



AFF – HLG Monthly Monitoring of EU Forest Value Chains

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This monthly newsletter, produced by the HLG on Forestry & Biomaterials with support from SAPPI, aims to stimulate joint thinking on the research and development of a climate-neutral bioeconomy.

The High-Level Group on EU Policy Innovation: Forestry and Biomaterials (HLG-FB) is one of the independent public-private think tanks which operates as advisory body for the European Union institutions. A partnership involving the HLG-FB and the African Forest Forum (AFF) is evolving.

The AFF is an association of individuals who share the quest for, and commitment to the sustainable management, use and conservation of the forest and tree resources of Africa for socio-economic wellbeing of its peoples and for the stability and improvement of its environment.

This partnership aims to provide a framework of cooperation and understanding and to facilitate collaboration between the Parties to further their shared goals and objectives regarding African forestry and its support to socio-economic wellbeing of Africa's peoples and for the stability and improvement of the environment.

Arising from these shared goals, the AFF team comprising the Executive Secretary, Labode POPOOLA and the Technical Advisor, Godwin KOWERO were invited to Brussels, Belgium to interact with key stakeholders at the EU and other organizations. The trip, held during 12 to 17 May, 2024 comprised meetings with the following Directorates-General of the European Commission:

1. Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs
2. Directorate-General for Environment
3. Directorate-General for Research and Innovation
4. Directorate-General for Climate Action (DG CLIMA)
5. Directorate-General Agriculture and Rural Development

On 14 May, 2024 a lunch debate involving over 20 Ambassadors and diplomats from African countries, and the Director General of the Belgian Foreign Ministry, previously occupying the Presidency of the Council (of Ministers) in the EU, and the management of one of Africa's leading forestry and bioeconomic companies, SAPPI, was held at which a presentation was made by the AFF on emerging issues in African Forestry and the increasing relevance of the sector in the economies countries in the continent. Additionally, the AFF met with the leadership of the European Forest Institute.

As a first token of this cooperation, AFF members will receive in future a regular newsletter from the HLG on Forestry and Biomaterials, with the purpose to stimulate joint thinking about the research and development of a climate neutral bioeconomy.

*EUROPEAN UNION REGULATION ON DEFORESTATION-FREE PRODUCTS
(EUDR) - LATEST DEVELOPMENTS*

EPP Environmental lead calls for two-year delay to EUDR market restrictions

On June 27, 2024, Peter [Liese](#), the environmental lead of the European People's Party (EPP), the largest political group in the European Parliament, issued a formal statement calling for a two-year delay on the market restrictions imposed by the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR).

Liese expressed confidence that the European Commission would consider the postponement, following recent warnings from the Biden administration about significant economic impacts. He emphasized the need for a delay, citing recent communications with EU officials and international pressure, including a letter from senior US trade and agriculture officials to Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič.

The EUDR has been defined by Liese as a "bureaucratic monster" in its current form. Liese also highlighted the EPP's intention to revisit other Green Deal legislations, such as the CO2 emissions standards for cars, advocating for more technologically neutral approaches.

White House calls for postponement of EUDR implementation

As mentioned above, the Biden administration has called on the EU to [postpone the implementation](#) of the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) until significant challenges can be resolved.

On May 30th, the US Trade Representative Katherine Tai, Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondi, and Agriculture Secretary Thomas Vilsack sent a letter to the EU Commission highlighting the difficulties faced by US exporters in meeting the regulation's requirements on time.

This request follows a previous letter from 50 US senators in March, urging the USTR to address the potential impact of the EUDR on US paper and pulp producers. Technical challenges associated with the EUDR implementation have been a major concern for stakeholders in the feed industry since the law came into force in June 2023.

Pedro Cordero, President of FEFAC, emphasized during the FEFAC Annual Public Meeting on May 31st that European feed companies have yet to secure soybean meal offers for January 2025. This delay, unprecedented at this stage, underscores significant supply chain disruptions due to growing market uncertainty linked to EUDR implementation.

Questions persist regarding the technical aspects of the deforestation law and whether the Commission's timetable aligns adequately with business needs. FEFAC and other EU trade groups, including FEDIOL, have been vocal about issues with the regulation's information system. This system, intended to facilitate the submission and processing of due diligence statements, is currently deemed insufficient to support well-functioning supply chains by the end of 2024 when EUDR enforcement begins.

