



#HorizonEU

THE EU RESEARCH & INNOVATION PROGRAMME

2021 – 2027

HORIZON EUROPE PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Standard Briefing

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	06.05.2021	Original version
2.0	25.06.2021	Adaptation to the approach on the 'Do no significant harm principle'. Some minor formatting changes.
3.0	18.03.2022	Added link to video-briefings to help experts evaluate policy aspects Added slides about panel review and proposals with the same score
4.0	26.09.2022	Added slides on evaluating lump sum and COFUND proposals
5.0	07.03.2023	Added slides with the definition of score descriptors and on blind evaluations
6.0	24.03.2023	Updated annex on blind evaluation
7.0	27.10.2023	Updated annex on lump sum proposals (personnel cost dashboard; documenting the budget assessment)
8.0	14.03.2024	Updated slide on Confidentiality. Added point on the use of generative AI tools. Added slide with AI disclaimer.
9.0	05.07.2024	Updated slides on evaluation criteria highlighting that all comments should come with rationale behind. Added slide on experts' obligation to document their assessment of the lump sum budget

Content

Horizon Europe: An EU R&I programme	About Horizon Europe The impact logic in HE work programmes Overview of the evaluation procedure
Standard evaluation procedure	Evaluation criteria per type of action How to evaluate proposals
Individual evaluation and scoring	Evaluating the excellence, impact and quality of the implementation criteria Additional questions in the evaluation form The role of independent experts
Guiding principles	Confidentiality Conflicts of interest
Additional Information	Observers Implicit gender bias Logistic
Annexes	Evaluating Lump sum proposals Evaluation COFUND proposals

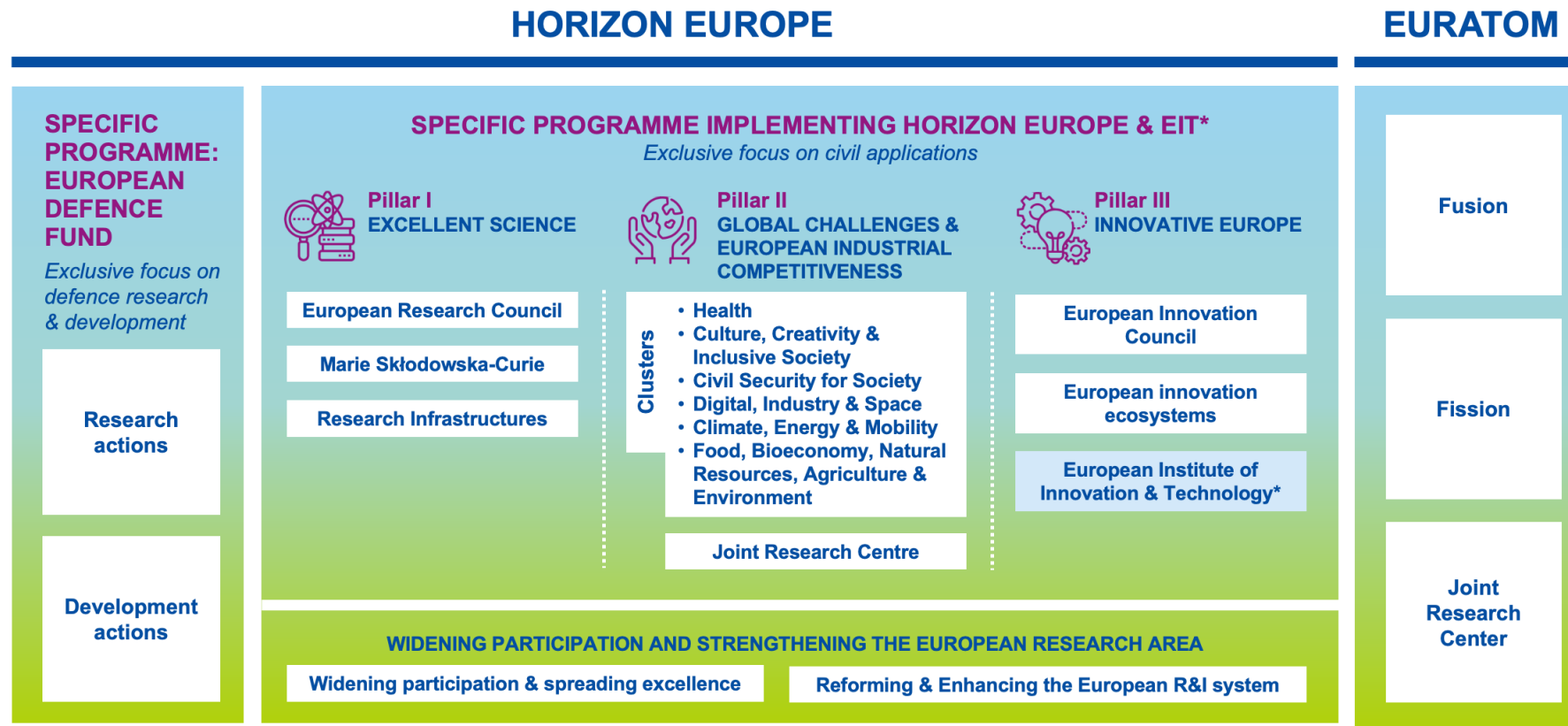
HORIZON EUROPE PROPOSAL EVALUATION

HORIZON EUROPE: AN EU R&I PROGRAMME



About Horizon Europe

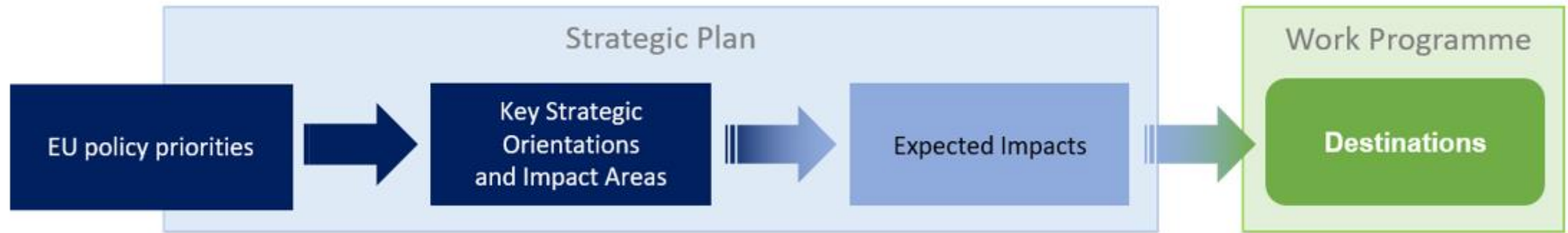
Horizon Europe supports research and innovation through Work Programmes, which set out funding opportunities for research and innovation activities.



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

Horizon Europe delivers on EU policy priorities

From EU priorities to Work Programme Destinations



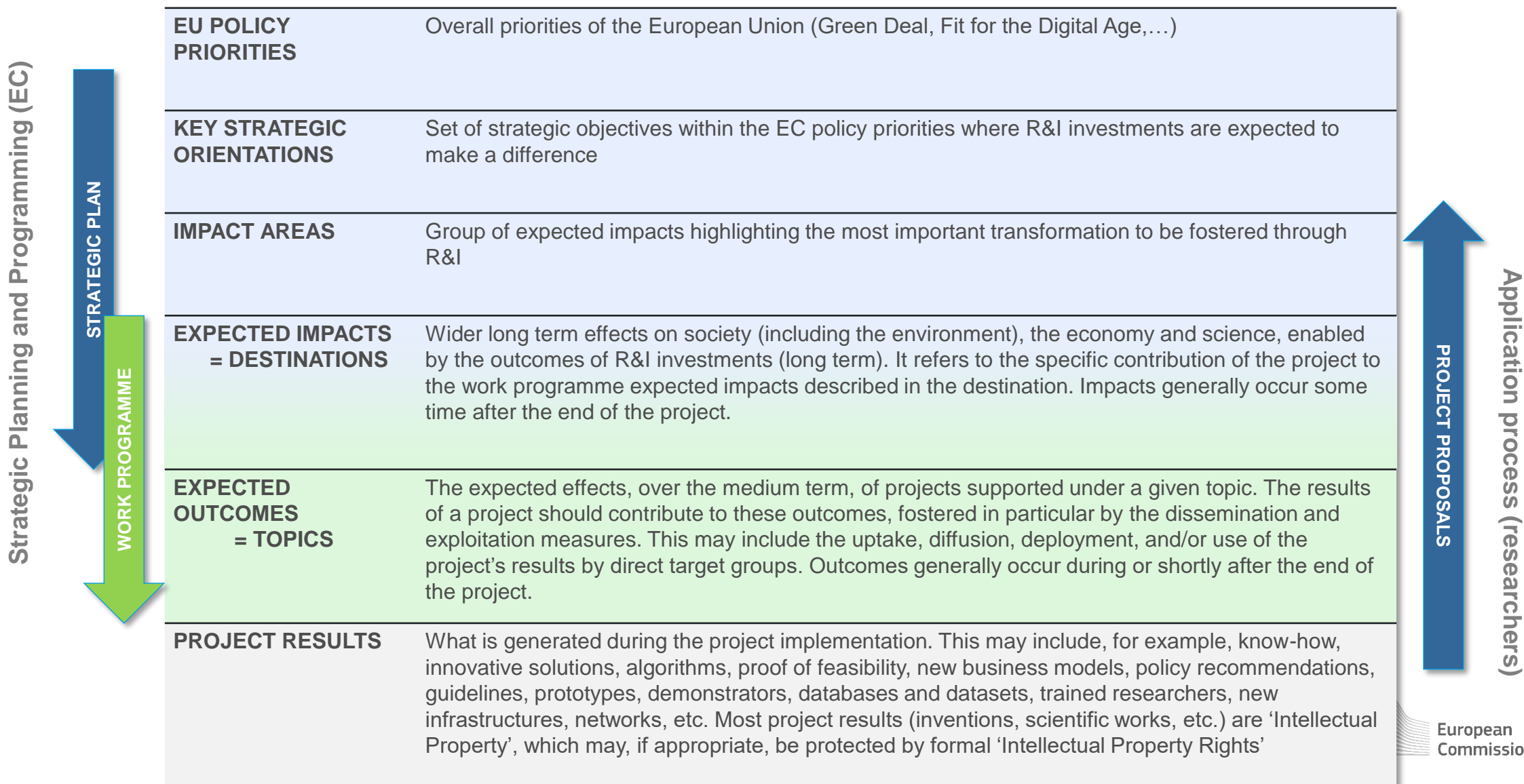
- The **strategic plan** sets out strategic orientations and impacts areas for research and innovation investments under Horizon Europe for **four years** (first HE strategic plan covers the period 2021-2024). The **key strategic orientations** and **impact areas** are formulated on the basis of **expected impacts**.
- Each expected impact is targeted via dedicated packages of actions in the work programme. These are termed **destinations**, because they indicate both the specific direction and the ultimate point of arrival of the projects to be supported through Horizon Europe.
- The **work programmes** (WPs) include the research and innovation activities to be funded under Horizon Europe for **two years** (first HE WP covers the period 2021-2022). ERC and EIC WPs will be annual.

