



#HorizonEU

THE EU RESEARCH & INNOVATION PROGRAMME

2021 – 2027

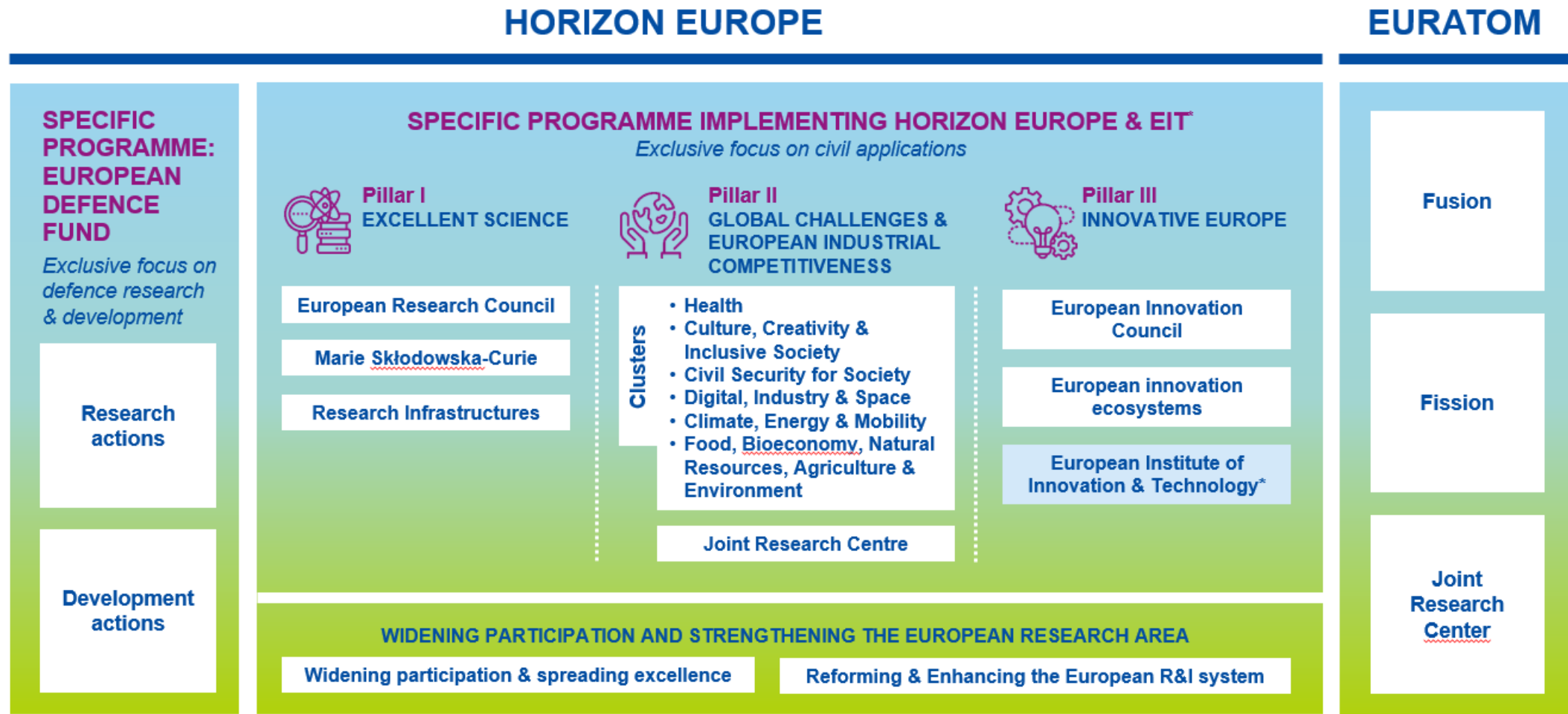
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How to prepare a successful proposal in
Horizon Europe

24 March 2021

About Horizon Europe

Horizon Europe supports research and innovation through Work Programmes, which set out funding opportunities for research and innovation activities.



* The European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT) is not part of the Specific Programme

HORIZON EUROPE

What is new in the submission process?





