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Assessment of Lump Sum Funding in Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe

Analysis of implementation data and feedback from surveys

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I. SUMMARY

The European Commission uses lump sum funding as a means of simplifying EU grants. Following a pilot under the final three years of the Horizon 2020 programme, which found that the approach was generally popular among users, lump sum funding has been gradually introduced more widely in Horizon Europe.

This report was prepared by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Research and Innovation. It aims to follow up on our 2021 assessment of lump sum funding ⁽¹⁾ with a new, in-depth analysis of lump sum grants, based on comprehensive data and extensive surveys of participants and experts.

Key results are that lump sums **continue to be popular** with users and are perceived as **reducing the administrative burden**. Lump sum funding puts **more focus on the content** of Horizon Europe grants and **does not change the functioning** of research and innovation projects. This confirms and extends the positive findings of the 2021 report.

This analysis is based on the state of play in early 2024, which gives us a far richer source of objective data than for the 2021 report. This provides a good basis for a meaningful analysis of how lump sums work, covering all stages of the project lifecycle from proposal writing to the end of the project.

The analysis of our implementation data reveals that there are no significant differences in the functioning of lump sum and actual cost grants. The distribution of lump sum applications across types of organisations does not differ much from the distribution for Horizon Europe as a whole. In addition, the amount of funding per participant is extremely similar in lump sum and actual cost grants.

The data also shows that there are no substantial payment reductions under lump sum funding. A large majority of successful applicants to lump sum grants received the entirety of the initially requested lump sum budget, with no or little reduction at any point in the process. Participants therefore have no grounds to fear that their work will not be paid.

The main area of divergence between the implementation of the two funding models is the generally higher number of work packages in lump sum grants. This is understandable, given that applicants may split work packages with a long duration along the reporting periods to optimise cashflow. However, where the splitting option for work packages has been used, applicants have not made excessive use of it, as the average funding per lump sum work package is still very sizeable.

To complement the implementation data, we addressed surveys to participants – both successful and unsuccessful – and to experts involved in lump sum funding. A large majority of these also had experience with actual cost funding, allowing them to compare the two approaches. The sizeable number of responses, more than 3 600 in total, enabled a meaningful analysis of the perception of lump sums.

The survey results show clearly that participants and experts are very satisfied with lump sum funding. The great majority of respondents agree that lump sum funding leads to an overall reduction of administrative burden for beneficiaries and that it shifts the focus from financial controls to the content of projects.

(1) [Assessment of the Horizon Europe Lump Sum Pilot \(2018-2020\)](#)

Feedback from participants was generally favourable across all groups of participants and sizes of grant budget and consortium. A large majority of respondents confirmed that lump sums allow them to manage their project flexibly and make financial reporting much easier. Fewer respondents – but still a clear majority – found the detailed budget table sufficiently user-friendly, and we acknowledge that completing it is an additional task.

Likewise, feedback from the experts was generally positive. The great majority are confident that their assessment of the budget ensured that the final lump sum was reasonable and needed for the activities proposed. More than half the experts responding to the survey consider that the detailed budget table is clear and has the appropriate level of detail for them to perform a sound budget evaluation, even though many of them consider this a demanding task. They also considered that the quality of proposals is stable when compared to actual cost proposals.

We are aware of concerns highlighted by some stakeholder groups but there is no evidence that these have materialised. In particular, lump sum grants have not led to higher financial risk for participants. Also, lump sums do not appear to increase the number of amendments to the grant agreement, which would lead to greater workload for beneficiaries. Newcomers and SMEs are well represented in lump sum projects and are particularly satisfied with the benefits of lump sum funding.

Lump sums are still a relatively new approach within Horizon Europe. There is therefore still scope for further fine-tuning of processes, as confirmed by most survey respondents. From the feedback received, we have identified room for improvement in four main aspects: guidance on splitting work packages; the user-friendliness of the lump sum budget table; the quality of the evaluation feedback; and clarity on record-keeping and controls. DG Research and Innovation will follow up these points and will continue to fine-tune the methodology.

To summarise, the data demonstrates that lump sum funding does not introduce any significant biases and is popular among users. Moreover, lump sums are particularly welcomed by beneficiaries of grants involving up to 20 participants and with budgets up to EUR 10 million. It therefore appears that lump sum funding is essentially fit for all kinds of grants. For the very largest grants, some caution is in order as we still lack sufficient experience in this area, and we acknowledge that setting up the lump sum budget becomes complex for large consortia. The lump sum approach is nevertheless fit for further roll-out in Horizon Europe and beyond.

II. SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

Lump sum funding in Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe

The European Commission wants to simplify EU grants, and the use of lump sums is one of the measures to achieve this. Lump sums make grant management easier by removing the obligation to report on actual costs. This is considered a key step towards lower administrative burden, fewer errors, easier access to funding, and more focus on content – all of which are important goals.

DG Research and Innovation is monitoring lump sum grants closely because they are still a relatively new method in Horizon Europe, in order to avoid unwanted side effects. While lump sums are used in multiple EU programmes, the present report focuses on lump sums in the research and innovation (R&I) Framework Programmes Horizon 2020 (2014-2020) and Horizon Europe (2021-2027).

As part of the wider initiative to increase the use of simplified cost options, the Commission tested lump sum funding in a pilot during the last three years of the Horizon 2020 programme (i.e. 2018-2020). Two studies on the pilot, one by the Commission ⁽²⁾ and one by the European Parliament ⁽³⁾, found that the approach tested is generally popular among users and works in practice. On this basis, the Commission decided to use lump sums more widely in Horizon Europe.

Figure 1 provides an overview of the lump sum grants that were signed under Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe by January 2024. Since 2018, we have received more than 6 000 eligible lump sum proposals. We have signed more than 1 300 lump sum grants, and more than 500 of these have been completed. This is a much bigger pool of grants than was available for the first lump sum assessment in 2021, allowing for a more reliable analysis and covering all stages of the project lifecycle, including final payments.

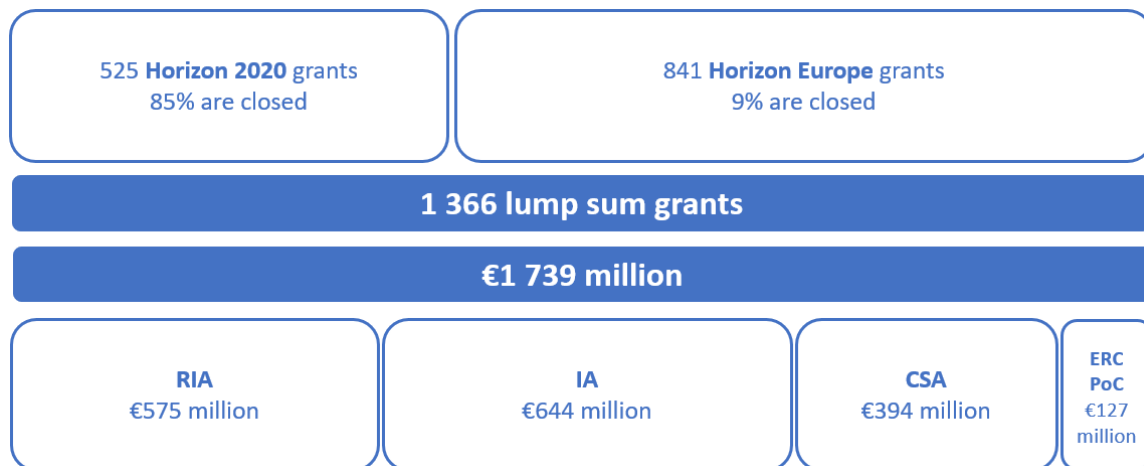


Figure 1. Lump sum funding until January 2024. While nearly all lump sum grants under Horizon Europe are still active, most lump sum grants under Horizon 2020 had been completed. The percentages of closed grants reflect the situation as of May 2024. The corresponding total EU contribution of EUR 1.7 billion is broken down by type of action (RIA - Research and Innovation Action, IA – Innovation Action, CSA – Coordination and Support Action, ERC PoC – European Research Council Proof of Concept).

⁽²⁾ [Assessment of the Horizon Europe Lump Sum Pilot \(2018-2020\)](#)

⁽³⁾ [European Parliament \(STOA\) study on lump sums in Horizon 2020 \(May 2022\)](#)

In the first two years of Horizon Europe, lump sums accounted for only 2% of the budget for calls for proposals, in line with the expectation of many stakeholders that we introduce lump sums cautiously. In 2021, lump sum funding was limited notably to the ERC Proof of Concept (PoC) call and several topics under the European Innovation Ecosystems (EIE) work programme part. In 2022, lump sum topics were introduced in some Pillar II calls and their use was continued from Horizon 2020 in the work programme of the Europe Rail Joint Undertaking. During this period, DG Research and Innovation improved the guidance and support for lump sums, following up on the main recommendations from the two studies mentioned above.

Since 2023, Horizon Europe has started to use lump sums in a significant way. More than 200 lump sum topics were published with the ‘main’ work programme 2023–2024, mostly in Pillar II (thematic clusters). With the work programmes for 2024, lump sum funding was also extended to Pillar I (ERC – European Research Council Advanced Grants) and Pillar III (EIC – European Innovation Council main funding schemes). This will increase the share of lump sum funding up to around 27%.

As shown in figure 1, most of the budget committed to lump sum grants so far in Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe has been for Innovation Action (IA) and Research and Innovation Action (RIA) grants, whereas a higher number of grants has been signed for smaller ERC PoC and Coordination and Support Actions (CSA).

Note that the calls in the work programmes for 2023 and 2024 are still being implemented and will give rise to many more grants still to be signed in 2024 and 2025. Figure 1 should therefore be considered a snapshot of the state of play.

Methodology – implementation data

Implementation data in this report includes data from published work programmes⁽⁴⁾ and internal data on proposals and projects. Data on proposals and grants was extracted from our database in Q1 2024 to analyse the implementation of lump sums and compare it with the implementation of grants based on actual costs.

As for the previous assessment on lump sum funding, we excluded the ERC Proof of Concept (PoC) calls and grants from most analyses, since they have different implementation arrangements from other lump sum grants which prevent a meaningful comparison. In particular, ERC PoC calls are for mono-beneficiary projects and are open only to principal investigators in one of the ERC main grants, the amount of the lump sum is pre-fixed in the call for proposal (i.e. proposals cannot deviate from this amount, nor can the lump sum be changed following evaluation), and submission is simpler as applicants do not have to provide a detailed budget table. Since 35% of the eligible proposals were submitted to ERC Proof of Concept (PoC) calls and just over half of the selected proposals are ERC PoC projects, with a success rate of 44%, including these in the overall analysis would distort the results.

As much as possible, the analysis for this report is based on Horizon Europe data, since this reflects the latest approach for lump sums. From programming, through proposal submission and evaluation, and grant management, most aspects are fully covered by Horizon Europe. Horizon 2020 data have only been used for comparing lump sum and actual cost grants when data for

⁽⁴⁾ Work programme and call documents are available [here](#). Since the cut-off date for the data used in this report was Q1 2024, figures relating to budgets and topics in published work programmes do not include any amendments to the work programmes adopted in 2024.

Horizon Europe were not sufficient or unavailable (e.g. for the analysis on the number of grant amendments and final payments).

For the section comparing lump sum and actual cost grants, most of the analyses are limited to grants under Pillar II of Horizon Europe. The grants funded within this part of the programme generally share the same approach (i.e. collaborative projects with a balanced mix of types of organisations participating in the consortia). This allows for a meaningful comparison between the two types of funding. The types of action used by the lump sum grants in Pillar II so far are Research and Innovation Actions (RIA), Innovation Actions (IA) and Coordination and Support Actions (CSA).

Methodology – online surveys

DG Research and Innovation launched two surveys between 20 September and 31 October 2023, targeting participants and expert evaluators involved in lump sum proposals and grants.

We addressed the survey to 13 759 **participants** in lump sum grants and proposals:

- 983 beneficiaries of lump sum grants from the Horizon 2020 lump sum pilot. We sent an invitation to every primary coordinator contact and to the most active participant contacts available in our internal database.
- 12 776 applicants to lump sum topics under Horizon Europe (both successful and unsuccessful). We sent an invitation to the main contact of every partner involved in an evaluated proposal, whether their proposal had been successful or not. The proposals included a limited number (resulting in 5.4% of the survey invitations and 5.3% of the survey responses) which had been evaluated for the first stage of two topics with two-stage evaluation, and where the second stage evaluation was still ongoing.

We targeted all the lump sum topics under Horizon Europe that had a submission deadline before April 2023 (including two topics with two-stage evaluation). As for the previous assessment on lump sum funding, we excluded the ERC Proof of Concept (PoC) topics.

We received 2 982 answers from participants in total, equivalent to a response rate of 21%. Among the respondents, the majority also have experience with standard (i.e. actual cost) R&I proposals and grants and therefore can compare the lump sum approach with other forms of funding. 54% of respondents were involved in lump sum proposals that were unsuccessful under Horizon Europe. This sizeable sample minimizes any bias in favour of lump sum funding that could arise from respondents only involved in successful proposals.

Unsuccessful participants were only asked to answer questions about their experience with lump sums related to proposal submission and evaluation. The grant management questions in the survey were addressed only to participants who had declared earlier in the survey that they had participated in a successful proposal. This explains the different N in the various replies.

We also sent a survey to 1 016 **expert evaluators** for lump sum proposals under Horizon Europe. We targeted experts involved in all the lump sum topics under Horizon Europe that had a deadline submission before April 2023 (including two topics with two-stage evaluation). As for the survey of participants, we excluded expert evaluators for the ERC Proof of Concept (PoC) topics. We received 650 answers from experts, equivalent to a response rate of 62%.

81% of the experts who responded had also been involved in evaluating proposals for ‘standard’ (i.e. actual cost) topics in Horizon 2020 or Horizon Europe, and so were well-placed to comment on the differences with lump sum proposals.

The full survey results for both participants and experts are set out in section VI. Appendices.

III. IMPLEMENTATION DATA

In contrast to the earlier assessment on lump sum funding (October 2021), there is now data evidence from a sufficient number of lump sum projects which have gone through reporting and payments (including final payments) to enable a comprehensive analysis of how lump sums work, from proposal writing to the end of the project.

All data reflects the state of play in Q1 2024. Please see section II. Scope and Methodology for more information.

Lump sum calls

Under Horizon Europe, 314 topics using lump sum funding have been published so far (work programmes covering the period 2021 to 2024), corresponding to a total budget of EUR 4.7 billion (see table 1). Most of these topics are under Pillar II (thematic clusters). An important share of the lump sum budget is also allocated to Pillar I and Pillar III, following the extension of lump sum funding to ERC Advanced Grants and several EIC funding schemes from 2024.

Table 1. Horizon Europe topics using lump sum funding (2021-2024). The majority of lump sum topics, with nearly half of the total lump sum budget, are in Pillar II. In contrast, the highest number of lump sum grants is expected in Pillar I. The figures are based on the work programmes published for 2021 to 2024.

Programme part	Number of lump sum topics	Expected number of lump sum grants	Total indicative budget (EUR million)	Total indicative budget (%)
Pillar I	27	1 122	931	19%
Pillar II	209	468	2 086	44%
Pillar III	26	307	937	19%
Widening & ERA	5	185	331	7%
Joint undertakings ⁽⁵⁾	46	46	405	9%
Horizontal support	1	1	4	0.1%
Total	314	2 129	4 694	100%

Lump sum funding was introduced in Horizon Europe in a gradual manner, with a significant wave of lump sum topics added in 2023-2024 (see figure 2). The total budget in 2024 for the Horizon Europe work programmes is EUR 10.3 billion, of which EUR 2.8 billion will be used for lump sum topics (27%).

⁽⁵⁾ EU Rail Joint Undertaking (2018-2024) and Clean Hydrogen Joint Undertaking (2024). So far, no other Joint Undertakings use lump sum funding.

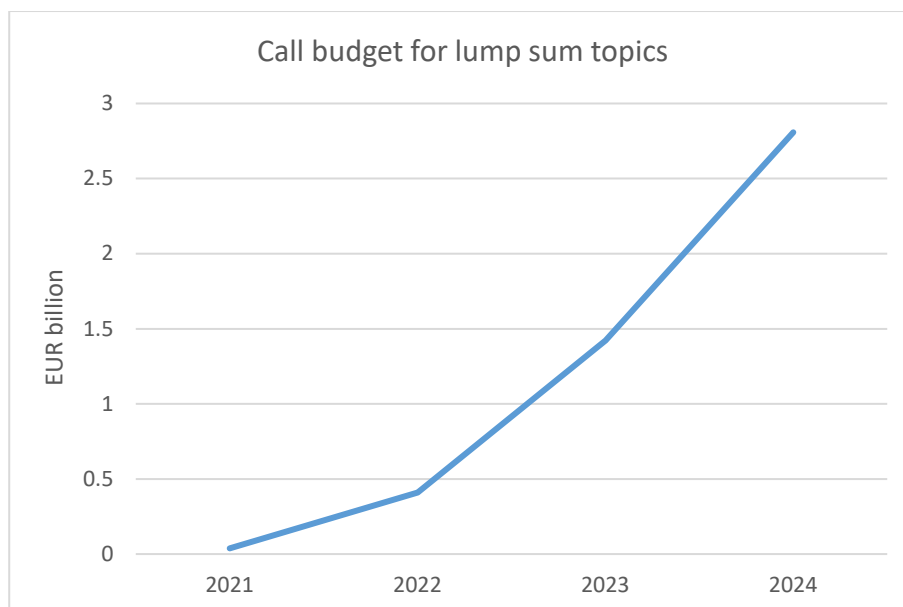


Figure 2. Total annual call budget for topics using lump sum funding. Budget amounts stem from published Horizon Europe work programmes (2021-2024), as of Q1 2024. The first significant wave of lump sums started in 2023 and 2024.

It is worth noting that this calculation includes parts of the work programme for which lump sum funding should not or cannot be used (e.g. actions that use a simplified cost option already, such as Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions funded through unit costs, prizes, expert contracts, etc.). In addition, the calls in the work programmes for 2023 and 2024 are still being implemented and will give rise to many more grants still to be signed in 2024 and 2025. Furthermore, the final budgets per topic and/or call may change following evaluation by up to 20% compared to the total budget indicated in each individual part of the work programme. For these reasons, the final proportion of the total 2024 work programme budget allocated to lump sum grants may diverge from this 27% *ex ante* calculation once all grants have been signed.

Lump sum proposals

This section focuses on lump sum proposals in Horizon Europe. For information on lump sum proposals in Horizon 2020, please see the 2021 assessment ⁽⁶⁾.

From 2021 until the end of 2023, 4 816 eligible lump sum proposals were submitted. These proposals contained 35 981 eligible applications (i.e. 35 981 participating organisations). If a given organisation participates in N eligible proposals, this is counted as N eligible applications.

Figure 3 shows the distribution of eligible applications across types of organisations. There is no significant difference between the types of organisations in lump sum proposals and all proposals submitted under Horizon Europe. We excluded the ERC PoC scheme from this analysis (see section II. Scope and Methodology), but even with ERC PoC proposals included the distribution of organisations involved remains very similar for lump sums and the rest of Horizon Europe (data not shown).

⁽⁶⁾ [Assessment of the Horizon Europe Lump Sum Pilot \(2018-2020\)](#), pages 8-13

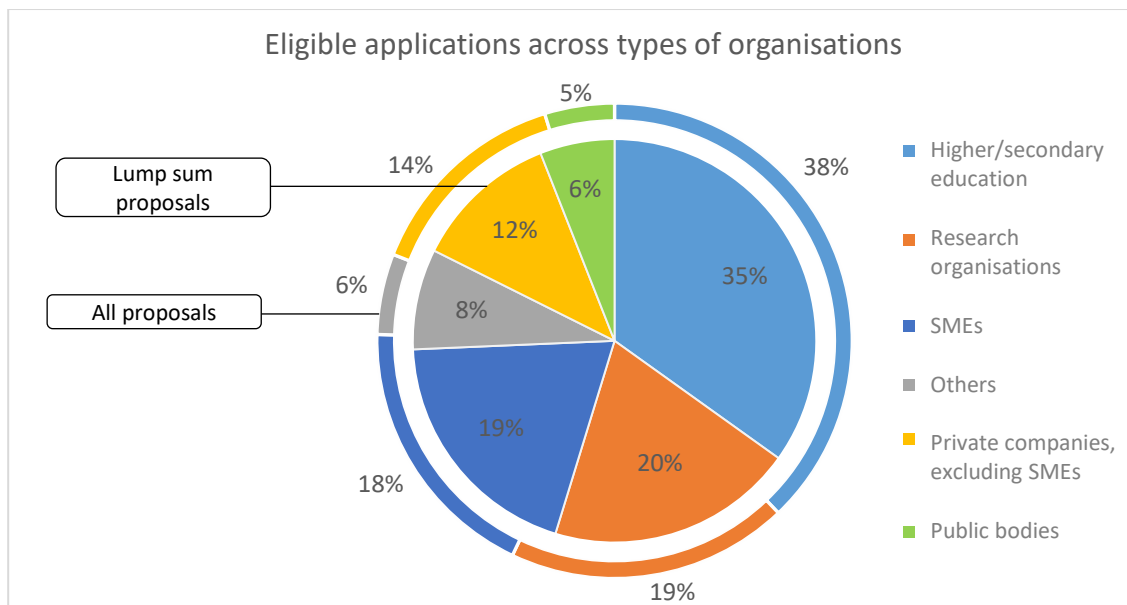


Figure 3. Distribution of eligible applications across types of organisations in Horizon Europe. The distribution for lump sum proposals, (inner circle, excluding ERC PoC, n=34 485) is very similar to the distribution for all Horizon Europe proposals (outer ring, n=319 821). This analysis comprises all proposals submitted by the end of 2023.

To obtain the success rate for lump sum proposals, we looked at the 3 862 eligible lump sum proposals that had been fully evaluated by 15 March 2024. Among them, 1 139 proposals were successful, corresponding to a success rate of 29.5%. This comparatively high value is, in large part, due to the high success rate of ERC PoC proposals. Without the ERC PoC scheme, the success rate was 21.5% (see figure 4), still noticeably higher than the 17% ⁽⁷⁾ success rate for Horizon Europe as a whole.

It should be noted that the success rate varies substantially across the different parts of Horizon Europe (a detailed breakdown is available on the [Horizon dashboard](#)) and the different success rates observed for lump sum proposals and Horizon Europe as a whole are likely due to this general variation.

When looking at a more homogenous part of the programme and examining the success rate only within Pillar II, we currently see a success rate of 18.8% for lump sum proposals, which is much closer to that of Pillar II as a whole (18%). The small difference observed does not appear to be due to a systematically higher success rate when using lump sums.

⁽⁷⁾ Value extracted from the [Horizon dashboard](#) on 10/04/2024.

