



SOFT
INNOVATION
PRIZE 2020

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RULES OF CONTEST

SOFT INNOVATION PRIZE

19 November 2019

Version 1.0

*Research and
Innovation*

1. THEME: SOFT INNOVATION PRIZE

1.1 Objectives pursued

The SOFT Innovation Prize is being offered to highlight and reward the excellence in innovation that can be found in fusion research as well as the quality of the researchers and industries involved. Following the successful running of this contest in coordination with SOFT 2014, 2016 and 2018 (Symposium on Fusion Technology), the European Commission is holding the contest again in coordination with the next SOFT in 2020. There are no specific categories for this prize. Contestants are free to submit an application concerning any physics or technology innovation that has been or is being developed in magnetic confinement fusion research and that has a market potential or has been taken up (or recognised) by industry to be further developed for the market.

1.2 Expected results

By awarding the 'SOFT Innovation Prize', the Commission will showcase innovations in this research sector giving visibility to the most dynamic, forward-looking and innovative researchers, research teams or industrial contestants. This visibility will provide greater potential for valorisation of the research, and the contest will stimulate the research community globally and in the EU to develop a stronger innovation and entrepreneurial culture in fusion research.

2. PRIZE AMOUNT(S):

Winner: 50 000 EUR, second: 25 000 EUR and third: 12500 EUR.

3. DEADLINES & ADMISSIBILITY

DEADLINES	
Opening of the submission:	19/11/2019
Closing date for submission:	5/3/2020 at 17:00:00 CET ¹

Joint applications by a group of participants are admitted. In this case, the participants must appoint a 'lead participant' to represent them towards the Commission. The participants will be jointly responsible and must all fulfil and respect the conditions set out in these Rules of Contest.

Applications must be submitted by the (lead) participant via the [Funding and tender opportunities portal](#).

Applications must be readable, accessible and printable. Incomplete applications may be considered inadmissible if essential elements are missing (see [General Annex B to the Main Work Programme](#)).

The researcher, research team or industrial participant must obtain permission from the owner of the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) to submit an application and provide supporting documentation. The owner of the IPR should comment on the state of the IPR, i.e. free or contractually embedded, and name of possible contractor(s).

The complete application for the 'SOFT Innovation Prize' should include: - a technical description of the innovation; - a state-of-the-art assessment of the innovation (using a publicly available patent database such as the EPO Espacenet); - an account, in general terms, of the market potential for the exploitation of the innovation; - the contribution that the prize could provide for the exploitation of the innovation.

The page-limit for your prize application (Part B) is: 15 pages.

Sample application forms will be available on the [prize submission page](#).

¹ Central European Time = Brussels local time.

4. ELIGIBILITY

4.1 Eligibility criteria

1. The contest is open to researchers² or research teams³ funded under the Euratom fusion research programme, to researchers or research teams working for a national programme in an ITER partner country or in any third country that has a bilateral fusion cooperation agreement with Euratom⁴, and to industrial participants benefitting from the ITER project⁵. Example of proof: The Commission may request substantiating document such as contracts, etc.

Please note however that special rules may apply for entities from certain countries (see [General Annex C to the Main Work Programme](#)).

Please also be aware that participants that have already received an EU or Euratom prize cannot receive a second prize for the same activities.

4.2 Exclusion criteria

Participants will be excluded if they (or one of them):

- a) are subject to an administrative sanction (i.e. exclusion or financial penalty decision)⁶
- b) are in one of the following situations⁷:
 - bankrupt, being wound up, having the affairs administered by the courts, entered into an arrangement with creditors, suspended business activities or subject to any other similar proceedings or procedures (including procedures for persons with unlimited liability for the participant's debts)
 - in breach of social security or tax obligations (including if done by persons with unlimited liability for the participant's debts)
 - guilty of grave professional misconduct⁸ (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award of the prize)
 - committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including if done by terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award of the prize)

² The researcher applies in her/his name and may in this case use her/his own personal PIC code.

³ In this case, the lead researcher applies on behalf of the others.

⁴ The ITER Members are China, the European Union, India, Japan, Korea, Russia and the United States. All EU member states are automatically included in the ITER partner countries. Countries with a bilateral fusion cooperation agreement with Euratom include Switzerland, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Brazil.

⁵ These could be companies that have worked as a contractor or subcontractor or have received a grant from the ITER Organization or any of the Domestic Agencies of the Parties to the ITER Agreement while working on the ITER project. For more information about the ITER Organization and the ITER project see www.iter.org.

⁶ See Article 136(1) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 ('EU Financial Regulation') (OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p. 1).

⁷ See Articles 136(1) and 141(1) EU Financial Regulation.

