EUROPEAN
TRAINING ACADEMY

HORIZON EUROPE PRACTICAL GUIDE

Contents

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I HORIZON EUROPE INTRODUCTION – HOW TO TAKE PART?

How to use Horizon Europe Practical Guide?

This is the second edition of the guide for Horizon Europe intending to assist prospective participants to **successfully navigate through hundreds of calls/topics** and identify the best funding source matching their needs. Guide sections II - V are summarizing the largest global research and innovation framework programme and focusing readers' attention on *call/topics examples*. The next objective is to assist participants in **deciding and defining their role in the project.** Section VI and VII are explaining the principles of how to analyse the call for proposals and create a consortium. **The philosophy of writing a winning proposal** is briefly presented in Section VIII. And lastly, the **explanation of what a grant agreement phase is and advice for project implementation** are provided in Section IX. The guide is designed based on the compilation and adjustment of formal EC documents for the readers' needs and best practices of the author, and it addresses the most frequent questions of the participants and the most common mistakes of grant seekers and proposal writers. For more thorough reader bibliography should provide a shortcut to the original sources and to further reading. We have attempted to keep the matter, the layout, and the style of this Guide as concise as it can be.

Section II - V **How to identify adequate funding source for your interests**	Section VI - VII **Decide about your role, to lead or join a consortium** **Consortium Creation**	Section VIII **Lead or contribute to writing a wining proposal**	Section IX **Grant agreement phase** **Advice for project implementation**
What is the Horizon Europe Programme? ✓ Understanding the logic behind How Horizon Europe works ✓ What is a Work Programme? ✓ Example of main calls/topics ✓ Where to find calls/topics	**Call Analysis** ✓ Topic Description ✓ Types of Action ✓ WBS creation ✓ Partnres Profiles ✓ Partners Search ✓ Consortium Creation	**Proposal writing** ✓ Planning ✓ Intelligently interpreting instructions ✓ Causality and consistency ✓ Educating Evaluators ✓ Providing credible evidence	**Advice** ✓ What is Grant Agreement Phase? ✓ Advice for project implementation

Picture: Guide for Horizon Europe – Roadmap how to participate

Understanding the ninth European Research and Innovation Framework programme (2021-2027) is a challenge, due to its size, scope and complexity. The most common pitfall for prospective participants by far is "*not reading and implementing official instructions*". Indeed, for a majority of novice participants understanding **the entire programme** *is hardly possible,* **and it is not needed** *for successful participation*. Therefore, in this Guide, the presentation of Horizon Europe serves to provide orientation, "where" you can take part: in which pillars, work programmes, calls/topics, and types of actions. While more experienced participants can find new funding opportunities. The second pitfall for novice participants is to find a suitable role. Deciding between leading a consortium, joining a

consortium as a partner, or leading a sole participant project differentiates three *different roadmaps for participants*. To add to the complexity, **consortium creation and proposal writing** also differ for each call/topic as Horizon Europe offers the largest number of funding opportunities on the globe, but as well, the most competitive ones. Sections VI-IX of this Guide provides **the key variables for success** in each step, from call analysis, choosing a role, consortium creation to writing a winning proposal, and preparation for project implementation.

What is the Horizon Europe Programme?

Horizon Europe is the research and innovation framework programme running from 2021-2027. As it was mentioned in the introduction it is the *ninth programme* succeeding previous Horizon 2020 (FP8), FP7, FP6 and other similar instruments before mid-80's, so it builds further on the world's leading research and innovation project database. Horizon Europe begins with a budget of around €95.5 billion which makes it the greatest open R&I funding source in the world. The aim of Horizon Europe is keeping the EU at the forefront of global research and innovation. Operational objectives are *consequently* widely and strategically set:

➢ supporting the implementation of **Union policy priorities** including the **sustainable development goals** and the **Paris Agreement**; delivering, through **R&I missions** on ambitious goals;

➢ strengthening **excellent basic and frontier research**; **promoting excellence**, **broadening participation;** strengthening the **gender dimension**; **international cooperation**; **promoting responsible research and innovation**;

➢ reinforcing the **link between research, innovation, education** and **other policies**; increasing collaboration links in European **research and innovation** and **across sectors and disciplines**;

➢ improving the relationship between **science and society**, the **visibility of science and science communication**, and promoting the **involvement of citizens and end-users** in co-design and **co-creation** processes;

➢ **attracting talent**, training and retaining researchers and innovators in the European Research Area;

➢ fostering **open science** and ensuring visibility to the public and **open access to scientific publications and research data**;

➢ developing **research infrastructures** across the European Research Area and providing transnational access;

➢ encouraging **exploitation of R&I results** for leveraging **private investments** and **policy development**; improving **access to risk finance**, through **synergies with InvestEU as well**, in particular where the market does not provide viable financing;

➢ accelerating **industrial transformation**, through **improved skills for innovation as well**;

➢ stimulating **R&I activities in SMEs** and the **creation and scale-up of innovative companies**, in particular **start-ups, SMEs, and in exceptional cases small mid-caps;**

For a thoughtful reader, operational objectives reveal the vision of the European research and Innovation area and may position project initiatives to contribute. Horizon Europe structure is divided across 3 pillars: Excellent Science, Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness, and Innovative Europe. And Horizontal part Widening Participation and Strengthening the European Research Area. Each Horizon Europe Pillar and Part consists of Work Programmes.

What is a Work Programme? Work programmes set out funding opportunities under Horizon Europe. The content of work programmes for Horizon Europe is prepared by strategic planning and the resultant strategic plan. The preparation of work programmes involves the consultation of stakeholders. For this purpose, Advisory Groups have been set up representing the broad constituency of stakeholders ranging from industry and research to representatives of civil society.

The current main Horizon Europe work programme comprises an introduction, thematic sections and the general annexes describing general rules such as standard admissibility conditions and eligibility criteria, selection and award criteria, etc.

Each thematic section is self-contained, and describes the overall objectives, the **respective calls for proposals, and the topics within each call.** With calls for proposals the Commission selects, on a competitive basis, organizations or natural persons to implement projects co- financed by EU because these projects contribute to EU policy aims. You can find more detailed information including budget allocation in the programme sections.

Before each call for proposals, a 'Draft Work programme' is published by the European Commission. This is not an official document. It is initially distributed to the Programme Committee (these are the National Delegates to the different Horizon Europe programmes). During the period before the official Call, stakeholders have an opportunity to comment on the draft or to start planning future proposals**.** *Draft work programmes* are available from Horizon Europe NCPs, support actions websites like www.eufunds.info and **Official Work Programmes are published at Funding & Tenders Opportunities Portal.**
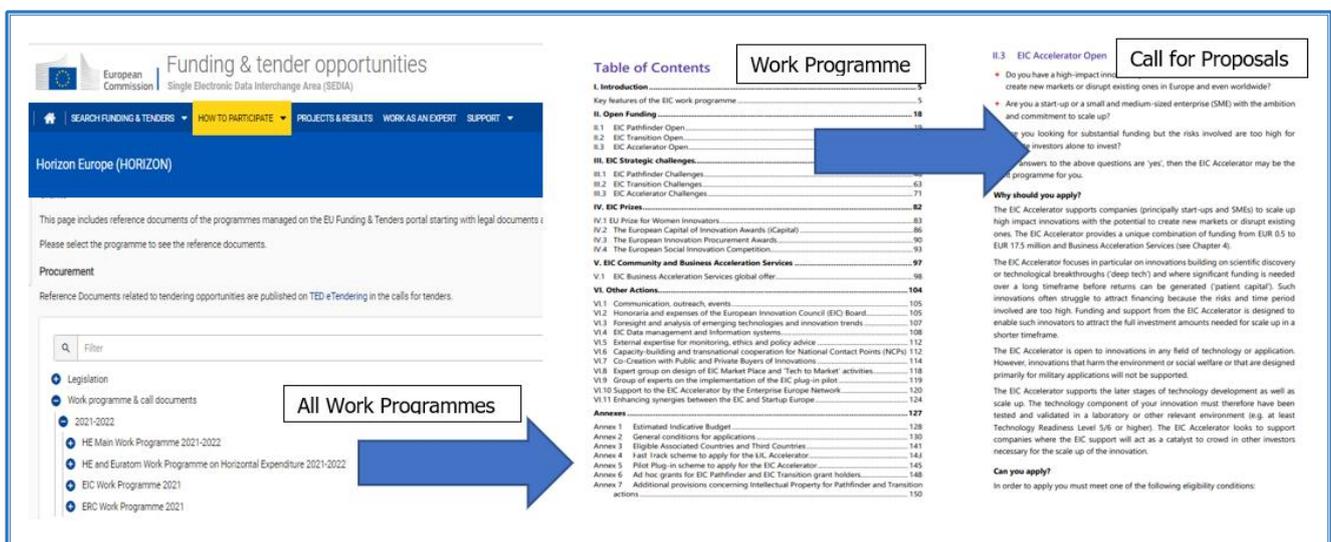
Picture: Participants portal' reference documents, Work Programme content and Calls for Proposals

What is a Funding & Tenders Opportunities Portal?

The Funding and Tenders Portal is the single-entry point (the Single Electronic Data Interchange Area) for applicants, contractors, and experts in funding programmes with all relevant information and instructions.