N.B. This graphic applies primarily to the Clusters under Pillar II. The expected impacts and Destinations in other work programme parts are not derived directly from the Strategic Plan.

Horizon Europe Work Programme

- Horizon Europe is implemented through **work programmes** which set out funding opportunities mainly through **calls for proposals**.
- A call for proposal will normally contain one or more **topics** with a common deadline. The budget of the call is distributed among topics. Where topics share a budget envelope, proposals for these topics will be competing against each other and will result in a single ranking list.
- Applicants **apply to a specific call and topic**.
- Each topic to which applicants can apply will include:
 - The topic **scope**
 - The topic **expected outcome**
 - The **expected impact** of the destination to which the topic belongs
 - The **type of action**
 - The topic **budget** (or budget shared by group of topics)

Link between policy priorities and project results





Glossary of terms

Impacts	Wider long-term effects on society (including the environment), the economy and science, enabled by the outcomes of R&I investments (long term). It refers to the specific contribution of the project to the work programme expected impacts described in the destination. Impacts generally occur some time after the end of the project.
Objectives	The goals of the work performed within the project, in terms of its research and innovation content. This will be translated into the project's results. These may range from tackling specific research questions, demonstrating the feasibility of an innovation, sharing knowledge among stakeholders on specific issues. The nature of the objectives will depend on the type of action, and the scope of the topic.
Outcomes	The expected effects, over the medium term, of projects supported under a given topic. The results of a project should contribute to these outcomes, fostered in particular by the dissemination and exploitation measures. This may include the uptake, diffusion, deployment, and/or use of the project's results by direct target groups. Outcomes generally occur during or shortly after the end of the project.
Pathway to impact	Logical steps towards the achievement of the expected impacts of the project over time, in particular beyond the duration of a project. A pathway begins with the projects' results, to their dissemination, exploitation and communication, contributing to the expected outcomes in the work programme topic, and ultimately to the wider scientific, economic and societal impacts of the work programme destination.
Research output	Results generated by the action to which access can be given in the form of scientific publications, data or other engineered outcomes and processes such as software, algorithms, protocols and electronic notebooks.
Results	What is generated during the project implementation. This may include, for example, know-how, innovative solutions, algorithms, proof of feasibility, new business models, policy recommendations, guidelines, prototypes, demonstrators, databases and datasets, trained researchers, new infrastructures, networks, etc. Most project results (inventions, scientific works, etc.) are 'Intellectual Property', which may, if appropriate, be protected by formal 'Intellectual Property Rights'.

HORIZON EUROPE PROPOSAL EVALUATION

OVERVIEW OF THE EVALUATION PROCEDURE





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.



Activities eligible for funding

Eligible activities are the ones described in the call and topic conditions. The types of action include different activities eligible for funding.

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.



Standard evaluation process

Receipt of proposals

Admissibility/eligibility check

Allocation of proposals to evaluators

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 reaches an **agreement** on the scores and comments for all proposals within a call, checking **consistency across the evaluations**.

If necessary, resolves cases where evaluators were unable to agree.

Ranks the proposals with the same score.

Finalisation

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



Admissibility, eligibility checks and additional requirements

Admissibility is checked by EU staff.

- Applications must be **complete** and contain all parts and mandatory annexes and supporting documents.
- Applications must be **readable, accessible and printable**.
- Applications must include a **plan for the exploitation and dissemination of results including communication activities** (n/a for applications at the first stage of two-stage procedures or unless otherwise provided in the specific call conditions).
- Specific **page limits** per type of action normally apply (specified in the topic conditions and controlled by IT tool).

Eligibility is checked by EU staff. If you spot an issue, please inform the EU staff.

- Eligible activities are the ones described in the call conditions.
- Minimum number of partners as set out in the call conditions (at least one independent legal entity established in a MS, and, at least two other independent legal entities established either in a MS or AC).
- For calls with deadlines in 2022 and onwards participants that are public bodies, research organisations or higher education establishments from Members States and Associated countries must have a gender equality plan (GEP) in place.

 The GEP is not part of the evaluation criteria, evaluators should not look into it. The existence of a GEP is checked internally by staff.

- Other criteria may apply on a call-by-call basis as set out in the call conditions. In few cases, the call conditions in the topic can modify the interpretation of criteria.



Evaluation (award) criteria

Three evaluation criteria

‘**Excellence**’, ‘**Impact**’ and ‘**Quality and efficiency of the implementation**’.

(Only one evaluation criterion for ERC - Excellence)

- Evaluation criteria are **adapted** to each **type of action**, as specified in the WP
- Each criterion includes the ‘**aspects to be taken into account**’. The same aspect is not included in different criteria, so it is not assessed twice.
- **Open Science** practices are assessed as part of the scientific methodology in the excellence criterion.



Evaluation criteria (RIAs and IAs)

Research and innovation action (RIA)

Activities to establish new knowledge or to explore the feasibility of a new or improved technology, product, process, service or solution.

This may include basic and applied research, technology development and integration, testing, demonstration and validation of a small-scale prototype in a laboratory or simulated environment.

Innovation action (IA)

Activities to produce plans and arrangements or designs for new, altered or improved products, processes or services.

These activities may include prototyping, testing, demonstrating, piloting, large-scale product validation and market replication.

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



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Evaluation criteria (CSAs)

Coordination and support actions (CSA)

Activities that contribute to the objectives of Horizon Europe. This excludes R&I activities, except those carried out under the 'Widening participation and spreading excellence' component of the programme (part of 'Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area').

Also eligible are bottom-up coordination actions which promote cooperation between legal entities from Member States and Associated Countries to strengthen the European Research Area, and which receive no EU co-funding for research activities.

EXCELLENCE

- ✓ Clarity and pertinence of the **project's objectives**.
- ✓ Quality of the proposed coordination and/or support measures, including soundness of methodology.

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



Evaluation criteria (CoFund)

Programme
co-fund
actions
(CoFund)

A programme of activities established or implemented by legal entities managing or funding R&I programmes, other than EU funding bodies. Such a programme of activities may support: networking and coordination; research; innovation; pilot actions; innovation and market deployment; training and mobility; awareness raising and communication; and dissemination and exploitation.

It may also provide any relevant financial support, such as grants, prizes and procurement, as well as Horizon Europe blended finance¹³ or a combination thereof. The actions may be implemented by the beneficiaries directly or by providing financial support to third parties.

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



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Evaluation criteria (PCPs and PPIs)

Pre-commercial procurement actions/ (PCP)

Activities that aim to help a transnational buyers' group to strengthen the public procurement of research, development, validation and, possibly, the first deployment of new solutions that can significantly improve quality and efficiency in areas of public interest, while opening market opportunities for industry and researchers active in Europe.

Eligible activities include the preparation, management and follow-up, under the coordination of a lead procurer, of one joint PCP and additional activities to embed the PCP into a wider set of demand-side activities.

Public procurement of innovative solutions actions (PPI)

Activities that aim to strengthen the ability of a transnational buyers' group to deploy innovative solutions early by overcoming the fragmentation of demand for such solutions and sharing the risks and costs of acting as early adopters, while opening market opportunities for industry.

Eligible activities include preparing and implementing, under the coordination of a lead procurer, one joint or several coordinated PPI by the buyers' group and additional activities to embed the PPI into a wider set of demand-side activities.

EXCELLENCE

- ✓ Clarity and pertinence of the **objectives**, and the extent to which they are ambitious, and go beyond the state-of-the-art in terms of the degree of innovation that is needed to satisfy the procurement need.
- ✓ Soundness of the proposed **methodology**, taking into account the underlying concepts and assumptions.

IMPACT

- ✓ Credibility of the **pathways** to achieve the expected **outcomes and impacts** specified in the work programme.
- ✓ Suitability and quality of the **measures to maximise expected outcomes and impacts**, as set out in the dissemination and exploitation (*) plan, including communication activities.

(*) For PCP actions and PPI actions, the exploitation of results by the beneficiaries means primarily the use that is made of the innovative solutions by the procurers/end-users. The manufacturing and sale of the innovative solutions are performed by the suppliers of the solutions, which are not beneficiaries but subcontractors.

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

HORIZON EUROPE PROPOSAL EVALUATION

THE ROLE OF INDEPENDENT EXPERTS





The role of independent experts

As an independent expert:

- You are **responsible for carrying out the evaluation of the proposals yourself** and you are **not allowed to delegate the work** to another person!
- You must close reports in the electronic system **within a given deadline**.
 - This is part of your contractual obligations!
 - The allowance/expenses you claim may be reduced or rejected otherwise.
- Significant funding decisions will be made on the basis of your assessment.
- If you suspect any form of **misconduct** (e.g. plagiarism, double funding), **please report** this to EU staff.
- You do not need to comment on **ethics**, as proposals that are **successful** in this scientific evaluation will undergo an ethics **review**.



Guiding principles

Independence

- You are evaluating in a personal capacity.
- You represent neither your employer, nor your country!

Impartiality

- You must treat all proposals equally and evaluate them impartially on their merits, irrespective of their origin or the identity of the applicants.

Objectivity

- You evaluate each proposal as submitted, meaning on its own merit, not its potential if certain changes were to be made.

Accuracy

- You make your judgment against the official evaluation criteria and the call or topic the proposal addresses and nothing else.

Consistency

- You apply the same standard of judgment to all proposals



Confidentiality

You must:

- **Not discuss evaluation matters** (e.g. content of proposals, evaluation results or opinions of fellow experts) with anyone, including:
 - Other experts or EU staff or any other person (e.g. colleagues, students...) not directly involved in the evaluation of the proposal.
 - **The sole exception:** Your fellow experts who are evaluating the same proposal in a consensus group or Panel review.
- **Not contact partners** in the consortium, sub-contractors or any third parties.
- **Not disclose names** of your fellow experts.
- **Maintain confidentiality of documents, paper or electronic**, at all times and wherever you do your evaluation work (on-site or remotely).
 - Do not take anything away from the evaluation building (be it paper or electronic).
 - Return, destroy or delete all confidential documents, paper or electronic, upon completing your work, as instructed.
 - Please be aware that **the use of generative AI tools** for evaluation, particularly generative AI online tools, may represent a breach of the confidentiality requirements of your contract*.