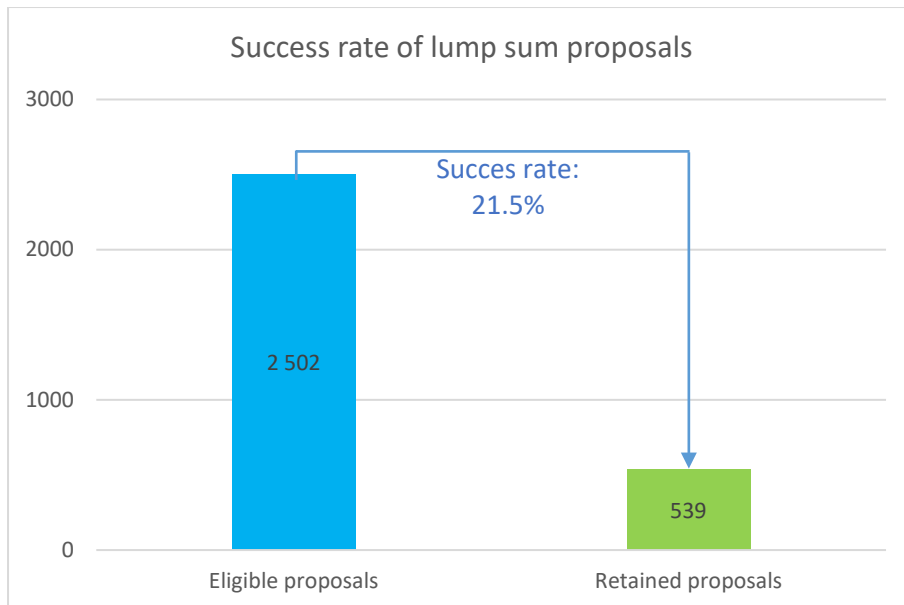


Figure 4. Success rate of lump sum proposals in Horizon Europe. Approximately 1 in 5 lump sum proposals were successful. This analysis comprises only eligible lump sum proposals submitted by the end of 2023 that were evaluated by 15 March 2024 (excluding proposals for the ERC PoC calls).

Lump sum grants

An overview of lump sum grants signed so far is available in figure 1, in section II of this report.

By the end of 2023, the total value of lump sum grants in Horizon 2020 and in Horizon Europe was EUR 1.7 billion, 74% of this budget being under Horizon Europe. Looking just at Horizon Europe so far, close to 60% of the lump sum budget has been committed in Pillar II.

Size of lump sum grants

Of the 1 366 lump sum grants signed by the end of 2023, most were small grants of less than EUR 3 million. Only 1% were big grants with a value above EUR 10 million. This pattern is observed for lump sum grants under both Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe (see table 2).

Table 2. Lump sum grants by budget size. Almost all lump sum grants have a small or mid-sized budget. Only 1% have a budget above EUR 10 million. The figures comprise all lump sum grants in Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe that were signed by the end of 2023.

Grant size (budget)	Number of grants			
	Horizon 2020	Horizon Europe	TOTAL	(%)
Small (< €3 million)	489	702	1 191	(88%)
Mid-sized (€3 million - €10 million)	26	129	155	(11%)
Large (> €10 million)	10	10	20	(1%)
TOTAL	525	841	1 366	(100%)

This pattern is due to the nature of topics in the work programmes using lump sum funding. The Horizon 2020 lump sum pilot showed that lump sum funding works for all the main types of actions, all sizes of projects and in all thematic areas. However, feedback from projects with small to medium-size budgets was the most positive. Therefore, topics expecting to lead to small or mid-sized projects were identified as good candidates for using lump sum funding going forward and the internal guidance for work programme preparation in Horizon Europe was adjusted accordingly. A lower budget for projects with lump sum funding is therefore understandable and demonstrates that the guidance has been followed.

Conversely, lump sum funding has been chosen less often for topics leading to large grants. Note that most of the large grants are found in the EU Rail Joint Undertaking (see table 1 in section III above).

Reduction of the maximum grant amount after evaluation

The budget of lump sum proposals is assessed by independent experts at the evaluation stage. If the cost estimations provided by the applicants are clearly overestimated and/or not in line with the proposed activities, experts can either recommend a reduction in the lump sum amount for a specific beneficiary/work package, or the reallocation of the lump sum shares among beneficiaries/work packages.

In such cases, budget recommendations from experts might lead to a lower lump sum amount being fixed in the grant agreement compared to the amount originally requested in the proposal. To understand the frequency and size of these budget reductions, we compared the maximum grant amount in the proposal with the maximum grant amount in the signed grant agreement in a representative sample of lump sum projects (see figure 5).

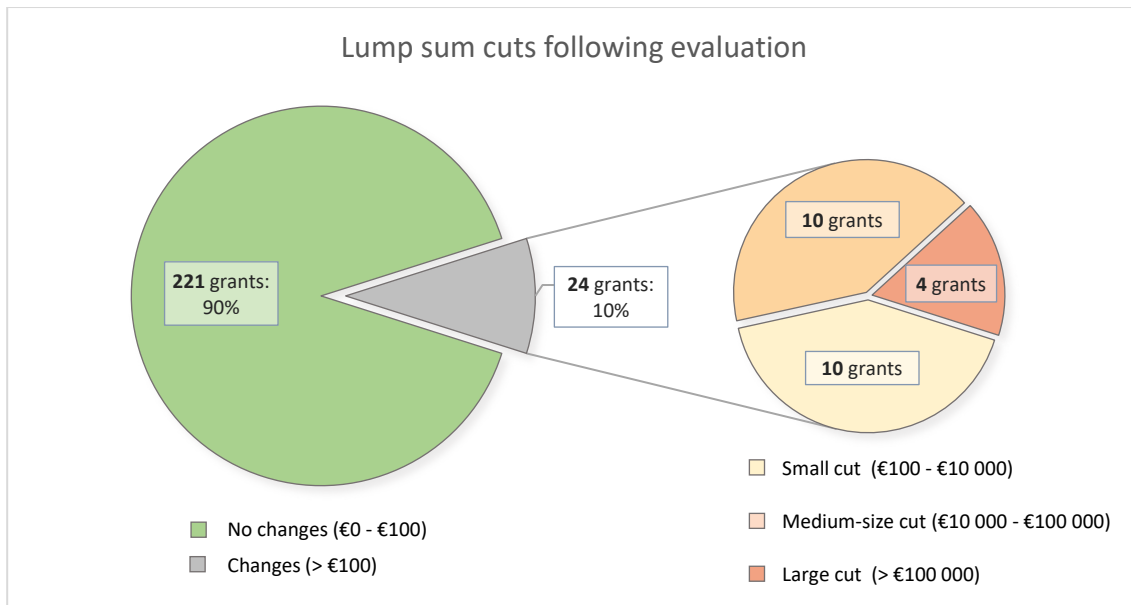


Figure 5. Lump sum cuts following evaluation. The figure shows the frequency and size of budget cuts following evaluation of the proposed lump sum budget. The analysis is based on a subset of 245 Horizon Europe lump sum grants. Starting from all Horizon Europe grants that were signed by the end of 2023, the sample was constructed by excluding ERC PoC grants (see section II. Scope and Methodology). In addition, grants with participations from Switzerland or the United Kingdom were excluded because these countries could only participate as Associated Partners during the period analysed. This led to budget corrections that were unrelated to the evaluation of the lump sum budget. The final sample of 245 grants contained 26 cases where the accepted lump sum was lower than the lump sum requested in the proposal. In 24 out of these 26 grants, the reduced lump sum was the result of the lump sum budget evaluation. The remaining 2 cases were unrelated to the lump sum methodology (i.e. due to beneficiaries not eligible for funding whose budget was removed during the grant preparation phase).

Figure 5 shows that a large majority (90%) of lump sum budgets were funded as requested in the proposal, while a small number (10%) experienced a cut of more than EUR 100 after the evaluation. In the 10% of cases that were subject to a cut, the cuts ranged from EUR 178 to EUR 290 000, with a median of EUR 24 414 (corresponding to a median reduction of 0.7%).

Overall, looking at the representative sample of 245 grants analysed, lump sum proposals selected for funding were subject to a reduction of 0.2% on average.

Reduction of the maximum grant amount at the end of the project

In lump sum grants, interim payments are made in accordance with the lump sum shares for work packages completed during the reporting period and accepted by the EU project officer in charge of the project. At the end of the project, it is also possible for work packages to be declared only partially completed, either by the project coordinator or by the project officer. In such cases, the lump sum share will be paid partially, in line with the degree of completion accepted by the Commission.

Figure 6 shows that 96% of the 520 closed lump sum grants in Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe were paid in full, while a small minority of 21 grants (4%) were paid partially. Overall, lump sum grants were paid on average to more than 99% of the maximum grant amount.

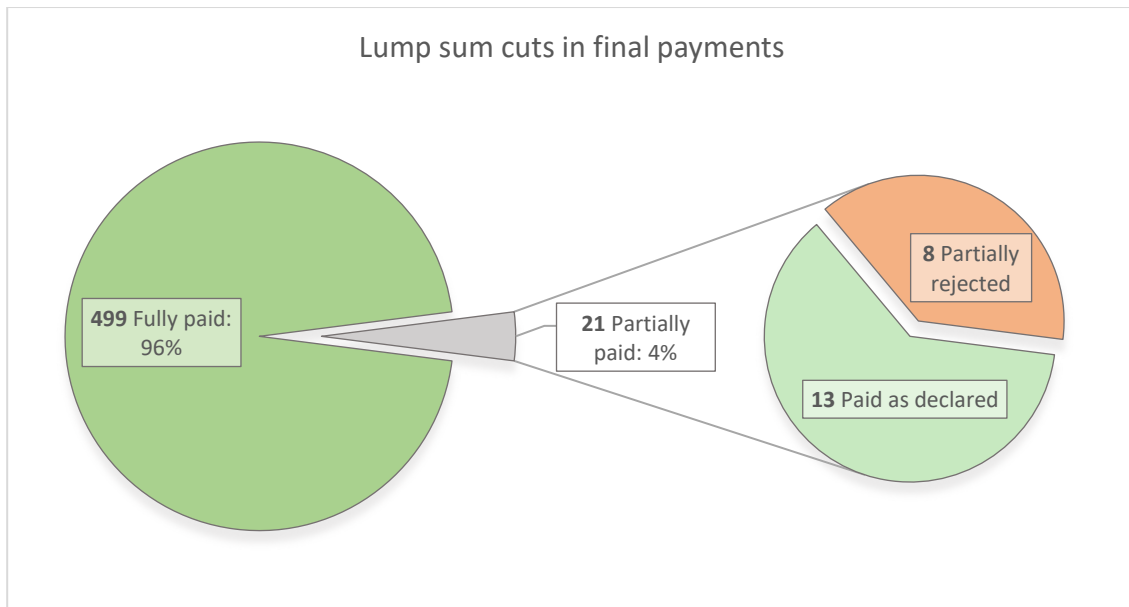


Figure 6. Frequency of cuts in final lump sum payments. The sample analysed includes all 520 lump sum grants that were closed by 23 May 2024 (445 grants under Horizon 2020 and 75 grants under Horizon Europe). Out of these 520 closed grants, 21 grants were not paid in full at the final payment. For 13 grants, the partial payments were paid as declared (i.e. in line with the percentage of completion of the work packages as reported by the consortium), while for the other 8 grants, the project officer decided a lower percentage of work package completion than what was declared by the consortium at the final reporting period.

When analysing only the partially paid grants, a high percentage of the maximum grant amount was still paid (94.1% on average), showing that cuts at final payments do not usually represent a big share of the total maximum grant amount. Among the 21 grants that were paid partially, 13 were partially paid as declared (i.e. the payment corresponded to the level of completion reported by the consortium, with one or more work packages only partially completed). In 8 out of 520 completed grants, the lump sum was partially rejected (i.e. the final lump sum amount was lower than requested because the project officer partially rejected one or more work packages). For these 8 grants, the median percentage of grant reduction of the lump sum was 11%.

Work packages can also be rejected at the interim payment, and this affects approximately 1% of the work packages declared as completed by the consortium. As a result, these work packages are not paid at that point in time but are expected to be completed in a subsequent reporting period. There is no effect on the final lump sum amount, provided the work packages concerned can be accepted by the end of the project.

The data show that the checks during evaluation, over the course of the project, and at the final payment consistently led to reductions in a small but significant number of cases. On the other hand, most lump sum grants (approximately 85%) received 100% of the initially requested lump sum budget, with no reduction at any point in the process. This suggests that the lump sum methodology works as intended and is effective in identifying those cases where costs were overestimated or where the work was not completed as agreed.

Comparison between lump sums and actual costs

For most of the analyses in this section, we limited the comparison to lump sum and actual cost grants under Pillar II of Horizon Europe, because the grants funded within this part of the programme generally share the same approach (i.e. collaborative projects with a balanced mix of types of organisations participating in the consortia). This allows for a meaningful comparison between the two types of funding.

Some of the analyses are broken down only by Research and Innovation Actions (RIA), Innovation Actions (IA) and Coordination and Support Actions (CSA), because these are the types of action used by the lump sum grants in Pillar II, and are also the most common types of action in this part of the programme.

Horizon 2020 data have only been used when data for Horizon Europe were not sufficient to draw a meaningful comparison between lump sum and actual cost grants (e.g. for the analysis on the number of grant amendments).

Funding

Our data show that lump sums do not significantly change the amount of funding per grant or per participant. This is in line with the Horizon Europe approach to lump sums, which does not intend to alter the level of funding in any way.

– Funding per grant (maximum grant amount)

Figure 7 shows that the amount of funding per grant is rather similar in lump sum and actual cost grants, especially for the RIA and CSA type of actions. A noticeable difference between the two funding models is only observed for IA. Here the median difference is around EUR 1 million.

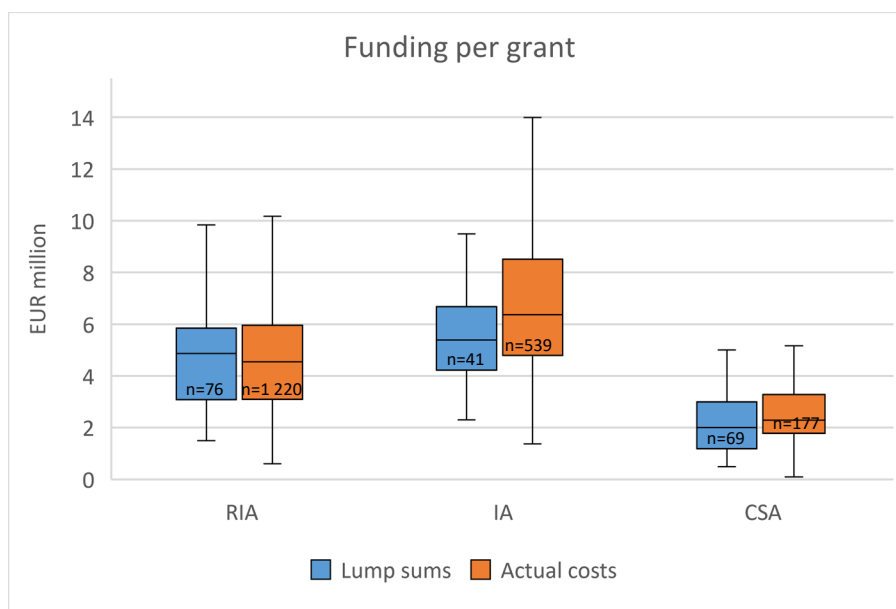


Figure 7. Funding per grant in lump sum and actual cost grants. Overall, the amount of funding is similar in lump sum and actual cost grants. The figure shows the results for the three main types of action (RIA, IA, CSA). To allow for a meaningful comparison between lump sums and actual costs, the analysis is limited to Pillar II of Horizon Europe. Box plots follow standard conventions. They show the interquartile range between the 25th and the 75th percentiles (boxes) and the

range between the minimum and maximum values (whiskers). Median values are indicated as horizontal lines in the boxes. N is the number of grants.

One explanation for the difference observed for IA grants may be that the maximum grant amount requested by the consortium relies to a large extent on the indicative amount per grant published in the work programme. It is understandable that lump sum grants tend to result in a lower budget than actual cost grants, since the internal guidance for work programme preparation indicates that lump sum funding is more appropriate – and hence should primarily be used – for topics aiming at smaller or mid-sized grants (see above).

– **Funding per participant**

Figure 8 shows that the amount of funding per participant is very similar in lump sum and actual cost grants.

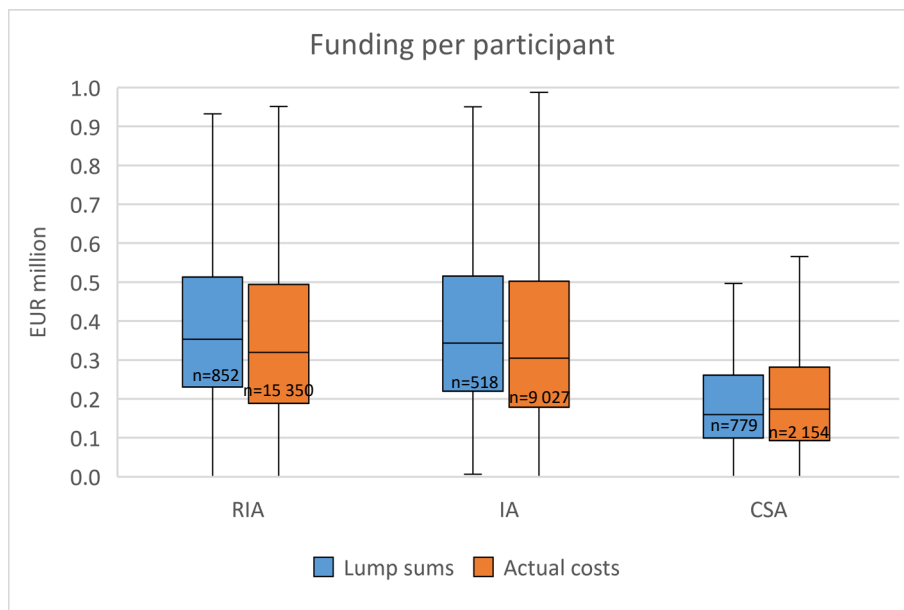


Figure 8. Funding per participant in lump sum and actual cost grants. Overall, the amount per participant is very similar for both funding models. The figure shows the results for the three main types of action (RIA, IA, CSA). To allow for a meaningful comparison between lump sums and actual costs, the analysis is limited to Pillar II of Horizon Europe and comprises only participants receiving funding (e.g. excluding Associated Partners). Box plots follow standard conventions as described in figure 7. N is the number of participations.

Consortium

– **Consortium size**

Figure 9 shows that the median number of participants in a consortium is rather similar for RIA and CSA projects, regardless of the funding model, being only slightly higher overall in actual cost grants than in lump sum grants. The noticeable difference is for Innovation Actions (IA).

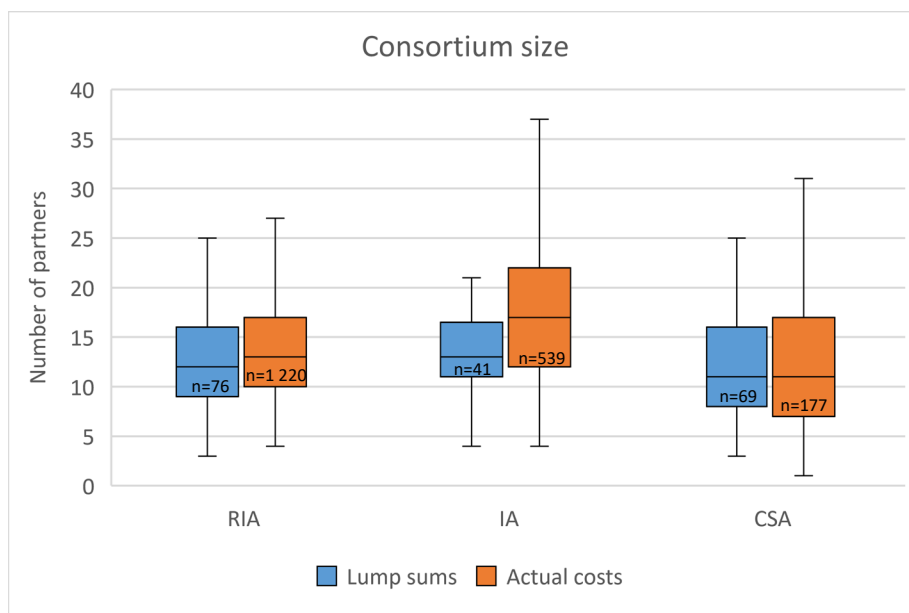


Figure 9. Consortium size in lump sum and actual cost grants. A sizeable difference is observed for Innovation Actions. The figure shows the results for the three main types of action (RIA, IA, CSA). To allow for a meaningful comparison between lump sums and actual costs, the analysis is limited to Pillar II of Horizon Europe. Box plots follow standard conventions as described in figure 7. N is the number of grants.

One explanation for the difference observed for Innovation Actions (IAs) is that grants with a larger budget tend to have a higher number of participants. The higher number of partners in actual cost IAs (as seen in figure 9) is therefore fully consistent with the higher budget of actual cost IAs (see figure 7 above), as well as the internal guidance on when the use of lump sum is more appropriate.

– Share of SMEs and share of newcomers

Our data show that the level of participation of SMEs and newcomers is very similar in lump sum proposals and grants to their share in actual cost proposals and grants. For proposals, we observe almost no difference for Pillar II as a whole (22.3% of newcomer participation in lump sum proposals compared to 22.6% for actual cost proposals, and 22.5% versus 22.9% respectively for SME participation). For grants in Pillar II, there is a slightly higher level of SME participation and a slightly lower level of newcomer participation in lump sum grants compared to actual cost grants. However, we consider that these differences (especially at proposal level, but also at grant level) are not statistically significant, given the large variation across and within the six clusters of Pillar II.

Figure 10 shows that there is significant variation across the various clusters in Pillar II of Horizon Europe between the share of SMEs and the share of newcomers. However, there is no significant difference in the average values of SME and newcomer participations when comparing lump sum and actual cost grants. In fact, the variation across the various clusters is greater than the difference between SME and newcomer participation in lump sum and actual cost grants within the same cluster.

One noticeable point is that the share of newcomer participations is higher in proposals than in signed grants, both under lump sums and actual costs. This means that the success rate of

newcomers is below average, regardless of the form of funding. We acknowledge that this is not an ideal situation, but the data show that this is not a lump sum specific problem.

DG Research and Innovation will continue to monitor the situation, as further data becomes available for grants signed after Q1 2024, to establish whether this is a persistent pattern.