This is where the 'Calls for Proposals' are published and where proposals are submitted electronically. Participants, planning to take part in Horizon 2020, must have a thorough understanding of what is commonly referred to as a "Participant Portal". This Guide does not describe the Portal in detail, but provides basic information, as the European Commission has a comprehensive set of guidelines and online training tools relating to the portal**.**

Funding & Tenders Opportunities Portal contains sections: **Search** for funding and tenders; with open, closed and forthcoming calls; **Reference documents** like Application forms and Evaluation forms; **Partners search**; **Projects and results**; and other relevant info for applicants and participants. We shall be referring to *different FT Portal' sections and tools throughout this Guide* as it is a major source of information for participants and offers wide-ranging options to "Get support" i.e.: Partner search, Online Manual is your guide on the procedures from proposal submission to managing your grant, Horizon Europe Programme Guide contains the detailed guidance to the structure, budget and political priorities of Horizon Europe, Research Enquiry Service, Enterprise Europe Network, IT Helpdesk and European IPR Helpdesk assists you on intellectual property issues. While CEN and CENELEC, the European Standards Organisations advise you as to how to tackle standardization in your project proposal.
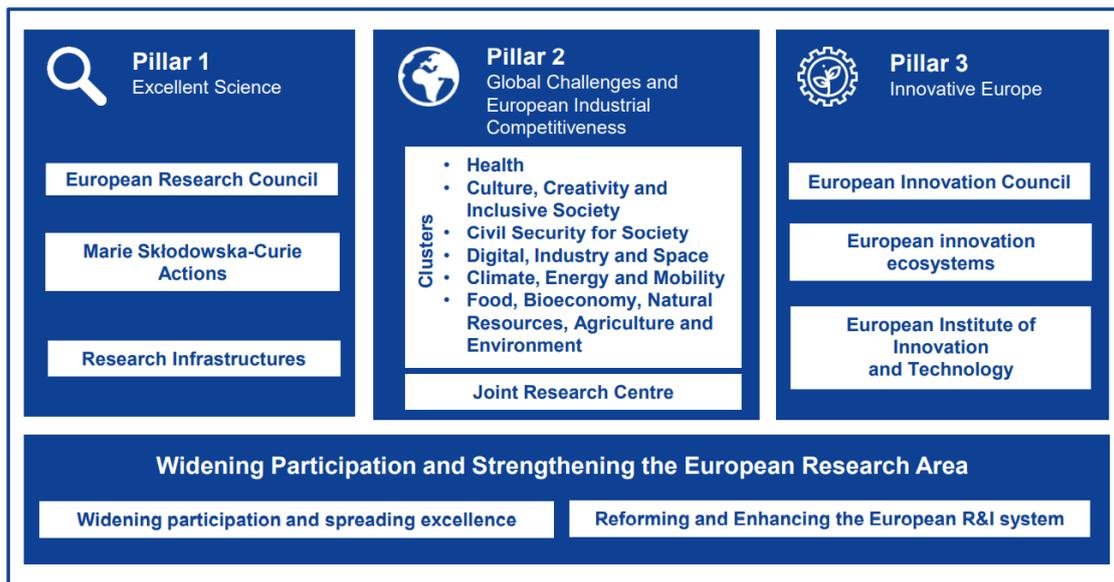
> FT Portal Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home

Registration of Participants

For participation, you must **register your organization following instructions provided at the Funding and tenders portal at:**

> Registration Link:
> https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/urf/reg

Horizon Europe structure

Picture: Horizon Europe Structure

Understanding the logic behind How Horizon Europe works?

STRATEGIC PLAN

EU Policy priorities
➢ Overall **priorities for of the EU** i.e. A European Green Deal; A Europe fit for the digital age; A stronger Europe in the world; Promoting European way of life; A new push for European democracy;

Key Strategic Orientations
➢ **Strategic objectives** where Research and Innovation investments are expected to make a difference. The strategic plan 2021-24 defines the key strategic orientations for the first four years of Horizon Europe, the EU's multiannual framework programme for research and innovation. It sets out the research and innovation priorities to support policy implementation.

Impact Areas
➢ The most important **transformations and benefits** to be fostered through Research and Innovation

WORK PROGRAMMES

Expected Impacts / Destinations
➢ Specific **contribution of the project** to the Work Programme *expected impacts described in the destination*. Destination directly supports the Key Strategic Orientations (KSO), as outlined in the Strategic Plan. Impacts and destinations are synonyms at this level, and generally occur sometime after the end of the project.

Expected Outcomes / Topics
➢ The **expected effects, over the medium term,** of the projects supported under a given topic. The results of a project should contribute to these outcomes, fostered in particular by dissemination and exploitation measures. (i.e. uptake, deployment, commercialization) short them after the project.

Project Results
➢ What is **generated during the project implementation** i.e know-how, innovative solutions, new business models, policy recommendations, new infrastructures, etc.

PROPOSAL

To fully understand Horizon Europe, it is necessary to understand the political priorities of the European Union i.e. 'How do they think in Brussels?'. Policy making is about long-term planning to address EU challenges. And funding programmes like Horizon Europe, **are instruments designed to implement EU policy objectives.** Following the European elections in May 2019, the European Union set a number of priorities that shape the political and policy agenda until 2024. Four main priorities are in focus: protecting citizens and freedoms; developing a strong and vibrant economic base; building a climate-neutral, green, fair and social Europe; promoting European interests and values on the global stage.

The EU institutions reached a political agreement on Horizon Europe in December 2020 and set the budget for Horizon Europe at €95.5 billion (including €5.4 billion from the Next Generation of the EU – Recovery Fund). Based on Horizon Europe 'Strategic Plan', a 2-year 'Work programme' is designed. The most recent work programmes for 2023 – 2024 are formally published in December 2022.

Project proposals responding to Calls are expected to ensure that all Topic' Outcomes and Impacts (Destinations) listed in the Work Programme will be achieved. Novice participants may be confused with the complexity of calls/topics, evaluation criteria, types of actions, or be overloaded with information etc. So, understanding the logic behind the FP9 helps to see the big picture, where your projects fit and cope with the complexity of the calls.

The next four sections of the Guide should provide novice participants an overview of **where to take part,** based on the Calls/Topics examples, Impact/Destinations, and Work Programme aims. The terminology used in the next sections is mostly extracted from relevant official documents to avoid misunderstandings. Misinterpretations as a consequence of "not reading" instructions are a major barrier for novice participants. The **objective of the next four sections is NOT education of readers** about the entire Horizon Europe programme, nor its marketing, but to provide a Tool, **orientation map for participants** to **find "where" (in which calls) to take part**. Thus, you are advised simply **to identify Topics or areas that match your interest** in the Horizon Europe

structure. And each section provides a summary of the most relevant information and calls/topics examples for participants to make informed decisions.

The network of **National Contact Points (NCPs)** is the main structure to provide guidance, practical information and assistance on all aspects of participation and calls/topics. They provide information and on-the ground advice to potential applicants and beneficiaries, through the project life cycle, in their own language. In majority of countries where the author worked, NCPs are not experts but politicly obedient regime servants hardly capable or competent to provide assistance.

You can ask for personalised support in your national language from your NCPs at:

NCPs Link: Funding & tenders (europa.eu)

II PILLAR 1 – EXCELLENT SCIENCE

"Advancing and extending the excellence"

The Excellent Science Pillar aims to increase the EU's global scientific competitiveness. It supports **frontier research projects** driven by top researchers through the European Research Council, funds **fellowships for experienced researchers, doctoral training networks and exchanges** through Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions and invests in world-class **research infrastructures.**

The Excellent Science pillar consists of three main sections:

• European Research Council (ERC)

Details are available in the ERC Work Programme

Funding frontier research **designed and led by the best researchers** in Europe. ERC consists of three main calls.

➢ **Starting Grant;** Support for excellent Principal Investigators at the career stage at which they are **starting their own independent research team or programme**. Principal Investigators must demonstrate the **ground-breaking nature, ambition and feasibility** of their scientific proposal. Up to EUR 1 500 000 for a period of 5 years. Additional funding up to EUR 1 000 000.

➢ **Consolidator Grant:** Support for excellent Principal Investigators at the career stage at which **they may still be consolidating their own independent research team or programme**. Principal Investigators must demonstrate the **ground-breaking nature, ambition and feasibility** of their scientific proposal. Up to EUR 2 000 000 for a period of 5 years. Additional funding up to EUR 1 000 000.

➢ **Advanced Grant**; Support for excellent Principal Investigators at the career stage at which they are **already established research leaders with a recognized track record of research achievements.** Principal Investigators must demonstrate **the ground-breaking nature, ambition and feasibility** of their scientific proposal. Up to EUR 2 500 000 for a period of 5 years. Additional funding up to EUR 1 000 000.

• **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA)**

MSCA is mostly funding **fellowships and mobility** of researchers, it is the Union's reference programme for **doctoral education and postdoctoral training**.

MSCA consists of the following main calls 22-23:

➢ **The MSCA Doctoral Networks** aim to train **creative, entrepreneurial, innovative and resilient doctoral candidates,** able to face current and future challenges and to **convert knowledge and ideas into products and services for economic and social benefit**. MSCA DN will equip researchers with the right combination of research-related and transferable competencies and provide them with enhanced career perspectives in both the academic and non-academic sectors through **international, interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral mobility** combined with an **innovation-oriented mindset**.

➢ **The goal of MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships** is to enhance the **creative and innovative potential of researchers holding a PhD**, wishing to acquire new skills through **advanced training, international, interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral mobility**. MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships are open to excellent researchers of *any nationality including researchers wishing to reintegrate in Europe, researchers who are displaced by conflict as well as researchers with high potential aiming for a career restart in research*. The scheme also **encourages researchers to work on research and innovation projects in the non-academic sector.**

➢ **MSCA Staff Exchanges** promote **innovative international, inter-sectoral and interdisciplinary collaboration in research and innovation** through **exchanging staff and sharing knowledge and ideas** at all stages of the innovation chain. The scheme fosters a shared culture of research and innovation that welcomes and rewards **creativity and entrepreneurship** and helps turn **ideas into innovative products, services or processes**. It is **open to research, technical, administrative and managerial staff.**

➢ **MSCA COFUND** co-finances **new or existing doctoral programmes and postdoctoral fellowship schemes** at national, regional or international level with the aim to **spread the best practices of the MSCA including international, inter-sectoral and interdisciplinary research training**, as well as transnational and cross-sectoral mobility of researchers at all stages of their career.

