



How to prepare a successful proposal?

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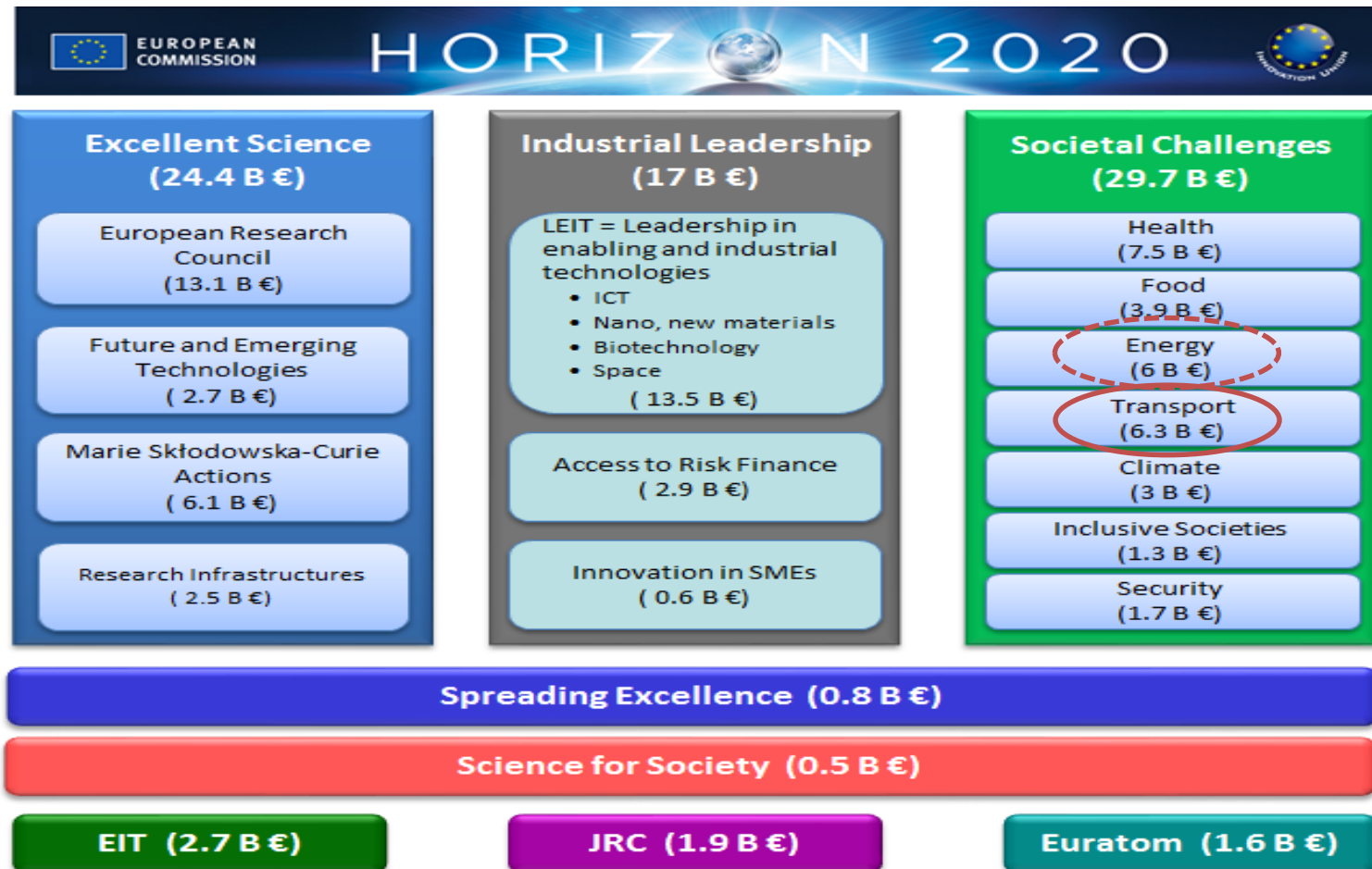
National delegate for H2020 PC on Smart, Green and Integrated Transport