Forest Stewardship Council introduces FSC aligned certification and reporting for EUDR: Facilitating compliance with latest regulation

On the 9th of July, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) launched the [FSC Aligned for EUDR](#), a new solution aimed at facilitating compliance with the EUDR. This initiative seeks to simplify the complex process of meeting EUDR requirements for businesses involved in trading forest-based products within Europe.

FSC Aligned for EUDR comprises two primary components:

- FSC Aligned *Certification* for EUDR: Starting July 1, 2024, this additional module integrates FSC's stringent standards with specific EUDR expectations concerning risk assessment, due diligence, and supply chain transparency.
- FSC Aligned *Reporting* for EUDR: Scheduled for launch on August 30, 2024, this automated system will assist companies in compiling necessary due diligence reports and statements, improving traceability and data management across intricate supply chains.

The Chief System Integrity Officer leading FSC's EUDR efforts, Marc Jessel, noted that "the EU consumes a substantial portion of products linked to deforestation, thus as the December 2024 deadline approaches, we are committed to aiding businesses in efficiently meeting these new requirements".

FSC has also initiated an Early Adopters Onboarding Programme, currently supporting over 20 companies in implementing FSC Aligned Certification for EUDR.

About the Forest Stewardship Council

FSC is a non-profit organization offering a proven solution for sustainable forest management. Currently, over 150 million hectares of forest worldwide are certified according to FSC standards. Recognised as the most rigorous forest certification system by NGOs, consumers, and businesses alike, FSC addresses today's deforestation, climate, and biodiversity challenges through ten core principles encompassing environmental, social, and economic factors. The FSC label, represented by the "check tree" logo, verifies the sustainable sourcing of millions of forest-based products from origin to consumer. For more information, visit www.fsc.org.

Experts criticize EU-Backed analysis of Malaysia's sustainability certification for EUDR

Palm oil industry experts have voiced [strong criticism](#) against a recent EU-based analysis that highlighted deficiencies in Malaysia's national sustainability certification scheme under the EU Deforestation Regulations (EUDR). Funded by the EU and conducted by the European Forest Institute (EFI), the analysis pointed out significant "information gaps" across geolocation, deforestation-free practices, legality and traceability within Malaysia's Sustainable Palm Oil (MSPO) certification.

While these findings were presented by a technical expert from EFI, during an online forum hosted by the Malaysian Palm Oil Council (MPOC), Chee Yong Tan, Manager of Certification & Operation Services at MSPO, outlined that potential solutions are being pursued by the organization to address these gaps.

However, industry experts criticized the EFI analysis for allegedly defending the stringent requirements of the EUDR without clear guidance and for unfairly singling out MSPO for compliance challenges. Moreover, some scepticism was expressed over the clarity of EUDR requirements and the absence of other commodities like sunflower oil or rapeseed oil, also linked to deforestation.

The European Commission rejected accusations of bias, stating that the selection of commodities under EUDR was based on extensive research and would undergo further review after the regulation's implementation.

EU Deforestation Regulation faces criticism for red tape as European Commission revises reporting obligation

The European Commission is currently revising the reporting requirements to address concerns within the forestry sector about extensive administrative burdens.

As part of this effort, the Commission is implementing an IT-based solution to streamline the reporting process under EUDR. This includes developing an interface to automate the transfer of data from entities authorising tree felling to the EU's Traces system (Trade Control and Expert System).

Previously, due diligence statements had to be manually entered into the Traces system, rather than using digital data transfer interfaces. The new system is expected to be operational by the end of the year. These steps are crucial for ensuring that wood producers meet EUDR standards, based on each operator's risk assessment.

Maija Rantamäki, Manager of International and EU Forest Affairs at the Finnish Forest Industries Federation, stressed the importance of a functional data transfer interface for companies in the forest industry. She asserted that "Some forest companies are currently testing the interface and its functionalities. The Commission has indicated that adjustments may still be made, posing challenges for companies as they develop internal systems to align with the interface".

Ethiopian Agri-tech partners with farmers to align with European Union deforestation goals

[Ethiopian and African farmers](#) are swiftly adapting to comply with EUDR to maintain access to the EU market, crucial for their economic stability and growth. To meet EU buyers' requirements and prevent significant economic setbacks, farmers and producers are prioritizing compliance with EUDR.