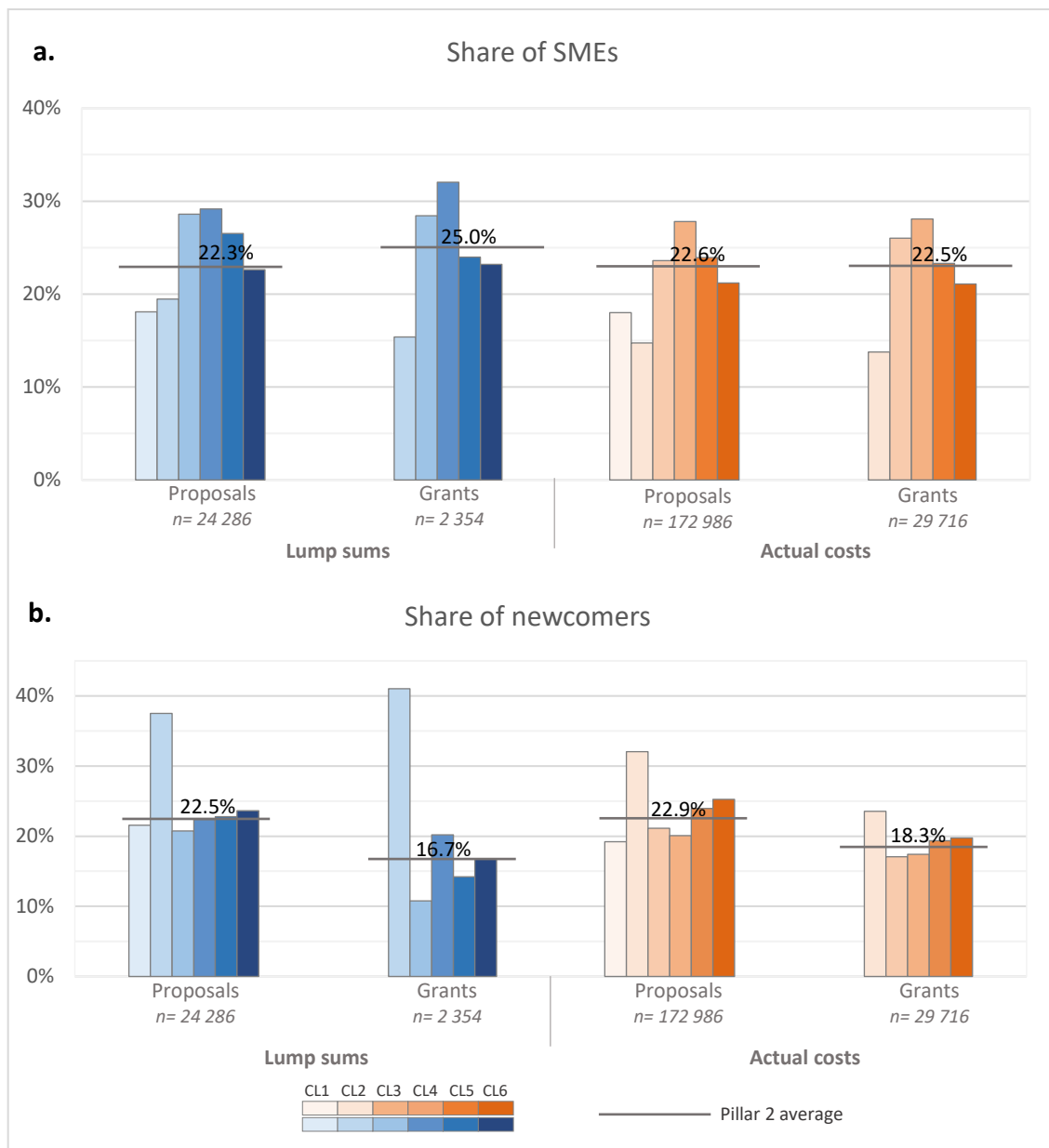


Figure 10. Share of SMEs (a) and newcomers (b) under lump sum and actual cost grants. This analysis is based on participations in lump sum and actual cost proposals and grants in Pillar II of Horizon Europe (excluding Cluster 1 at grant level because no lump sum grants have been signed to date). The figure shows the average for each cluster at proposal and grant level. The averages for Pillar II as a whole are indicated by horizontal lines. Newcomers in Horizon Europe are defined as organisations that did not participate in Horizon 2020. N is the number of participations in eligible proposals and in signed grants, respectively.

Project management

– **Average number of work packages**

There is generally a higher number of work packages in lump sum grants than in actual cost grants (see figure 11). The median number of work packages is higher in lump sum grants, in particular for IAs, and the distribution of the number of work packages is much broader. This is the only area where we see a clear divergence between lump sum and actual cost implementation.

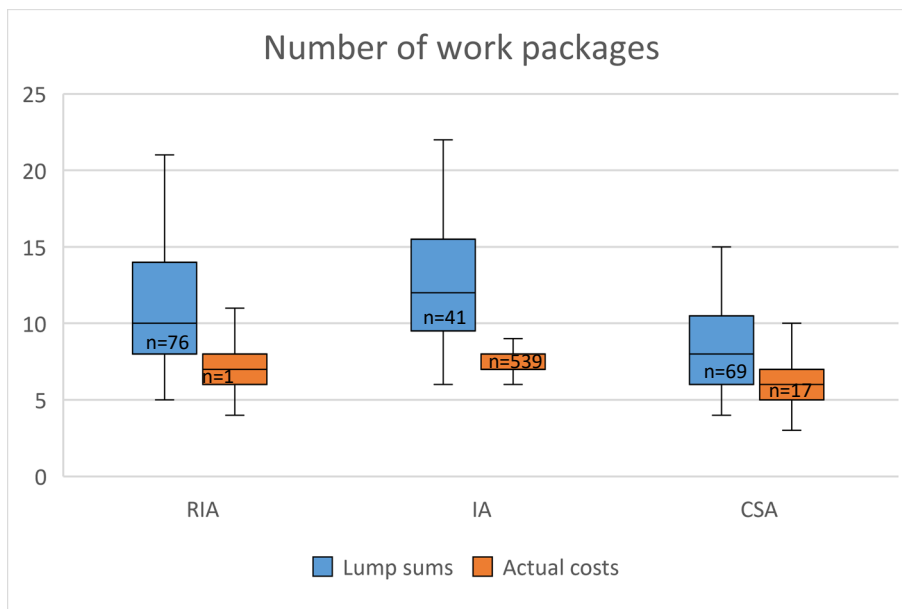


Figure 11. Number of work packages in lump sum and actual cost grants. As expected, lump sum grants have more work packages than actual cost grants. The figure shows the results for the three main types of action (RIA, IA, CSA). To allow for a meaningful comparison between lump sums and actual costs, the analysis is limited to Pillar II of Horizon Europe. Box plots follow standard conventions as described in figure 7. N is the number of grants.

This result is expected, because lump sum beneficiaries are advised that they may split work packages with a long duration along the reporting periods. In this way, the relevant activities can be paid at the end of each reporting period, which may be important for the cashflow in the project. The broad distribution of the number of work packages demonstrates that some applicants took advantage of this option, and others did not see the need.

Where the splitting option is used, applicants have not made excessive use of it. This is shown by a moderate increase in the median number of work packages, as supported by figure 11 above, and by the still sizeable amount of funding per work package, as provided in table 3 below.

Table 3. Funding per work package in lump sum and actual cost grants. The amounts per work package are lower in lump sum grants than in actual cost grants, but still significant. The figure shows the results for the three main types of action (RIA, IA, CSA). To allow for a meaningful comparison between lump sums and actual costs, the analysis is limited to Pillar II of Horizon Europe.

Type of action	Median funding per work package (EUR million)	
	Lump sums	Actual costs
RIA	0.42	0.62
IA	0.41	0.83
CSA	0.25	0.40

Given the rather stable amount of funding per grant (see figure 8 above), a higher number of work packages automatically leads to a lower budget per work package. However, the average funding per lump sum work package is still very sizeable, showing that the increase in the number of work packages is reasonable.

In summary, the data in table 3 and figure 11 are in line with the guidance given to applicants: applicants may split work packages with a long duration along the reporting periods, but lump sum funding should not lead to the subdivision of projects into many small work packages.

– Number of amendments

Projects often need to change the original work plan to adapt to the needs of the project, new scientific developments or to organisational changes. The consortium can request, for example, the addition or the removal of a partner, or a change to the description of the action (Annex 1 to the grant agreement), the reporting periods, or the project duration. Likewise, projects can report deviations from the work plan, using a dedicated section in the periodic report.

Lump sum grants can be amended in the same way as other grants to accommodate these kinds of changes. Lump sum grants already provide very high budget flexibility because the consortium can use the budget as they see fit, as long as the project is implemented as agreed. Nevertheless, if the consortium wants to have budget transfers between beneficiaries and/or between work packages reflected in the grant agreement (in its Annex 2), this does require an amendment.

Figure 12 shows that there is no significant difference in the number of amendments to grant agreements for lump sum and actual cost grants. This analysis is based on Horizon 2020 data because most lump sum grants under Horizon Europe have not been running for long enough to allow for a meaningful comparison with actual cost grants.

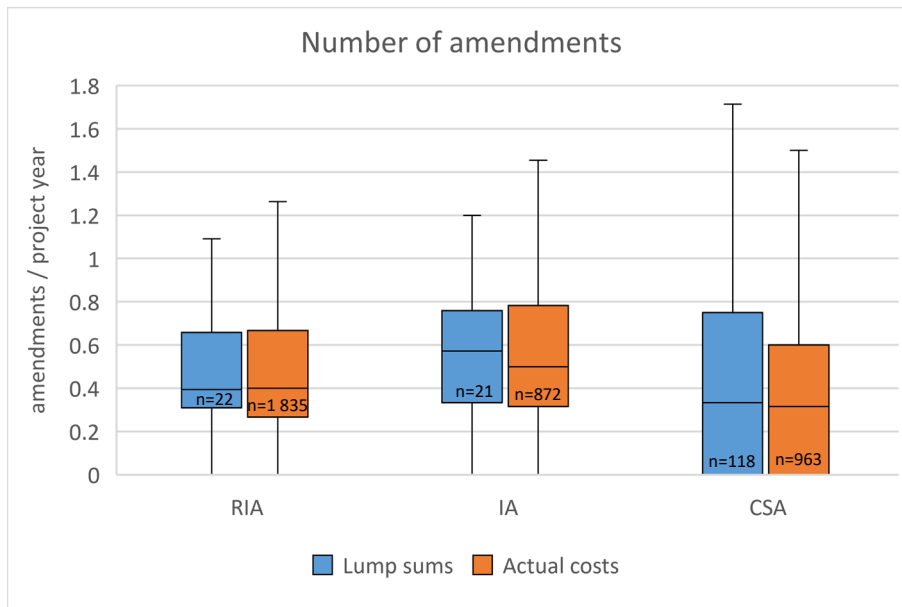


Figure 12. Consortium-led amendments in lump sum and actual cost grants. No significant difference is observed between the two funding models. The data set is composed of Horizon 2020 grants signed from 01/09/2018, which corresponds to the signature date of the first lump sum grant in the Horizon 2020 lump sum pilot. Analogous data is not yet available for Horizon Europe grants. The values refer to the number of amendments per project year in lump sum and actual cost grants. All kinds of amendment requested by the consortium are included, except administrative amendments for changing data or bank account of legal entities. Box plots follow standard conventions as described in figure 7. N is the number of grants.

IV. SURVEY RESULTS

This section presents an analysis of the feedback received from the respondents to the lump sum surveys conducted during September to October 2023. See section II. Scope and Methodology for more information on how the survey was conducted.

The responses received have good coverage of the experience of a variety of stakeholders. Participants include both successful (46%) and unsuccessful (54%) applicants to lump sum topics, coming from universities, research organisations, private companies, SMEs, public bodies, and other types of organisations.

81% of the experts who responded had also been involved in evaluating proposals for ‘standard’ (i.e. actual cost) topics in Horizon 2020 or Horizon Europe, and so were well-placed to comment on the differences with lump sum proposals.

The survey confirms the results of our previous assessment of 2021, with the great majority of respondents expressing their satisfaction with lump sum funding. The overall level of satisfaction remains essentially the same.

Since the earlier assessment, far more lump sum proposals have been received and evaluated, and many projects using lump sums have now gone through reporting and payments (including final payments). The survey results therefore provide us with a more extensive evidence base. They also enable a more complete analysis of participants’ and experts’ experiences of how lump sums work, from proposal writing through to the end of the project, which was not possible in 2021.

In the analysis and presentation of the survey results below we have only used the meaningful replies, i.e. excluding any ‘Not applicable/Cannot say’ replies.

This section is a summary of the main survey results. The full survey results are set out in section VI. Appendices.

Overall satisfaction

The survey results show clearly that participants and experts are very satisfied with lump sum funding. The great majority of respondents agree that lump sum funding leads to an overall reduction of administrative burden for beneficiaries (figure 13.a) and that it shifts the focus from financial controls to the content of projects (figure 13.b).

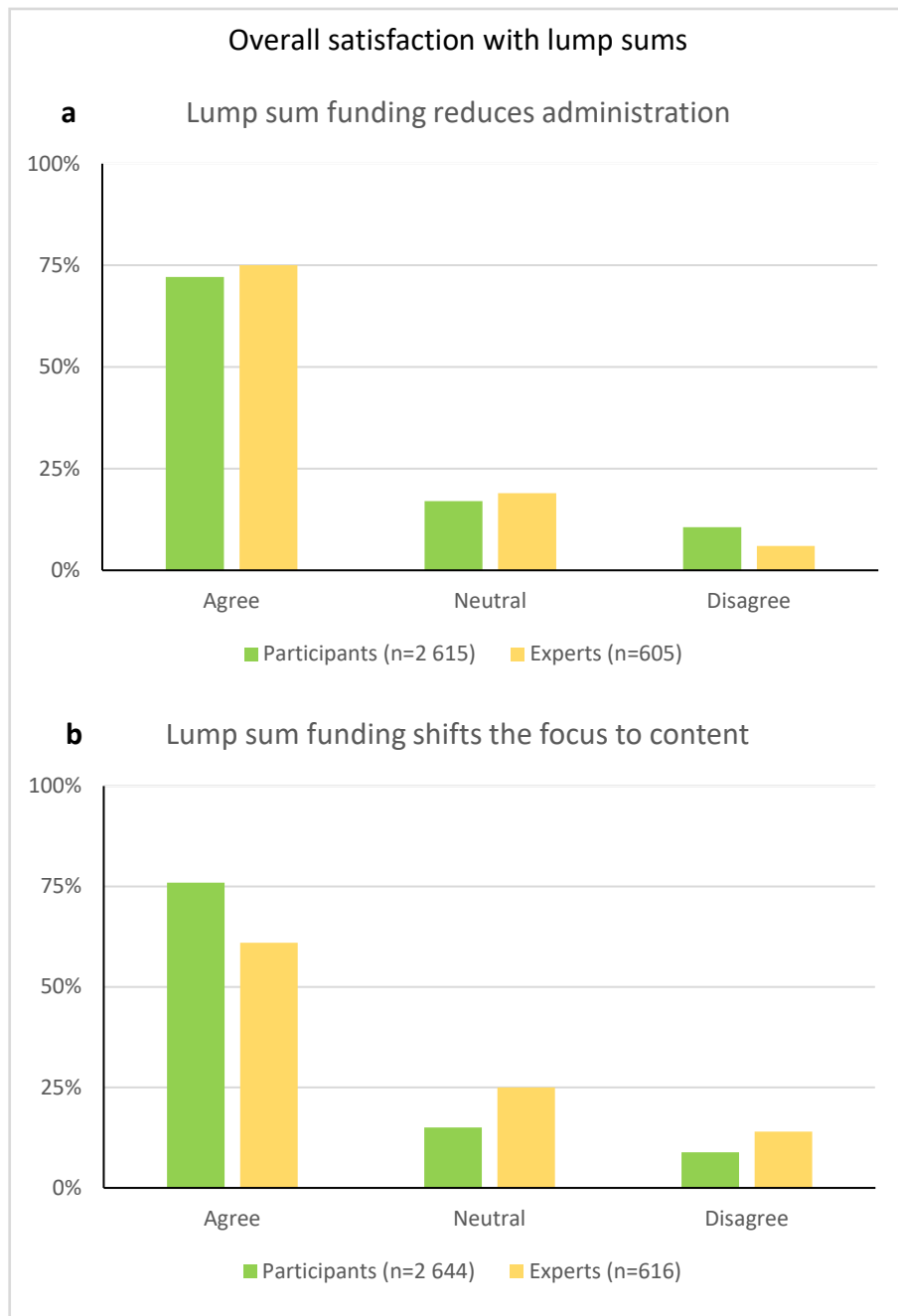


Figure 13. Overall satisfaction with lump sum funding. The great majority of participants and experts agree that lump sum funding leads to an overall reduction of administrative burden for beneficiaries (a) and that it shifts the focus from financial controls to the content of projects (b). N is the number of replies.

Proposal submission and evaluation

Application process, guidance and support

Overall, participants are satisfied with the application process for lump sum funding (see figure 14).

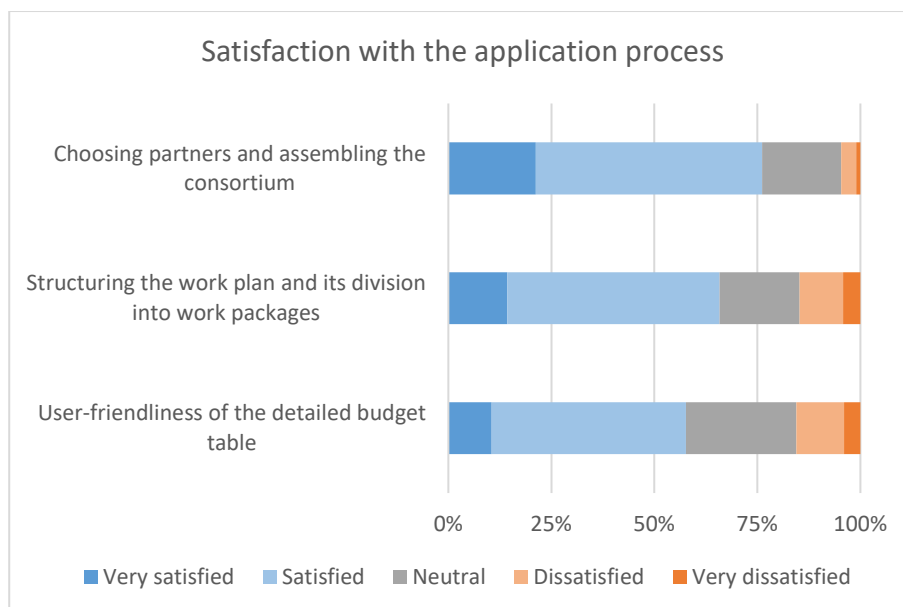


Figure 14. Participants' satisfaction with the application process. The figure shows results for satisfaction with consortium building, structure of the work plan and user-friendliness of the detailed budget table. Participants are generally satisfied with the various aspects they need to handle when applying to a lump sum topic.

The highest level of satisfaction is with the ease of choosing partners and assembling the consortium (76%). The aspect with the lowest satisfaction score (57%) concerns the user-friendliness of the detailed budget table (Excel template). This comes as no surprise, as it is in line with the feedback received over the past few years from various other stakeholders. We acknowledge that the detailed budget table is an additional element when compared with proposals for actual cost grants. However, it should be noted that the details it contains are required for the preparation of any proposal, regardless of the funding model.

The results of the survey also show that the lump sum guidance provided to participants and experts is sufficient and clear enough (see figure 15).

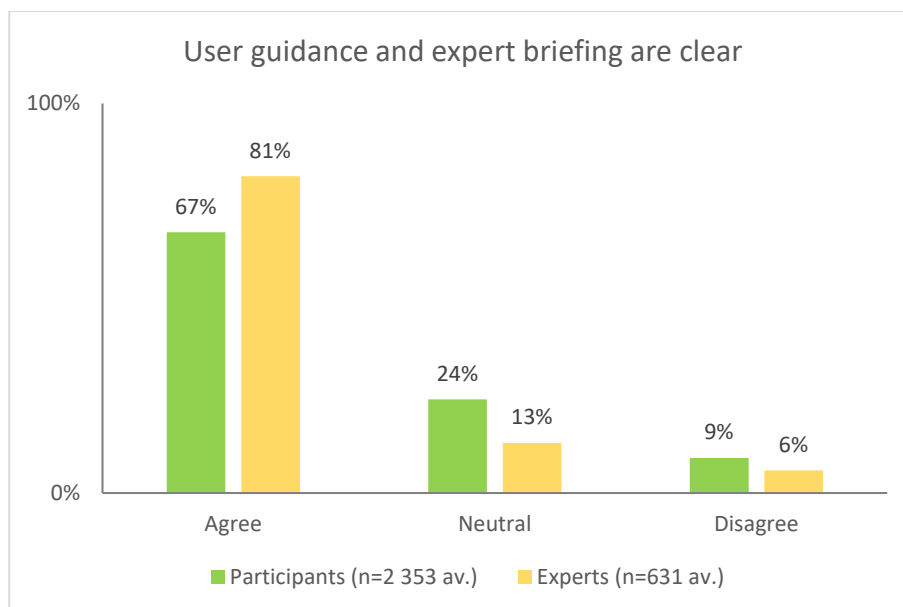


Figure 15. Perception of lump sum guidance and support. The great majority of participants and experts agree that the guidance provided, and the expert briefing respectively, are useful to understand the specific aspects of lump sum funding. This graph displays the average values of the results to specific sub-questions in the surveys, covering several aspects of lump sum guidance: the dedicated page on the Funding & Tenders Portal, webinars, detailed guidance for applicants and beneficiaries, FAQs, relevant information in the topic description (participants); the clarity of the expert briefing, including the specificities and financial aspects of lump sum funding (experts). The questions on guidance and support were tailored to each group (see section VI. Appendices for details).

Figure 15 shows the combined values for a series of more specific questions on lump sum guidance for participants and experts respectively, since the patterns were essentially the same for all of the sub-questions (see section VI. Appendices for full details of the responses). The great majority of participants believe that the information available on the dedicated lump sum page on the Funding & Tenders Portal supports both the preparation of a lump sum proposal and the implementation of a lump sum grant. Participants also perceive the webinars, the detailed guidance, and the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to be useful in understanding how lump sums work, and they are satisfied with the information on lump sum funding in the topic description (call for proposals).

At the same time, the vast majority of experts perceive that the expert briefing was sufficiently clear. They also believe that the briefing adequately explained the specific aspects of lump sum funding and, in particular, how to evaluate the lump sum budget.

Quality of proposals

A large majority of experts agree that neither the quality of proposals nor the structure of the consortium are affected negatively by the use of lump sums (see figure 16). In comparison, fewer experts agreed that splitting work packages does not affect the quality of the work plan, although more than half the respondents still agreed that there was no negative impact.