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Outline

- H2020 in brief (what is new in WP2018-2020)
- H2020 proposal in 5 quick steps
- Why the abstract is so important?
- How EC evaluates project proposals?
- Final tips
- Related resources

H2020 pillars



Implementing Focus Areas through 'virtual calls' in WP 2018-20

- There are 4 **Focus Areas** aligned with major political or policy drivers & expected to generate exceptional impact
- **Focus Areas** - 'virtually linked calls' linking calls/topics from respective parts of Horizon 2020.
- The rationale and objectives of the four Focus Areas - described in the **General Introduction**
 - to be taken into account in the project proposal
- Calls and topics are clearly marked (common call identifier)



Common 'virtual' call title and call identifier

- Building a low-carbon, climate resilient future: H2020-**LC**-2018-2020
- Digitising and transforming European industry and services: H2020-**DT**-2018-2020
- Connecting economic and environmental gains – the Circular Economy: H2020-**CE**-2018-2020
- Boosting the effectiveness of the Security Union: H2020-**SU**-2018-2020

Cross-cutting issues

- Cross-cutting issues integrated in the work programme (WP)
 - **Social Sciences and Humanities** (SSH) integrated across all Horizon 2020 activities
 - **Gender dimension** in the content of R&I - question on the relevance of sex/gender analysis is included in proposal templates
 - **International cooperation** consists of a general opening of the WP and targeted activities across all relevant Horizon 2020 parts
 - Information on 'automatic funding' to third country participants is restricted – see list of countries*
 - Other cross-cutting issues may also be included in the WP Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI), ethics...; open access to scientific publications; climate change and sustainable development; standardisation ...

* http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/wp/2016-2017/annexes/h2020-wp1617-annex-a-countries-rules_en.pdf



1. Is H2020 the right fit for you?

- Not about a single player, short-term results, BUT about **internationalisation, collaboration, long-term benefits**, creating networks that can potentially speed up the results and improving the **overall scientific output of Europe**
- Not about single country/region, BUT about **bringing Europe/regions together** both economically and politically and ensuring its various Member States are pulling in the same direction
- Not about incremental change, BUT about something that is **groundbreaking** and something that is **beyond the state-of-the-art**
- **Tips**
 - Read the Rules for participation (eligible vs not eligible)
 - Start on your application as early as possible (in average 3 person months)
 - Go to brokerage events (learn ins and outs of the funding framework, expand your network, look for potential partners)
 - Visit the EC Portal (all the information you need to apply for funding)
<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/home.html>



2. Get closely acquainted with your call

- Don't fail to address the scope of the call, BUT print off the call and **highlight the important keywords**, check if the call has its own **eligibility criteria** and **examine the impact(s)** EC requires to achieve
 - Many proposals fail in impact (they haven't studied the market enough and they don't talk about how they will address things at a European level)
- Don't start with details, BUT write a one-page outline to provide **a high-level overview** of your project proposal
 - Explain here simplistically the issue you want to address and how you plan to do it
 - Keep it on hand as you go through the entire application process
- **Tips**
 - Make your objective extremely strong and clear - you will be referring to it throughout the application process and sharing it with your consortium
 - Remember your customer is EC – understand what motivates the Commission and keep this in mind when creating your one-page outline

3. Create a strong consortium

- Don't create a consortium with partners of the same type and skills, BUT put together a **world-class consortium** composed of **a diverse group of partners**
 - Mix of individual academics and scientists as well as SMEs, universities, research organisations and industry partners
 - Consortium - not only wide ranging, but also strategic
 - Inviting people or organisations to join - know exactly why you want them on board and how their strengths will be used
- Pin down a project coordinator
 - Person who is responsible for the project and oversees its progress
 - Experienced in coordinating large-scale projects (proved in the application)
- **Tip**
 - H2020 is more interested in funding projects that have an eye on commercialisation
 - **Industrial members** play a large part in this process

