EU funding opportunities and Global gateway

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13-10-26



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HORIZON EUROPE

Best fit for technology risk.

Geothermal appears directly in the 2026–27 Cluster 5 work programme — from deep-reservoir assessment to SET Plan coordination and a future lithium prize.

Research & innovation • competitive grants

LIFE

Best fit for market & policy barriers.

Clean Energy Transition supports planning, market uptake, skills, finance mobilisation and local implementation — rather than drilling or plant CAPEX.

Coordination & support • 2026 CET budget: €85.5m

GLOBAL GATEWAY

Best fit for international deployment.

EFSD+ guarantees, blending and investment vehicles can de-risk renewable-energy projects in partner countries — including geothermal.

Finance & technical assistance • global / partner countries

1 DEC 2026	**Horizon D3-06** **Horizon D3-23**	Deadline: Resource assessment for deep sedimentary & basement réservoirs Deadline: Data sharing to support the training and development of AI foundation models in the energy sector
3 DEC 2026	**Horizon D3-33**	Opens: geothermal SET Plan stakeholder support
31 MAR 2027	**Horizon D3-33**	Deadline: geothermal SET Plan stakeholder support
2027	**Horizon Prize**	Contest rules to be published for lithium production from geothermal brines
15 SEP 2027	**Horizon D4-06**	Deadline: Thermal energy optimisation and waste heat recovery of high energy demand IT rooms in buildings or small edge data centres

Horizon Europe 2026 Cluster 5 Call 11-2026

HORIZON-CL5-2026-11-D3-06: Resource assessment for deep sedimentary and basement reservoirs

Expected Outcome:

- ✓ Major exploration challenges relate to predicting deep sedimentary and basement reservoir structures and properties to identify suitable locations for reservoir-independent approaches, capable of overcoming the low permeability obstacle, such as Enhanced Geothermal Systems (EGS) or closed-loop geothermal systems.
- ✓ Increased knowledge base for developers to unlock unexploited geothermal resources, increase drilling success rate, increase geothermal sources performance and reduce the risk of induced seismicity and deploy geothermal energy in a sustainable way in environmental (notably on biodiversity and pollution) and socioeconomic terms.
- ✓ Citizens and local communities are engaged and benefit from local, more secure and affordable renewable energy sources.

Scope:

- ❑ Advanced methods, technologies and conceptual models, for different geological settings, to identify suitable conditions for geothermal resource exploitation.
- ❑ Contribute to the assessment of environmental and social impacts and to unlock geothermal resources marked by low natural permeability at depths between 2000-6000m.
- ❑ Cover advances beyond the state of the art in equipment, methods and models; take into account the impact of reservoir conditions and parameters on the development and performance of the geothermal resources.

Budget: €18.00 mio, €4.50 mio per project ; TRL 4-5

www.gec.org

HORIZON-CL5-2026-11-D3-23: Data sharing to support the training and development of AI foundation models in the energy sector

Expected Outcome:

- ✓ Effective and innovative methods for gathering, sharing and using large data sets in energy applications for the purpose of training AI models while ensuring privacy and security.
- ✓ Advanced and - wherever possible - open-source AI foundation models to support the digitalisation of the energy system, through improved grid observability, forecasting of supply and demand, advanced storage and renewables integration, demand side flexibility and energy efficiency.
- ✓ Enhanced cooperation, knowledge sharing and interoperability among energy system actors for secure and seamless data exchange.
- ✓ Advanced methodologies for AI model development ensuring that the results are FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) beyond the project ending, open source and accommodating for technology evolution.

Budget: €30mio, 10 mio per project ; TRL 4-5

Opening: 4 Aug 2026; Deadline(s): 1 Dec 2026

Horizon Europe 2026 Cluster 5 Call 11-2026

HORIZON-CL5-2026-11-D3-07: European Union Contest on Lithium production from geothermal plants in Europe

Expected Outcome:

- ✓ Facilitate the wider uptake of geothermal energy systems (RES) in the energy, industrial and residential sectors leading to an increased share of renewable energy in the final energy consumption by 2030 and beyond.
- ✓ Contribute to the development of a new renewable based energy system and industries.
- ✓ Establishing a solid long term dependable European innovation industrial base for renewable energy technologies.

Scope:

- ❑ support the European Union Contest for the most efficient and innovative on-site demonstration of lithium production (lithium carbonate – Li_2CO_3 or lithium hydroxide – LiOH) from geothermal brines in a geothermal plant subject to meeting the eligibility requirements outlined below.
- ❑ Contest competition is expected to stimulate progress in the field by advancing DLE technologies, and to commence and increase the amount of lithium produced in Europe's geothermal plants

Contest is expected to be launched in the Q1 2027

Winners to be selected in Q4 2031. The Contest reward will be distributed as follows:

- 1st winner: €3 million
- 2nd winner: €1 million
- 3rd winner: €0.5 million

HORIZON-CL5-2027-05-D4-06: Thermal energy optimisation and waste heat recovery of high energy demand IT rooms in buildings or small edge data centres

Expected Outcome:

- ✓ Improved open access to performance data, sharing of best-practices and useful knowledge and information for owners and operators of IT infrastructure, as well as the IT and building sectors;

Scope:

- ❑ address the energy and resources consumption over the full ICT value chain

Budget: €15.75 mio, €5.25 mio per project; TRL 6-7

Relevance for geothermal: geothermal cooling for data centres

Opening: 05 May 2027 Deadline(s): 15 Sep 2027

Netherlands Enterprise Agency GEOTHERMICA INITIATIVE Smart Energy Systems ERA-Net Cet Partnership ETIP Geothermal CHIMEC

1

SUBSURFACE

D3-06
€18m

Reduce exploration uncertainty; deep reservoirs; EGS / closed-loop

2

DEMONSTRATE

D3-02
€23.5m

High-risk / high-return renewable technologies; EGS and ultra-deep relevance

3

SYSTEMISE

D3-33
€0.38m

Coordinate the geothermal SET Plan community; roadmaps, barriers, funding needs

4

DIVERSIFY

Prize
€4.5m

On-site lithium production from geothermal brines using DLE

The useful distinction: getting above threshold vs. actually getting funded

Call	Topic	Submitted	Above threshold	Funded	Threshold	Above-threshold rate	Overall success rate
D3-03	Geothermal resources	17	4	2	14.0	24%	11.8%
D4-06	Fossil phase-out / RES integration	35	14	2	14.5	40%	5.7%
D3-19	GenAI energy system	56	10	2	15.0	18%	3.6%
D3-14	Renewable-energy value chains	33	17	3	14.5	52%	9.1%
D3-20	Energy communities	43	21	2	15.0	49%	4.7%
D3-22	Underground thermal storage	20	15	2	13.0	75%	10.0%

Global Gateway

Up to €300bn investment mobilisation

EFSD+ is the core risk-sharing instrument: €53bn guarantee volume, expected to leverage up to €232bn of sustainable investment.

GREEN ENERGY FOR AFRICA & ASIA

Guarantee up to €361m • technical assistance up to €22.82m • open until Feb 2028
Explicitly includes geothermal among eligible renewable-energy investments.

EDFI RENEWABLE ENERGY TRANSITION

Guarantee up to €332m • technical assistance up to €16m • open until Nov 2027
Supports renewable energy including geothermal across Sub-Saharan Africa, LAC and Asia-Pacific.

WHAT CHANGES FOR A GEOTHERMAL DEVELOPER

The question shifts from “Is the resource promising?” to “Can the project be made bankable and financed?”