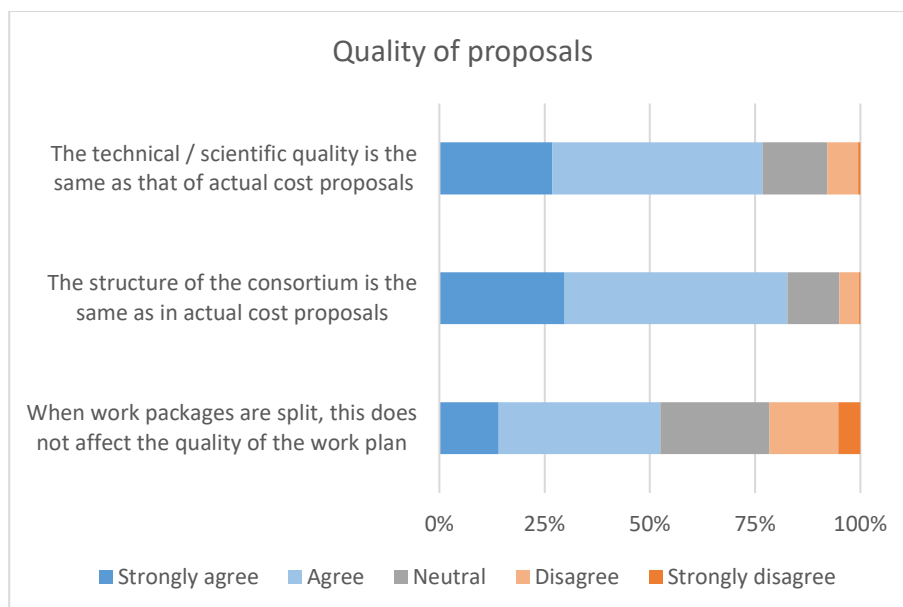


Figure 16. Experts' perception of the quality of lump sum proposals. There is wide agreement that the quality and structure of proposals are the same in lump sum and actual cost proposals, while there is lower agreement that splitting work packages does not impact the quality of the work plan.

Effort needed to write a lump sum proposal

The great majority of participants (68%) estimated that it took the consortium fewer than 50 person-days to prepare their lump sum proposal (see figure 17.a), covering all partners and including the setup of the detailed budget table. This figure is in line with the results of the public consultation for the *ex post* evaluation of Horizon 2020, where more than half of the respondents declared that their proposal preparation took fewer than 50 person-days in total ⁽⁸⁾.

The different responses regarding the estimated time needed to prepare a lump sum proposal suggest a wide range of perspectives and experiences among participants. It indicates that the preparation of a proposal varies significantly, depending on a number of factors such as the nature of the call for proposals, the size of the budget and of the consortium, and/or the applicant's familiarity with the overall process.

The great majority of respondents (62%) expect the effort to prepare a lump sum proposal to decrease over time, given previous experience (see figure 17.b). This suggests a positive attitude towards the development and efficiency of processes regarding lump sums in the years to come.

⁽⁸⁾ [Ex post evaluation of Horizon 2020 Staff Working Document \(January 2024\), Annex 5 - 'Stakeholder consultation: Synopsis report'](#), p. 95

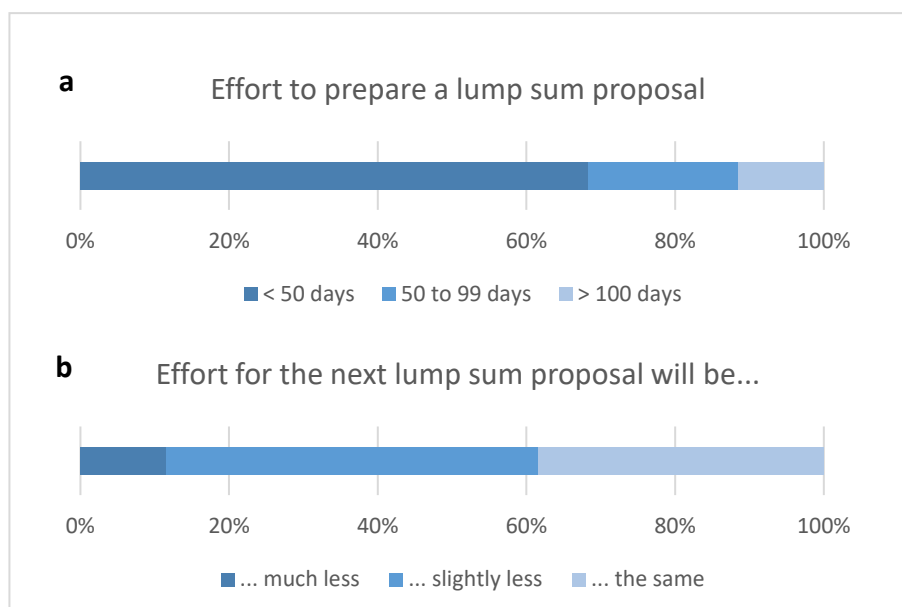


Figure 17. Participants' perception of the effort to prepare a lump sum proposal. Figure 17.a displays the estimated effort for submitted proposals in person-days (2 266 answers), while figure 17.b displays the expected effort to prepare another lump sum proposal, given previous experience (2 611 answers). A large majority of respondents indicated that they needed fewer than 50 person-days to prepare their lump sum proposal, and most of them expect to spend less time on future proposals.

The survey results also reveal that completing the lump sum detailed budget table is not a significant increase in the administrative burden for applicants: 57% of the total respondents reported that completing the detailed budget table took less than 1 person-day. Just over half of the respondents (52%) reported that they did not require a significant amount of time to complete the detailed budget table. 48% gave a specific time, with a median of 5 person-days. This suggests that the extra time required for completing the lump sum budget table is rather limited and that it is not an obstacle in the application process (see section VI. Appendices for details).

Proposal evaluation

- Experts' perceptions

The evaluation of the detailed budget table (Excel template) under the criterion 'Quality and efficiency of the implementation' is the only extra task for experts assessing lump sum proposals. All other aspects are the same as for actual cost (i.e. standard) proposals.

More than half the experts responding to the survey consider that the detailed budget table of cost estimations and resources has the appropriate level of detail to perform a sound budget evaluation. The dashboard for lump sum evaluations was also positively assessed by experts: the majority of respondents agree that the dashboard provides clear instructions on its use (70%) and consider it to be a useful tool for assessing personnel costs in a lump sum proposal (61%). The great majority of respondents are also confident that their assessment of the detailed cost estimations and resources ensured that the final lump sum was reasonable and needed for the activities proposed. In this light, it is surprising that fewer than half (43%) of the experts judged that the evaluation process is properly designed to avoid inflated lump sums, which shows that they see room for improvement (see Conclusions and Next Steps).

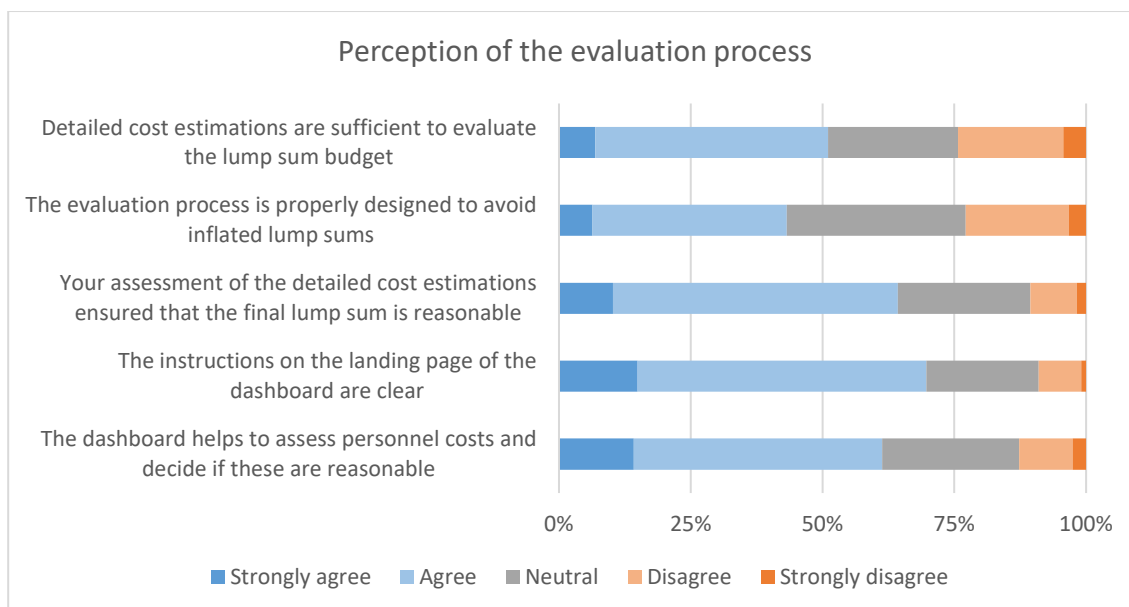


Figure 18. Experts’ perception of the evaluation process. The figure shows the results for the level of detail in the lump sum budget table, the efficiency of both the process and individual assessments in avoiding inflated lump sums, and the usefulness of the Horizon dashboard for lump sum evaluations. Experts are generally satisfied with the various aspects of evaluating lump sum proposals and are particularly positive about the dashboard and their own assessment of the detailed cost estimations.

One specific aspect where experts were less satisfied was related to the extra time and fees for evaluating lump sum topics (see section VI. Appendices). This was already recognised at the beginning of Horizon Europe, and therefore from 2023 the expert remuneration for lump sum proposals was increased.

- Participants’ perceptions

Regarding the quality of the evaluation summary report (ESR), the majority of the respondents were satisfied with the feedback received in their ESR. Unsurprisingly, successful applicants are much more satisfied with this aspect than unsuccessful applicants (see figure 19).

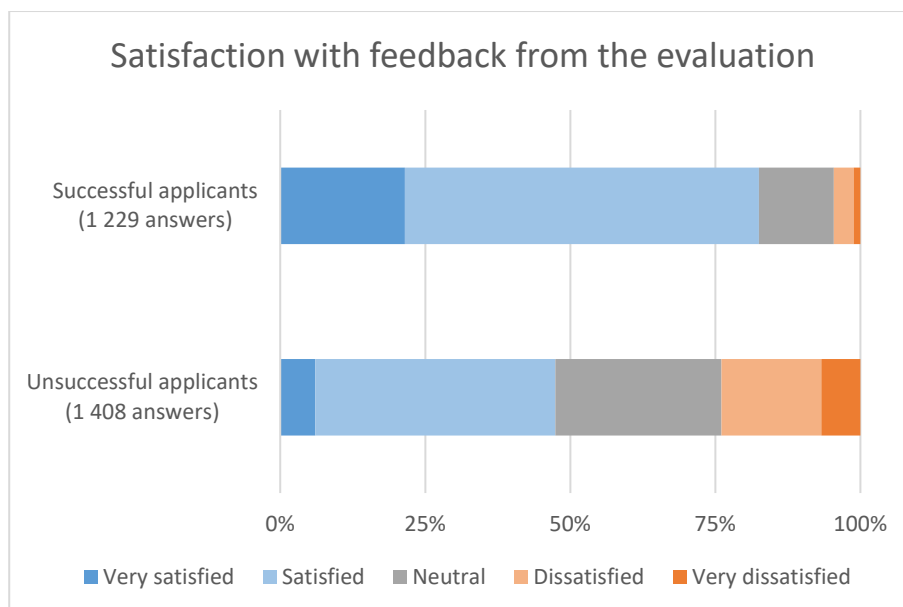


Figure 19. Participants’ satisfaction with the overall feedback from the evaluation. Feedback is provided to applicants in the form of an Evaluation Summary Report (ESR). The answers are broken down by evaluation outcome. As expected, the unsuccessful applicants are less happy than successful applicants with the feedback received from the evaluators on the quality of their proposal.

In general, the request to improve the feedback provided in the ESR occurs across the whole R&I framework programme. This in line with the results of the public consultation for the *ex post* evaluation of Horizon 2020, where only 50% of respondents believed that the feedback received from the evaluation was ‘clear and informative’. This demonstrates that possible issues with the quality of ESRs are not lump sum specific.

Grant management

Grant agreement preparation (GAP)

Grant agreement preparation is essentially the same for lump sum and standard grants. The majority of participants found no major differences (see figure 20).

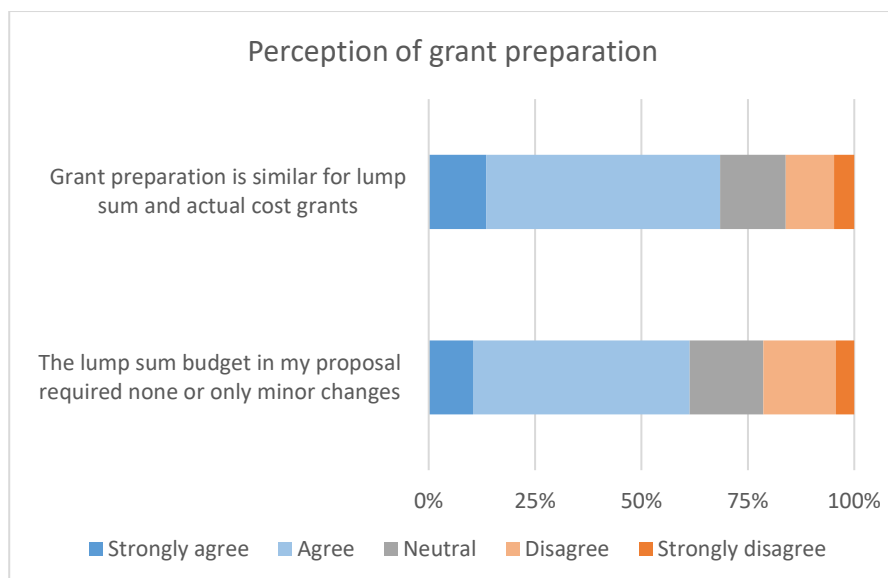


Figure 20. Participants’ perception of lump sum grant preparation. The figure shows the results for perceived similarity with actual cost grants and changes required to the lump sum budget.

Fewer than a quarter of the respondents reported a change in the budget for their project following evaluation. Half of these in turn found that these changes were not difficult to implement. It is nevertheless surprising that 20% of respondents reported changes to the lump sum budget of the proposal before grant signature, since the internal data showed that in fact only 10% of lump sum proposals experienced a budget cut following evaluation (see figure 5).

Flexibility and collaboration in project implementation

Lump sum grants provide very high flexibility because the consortium can use the budget as they see fit as long as the project is implemented as described in the grant agreement. A large majority of respondents (80%) confirmed that the use of lump sums allows them to manage their project flexibly (see figure 21). A similar proportion of respondents (78%) is satisfied with the level of collaboration between partners within their project.

63% of the respondents were satisfied with the way of addressing technical difficulties or delays in their lump sum project through reporting a deviation or through an amendment to the grant agreement. The process to amend a lump sum grant is the same as for actual cost grants, and 67% of the respondents consider this process efficient.

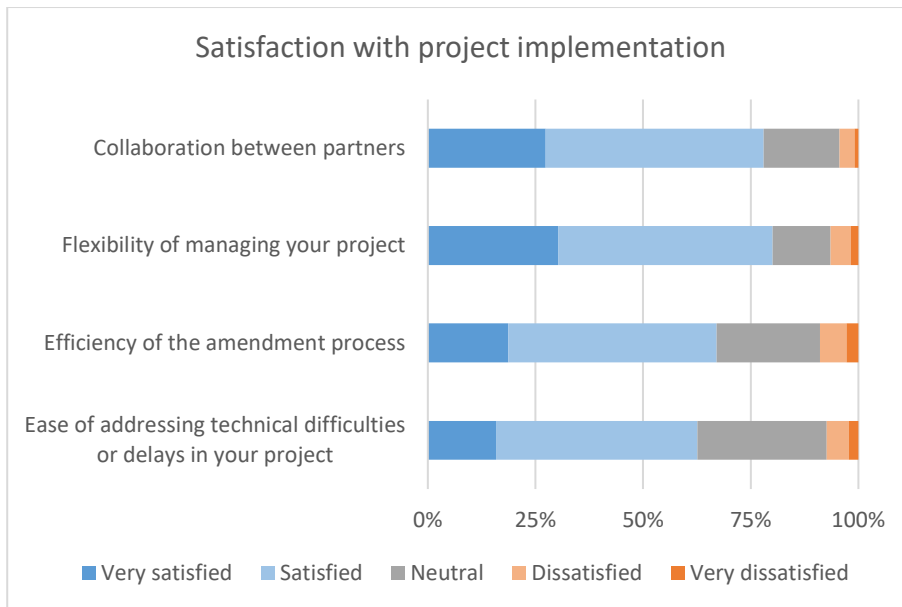


Figure 21. Participants' satisfaction with project implementation. The figure shows the results for collaboration between partners, flexibility in project management, the efficiency of the amendment process, and ease of addressing additional difficulties. Collaboration and flexibility are perceived very positively, with over 75% satisfaction. Similarly, the processes for amendments and handling any technical difficulties are also perceived as satisfactory, although to a slightly lesser degree.

Effort needed for reporting

Lump sum funding has removed the obligation to report on actual costs and resources. This key simplification aims to reduce the administrative burden on beneficiaries, and to prevent errors when reporting costs. 63% of respondents confirmed that their effort for financial reporting is very low (see figure 22).

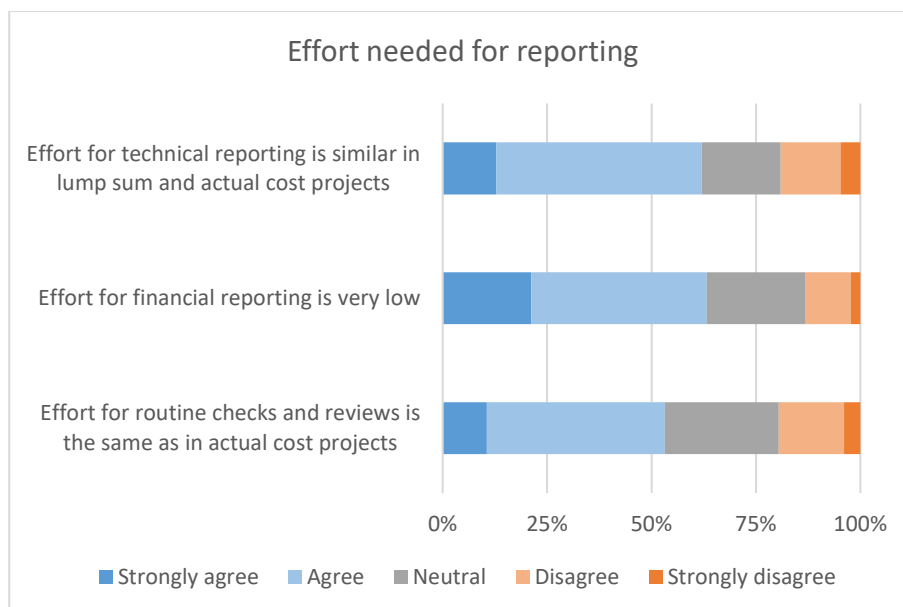


Figure 22. Participants' perception of the effort needed for reporting. The figure shows the results for technical reporting, financial reporting, and for routine checks and reviews. Technical and financial reporting are both perceived positively. More than half the respondents considered the effort for routine checks and reviews to be the same as in actual cost projects.

Given that the main simplification for lump sum grants is that no financial reporting is needed, it is surprising that this figure is not higher. One possible explanation might be that respondents included in their considerations their organisation's internal financial processes (e.g. financial record-keeping, interaction with financial departments, time-sheets that might be required for internal use) and/or internal financial follow-up that consortia or coordinators might still be requesting. If this is the case, these requirements are not imposed by the grant agreement, and they may decrease over time as the organisations adapt to the use of lump sums.

Technical reporting obligations are the same in lump sum and in actual costs grants. In both cases, beneficiaries have to report on the proper implementation of the grant agreement. A majority of respondents to the survey confirmed this and reported similar efforts in this respect in lump sum and actual cost projects.

While 54% of respondents felt that the effort for routine checks and reviews in lump sum projects is the same as for actual cost projects, 20% disagreed. This figure is surprising since the reporting template is identical for both kinds of projects. In addition, the processes for project monitoring and the quality standards applied are the same.

Payments and financial risk

A large majority of participants confirmed that the use of lump sum funding does not increase the financial risk in the project (figure 23). Most beneficiaries of lump sum grants also agree that the schedule of payments provides them with adequate cashflow to implement their project.

This response is not surprising since the pre-financing and payments are handled in the same way in lump sum and actual costs grants. In addition, beneficiaries make use of the option to split work packages to optimise the cashflow where needed (see figure 11).

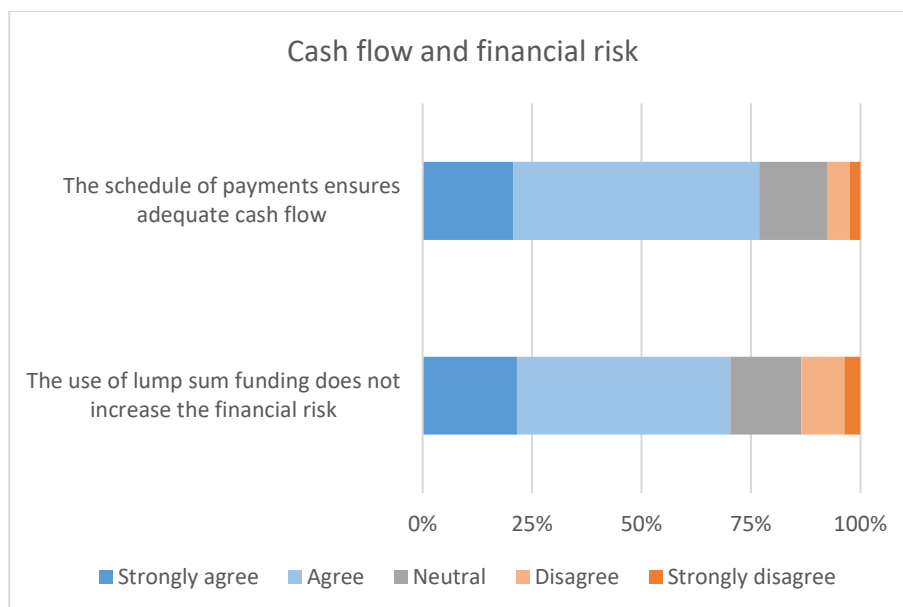


Figure 23. Participants' perception of cash flow and financial risk. A large majority agree that the schedule of payments is adequate for the cash flow, and that the financial risk does not increase in lump sum projects.

The controls put in place to prevent fraud (both at evaluation and at payment stage) are considered to be sufficient by a large share of the participants (75% or more, see section VI. Appendices). The experts are also confident that their assessment of the detailed cost estimations and resources ensured an appropriate budget of the lump sum proposal (see above on 'proposal evaluation').

Survey results broken down by partner and project characteristics

This section presents a **more detailed analysis** of the results of the survey of participants. We matched the survey responses to the internal implementation data, which contains detailed information on the proposals or grants that the respondents were involved in. In this way, we were able to break down the survey results by a number of features, such as: type of organisation, size of grant (budget and consortium size), evaluation outcome and prior experience (newcomer or returning participant).

To some extent, it was also possible to break down experts' responses by linking them to characteristics of the topic(s) they worked on. However, expert responses cannot be linked to individual proposals, preventing analysis at that level.

Some characteristics and features had more of an influence than others. This section therefore includes a selection of cases, notably those where the analysis showed an interesting aspect. Generally, the type of organisation and/or prior experience influence the result somewhat. Consortium size and budget sometimes have an effect, but this is often not very pronounced.