Use of generative AI in proposal preparation

Disclaimer included in Application Forms (Part B)

*“When considering the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools for the preparation of the proposal, it is imperative to exercise caution and careful consideration. The AI-generated content should be thoroughly reviewed and validated by the applicants to ensure its appropriateness and accuracy, as well as its compliance with intellectual property regulations. **Applicants are fully responsible for the content of the proposal** (even those parts produced by the AI tool) and must be transparent in disclosing which AI tools were used and how they were utilised”.*

Specifically, **applicants are required** to:

- **Verify the accuracy, validity, and appropriateness** of the content and any citations generated by the AI tool and correct any errors or inconsistencies.
- **Provide a list of sources used to generate content and citations**, including those generated by the AI tool. Double-check citations to ensure they are accurate and properly referenced.
- **Be conscious of the potential for plagiarism** where the AI tool may have reproduced substantial text from other sources. Check the original sources to be sure you are not plagiarising someone else’s work.
- **Acknowledge the limitations of the AI tool** in the proposal preparation, including the potential for bias, errors, and gaps in knowledge”.



Conflicts of interest

You have a COI if you:

Were involved in the preparation of the proposal.

Stand to benefit directly/indirectly, if the proposal is successful or fails.

Have a close family/personal relationship with any person representing an applicant legal entity.

Are a director/trustee/partner of an applicant or involved in the management of an applicant's organisation.

Are employed or contracted by an applicant or a named subcontractor.

Are a member of an Advisory Group or Programme Committee in an area related to the call in question.

Are a National Contact Point or are directly working for the Enterprise Europe Network.

Are involved in a competing proposal.



Conflicts of interest



You must inform the Commission/Agency/JU as soon as you become aware of a COI before the signature of the contract, upon receipt of proposals, or during the course of your work.

If there is a COI for a certain proposal you cannot evaluate it **neither individually, nor in the consensus group, nor in the panel review.**

- The EU services will determine if there is a COI on a case-by-case basis and decide the course of action to follow.
- **If you knowingly hide a COI**, you will be excluded from the evaluation and your work declared **null and void**.
 - The allowance/expenses you claimed may be reduced, rejected or recovered.
 - Your contract may be **terminated**.

COI rules are listed in the **Code of Conduct** annexed to the expert contract

HORIZON EUROPE PROPOSAL EVALUATION

HOW TO EVALUATE PROPOSALS





Individual evaluation

- Read the proposal and evaluate it against the evaluation criteria, without discussing it with anybody else and as submitted and not on its potential if certain changes were to be made.
- Complete an Individual Evaluation Report (IER).
 - Evaluate each proposal as submitted and not on its potential if certain changes were to be made.
 - If you identify shortcomings (other than minor ones and obvious clerical errors), reflect those in a lower score for the relevant criterion. 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.
 - Provide comments and scores for all evaluation criteria (scores must match comments).
 - Explain shortcomings, but do not make recommendations (e.g. no additional partners, work packages, resource cuts).
 - Sign and submit the form in the electronic system.



Proposal scoring, thresholds and weighting

- Evaluation scores are awarded for the criteria, and not for the different aspects in each criterion.
- You provide a score in the range from 0-5 to each criterion based on your comments. Maximum score for a proposal is 15.
 - The whole range of scores should be used. Use steps of 0.5.
 - Scores must pass the **individual threshold AND the overall threshold** if a proposal is to be considered for funding within the limits of the available call budget.
- Thresholds apply to individual criteria and to the total score. The default threshold for individual criteria is 3 and the default overall threshold is 10 (unless specified otherwise in the WP).

For the **first stage of a two-stage procedure**, you only **evaluate the criteria Excellence and Impact**. The **threshold** for both individual criteria is 4.

The level of **overall threshold** will be set at a level that ensures the total requested budget of proposals admitted to stage 2 is as close as possible to **three times the available budget**, and not less than two and a half times the available budget.

- **Weighting:** scores are normally NOT weighted. Weighting is used for some types of actions — and only for the ranking (not to determine if the proposal passed the thresholds).
- Specific calls or topics may have different rules regarding thresholds and weighting.
- For **Innovation actions**, the criterion **Impact** is given a **weight of 1.5** to determine the ranking.



Interpretation of scores

0

The proposal **fails to address the criterion** or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.

1

Poor. The criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.

2

Fair. The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.

3

Good. The proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.

4

Very Good. The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.

5

Excellent. The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion.
Any shortcomings are minor.



Definitions for score descriptors

- A '**minor shortcoming**' is an issue that relates only to a marginal aspect of the proposal with respect to the criterion and/or can easily be rectified (it will not impact the scoring).
- A '**shortcoming**' is a problem that relates to an important aspect of the proposal. It impacts the scoring but does not render the proposal inappropriate for funding, i.e. the proposal is still expected to lead to useful results with positive impact.
- A '**significant weakness**' means that the proposal addresses the criterion in a limited and/or not sufficiently effective way (will lower the score below threshold). This can also be the case when the proposal includes a large number of shortcomings, each one of them not rendering the proposal inappropriate for funding, though all together make the proposal not addressing the criterion sufficiently in an effective way.



Evaluating the excellence criterion (1/2)

Assess the project's objectives:

- Are they clear and pertinent to the topic?
- Are they measurable and verifiable?
- Are they realistically achievable?
- Is the proposed work ambitious and goes beyond the state-of-the-art?
- Does the proposal include ground-breaking R&I, novel concepts and approaches, new products, services or business and organisational models?
- Is the R&I maturity of the proposed work in line with the topic description?

Please bear in mind that advances beyond the state of the art must be interpreted in the light of the positioning of the project. For example, expectations will not be the same for RIAs at lower TRL, compared with Innovation Actions at high TRLs.

Following questions are adapted to RIA and IA type of actions (ToA). Similar questions will be asked for other ToAs, in line with the instructions in the specific applications forms.

Always provide well-supported reasons to justify your evaluation. For instance, if you think that the project's objectives are (or are not) realistically achievable, **add always the rationale behind your opinion.**





Evaluating the excellence criterion (2/2)

Following questions are adapted to RIA and IA type of actions (ToA). Similar questions will be asked for other ToAs, in line with the instructions in the specific applications forms.

Assess the scientific methodology:

- Is the scientific methodology (i.e. the concepts, models and assumptions that underpin the work) clear and sound?
- Is it clear how expertise and methods from different disciplines will be brought together and integrated in pursuit of the objectives? if applicants justify that an inter-disciplinary approach is unnecessary, is it credible?
- Has the gender dimension in research and innovation content been properly taken into account?
- Are open science practices implemented as an integral part of the proposed methodology?
- Is the research data management properly addressed?
- For topics indicating the need for the integration of social sciences and humanities, is the role of these disciplines properly addressed?

Always provide well-supported reasons to justify your evaluation. For instance, if you think that the methodology is (or is not) sound, detailed and convincing, **add always the rationale behind your opinion.**



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Open Science

Check [support video](#) in the portal!

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.

Open science practices include:

- Early and open sharing of research (for example through preregistration, registered reports, pre-prints, or crowd-sourcing).
- Research output management including research data management (RDM).
- Measures to ensure reproducibility of research outputs.
- Providing open access to research outputs (e.g. publications, data, software, models, algorithms, and workflows) through deposition in trusted repositories.
- Participation in open peer review.
- Involving all relevant knowledge actors including citizens, civil society and end users in the co-creation of R&I agendas and contents (such as citizen science).

Mandatory OS practices

- **Mandatory in all calls:** Open access to publications; RDM in line with the FAIR principles including data management plans; open access to research data unless exceptions apply ('as open as possible as closed as necessary'); access and/or information to research outputs and tools/instruments for validating conclusions of scientific publications and validating/re-using data.
- Additional obligations specific to certain work programme topics.

Reflect both in lower score when not sufficiently addressed

Recommended OS practices

- All open science practices beyond mandatory

Evaluate positively when sufficiently addressed

When OS practices (mandatory and recommended) are duly justified as not appropriate for the project, do not lower score for not addressing those practices

Detailed guidance for proposers and evaluators in the HE Programme Guide



Check [support video](#) in the portal!

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.

Under Horizon Europe the **integration of the gender dimension** into R&I content is **mandatory**, unless it is explicitly mentioned in the topic description as for example:

“In this topic the integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement.”

Why is gender dimension important? It brings added value of research in terms of excellence, rigor, reproducibility, creativity and business opportunities It enhances the societal relevance of research and innovation

- 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?
- 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?

Detailed guidance for evaluators and proposers is provided in the Horizon Europe Programme Guide



Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH)

Social Sciences and Humanities

Assessing the effective contribution of social science and humanities disciplines and expertise as part of the scientific methodology of the project.

When the **integration of SSH is required**, applicants have to show the roles of these disciplines or provide a justification if they consider that it is not relevant for their project. A proposal without a sufficient contribution/integration of SSH research and competences will receive a lower evaluation score.

Why integrating social sciences and humanity matters?

Many societal challenges that need to be addressed through research and innovation are too complex to be overcome by a single scientific discipline. Technical solutions are often preconditions for new policy outcomes, but in themselves insufficient to have a meaningful impact. The lasting societal impacts that policy-makers seek are often equally reliant on insights from social sciences and the humanities. A few examples:

- **Social sciences** (law, ethics, psychology, political sciences...) are an essential component of the research responses to public health emergencies.
- **Economics and political science** are major components of projects focusing on socio-economic evaluation of climate-change impact.
- **Psychology, cultural considerations, ethics and religion** are essential to improve the support to palliative care patients.
- **Linguistics, cultural studies and ethics** are an important part of projects aiming to develop AI enhanced robotic system and improve human/robot interaction.
- **Economics and social sciences** are essential to devise effective measures of recovery after the Covid-19 pandemic.



Do no significant harm principle (DNSH)

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).

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



Evaluating the impact criterion (1/2)

Following questions are adapted to RIA and IA type of actions (ToA). Similar questions will be asked for other ToAs, in line with the instructions in the specific applications forms.