➢ **MSCA and Citizens,** through the European Researchers' Night, aims to **bring research and researchers closer to the public at large**, to increase awareness of research and innovation activities and to boost public recognition of science and research education. It will also show the role of the researcher for the society and economy, as well as the **impact of researchers' work on citizens' daily lives,** and aim **at raising young people's interest for research and scientific careers.**

> And **MSCA Support** is aimed at promoting, supporting and complementing the MSCA implementation, targeting for example NCPs, initiatives focused on Researchers at Risk etc.

Details are available in MSCA Work Programme

• **Research Infrastructures (RI)**

The overall objective of the Research Infrastructure Programme under Horizon Europe is to empower Europe through **world-class and accessible Research and Technology Infrastructures.**

Example of main calls/topics 22-23 include:

> Consolidation of the RI landscape – Individual support for evolution and long-term sustainability of pan-European research infrastructures;
> Research infrastructure concept development;
> Consolidation of the RI landscape – Individual support for evolution, long term sustainability and emerging needs of pan-European research infrastructures;
> Build on the science cluster approach to ensure the uptake of EOSC by research infrastructures and research communities'
> Planning, tracking, and assessing scientific knowledge production;
> Long-term access and preservation infrastructure development for EOSC, including data quality aspects;
> Research infrastructure services advancing frontier knowledge;

Details are available at PP - RI Work Programme

III   PILLAR 2

GLOBAL CHALLENGES AND EUROPEAN INDUSTRIAL COMPETITIVENESS

"Boosting key technologies and solutions underpinning EU policies"

The Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness Pillar supports research relating to societal challenges and reinforces technological and industrial capacities through clusters. **It sets ambitious goals for five EU missions and six Clusters.** It also includes the Joint Research Centre which supports EU and national policymakers with independent scientific evidence and technical support.

• **Six Clusters (2nd pillar)**

Global Challenges & European Industrial Competitiveness pillar consists of six Clusters. Six thematic clusters are covering the entire range of the Sustainable Development Goals and have an interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary orientation (including the humanities, social and cultural sciences).

1. Health

'Health' is directed towards two Key Strategic Orientations creating a more resilient, inclusive and democratic European society and promoting an open strategic autonomy by leading the development of key digital, enabling and emerging technologies, sectors and value chains. It aims to mainly contribute to four impact areas of the strategic plan: Good health and high-quality accessible health care; A resilient EU prepared for emerging threats; High-quality digital services for all; and A competitive and secure data economy.

Expected Impacts are:

➢ Destination 1. Staying healthy in a rapidly changing society
➢ Destination 2. Living and working in a health-promoting environment
➢ Destination 3. Tackling diseases and reducing disease burden
➢ Destination 4. Ensuring access to innovative, sustainable and high-quality health care
➢ Destination 5. Unlocking the full potential of new tools, technologies and digital solutions for a healthy society
➢ Destination 6. Maintaining an innovative, sustainable and globally competitive health industry

Example of main calls/topics 22-23 include:

➢ The Silver Deal - Person-centred health and care in European regions;
➢ Towards a holistic support to children and adolescents' health and care provisions in an increasingly digital society;
➢ Personalised prevention of non-communicable diseases - addressing areas of unmet needs;
➢ Understanding the links between environmental degradation and health impacts;
➢ Evidence-based interventions for promotion of mental and physical health in changing working environments;
➢ Health impacts of endocrine-disrupting chemicals: bridging science-policy gaps by addressing persistent scientific uncertainties;
➢ Ensuring access to innovative, sustainable and high-quality health care;

All Details are available at PP – Health Work Programme

2. Culture, Creativity, and Inclusive Society

Cluster 'Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society' aims to meet EU goals and priorities on enhancing democratic governance and citizens participation, on the safeguarding and promotion of cultural heritage, and to respond to and shape multifaceted social, economic, technological and cultural transformations. Cluster 2 mobilises multidisciplinary expertise of European social sciences and humanities for understanding fundamental contemporary transformations of society, economy, politics and culture. It aims to provide evidence-based policy options for a socially just and inclusive European green and digital recovery.

Expected Impacts are:

➢ Destination 1. Innovative Research on Democracy and Governance

➢ Destination 2. Innovative Research on the European Cultural Heritage and the Cultural and Creative Industries
➢ Destination 3. Innovative Research on Social and Economic Transformations

Example of main calls/topics 22-23 include:

➢ Detecting, analysing and countering foreign information manipulation and interference;
➢ The emotional politics of democracies;
➢ Democratic governance for times of disruptive changes to the social contract;
➢ Multilevel governance in times of digital and climate transitions;
➢ Computational Social Science approaches in research on democracy;
➢ Future scenarios and young visions for European democracy 2040;
➢ Cultural and creative industries for a sustainable climate transition;
➢ Inclusiveness in times of change;
➢ Global Shortages and Skill Partnerships;

Details are available at PP – CCI Work Programme

3. Civil Security for society

Cluster Civil Security for society will support the implementation of EU policy priorities relating to security, including cybersecurity, and disaster risk reduction and resilience. In addition, it will build on lessons learnt from the COVID-19 crisis in terms of prevention, mitigation, preparedness and capacity building for crises (including health crises) and in improving cross-sectoral aspects of such crises.

Expected Impacts are:

➢ Destination 1. Better protect the EU and its citizens against Crime and Terrorism
➢ Destination 2. Effective management of EU external borders
➢ Destination 3. Resilient Infrastructure
➢ Destination 4. Increased Cybersecurity
➢ Destination 5. Disaster-Resilient Society for Europe
➢ Destination 6. Strengthened Security Research and Innovation

Example of main calls/topics 22-23 include:

➢ Modern information analysis for fighting crime and terrorism;
➢ Enhanced prevention, detection and deterrence of societal issues related to various forms of crime;
➢ Increased security of citizens against terrorism, including in public spaces;
➢ Enhancing tools and capabilities to fight advanced forms of cyber threats and cyber-dependent crimes;

Details are available at PP – Security Work Programme

4. Digital, Industry and Space

Progress in digital and industrial technologies, including in space, shape all sectors of the economy and society. Areas of intervention are wide: Manufacturing technologies; Advanced materials; Next-generation internet; Circular industries; Space, including Earth Observation; Emerging enabling technologies; Key digital technologies, including quantum technologies; Artificial Intelligence and robotics; Advanced computing and Big Data Low carbon and clean industry; Emerging enabling technologies.

Expected Impacts are:

➢ Destination 1. Climate-neutral, circular and digitized production
➢ Destination 2. Increased autonomy in key strategic value chains for resilient industry
➢ Destination 3. World-leading data and computing technologies
➢ Destination 4. Digital and emerging technologies for competitiveness and fit for the green deal
   Destination 5. Open strategic autonomy in developing, deploying and using global space-based infrastructures, services, applications and data
➢ Destination 6. A human-centred and ethical development of digital and industrial technologies

Example of main calls/topics 22-23 include:

➢ Energy efficiency breakthroughs in the process industries;
➢ Expert network on Critical raw materials;
➢ World leading data and computing technologies;
➢ Industrial leadership in AI, Data and Robotics – advanced human robot interaction;
➢ Investing in alternative quantum computation and simulation platform technologies;
➢ A human-centred and ethical development of digital and industrial technologies;
➢ Drivers and success factors for progress towards Industry 5.0

Details are available at PP - DIS Work Programme

5. Climate, Energy and Mobility

The overarching driver for Climate, Energy and Mobility cluster is to accelerate the twin green and digital transitions and associated transformation of our economy, industry and society with a view to achieving climate neutrality in Europe by 2050. This encompasses the transition to greenhouse gas neutrality of the energy and mobility sectors by 2050 at the latest (as well as that of other sectors not covered by this cluster), while boosting their competitiveness, resilience, and utility for citizens and society. Europe has been at the forefront of climate science and is committed to keep delivering the knowledge for enabling efficient pathways to climate neutrality.

Expected Impacts are:

➢ Destination 1. Climate sciences and responses for the transformation towards climate neutrality
➢ Destination 2. Cross-sectoral solutions for the climate transition
➢ Destination 3. Sustainable, secure and competitive energy supply
➢ Destination 4. Efficient, sustainable and inclusive energy use

➢ Destination 5. Clean and competitive solutions for all transport modes
➢ Destination 6. Safe, Resilient Transport and Smart Mobility services for passengers and goods

Example of main calls/topics 22-23 include:

➢ Climate-related tipping points;
➢ Climate impacts of a hydrogen economy;
➢ Development of technical and business solutions to optimise the circularity, resilience, and sustainability of the European battery value chain;
➢ Emerging energy technologies for a climate neutral Europe;
➢ Demonstration of innovative pumped storage equipment and tools in combination with innovative storage management systems;

Details are available at PP - CEM Work Programme ➤

6. Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment

Cluster Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment mandate is to provide opportunities to enhance and balance environmental, social and economic goals and to set human economic activities on a path towards sustainability. The underlying paradigm of Cluster 6 is therefore the need for a transformative change of the EU economy and society aimed at reducing environmental degradation, halting and reversing the decline of biodiversity and to better manage natural resources while serving the EU's climate objectives and ensuring food and water security.