In response, the Orbit Innovation Hub in Addis Ababa, in collaboration with the ITC Netherlands Trust Fund's Ethiopia Tech project, organized a symposium focused on leveraging agritech to enhance market access and financing.

The symposium convened 140 participants from the technology sector, local and international NGOs, government agencies, banks, farmers, and exporters. Its objective was to educate

stakeholders on adopting traceability systems, understanding regulatory requirements, and fostering collaboration for seamless implementation.

One key takeaway from the discussions was the limited knowledge available amidst the tight deadlines set by the EU. While agriculture and coffee are vital to Africa's exports to the EU, a definitive strategy for navigating these regulatory changes is currently lacking.

With the EU being Ethiopia's largest single market, and with 70% of the population in rural areas and 85% of agricultural production from smallholder farmers, reliable access to markets like the EU can enhance productivity, increase incomes and bolster food security in the country.

"There are numerous complexities, including cultural differences, digital literacy gaps, and inter-company collaboration issues. It is crucial that everyone involved, from financial institutions and customs authorities to exporter certification providers and port inspectors, understands the implications of EUDR," emphasized Saminas Seyfu, Director of Marketing at Orbit Innovation Hub.

There is a rising demand for ITC's support in providing training and assistance for comprehensive EUDR compliance. As a response, ITC is developing the Deforestation Free Trade Gateway, an online platform aimed at helping small producers worldwide meet EUDR requirements and connect with international buyers.

More about the regulation and potential issues

The EUDR, which mandates strict due diligence requirements to curb deforestation, will start being applied from December 30, 2024, for large and medium enterprises, and from June 30, 2025, for micro and small enterprises. It specifically targets a list of commodities outlined in Articles 38(2) EUDR, including cattle, cocoa, coffee, oil palm, rubber, soya, and wood, and demands comprehensive traceability from the point of origin to processing and distribution. Operators are required, under Article 3, to ensure that commodities exported are:

- deforestation-free;
- produced in accordance with the relevant legislation of the country of production;
- covered by a due diligence statement.

Pursuant to Articles 3, 4, and 8 of the Regulation, due diligence statements must be submitted to the designated authorities via the information system delineated in Article 33 before placing products on the market. This electronically transmitted due diligence statement must include the details specified in Annex II and affirm that the operator has conducted due diligence, identifying no or negligible risk.

Expected developments

In response to these challenges, the Commission has planned updates to the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) (FAQ) document, a non-binding working file released by the Commission, aimed at supporting National authorities and economic operators on the text, context, and purpose of the EUDR, to achieve its uniform application across the European Union.

An additional document, the Guidance on EUDR, is set to be published by the mid of July to further explain various aspects of the regulation, *inter alia*:

- clarifications on placing and making available on the EU market;
- legality;
- risk assessment;
- product scope; and
- the role of third-party verification schemes.

A reassessment of the risk categorization of countries based on deforestation metrics is also anticipated, aiming to mitigate the negative impacts on smallholder producers in developing regions. This decision is a response to concerns raised by developing countries about the negative implications of being classified as "high risk," which can lead to operational reductions or a preference for larger producers with advanced technological capabilities.

The European Wood Policy Platform (WoodPoP) continues its efforts to promote a wood-based circular bioeconomy in Europe.

On the 19th of July, the WoodPoP secretariat will participate in the “WOOD for GLOBE: Leading Pathways to Carbon Neutrality and Resilience” event – a high-level dialogue to review progress on the implementation of the sustainable wood pathways identified in the Ministerial Call on Sustainable Wood, launched in 2022 at the XV World Forestry Congress in Seoul, Republic of Korea.

The European Wood Policy Platform will be presented in the morning panel, ‘Advancing Sustainable Wood Pathways: Cooperation for Policy, Science, Innovation, Knowledge, and Investments’. In the afternoon, the main results from the Wood For Globe Project will be showcased.

The event will be followed by the [27th Session](#) of the Committee on Forestry (COFO), taking place from 22-26 July 2024 at the FAO headquarters in Rome, with WoodPoP participating. COFO's biennial sessions gather high-level representatives, heads of forest services, government officials, and partner organisations to identify emerging policy and technical guidance, seek solutions, and provide advice on future strategy and actions.