Reduced administrative burden

Across all types of organisations, the great majority of participants agree that lump sum funding leads to an overall reduction of administrative burden (see figure 24). Since the majority of

respondents also have experience with standard (i.e. actual cost) R&I proposals and grants, they are clearly competent to make this comparison.

SMEs (76%) and newcomers (82%) are extremely positive. This shows that lump sum funding is in line with and supports Horizon Europe’s objectives of stimulating R&I activities in SMEs, and of promoting openness and diversity of project consortia, including with respect to newcomers ⁽⁹⁾. The finding that newcomers are more positive about lump sums than returning or experienced participants confirms an earlier survey conducted by the European Court of Auditors ⁽¹⁰⁾.

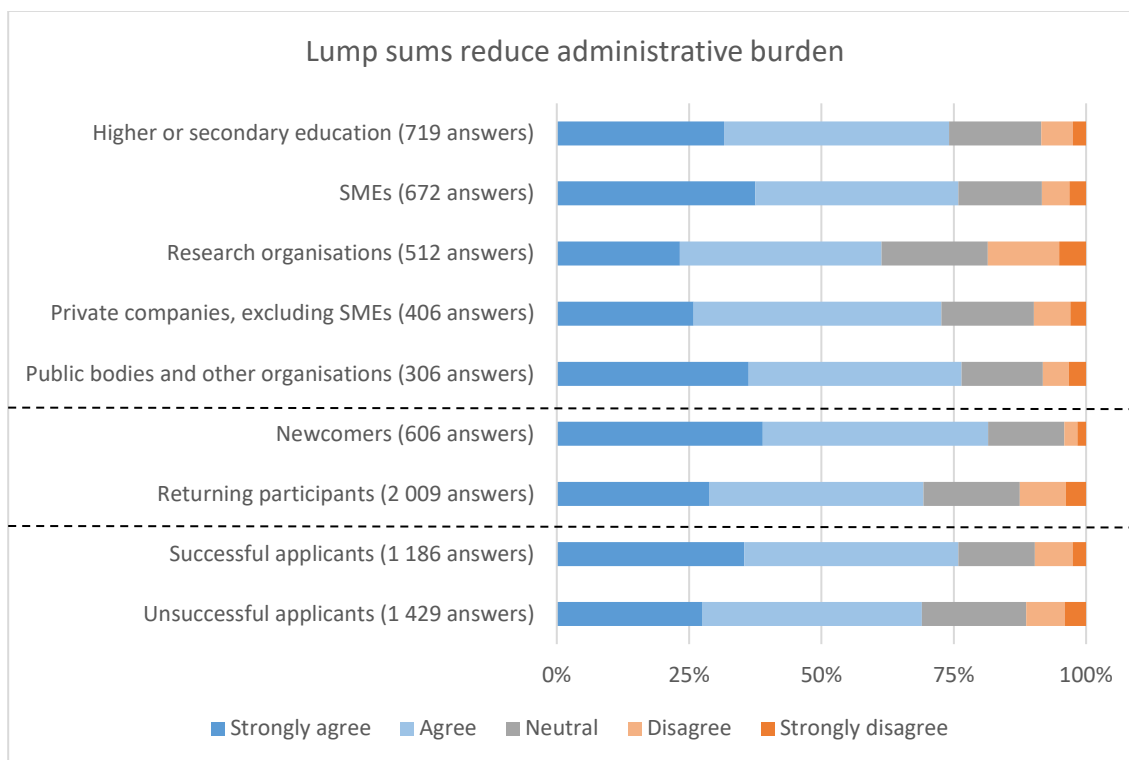


Figure 24. Participants’ agreement that lump sum funding reduces the administrative burden. The graph shows results broken down by type of organisation, category of applicant, and evaluation outcome. Overall, there is wide agreement that lump sums reduce the administrative burden.

Interestingly, unsuccessful participants are nearly as positive as successful applicants, suggesting that the extra effort for a lump sum proposal (i.e. for preparing the detailed budget table) is not a major problem.

Research organisations also agree that lump sums reduce the administrative burden, but to a lower extent than other types of organisations. This is in line with the feedback received on other occasions from some research organisations, which suggests they are more sceptical than others about the use of lump sums.

⁽⁹⁾ [Council Decision \(EU\) 2021/764 of 10 May 2021 establishing the Specific Programme implementing Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, and repealing Decision 2013/743/EU](#)

⁽¹⁰⁾ European Court of Auditors’ Special Report 28/2018 ‘Simplification measures into Horizon 2020’ <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/eca/special-reports/horizon-2020-28-2018/en/>

Strikingly, the budget size of the grants that respondents are involved in had little effect (see figure 25). Even for the largest grants (above EUR 10 million), the agreement that lump sums reduce the administrative burden remains very high and is not much lower than for small grants (below EUR 3 million). This underlines that lump sum funding is popular and also works for large grants.

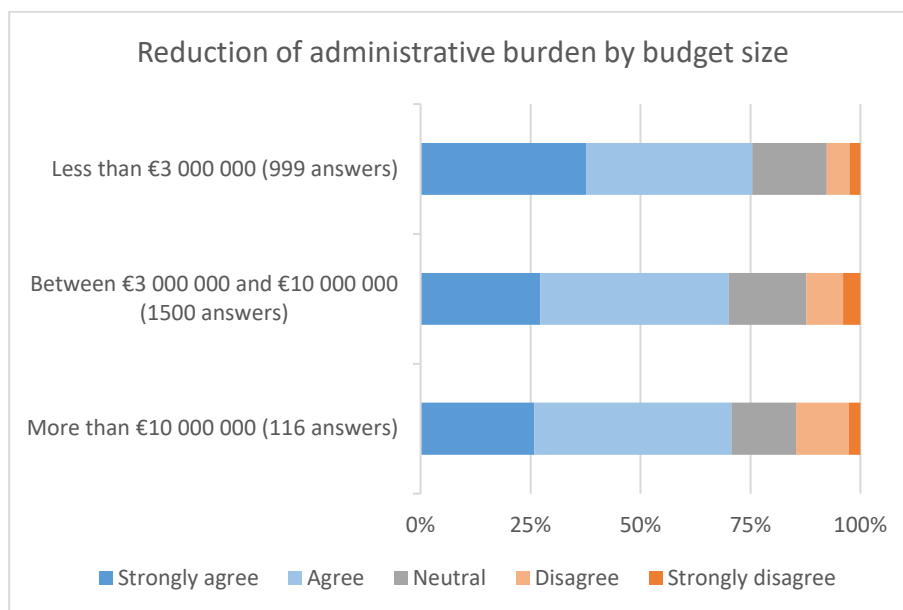


Figure 25. Lump sums reduce administrative burden, regardless of budget size. Budget size has limited effect on participants' agreement that lump sums reduce administrative burden. The survey data is broken down by size of requested/granted lump sum budget.

Detailed budget table

Participants generally consider the Excel template for the lump sum detailed budget to be user-friendly. The satisfaction level is higher for small consortia and decreases slightly for medium-size and large consortia (see figure 26), but most participants still find it user-friendly. The same pattern can be observed when analysing the replies by grant budget size (data not shown).

A majority of experts find the lump sum detailed budget table sufficiently clear. However, there is no clear correlation between consortium size and satisfaction levels.

In general, this breakdown suggests that the detailed budget table works for the majority of respondents, both for participants and experts. Participant satisfaction decreases with increasing consortium size, but this effect is not large.

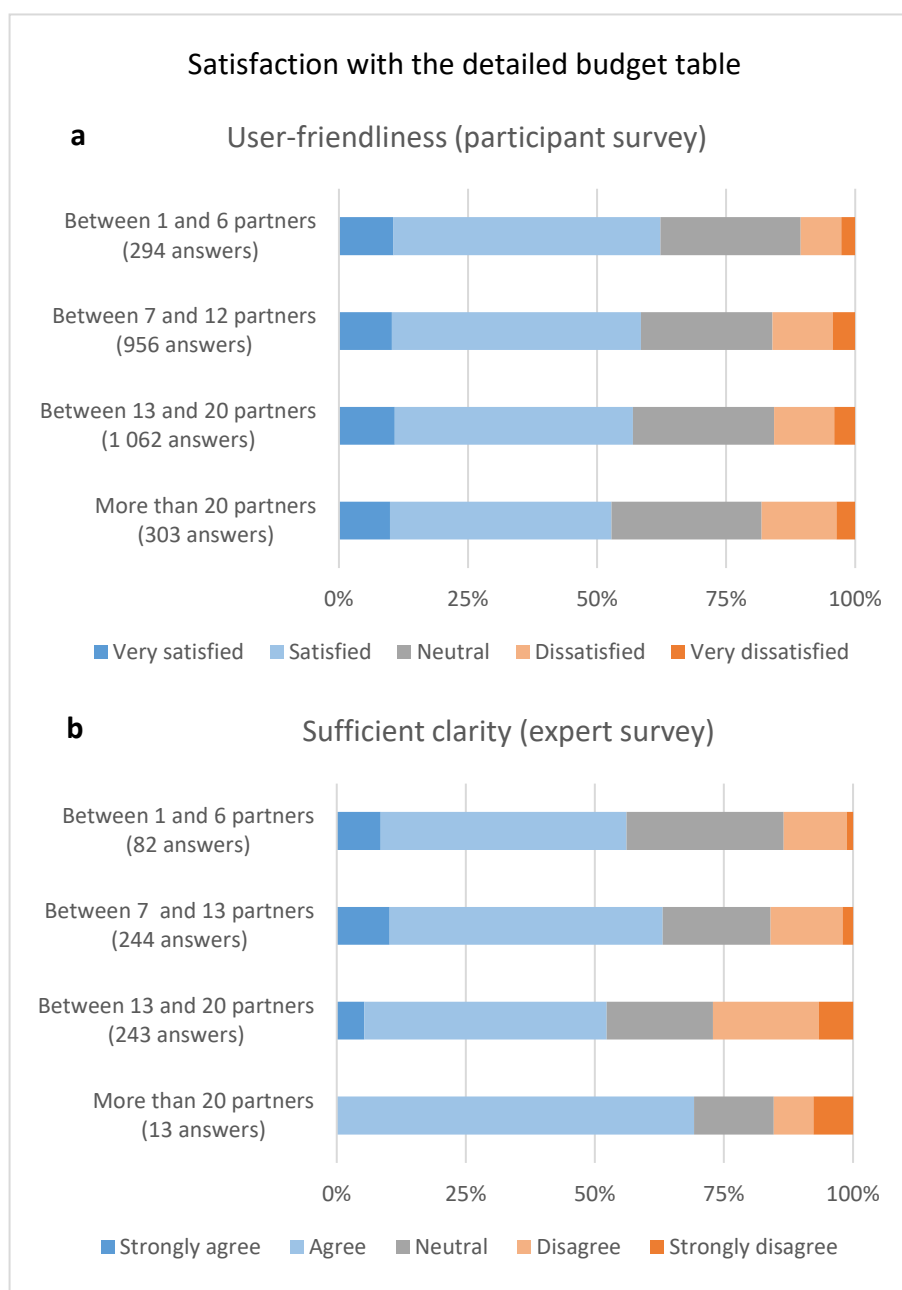


Figure 26. Satisfaction with the detailed budget table (Excel template). The survey data from participants and experts is broken down by size of consortium. The survey results from experts were linked to data on the lump sum topics they evaluated, including the average size of consortium and average size of budget of the proposal in those specific topics. The results from experts that were involved in the evaluation of more than one lump sum topic are not included in this analysis.

Project implementation

A very high share of participants are satisfied with the level of flexibility for managing their lump sum project (see figure 27). The perceived flexibility is somewhat affected by consortium size, but even consortia above 20 partners show a satisfaction rate of 70%.

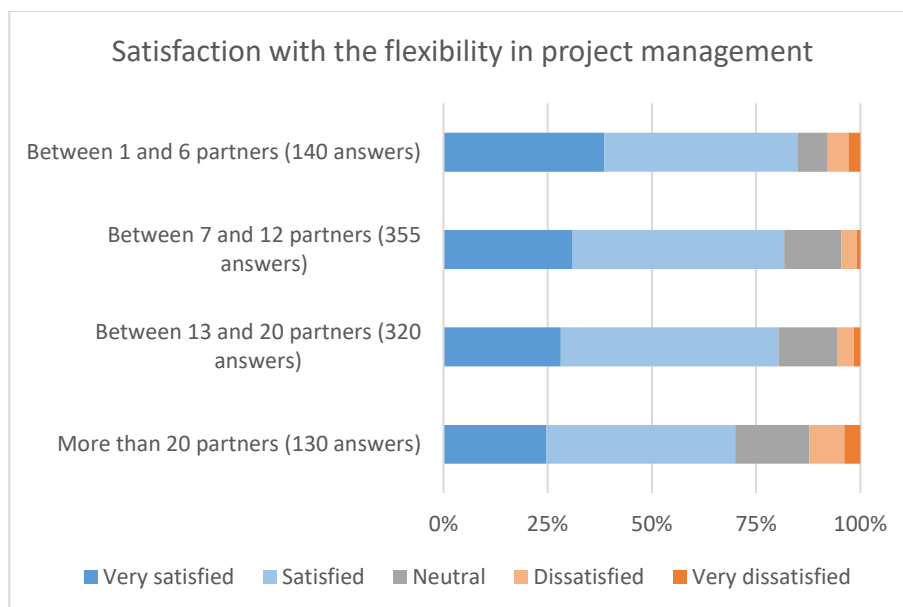


Figure 27. Participants' satisfaction with the flexibility in project management for lump sum grants. The survey data is broken down by size of consortium. Satisfaction is generally high, with over 75% agreement in consortia containing less than 20 partners. A slight decline in satisfaction for consortia with more than 20 partners is visible, however, although 70% of respondents are still satisfied.

The effect of consortium size seen in figure 27 is also observed with grant budget size: satisfaction with flexibility is somewhat lower for lump sum grants bigger than EUR 10 million (data not shown). Essentially the same pattern is obtained when analysing how satisfied participants are with the collaboration inside their lump sum grants. A higher number of partners and/or a higher budget lead to lower satisfaction rates, but satisfaction remains high even for the largest grants (data not shown).

Looking at the level of satisfaction with the efficiency of the grant amendment process, we see that all respondents involved in consortia with up to 20 partners are rather positive (around 70%). Only in consortia with over 20 partners is there lower satisfaction (see figure 28).

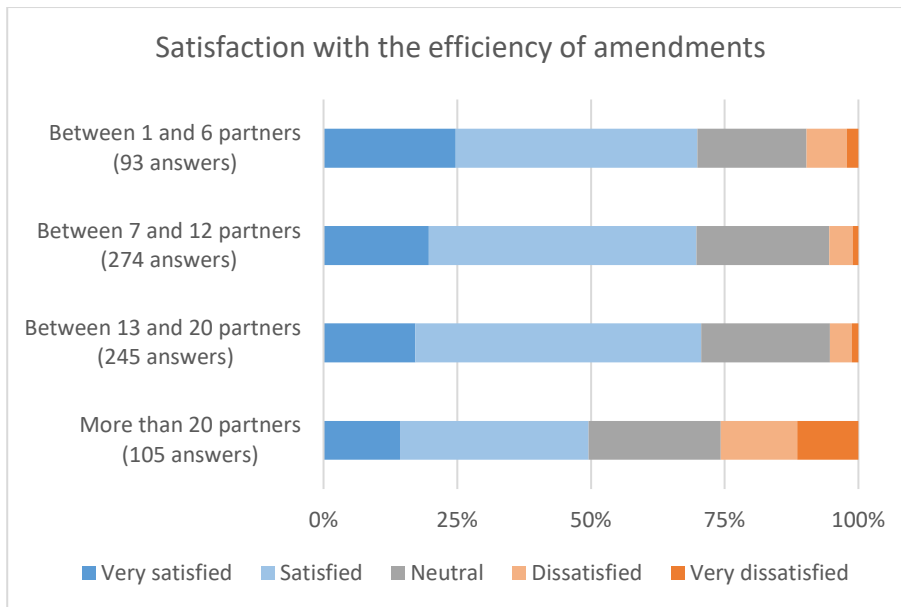


Figure 28. Participants' satisfaction with the efficiency of grant amendments. The survey data is broken down by size of consortium. Consortia consisting of up to 20 partners are generally satisfied with the efficiency of the amendment process. This level is somewhat lower for larger consortia, where 50% of respondents are satisfied.

Lump sum payments

Most participants think that lump sums do not increase their financial risk (see figure 29). Even though the financial risk perception is affected by budget size, agreement is still above 50% for grants with a budget of more than EUR 10 million.

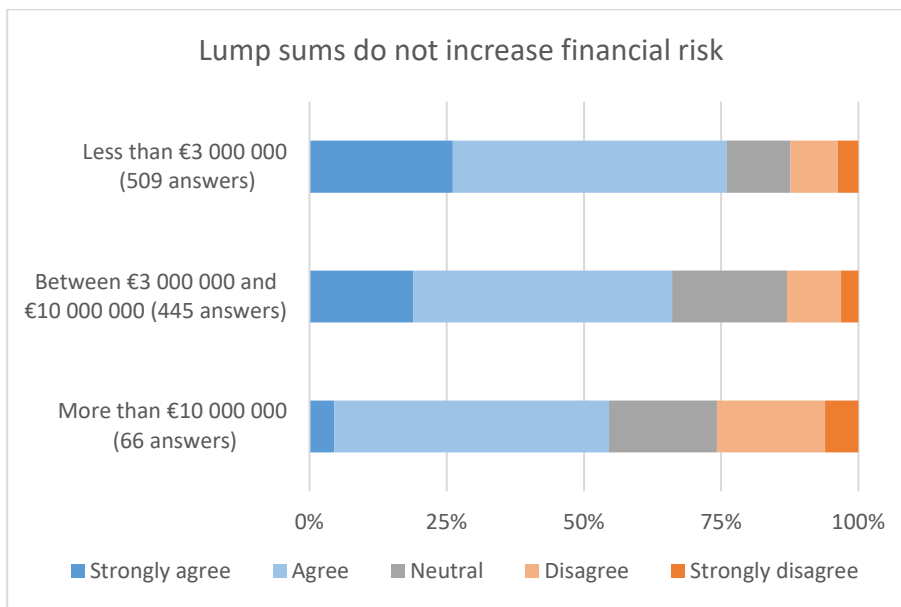


Figure 29. Participants agree that lump sum funding does not increase their financial risk. The survey data is broken down by size of grant budget. While participants with grant budgets below EUR 3 million are the most satisfied, this agreement progressively declines with increasing budget size.

Written comments and suggestions

Both participants (66%) and experts (72%) agree that the current approach to lump sums should be further improved in order to fully deliver on its potential (see section VI. Appendices). About 25% of the survey respondents made use of the possibility to provide written comments or suggestions for improvements. This section summarises the main points raised ⁽¹¹⁾.

The respondents who provided written feedback expressed a range of opinions and concerns. Some expressed positive views, highlighting the benefits of lump sum funding, such as reduced administrative burden for participants, and improved focus on project content. However, as expected, other respondents also expressed reservations and offered concrete suggestions to improve the lump sum approach. Most of the points mentioned below were made by fewer than 1 in 10 of those respondents who provided a comment, meaning that this is qualitative feedback which does not represent the opinion of the majority.

Suggested areas for improvement

- Split work packages

Some participants expressed the concern that splitting work packages leads to artificial work plans and a greater burden at proposal and reporting stages. They would therefore like to have more examples and guidance on how to structure and split the work packages in a lump sum proposal. Experts also ask for clearer and more detailed guidance to be provided to applicants, particularly on how to design an effective work plan for a lump sum proposal.

In contrast to these individual comments, survey data reveal that 65% of participants are satisfied with the structure of the work plan and its division into work packages (see figure 15). Similarly, more than half the experts (52%) agree that when work packages are split, this does not affect the quality of the work plan (see figure 16).

Splitting work packages is a recurrent question among various stakeholders, and we continue to communicate on this to prevent misunderstandings. Besides the detailed guidance for applicants and beneficiaries on the Funding & Tenders Portal, we explain in the lump sum webinars that splitting work packages is not mandatory but is an option for applicants to optimise cash flow during the implementation of their project (especially for longer projects with several reporting periods that last for 4 years or more).

The standard Horizon Europe proposal template has recently been updated (April 2024) to clarify how the work packages should be designed. Additional information on how to describe the activities per work package is now available in Part B of the proposal template under the point 3.1 ‘Work plan and resources’.

- Excel template for the lump sum budget

Some participants commented that the Excel template for the lump sum budget is complex and not very user-friendly (e.g. due to the use of macros within the file). They suggest that the readability of the file should be improved, and that the budget template should be simplified to reduce the time needed for all partners to fill it in.

⁽¹¹⁾ The summary of the written replies to the open question of the surveys (i.e. on how lump sum funding can be improved) was partially generated using an internal LLM (Large Language Model) tool based on Generative AI technology. The resulting text was critically assessed and reviewed before using it.

Experts share the participants' opinion of the Excel detailed budget table, which they think should be further simplified and made more user-friendly, as this would ease the work of both applicants and evaluators. Some experts mentioned that the Excel file is more cumbersome to evaluate for proposals with larger consortia (e.g. with more than 15 partners). Some experts are also keen to receive more detailed guidance on how to properly evaluate the detailed budget table and believe that it is essential to encourage applicants to justify their costs within the proposal.

On the other hand, survey data show that respondents are overall quite positive about the Excel template for the detailed budget table: 57% of participants are satisfied with its user-friendliness (see figure 15), while 57% of experts believe that the file is clear enough (see section VI. Appendices). The great majority of experts responding to the survey were also confident that their assessment of the detailed cost estimations and resources ensured that the final lump sum was reasonable and needed for the activities proposed.

We acknowledge that the Excel file for the lump sum budget is not ideal and becomes more complex with a larger consortium and grant size. Consequently, we have started to work towards the implementation of the lump sum budget table in the online submission system. In the meantime, we continue to improve the current Excel file (e.g. in regard to guidance, stability, and compatibility).

- Evaluation feedback

Some participants ask for more detailed and precise feedback in the evaluation summary report (ESR), both on the technical content and on the budget of their proposal, especially when budget cuts are recommended by experts. Some of them also believe that experts evaluating the lump sum budgets should be provided with better guidance and training on the financial aspects.

Survey data show that 64% of participants are satisfied with the overall feedback on the quality of the proposal, while the level of satisfaction decreases for the feedback on the lump sum budget in the Evaluation Summary Report, though it is still more than 50% (see section VI. Appendices). This is partly explained by the fact that unsuccessful applicants do not generally receive any feedback on their lump sum budgets.

However, we are aware that there is room for improvement on how feedback is provided to applicants, regardless of the form of funding. Since the date of the survey, several improvements have been made already. We have updated the briefing for experts to further clarify that their recommendations on the lump sum budget must be precise enough to be implemented during grant preparation, and that the budget assessment must be documented in the evaluation reports. We have also updated the internal guidance for EU staff implementing lump sums and provided more guidelines to ensure that the recommendations are formulated in a clear and precise way.