Assess the proposed pathways towards impact:

- Is the contribution of the project towards the 1) expected outcomes of the topic and 2) the wider impacts, in the longer term, as specified in the respective destinations of the WP, credible?
- Are potential barriers to the expected outcomes and impacts identified (i.e. other R&I work within and beyond Horizon Europe; regulatory environment; targeted markets; user behavior), and mitigation measures proposed? Is any potential negative environmental outcome or impact (including when expected results are brought at scale, such as at commercial level) identified? Is the management of the potential negative impacts properly described?
- Are the scale and significance of the project's contribution to the expected outcomes and impacts estimated and quantified (including baselines, benchmarks and assumptions used for those estimates)?
 - Scale' refers to how widespread the outcomes and impacts are likely to be. For example, in terms of the size of the target group, or the proportion of that group, that should benefit over time;
 - 'Significance' refers to the importance, or value, of those benefits. For example, number of additional healthy life years; efficiency savings in energy supply.

Always provide well-supported reasons to justify your evaluation. For instance, if you think that the contribution of the project towards the expected outcomes of the topic is (or is not) credible, **add always the rationale behind your opinion.**



Evaluating the impact criterion (2/2)

Following questions are adapted to RIA and IA type of actions (ToA). Similar questions will be asked for other ToAs, in line with the instructions in the specific applications forms.

Assess the measures to maximise impact –
Dissemination, exploitation and communication :

- Are the proposed dissemination, exploitation and communication measures suitable for the project and of good quality? 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.
- Are the target groups (e.g. scientific community, end users, financial actors, public at large) for these measures identified?
- Is the strategy for the management of intellectual property properly outlined and suitable to support exploitation of results?
 - If exploitation is expected primarily in non-associated third countries, is it properly justified how that exploitation is still in the Union's interest?

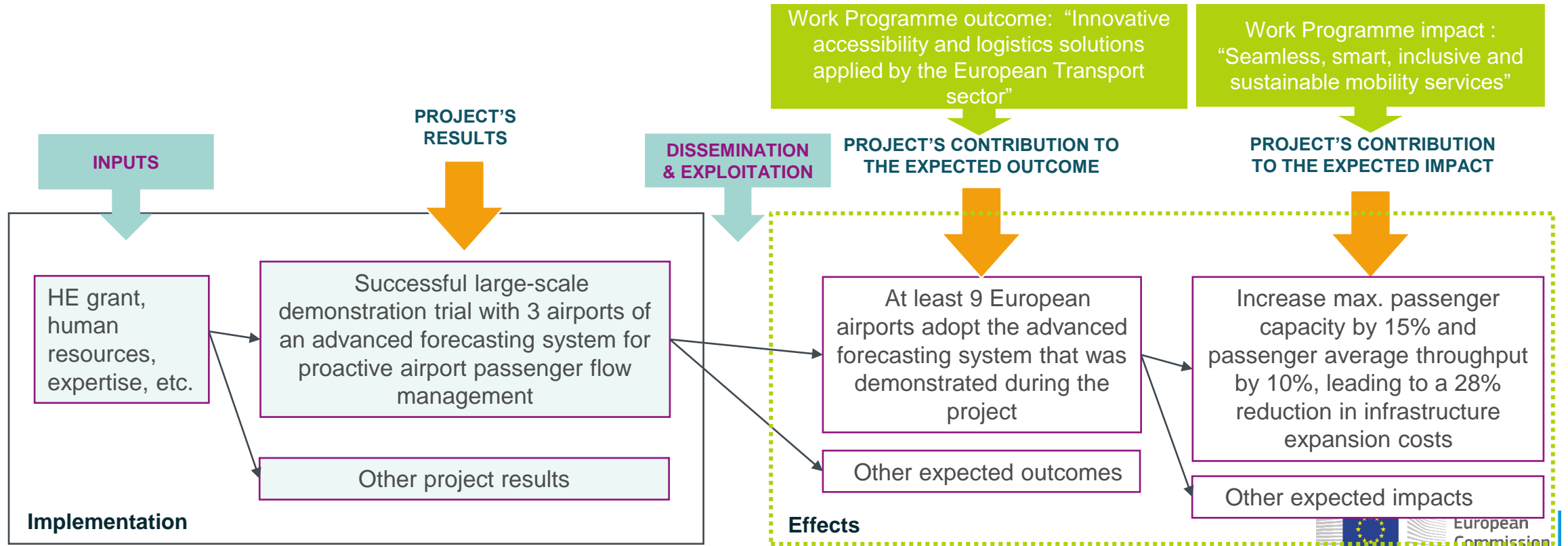
Always provide well-supported reasons to justify your evaluation. For instance, if you think that the dissemination, exploitation and communication measures are (or are not) suitable for the project and of good quality, **add always the rationale behind your opinion.**



How applicants describe the impact

**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.





Management of intellectual property (IP)

*Each Horizon Europe beneficiary shall use its best efforts to **exploit the results it owns**, or to have them exploited by another legal entity, in particular through the transfer and licensing of results. In this respect beneficiaries are required to **adequately protect their results – if possible and justified** – taking account of possible prospects for commercial exploitation and any other legitimate interest.*

The provision of a **results ownership list** is mandatory at the end of a project.

The strategy for IP management in a proposal

- Should be comprehensive and feasible and should include protection measures whenever relevant.
- Should be commensurate with the described pathways to outcomes and impacts and therefore underpins the ‘credibility’ of these pathways.
- Should consider ‘freedom to operate’ regarding the background owned by consortium members and/or third parties outside the consortium.
- Should give due thought to balancing between publication of results and plans to protect IP, e.g. in terms of timing the respective activities, involvement of IP experts.
- If exploitation is expected primarily in non-associated third countries, it must include justifications on how that exploitation is still in the Union’s interest.
- if required in the call conditions, it must consider additional exploitation obligations in relation to IP.



Evaluating the Quality of implementation (1/2)

Following questions are adapted to RIA and IA type of actions (ToA). Similar questions will be asked for other ToAs, in line with the instructions in the specific applications forms.

Assess the proposed work plan, and the effort and resources:

- Is the work plan of good quality and effective?
- Does it include quantified information so that progress can be monitored?
- Does it follow a logic structure (for example regarding the timing of work packages)?
- Are the resources allocated to the work packages in line with their objectives and deliverables?
- Are critical risks, relating to project implementation, identified and proper risk mitigation measures proposed?

Always provide well-supported reasons to justify your evaluation. For instance, if you think that the work plan is (or is not) of good quality and effective, **add always the rationale behind your opinion.**

Do not penalize applicants that did not provide detailed breakdown of costs as they are not required.
Exception: In the case of lumps sums, there is a requirement of a detailed budget table.



Evaluating the Quality of implementation (2/2)

Assess the quality of participants and the consortium as a whole:
(Note that important information on role of individual participants and previous experience is included in part A of proposal)

Following questions are adapted to RIA and IA type of actions (ToA). Similar questions will be asked for other ToAs, in line with the instructions in the specific applications forms.

- Does the consortium match the project's objectives, and bring together the necessary disciplinary and inter-disciplinary knowledge.
- Does the consortium include expertise in open science practices, and gender aspects of R&I, as appropriate?
- For topics flagged as SSH relevant, does the consortium include expertise in social sciences and humanities?
- Do the partners have access to critical infrastructure needed to carry out the project activities?
- Are the participants complementing one another (and cover the value chain, where appropriate)
- In what way does each of them contribute to the project? Does each of them have a valid role, and adequate resources in the project to fulfil that role (so they have sufficient operational capacity)?
- Is there industrial/commercial involvement in the project to ensure exploitation of the results?

Always provide well-supported reasons to justify your evaluation. For instance, if you think that the consortium brings (or doesn't bring) together the necessary expertise, **add always the rationale behind your opinion.**

Participants' previous publications, in particular journal articles, are expected to be open access and existing datasets FAIR and 'as open as possible, as closed as necessary'. Evaluate positively if this is sufficiently addressed.



European
Commission



Additional questions in the evaluation form

Evaluation form includes:

- Main part with the three **evaluation criteria** where you give comments and scores
- **Additional questions:** The evaluators are asked to take a position on additional questions linked to the selection procedure or policy considerations.

Additional questions in Horizon Europe evaluations

- Scope of the application
- Exceptional funding
- Use of human embryonic stem cells (hESC)
- Use of human embryos (hE)
- Activities not eligible for funding
- Exclusive focus on civil applications
- Do not significant harm principle
- Artificial Intelligence



Exceptional funding

- Third country participants
- International organisations

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

During the **evaluation** experts give their opinion on the exceptional funding to participants from non-EU countries not eligible for funding and international organisations. Participation is considered essential for the action if there are clear benefits for the consortium, such as:

- outstanding competence/expertise
- access to research infrastructure
- access to particular geographical environments
- access to data.

Your assessment will help the EU services to take a decision on the exceptional funding for these participants.



Use of human embryonic stem cells (hESC) and human embryos (hE)

- In two separate questions, experts give their opinion on whether the proposal involves the use of **hESC** and **hE**. This is independent of, and serves to verify, the applicants' answers in the ethics issues table.
- If you consider that the proposal involves hESC, you must state whether the use of hESC is, or is not, **necessary to achieve the scientific objectives** of the proposal and the reasons why.

Your answers to these questions and the comments provided will be used by the ethics experts in charge of the **ethics assessment**. Proposals involving hESC can be funded only if the use of hESC is necessary to achieve its objectives.



Activities not eligible for funding

- Participants have declared **in proposal part A** that the proposal does not include any activity excluded from funding.
- Evaluators are asked to **confirm** that this is the case.
- In the consensus phase, if you agree that the proposal includes one or more activities excluded from funding, you must provide the **reasons** for this conclusion and explain why the beneficiaries' declaration is wrong.
- Evaluators must reflect the **removal of the activities excluded from funding** in the final score (e.g., if the excluded activities were important for reaching the objectives, their removal would lead to a lower score).
- The proposals are not rejected as ineligible during the evaluation phase. Instead, they are **processed according to their score**, including the possibility to go on the main list and be invited for grant preparation.
- Your opinion will help the EU services to decide whether to reject the proposal as ineligible or to fund it in a modified form without the ineligible activities.