4. Put together your application from the point of view of the evaluator

- Don't wait till the last moment, BUT read the **Guide for evaluators** at the very beginning
- Evaluators looking at the three criteria
 - **Excellence, Impact and Implementation**
- Don't focus on a project or a product only, demonstrate the ability to go to market and the team's capability to commercialise it
- Think of how an evaluator will read your proposal
 - Make the **abstract** as attractive as possible
 - Put together a **realistic budget** (no negotiation)
 - Explain clearly a **role of each partner** (complementarity)
- **Tips**
 - Evaluators are human - do your best to make your proposal memorable
 - EC selects external evaluators via a database – a great way of learning to write a good proposal is to register as an evaluator



5. Submit your proposal early and often

- Don't wait till the last minute, BUT submit your proposal early
 - It can take a while for the server to submit the proposal, causing you to miss the deadline
 - You can submit **as many times as you would like** up to the actual deadline - take advantage of this feature

Why the abstract is so important?

- From EC perspective

- Select the right experts to evaluate a proposal (from the expert's database)

- From evaluators' perspective

- Get a full picture of your proposal
- Keeping them awake, focused and convinced

- Tips

- Use the actual words and phrases given in the Call
- Make the abstract credible – inform and excite the evaluators in a very short period of time
- Explain convincingly - while the idea of your project goes beyond the state-of-the-art, it is achievable with concrete milestones

Five key questions to be addressed by the abstract

WHY YOU?

WHY NOW?

EXISTING?

PRIORITY?

WHAT?



Source: GET READY FOR HORIZON 2020, <http://www.horizon2020.lu/Downloads/Get-ready-for-H2020>



How EC evaluates project proposals?

■ Single-stage proposals

- Three individuals evaluate your proposal remotely (Individual Evaluation Report – IER) and mark on
 - Excellence, Impact and Implementation
 - Each criterion scored out of 5.0
 - Individual thresholds for each criterion - 3 out of 5
 - For Innovation Actions (IA), criterion “Impact” multiplied with the factor 1.5
- Proposal goes to a Consensus group – Consensus Report
 - CR created online (physical meeting in BXL) or offline (remotely)
- Proposal sent to a Panel review
 - Receives a ranking, those proposal above a certain threshold are chosen (depending on the available budget)
 - Resolve proposals with tight scores (based on the criteria that vary for different Actions)