Admissibility

Same general admissibility conditions

- Applications must be submitted before the call deadline, **electronically** via the Funding & Tenders Portal
- Applications must be **complete, readable, accessible and printable**, and include a **plan for the exploitation and dissemination of results**, unless provided otherwise in the specific call conditions.

Proposal page limit

Substantial reduction in maximum length:

- RIAs and IAs type of actions: limit for a full application is **45 pages**
- CSAs: limit is **30 pages**
- First stage proposals: limit is **10 pages**
- EIC Pathfinder: limit is **17 pages**
- Exceptions, if any, would be specified in the call text.



Eligibility

Consortium composition (collaborative projects)

- at least one independent legal entity established in a Member State, and
- at least two other independent legal entities each established either in a different Member State or an Associated Country.

Gender Equality Plan (applicable only from 2022 on)

Participants that are public bodies, research organisations or higher education establishments from Members States and Associated countries **must have a gender equality plan**, covering minimum process-related requirements.

- A self-declaration will be requested at proposal stage (for all types of participants).
- Included in the entity validation process (based on self-declaration)

Who is eligible for funding?



EU COUNTRIES

- Member States (MS) including their outermost regions
- The Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) linked to the MS.



NON-EU COUNTRIES

- Countries associated to Horizon Europe (AC)
- Low and middle income countries: See [HE Programme Guide](#).
- Other countries when announced in the call or exceptionally if their participation is essential



SPECIFIC CASES

- Affiliated entities established in countries eligible for funding.
- EU bodies
- International organisations (IO):
 - International European research organisations are eligible for funding.
 - Other IO are not eligible (only exceptionally if participation is essential)
 - IO in a MS or AC are eligible for funding for Training and mobility actions and when announced in the call conditions

Associated Countries



For the purposes of the eligibility conditions, applicants established in Horizon 2020 Associated Countries or in other third countries negotiating association to Horizon Europe will be treated as entities established in an Associated Country, if the Horizon Europe association agreement with the third country concerned applies at the time of signature of the grant agreement.

Specific situation of UK

- The UK is expected to soon become an associated country to Horizon Europe. UK entities can take part in the first calls for proposals of Horizon Europe
- The UK is associating to the full Horizon Europe programme with the only exception of the EIC Fund (which is the loan/equity instrument of the EIC).