⁸ Professional misconduct includes: violation of ethical standards of the profession, wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility, false declarations/misrepresentation of information, participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition, violation of IPR, attempting to influence decision-making processes or obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain an advantage.

- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement or grant decision (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award of the prize)
 - guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No 2988/95 (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award of the prize)
 - created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award of the prize).
- c) have misrepresented information required for participating in the contest or fail to submit such information⁹
- d) were involved in the preparation of the prize documents and this entails a distortion of competition¹⁰.

5. AWARD CRITERIA

The prize will be awarded, after closure of the contest, to the contestant(s) who in the opinion of the jury best addresses the following cumulative criteria:

- 1. Originality and replicability:** The extent to which the idea is innovative, original and a first-of-a-kind use of the technology in industry or in the domain of application. The description should be clear, logically presented and well illustrated.
- 2. Technical excellence:** The extent to which the innovation is demonstrably state-of-the-art and based on excellent science and engineering.
- 3. Economic impact and exploitation of the innovation:** The extent to which the submission demonstrates understanding and awareness of the relevant innovation aspects, including market potential / needs and business opportunities.
- 4. Plans for potential exploitation and further development of the innovation:** The extent to which the prize would contribute to the successful exploitation and further development of the innovation, as described in the application.

6. DOCUMENTS

The mandatory supporting documents are set out in the application form.

Participants may be asked at a later stage for further documents (for legal entity validation, bank account validation, ethics review, declaration of honour on exclusion grounds, etc).

7. PROCEDURE

If there are more than 50 applications, there will be a pre-selection phase to select the best 10 applications to pass to jury review. Otherwise, all applications will pass directly to jury review.

The pre-selection panel and jury usually have a different composition, but jury members may participate in the pre-selection panel.

⁹ See Article 141(1) [EU Financial Regulation](#).

¹⁰ See Article 141(1) [EU Financial Regulation](#).

The jury evaluation is planned to take place between March 2020 and May 2020.

The pre-selection panel/jury will evaluate each application against the four award criteria and score them as follows (half marks are possible decimals are not):

CRITERION	THRESHOLD	MAXIMUM POINTS
1. Originality and replicability	3	5
2. Technical excellence	3	5
3. Economic impact and exploitation of the innovation	3	5
4. Plans for potential exploitation and further development of the innovation	3	5
Total	12	20

For applications with the same score, the pre-selection panel/jury will determine a priority order according to the following approach: The score for the criterion No 2 will be given a weight of 2 and the score for criterion No 3 will be given a weight of 1.5. If two or more applications tie for the first rank, the prize will be equally divided and awarded to all.

On the basis of the evaluation by the jury (and after the mandatory checks: ethics review, security scrutiny, legal entity validation, non-exclusion, double funding and plagiarism, etc), the Commission will decide on the award of the prize.

The 2020 SOFT Innovation Prize will be awarded at the 31st Symposium on Fusion Technology (SOFT 2020) that will be held in Dubrovnik, Croatia, from 20th to 25th September 2020. The winner, second and third are expected to take part in the award ceremony.

All participants will be informed at the latest in September 2020 on the outcome of their application.

8. OTHER CONDITIONS

8.1 Payment arrangements

The prize money (Winner: 50000 EUR, 2nd: 25000 EUR and third: 12500 EUR) will be paid to the (lead) participant in one instalment after the award ceremony by bank transfer, provided all the requested documents have been submitted.

8.2 Publicity — Promoting the prize — Visibility of EU funding

8.2.1 Publicity by the winner(s)

The winner(s) must promote the prize and its results, by providing targeted information to multiple audiences (including the media and the public) in a strategic and effective manner.

Unless the Commission requests or agrees otherwise or unless it is impossible, any communication activity related to the action (including in electronic form, via social media, etc.) must:

- (a) display the EU emblem and
- (b) include the following text:

“This person was winner of the SOFT Innovaton Prize from the 2019-2020 Euratom Research and Training Programme”.

When displayed together with another logo, the EU emblem must have appropriate prominence.

For the purposes of their obligations, the winner(s) may use the EU emblem without first obtaining approval from the Commission.

This does not, however, give it the right to exclusive use.

Moreover, they may not appropriate the EU emblem or any similar trademark or logo, either by registration or by any other means.

8.2.2 Publicity by the Commission

The Commission may use, for its communication and publicising activities, information relating to the action, documents notably summaries for publication as well as any other material, such as pictures or audio-visual material that it receives from the participants (including in electronic form).

The Commission will publish the name of the winner(s), their origin, the amount of the prize and its nature and purpose — unless they have requested to waive this publication (because disclosure risks threatening its security and safety or harm its commercial interest).

