PARTICIPATION IN HORIZON EUROPE: KEEPING IT SIMPLE
competitive, fair and transparent, easy to access

Horizon Europe is the new EU programme for research and innovation, running from 2021 to 2027. To achieve its ambitious scientific, societal and economic objectives, and to maximize the impact of the financial investment, the programme must attract the best researchers and the most innovative companies. In a highly competitive environment, this needs easy access, fair and transparent selection processes, and smooth grant management. To this end the Commission has cut unnecessary red tape, building on simplifications in the current programme, so that taking part in EU research and innovation will become easier than ever before.

Tens of thousands of applicants from individual scientists and SMEs to big companies and international organisations have received funding for their projects under the past and current Framework Programmes. Fully electronic paperless administration of the grants was a novelty introduced with the launch of Horizon 2020 in 2014, considerably simplifying and speeding up the participation and implementation process. The new Horizon Europe will continue in this direction, offering:

- **A stable legal framework with simplified rules and procedures**
- **Digital administration**
- **A fair, transparent and objective evaluation of proposals**
- **Data reporting, dissemination and exploitation for value creation**
- **Outreach, guidance and support to participants**

The implementation strategy of Horizon Europe is organised around:

- **Rules for Participation** aligned with the EU Financial Regulation. For all aspects not requiring specific rules, related to the nature of R&I, the rules of the general EU Financial Regulation apply – providing simpler opportunities for synergies between programmes.

- **A corporate model grant agreement** used across all EU funding programmes, with further simplification of the rules, facilitating synergies at project level and further reducing error rates.

- **Simplified forms of funding** (flat rates, unit costs, lump sums, prizes), based on the experience in Horizon 2020, including the ongoing pilots on lump sum project funding.

- **Simpler rules for personnel costs**. The complex and error-prone rules of Horizon 2020 will be replaced by a simple rule, based on daily rates. This approach will be applied to all (centrally managed) EU grants.

- **A control strategy** aiming at better control rather than more control. Further simplification in project implementation reduces the level of error while allowing for risk-based controls, including enhanced fraud prevention and detection.
Digital transformation of administrative processes in the Commission’s interaction with stakeholders offers great opportunities:

- **A one-stop shop** for finding opportunities and managing all interactions
- **Paperless grant management** with fully electronic workflows for the entire project lifecycle
- **Faster** time to grant and to pay
- **Full transparency** on project and programme implementation
- **Easy access** to project results
- **Search for partners for exploiting project results**

**In numbers...**

**Evolution in participation between FP7 and Horizon 2020:**
More than 68% of participants in Horizon 2020 are “newcomers”.

*Source: Horizon Dashboard - September 2020*

**The Funding & Tenders Portal**

The Funding & Tenders Portal is the Commission’s tool for achieving this digital transformation. Initially served as a portal for R&I funding with H2020, it now evolves to become the one-stop shop for all managed EU programmes.

**Are you looking to finance a project or do business with the EU?**
Here’s how to participate in 5 simple steps

1. **Have an IDEA?**
2. **Find an OPPORTUNITY**
3. **Find PARTNER(s)**
4. **Create an ACCOUNT**
5. **Register your ORGANISATION**

**Submit your PROPOSAL**

**Get FUNDING**

**Evaluation Process in Horizon Europe - fair, transparent and objective**

Applying for EU R&I funding is highly competitive. Selecting the best projects to be funded, with the highest potential for creating the intended impact, is decisive for the success of the programme. The European Commission has developed a system for proposal evaluation over successive framework programmes. It is a solid and recognised process based on an evaluation made by external experts with a final decision taken by the Commission, fully and transparently justified. It aims to ensure that the process is as fair, trusted and as transparent as possible.

- **Three evaluation criteria:** Excellence, Impact and Quality of Implementation.
- **Careful choice of expert evaluators:** Experts are selected based on their expertise, but also on geographical and gender considerations. In addition, we apply rotation rules to incentivize the participation of new experts and to encourage participation of experts from all Member States in particular from widening countries, and to avoid closed clubs in our evaluation process.
- **Adapted to new features:** for missions and EIC (e.g. portfolio considerations when making the ranking).