Expected Impacts are:

➢ Destination 1. Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
➢ Destination 2. Fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food systems from primary production to consumption
➢ Destination 3. Circular economy and bioeconomy sectors
➢ Destination 4. Clean environment and zero pollution
  Destination 5. Land, oceans and water for climate action
➢ Destination 6. Resilient, inclusive, healthy and green rural, coastal and urban communities
➢ Destination 7. Innovative governance, environmental observations and digital solutions in support of the Green Deal

Example of main calls/topics 22-23 include:

➢ Better understanding of routes of exposure and toxicological and ecological impacts of chemical pollution on terrestrial biodiversity;
➢ Fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food systems from primary production to consumption;
➢ Improving yields in organic cropping systems
➢ Towards research and innovation beyond farm to fork strategy targets for pesticides after 2030
➢ Resilient, inclusive, healthy and green rural, coastal and urban communities

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Details are available at PP – C6 Work Programme ➤

- **Five Missions in Horizon Europe (2nd pillar)**

EU missions aim to address some of the greatest challenges facing our society. They are bold and inspirational with clear objectives that are, realistic, measurable, targeted and time-bound to be resolved by 2030. Rooted in research and innovation, EU missions aim to tackle societal challenges with systemic solutions, leading to societal transformations and social impact. Missions will help deliver key EU policy priorities such as the European Green Deal, Europe's Beating Cancer Plan, Next Generation EU and the Recovery and Resilience Facility, the EU Industrial Strategy, the Europe fit for the Digital Age, amongst others. To achieve their goals and promote societal change, EU missions will implement the reuse and reproducibility of research results such as FAIR research data and open access to scientific publications. Also, the missions will closely involve citizens in their identification, implementation and monitoring throughout their duration, showcasing the added value of the EU as well.

EU missions are a novel instrument in Horizon Europe. For their successful implementation they will work in synergy and coordination with other missions, parts of Horizon Europe, particularly with European Partnerships and Clusters, as well as with other EU funding instruments and policies. Furthermore, they will need to be implemented in close synergy with funding, programmes and strategies both at Member State / Associated Country and regional level, as well as with civil society and the private sector.

Five Mission Areas:

- ✓ **Mission: Adaptation to Climate Change**
  Calls/Topic example: Testing and demonstrating transformative solutions increasing climate resilience of the agriculture and/or forestry sector;
- ✓ **Mission: Cancer**
  Calls/Topic example: Enhance primary cancer prevention through sustainable behavioural change;
- ✓ **Mission: Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030**
  Calls/Topic example: Danube river basin lighthouse – Demonstration of effective and sustainable management of sediments in the Danube river-Black sea system;
- ✓ **Mission: 100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030**
  Calls/Topic example: Associating Ukrainian cities to the Climate-neutral and smart cities;
- ✓ **Mission: A Soil Deal for Europe**
  Calls/Topic example: Discovering the subsoil;

Details at PP – Missions Work Programme

Joint Research Centre:

The Joint Research Centre is the Commission's science and knowledge service. JRC is supporting policymakers, with supposing independent scientific evidence and support as the previous eight framework programmes failed to support evidence-based policy making in the EU and lead the EU' policy development.

IV   PILLAR 3 – INNOVATIVE EUROPE

"stimulating market-creating breakthroughs and ecosystems conducive to innovation"

The Innovative Europe pillar aims to make Europe a frontrunner in market-creating innovation via the European Innovation Council. It also helps to develop the overall EU innovation landscape through the European Institute of Innovation and Technology which fosters integration of the knowledge triangle of education, research and innovation.

• European Innovation Council (EIC)

EIC provides integrated, agile support across the full innovation spectrum from **early-stage research to start-up and scale-up.** The funding and support is organized into three main funding schemes with Open and Challenge driven calls.

➢ **EIC Pathfinder** is targeting innovations with **ambitious vision for radically new technology**, with **potential to create new markets and/or to address global challenges**. Support may be provided for **early-stage development** of such future technologies (e.g. various activities at low Technology Readiness Levels 1-4), based on **high-risk/high-gain science-towards-technology breakthrough research**. This research must provide the foundations of the technology you are envisioning. EIC Pathfinder targets *highly risky innovations, to try things that may not work, rather than incremental innovations and improvements*. Grants of up to EUR 3 million (open) or EUR 4 million (challenge driven) (or more if properly justified) to achieve the proof of principle and validate the scientific basis of breakthrough technology (TRL 1-4).

➢ **EIC Transition** aims to **validate technologies and develop business plans** for specific applications; Single applicants may apply (SMEs, spin-offs, start-ups, research organisations, universities) or small consortia (two to 5 partners). Applications **must build on results from eligible Pathfinder, FET or ERC Proof of Concept projects.** Grants of up to EUR 2.5 million (or more if properly justified) to validate and demonstrate technology in application relevant environment (TRL 4 to 5/6) and develop market readiness.

➢ **EIC Accelerator** supports **companies (principally start-ups, spin-outs and SMEs, and in exceptional cases small mid-caps) to bring their innovations to market and scale-up.** The aim is to scale up high-impact innovations with the potential to create new markets or disrupt existing ones. The EIC Accelerator provides a unique combination of funding from EUR 0.5 to EUR 17.5 million and Business Acceleration Services.
The EIC Accelerator is **open to innovations in any field of technology or application**. Particular focus is on *innovations building on scientific discovery or technological breakthroughs*. Support is targeting the **later stages of technology development as well as scale-up**. The technology component of innovation must therefore have been tested and validated in a laboratory or other relevant environment (e.g. at least Technology Readiness Level 5/6 or higher). The EIC Accelerator is a catalyst to crowd in other investors necessary for the scaleup of the innovation.

			EIC Open		EIC Challenges		
Call	Who can apply	What for	Deadlines	Indicative Budget (EUR million)	EIC Challenge	Deadlines/ Cut-offs	Indicative Budget (EUR million)
EIC Pathfinder	Consortia of at least three different independent legal entities[7] established in at least three different eligible countries. Additionally, single applicants or small consortia (two partners) for EIC Pathfinder Challenges only.	Grants of up to EUR 3 million (open) or EUR 4 million (challenges), or more if duly justified, to achieve the proof of principle and validate the scientific basis of breakthrough technology (Technology Readiness Levels 1-4)	7 March 2023	179.50	- Clean and efficient cooling - Construction digitalisation - Precision nutrition - Responsible electronics - In-space solar energy	18 October 2023	163.50
EIC Transition	Single applicants (SMEs, spin-offs, start-ups, research organisations, universities) or small consortia (two partners) or consortia of three to five different independent legal entities established in at least three different eligible countries. Proposals must build on eligible EU-funded project results (see call text)	Grants of up to EUR 2.5 million to validate and demonstrate technology in application-relevant environment (TRL 4 to 5/6) and develop market readiness	- 12 April 2023 - 27 September 2023	67.86	- Micro-Nano-Bio devices - Environmental intelligence - Chip-scale optical frequency combs	- 12 April 2023 - 27 September 2023	60.50
EIC Accelerator	Single start-ups and SMEs (including spin-outs), individuals (intending to launch a start-up/ SME) and in exceptional cases small mid-caps (fewer than 499 employees)	Grant component below EUR 2.5 million for innovation activities (TRL 5/6 to 8); EUR 0.5 up to 15 million[8] investment component for scaling up and other activities. Grant only, grant first and investment only component under certain conditions, namely for non-bankable SMEs, including start-ups, which have already received a grant-only support.	Short applications: continuous Full applications : - 11 January 2023 - 22 March 2023 - 7 June 2023 - 4 October 2023	611.75	- Biomarkers for cancer - Decontamination for pandemic management - Energy storage - New European Bauhaus - Quantum or Semiconductor components - Resilient agriculture - Space technologies and services	Short applications: continuous Full applications : - 22 March 2023 - 7 June 2023 - 4 October 2023	523.49

➢ **EIC also provides Prizes:** EU Prize for Women Innovators, The European Capital of Innovation Awards (iCapital), The European Innovation Procurement Awards, The European Social Innovation Competition, EIC Community and Business Acceleration Services and EIC Business Acceleration Services global offer.

> Details are available at PP - EIC Work Programme

• European Innovation Ecosystems

Connecting with **regional and national innovation actors and supporting the implementation of joint cross-border innovation programmes** by the Member States and associated countries, from the enhancement of soft skills for innovation to research and innovation actions, to boost the effectiveness of the European innovation system. This will complement the ERDF support for innovation eco-systems and interregional partnerships around smart specialization topics.

> Details are available at PP - EIC Work Programme

• European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)

The European Institute of Innovation and Technology is an Agency of the European Union established in 2008 to strengthen Europe's ability to innovate. The EIT spends substantial part of HE budget without measurable impact on research, higher education, business and entrepreneurship.

Strategic Innovation Agenda (SIA) proposed for 2021-2027 ensures alignment with the objectives of Horizon Europe and introduces the following main new features:

✓ Increasing the regional impact of Knowledge and Innovation Communities;
✓ Boosting the innovation capacity of higher education;
✓ Launch of new KICs;

> Detail info https://eit.europa.eu/

V WIDENING PARTICIPATION AND STRENGTHENING EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA

"increasing strengths and potential for a more innovative Europe"

This Horizontal part of Horizon Europe programme *Widening Participation and Strengthening the European Research Area* will implement concrete measures in support of widening participation and strengthening the ERA. It will underpin geographical spread, build the necessary capacity to allow successful participation in the R&I process and promote networking of and access to excellence. Synergies will be sought with the programme parts on European Innovation Ecosystems and the European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT). Another way of furthering dissemination and exploitation of research results is through reinforcing the interaction between education and research. This programme part will strengthen collaborative links across Europe and open up European R&I networks, contribute to improving research management capacities in the widening countries and Outermost Regions, support national policy reforms as well as exploit the potential of the Union's talent pool by targeted actions.

• Widening Participation and Spreading Excellence

Concrete measures in support of widening participation and strengthening the ERA include five main calls: Teaming for Excellence, Twinning, Twinning for Western Balkan Countries, Excellence Hubs, Strengthening capacity for excellence in universities.

➢ **Teaming for Excellence** is responding to the challenge of **insufficient critical mass of science and lack of centres of excellence having sufficient competence** to engage countries and regions strategically in a path of innovative growth. Teaming is having a strong potential helping countries that are increasing their R&I intensity to attain a competitive position in the global value chains, especially by becoming drivers of change.
Teaming will support the **creation of new centres of excellence or upgrading the existing ones** in low R&I performing countries, building on partnerships between leading scientific institutions and partner institutions in low R&I performing countries that display the willingness to engage together for this purpose.