In the previous meeting held in May 2024, the European WoodPoP convened to advance the development and dissemination of essential actions to promote sustainable forest use while ensuring their protection at the EU level. During this meeting, participants underscored the importance of creating a conducive environment for a resilient European wood sector that harmonizes economic growth with environmental and social equity.

Furthermore, a strong emphasis was placed on the need to establish a sustainable wood policy for Europe. This includes enhancing wood and wood-based solutions, contributing to climate change mitigation, and promoting the transition towards a carbon-neutral and circular bioeconomy. These efforts aim to provide viable alternatives to fossil-based, non-renewable materials, create innovative goods and services, and enhance cooperation and development. The discussion also touched on the potential for job creation, local development, and improving livelihoods.

The dialogue also explored how to better optimize the wood value chain for improved supply management and discussed the role of innovation, research, and development in enhancing governance, regulatory compliance, harmonisation, and sustainability.

The WoodPop initiative was established following a proposal by Finland and Austria during the Forest Fund's Wood Initiative. The platform serves to accelerate policy dialogue focused on wood, bringing together high-level experts from politics, administration, business, and research to address current and future challenges of material and energy use of wood and to stimulate innovative, cross-sector developments in line with the bioeconomy and circular economy principles.

GREEN DEAL, THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SECOND PHASE OF THE EU'S CARBON BORDER ADJUSTMENT MECHANISM (CBAM) IS POISED TO BEGIN.

CBAM's Second Transitional Phase set to start in July 2024

The [second transitional phase](#) of the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) is planned to start on July 1, 2024. During this phase, EU importers of products are required to collect and disclose the actual embedded emissions data (instead of default values) of their imports from global (non-EU based) manufacturers.

The transition to a CBAM based system commenced on October 1, 2023, with EU importers of specific products such as steel, aluminium, cement, fertilizer, hydrogen, and electricity mandated to report their embedded carbon emissions. The initial quarterly reports were due by January 31, 2024, though compliance was low, with only a minority of companies meeting this initial deadline. Importers now face a crucial deadline of July 31, 2024, to comply and avoid penalties, with many stakeholders reporting higher than expected difficulties.

To ensure compliance, EU importers must perform detailed screenings of the emissions data received from non-EU manufacturers. This involves verifying that the data accurately reflects the actual emissions as per CBAM's GHG accounting principles and requesting necessary documentation, such as calculation templates and supporting evidence.

To improve the accuracy of carbon accounting, importers are advised to:

- Cross-verify the data against multiple sources to ensure consistency and accuracy.
- Conduct audits to assess the data quality and identify any discrepancies.
- Validate the accuracy of the calculations and measurements used.

The EU Launched a Carbon Market Diplomacy Task Force

At the beginning of 2024, the EU unveiled its ambitious climate targets for 2040, committing to a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by at least 90% compared to 1990 levels. Alongside this, the EU introduced its Industrial Carbon Management Strategy, focusing on improvements in CO2

transportation and storage facilities, as well as fostering international cooperation for effective decarbonization.

In April 2024, the EU announced the formation of a [carbon market diplomacy task force](#). This initiative aims to enhance international carbon markets by boosting diplomatic efforts to help other countries establish similar schemes. EU climate policy chief Wopke Hoekstra highlighted the importance of supporting nations in implementing carbon pricing mechanisms similar to the EU ETS to combat climate change effectively.

The task force will work to harmonize existing carbon pricing systems and facilitate connections among them, addressing challenges faced by regions like China, California, and Britain, which already operate carbon markets.

The EU carbon market diplomacy task force will play a crucial role in global climate efforts by bridging differences between existing carbon pricing systems and fostering international collaboration. This initiative, announced alongside the 2040 climate goals, underscores the EU's commitment to achieving a 90% net reduction in CO₂ emissions and leading global efforts in carbon pricing strategies. The task force and the EU's climate goals will be key topics of discussion in the newly elected European Parliament this summer.

South Africa Criticizes UK's Proposed Carbon Tax on Imports for Exacerbating Global Inequality and Hindering Climate Adaptation Efforts

Aside from the EU's CBAM, South Africa has informed the UK that its plan to impose a [carbon tax on imported goods](#) will exacerbate global inequality and hinder Africa's efforts to adapt to climate change.