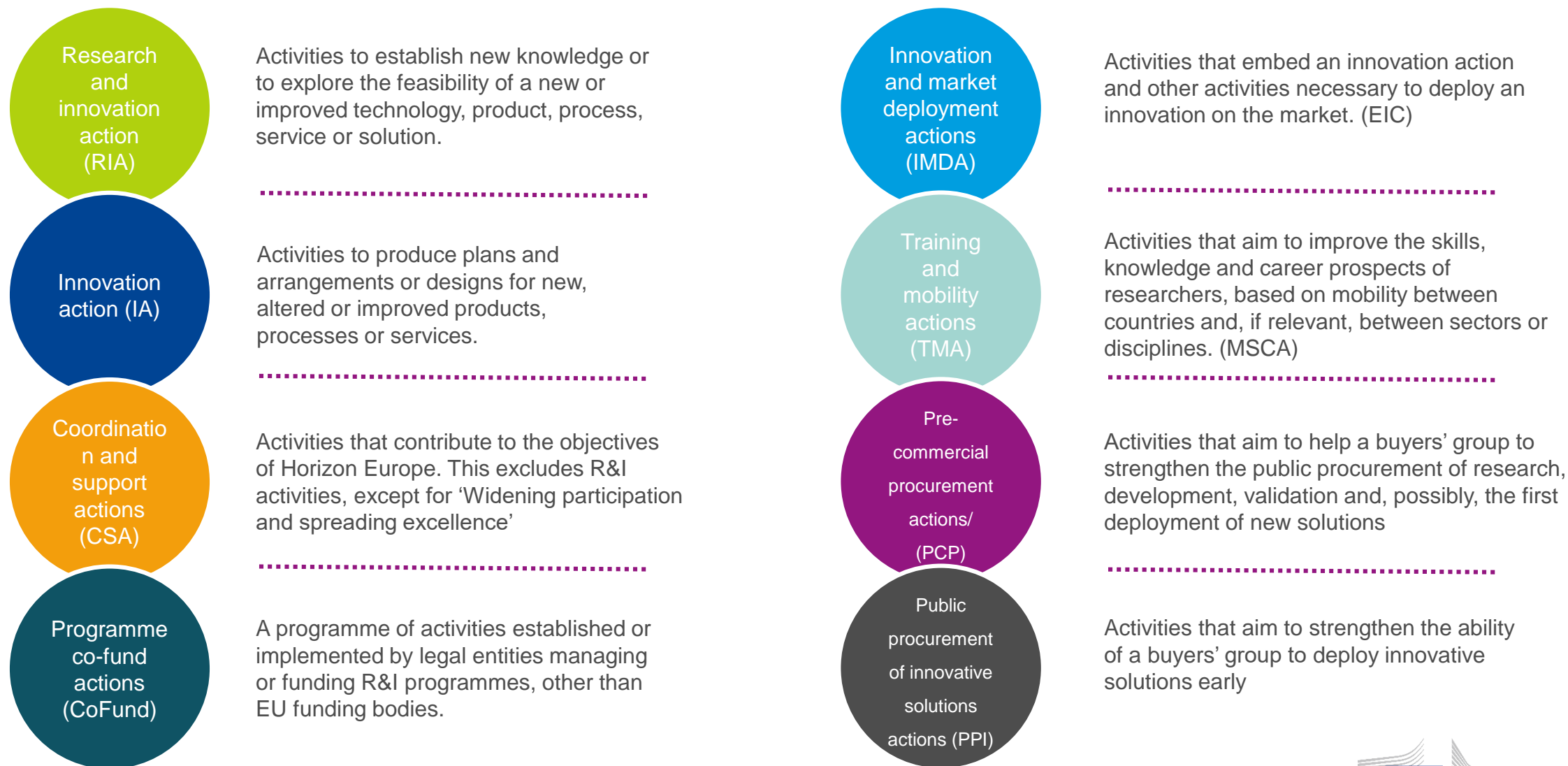
Activities eligible for funding

Eligible activities are the ones described in the call conditions

Activities must **focus exclusively on civil applications** and **must not**:

- aim at human cloning for reproductive purposes;
- intend to modify the genetic heritage of human beings which could make such changes heritable (except for research relating to cancer treatment of the gonads, which may be financed);
- intend to create human embryos solely for the purpose of research, or for the purpose of stem cell procurement, including by means of somatic cell nuclear transfer;
- lead to the destruction of human embryos.

Activities eligible for funding – Type of actions





Maximum funding rates

Type of Action	Funding rate
Research and innovation action	100%
Innovation action	70% (except for non-profit legal entities, where a rate of up to 100% applies)
Coordination and support action	100%
Programme co-fund action	Between 30% and 70%
Innovation and market deployment	70% (except for non-profit legal entities, where a rate of up to 100% applies)
Training and mobility action	100%
Pre-commercial procurement action	100%
Public procurement of innovative solutions action	50%

Other funding rates may be set out in the specific call conditions



Application form (proposal template)



Same structure

The proposal contains two parts:

- **Part A** (web-based forms) is generated by the IT system. It is based on the information entered by the participants through the submission system in the Funding & Tenders Portal.
- **Part B** is the narrative part that includes three sections that each correspond to an evaluation criterion. Part B needs to be uploaded as a PDF document following the templates downloaded by the applicants in the submission system for the specific call or topic.

New features in the Horizon Europe proposal



NEW FIELDS IN PART A

- Researchers table – needed to follow up researchers careers (HE indicator)
- Role of participating organisation
- Self-declaration on gender equality plan



FIELDS MOVED FROM PART B TO PART A

- Ethics self-assessment
- Security questionnaire (**NEW!** in all HE proposals)
- Information on participants' previous activities related to the call



NEW IN PART B

- Glossary of terms.
- Consistency on the use of terminology is ensured in all project phases (from WP to proposal and reporting)
- Extensive explanations on what exactly should be included in each section.