➢ **Twinning** aims to **enhance networking activities between the research institutions of the Widening countries and internationally-leading counterparts at EU level** by linking it with at least **two research institutions from two different Member States or Associated Countries**. Therefore, building on the huge potential of **networking for excellence through knowledge transfer and exchange of best practice** between research institutions and partners. Twinning proposals will have to clearly *outline the scientific strategy for stepping up and stimulating scientific excellence and innovation capacity* in a defined area of research as well as the scientific quality of the partners involved in the twinning exercise. This scientific strategy should include arrangements for formulating new (or ongoing) joint research project(s) in the scientific area of choice and describe how Twinning will take this research to a new stage, by enlarging its scope and/or the research partnership. If relevant, any links with sustainable development objectives are to be outlined.

➢ **European Excellence Initiative** This action follows Council Conclusions on the European strategy empowering higher education institutions for the future of Europe on empowering higher education institutions to develop in synergy with the European Education Area. The action also contributes to implementation of the Council Conclusions on strengthening research careers. The objectives of this action are to: • Raise excellence in science and in value creation through deeper and geographically inclusive cooperation in alliances of higher education institutions, such as – but not limited to – European Universities alliances selected under Erasmus+, with a particular focus on Widening countries; • Improve global competitiveness and visibility of Europe's higher education institutions, creating critical mass in key areas such as the green transition and Horizon Europe mission areas.

➢ **Pathways to Synergies** Synergies between Horizon Europe and the cohesion policy programmes, mainly the European Fund for Regional Development (ERDF) but also INTERREG and the Resilience and Recovery Fund (RRF), are instrumental for widening countries to catch up in their R&I performance and to reduce the innovation divide in Europe. Although such synergies are already addressed in the Teaming and Excellence Hubs actions under this work programme these instruments do not capture the full range of possible synergies and need to be complemented by a dedicated scheme. Synergies between Horizon Europe and ERDF 20 presents the new opportunities for achieving operational synergies between Horizon Europe and the ERDF, including for Seal of Excellence, transfer, cumulative funding, combined funding (Co-funded and Institutionalised Partnerships), Teaming, and upstream/downstream synergies. This pilot call offers opportunities to incentivise the concrete realisation of particularly promising sequential synergies in two different pathways either supporting the upstream synergy mode (a) or downstream synergy mode (b) where the former is focusing on human resources development and internationalisation and the latter on valorisation and upscaling of research results towards marketable solutions.

➢ **Dissemination and Exploitation Support Facility** Improving knowledge diffusion, technology uptake and having spill-over effects is fundamental to ensure that researchers and their institutions build on and valorise the latest available knowledge. Moreover, the exploitation of research results and the creation of value for our economy and society, often depend on the skills and abilities of the beneficiaries as well as the intermediaries (i.e., technology/knowledge transfer officers) to present and connect to those stakeholders that can help them take the results into the next level. Especially in Widening countries, R&I actors lack sufficient support and information, skills or connections to the right stakeholders and these gaps can jeopardise their ability to maximise the potential value of their results. Dissemination & Exploitation (D&E) policy of Horizon Europe can act as an enabler for the implementation of the political objectives of this programme component. Therefore, this action focuses on activities to strengthen or build D&E capacities in Widening countries.

➢ **Hop-on facility** The Hop On Facility allows for legal entities from low R&I performing countries to join already selected collaborative R&I actions, subject to the agreement of the respective consortium and provided that legal entities from such countries are not yet participating in it. The scheme aims to improve the inclusiveness of Horizon Europe by involving more research institutions from Widening countries under Horizon Europe Pillar 2 and EIC Pathfinder actions. Main selection criteria are excellence and added value of the new partner performing a relevant additional task in the project. All consortium partners need to agree on the accession of the new partner whereas the R&I relevance and complementarity needs to be demonstrated. The accepted application will trigger a GA amendment with the service in charge of the related topic.

➢ **Excellence Hubs** are part of the European excellence initiative and complement the science-oriented schemes Teaming, Twinning, ERA Chairs and the university alliances by a dedicated innovation component. This action is embedded into the broader European initiative on ERA hubs and will help to **bridge the innovation divide** in this context. It responds to the third priority in the ERA communication on translating R&I results into the economy and especially that R&I policies should aim at **boosting the resilience and competitiveness of our economies and societies.** This means ensuring Europe's competitive leadership in the global race for technology while improving the environment for business R&I investment, deployment of new technologies and enhancing the take up and visibility of research results in the economy and society as a whole.

Unlike Teaming projects that are centred around a single beneficiary, Excellence hubs are partnerships of place based innovation ecosystems in expanding the number of countries **involving larger communities of actors in a regional context based on the quadruple helix principle**. To a limited extent, participants from other EU member states, associated countries and international co-operation partners may join in duly justified cases e.g. given by a specific expertise needed or the involvement in a relevant value adding chain.

➢ **Strengthening capacity for excellence in universities and surrounding ecosystems**
The capacity building towards the European Excellence Initiative aims to **significantly strengthening cooperation** between at least two organisations from academic sector in a Widening country (or different Widening countries), by linking it with at least two internationally-leading institutions from two different Member States or Associated Countries.

• **Attracting and mobilising the best talents** In line with the strategic priority "Deepening the ERA" this part of the work programme will support further progress on the free circulation of knowledge in an upgraded, efficient and effective R&I system. The destination will be pursued both at the level of individual researchers e.g., helping to develop the skills that researchers need for excellent science and, connecting all actors across the European Union and at the level of institutions and smaller research teams around future ERA Chair holders. ERA Chairs will support universities or research organisations from eligible countries to attract

and maintain high-quality human resources under the direction of an outstanding researcher and research manager (the 'ERA Chair holder'), and to implement structural changes to achieve excellence on a sustainable basis. The institutional dimension will be complemented by opportunities for brain circulation for research and innovation talents across the ERA and across sectors, aiming to revert the brain drain from Widening countries. It will focus support to early career and experienced talents to explore unknown personal territories for professional development and training, by being mobile in the European Research Area in other sectors and in less obvious knowledge hubs across the European Union, notably in Widening countries.

- **ERA Chairs**

   Progress towards more and better links between research and innovation actors across European Research Area and beyond is a requirement if Europe as a whole is to capitalise on excellence from across the continent. To foster brain circulation for researchers and innovators the intervention point of the **ERA Chairs actions is attracting in a sustainable manner outstanding scientists and innovators to universities or research organisations in catching up countries and regions**. This measure of "brain gain" and creation of pockets of excellence will impact on the culture and performance of host institutions. *The leadership of the ERA Chair holder and the creation of a permanent and excellent research group in the chosen scientific field will ensure excellence, visibility and better integration in the European Research Area, as well as fostering competitiveness in research funding and promoting institutional reforms* aligned with ERA priorities. Research organisations located in widening countries interested in establishing an ERA Chair shall **submit a proposal with the prospective ERA Chair holder who should be an outstanding researcher and/or innovator** in the chosen scientific domain.

- **ERA Fellowships** In order to apply for the ERA Fellowships call, applicants must submit their proposal to the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions (MSCA) Postdoctoral Fellowships 202337. To be eligible to this call the host organisation must be located in an eligible Widening country.

- **ERA Talents** The ERA Talents action aims to boost interoperability of careers and employability of research and innovation talents across sectors, with a centre of gravity in Widening countries. Secondments are open to researchers, innovators, and other research and innovation talents – such as administrative, managerial and technical staff supporting R&I activities in their organisations from any career stage.

- **Enhancing the European R&I system** and detail description of other calls/topics is available at the PP Widening WP link.

   Details are available at PP Work Programme

VI   IDENTIFYING THE SUITABLE CALL - CALL ANALYSIS

YOUR ROLE IN THE PROJECT
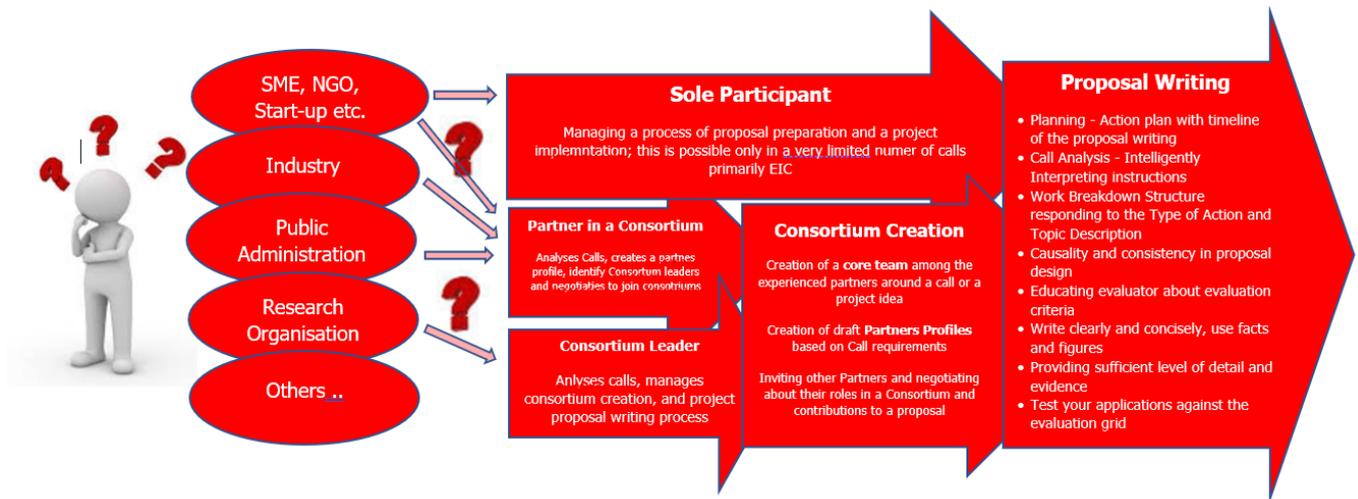
Picture: Understanding differences among the three most common roles

Choosing the correct call/topic is about the right fit of the organization's interests within the available call/topic opportunities and constraints. Horizon Europe offers a wide variety of funding opportunities for research and innovation activities through calls for proposals.