This criticism of the proposed measure, which the UK aims to introduce by 2027, arises as developing economies like South Africa accuse industrialized nations of shifting the responsibility to combat global warming onto poorer countries. The European Union implemented its own Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) last year, taxing imports based on the carbon emissions produced during their manufacturing. South Africa argues that this tax could violate World Trade Organization (WTO) rules, as stated in a submission sent to the UK Treasury last month. South Africa's dependence on coal for most of its electricity makes it particularly susceptible to such measures.

South Africa claimed that CBAM is punitive and forecloses possibilities for industrial development to meet real socioeconomic needs, according to the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition. For this reason, the UK should consider cooperative mechanisms rather than punitive measures in incentivizing third countries to adopt greener technologies.

PACKAGING & PACKAGING WASTE REGULATION (PPWR) DEVELOPMENTS

European Parliament approved a revised version of the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR)

On April 24, 2024, the plenary session of the European Parliament cast votes to advance the EU Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) toward its final stages of legislative enactment. This [regulation](#), designed to be directly applicable across all EU member states, aims to preemptively reduce waste generation through stringent reuse requirements, restrictions on market practices, obligations for deposit-return schemes, and additional regulatory measures.

Following disagreements on recycled content origins and plastic materials' focus, the decisive vote on April 24 sets the stage for the new Parliament and Council, elected in June 2024, to give their final endorsement in late 2024. Thus, the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) is expected to be implemented by 2026.

Under this new regulatory framework, companies involved in manufacturing and distribution will be compelled to:

- Undertake significant modifications to their packaging solutions, product designs, and logistical operations to accommodate mandated reuse systems and enhance sustainability.
- Specifically, entities providing takeaway food and beverages must enable consumers to use their own containers and establish dedicated collection systems for single-use plastic (SUP) bottles and metal beverage containers.
- Augment the recycled material content within their plastic packaging configurations.
- Implement reduction strategies by eliminating superfluous packaging elements, minimizing void space within packaging, reducing material thickness, and incorporating refill options.

To facilitate this transition, the adoption of prevention and eco-design strategies—already mandatory in several jurisdictions—will serve as an effective methodology to fulfil and exceed these regulatory demands, thereby fostering a more sustainable industrial ecosystem.

What will be banned starting January 2030? - Background of the proposed PPWR Regulation

The PPWR, pivotal for the forestry value chain, especially for entities manufacturing paper-based packaging, prescribes substantial reductions in packaging materials by the years 2030, 2035, and 2044. The regulation prohibits the use of detrimental chemicals such as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and bisphenol A (BPA) in food packaging and advocates for the utilization of sustainable materials sourced from responsibly managed forests, with a strong emphasis on the recyclability and reusability of packaging.

Commencing in January 2030, prohibitions will include:

- Single-use plastic packaging for unprocessed fresh fruits and vegetables, and for consumables in bars and restaurants.
- Single-use items such as condiments, sauces, sugar, and cream.
- Small-scale hotel products like shampoo and shower gel.
- Plastic wrap for suitcases at airports.

However, exemptions apply to milk cartons, disposable compostable plastic packaging, and packaging for fruits and vegetables weighing less than one and a half kilograms, necessary to prevent food deterioration.

The regulation sets packaging reduction goals of 5% by 2030, 10% by 2035, and 15% by 2040, with MEPs advocating for a 20% reduction in plastic packaging by 2040. It also mandates a maximum empty space ratio of 50% in various packaging types to minimize waste, and stipulates that manufacturers and importers ensure minimized packaging weight and volume, except where protected packaging designs are already established.

Additionally, the MEPs call on EU member states to ensure that 90% of materials used in packaging are collected separately by 2029, reinforcing the regulation's role in promoting environmental sustainability and a circular economy within the EU packaging sector.

EPPA concerns over emphasis on Reusable vs. Disposable Paper Packaging

The European Paper Packaging Alliance ([EPPA](#)) has voiced concerns regarding the regulatory framework's preferential treatment of reusable packaging over disposable paper options, which they argue undermines other environmentally sustainable alternatives. EPPA advocates for a revision of the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) to favour renewable, recyclable, and environmentally friendly single-use paper packaging to better align with the goals of the circular economy.

Antonio D'Amato, President of EPPA, has expressed [moderate satisfaction](#) with the outcomes of the most recent vote on the PPWR. Although not perfect, he acknowledges that the regulation is largely in accordance with the latest scientific findings and believes it will enhance Europe's competitiveness and sustainability without compromising the single market or the EU's leadership in recycling.