HORIZON EUROPE

What is new in the evaluation process?





Evaluation (award) criteria

Same criteria as in H2020

Same three award criteria: '**Excellence**', '**Impact**' and '**Quality and efficiency of the implementation**'. Excellence only for ERC.

Adapted following lessons learnt

- The number of '**aspects to be taken into account**' have been **reduced**, ensuring that the same aspect is not assessed twice
- **Open Science** practices assessed as part of the scientific methodology in the excellence criterion
- **New approach to impact**: Key Impacts Pathways (KIPs)
- The assessment of the **quality of applicants** is assessed under 'implementation', rather than as a separate binary assessment of operational capacity
- Assessment of **management structures** has been removed.



Evaluation criteria (RIAs and IAs)

EXCELLENCE

- ✓ Clarity and pertinence of the **project's objectives**, and the extent to which the proposed work is ambitious, and goes beyond the state-of-the-art.
- ✓ Soundness of the proposed **methodology**, including the underlying concepts, models, assumptions, interdisciplinary approaches, appropriate consideration of the **gender dimension** in research and innovation content, and the quality of **open science practices** including sharing and management of research outputs and engagement of citizens, civil society and end users where appropriate.

IMPACT

- ✓ Credibility of the **pathways** to achieve the expected **outcomes and impacts** specified in the work programme, and the likely scale and significance of the contributions due to the project.
- ✓ Suitability and quality of the **measures to maximize expected outcomes and impacts**, as set out in the dissemination and exploitation plan, including communication activities.

QUALITY AND EFFICIENCY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION

- ✓ Quality and effectiveness of the **work plan**, assessment of risks, and appropriateness of the effort assigned to work packages, and the resources overall.
- ✓ Capacity and role of each **participant**, and extent to which the **consortium** as a whole brings together the necessary expertise.

Proposals aspects are assessed to the extent that the proposed work is within the scope of the work programme topic



Standard evaluation process

Individual evaluation

Experts assess proposals **individually**. Minimum of three experts per proposal (but often more than three).

Consensus group

All individual experts discuss together to agree on a **common position**, including comments and scores for each proposal.

Panel review

The panel of experts reach an **agreement** on the scores and comments for all proposals within a call, checking **consistency across the evaluations**.

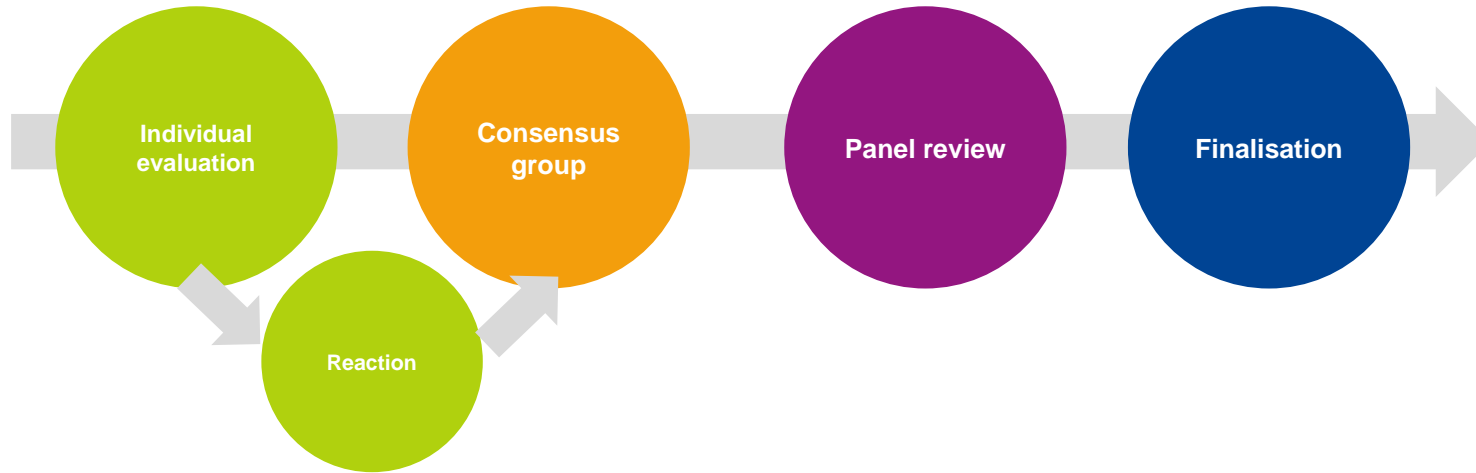
if necessary, resolve cases where evaluators were unable to agree.