The **activities excluded from funding** are activities that:

- aim at **human cloning** for reproductive purposes, or
- intend to **modify the genetic heritage of human beings** which could make such changes heritable (with the exception of research relating to cancer treatment of the gonads, which may be financed), or
- 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, or
- lead to the **destruction of human embryos** (for example, for obtaining stem cells)



Exclusive focus on civil applications

- Participants confirm, as part of the **declarations in proposal part A** that the proposal has an exclusive focus on civil applications. Activities intended to be used in military application or aiming to serve military purposes cannot be funded.
- Evaluators are asked to **confirm** that this is the case.
- In the consensus phase, if you agree that the proposal does not have an exclusive focus on civil applications, you must provide the **reasons** for this conclusion and explain why the beneficiaries' declaration is wrong.
- Evaluators must reflect the **removal of the activities excluded from funding** in the final score (e.g., if the excluded activities were important for reaching the objectives, their removal would lead to a lower score).
- The proposals are not rejected as ineligible during the evaluation phase. Instead, they are **processed according to their score**, including the possibility to go on the main list and be invited for grant preparation.
- Your opinion will help the EU services to decide whether to reject the proposal as ineligible or to fund it in a modified form without the ineligible activities.



Do no significant harm principle (DNSH)

- Aspects related to the '**Do no significant harm**' (DNSH) principle can be part of the proposal but evaluators should 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).
- Evaluators are asked in one **additional question** whether the proposal is compliant with the DNSH principle and provide comments in the case the answer to the question is 'Partially', 'No' or 'Cannot be assessed'. The answer to this question will be **used for monitoring purposes** and for a proper **follow up in the case the project is funded**.



Artificial intelligence

- Experts must answer an additional question as part of their individual evaluations on whether the activities proposed involve the **use and/or development of AI-based systems and/or techniques**.
- If you answer 'yes' to this question, you must **assess the technical robustness** of the proposed AI-system as part of the excellence criterion (if applicable).
- In addition, your answer to this question will help us to with the **proper follow-up** of any aspects related to **Artificial Intelligence** in projects funded under Horizon Europe.

(*) 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.



Consensus

- It usually **involves a discussion on the basis of the individual evaluations**.
 - For full proposals, don't immediately converge on the average score.
 - For first stage proposals, the average is a starting point.
- The aim is to **find agreement on comments and scores**. Agree comments before scores!
- **'Outlying' opinions need to be explored**.
 - They might be as valid as others. Be open-minded.
 - It is normal for individual views to change.
- **Moderated by EU staff (or an expert in some cases)**.
 - Neutral and manages the evaluation, protects confidentiality and ensures fairness.
 - Ensures objectivity and accuracy, all voices heard and points discussed.
 - Helps the group keep to time and reach consensus.



Consensus report

- **The rapporteur is responsible for drafting the consensus report (CR).** The rapporteur includes consensus comments and scores and in some cases does not take part in the discussion.
- **The quality of the CR is of utmost importance.** It will be the basis for the **evaluation summary report (ESR)** sent to applicants together with the evaluation result letters. It often remains unchanged at the panel stage, so in most of the cases ESRs are identical to CRs.
- The aim of the CR is to give:
 - A **clear assessment** of the proposal based on its merit, with justification.
 - Clear feedback on the proposal's **weaknesses and strengths**, of an adequate length, and in an appropriate tone.
 - **Explain shortcomings**, but not to make recommendations.

Avoid:

1. Comments not related to the criterion in question.
2. Comments too long, or too short and inappropriate language.
3. Categorical statements that have not been properly verified.
4. Scores that don't match the comments.
5. Marking down a proposal for the same critical aspect under two different criteria.

Remember: Applicants will read your comments and, based on them, can challenge the evaluation through the evaluation review procedures.





The panel review

- Consists of experts from the consensus groups and/or new experts
- Ensures the consistency of comments and scores given at the consensus stage
- Resolves any cases where a minority view is recorded in the consensus phase
- Endorses the final scores and comments for each proposal
 - Any new comments and scores should be carefully justified. These changes may come as a result of:
 - checking on possible inconsistencies
 - benchmarking proposals belonging to different areas and/or subtopics
 - resolving minority views
 - cross-reading proposals with equal scores.
- Recommends a list of proposals in priority order
- Prioritises proposals with identical total scores
- May also hold hearings at which applicants are invited to present their proposal
- **The discussion is led by the panel chair (normally EU staff, but also an expert in some cases).**
 - The chair must ensure fair and equal treatment of the proposals and seek agreement on a common view.



Proposals with identical scores

For each group of proposals with the same score, starting with the group achieving the highest score and continuing in descending order:

1. Proposals that address **aspects of the call that have not otherwise been covered** by more highly ranked proposals will be considered to have the highest priority.
2. The proposals identified under 1), if any, will themselves be prioritised according to the **scores** they have been awarded for '**Excellence**'. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on scores for '**Impact**'. In the case of '**Innovation actions**', priority will be given to the score for '**Impact**', followed by that for '**Excellence**'.
3. If necessary, the **gender balance** among the personnel named in the proposal who will be primarily responsible for carrying out the research and/or innovation activities, and who are included in the researchers table in the proposal, will be used as a factor for prioritisation.
4. If necessary, any further prioritisation will be based on **geographical diversity**, defined as the number of Member States or Associated Countries represented in the proposal, not otherwise receiving funds from projects higher up the ranking list (and if equal in number, then by budget).
5. If a distinction still cannot be made, the panel may decide to further prioritise by considering **other factors** related to the objectives of the call, or to Horizon Europe in general. These may include, for example, enhancing the quality of the project portfolio through synergies between projects or, where relevant and feasible, involving SMEs.



Quality standard for CRs and ESRs

The basic quality principle:

Put yourself in place of the applicant. 'If this was my proposal, would I find this report fair, accurate, clear and complete, even if it brings bad news?'

- The comments should reflect the strengths and the weaknesses of the proposal in a fair way and give reasons for the scores.
 - In the individual and consensus group phase, the objective is not to decide about the selection of the proposal by comparison with other projects, but to evaluate the proposal on its own merit. The ESRs should therefore **NOT** contain comparative statements.
 - **Evaluation of second-stage proposals:** Inconsistencies between the stage 1 ESR and the stage 2 ESR should be avoided. Any difference in opinion should be specifically justified in the comments of the stage 2 ESR.
 - **Re-submissions:** For re-applications submitted within 2 years and declared in the proposal forms, comments and scores that differ significantly from those awarded in the previous ESR should be specifically justified if the resubmitted proposal was produced under comparable conditions (e.g. same type of funding programme and broadly similar topic/call and conditions).
- The report should be **complete** but **avoid additional elements**. This means comments address all aspects (sub-criteria) referred to in the criteria, and, equally importantly, these criteria and sub-criteria only.
- The evaluation of one criterion should NOT influence the evaluation of another criterion. In particular, the same weakness/shortcoming should not be referred to under different criteria (no double penalisation).



Quality standard for CRs and ESRs

Comments must reflect the assessment of **the criteria in the frame of what is requested in the call**.

Comments should be **precise** and **definite**.

Avoid **factual mistakes**. Whenever factual statements are made, they should be **explicitly verified**.

Comments should consist of **clear, concise** and **complete sentences**.

Comments must not be **discriminatory, offending** or **inappropriate**

Comments must **not be based on assumptions** and should not suggest ignorance or doubt.

Comments must **not contain recommendations or suggestions** to improve the project.

The comment for a criterion, taken as a whole, must be **consistent with the meaning of the score** that is awarded for that criterion.



HORIZON EUROPE PROPOSAL EVALUATION

ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT INFORMATION



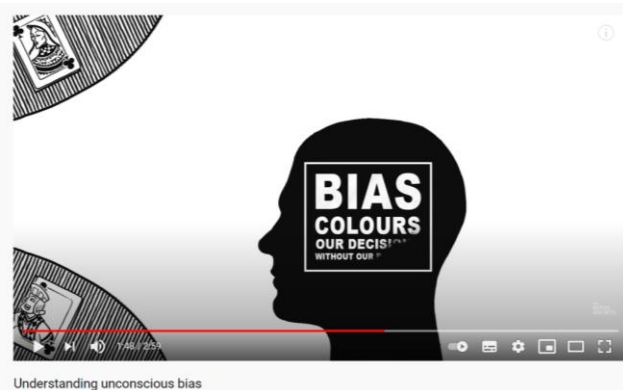
Observers

- Are appointed by the EU services and may attend any meetings or monitor remote evaluation, to ensure a high quality evaluation.
- They check the functioning and running of the overall process.
- They advise, in their report, on the conduct and fairness of the evaluation sessions (including 1st stage of 2 stage processes) and, if necessary, suggest possible improvements.
- They do not evaluate proposals and, therefore, do not express any opinion on their quality.
- They may raise any questions. Please provide them your full support.



Implicit gender biases may exist

- Implicit (or unconscious) gender biases refer to a cognitive phenomenon that takes place automatically and without our knowledge when assessing people and situations, influenced by our background and socio-cultural environment.
- Implicit gender biases based on gender stereotypes can affect both men and women and influence behaviour and decision making, and should be taken into account when carrying out evaluations.
- Please watch the following videos for a better understanding of issues at stake:





Logistics

- The electronic system for the evaluation of proposals is accessible via your 'EU Login'. Please make sure you know your 'EU Login'.
- Please bring your own device in case of non-remote evaluations.
 - You are invited to bring your own laptop/tablet/notebook (including chargers, adapters [VGA, HDMI cables], etc.) for the on-site evaluation in Brussels, if this is the case.
 - There are no fixed computers available in the open space/reading rooms of the evaluation building in Brussels.
 - Laptops are available upon request.
 - Fixed computers are available in the meeting rooms.
- **Paperless evaluations:** Copies of proposals will be exclusively in electronic form.

For more information:

[HE Programme Guide](#)
[General Annexes of the WP](#)
[Standard application form \(RIAs/IAs\)](#)
[Support video briefings to help experts evaluate policy aspects](#)





Thank you!