The Funding and Tenders Portal provides a **Search option** based on the text of the call and topic titles, call and topic identifiers, topic description, keywords and tags related to this topic.

The Funding and Tenders Portal – Search:

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-search

You can also filter using the quick finder for topics related to Horizon Europe cross-cutting priorities, like international cooperation, SME instrument, social sciences and humanities, etc. *Good practice* is to use previous (closed) topics, as a guide.

Understanding differences among the *three most common roles of participants* in Horizon Europe is the first step towards successful fundraising and avoiding confusion while reading open calls. An organisation can take part in Horizon Europe choosing one of the three main roles, while opportunities for individuals are also presented where possible.

➢ *Project leader with no other partners (Sole Participant)*
  Project leader of a project with only one participating organization, and no other partners, is rarely possible throughout Horizon Europe. **EIC Accelerator offers this possibility** for Single Start-ups and SMEs (including spin-outs), individuals (intending to launch a start-up/SME) and

in exceptional cases small mid-caps (fewer than 500 employees); **EIC Transition offers this possibility** as an option: Single applicants (SMEs, spin-offs, start-ups, research organizations, universities), though small consortia (two to 5 partners) are welcome. Yet, for EIC Transition applications must build on results from eligible Pathfinder, FET or ERC Proof of Concept projects.

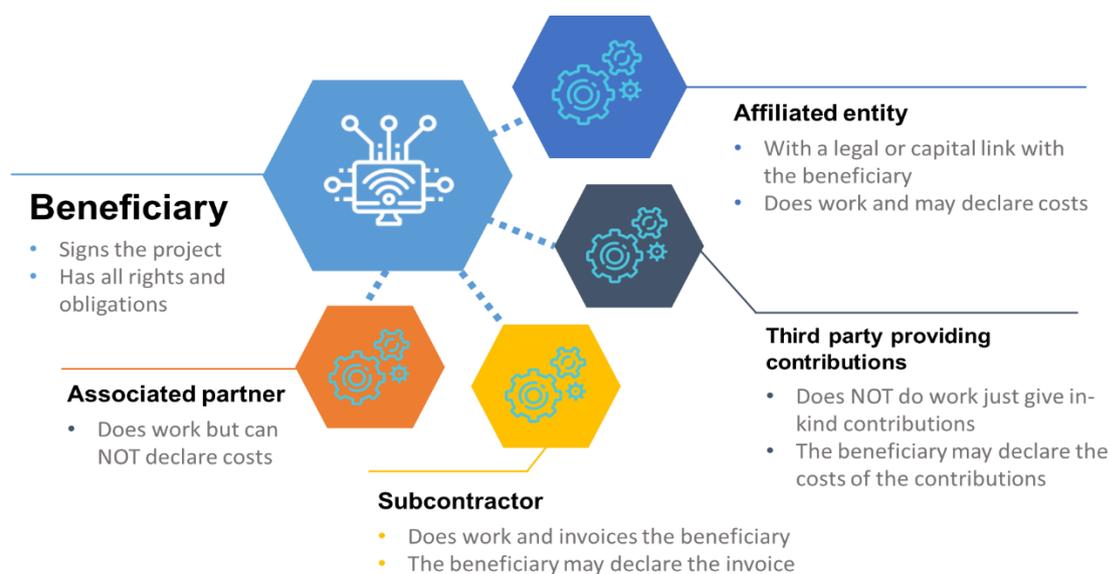➢ *Consortium Leader in a consortium with other Partners*

For organizations to embark on a *consortium leader role in projects with other partners*, adequate management and financial capacity is required. A consortium is a group made up of two or more organizations, that work together to achieve project objectives. Consortium leader is responsible for project management, including coordination, monitoring and controlling of other Partners, as well as communication with the contracting authority, typically the European Commission. The majority of calls in Horizon Europe require small or large consortiums to apply for projects, for over 90% of the programme calls. Consortium sizes significantly vary based on the type of action (RIA, IA, CSA etc.) and may include diverse partners (Academia, R&D, Industry, SME, NGO, etc) depending on the call requirements. Consortium leader's role requires sufficient experience in managing EU-funded projects. Therefore, it is possible only for organisations with appropriate size, management and financial capacity as well as previous experience.

Strengthening consortium leader's capacity is possible by involving highly specialized project management companies, dedicated partners for some managerial tasks and/or assigning a deputy co-ordinator role among partners. Yet, these organizational arrangements are suitable only if a Consortium Leader can justify *why is such a consortium the best possible solution to achieve expected outcomes of the call/topic*. In the highly competitive arena of Horizon Europe, the quality of consortium is critically important.

➢ *Partner in a Consortium*

The majority of participants in the Horizon Europe programme are partners in project Consortiums. Partners may be responsible for managing Work Packages, Tasks or assisting in Task implementation within a project. Ideally, partners are responsible for activities that advance their own organizational development agenda. Each partner needs to provide credible justification for its role and responsibilities, why it has been included in a consortium. In Horizon Europe, a 'partner' may be any legal entity - any organization that is legally registered. This includes research centres, universities, enterprises, non-governmental organisations etc. The European Commission only signs contracts with legal entities.

Once the consortium leader and partners sign the Grant Agreement, they become Beneficiaries. Other possible roles are explained in the picture below. *(Picture: possible roles)*

Beneficiary
- Signs the project
- Has all rights and obligations

Affiliated entity
- With a legal or capital link with the beneficiary
- Does work and may declare costs

Third party providing contributions
- Does NOT do work just give in-kind contributions
- The beneficiary may declare the costs of the contributions

Associated partner
- Does work but can NOT declare costs

Subcontractor
- Does work and invoices the beneficiary
- The beneficiary may declare the invoice

Joining projects to learn more about Horizon Europe and build credibility is often useful for example as third parties, associated partners, subcontractors, and observers. Partners in the Consortium sometimes need support to implement certain tasks, e.g. an additional service or resources of a third party. There are several possibilities how you can be included. Subcontracts can deliver some smaller services (printing flyer, catering, event management etc.). Third parties can be included based on in-kind contributions against payment or free of charge (i.e. Secondment of employees, Providing lab space). Associated Partners contribute to more relevant project activities, (i.e. applied research, testing, meetings, workshops, reports in thematic areas). In general, entities performing a substantial part of the work (i.e. project task leaders) should be beneficiaries, and not linked third parties, with some exceptions. So-called 'hop-on' calls are envisaged **for entities from widening countries** to join **already selected collaborative projects.** This lowers entry barriers into Horizon Europe and provides an opportunity to excel. Hop-on and sub-granting calls and subcontracting tenders are published by ongoing projects, usually on project websites.

Example for a request for associated partners from the ongoing ARCADE project: "Associated Partners can participate and contribute content in relevant ARCADE activities, i.e. meetings and workshops, reports, and position papers in thematic areas..."

The second criterion for identifying the suitable call/topic: organizations need to consider differences of the **top-down or bottom-up approach** of the call/topics in Horizon Europe. Top-down grants have specific pre-determined topics and outcomes. Top-down calls are 70-80% of the Horizon Europe grants (RIA research and innovation actions, Innovation actions, Coordination and support actions) and some EIC Challenges.

In Bottom-up grants any topic is welcome, but not all proposals may be scored highly on all evaluation criteria to get funded. Particularly the "relevance" of proposed bottom-up topics is among the most common pitfalls. Bottom-up grants are open for participants to nominate topics that can achieve call outcomes and impacts. Bottom-up calls are EIC Open (for SMEs mostly), ERC (Academia only) and MSCA (mostly for Academia).

Call Analysis – what should you look for?

The first question is: "Am I eligible?". Horizon Europe calls have different types of calls, each with varying requirements. For Research Innovation Action (RIA), Innovation Action and Coordination and support actions (CSA) **all European and Associated countries legal entities are eligible to apply**. For these calls, normally an academic partner is required to lead a consortium.

As the result of your Search, you will find the Topic Page where you can read:

General information:

What is **relevant information for proposers**? Programme, Work Programme, Call, Type of Action, Type of Grant Agreement, Opening date, Deadline model, Deadline dates.

Type of Action gives you insights about eligible activities, and funding rates. In example, common types of actions are: Research and Innovation Action, Innovation Action, Coordination and Support Action, Programme co-fund actions, Innovation and market deployment actions, Training and mobility actions, Pre-commercial procurement actions, Public procurement of innovative solutions actions.