- Record-keeping and controls

The main suggestion related to record-keeping and controls is to provide more clarity and guidance on how lump sum grants will be audited. Some participants believe that the information available in this regard in the lump sum Model Grant Agreement is contradictory, and there are still concerns and uncertainties that lead some beneficiaries to carry out the usual administrative records practices to be prepared in the case of an audit (e.g. by keeping time-sheets for their staff, invoices, proof of payments, etc.), reducing the expected benefits of the lump sum approach.

When looking at the survey data, more than half the participants (59%) agree that it is clear which type of records must be kept on file to demonstrate proper implementation of their project.

The lump sum guides for Horizon Europe and EU grants ⁽¹²⁾ make it clear that: there will be no financial audits; beneficiaries are not obliged to keep financial records for their project (except if needed to comply with national law or internal procedures); beneficiaries must keep the documentation needed to prove proper implementation (i.e. the technical documentation to be kept for lump sum grants is the same as for actual cost grants).

We acknowledge that the *ex post* control strategy for Horizon Europe is still under development, and this might be causing uncertainty among beneficiaries. Nevertheless, the *ex post* control strategy will respect the principles set out in the guidance (e.g. no financial audits of lump sum grants), and will include *ex post* technical reviews as a key element to further verify the proper implementation of lump sum grants.

Beyond these four areas for improvement that were mentioned more frequently, there were some other suggestions that were limited to a few replies. For example, some experts suggested that the checking of personnel costs in Horizon Europe lump sum proposals should be supported by automating the comparison between the proposed rates and the benchmark rates ⁽¹³⁾. A couple of participants suggested introducing lump sums as widely and as rapidly as possible to speed up the learning curve and optimise efficiency, avoiding two systems running in parallel.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Main conclusions

We see no significant differences in the functioning of lump sum grants and actual cost grants along several important indicators. This includes the amount of funding, the types of organisations involved, the size of consortia, and the number of amendments. In addition, there is no increased financial risk for beneficiaries.

This is confirmed and complemented by the surveys. Participants and experts largely agreed that lump sum funding leads to an overall reduction in the administrative burden and shifts the focus to the research and innovation content of the projects. Less red tape is a key objective of the Commission, and more focus on content and actual implementation is an advantage that could lead to better results, especially in research and innovation projects. Moreover, lump sum funding is popular and is particularly welcomed by SMEs and newcomers to the programme.

Lump sum funding has now been used widely for Research and Innovation Actions (RIAs), Innovation Actions (IAs) and Coordination and Support Actions (CSAs), with a high degree of satisfaction and no blocking issues. In general, we consider lump sums to be particularly appropriate for projects involving up to 20 participants and with budgets up to EUR 10 million. Grants above EUR 10 million and with more than 20 participants can still benefit from using lump sums, as shown by the still high satisfaction expressed by participants involved in larger projects. We conclude that lump sum funding is essentially fit for all kinds of grants currently using actual costs. For the very largest grants, some caution is in order as we still lack sufficient

⁽¹²⁾ See the [lump sum guidance for EU grants](#) and the [Horizon Europe lump sum quick guide](#)

⁽¹³⁾ [Horizon dashboard for lump sum evaluations](#)

experience in this area. We also acknowledge that setting up the lump sum budget becomes complex for large consortia. The lump sum approach is nevertheless fit for further roll-out in Horizon Europe and beyond, in line with the intention to reach a 50% share of lump sum funding in Horizon Europe by 2027, as endorsed by the programme's governance.

Stakeholder concerns

We are aware of position papers in which some umbrella groups and research associations have expressed specific concerns about lump sum funding. Looking at the results of our analysis, some of the key concerns are not substantiated.

Most importantly, the data analysed shows that there are no substantial payment reductions under lump sum funding. Lump sum grants have not led to higher financial risk for participants: a large majority of successful applicants to lump sum grants received the entirety of the initially requested lump sum budget, with no reduction at any point in the process. This creates a very similar financial situation as under actual costs.

In addition, there is no evidence to support the concern that lump sum funding will reduce the participation of newcomers and SMEs. Both newcomers and SMEs are well represented in lump sum projects and are particularly satisfied with the benefits of this funding model.

Moreover, the data does not support the view that the number of amendments to the grant agreement will significantly increase in lump sum projects, with a concomitant increase in administrative work for lump sum beneficiaries. So far, the number of amendments per project year in lump sum grants was not significantly higher than for actual cost grants.

Action taken already

DG Research and Innovation has taken several steps to further develop lump sum funding, many of which already address some of the comments received.

Since the start of Horizon Europe, all information, guidance, and events relating to lump sums have been brought together in a single place on the Funding & Tenders Portal⁽¹⁴⁾. We have launched an information campaign with many events and webinars to inform applicants and beneficiaries, to train EU staff, and to exchange views with National Contact Points, Programme Committee configurations, and other stakeholders. As a result, there is now a complete package of guidance and instructional videos on the lump sum approach, and we have updated several aspects of the lump sum process and guidance in line with the feedback received.

For example, we have increased the page limit for lump sum proposals and removed any differences to the standard amendment process. We have improved the instructions on how to complete the budget table and updated the proposal template to clarify how the work packages should be designed and described⁽¹⁵⁾. We have also released the Horizon dashboard for lump sum evaluations, a tool that provides orientation to applicants and experts on what can be considered 'normal' monthly personnel costs.

In addition, we have updated the briefing for experts evaluating lump sum proposals to better explain the assessment of the lump sum budget and how this must be documented. Given that the assessment of the budget is an additional task compared with actual cost proposals, the

⁽¹⁴⁾ [Lump sum funding in Horizon Europe](#)

⁽¹⁵⁾ [Horizon Europe proposal template](#), Part B, section 3.1 'Work plan and resources'

remuneration for experts evaluating lump sum proposals has also been increased to better reflect the effort and time needed.

Next steps

We acknowledge that lump sum funding is still a relatively new element in the R&I Framework Programme. As such, it is normal that there are some concerns. DG Research and Innovation is committed to further increasing trust in the lump sum approach among all parties concerned by improving the system as we gather experience. We hope that this report will contribute to the process.

In this spirit, DG Research and Innovation is examining the possibilities to address the concrete suggestions made. Next steps to further develop lump sum funding in Horizon Europe include:

- We will continue to monitor lump sum grants and to fine-tune the method for lump sums.
- We have started to work towards the full implementation of the lump sum budget table in the online system for the submission of proposals. In the meantime, we continue to improve the current Excel file in line with the feedback received.
- We are preparing the *ex post* control strategy for lump sums, with *ex post* technical reviews as a key element. The *ex post* control strategy will respect the principles set out in the lump sum guidance (e.g. no financial audits of lump sum grants).
- We will continue to provide, and improve on, lump sum guidance, support and training for applicants, beneficiaries, and experts, and internal staff.

VI. APPENDICES

a. List of abbreviations

AI	Artificial Intelligence
CSA	Coordination and Support Action
EC	European Commission
EIC	European Innovation Council
EIE	European Innovation Ecosystems
ERA	European Research Area
ERC	European Research Council
ESR	Evaluation Summary Report
FAQ	Frequently Asked Questions
GAP	Grant Agreement Preparation
H2020	Horizon 2020
HE	Horizon Europe
IA	Innovation Action
JU	Joint Undertaking
LLM	Large Language Model
MSCA	Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action
PoC	Proof of Concept
R&I	Research and Innovation
RIA	Research and Innovation Action
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
WP	Work programme

b. Online surveys and profile of respondents

DG Research and Innovation launched two surveys between 20 September and 31 October 2023, targeting two types of stakeholders involved in lump sum proposals and grants: participants and expert evaluators.

The two separate surveys were sent via EUSurvey and had some questions in common, but most questions were distinct and focused on the specific situation and experience of the addressees.

Participants

We invited 13 759 participants in lump sum grants and proposals:

- 983 beneficiaries of lump sum grants from the Horizon 2020 lump sum pilot. We sent an invitation to every primary coordinator contact and to the most active participant contacts available in our internal database.
- 12 776 applicants to lump sum topics under Horizon Europe (both successful and unsuccessful). We sent an invitation to all the main contacts of each partner involved in a proposal, whether or not their proposal had been successful, or (for the two-stage topics) was still to undergo the second evaluation.

We targeted all the lump sum topics under Horizon Europe that had a submission deadline before April 2023 (including two topics with two-stage evaluation). As for the previous assessment on lump sum funding, we excluded the ERC Proof of Concept (PoC) topics (see section II. Scope and Methodology).

2 982 answers were received in total, equivalent to a response rate of 21%. Among the respondents, the majority also have experience with standard (i.e. actual cost) R&I proposals and grants and therefore can compare the lump sum approach with other forms of funding.

The respondents to the survey come from all type of organisations (see figure 30). The majority belong to higher education, SMEs, or research organisations.

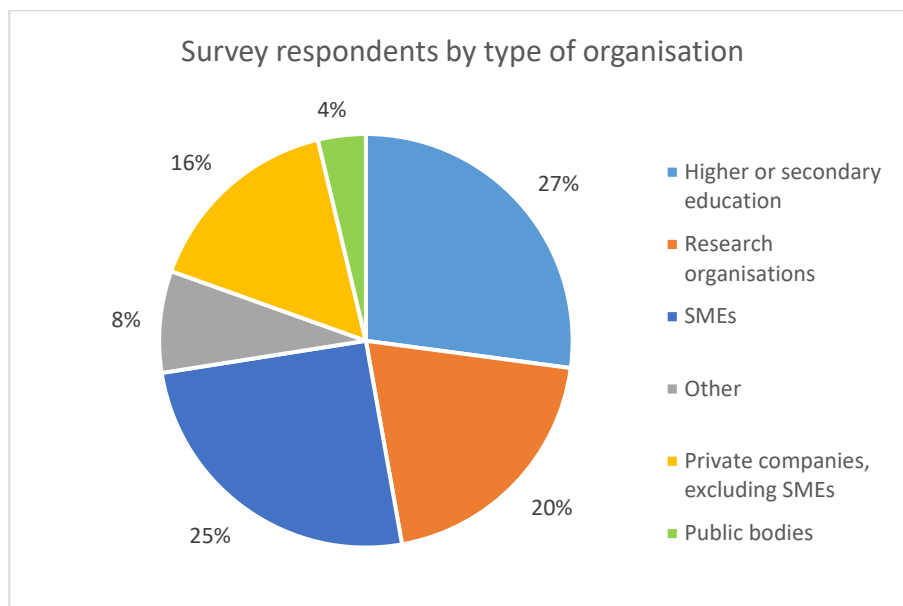


Figure 30. Share of respondents to the lump sum survey by type of organisation.
In total, 2 892 participants provided a response. The shares of organisation types in

the survey are similar to the shares of organisation types among lump sum participants (see figure 4).

The majority of participants were involved in a medium-size proposal, with a budget ranging between EUR 3 million and EUR 10 million (see figure 31) and were part of a medium-sized (between 7 and 12 partners) or large consortium (between 12 and 20 partners) (see figure 32).

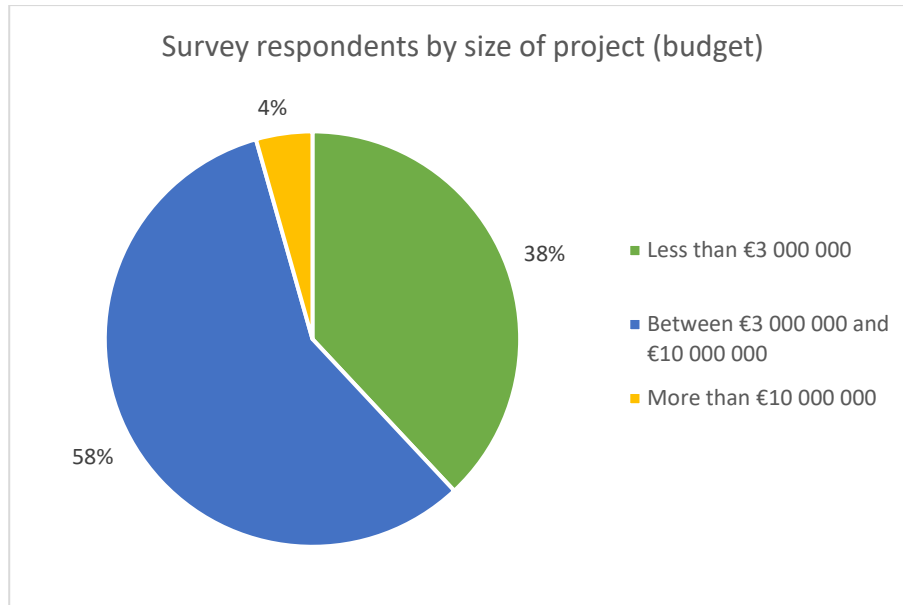


Figure 31. The majority of respondents were involved in a mid-sized proposal/grant, with a budget between EUR 3 million and EUR 10 million.

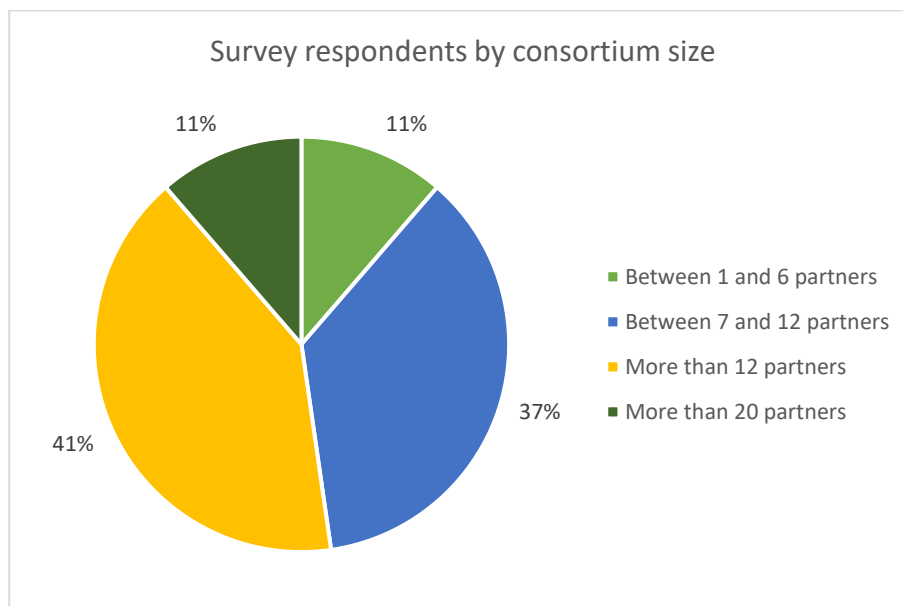


Figure 32. The majority of respondents were part of a medium-size or large consortium (between 7 and 20 partners).

54% of respondents were involved in lump sum proposals that were unsuccessful under Horizon Europe. This accounts for a sizeable sample to minimize any bias in favour of lump sum funding

that could arise from respondents involved in successful proposals. The respondents whose proposal was unsuccessful could only answer to general questions and questions related to proposal submission and evaluation. Successful applicants include both Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe programmes.

Expert evaluators

We invited 1 016 experts involved in the evaluation of lump sum proposals under Horizon Europe. We targeted all the lump sum topics under Horizon Europe that had a deadline submission before April 2023 (including two topics that were two-staged). As for the previous assessment on lump sum funding, we excluded the ERC Proof of Concept (PoC) topics (see section II. Scope and Methodology). We received 650 answers, equivalent to a response rate of 62%.

As shown in figure 33, the majority of experts answering the survey were involved in the evaluation of proposals with medium-size consortia of between 7 and 20 members (77%). Far fewer experts worked on proposals with small consortia of 1-6 members (6%) or large consortia of over 20 members (3%). Likewise, the majority of experts who answered the survey had evaluated proposals with a small or mid-size budget (i.e. less than EUR 10 million).

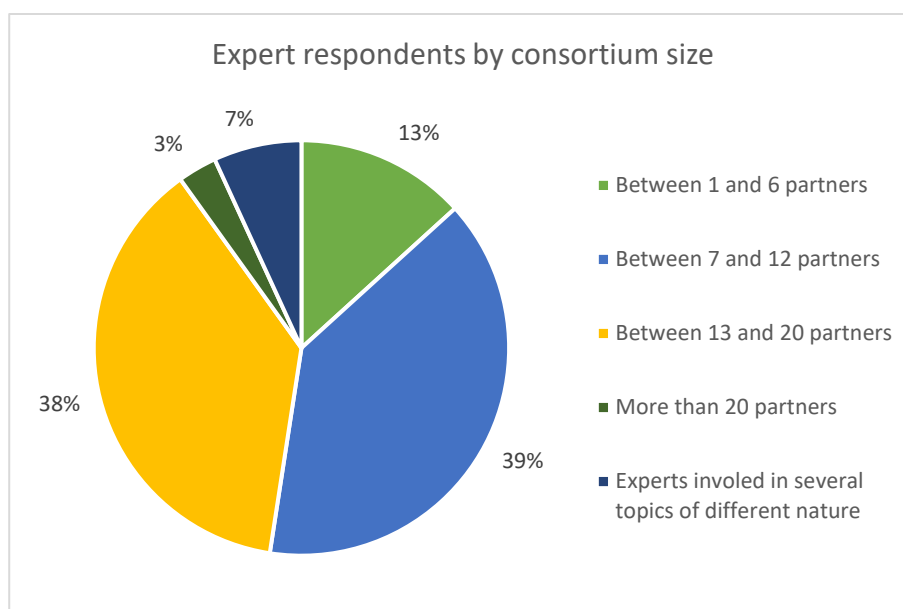


Figure 33. The majority of experts evaluated proposals with a small or medium-size consortium.

c. Questionnaires

Participants

Your role in a lump sum proposal / project

What is your role in the lump sum proposal / project that you are involved in?

Please use the nearest equivalent if your specific role is not in the list.

- Scientific / technical project lead
- Scientific / technical team member
- Project management / administration

Have you been involved in other Horizon 2020 or Horizon Europe proposals or projects, not using lump sums?

- Yes (e.g. as an applicant, or as beneficiary, or as expert evaluator)
- No

Has your lump sum proposal been selected for funding?

- Yes, the grant was signed or will soon be signed
- No (in this case, you will only be asked about proposal writing and evaluation)

Your experience with lump sum funding

Lump sum guidance

Lump sum guidance and support: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

- There is enough guidance available on the dedicated lump sum page on the Funding & Tenders portal to support the **preparation of a lump sum proposal**.
- There is enough guidance available on the dedicated lump sum page on the Funding & Tenders portal to support the **implementation of a lump sum grant**.
- The lump sum webinars help applicants and participants understand how lump sums work and the points to watch out for.
- The detailed guidance for applicants and beneficiaries (*How to manage your lump sum grant*, released October 2022) provides comprehensive information on all key aspects.
- The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on lump sums are useful to understand specific aspects of lump sum funding.

Lump sum proposals

How much time did it take to prepare your lump sum proposal?

Most aspects of preparing a lump sum proposal are the same as for actual cost (standard) proposals (e.g. concept and methodology). The main difference is the more detailed budget table required in lump sum proposals. Note that detailed cost estimations are always required to set up the budget of a proposal. The additional task for lump sum applicants is to submit these budget details using the Excel template provided.

Please estimate the approximate number of person-days for the whole proposal, covering all partners.

- Less than 10 person-days
- More than 10 but below 20 person-days
- More than 20 but below 30 person-days
- More than 30 but below 40 person-days
- More than 40 but below 50 person-days
- More than 50 but below 60 person-days
- More than 60 but below 100 person-days

- More than 100 person-days
- Not applicable / Cannot say

How much time did it take to complete the detailed budget table (Excel template)?

Provide an estimate for the whole proposal, covering all partners. Do not include the time spent on preparing and gathering the detailed cost estimations (because this step is required for all proposals, including actual cost (standard) proposals).

Filling in the detailed budget table took approximately:

- I specify the approximate number of person-days (an input box will appear just below)
- Not a significant amount of time
- Not applicable / Cannot say

Please indicate the approximate number of person-days needed to fill in the budget table:

- [numeric box]

If you were to prepare another lump sum proposal in the future, do you expect the effort to remain the same or to decrease, given your previous experience?

- I expect the effort will remain the same
- I expect the effort will decrease slightly over time, as I gain experience
- I expect the effort will decrease substantially over time, as I gain experience
- Not applicable / Cannot say

Application process: To what extent are you satisfied with the following aspects?

- The information on the use of lump sum funding in the description of the topic (call for proposals)
- Choosing partners and assembling the consortium
- Structuring the work plan and its division into work packages (including splitting work packages, if needed)
- The user-friendliness of the detailed budget table (Excel template)
- The number of pages allowed for the technical description (Part B) of your lump sum proposal

Evaluation summary report of your lump sum proposal: To what extent are you satisfied with the following aspects?

- The overall feedback on the quality of your proposal
- The feedback regarding the lump sum budget in your proposal

Lump sum grant management

Lump sum grant preparation: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

- The grant preparation process is similar for lump sum grants and actual cost (standard) grants.
- The lump sum budget for my project required no changes during grant preparation, or only minor changes.

[If the reply to the second statement was 'Disagree' or 'Strongly disagree', respondents had to reply to another question.]

Please select one option.

- The necessary changes to the lump sum budget for my project were easy to implement.

Lump sum project implementation: To what extent are you satisfied with the following aspects?

Lump sum projects follow the standard process for most aspects of grant management. Once fixed in the grant agreement, lump sums can be spent in any way you like if the project is carried out as agreed. In addition, the breakdown of lump sum shares can be modified through an amendment, if needed. The amendment procedure is very similar for all grants.

- Flexibility of managing your lump sum project
- Efficiency of the amendment process for your lump sum project
- Ease of addressing technical difficulties or delays in your lump sum project (i.e. by reporting a deviation or through an amendment)
- Collaboration between partners in your lump sum project

Lump sum reporting: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

The technical reporting template is the same for all projects, except that lump sum projects do not report on the use of resources. In lump sum projects, the coordinator must declare which work packages have been completed. On this basis, the financial statements are generated automatically for all beneficiaries. Technical checks and reviews are carried out for all projects to monitor progress and approve payments.

- The effort needed for technical reporting is similar for lump sum projects and actual cost (standard) projects.
- The effort needed for financial reporting in my lump sum project is very low.
- The effort needed for routine checks and reviews is the same as in actual cost (standard) projects.
- It is clear which type of records must be kept on file to demonstrate proper implementation of my project (e.g. in case of a technical project review).

Lump sum payments: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

As of June 2023, our data show that more than 99% of requests for lump sum payments were paid out in full. This suggests that the financial risk of beneficiaries in lump sum projects is low.

- The schedule of payments (pre-financing, intermediate payments, and final payment) ensures adequate cash flow for my lump sum project.
- The use of lump sum funding does not increase the financial risk in my project.

Risk of fraud

Risk of fraud in lump sum projects: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Lump sum projects are not subject to financial audits. Technical checks and reviews are the same for all projects, except for a particular focus on the completion of work packages in lump sum projects.

- The detailed cost estimations and their assessment during evaluation ensure that the final lump sum is reasonable, and that the resources are needed for the activities proposed.
- Continuous monitoring, technical checks and reviews are sufficient to detect potential cases of fraud in lump sum projects.