Photos and videos taken by the Commission either in preparation of the award ceremony or during the award ceremony are the sole property of the Commission.

8.3 Dissemination and exploitation of results

The winner(s) must comply with the obligations set out in Title III of the Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation Regulation No 1290/2013¹¹.

8.4 Processing of personal data

8.4.1 Processing of personal data by the Commission

Any personal data will be processed by the Commission under Regulation No 2018/1725¹² and in accordance with the [Participant Portal privacy notice\(s\)](#).

All winners consent that the Commission publishes the following information:

- a) name
- b) Member State of origin (address or NUTS 2 region)
- c) their activities in relation to the award of the prize (via the summary for publication they provided)
- d) prize amount

in whatever form and medium.

¹¹ Regulation (EU) No 1290/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 laying down the rules for participation and dissemination in “Horizon 2020 - the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020)” (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013 p.81).

¹² Regulation (EU) No 2018/1725 of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC (OJ L 295 21.11.2018, p.39).

8.4.2. Processing of personal data by the participants

The participants must process personal data in compliance with applicable EU and national law on data protection (including authorisations or notification requirements, if any).

8.5 Ethics

The activities must be carried out in compliance with:

- (a) ethical principles (including the highest standards of research integrity) and
- (b) applicable international, EU and national law.

No prize will be awarded for activities carried out outside the EU, if they are prohibited in all Member States.

The participants must ensure that the activities have an exclusive focus on civil applications.

The participants must ensure that the activities do not:

- (a) aim at human cloning for reproductive purposes
- (b) intend to modify the genetic heritage of human beings which could make such changes heritable (with the exception of research relating to cancer treatment of the gonads) or
- (c) intend to create human embryos solely for the purpose of research or for the purpose of stem cell procurement, including by means of somatic cell nuclear transfer.

Research activities involving human embryonic stem cells (hESC) are moreover subject to the conditions set out in the [Statement of the Commission related to research activities involving human embryonic stem cells](#).

The participants must respect the highest standards of research integrity — as set out, for instance, in the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity¹⁵.

For more information and best practice, see the [Funding & Tenders Portal Online Manual](#), the [Guidance — How to complete your ethics self assessment](#) and the [Guidance note — Research focusing exclusively on civil applications](#).

8.6 Security

The activities must be carried out in compliance with Commission Decision [2015/444](#), i.e. security-sensitive information must be **EU-classified**, if its unauthorised disclosure could adversely impact the interests of the EU or of one (or more) of its Member States. Applications that are too security-sensitive cannot be awarded a prize.

For more information and best practice, see the [Guidance — Guidelines for the classification of information in research projects](#), the [Guidance — Guidelines for the handling of classified information in EU research projects](#), the [Guidance note — Potential misuse of research results](#) and the [Guidance note — Research involving dual use items](#).

8.7 Conflict of interests

The participants must take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective award of the prize is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest ('conflict of interests').

They must inform the Commission without delay of any situation constituting or likely to lead to a conflict of interests and immediately take all the necessary steps to rectify this situation.

¹⁵ European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity of ALLEA (All European Academies) and ESF (European Science Foundation) of March 2017 http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/hi/h2020-ethics_code-of-conduct_en.pdf.

The Commission may verify that the measures taken are appropriate and may require additional measures to be taken by a specified deadline.

8.8 Liability for damages

The Commission cannot be held liable for any damages.

8.9 Checks, audits and investigations

The Commission, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and the European Court of Auditors may carry out checks, audits and investigations in relation to the prize.

8.10 Withdrawal of the prize — Recovery of undue amounts

The Commission may withdraw the prize after its award and recover all payments made, if it finds out that:

- (a) false information, fraud or corruption was used to obtain it
- (b) a winner was not eligible or should have been excluded
- (c) a winner is in serious breach of its obligations under these Rules of Contest.

8.11 Administrative sanctions

If a participant is in one of the situations specified in section 4.2, the Commission may also impose administrative sanctions (i.e. exclude it from future EU contracts, grants and prizes and/or impose a financial penalty)¹⁴.

8.12 Cancellation of the contest

The Commission may cancel the contest or decide not to award the prize — without any obligation to compensate participants —, if:

- (a) no applications are received
- (b) the jury does not find a winner
- (c) the winner is not eligible or must be excluded
- (d) the objective of the contest has already been achieved.

8.13 Complaints

Complaints against decisions negatively affecting the rights of a participant or winner can be brought before the General Court — or, on appeal, the Court of Justice of the European Union — under Article 263 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU).

9. CONTACT

For more information, please see the [prize submission page](#).

In case of questions, please contact RTD-FUSION@ec.europa.eu

¹⁴ See Articles 136(1) and 138 [EU Financial Regulation](#).