Tips for writing a successful proposal in H2020

Athens

1 December 2014

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ICT Programme coordination Unit
Outline

- Guidance and information
- Submit your proposal
- Evaluation process
- Cross-cutting features
- Innovation tips
Guidance and information
H2020 Calls

Call and all necessary documentation are published on the Research Participant Portal

http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal

- User friendly Participant Portal
- Easy to find funding opportunities
- Interaction with EC services through ECAS login
On this site you can find and secure funding for research & innovation 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)

**Non-registered users**
- search for funding
- read the funding guide & 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
Horizon 2020 Calls for Proposals

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**Excellent Science**
- European Research Council
- Future and Emerging Technologies
- Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions
- Research infrastructures

**Industrial Leadership**
- Leadership in enabling and industrial technologies (LEIT)
- Access to risk finance

Filters only programme and call titles and IDs, for extended search go to the [Search Topics page](#).

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**Sort by**
- Title
- Call Id
- Planned Opening Date
- Deadline Date

**Industrial Leadership**
- ICT 2015 - Information and Communications Technologies
  - H2020-ICT-2015

**Deadlines:**
- 14/04/2015
- Planned Opening Date: 15/10/2014

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In addition to the search facilities, the full list of Horizon 2020 Calls can be found here.
ICT 2015 - Information and Communications Technologies

H2020-ICT-2015

**Planned Opening Date**: 15-10-2014  
**Publication Date**: 23-07-2014  
**Deadline Date**: 14-04-2015 17:00:00 (Brussels local time)

**Total Call Budget**: €561,000,000

**Main Pillar**: Industrial Leadership

**Status**: Forthcoming

**Topic**: Technologies for creative industries, social media and convergence

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The submission system will be available on the planned opening date. As soon as the submission is open, the topic will be moved to the category of OPEN calls. If the submission system is not yet open on the planned opening date, the topic will remain under the category FORTHCOMING calls.
When opened, to start submission you first need to select the Type of Action you would like to apply:
- Research and Innovation Action
- Innovation Action
- Coordination and Support Action
Submit your proposal
Admissibility conditions for participation

- Submitted in the electronic submission service
- Readable, accessible and printable
- Complete
- Includes a draft plan for the exploitation and dissemination of the results
- Page limits will apply
Electronic Submission

**Electronic Submission System** accessed from the call page

1. ECAS password
2. Participant Identification Code (PIC) compulsory for all partners
3. Prepare proposal
   - On-line for structured part – Administrative forms
   - Upload non-structured part – Technical annex - pdf files
4. Validation checks
5. Submit the proposal before the 17h00 deadline

Submission failure rate = ± 1%

Only reason for failure: waiting till the last minute
- Technical problems
- Panic-induced errors (uploading the wrong proposal)
- Starting the uploading too late → running out of time
Administrative forms

Section 1: General information
- Title, acronym, topic, etc.
- Fixed and free keywords
- 2000 character proposal abstract
- Previous/current submission
- Declarations

Section 2: Participants & contacts (one form per partner)
- PIC to identify the partner
- Department
- Dependencies
- Contact information
Administrative forms 2/2

Section 3: Budget and requested grant

3 - Budget for the proposal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>(A) Direct personnel costs/E</th>
<th>(B) Other direct costs/E</th>
<th>(C) Direct costs of sub-contracting /E</th>
<th>(D) Direct costs of providing financial support to third parties/E</th>
<th>(E) Costs of inkind contributions not used on the beneficiary’s premises/E</th>
<th>(F) Indirect Costs/E (0.25(A+B-E))</th>
<th>(G) Special unit costs covering direct &amp; indirect costs</th>
<th>(H) Total estimated eligible costs/E (=A+B+C+D+F+G)</th>
<th>(I) Reimbursement rate</th>
<th>(J) Max. grant / € (=H*I)</th>
<th>(K) Requested grant / €</th>
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<tr>
<td>BEir Consulting SCS</td>
<td>BE</td>
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<td>4 453 855</td>
<td>4453 855</td>
<td>4 400 000</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section 4: Ethics' questionnaire

Section 5: Call specific questions
  - Clinical trial, Stage 2, SME instrument, Open Data Pilot, ERANET, PCP, PPI
Based around evaluation criteria:

**Section 1: Excellence**
- E.g. Objectives, concept, progress beyond state-of-art,…

**Section 2: Impact**
- E.g. Potential impact (incl. with reference to WP); measures to maximise impact (**dissemination, communication, exploitation**)

**Section 3: Implementation**
- Including **work packages descriptions**
- Information on third parties and subcontractors
Technical annex – 2 pdf files

2nd PDF: Sections 4 - 5

Section 4: Members of the consortium

Section 5: Ethics and Security

Templates supplied by the submission system and available on Participant Portal (under topic conditions)
Submission in H2020

- Simpler but tougher page limits:
  - 70 pages for RIA and IA full proposals
  - 50 pages for CSA
  - also for SME Instrument, PCP, PPI, ERANET co-fund,…
  - apply only to sections 1-3 of the Technical Annex (1st PDF)

- check page limit in topic conditions or proposal template
- “warn and watermark” in first round of calls

- Self-check for SME status, financial viability
Successful electronic submission

- Each submission overwrites the previous one
- Make an early submission to check out the procedure and your proposal
- Make your final submission in good time ...
- ... then look at what you submitted while there is still time to resubmit a correct version

Never (ever!) plan to submit in the last 30 minutes of the call!