**Experts for evaluation - expertise first but also geographical, gender and industry academia diversity**

![Female experts per programme](below)

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<th>FP6</th>
<th>FP7</th>
<th>Horizon 2020</th>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>35%</td>
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**Target 50%**
What are the novelties in the evaluation process in Horizon Europe?

Adjusted evaluation criteria:
Easier to understand, clearer definitions and consistent use of the terminology. In particular the impact criterion has been revised following a clearer logic linking the project results to the expected outcomes over the medium term, and to the wider long term impacts, as specified in the work programme. Applicants must describe a plausible pathway to impact over time, including beyond the lifetime of a project.

A pilot for anonymous evaluations:
Experts will evaluate an outline of the proposed work without knowing who is behind. This pilot addresses concerns about a possible unconscious partiality that evaluation experts may have in favour of proposals from well-known organisations in countries with better performing R&I systems.

A 'Right to react' (rebuttal) evaluation:
Applicants will be actively involved in the evaluation process by reacting to experts’ individual comments. The experts will take applicants’ reaction into account before finalising their final assessment. This new feature addresses concerns on the quality of the feedback to applicants and has the potential to increase the transparency of the evaluation system. A pilot will run at the early phase of Horizon Europe to fine tune the implementation modalities.

A portfolio approach:
For calls with a portfolio approach, aiming to fund a group of actions that are intended to achieve all together a measurable common goal, the evaluation will be done in a two-phase approach. Firstly, each proposal is evaluated independently on its own merits based on the standard criteria. Secondly, the best proposals would be assessed with a view to considerations relevant to the creation of a portfolio, as announced in the Work Programme.

Transparency on Programme implementation and promoting research results uptake

To promote transparency on the allocation of Horizon 2020 funding, as well as to create value of the research results, dedicated instruments have been developed under and will be further enhanced in Horizon Europe.

Horizon Dashboard
The one-stop-shop for data and statistics on EU Research and Innovation. This intuitive and interactive knowledge platform allows you to explore and visualise data on various research topics, to prepare statistics on funding implementation and research results, whether it is for reporting, analysis, monitoring or decision-making purposes. You can sort by topics, countries, organisations, sectors, as well as individual projects and beneficiaries! The Horizon Dashboard covers FP7 and Horizon 2020 programme data.

Horizon Europe will also foster maximum openness by providing tools and means for the dissemination and exploitation of the results of projects. Beneficiaries are able to showcase their most promising results and attract potential partners (companies, investors, policy makers) and maximize value creation.

Horizon Results Platform
An online platform and matchmaking tool that allows beneficiaries to advertise their research results to targeted audiences such as policy makers, investors, entrepreneurs, national and regional authorities, research and technology organisations, industry or academia; and express their specific needs in terms of bringing their results to the next level. Visitors to the platform can enjoy the rich presentations of each ‘result profile’, often including videos, and find out the most up-to-date information on the results’ maturity, their unique value proposition, policy influence and collaboration opportunities.
Outreach to applicants and beneficiaries is a key part of the implementation of the new Horizon Europe. The outreach strategy in Horizon Europe aims at providing clear and timely guidance and support, adapted to the needs and circumstances of all types of stakeholders, while at the same time gathering feedback for further simplification and improvements. It will offer a wide set of activities in order to inform, involve and interact with the programme stakeholders.

Effective help through a wide set of tools and services

Outreach events
- Tailor-made events offered to participants via the NCP network
- Outreach events are designed to provide guidance to several topics of the Programme implementation, to explain the rules and to collect valuable feedback for the IT tools and processes.

NCP Network
- National structures
- Financed by national governments
- Offers personalised support
- In the national language
- Key links between the EC services & participants

Annotated Model Grant Agreement
- Interprets the Grant Agreement
- Avoids technical vocabulary
- Answers practical questions
- Gives examples

Online Manual
- Process-based structure
- Embedded links for stepped navigation
- Search function for quick results
- Lorem ipsum

Info-sessions & trainings
- Over 40 trainings per year
- Remote & in-room trainings
- All trainings are recorded
- External trainings (Coordinators’ Days) for project participants

A complete set of tools & services at your disposal

Research Enquiry Service
The Research Enquiry Service (RES) is the central helpdesk for all questions on participation in the programme.
- 68k+ enquiries under H2020
- 94% replied within 2 weeks

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