Rank the proposals with the same score

Finalisation

The Commission/Agency reviews the results of the experts' evaluation and puts together the **final ranking list**.

Piloting new processes based on lessons learnt



Right-to-react (Rebuttal)

- Objective is to increase transparency, to correct any factual or major misunderstandings by experts at an early stage, and provide more detailed feedback to applicants.
- Applicants will send their reactions to draft experts comments
- Experts will take applicants' reaction into account before finalising their final assessment.

Piloting new processes based on lessons learnt



Blind evaluation (in 1st stage)

- There is no evidence that the current proposal evaluation system is systematically biased.
- There are understandable concerns that evaluation experts may be swayed – perhaps unconsciously – in favour of proposals from well-known organisations in countries with better performing R&I systems.
- ‘Blind’ evaluation is a way to remove any real or perceived effect of such reputational bias.
- Experts evaluate without knowing the identity of participants.
- The work programme will include an additional admissibility criterion: applicants can not be disclosed in the narrative part of the proposal.



Ethics review

Same criteria as in H2020

For all activities funded, ethics is an **integral part** of research from beginning to end, and **ethical compliance** is essential to achieve real research excellence. An ethics review process is carried out systematically in all Horizon Europe proposals, based on a **self-assessment** included in the proposal.

Ethical research conduct implies the application of fundamental ethical principles and legislation in all possible domains of research. This includes the adherence to the highest standards of **research integrity** as described in the **European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity**.

Adapted following lessons learnt

- Focus mainly on complex/serious cases
- Reduce number of ethics requirements in funded projects.



Security scrutiny

New in Horizon Europe

Security issues will be checked **systematically** in all Horizon Europe proposals (in H2020 only proposals submitted to topics flagged as 'security-sensitive' were checked). The checks are based on a **self-assessment** included in the proposal. The focus is on:

- Whether the proposal uses or generates **EU classified information**
- Potential of **misuse** of results (that could be channeled into crime or terrorism)
- Whether activities involve information or materials subject to **national security restrictions**

The checks based on the self-assessment may trigger an in-depth security scrutiny.

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Points to consider when writing a proposal in HE



Key principles

Updated slide
(June 2021)



Your proposed work must be within the scope of a work programme topic



You need to demonstrate that your idea is ambitious and goes beyond the state of the art



Your scientific methodology must take into account interdisciplinary, gender dimension and open science practices.



You should show how your project could contribute to the outcomes and impacts described in the work programme (the pathway to impact)



You should describe the planned measures to maximise the impact of your project ('plan for the dissemination and exploitation including communication activities')



You should demonstrate the quality of your work plan, resources and participants

Policy and horizontal considerations

Updated slide
(June 2021)



Open Science across the programme



Gender dimension in R&I content



Pathway to impact



Measures to maximise impact



Artificial intelligence

These aspects must normally be considered in all Horizon Europe calls (unless explicitly mentioned in the topic description).

Specific calls may include other aspects to take into account.

Future webinars focused on these specific aspects will come soon.



Open Science across the programme

Open Science

Open science is an approach based on open cooperative work and systematic sharing of knowledge and tools as early and widely as possible in the process. Including active engagement of society

Mandatory immediate Open Access to publications: beneficiaries must retain sufficient IPRs to comply with open access requirements;

Data sharing as ‘open as possible, as closed as necessary’: mandatory Data Management Plan for FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) research data

- Work Programmes may incentivize or oblige to adhere to **open science practices** such as involvement of citizens, or to use the **European Open Science Cloud**
- Assessment of open science practices through the **excellence award criteria** for proposal evaluation. Under **quality of participants** previous experience on open sciences practices will be evaluated positively.
- Dedicated support to **open science policy actions**
- **Open Research Europe** publishing platform



Gender dimension in R&I content

Gender Dimension

Addressing the gender dimension in research and innovation entails taking into account sex and gender in the whole research & innovation process.