HorizonEU

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



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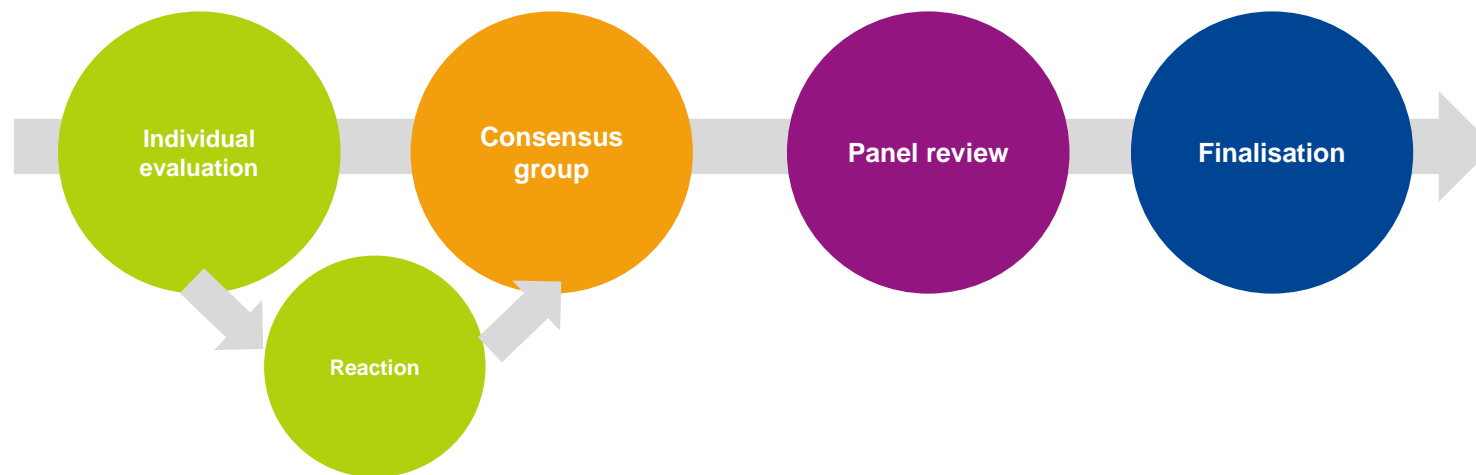
HORIZON EUROPE PROPOSAL EVALUATION

ANNEXES





Right-to-react (Rebuttal)



If the topic is taking part of the pilot on 'right-to-react', note that:

- After your individual evaluation, we will send to applicants your comments (without scores and anonymously).
- Applicants may send their reactions to your comments.
- During the consensus phase, take into consideration your individual comments and also the reaction from participants.

HORIZON EUROPE PROPOSAL EVALUATION

EVALUATING LUMP SUM PROPOSALS





Why using lump sum funding?

Significant simplification potential

- Despite all simplification, funding based on reimbursement of incurred costs stays complex and error-prone
- Lump sum project funding removes all obligations on actual cost reporting and financial ex-post audits – i.e. a **major reduction of administrative burden**
- **Access to the programme becomes easier**, especially for small organisations and newcomers

Focus on content

- Shift from focus on financial management and checking costs to **focus on scientific-technical content** of the projects



Basic principles

Lump sum evaluation and grant agreement follow standard approach with the same:

- Evaluation criteria
- Pre-financing and payment scheme
- Reporting periods and technical reporting, **though focusing on completion of work packages**

One lump sum share is fixed in the grant agreement for each work package:

➤ **Work package completed**  **payment**

- Payments do not depend on a successful outcome, but on the **completion of activities**.
- Work packages can be modified through amendments (e.g. to take into account new scientific developments)



Two lump sum options

The type of lump sum is specified in the text of the topic you are evaluating.

Option 1:

- The call for proposals defines a **fixed lump sum**.
- The budget requested by applicants in the proposal **must be equal** to this fixed lump sum.
- The proposal must **describe the resources mobilised** for this amount.

Option 2:

- Applicants **define the lump sum** in their proposal.
- In setting the lump sum, they are **free to define the amount** necessary to carry out your project.
- The lump sum chosen must be **justified by the resources mobilised**.



Example of lump sum breakdown per work package and per beneficiary

	WP1	WP2	WP3	WP4	WP5	WP6	WP7	WP8	Total	
Beneficiary A	250.000			50.000	300.000	250.000		300.000	1.150.000	Shares of the lump sum per beneficiary
Beneficiary B		250.000	350.000	50.000			100.000	150.000	900.000	
Beneficiary C	100.000	100.000		50.000		280.000			530.000	
Beneficiary D		120.000		50.000			100.000	150.000	420.000	
Total	350.000	470.000	350.000	200.000	300.000	530.000	200.000	600.000	3.000.000	

Share of the lump sum per WP

Lump sum = Maximum grant amount



Evaluation of lump sum proposals

Applicants use the standard Horizon Europe proposal template Part B (narrative part).

Proposals are evaluated:

- According to the standard Horizon Europe evaluation procedures
- With the help of independent experts

Like for other Horizon Europe proposals, you assess the proposals in terms of:

- Excellence
- Impact
- Quality and efficiency of the implementation



Evaluating the technical description of the proposal (Part B)

- Evaluate the ‘excellence’ and ‘impact’ criteria like in any other Horizon Europe proposal.
- Under the ‘implementation’ criterion, be aware that the design of the work plan in a lump sum proposal is similar as in actual costs proposals except that **work packages with a long duration may be split along the reporting periods**.
In this way, the relevant activities can be paid at the end of the reporting period.

As usual, the proposal must **describe in detail** the activities covered by each work package.

The effectiveness of the work plan remains important. The use of lump sum funding should not lead to the subdivision of the project into many small work packages.



Evaluating the lump sum detailed budget table

- Lump sum proposals must contain a **detailed budget table**:
 - For option 1, to describe the resources mobilised for the amount of the lump sum fixed in the work programme
 - For option 2, to define and justify the amount of the lump sum proposed by applicants
- Applicants provide this **detailed budget table** in an [Excel workbook](#)
- In this table, **cost estimations for each cost category** are resolved per beneficiary and per work package.
- The table automatically generates the **breakdown of the lump sum** per beneficiary and per work package.

Cost estimations and the resulting overall lump sum must be plausible and reasonable. They must be **necessary for and justified by the activities proposed**, but they cannot be accurate in the way costs can be accurate after they have been incurred.



Evaluating the lump sum detailed budget table

As expert, you:

- **Check the cost estimations** and whether the resources proposed and split of lump sum shares are reasonable and allow completing the activities described in the proposal.
- If needed, **make precise recommendations** on changes to the detailed budget table. On this basis, the lump sum amount and lump sum breakdown will be modified during grant preparation.

You can recommend:

- To **decrease** the lump sum amount for a work package and/or a beneficiary;
- To **reallocate** lump sum shares among work packages and/ or beneficiaries.

Following the recommendations of the experts, **the requested grant amount might be decreased**. However, the requested grant amount cannot be increased.

- Evaluate the detailed budget table **under the criterion “implementation”**
 - Corrections to individual cost estimations should not affect the score.
 - However, significant shortcomings must lead to a lower score (e.g., a flawed budget structure or a clearly inappropriate total lump sum).



Checking costs based on professional experience and against objective data

- For each work package, you check the cost estimates on the basis of your **knowledge and professional experience** (typical costs and resources based on your experience with other R&I projects in the field, e.g. for personnel, consumables, and equipment)
- We provide a dashboard with personnel cost data from Horizon Europe grants. You must **use this dashboard in your assessment** of estimated personnel costs (see next slide).
- For some topics, we may provide you with additional (historic) data to cover specific aspects. If such data are provided, you must use them to judge the relevant cost estimations.



Horizon dashboard for lump sum evaluations

- Personnel costs represent more than 60% of the costs in an average grant.
- To help you to assess if the personnel costs in the proposal are reasonable, we provide a **personnel cost dashboard**.
- It shows **the range of average personnel costs in actual cost grants**. This information can be resolved by country and by organisation type.
- You get an orientation of **what personnel costs are normal** in Horizon Europe.
- You must **consult the dashboard** when assessing personnel costs. Make sure you **read the instructions** on the landing page.

Access the dashboard [here](#)



Completing the evaluation reports

Where to include recommendations on the budget (if any)?

- In your **individual evaluation report** (IER), you must **cover all the criteria**. This includes the detailed budget table, to be covered under criterion 3 (implementation).
- In the **consensus report** (CR) and **evaluation summary report** (ESR):
 - Cover all three criteria.
 - For **proposals expected to be on the main or reserve lists**:
 - **Always document your assessment of the lump sum budget.**
 - Include your recommendations to modify the budget (if any).
 - For **proposals below the threshold and/or below the available budget**:
 - No recommendations on the detailed budget table are required.
 - Exception: If the score was lowered due to a flawed budget, the relevant comments must be included.
- It is important that your **budget recommendations are precise** (if any). For example, you can propose a change in % or in EUR. You should explain
 - why a **cost estimation** should be reduced, and/or
 - why the **allocation of resources** should be changed.

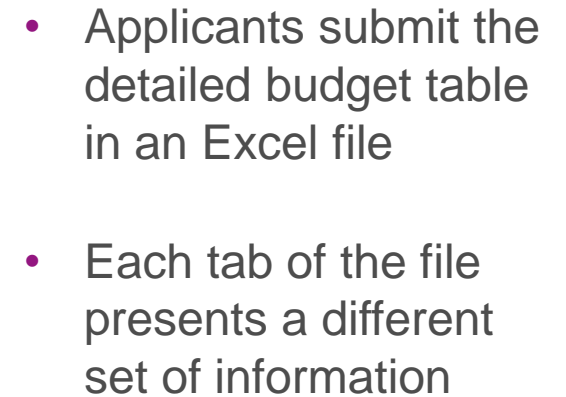


Assessment of the budget

For proposals expected to be on the main or reserve lists, you must **always document your assessment of the lump sum budget** in the evaluation reports (under criterion 3 'Implementation').

How to document your assessment of the budget?

- **Scenario 1:** The lump sum **budget is appropriate** (i.e. cost estimations are reasonable and in line with the activities proposed)
 - The evaluation report must still contain a record of your assessment of the budget. Summarise the budget checks carried out and your conclusion.
- **Scenario 2:** The lump sum **budget has issues** (e.g. some costs are overestimated)
 - Identify the partner, cost category, work package, and the amount in EUR (or a percentage) that should be reduced or reallocated.
 - Justify your recommendations. For example, explain
 - why a specific cost estimation was inappropriate or unjustified, and/or
 - why the allocation of budget to partners or work packages was unsatisfactory.