Summary

Your overall opinion: To what extent do you agree with the following statements on lump sums?

- Lump sum funding leads to an overall reduction of administrative burden.
- Lump sum funding shifts the focus from financial controls to the content of projects.
- The current approach needs to be further improved to fully deliver on the potential of using lump sums (if you have any concrete suggestions, please provide them in the comment box below).

Written feedback (optional)

If you have any comments or suggestions on how to improve lump sum funding in the R&I framework programme, please specify below.

Experts

Your experience with Horizon programmes

Question 1: Have you been involved in the evaluation of other Horizon 2020 or Horizon Europe proposals (not using lump sums)?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to reply

Question 2: Have you been involved in writing and submitting any Horizon 2020 or Horizon Europe proposals?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to reply

Question 3: Have you been participating in any Horizon 2020 or Horizon Europe grants?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to reply

Your experience with evaluating lump sum proposals

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Please select one option for each statement.

Question 4: Briefing for experts

- The briefing for experts was clear.
- The briefing for experts explained the specific aspects of lump sum funding.
- The briefing for experts explained adequately the financial aspects (i.e. how to evaluate the lump sum budget).

Question 5: Quality and structure of lump sum proposals

- The technical / scientific quality of lump sum proposals is the same as that of actual cost (standard) proposals.
- Applicants describe the concept and methodology in the same way as in actual cost (standard) proposals.
- The structure of the consortium is the same as in actual cost (standard) proposals.
- The structure of the work plan is the same as in actual cost (standard) proposals.
- When applicants make use of the option to split work packages, this does not affect the quality of the work plan.

Question 6: Evaluation of the detailed lump sum budget

The time allocated to the evaluation of a proposal, and hence the fees per proposal, increase with the complexity of the proposals. When a topic is using lump sums, the complexity level is routinely increased (i.e. it is higher than for a similar topic not using lump sums).

- The extra time and fees in your expert contract were enough to assess the detailed budget table.
- The detailed budget table is sufficiently clear.
- The detailed cost estimations and resources in a lump sum proposal are sufficient to evaluate the lump sum budget.
- The evaluation process for lump sum funding is properly designed to avoid inflated lump sums.
- Your assessment of the detailed cost estimations and resources ensured that the final lump sum is reasonable and needed for the activities proposed.

Question 7: Dashboard for lump sum evaluations

The dashboard for lump sum evaluations was released in Q4/2022. It allows experts to compare personnel costs in proposals with personnel costs in signed grants.

- The instructions on the landing page on how to use the dashboard are clear.
- The dashboard helps experts to assess personnel costs and decide if these costs are reasonable.

Question 8: Your overall opinion

- Lump sum funding leads to a significant reduction of administrative burden for beneficiaries.
- Lump sum funding shifts the focus from financial controls to the content of projects.
- The current approach needs to be further improved to fully deliver on the potential of using lump sums (if you have any concrete suggestions, please provide them in the comment box below).

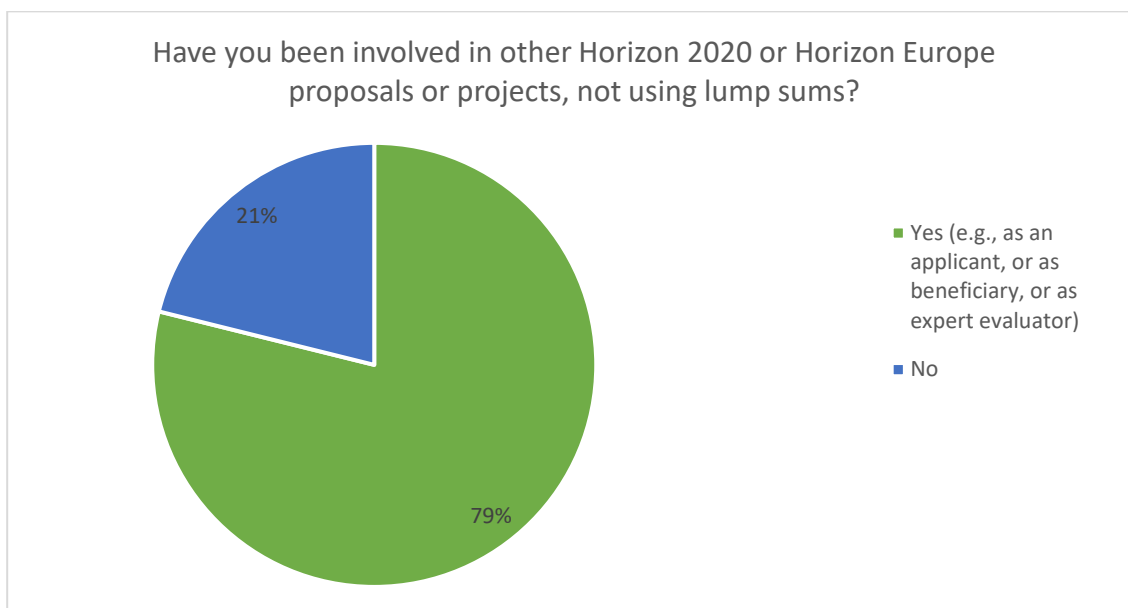
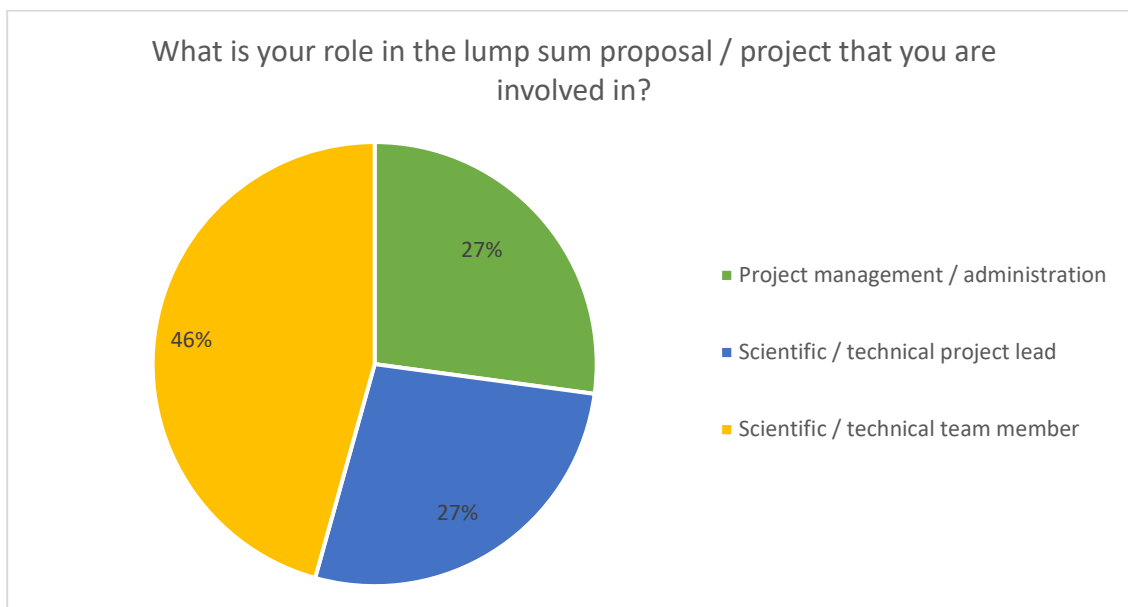
Written feedback (optional)

If you have any comments or suggestions on how to improve lump sum funding in the R&I framework programme, please specify below.

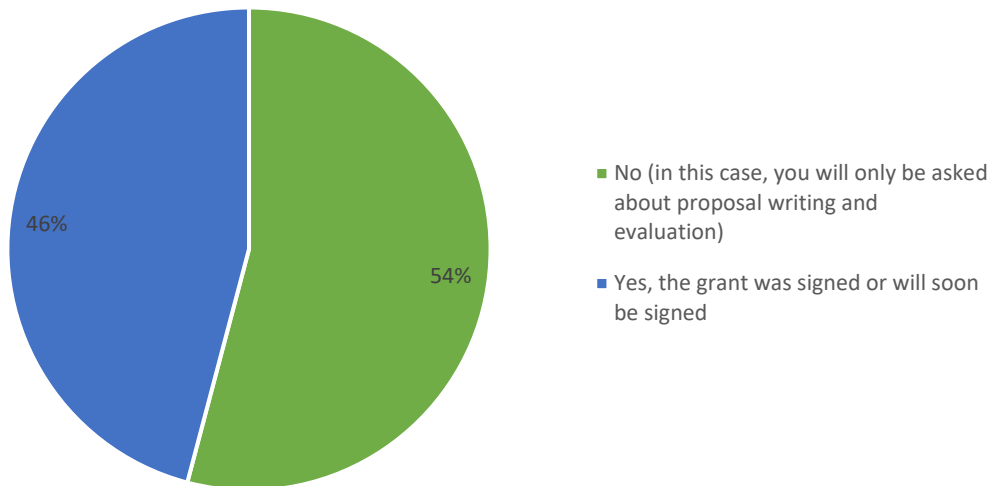
d. All survey results

See appendix b for details of the online surveys and profile of respondents.

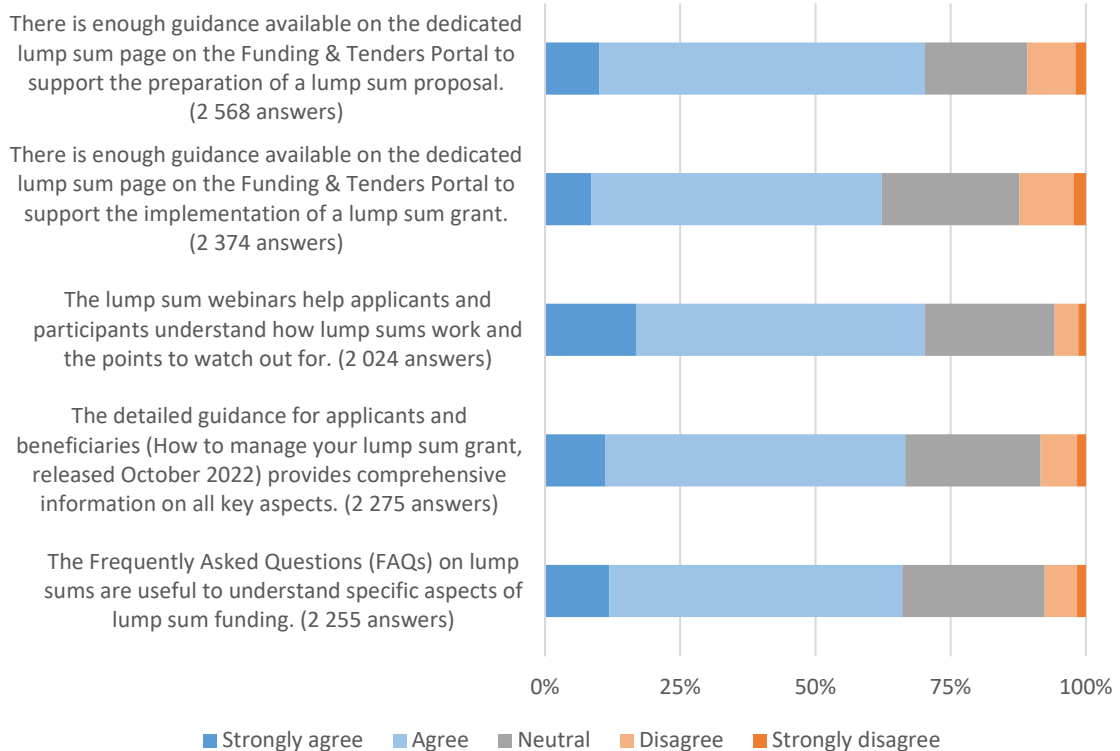
All graphs participants

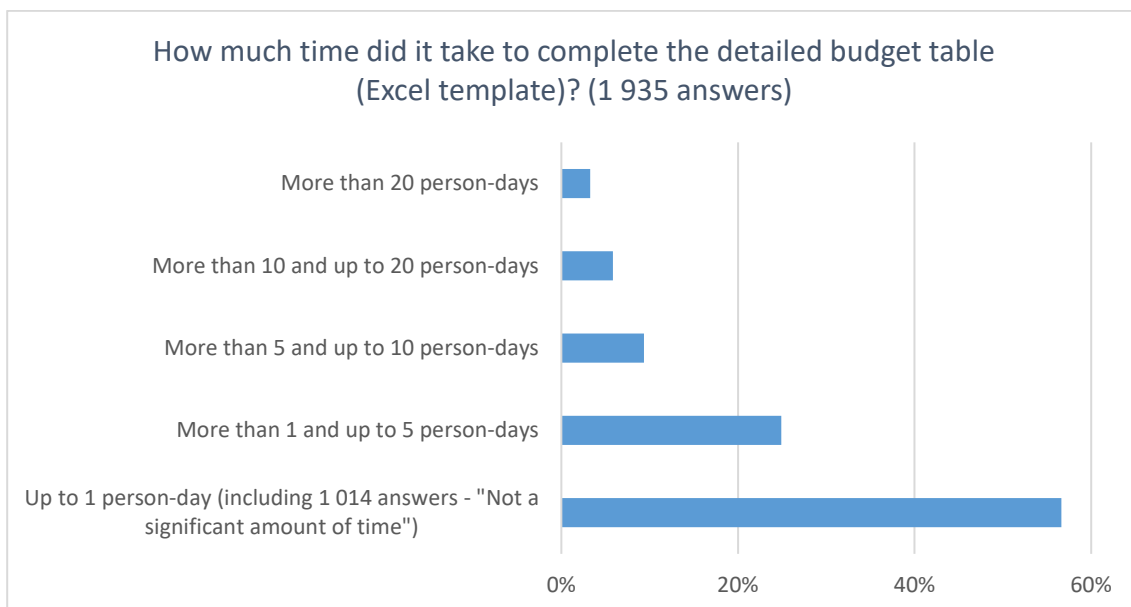
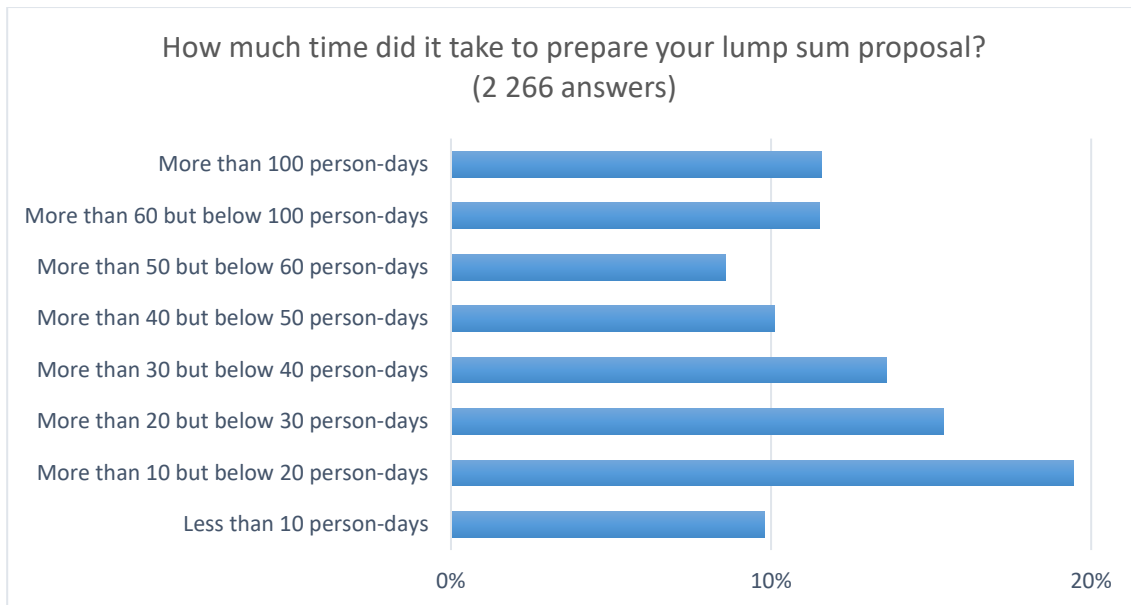


Has your lump sum proposal been selected for funding?

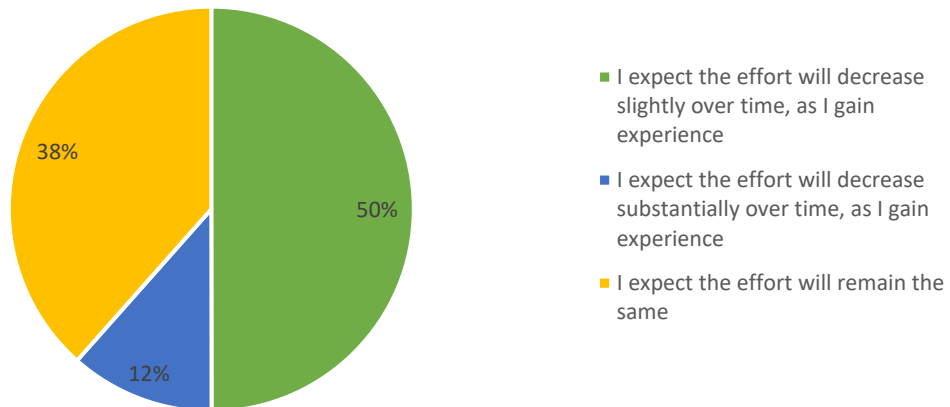


Lump sum guidance and support: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

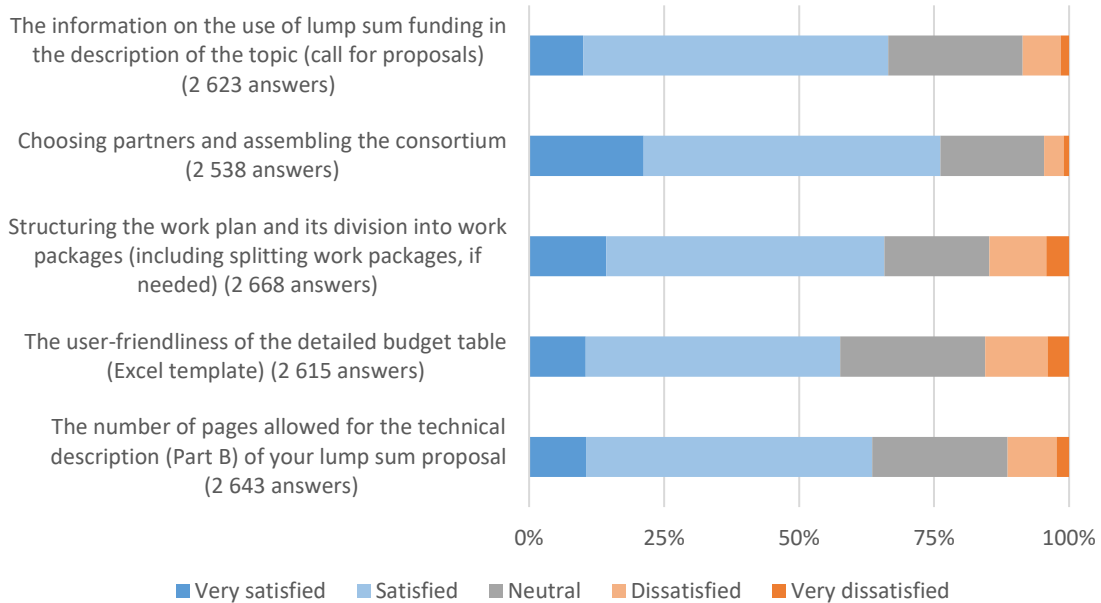




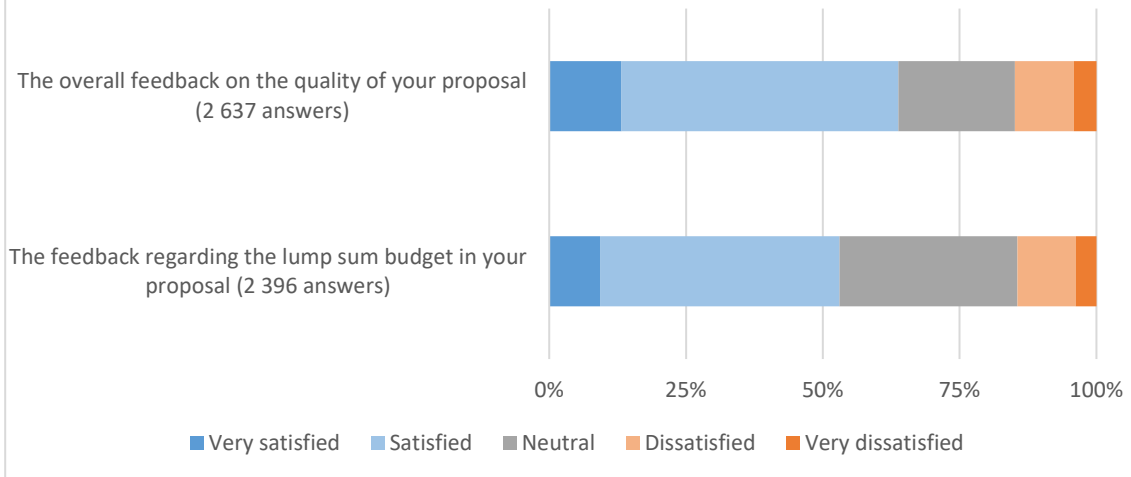
If you were to prepare another lump sum proposal in the future, do you expect the effort to remain the same or to decrease, given your previous experience? (2 611 answers)



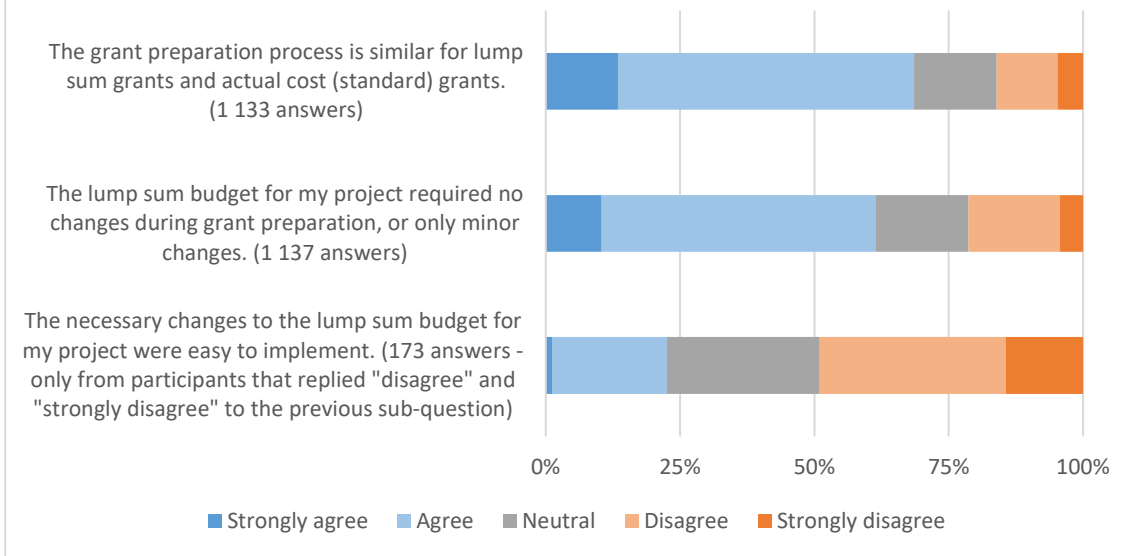
Application process: To what extent are you satisfied with the following aspects?



