Swiss university seeks research and industry partners for Horizon Europe Cluster 3 project on citizen safety and community resilience in crisis situations.

Summary

Profile type
Research & Development Request

Company's country
Switzerland

POD reference
RDRCH20260303002

Profile status
PUBLISHED

Type of partnership
Research and development cooperation agreement

Targeted countries
- **Germany**
- **Lithuania**
- **Latvia**
- **Estonia**
- **Poland**
- **Finland**
- **France**

Contact Person
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Term of validity
3 Mar 2026
3 Mar 2027

Last update
5 Mar 2026

General Information

Short summary

A Swiss research team plans a human centred project to improve work, learning, and coordination in shelters under prolonged threat, ensuring well being and community cohesion through AI supported systems for Horizon Europe Cluster 3. They study shelters as sociotechnical infrastructures, examining space, digital tools, leadership, group dynamics. Academic and field partners are sought mainly in civil protection, critical infrastructure, cybersecurity, crisis AI and simulation, risk engineering.

Full description

As recent experience from Ukraine shows, shelters and protected spaces are no longer used only for short-term protection. They are becoming environments where people continue to work, coordinate, study and make critical decisions under prolonged existential threat. While infrastructure protection is well addressed from an engineering perspective - as reflected in the INFRA destination of Horizon Europe Cluster 3 - far less is known about how people and teams maintain effective work, well-being and coordinated action in such environments over time. This human dimension is the focus of the DRS destination, and specifically its call for new approaches to disaster preparedness. Our project sits at the intersection of both.

Crisis infrastructures are more than physical structures - they are sociotechnical systems that need to sustain psychological well-being, social trust, and coordinated collective action if citizens are to genuinely feel safe, not merely be protected. Yet the human dimensions of these systems remain largely understudied. This Swiss research team would like to form a consortium to address this gap directly. We believe that citizens' right to feel safe is a collective responsibility, shared between public authorities, organisations, and citizens themselves - and that realising this right requires understanding how people lead, coordinate, learn, and maintain cohesion under prolonged threat. Our project brings a human-centred lens to crisis infrastructure research that existing technical approaches have largely overlooked.

The initial project idea is to develop and empirically validate a human-centred framework explaining how individuals and teams maintain effective work in shelter-like environments, and how AI-augmented collective intelligence frameworks can enhance resilience rather than create additional stress. Shelters are conceptualized as sociotechnical infrastructures that combine: physical space and safety structures; digital systems and AI-supported coordination tools; leadership, identity dynamics and collective functioning. This focus, would allow to uncover under which institutional, technological and human conditions shelters can sustain not only survival, but also psychological well-being, performance and coordinated collective action during prolonged existential or security threats.

The research team has strong expertise in how organizations and leaders function under conditions of complexity, political tension and transformation, particularly in cross-border and high-stakes environments. Through projects such as SHAPE – Shelter-based Hubs for Adaptive Partnerships and Engagement, the research team has developed practical and research-based insights into working and learning in crisis environments, integrating physical infrastructure, digital systems and human-centred coordination.

The Swiss team brings the scientific leadership and vision for this project and is actively seeking an experienced research coordinator - ideally a university or research institute with a strong track record in Horizon Europe project management - to lead the consortium administratively.

They are seeking university, research institute and private sector partners including a coordinator with EU project experience with strong technical or security-oriented expertise in one or more of the following areas:

- civil protection systems and emergency management
- critical infrastructure resilience
- cybersecurity and secure digital systems
- AI development for crisis coordination
- modelling and simulation of crisis scenarios
- disaster risk engineering
- human factors in safety-critical systems

The consortium aims to combine technical resilience expertise with behavioural and governance research in an indicative timeline, subject to final Work Programme publication:

- call opening: May 2026
- call deadline: Autumn 2026
- Anticipated project duration: 36–48 months

Advantages and innovations

The innovation of the project lies in an integrated framework that links physical infrastructure, digital systems, and human functioning. Current civil protection and resilience projects primarily focus on physical infrastructure protection, emergency logistics, or digital coordination tools. Human behaviour, identity dynamics, leadership practices, and well-being under prolonged existential threat are typically treated as secondary factors rather than core design variables.

First, the conceptualisation of shelters as sociotechnical work infrastructures rather than temporary protection spaces. Instead of focusing on survival and safety, the project analyses how shelters can sustain role continuity, coordinated action, and operational performance over extended periods.

Second, the project introduces an AI-augmented collective intelligence framework designed to synchronize human decision-making with automated coordination. Rather than treating AI as a mere interface, we explore how it can catalyse group productivity and cognitive flow within civil protection environments. The research systematically evaluates how this 'hybrid' intelligence improves coordination quality and stabilizes performance without exceeding the cognitive load of teams operating under extreme stress.

Third, to the combination of behavioural science, organisational research, and technical system tested in one empirical framework.

Technical specification or expertise sought

The project seeks a university or applied research partner capable of co-developing and testing an AI-augmented collective intelligence framework for shelter-based work environments under crisis conditions.

They are looking for expertise in technical research partner capable of co-developing and experimentally testing an embedded, locally operated, multimodal AI coordination assistant (AI Agent) designed for shelter-based work environments under crisis conditions.

Additionally the team is seeking practice and implementation partners e.g. European Civil Protection authorities, companies and ministries.

Stage of development

Concept stage

Sustainable Development goals

- **Goal 17: Partnerships to achieve the Goal**
- **Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being**
- **Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation**
- **Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities**
- **Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure**
- **Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth**
- **Goal 10: Reduced Inequality**
- **Goal 4: Quality Education**

IPR Status

IPR Notes

Partner Sought

Expected role of the partner

The university team is seeking university, research institute and private sector partners with strong technical or security-oriented expertise in one or more of the following areas:

• civil protection systems and emergency management
• critical infrastructure resilience
• cybersecurity and secure digital systems
• AI development for crisis coordination
• modelling and simulation of crisis scenarios
• disaster risk engineering
• human factors in safety-critical systems

They should have:

• experience in Horizon Europe or comparable security projects
• capability to develop or test AI-supported coordination tools
• capacity to contribute technical modelling or infrastructure design

The partner will:

• co-develop AI-augmented collective intelligence frameworks
• contribute modelling and technical expertise
• collaborate on experimental simulation environments
• integrate technological solutions with human-centred design principles

Type of partnership

Type and size of the partner

Research and development cooperation agreement

- **Other**
- **SME 50 - 249**
- **Big company**
- **University**
- **SME 11-49**
- **R&D Institution**
- **SME <=10**

Call Details

Framework program

Horizon Europe

Call title and identifier

Cluster 3: Civil security for society

Submission and evaluation scheme

Anticipated project budget

Coordinator required

Yes

Deadline for EoI

31 May 2026

Deadline of the call

5 Nov 2026

Project duration in weeks

156

Web link to the call

https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/cluster-3-civil-security-society_en

Project title and acronym

Working under conditions of existential threat: Safe spaces, well-being, and performance in AI-enhanced hybrid work settings.

Dissemination

Technology keywords

- **01003008 - Data Processing / Data Interchange, Middleware**
- **01003009 - Data Protection, Storage, Cryptography, Security**
- **01003016 - Simulation**
- **01004016 - Analysis Risk Management**
- **01003003 - Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

Market keywords

- **02006004 - Data processing, analysis and input services**
- **08002002 - Industrial measurement and sensing equipment**
- **09007004 - Engineering and consulting services related to construction**
- **09003005 - Consulting services**
- **02007020 - Artificial intelligence programming aids**

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Sector groups involved

- **Digital**
- **Aerospace and Defence**