

CALL

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-TRANSFO-09

TYPE OF ACTION

Research and Innovation Action (RIA) · Lump Sum

BUDGET

≈ €3,750,000

FUNDING RATE

100% for RIA beneficiaries

DURATION

36 months

COORDINATOR

University of Extremadura (UEX, Spain)

PLANNED STRUCTURE

12 beneficiaries · 6 Member States · JRC advisory

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

22 September 2026

PROXIMITY-CARE

Integrated Community Ageing
Infrastructures and Europe's
Long-Term Care Transition to 2070



Consortium core

RESOLUT

Anthea



UNIVERSIDAD
DE EXTREMADURA

01 The European challenge

Europe is approaching an irreversible inflection point in long-term care (LTC). By 2070, official European Commission projections place the number of people with LTC needs at least 21% above 2020 levels. Simultaneously, the care workforce is itself ageing and contracting, with vacancy rates exceeding 20% in several Member States. The dominant residential model faces three converging structural tensions: it is fiscally unsustainable, with an additional 1.5 to 2.5 percentage points of GDP projected by 2050; professionally unattractive; and misaligned with the preferences of over 85% of European citizens, who wish to age in their communities.

The European Care Strategy (2022), the revised Barcelona targets (2022) and the Action Plan of the European Pillar of Social Rights have opened the political space for a regime change. What is missing is the scientific evidence architecture that would allow this transition to be operated: robust projections to 2070 with quantification of the cost of non-action, controlled comparison across welfare regimes, empirical validation of alternative models, and operational regulatory and labour frameworks ready for adoption.

02 The PROXIMITY-CARE proposal

PROXIMITY-CARE builds that evidence architecture. The initiative articulates three integrated research scales, a coherent policy mix and a European impact plan, with the explicit goal of equipping European, national and regional authorities with the technical and regulatory instruments to steer with confidence the transition from the residential model towards Integrated Community Ageing Infrastructures.



Why this fits HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-TRANSFO-09

PROXIMITY-CARE directly addresses the need to rethink long-term care policy in the face of Europe's demographic shift. It focuses on the sustainability of long-term care service delivery, the efficient use of public, professional and technological resources, and the generation of evidence for public policies. The project combines projections, comparative policy analysis and Living Labs to support affordable, accessible, high-quality and community-based long-term care models that can be translated into regulatory and institutional practice.




03 A three-scale scientific architecture

The project operates simultaneously at three articulated scales, producing an evidence base unprecedented in European LTC research.

In practical terms, this means combining European-level projections, comparative policy analysis and real-world Living Labs so that public authorities can understand what will happen, what currently blocks change, and which community-based solutions can work in practice.







03 A three-scale scientific architecture

 <p>MACRO SCALE Projections to 2070 · 15 Member States</p> <hr/> <p>Dynamic microsimulation calibrated on SHARE, EU-SILC and Eurostat · Agent-Based Modelling driven by agentic AI · Federated learning-based NLP pipeline compliant with the AI Act. Produces the first rigorous quantification of the cost of non-action.</p>	 <p>MESO SCALE European Transition Readiness Index</p> <hr/> <p>Structured comparative analysis across the four European welfare regimes: Nordic, Continental, Mediterranean and Central-Eastern. Identifies regulatory, fiscal and institutional barriers to deinstitutionalisation through a 10-dimension index.</p>	 <p>MICRO SCALE 4 territorial Living Labs</p> <hr/> <p>Quasi-experimental design with matched cohorts · aggregate cohort of over 2,000 service users and 300 professionals · internationally validated indicators: InterRAI, WHOQOL-OLD, Zarit Burden Interview and QALYs · regulatory sandbox negotiated with each regional authority.</p>
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04 Material innovation · Integrated Community Ageing Infrastructures

The operating model validated in the Living Labs consists of four inseparable components:

	<p>Distributed cohousing. Small-scale shared housing units, with 4–8 residents each, embedded in the municipal fabric and leveraging public housing stock transferable by local authorities.</p>
	<p>Territorial Care Cooperative. Legal-economic vehicle managing pooled services across the territory: shared kitchen, laundry, adapted transport, professional team and common technological infrastructure. It delivers operational economies of scale without physically concentrating service users.</p>
	<p>Proximity Companions. The core professional figure of the model: professionals with decent full-time employment, certification portable across Member States, and staffing ratios adequate for community-based accompaniment.</p>
	<p>Ethical Ambient Intelligence layer. Non-intrusive sensing with frailty-prediction models trained under federated learning; personal data never leave the territory; full compliance with GDPR, AI Act, HL7 FHIR, ETSI and ISO/IEC standards.</p>

05 Coverage of 15 Member States



The topic requires modelling to 2070 for at least 15 Member States. The project addresses this requirement through a concentric architecture: 4 deep Living Labs with empirical validation; 15 Member States with full quantitative projections: Spain, France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Denmark, Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, Poland, Czechia, Hungary, Portugal, Greece and Ireland; 30 national experts, including academic and policy officers, validating the model's application to their countries; and 150 interviews with national policy-makers processed via federated NLP.