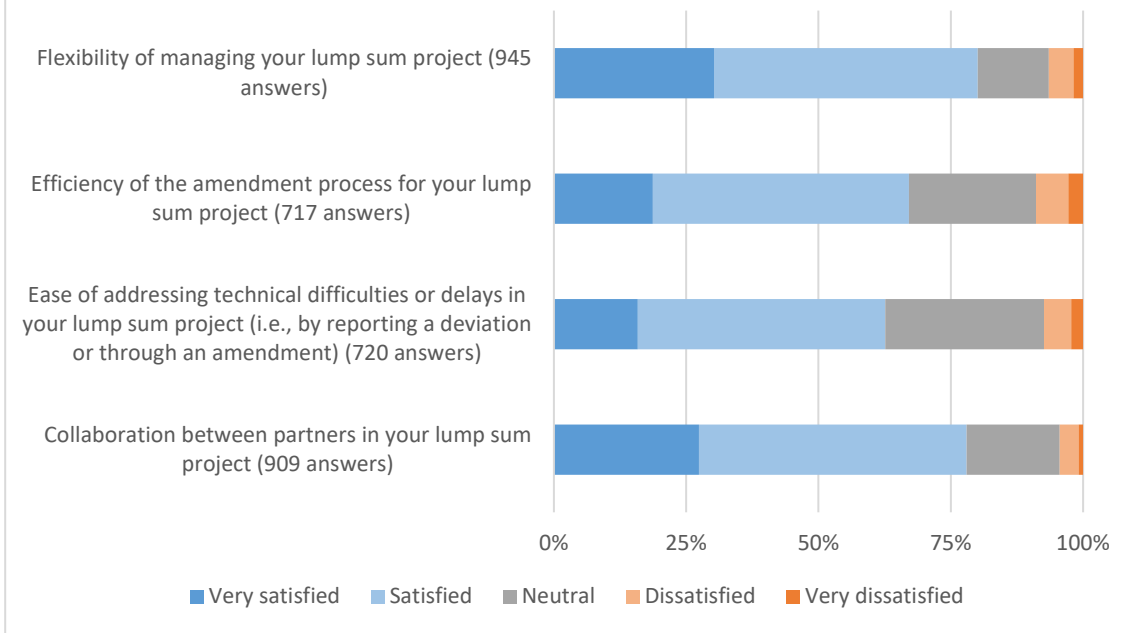
Evaluation summary report of your lump sum proposal: To what extent are you satisfied with the following aspects?



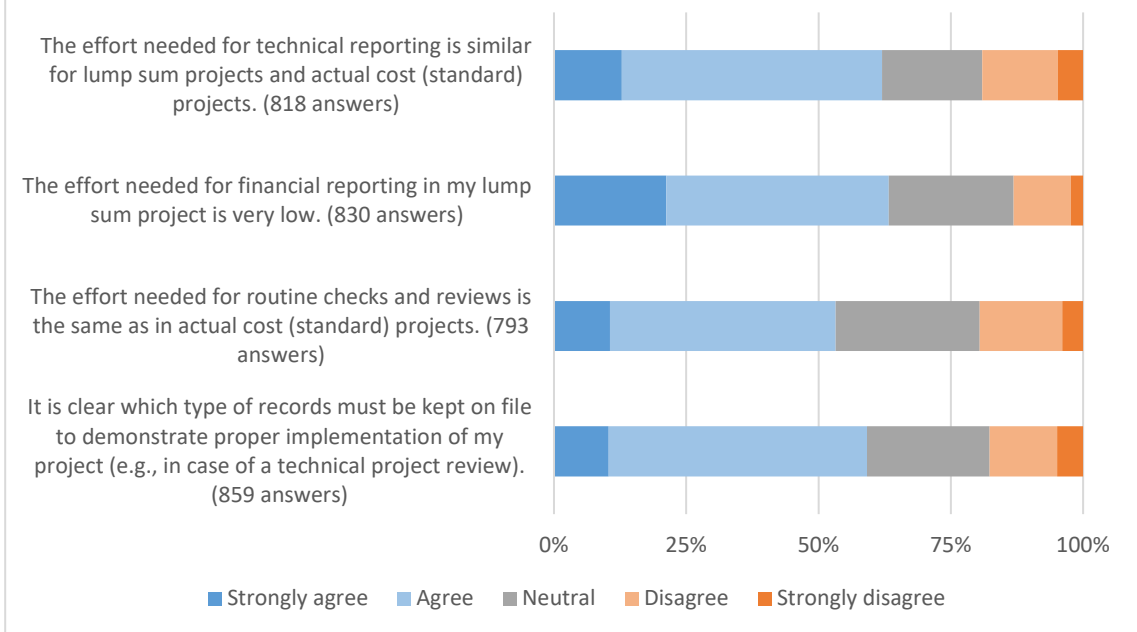
Lump sum grant preparation: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?



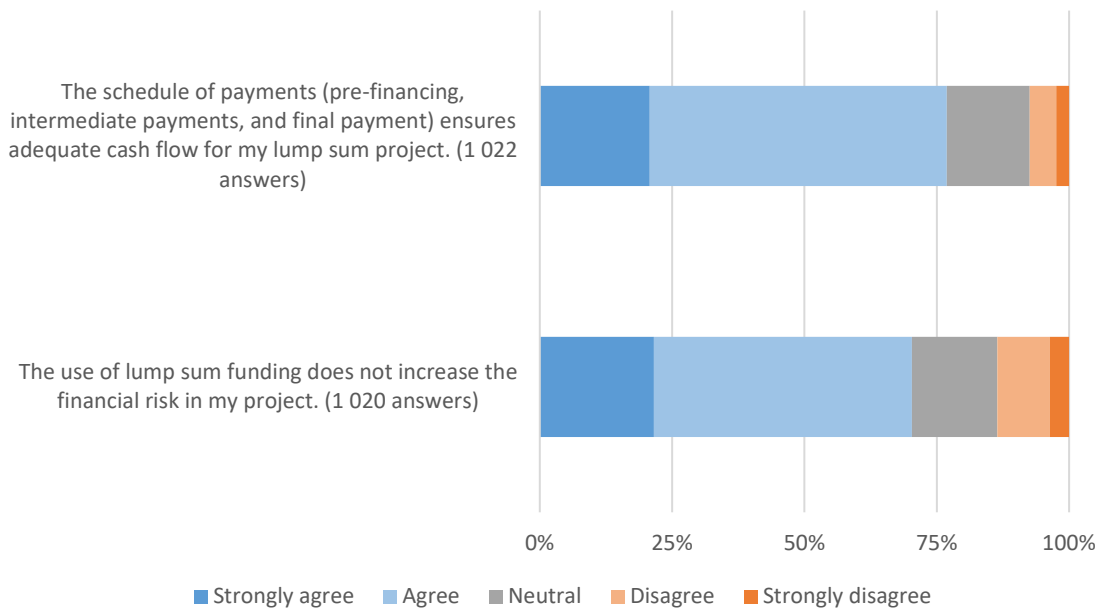
Lump sum project implementation: To what extent are you satisfied with the following aspects?



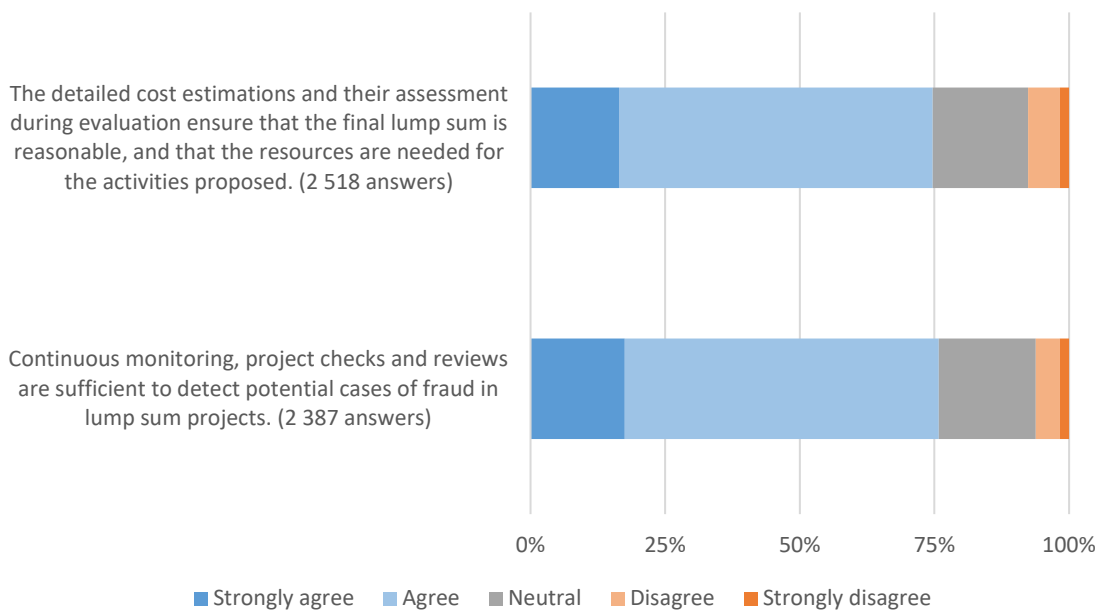
Lump sum reporting: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?



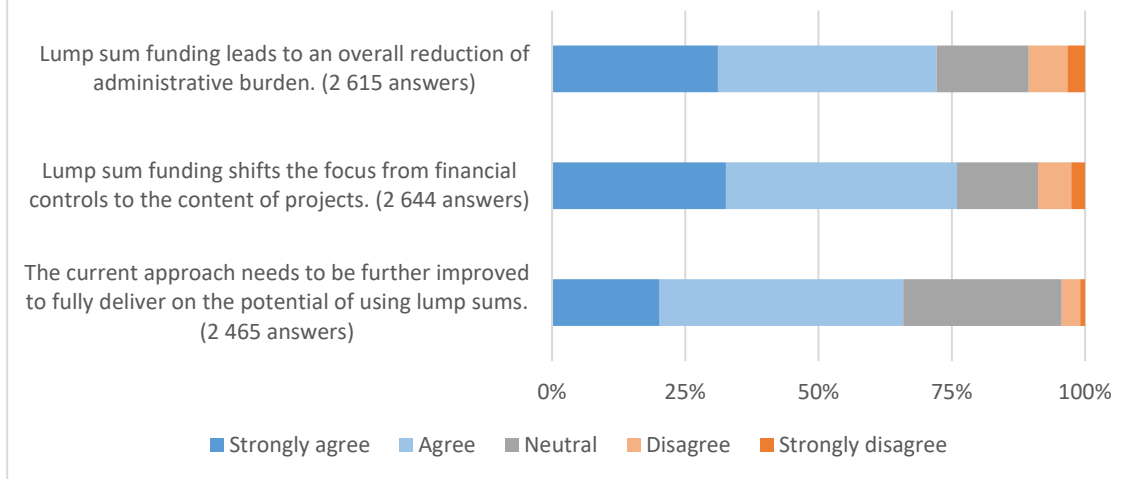
Lump sum payments: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?



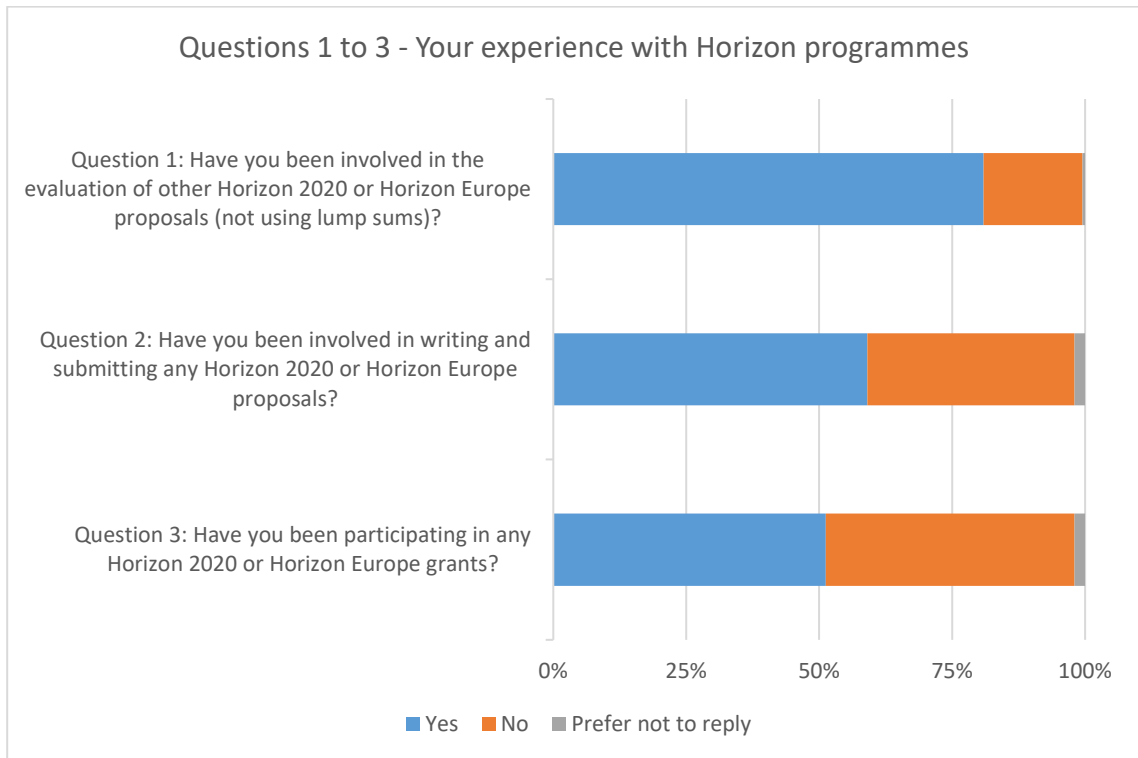
Risk of fraud in lump sum projects: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?



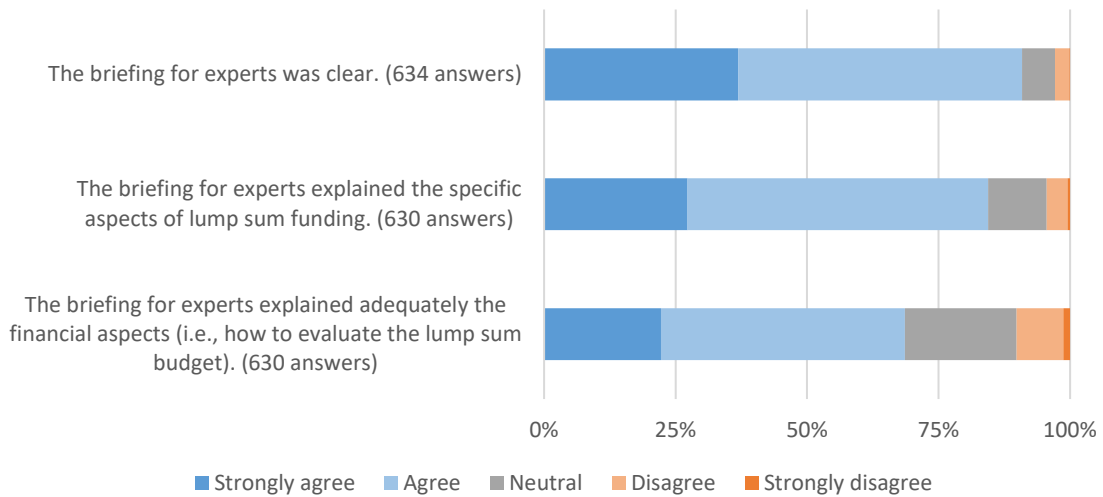
Your overall opinion: To what extent do you agree with the following statements on lump sums?



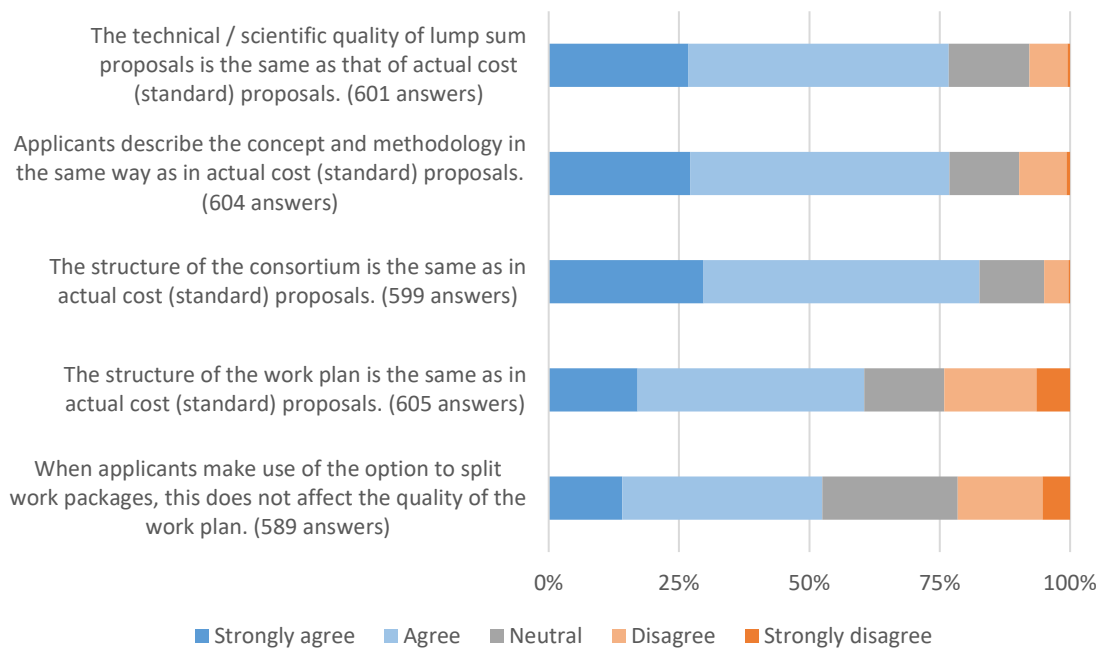
All graphs experts



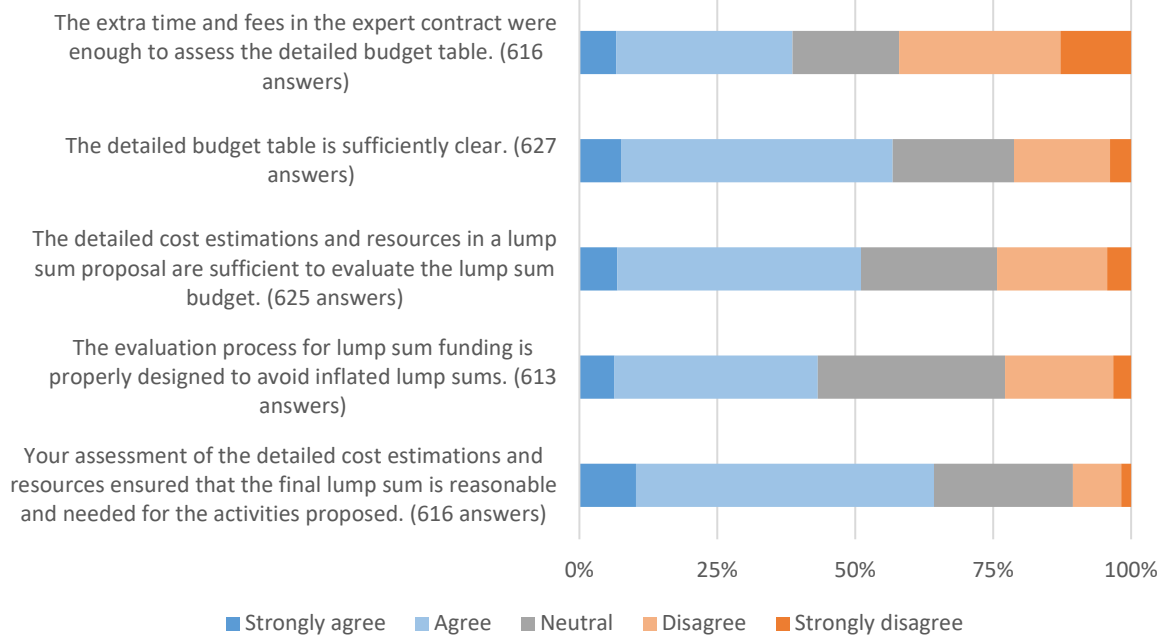
Question 4 - Briefing for experts



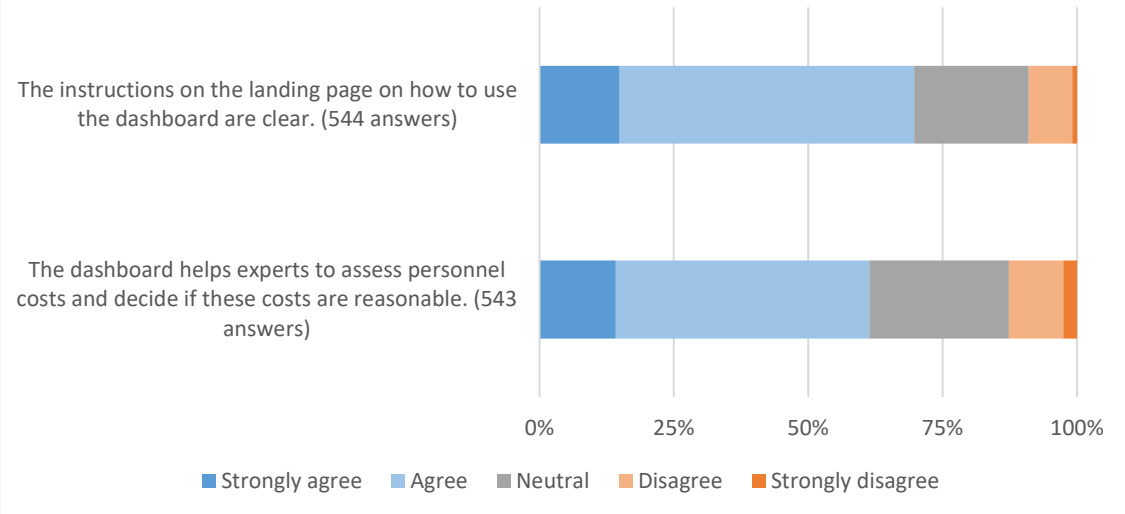
Question 5 - Quality and structure of lump sum proposals



Question 6 - Evaluation of the detailed lump sum budget



Question 7 - Dashboard for lump sum evaluations



Question 8 - Your overall opinion