The **integration of the gender dimension** into R&I content is **mandatory**, unless it is explicitly mentioned in the topic description

Why is gender dimension important?

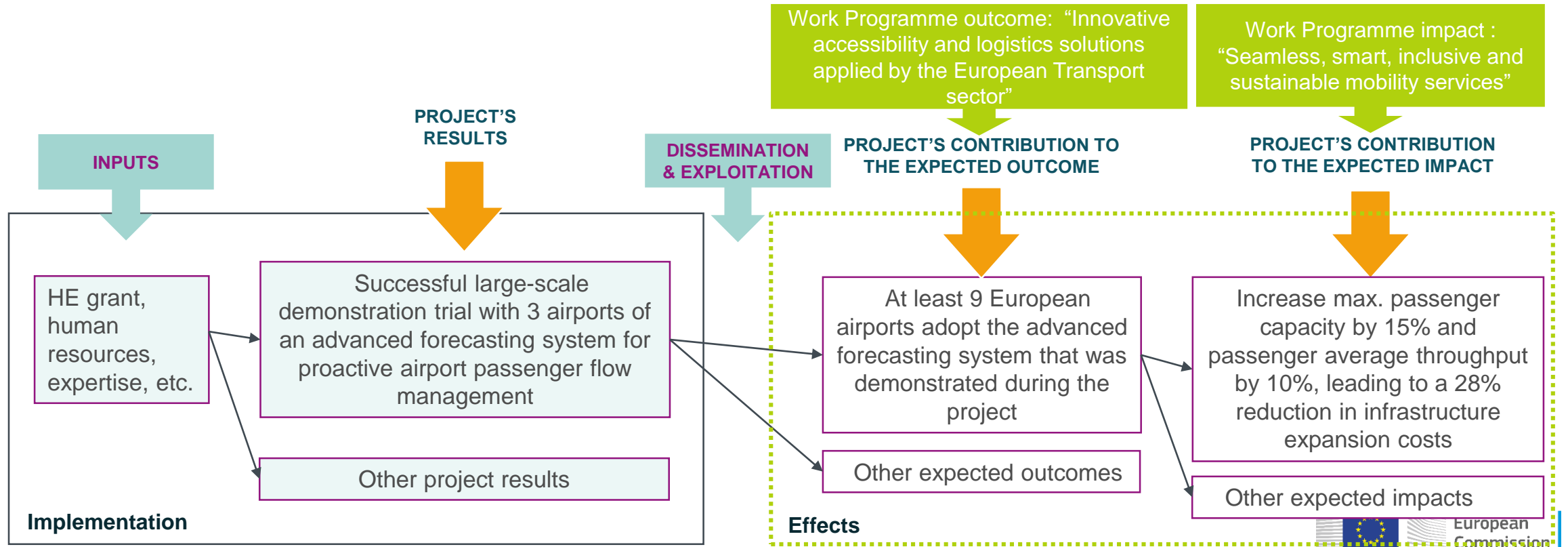
- Why do we observe differences between women and men in infection levels and mortality rates in the COVID-19 pandemic?
- Does it make sense to study cardiovascular diseases only on male animals and on men, or osteoporosis only on women?
- Does it make sense to design car safety equipment only on the basis of male body standards?
- Is it responsible to develop AI products that spread gender and racial biases due to a lack of diversity in the data used in training AI applications?
- Is it normal that household travel surveys, and thus mobility analysis and transport planning, underrate trips performed as part of caring work?
- Did you know that pheromones given off by men experimenters, but not women, induce a stress response in laboratory mice sufficient to trigger pain relief?
- And did you know that climate change is affecting sex determination in a number of marine species and that certain populations are now at risk of extinction?