Denmark implements PPWR, becoming the last EU country to adopt the regulation

Denmark has aligned with the broader EU strategy on sustainable packaging by enacting Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) regulations, which will come into effect on January 1, 2025. These regulations mandate that all producers are responsible for the entire lifecycle of their packaging products, encompassing recovery and recycling processes. This initiative is part of an EU-wide directive requiring all member states to implement EPR for packaging by 2025, positioning Denmark as the last to formalize these regulations.

Under the new EPR framework, companies are tasked with comprehensive management of their packaging outputs. This includes not only administrative and legal responsibilities such as documentation and labelling but also economic responsibilities which cover the costs associated with logistics, sorting, recycling, and registration.

Moreover, by the end of 2024, Danish companies must submit detailed reports on the expected quantities of packaging to be placed on the market in the following year. These reports must specify the quantities in kilograms and categorize them by type of material, such as cardboard, paper, or

plastic. This detailed tracking and reporting are crucial for ensuring compliance with the EPR regulations and contribute to the overall sustainability efforts of the EU.

Horizon (Europe and IA) in Africa

New Horizon Europe tender targets EU-Africa Partnership on Food Security and Soil Restoration

On May 2024, a [new horizon tender](#) was launched to undertake studies on EU-Africa Partnership on Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture. This initiative specifically supports the international dimension of the Mission ‘A Soil Deal for Europe,’ aiming to meet its objectives, notably objective 4 “the reduction of soil pollution and enhancement of restoration efforts”.

The significance of this endeavour is underscored by the IPBES report on land degradation and restoration, which assesses the substantial economic costs associated with land and soil degradation, including the escalating costs of inaction. Recognizing that soil health is crucial for climate change adaptation and mitigation, a holistic systems approach is essential for tackling the multifaceted soil health challenges at both country and regional levels. An analytical framework based on evidence is urgently required for effective soil health priority setting and planning at regional and national levels, ensuring alignment of partners and investments.

Proposed activities are:

- Developing an Africa-wide soil health dashboard that scales up from the EU's EUSO Soil Health Dashboard. This involves leveraging existing data sources like the Africa Soil Information System (AfSIS) and incorporating insights from EU-funded projects such as Soils 4 Africa.
- Strategically collecting new data to address soil knowledge gaps, which will enhance the dashboard's accuracy and functionality through stakeholder engagement.
- Identifying local and regional thresholds for critical soil health descriptors and creating roadmaps to elucidate soil health trends in response to policy measures.
- Assisting African nations in formulating national soil health strategies for improved management of soil resources in agriculture and environmental contexts, involving at least eight countries. Ensuring that proposals demonstrate a path toward the open access, longevity, sustainability, and interoperability of knowledge and outputs, in collaboration with the EU Soil Observatory (EUSO) and SoilWISE.

Proposals may also extend to leveraging international expertise, notably from the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, and should incorporate a long-term sustainability plan for the soil health dashboard in Africa.

The deadline for submissions is set for October 2024.

Background of Horizon Europe

[Horizon Europe](#) is the EU's main funding program for research and innovation, boasting a budget of €95.5 billion for the period 2021-2027. It aims to address climate change, support the achievement

of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, and enhance EU competitiveness and economic growth. The program fosters collaboration and amplifies the impact of research and innovation in shaping, supporting, and implementing EU policies while addressing global challenges. It plays a crucial role in generating and spreading excellent knowledge and technologies.

Moreover, Horizon Europe is instrumental in creating jobs, engaging the EU's full talent spectrum, promoting economic expansion, bolstering industrial competitiveness, and maximizing the impact of investments under a revitalized European Research Area.

Distinctive features of Horizon Europe that set it apart from its predecessor, Horizon 2020, include:

- European Innovation Council (EIC): The EIC supports high-risk innovations with breakthrough potential and disruptive nature, primarily targeting SMEs with 70% of its budget.
- Missions: Horizon Europe introduces missions aiming to achieve bold, inspiring, and quantifiable objectives within specific timelines, encompassing five primary mission areas.
- Open Science Policy: The program enforces mandatory open access to research publications and applies open science principles across all activities.
- Revamped Partnerships: Horizon Europe fosters more strategic and ambitious partnerships with industry to support EU policy goals, emphasizing objective-driven collaboration.