The tangible outputs of this architecture are 15 Country Policy Briefs, a European Synthesis Report and operational regulatory models ready for adoption.

06 European impact and project deliverables

Findings are channelled simultaneously through four impact pathways:



1
Direct translation into European policy.
 Structured dialogue with DG EMPL, DG SANTE and the JRC; explicit feed-in to the next iteration of the European Care Strategy and of the Social Pillar Action Plan.



2
Operational regulatory deliverables.
 Model legislative and regulatory instruments and municipal ordinances ready for adoption by national and subnational authorities.



3
Professional capacity building.
 European LTC Transition Academy training more than 300 practitioners and 80 administrative officers across the 36 months.



4
Persistent institutional vehicle.
 European Care Commons Network, an association constituted in month 18 and based in Brussels, that takes over from the consortium and acts as a stable interlocutor of European institutions after the project closes.

07 Consortium architecture

The Spanish operational core of the consortium is already constituted and confirmed:

BENEFICIARY	ROLE
University of Extremadura (UEX)	Coordinator · scientific and methodological leadership · macro modelling · anchor Living Lab in Tierra de Barros.
ANTHEA	Anchor Living Lab operator in Tierra de Barros, Badajoz, Spain · national non-profit association with extensive presence across Extremadura and across Spain.
RESOLUT	PMO · Lump Sum administrative management · liaison with the Funding & Tenders Portal · coordination support.

We are currently expanding the consortium and actively seeking the following partners:



Universities. With demonstrated academic excellence in comparative social policy, demography, long-term care economy, welfare-regime analysis or computational social sciences.

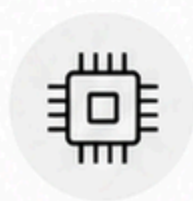


Social economy operators. Cooperatives, foundations, not-for-profit associations or equivalent entities with territorial presence and operational capacity in long-term care service delivery, including entities affiliated with networks such as Coompanion, Legacoopsociali, Diakonie, Caritas, EAPN and equivalents.

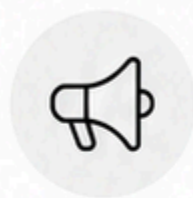


Regional or supra-municipal public authorities. Willing to sign a Memorandum of Understanding that will secure territorial deployment for 36 months, and to explore a regulatory sandbox that will temporarily flex staffing ratios, service-contracting modalities or co-payment schemes.

07 Consortium architecture *(continued)*



European tech SME. Specialised in ethical Ambient Assisted Living (AAL), with expertise in federated learning and a commitment to licensing frameworks compatible with open source to ensure continuity of the technological stack after the project.



European advocacy platforms. AGE Platform Europe, leading the dissemination and policy-advocacy work package, and Eurocarers, providing the European voice of informal carers and co-design of the intersectional dimension.



Joint Research Centre (JRC). Scientific advisory and methodological validation of the 2070 projection engine; participation as a beneficiary with zero funding or as an associated partner, consistent with the terms of the call.

08 What consortium participation offers

PROXIMITY-CARE is designed so that each type of partner obtains specific benefits aligned with its nature:



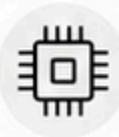
For universities. Direct funding for 3-5 research contracts, co-leadership of work packages, 8-12 expected scientific publications in impact journals under Open Access Gold, access to unique European primary data, and consolidation of a research line.



For Social economy operators. Three years of operational funding, deployment of free tailor-made technological infrastructure, staff training, integration into a European network, and a post-project continuity vehicle: the Territorial Cooperative.



For public authorities. Rigorous scientific evidence on cost-effectiveness applied to their own territory, European recognition, access to the policy-making network, and the opportunity to pilot regulatory reforms in a controlled framework with methodological support.



For the tech SME. Deployment across 4 diverse European territories, co-design with service users and professionals, independent scientific validation, CE certification and positioning in the European ethical-AAL market.

09 Onboarding schedule and contact

PERIOD	MILESTONE
April-May 2026	First contact with European academic partners. Signing of Letters of Intent.
May-June 2026	Incorporation of Social economy operators, tech SME and letters of commitment from administrations.
June 2026	Formal engagement with European advocacy platforms; invitation to the JRC.
June-August 2026	Collaborative drafting of Part B and external review.
22 September 2026	Official submission of the proposal via the Funding & Tenders Portal.

Expressions of interest are welcome until 15 June 2026. We invite any potentially interested entity to contact the coordinating team directly:

CONSORTIUM CONTACT

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