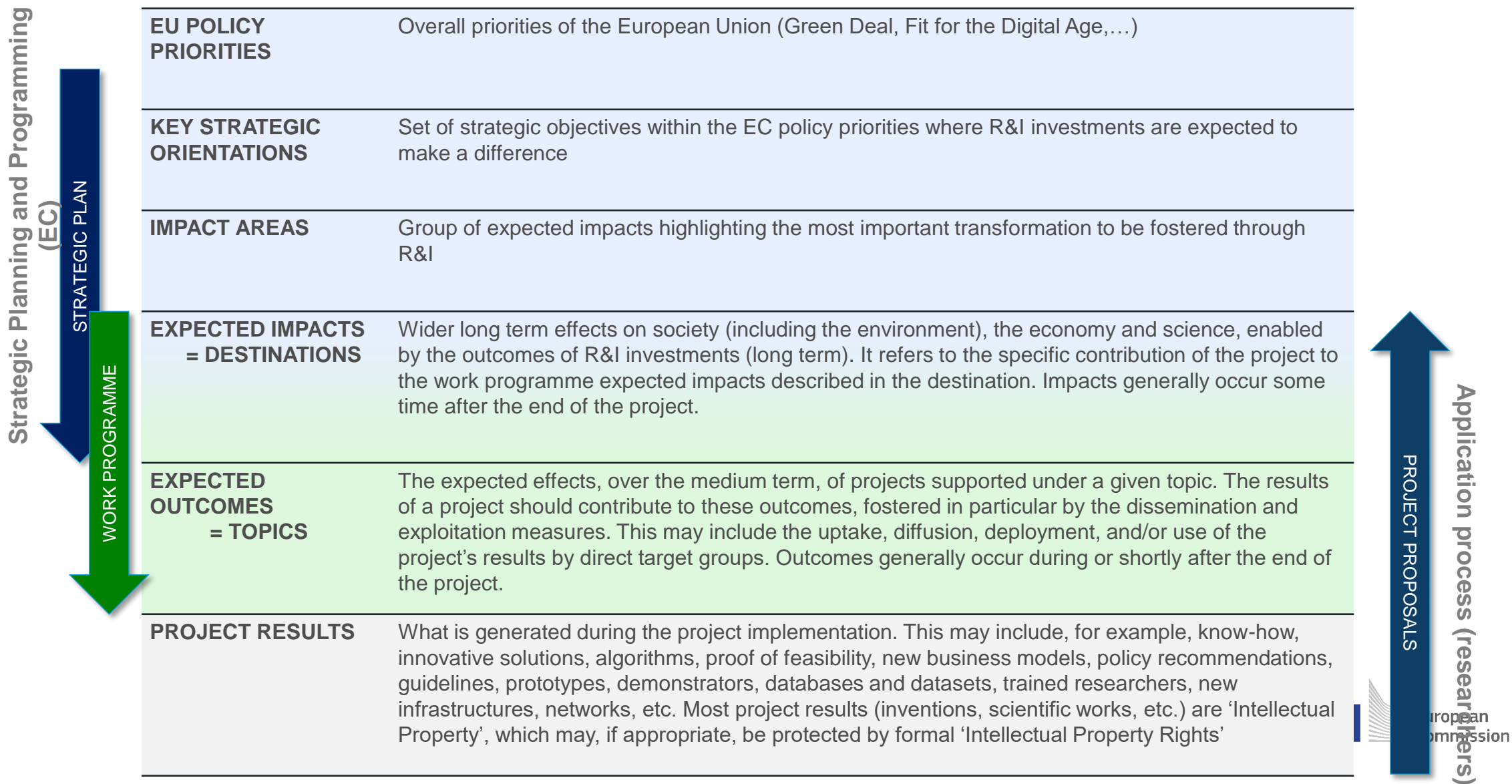
Describing the impact of your proposal

**Project's
pathway towards
impact**

...by thinking about the specific contribution the project can make to the expected outcomes and impacts set out in the Work Programme.



Link between policy priorities and project results





Measures to maximise impact

Dissemination, exploitation and communication

To include a draft plan in proposal is an admissibility condition, unless the work programme topic explicitly states otherwise.