The three most common types of actions are:

- ✓ **RIA – Research and Innovation Action** primarily consisting of activities aiming to establish new knowledge and/or to explore the feasibility of new or improved technology, product, process, service or solution. For this purpose they may include basic and applied research, technology development and integration, testing and validation on a small-scale prototype in a laboratory or simulated environment. Projects may contain closely connected but limited demonstration or pilot activities aiming to show technical feasibility in a near to operational environment. 45 pages proposal. Funding rate: 100%

- ✓ **IA – Innovation actions** primarily consisting of activities directly aiming at producing plans and arrangements or designs for new, altered or improved products, processes or services. For this purpose they may include prototyping, testing, demonstrating, piloting, large-scale product validation and market replication. A 'demonstration or pilot' aims to validate the technical and economic viability of a new or improved technology, product, process, service or solution. A 'market replication' aims to support the first application/deployment in the market. Projects may include limited research and development activities. 45 pages proposal. Funding rate: 70% (except for non-profit legal entities, where a rate of 100% applies

- ✓ **CSA – Coordination and Support Actions** consisting primarily of accompanying measures such as standardization, dissemination, awareness-raising and communication, networking, coordination or support services, policy dialogues and mutual learning exercises and studies, including design studies for new infrastructure and may also include complementary activities of strategic planning, networking and coordination between programmes in different countries. 30 pages proposal. Funding rate: 100%
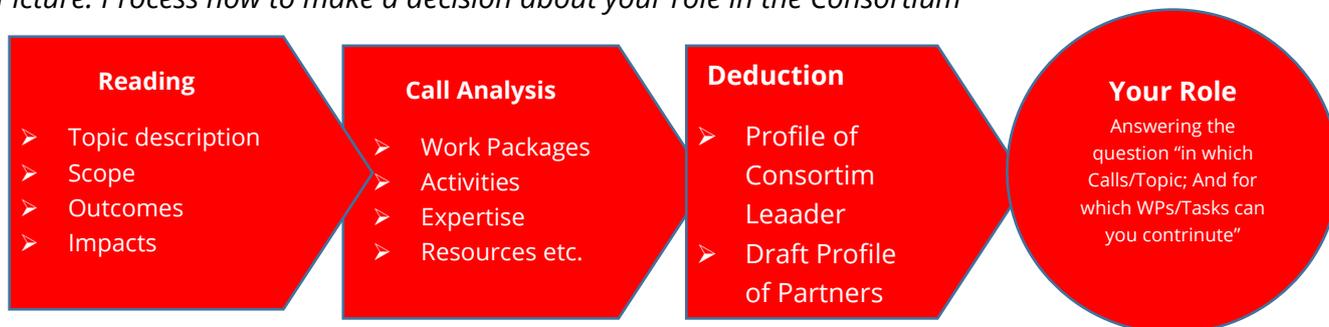- ✓ *Attention: read and analyse calls/topics as most types of actions are highly customized*.

Topic description is providing the most important information for a decision about your participation in a call and possible role. A call text describes all the information that needs to be included in a project proposal. Reading it in full detail and **intelligently interpreting the text and following instructions** increase your chances of getting funded.

The Scope gives information on how the European Committee would see the challenge solved, which topics should be addressed, or what type of activities should be performed. Also, the information about what consortium members should be included is described in the scope or if a collaboration should be built with specific organizations or previously funded projects. The Scope gives information on what you are expected to do (by the consortium) during the project lifecycle.

Analysis of the Scope provides you information on what activities, expertise and resources are necessary for a successful proposal. Hence, the majority of participants aiming to become Partners in a consortium should be analysing carefully "**Can you contribute to implementing some of the expected activities**" specified in the scope. In addition, "**Do you have the necessary experience, expertise, resources, reach, access to stakeholders and sim.**" which are required.

The Expected **Outcomes and Impact** describes the envisioned results from the project once executed. It provides a more defined description which is to the point and more specific compared to the scope description. Participants aiming to become partners in consortiums should be analysing Outcomes and Impacts by asking themselves a question: "**Can you provide added value to ensure expected Outcomes and Impacts are achieved**".

Picture: Process how to make a decision about your role in the Consortium

Reading	Call Analysis	Deduction	Your Role
➢ Topic description ➢ Scope ➢ Outcomes ➢ Impacts	➢ Work Packages ➢ Activities ➢ Expertise ➢ Resources etc.	➢ Profile of Consortim Leaader ➢ Draft Profile of Partners	Answering the question "in which Calls/Topic; And for which WPs/Tasks can you continute"

In case that you identify a useful role after analysing Scope, Outcomes and Impacts *read* **Topic conditions, Call document and annexes:** Guide for Applicants, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), EU Financial Regulation, Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment, Funding & Tenders Portal Online Manual.

Practical Example for Call Analysis:

Let's assume your first choice was to type "social networks" (as it is a very popular topic) in FT Portal Search and get as a result following Topic description:

HORIZON-CL2-2022-DEMOCRACY-01-07: Politics and the impact of online social networks and new media

Firstly, you can notice the estimated EU contribution "The EU estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 2.00 and 3.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately". And the overall indicative Budget for this Topic: "The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 9.00

million". So it is reasonable to expect that more than One proposal may be funded, given their requested contribution is between 2-3 million and the indicative budget remains unchanged by the time call is published.

Next, you can see as the Type of Action, for this topic it is stated "Research and Innovation Actions". If you look at the definition of the RIA you can see it is consisting of **activities** aiming to **establish new knowledge** and/or to **explore the feasibility** of new or improved technology, product, process, service or solution. For this purpose, they may include **basic and applied research**, **technology development and integration, testing and validation** on a **small-scale prototype** in a laboratory or simulated environment. Projects may contain closely **connected but limited demonstration or pilot activities** aiming to *show technical feasibility in a near to operational environment*. 45 pages proposal. Funding rate: 100%

At this point you have hints about proposal budget, funding rate, recommended activities and you can already find some models of previously funded RIA projects with a budget between 2-3 million to get an orientation about the consortium size, work-breakdown structure and partners profiles.

However, the key to a proper call analysis is to read and analyse all reference documents and intelligently interpret every word. Next step is to analyse the Scope:

- ✓ Scope: Social media and other internet-based platforms are intertwined with political life. They play an important role in allowing people to design, consume and share political news, seek political information and discuss, make decisions, donate money, or engage with political parties and other organisations.
- ✓ Furthermore, these platforms and media are supposed to open new avenues to political engagement and democratic participation. However, developments in the recent past have created anxieties about their capacity to protect citizens from disinformation and to serve as balanced and open public fora for democratic debates.
- ✓ Social platforms and new media are increasingly perceived as conducive to the creation of ideological "echo-chambers" eroding the space for public dialogue.
- ✓ They are seen as fostering polarisation, radicalisation, depoliticization, spreading misinformation and subject to manipulation. At the same time, they have been instrumentalised in attempts to covertly influence the political choices of citizens, thus sapping their democratic credentials.

So far blue parts of the text that provide relevant background information that the EC considers to be important. And I shall continue in the next section colouring in blue parts of the text which provide more info on what activities are expected in the proposal, what kind of expertise is needed, capabilities, access or resources as well, to achieve expected outcomes.

- ✓ Proposals are expected to address the following: Build **Europe-wide evidence** on the **extent** to which **political opportunities and information offered** by **platforms and new media** – and **resulting impacts,** such as the "echo-chambers" effect – **affects political attitudes** in European states and **at the level of the EU and its neighbourhood.**

Hence, this indicates that large-scale data gathering and analysis are necessary, for the major platforms and new media, on a European wide scale including neighbourhood. Apparently, organizations with capabilities to gather and analyse data on these platforms and new media are necessary as partners in the consortium. Possibly also those who have designed social network campaigns and measured their impacts.

✓ **Assess** whether and how new media functions as a new level of news selection and **study the resulting perception biases** with citizens.

✓ **Examine the extent** to which platforms and new media **actually help democratise political systems** and **offer avenues of active engagement, or hinder participation for some**.

✓ **Examine the effects of the replacement** of media consumption with content consumption.

✓ Investigate how audiences of **different ages, different genders and different socio-economic and ethnolinguistic groups** receive and assess information on digital platforms, and how political actors use these platforms to shape political behaviour.

So far instructions provided indicate draft "work packages" of a proposal and provide more information about the capabilities of partners. All activities are so far "**activities** aiming to **establish new knowledge " and will be "basic and applied research** " following RIA instructions. Apparently investigation of "audiences of **different ages, different genders... "** will also require to **involve specified stakeholders either directly or using specialized partners with a proven track record in this type of investigations.**

By this point, in the text of the Scope instructions were mostly indicating what kind of research is needed. And now we can see the switch towards "building further" on the research results. As RIA definition states "explore the feasibility of new or improved technology, product, process, service or solution...technology development and integration, testing and validation) and concretely we shall see a request for "**regulatory solutions, enhancing capacities,** (including media education, media competencies, and digital literacy) etc.

✓ **Propose and design regulatory innovations** in response to the **covert instrumentalization of social platforms** for political goals.

✓ **Develop evidence-based approaches and methods** for **enhancing capacities** for digital citizenship, including **media education, media competences, and digital literacy**.

✓ **Attain insight** about the **effects of social media on social behaviour**.

✓ **Citizen science and other innovative and participatory forms of research could be appropriate for this action.**

Lastly, we must carefully examine the **Expected Outcome:**

➢ Understand the changes wrought on democratic processes by new technologies.

➢ Produce evidence-based recommendations to address the opportunities and challenges for political behavior and democratic engagement presented by social platforms and new media.

➢ Enhance capacities for digital citizenship

Based on the Topic Description core consortium partners seem to be required to analyze big data, from major social platforms and new media, consequently probably developed AI and supercomputing capabilities and already involved in campaigns on social networks and new media. Methodologically, a sufficient number of representative case studies may replace an all-encompassing study.

It is unlikely that the EC would consider newcomers as credible to lead a consortium, so the first place to look for project models is among consortium leaders of previous RIA actions and their ("social platforms and new media") Industry partners.

> ➢ Some of the corresponding projects based on initial search reveal "who are Research and Innovation and Industry Leaders" already funded by the EC like:

Link: https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/723014 , Link: https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/688722, Link:

> ➢ Also some of the key actors already doing research about citizens perceptions:

Link: https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/822590

> ➢ As well as co-creation of solutions to combat misinformation like:

Link: https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/770302

Key intelligence is to **breakdown the work** for this Topic, besides Project Management Work Package (WP), the next WPs would be focusing on research requirements from the Scope text and resulting in innovative solutions WPs:

> ➢ WP: How political actors use new platforms
> ➢ WP: How new media affects news selection and perception biases with citizens
> ➢ WP: Effects of content consumption on different audiences and social behaviour
> ➢ WP: Effects on political systems
> ➢ WP: Development of new evidence-based approaches and methods
> ➢ WP: Designing regulatory innovations
> ➢ WP: Enhancing capacities (media education, media competencies, and digital literacy).