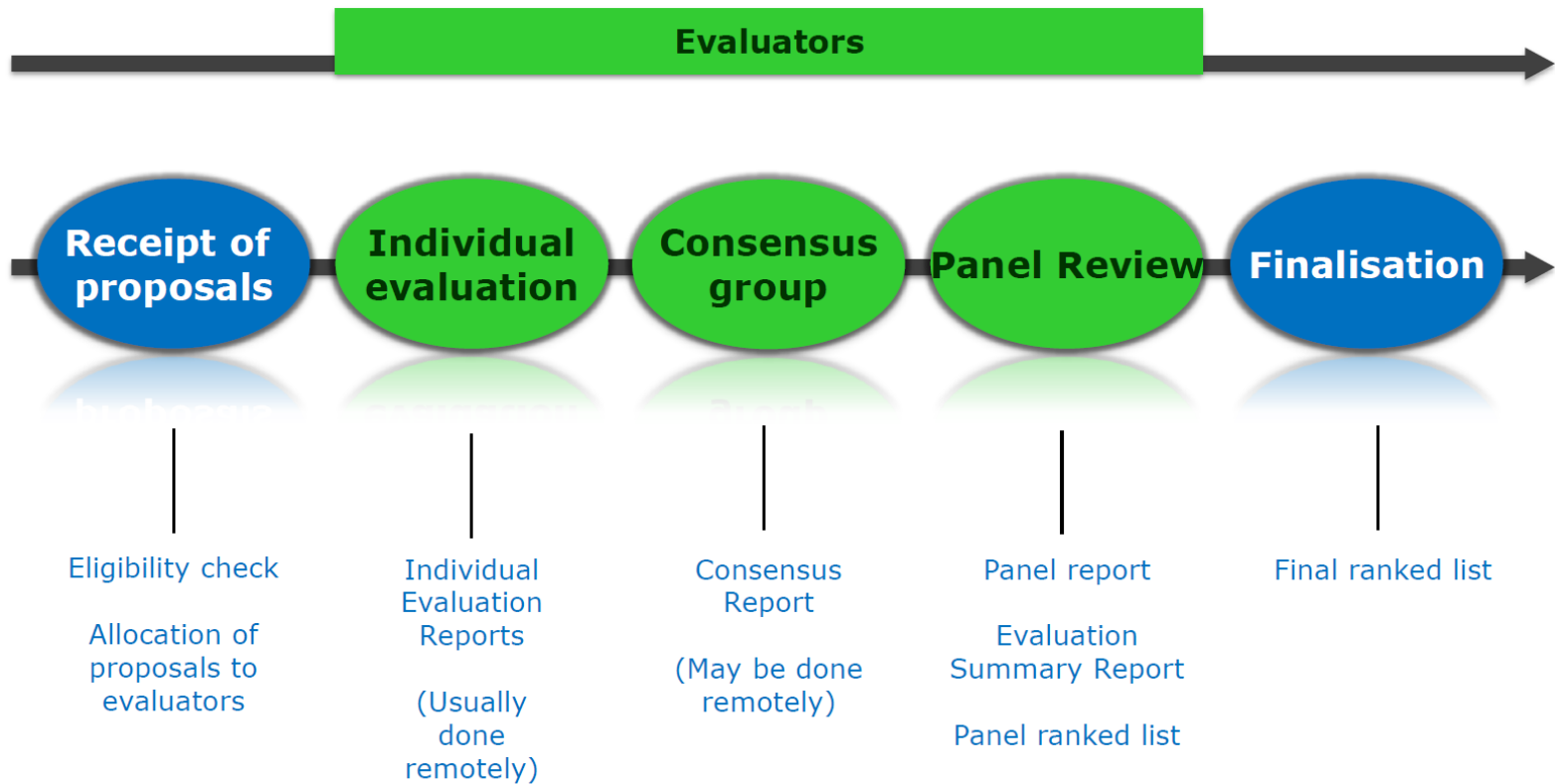


How EC evaluates project proposals?

- Two-stage proposals

- Similar to one-stage proposals, except
- You must submit a short proposal, which evaluators solely mark on Excellence and Impact
- Threshold for both individual criteria is
- If you are above a certain threshold (usually 8/10), you are invited to stage 2
- You submit a full proposal
- At this point, you have a clean slate from stage 1, but the process that is followed is the same

Overview of the Evaluation Process



Evaluation criteria and scores

Excellence	Impact	Quality and efficiency of implementation
Clarity and pertinence of the objectives	Expected impacts as described in the topic	Coherence and effectiveness of the work plan
Credibility of the approach	Enhancing innovation capacity	Appropriate allocation of tasks and resources
Soundness of the concept	Strengthen the competitiveness and growth of companies	Complementarity of participants
Ambition, innovation potential (beyond state of the art)	Dissemination of project results	Appropriate management structures and procedures
Min 3 out of 5	Min 3 out of 5	Min 3 out of 5
Min 10 out of 15		

- Evaluation scores - awarded for **the criteria**, not for the different aspects
- **Importance (weighting) of criteria** may vary from one programme to another
- **Impact criterion** refers to the specific impact statement under every topic in the WP



Source: GET READY FOR HORIZON 2020, <http://www.horizon2020.lu/Downloads/Get-ready-for-H2020>