All measures should be **proportionate** to the scale of the project, and should contain **concrete actions** to be implemented both **during and after** the end of the project

Elements of the D&E&C plan

- **Planned measures** to maximise the impact of projects
- **Target groups** (e.g. scientific community, end users, financial actors, public at large) and **proposed channels** to interact
- **Communication measures** for promoting the project and its findings throughout the full lifespan of the project
- **Policy feedback** measures to contribute to policy shaping and supporting the implementation of new policy initiatives and decisions
- Follow-up plan to foster **exploitation/uptake** of the results
 - Comprehensive and feasible strategy for the **management of the intellectual property** (the provision of a results ownership list is mandatory at the end of the project)
 - If exploitation is expected primarily in non-associated third countries, give a convincing justification that this is still in the Union's interest.



Do no significant harm principle (DNSH)

Updated slide
(June 2021)

European Green Deal

In line with the European Green Deal objectives, economic activities should not make a significant harm to any of the six environmental objectives (EU Taxonomy Regulation)

- Applicants **can refer to the DNSH principle** when presenting their research methodology and the expected impacts of the project, to show that their project will not carry out activities that make a significant harm to any of the six environmental objectives of the EU Taxonomy Regulation.
- However, evaluators **will not score applications in relation to their compliance with the DNSH principle** unless explicitly stated in the work programme (currently, this is the case only for actions in the European Innovation Council Work Programme 2021).

The six environmental objectives :



Climate change mitigation



Sustainable use & protection of water & marine resources



Pollution prevention & control



Climate change adaptation



Transition to a circular economy



Protection and restoration of biodiversity & ecosystems



Artificial intelligence

Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence

Due diligence is required regarding the trustworthiness of all AI-based systems/ techniques used or developed in projects funded under Horizon Europe.

Under Horizon Europe, the **technical robustness*** of the proposed AI based systems must be evaluated under the **excellence** criterion.

(*) Technical robustness refers to technical aspects of AI systems and development, including resilience to attack and security, fallback plan and general safety, accuracy, reliability and reproducibility.

AI-based systems or techniques should be, or be developed to become:

- **Technically robust, accurate and reproducible**, and able to deal with and inform about possible failures, inaccuracies and errors, proportionate to the assessed risk posed by the AI-based system or technique.
- **Socially robust**, in that they duly consider the context and environment in which they operate.
- **Reliable and function as intended**, minimizing unintentional and unexpected harm, preventing unacceptable harm and safeguarding the physical and mental integrity of humans.
- Able to provide a suitable explanation of its **decision-making process**, whenever an AI-based system can have a significant impact on people's lives.



... one final point

The best way to learn is by doing

You can register in the EU experts database at any time.

Click [here](#) to register!

The screenshot shows the European Commission's 'Funding & tender opportunities' portal (SEDIA). The main navigation bar includes links for 'SEARCH FUNDING & TENDERS', 'HOW TO PARTICIPATE', 'PROJECTS & RESULTS', 'WORK AS AN EXPERT' (highlighted in yellow), and 'SUPPORT'. Below this, a blue banner for the 'Horizon 2020 Framework Programme (H2020)' is visible. Two orange warning boxes are present: one about a contact form issue and another about legal entity and bank account validation tasks on Wednesday, 02.12.2020. The 'Work as an expert' section is titled 'The European Union Institutions appoint external experts to assist in the evaluation of grant applications, projects and tenders, and to provide opinions and advice in specific cases.' It includes a video thumbnail titled 'Being an expert for the European Commission...' and a list of tasks: 'Evaluation of proposals, prize applications and tenders', 'Monitoring of actions, grant agreements, public procurement contracts', and 'Preparation, implementation and evaluation of EU programmes and design of policies.' A 'News' section on the right mentions a call for experts to assist the European Commission and other EU bodies with tasks in connection with pilot projects and preparatory actions. At the bottom, a blue button labeled 'Register as expert' is circled in red.

Any questions?

Please enter your
questions in slido

<https://app.sli.do/event/h8eseiw4>





Thank you!

HorizonEU

<http://ec.europa.eu/horizon-europe>



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