The detailed budget table in practice – lump sum breakdown

ESTIMATED BREAKDOWN OF THE LUMP SUM									
BENEFICIARIES \ WORK PACKAGES	WP1 Analysis	WP2 Technical part	WP3 Experiment 1	WP4 Experiment 2	WP5 Communication & dissemination	WP6 Project management 1	WP7 Project management 2	Total	Pct %
BE1: University 1	91,500.00	49,750.00	51,250.00	114,250.00	17,500.00	8,000.00	7,500.00	339,750.00	21.06%
> BE1-AE2: Laboratory 1	44,500.00	76,250.00	0.00	46,875.00	0.00	8,000.00	7,500.00	183,125.00	11.35%
BE3: SME 1	125,125.00	9,205.00	56,000.00	52,937.50	6,343.75	5,687.50	5,250.00	260,548.75	16.15%
BE4: Research Org 1	16,312.50	8,625.00	34,375.00	50,000.00	9,375.00	3,750.00	3,750.00	126,187.50	7.82%
BE5: University 2	12,500.00	3,750.00	22,000.00	29,300.00	10,500.00	4,500.00	4,500.00	87,050.00	5.39%
BE6: SME 2	33,375.00	20,353.05	48,125.00	46,250.00	250.00	3,875.00	3,875.00	156,103.05	9.67%
> BE6-AE7: Company A	3,237.50	9,450.00	19,250.00	18,550.00	1,750.00	1,268.75	1,268.75	54,775.00	3.39%
BE8: Museum A	59,500.00	58,750.00	49,125.00	71,687.50	19,375.00	6,875.00	6,875.00	272,187.50	16.87%
BE9: University 3	6,375.00	10,312.50	38,375.00	39,750.00	30,000.00	4,500.00	4,500.00	133,812.50	8.29%
Total:	392,425.00	246,445.55	318,500.00	469,600.00	95,093.75	46,456.25	45,018.75	1,613,539.30	100.00%
Percentage:	24.32%	15.27%	19.74%	29.10%	5.89%	2.88%	2.79%	100.00%	

- The **breakdown of the lump sum** per work package and per beneficiary is generated automatically on the basis of the individual cost estimations of each beneficiary.
- It can be the starting point of your evaluation, but you will need more information to understand what are the costs behind each lump sum share.



The detailed budget table in practice – summary tables

SUM OF ALL BENEFICIARIES (including AFFILIATED ENTITIES) FOR ALL THE WORK PACKAGES			
COST CATEGORY	ALL BENEFICIARIES (with affiliated entities)		TOTAL COSTS
	ITEMS (TOTAL)	AVERAGE COST PER ITEM	
COSTS WORK PACKAGE 1: Analysis			
A. DIRECT PERSONNEL COSTS			
A.1 Employees (or equivalent)			
SENIOR SCIENTISTS (or equivalent in the private sector)	23.0	5,813.04	133,700.00
JUNIOR SCIENTISTS (or equivalent in the private sector)	38.0	3,546.05	134,750.00
TECHNICAL PERSONNEL (or equivalent in the private sector)	5.0	5,800.00	29,000.00
ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL (or equivalent in the private sector)	0.0		0.00
OTHERS	0.0		0.00
A.2 Natural Persons under direct contract	0.0		0.00
A.3 Seconded Persons	0.0		0.00
A.4 SME owners and natural person beneficiaries	0.0		0.00
B. DIRECT SUBCONTRACTING COSTS			
	0.0		0.00
C. DIRECT PURCHASE COSTS			
C.1 Travel and subsistence	35.0	825.71	28,900.00
C.2 Equipment (complete 'Depreciation cost' sheet)			
Equipment	7.0	2,500.00	17,500.00
Infrastructure	0.0		0.00
Other assets	0.0		0.00
C.3 Other goods, works and services			
Instructions BE list WP list Lump sum breakdown Person-months overview Summary per WP BE1 BE3 BE4 BE5			

- The table 'Summary per WP' gives you an estimation of costs of all beneficiaries for each work package.



- The table '**Person-months overview**' gives you the number of person months that each beneficiary is planning to allocate to each work package.



The detailed budget table in practice – individual beneficiary sheets

Beneficiary: BE3 - BUDGET SHEET		View Summary	
SME 1			
COST CATEGORY	ITEMS	COST PER ITEM	BE TOTAL COSTS
COSTS WORK PACKAGE 1: Analysis			
A. DIRECT PERSONNEL COSTS			
A.1 Employees (or equivalent)			
SENIOR SCIENTISTS (or equivalent in the private sector)	5.0	7500	37500.00
JUNIOR SCIENTISTS (or equivalent in the private sector)	10.0	5400	54000.00
TECHNICAL PERSONNEL (or equivalent in the private sector)	5.0	5800	29000.00
ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL (or equivalent in the private sector)			0.00
OTHERS			0.00
A.2 Natural Persons under direct contract			0.00
A.3 Seconded Persons			0.00
A.4 SME owners and natural person beneficiaries		5913	0.00
B. DIRECT SUBCONTRACTING COSTS			
			0.00
C. DIRECT PURCHASE COSTS			
C.1 Travel and subsistence	5.0	1500	7500.00
C.2 Equipment (complete 'Depreciation costs' sheet)			
Equipment	2.0	3000	6000.00
Infrastructure			0.00
Other assets			0.00
C.3 Other goods, works and services			
Consumables	1.0	9000	9000.00
Services for meetings, seminars			0.00
Services for dissemination activities (including website)			0.00
Publication fees			0.00
Other (shipment, insurance, translation, etc.)			0.00
D. OTHER COST CATEGORIES			
Instructions		BE list	WP list
Lump sum breakdown		Person-months overview	Summary per WP
		BE1	BE3
		BE4	BE5

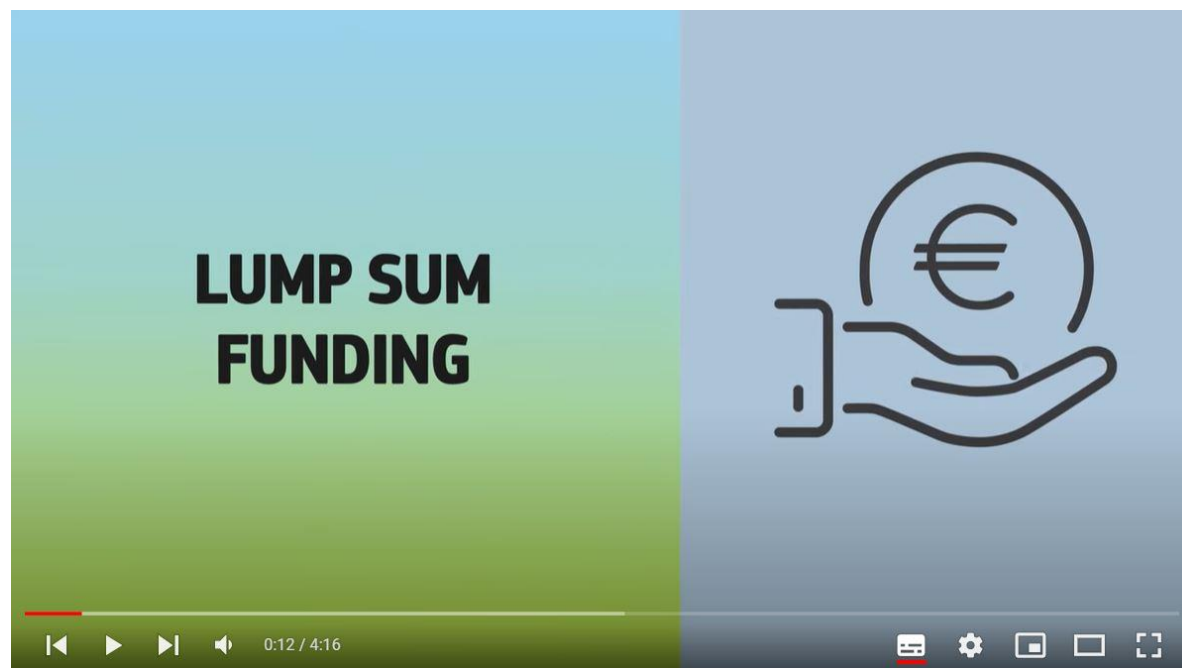
- Each beneficiary completes one individual sheet. This sheet includes one separate section for each work package.
- For each work package, beneficiaries enter cost estimations under each cost category used.
- For more details on equipment costs, you can refer to the 'Depreciation costs' sheet.
- You might find more information on some costs in the tables 3.1g, 3.1h, 3.1i, 3.1j in the Part B of the proposal. The cost estimates must be consistent with the information in these tables.



Lump sum videos

In addition to this briefing, we encourage you to watch our lump sum videos.

- Overview of lump sum funding
- Detailed budget table
- Personnel costs dashboard (coming soon)



You can watch the videos here:

[EU Science & Innovation YouTube channel](#)

HORIZON EUROPE PROPOSAL EVALUATION

EVALUATING COFUND PROPOSALS





Evaluating the excellence criterion (COFUND) (1/3)

Assess the project's objectives:

- Is the description of the general, specific and operational objectives of the proposed Partnership, based on a clear intervention logic?
- Are the objectives linked to broader policy objectives, in particular priorities set by the Commission, including links with global strategies and agreements such as the Sustainable Development Goals where the EU has committed itself, where relevant?
- Is the expected timeframe to achieve the specific objectives credible?
- Are the objectives of the Partnership pertinent to the work programme topic? Are the objectives clear, realistic, measurable, achievable and verifiable?
- Does the vision and ambition of the Partnership include information and qualitative and quantitative data from socio-economic, environmental and industrial/technological studies, recent research results, policies and strategies, as well as data on identifiable business/investment plans, as appropriate?
- Are the links and/or collaboration opportunities with other Partnership candidates and Union programmes described? (in particular if co-financing of the Partnership by other programmes, or upstream use of other programmes is planned)
- Does the proposal include a clear and realistic exit-strategy and measures for phasing-out from the Framework Programme funding?



Evaluating the excellence criterion (COFUND) (2/3)

Assess the project's objectives:

For those Partnerships where research and innovation activities are carried out directly by the consortium:

- Is the proposed work ambitious and goes beyond the state-of-the-art?
- Does the proposal include ground-breaking R&I, novel concepts and approaches, new products, services or business and organisational models?
- Where relevant, is the advance illustrated by referring to products and services already available on the market (referring to any patent or publication search carried out)?
- Is the position of the proposed work described in terms of R&I maturity (i.e. where it is situated in the spectrum from 'idea to application', or from 'lab to market')?
- Does the proposal include an indication of the Technology Readiness Level, if possible distinguishing the start and by the end of the project? (if applicable)



Evaluating the excellence criterion (COFUND) (3/3)

Assess the scientific methodology:

- Is the scientific methodology (i.e. the concepts, models and assumptions that underpin the work) clear and sound?
- Does the proposal indicate in a credible way how the area addressed by the action will benefit from the coordination of national/regional research activities?
- Does it include a credible description of the level of ambition in the collaboration and commitment of the participants in pooling national resources and coordinating their national/regional research programmes, in terms of budget, number of partners and participating countries?
- Is it clear how expertise and methods from different disciplines will be brought together and integrated in pursuit of the objectives? if applicants justify that an inter-disciplinary approach is unnecessary, is it credible?
- Has the gender dimension in research and innovation content been properly taken into account?
- Are open science practices implemented as an integral part of the proposed methodology?
- Is the research data management properly addressed?
- For topics indicating the need for the integration of social sciences and humanities, is the role of these disciplines properly addressed?