If a proposal

- Is only marginally relevant in terms of its scientific, technological or innovation content relating to the call or topic addressed – **a score is lowered for the Excellence criterion**
 - No matter how excellent the science!
- Does not significantly contribute to the expected impacts as specified in the WP for that call or topic - **a score is lowered for the Impact criterion**
- Would require substantial modifications in terms of implementation (i.e. change of partners, additional work packages, significant budget or resources cut...) - **a score is lowered for the “Quality and efficiency of the implementation” criterion**
- If cross-cutting issues are explicitly mentioned in the scope of the call or topic, and not properly addressed - a lower score for the relevant criterion
 - A successful proposal is expected to address them, or convincingly explain why not relevant in a particular case
 - Proposals addressing cross-cutting issues which are not explicitly mentioned in the scope of the call or topic can also be evaluated positively

Operational capacity

- Evaluated by the Individual Evaluators
 - Assessing whether **each applicant has the necessary basic operational capacity** to carry out their proposed activity(ies) based on
 - Curriculum Vitae or description of the profile of the applicant
 - Relevant publications or achievements
 - Relevant previous projects or activities
 - Description of any significant infrastructure or any major items of technical equipment
 - Description of third parties contributing to the work but not represented as project partners
- At the Consensus Group – to be stated whether an applicant lacks basic operational capacity
 - If yes, the proposal is scored without taking into account this applicant and its associated activity(ies)
- Not for stage one of two-stage procedures

What the evaluators expect?

What the evaluator expects

Creditability

The idea is convincing and achievable
“It has to make sense”

Communication

Clear description of what will be done

Concrete

Very specific (not general concepts)
“Who will do what, when and how?”

Consistency


High quality documentation (proof read)

Final tips

- Plan ahead – don't wait for the call to open
- Write for an informed, non-native English speaker
- Make it interesting for the reviewers
- Concise, attractive and clear
- Narrative, diagrams, images
- Shorter is better
- Don't expect reviewers to assume
- Use the H2020 on-line resources

Online resources – EC portal

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RESEARCH & INNOVATION

Participant Portal

European Commission > Research & Innovation > Participant Portal > Home

HOME FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES HOW TO PARTICIPATE PROJECTS & RESULTS EXPERTS SUPPORT


LOGIN REGISTER

Horizon 2020 Funding

Starting from 1/1/2014

On this site you can find and secure **funding** for projects under the following EU programmes:

- **2014-2020** Horizon 2020 - research and innovation framework programme
- **2007-2013** 7th research framework programme (FP7) and Competitiveness & Innovation Programme (CIP)
- 3rd Health Programme, Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, Consumer Programme, COSME, European Statistics Programme, Hercule III Programme, Internal Security Fund Borders, Internal Security Fund Police, Justice Programme, Pilot Projects and Preparatory Actions, Promotion of Agricultural Products Programme, Research Fund for Coal & Steel, Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme and Union Civil Protection Mechanism




H2020 DASHBOARD:
Statistics on H2020 proposals, success rates, funded projects and participants.

Non-registered users


- search for funding
- read the H2020 Online Manual & download the legal documents
- check if an organisation is already registered
- contact our support services or check our FAQs

Registered users


- submit your proposal
- sign the grant
- manage your project throughout its lifecycle
- register as expert advising the Commission




WHAT'S NEW?




FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES




HOW TO PARTICIPATE



WORK AS AN EXPERT



MY PERSONAL AREA



INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

HORIZON 2020 RESEARCH ON EUROPA HORIZON 2020 & FP7 PROJECTS & RESULTS OLAF

Official (EC) online resources

- H2020 on-line manual:
<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/funding/guide.html>
- H2020 reference documents:
http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/funding/reference_docs.html
- Partner search:
http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/organisations/partner_search.html

Some more resources

- Dr. Seán McCarthy How to Write a Competitive Proposal for Horizon 2020 (A Handbook for Research Managers): <http://www.hyperion.ie/h2020-proposalhandbook.htm>
- How to write effective EU proposals for Horizon 2020: <https://horizonbook.eu/>
- Horizon 2020: All you need to know and understand to participate in H2020: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/product/1494992396>
- ...
- **ERAdiate Guide for preparation and implementation of R&I projects:** http://www.erachair.uniza.sk/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Guide-for-preparation-and-implementation-of-RI-projects_PUBLIC.pdf





Thank You for Your Attention!
Questions?

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