If in trouble, immediately call the submission service helpdesk
Evaluation process
**Evaluation process**

**Process monitored by independent experts**

1. **Receipt of proposals**
   - Eligibility check
   - Allocation of proposals to evaluators

2. **Individual evaluation**
   - Individual Evaluation Reports
     - (Usually done remotely)

3. **Consensus group**
   - Consensus Report
     - (May be done remotely)

4. **Panel Review**
   - Panel report
     - Evaluation Summary Report
     - Panel ranked list

5. **Finalisation**
   - Final ranked list
Same process than FP7... but adapting to Horizon 2020

Coherence across the programme

New types of calls; new types of proposals
  • multi-disciplinary and multi-sectorial; more emphasis on innovation and close-to-market

Simplification, for applicants, experts, and for streamlined operations;
  • 8 months time to grant:
    • 5 months to evaluate and inform applicants on evaluation outcome
    • 3 months for grant preparation and signing
No grant negotiation phase!

- A proposal is evaluated as submitted not on its potential if certain changes were to be made
- Shortcomings are reflected in a lower score for the corresponding criterion.
- Shortcomings are mentioned, but no recommendations made
- Proposals with significant weaknesses that prevent the project from achieving its objectives or with resources being seriously over-estimated must not receive above-threshold scores; any proposal with scores above thresholds can be selected as submitted
Evaluation of proposals

• Evaluation carried out by independent experts

• **Award criteria**
  • Excellence
  • Impact
  • Quality and efficiency in the implementation

Details, e.g. the sub-criteria, weightings and thresholds are described in the Workprogramme
Selection criteria

Operational capacity (no specific provisions)

- Operational capacity means that the applicants must have the professional competencies and qualifications required to complete the proposed action or work programme: it may be assessed on the basis of specific qualifications, professional experience and references in the field concerned.

- checked against the information provided in
  - 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

- Financial capacity
  - Only coordinator of actions asking for 500 kEUR or more, except specific cases
  - No verification of public bodies, entities guaranteed by a MS or AC and higher and secondary education establishments
Selection of proposals

In each topic, all above threshold proposals are listed in descending order of overall scores.

We select proposals starting from the top of the list until the available budget is consumed.

Hence, the ranking of proposal is very important.
Cross-cutting features

- Standardisation
- RRI and SSH
- Dissemination
- Communication
Communication: Why should you communicate?

Because you have a good story and a clear message for a target audience.

**Examples:**

Your project is successful and you want to:

- show that investment in innovation is worth it and you wish to ask a specific audience (e.g. policy makers) for more investment

- highlight a successful partnership and influence a choice for replicating and scaling up (MS participation, co-funding, collaboration instruments, etc.)

- build a community for discussion, project development, scaling up, best-practice exchange, experience sharing, piloting before market, etc.

- show the impact of the project to your region ('localise' the content via your local media)
Communication action in practice

- Plan your communication actions: get started soon and identify the right timing
- Map your audience and stakeholders
- Build a narrative which includes the EU policy your project contributes to implement
- Find good stories: examples, facts and figures and use visualisation if appropriate (infographics, figures, videos)
- Choose the most appropriate style and language (it depends on your audience) to express the concepts and messages, choose the most appropriate tools to reach your goals and target audience
- Go social (use social media: Facebook, Twitter etc.)!
- Follow up, monitor and measure
- Keep your PO informed!
Our channels

DAE Facebook page: Digital Agenda for Europe

Twitter account: @DigitalAgendaEU, know your key hashtags

Digital Agenda web page, its Newsroom, its blog

Youtube Channel DigitalAgendaEU
Innovation
Tip 1: Innovation is mainstreamed in Horizon 2020 (ignore this at your own risk!)
Tip 2:

'Innovation Actions' do not have a monopoly on Innovation

(100% funded Research & Innovation Actions should also address Innovation)
Tip 2 (expanded):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research &amp; Innovation Actions</th>
<th>Innovation Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic &amp; applied research</td>
<td>Limited R&amp;D activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testing / validation on small-scale prototype (in lab or simulated environment)</td>
<td>Prototyping, testing, large-scale product validation &amp; market replication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited demo or pilot activities (to show tech feasibility in a near to operational environment)</td>
<td>Demo or pilot activities (to show tech feasibility in operational environment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing innovations meeting needs of markets</td>
<td>Developing innovations meeting needs of markets &amp; their delivery to market</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exploitation activities
Innovation management
Tip 3:
Different aspects of innovation are called for under each of the 3 evaluation criteria

(Bonus tip: The exact same criteria are used for R&I actions and for Innovation actions)
Tip 3 (expanded):

'Excellence' criterion (excerpt)

- Extent that proposed work is ambitious, has innovation potential, and is beyond the state of the art

'Impact' criterion (excerpt)

- Enhancing innovation capacity and integration of new knowledge;
- ...developing innovations meeting the needs of European and global markets; and, where relevant, by delivering such innovations to the markets

'Quality & efficiency of the implementation' (excerpt)

- Appropriateness of the management structures and procedures, including risk and innovation management.

Note: For 'Innovation' actions the score for 'impact' will be weighted by a factor of 1.5
Some findings and lessons learnt after the first calls
Some numbers for LEIT ICT-related calls:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Call</th>
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Lessons learnt

**Oversubscription:**

- This may be a consequence of the decision to have less prescriptive calls.
- Pre-proposal checks might help to discourage out-of-scope proposals → NCP are tasked with the pre-proposal checks

**Innovation:**

- R&IA and IA have the same evaluation criteria: the topic description and the expected impacts reflect the difference

**Participant Portal**

- It is rather complex and clarity can be improved
Experts

Appropriately qualified professional should apply to work as experts in H2020 evaluations

Application via the Participant Portal

The selection per call is made to ensure broad ranging and expertise, and avoiding conflicts of interest