Evaluating the impact criterion (COFUND) (1/2)

Assess the proposed pathways towards impact:

- Is the contribution of the project towards the 1) expected outcomes of the topic and 2) the wider impacts, in the longer term, as specified in the respective destinations of the WP, credible?
- Are the scale and significance of the project's contribution to the expected outcomes and impacts estimated and quantified (including baselines, benchmarks and assumptions used for those estimates)?
 - 'Scale' refers to how widespread the outcomes and impacts are likely to be. For example, in terms of the size of the target group, or the proportion of that group, that should benefit over time;
 - 'Significance' refers to the importance, or value, of those benefits. For example, number of additional healthy life years; efficiency savings in energy supply.
- Are potential barriers to the expected outcomes and impacts identified (i.e. other R&I work within and beyond Horizon Europe; regulatory environment; targeted markets; user behavior), and mitigation measures proposed? Is any potential negative environmental outcome or impact (including when expected results are brought at scale, such as at commercial level) identified? Is the management of the potential negative impacts properly described?
- Does the proposal demonstrate how the proposed Partnership is expected to trigger relevant transformational changes in the broader research and innovation ecosystem (qualitative impacts) at national and/or sectorial level?



Evaluating the impact criterion (COFUND) (2/2)

Assess the measures to maximise impact –
Dissemination, exploitation and communication :

- Are the proposed dissemination, exploitation and communication measures suitable for the project and of good quality? 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.
- Are the target groups (e.g. scientific community, end users, financial actors, public at large) for these measures identified?
- Is the strategy for the management of intellectual property properly outlined and suitable to support exploitation of results?
 - If exploitation is expected primarily in non-associated third countries, is it properly justified how that exploitation is still in the Union's interest?



Evaluating the Quality of implementation (COFUND) (1/4)

Assess the proposed work plan, and the effort and resources:

- Is the work plan of good quality and effective?
- Does proposal include a more detailed annual work plan for the first year of activities? (annex to proposal part B). Is it credible and of good quality?
- Does it include quantified information so that progress can be monitored?
- Does it follow a logic structure (for example regarding the timing of work packages)?
- Are the resources allocated to the work packages in line with their objectives and deliverables?
- Are critical risks, relating to project implementation, identified and proper risk mitigation measures proposed?



Evaluating the Quality of implementation (COFUND) (2/4)

Assess the quality of participants and the consortium as a whole:

(Note that important information on role of individual participants and previous experience is included in part A of proposal)

- Does the consortium match the project's objectives, and bring together the necessary disciplinary and inter-disciplinary knowledge?
- Does the consortium include expertise in open science practices, and gender aspects of R&I, as appropriate?
- Does the proposal demonstrate how the consortium will develop a cooperation extending well beyond transnational joint calls and R&I projects, thus ensuring that structural and societal impacts contributing to the overarching policy objectives can be achieved?
- Does the proposal demonstrate how the consortium will establish a meaningful collaboration with Member States /Associated Countries and their relevant national/regional authorities and their respective commitments (e.g. by identifying and connecting with relevant national activities and programmes that allow addressing common challenges more effectively)?



Evaluating the Quality of implementation (COFUND) (3/4)

Assess the quality of participants and the consortium as a whole:

- Does the proposal describe how the consortium will build upon, strengthen and/or expand collaboration networks and initiatives that are currently existing at the EU level, beyond currently existing Partnerships, including where appropriate in Associated Countries, beyond currently existing Partnerships?
- Does the proposal justify the type and composition of partners (public, private, foundations etc.) considered necessary for this partnership and describe the ambition to include new types of partners (in particular end-users), and to ensure the necessary thematic and geographical coverage to meet the objectives?
- For topics flagged as SSH relevant, does the consortium include expertise in social sciences and humanities?
- Do the partners have access to critical infrastructure needed to carry out the project activities?
- Are the participants complementing one another (and cover the value chain, where appropriate)
- In what way does each of them contribute to the project? Does each of them have a valid role, and adequate resources in the project to fulfil that role (so they have sufficient operational capacity)?

Participants' previous publications, in particular journal articles, are expected to be open access and existing datasets FAIR and 'as open as possible, as closed as necessary'. Evaluate positively if this is sufficiently addressed.



Evaluating the Quality of implementation (COFUND) (4/4)

Assess the quality of participants and the consortium as a whole:

- If applicable, is there industrial/commercial involvement in the project to ensure exploitation of the results?
- Are the governance and management of the Partnership outlined in the proposal? Does the proposal demonstrate how the governance and management of the Partnership help to achieve the defined vision and objectives?
- Is the involvement of the Commission in the implementation if the Partnership properly described?
- Will the Partnership be established in a transparent way with no unjustified restriction in participation and with a broad, open and transparent approach towards different sectors and geographical area?
- Does the proposal properly describe the strategies and plans throughout the lifetime of the Partnership to ensure easy and non-discriminatory access to information about the initiative and dissemination of and access to results?
- Does the proposal describe how the proposed Partnership will establish a proactive recruitment policy?
- Does the proposal present the process for establishing annual work programmes?

HORIZON EUROPE PROPOSAL EVALUATION

PILOT ON BLIND EVALUATION





Pilot on Blind Evaluation

- A pilot on Blind Evaluation has been launched in the Horizon Europe WP 2023-24
- **All two-stage calls** in 2023 and 2024 are taking part in the pilot (except one call for Widening)
- It only concerns the **first stage application** of two-stage calls
- First-stage proposals of two-stage submissions are evaluated blindly; applicants may not disclose their identity in Part B of their proposal
- **NEW admissibility criterion:** Applicants submitting a proposal under the blind evaluation pilot must not disclose their **organisation names, acronyms, logos nor names of personnel** in **Part B** of their first-stage application. Proposals including indirect identification of applicants are discussed case by case.



No identification data can be mentioned by applicants in the proposal's **Part B**, otherwise **inadmissible proposal**



Pilot on Blind Evaluation

Blind evaluations require that Experts do not know the consortium structure and the applicant(s) involved.

Proposal - Part A

The IT system will automatically hide from Experts the identification (consortium) data in the Proposal Details page.

Proposal - Part B

As it is not possible to hide any information from Part B in the SEP IT tool, **it is up to the applicant to omit there any identification data in their first-stage application.**

Usually, admissibility checks, including whether proposal part B contains any participants' identification, are carried out by internal staff.

IMPORTANT: Should Experts notice any direct or indirect identification of the applicant, they should notify the staff officer.

If proposals **include any direct identification** of the applicant in Part B, the proposal will be declared **inadmissible**. **Indirect identifications** may result as well in declaring a proposal **inadmissible (analysis done case by case)**.

Guidance on direct and indirect identification of the applicant can be found in the [1st stage Standard Application Form template](#).



Pilot on Blind Evaluation

- Experts should under **no circumstances exchange and discuss** their guesses regarding the identity of the applicant(s) among each other.
- Experts should evaluate the proposal blindly, **without taking extra steps** to investigate based on the information included in the proposal, who is behind the project.
- Listing R&I activities, including on-going or finished projects, does not necessarily entail that the applicants are also participants of those mentioned activities. Evaluators should **not perform extensive checks** of the project partners of the listed projects in order to possibly identify current applicants.



References to publications

The proposal can include references to participants' own publications if there is **no emphasis** that the publication is authored by one or more of the proposers.

For example, the following statement will **not be admissible**:

'For climate impact, we will use greenhouse gas emission intensities, following a methodology developed previously by a project partner (Dalin et al.)'

but the following would be ok:

'For climate impact, we will use greenhouse gas emission intensities, following the methodology described in Dalin et al.'



References to R&I activities

- **Names of past projects** can be mentioned, but it cannot be explicitly indicated that the proposal is a continuation of these projects or that the partners from the past projects overlap with project partners of the current proposal.
- If the applicant would like to **refer to other R&I activities as their own**, then the name of the past/on-going project cannot be mentioned, and the project should not be identifiable through its description.
- The **name of the city and its characteristics** can be mentioned, provided that there is no explicit indication in the proposal, that any of the applicants are from this location (even if this would be in reality the case). Otherwise, if the participant wants to mention that one of project partners is coming from/ is closely connected with the given city, then the city name should not be mentioned and the city should be only vaguely described by its characteristics, which would not allow for its identification.



Examples of statements resulting in inadmissible proposals

Examples of statements resulting in inadmissible proposals

- ‘Most of project’s participants have been involved in the previous H2020 project, NANOCOM...’
- ‘For climate impact, we will use greenhouse gas emission intensities, following a methodology developed previously by a project partner (Dalin et al.)’
- ‘This task in WP3 will be based on outputs generated by some participants of the consortium’, (with in the footnote a link to a YouTube video or webpage where participants can be identified)
- ‘The consortium includes the largest research institute in France’



Examples of statements resulting in inadmissible proposals

- 'Partner 3 is the leading company in Spain for wind turbine installation'
- 'Our current research expands our previous findings described in a recently published article (Wiliam et al, 2022)'
- 'The consortium consists of leaders in the high tech industry, including the biggest in terms of capital constructor of micro chips'
- 'The coordinator organisation was the one who first introduced the concept of m-RNA in vaccines'
- 'The consortium consists of 2 research centres (including an international one based in Geneva) and the oldest university in Belgium'



Assessment of the pilot on Blind Evaluation

- Experts evaluators are asked in one **additional question** whether they were **able to guess the identity of the applicants (at least one)** behind the proposal, even if the proposal was **fully admissible** because it did not contain any direct or indirect reference to the identity of the participants.
- Should the answer to this question be 'yes', Experts are asked to provide their guess who the applicant(s) is.
- The purpose of this question is to measure whether true blind evaluations are possible given the operational and legal context of the Horizon Europe evaluation procedure. The feedback from the Experts will contribute to the assessment of the pilot on Blind Evaluations.
- Experts should not share and discuss their guesses regarding the identity of the applicant(s) among each other.