Of course, this is just an example and exercise and WBS and WPs will be refined and advanced by experts considering listed Outcomes and Impacts. However, using logical thinking anyone *interested to participate can and should create a draft WBS for an open call/topic of interest.*

Why is the creation of draft WBS during the call analysis critically important? To understand Activities, Expertise, Resources needed and identify if and how can you contribute to a call/topic! So the next question is whether you have relevant **expertise or whether you can bring added value** to implement activities within draft WBS and help the consortium achieve expected Outcomes. With a draft WBS you have a deeper insight about necessary expertise: i.e. *How political actors use new platforms or How new content consumption on social media affects different audiences (and their social behaviour).* If you have capabilities for data gathering, data analysis, you know what the key variables are, you have access to stakeholders, case studies, target audience, necessary infrastructure, or experience in the design of new regulatory tools, or enhancing capacities *like media education, competences, and digital literacy* etc. that would become a base for your participation in a consortium and negotiations about your role and your contribution to a proposal design.

WBS and the resulting printer's matrix will be significantly different for different types of actions! Hence Call analysis is a critical first step for participation. Some types of action like EIC Accelerator are designed for a sole applicant (SMEs primarily). ERC is focused on scientific excellence and driven by researchers. "Doctoral Networks" despite immediate intuitive conclusions may include industry and SMEs. Similarly, in RISE, Teaming, Twinning, ERA Chair etc you have to start from call analysis and project models.

VII CONSORTIUM CREATION – CONSORTIUM LEADER AND PARTNERS

Consortium creation for Horizon Europe calls starts as soon as the **draft Work Programmes** are published. The most experienced participants contribute to refining Topics during *stakeholder consultations* and as soon as the drafts are available, partner search commences. Based on the Call/Topic analysis participants can create an initial draft work breakdown structure (WBS) for each call, describing the expertise matrix and partners profiles. The essence of call analysis is analytical reading and intelligent interpretation of the call text in order to identify "what is needed" i.e. necessary expertise, activities, infrastructure, or other resources, to achieve call/topic outcomes. Based on the call analysis initial WBS and core partners profiles are created.

The next step is to identify **the best partners** which fit the profile. These are normally leaders in their respective fields. Consortium leaders and experienced participants embark on initial discussions about possible cooperation for specific calls as early as possible.

Simple examples of call/topic analysis:
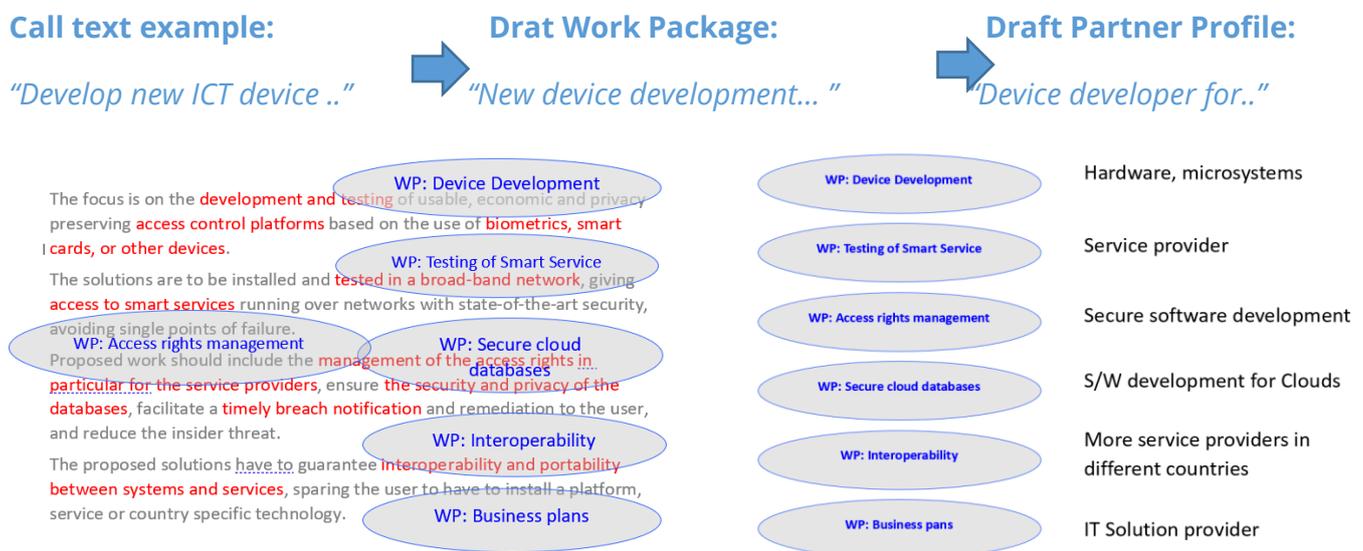
Picture: Consortium creation process

A strong consortium has the following characteristics:

- ✓ **Complementary**. Each partner should have a unique role and bring in a special, required expertise or technology (academia, industry, SMEs). Combine different roles and expertise to ensure you will be able to achieve all expected outcomes/impacts and **avoid redundancy.**

- ✓ **Interdisciplinary.** To tackle complex call/topic challenges and achieve expected impacts, collaborations need to connect interdisciplinary and intersectoral expertise and capabilities. Combining **partners from all disciplines and sectors** (necessary to achieve expected outcomes/impacts) is essential.

- ✓ **Balanced.** Think about aspects such as geographical spread in the EU, a balance between profit, non-profit partners, public, private, governments, non-governmental organizations, large businesses, mid-caps and SMEs, and gender balance of key people involved.

✓ **Excellent.** A strong consortium brings together the brightest minds in their various key disciplines. Therefore, identify the leaders among topic areas, and make a compilation of outstanding organisations in charge of each project task. Choose the best partners.

Effective ways for partner search:

✓ **Partner Search tool available at the Funding and Tenders portal**

Link:https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/partner-search

✓ **European Enterprise Network offers support for partner search**

Link :https://een.ec.europa.eu/partners

✓ **Info Days, Brokerage and Match-making events**

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/events_en

The most effective way to find partners is to

✓ **Analyse recently finished and ongoing projects**

using Cordis or Projects and Results search at the Funding and Tenders portal

Link: Funding & tenders (europa.eu)

For the majority of participants, it is not possible to embark on the project coordinator's role due to insufficient management and financial capacity. Consequently, for a majority of participants, it is critical to *present themselves* to *possible consortium leaders* in such a way, *to get invitations to join consortiums* as partners in the early stages while the project proposal is in the design phase.

Effective communication with consortium leaders requires that the participants should create a Partner Profile: in a nutshell, it is your presentation formatted for the call requirements and description of your prospective role as partners. Partner Profile is created using two sets of instructions: justification for partners required in project proposal template; and call analysis, more specifically, presentation of the 'added value" you may bring as partners to advance project cost vs impact ratio.

For the Partners Profile development, you should present briefly: mission, vision, objectives, expertise, human resources and infrastructure, recent success stories, previous experience in EU-funded projects, the topic of interest in Horizon Europe and roles as a partner.

Example: *(from a Brokerage event)*   *(for direct contact)*

Picture: Examples of Partners' Profiles

To create the **most effective Partner Profile** information should be *adjusted for the call*, responding to specific wording and phrases, and emphasize **added value for the consortium**. Careful planning of communication and relationship building with consortium leaders prevents failures. **Identification of the best possible consortium leaders** requires that you analyse recently finished and ongoing H2020/Europe projects. And to select **senior experts with sufficient experience** in **H2020/Europe project coordination** in your fields of interest. So, you need to analyse the personal track record of those who you intend to contact, and you should be well informed about *their interests.*

VIII   WRITING A WINNING PROPOSAL – TOOLS FOR PROPOSAL WRITING

What is a proposal and what is a project?

A Proposal is a document similar to the Description of Work (DoW) that describes the aims and objectives of such a partnership. It covers the scientific/technical aspects, a concrete management/work plan and describes how the results will be used after the end of the project (exploitation) and what the long-term impacts are.

A Project consists of a group of a different organisation that jointly work to achieve a given goal, funded by the EC. This goal and the steps needed to achieve it is described in the DoW that is part of the contract with the EC.

Proposal Structure – Download proposal template!

Standard application forms (Proposal Template' models) are available at the FT Portal Reference document section, or if you click "Start Submission" for your selected call.

> FT Portal Reference document Link: Reference Documents (europa.eu)

Example: Standard Proposal Template (RIA, IA) Contents

> ➢ **Part A:** In this part you will be asked for certain administrative details that will be used in the evaluation and further processing of your proposal.
> ➢ **Part B:** Contains the details of the work you intend to carry out.
> ➢ **Section 1: Excellence**
> ➢ Objectives and ambition [e.g. 4 pages]
> ➢ Methodology [e.g. 15 pages]
> ➢ **Section 2: Impact**
> ➢ Project's pathways towards impact [e.g. 4 pages]
> ➢ Measures to maximise impact - Dissemination, exploitation and communication [e.g. 5 pages]
> ➢ Summary
> ➢ **Section 3: Quality and efficiency of the implementation**

Picture: FT portal' refence documents section - Standard Proposal Template

Example: Instructions for filling out proposal template are provided by the EC

1.1 Objectives and ambition [e.g. 4 pages]

> ➢ *Briefly describe the objectives of your proposed work. Why are they pertinent to the work programme topic? Are they measurable and verifiable? Are they realistically achievable?*
> ➢ *Describe how your project goes beyond the state-of-the-art, and the extent the proposed work is ambitious. Indicate any exceptional ground-breaking R&I, novel concepts and approaches, new products, services or business and organisational models. Where relevant, illustrate the advance by referring to products and services already available on the market. Refer to any patent or publication search carried out.*
> ➢ *Describe where the proposed work is positioned in terms of R&I maturity (i.e. where it is situated in the spectrum from 'idea to application', or from 'lab to market'). Where applicable, provide an indication of the Technology Readiness Level, if possible, distinguishing the start and by the end of the project.*

This Guide cannot address the question "How the get the maximum score in each section for all different calls/topics and types of actions". As much as we intend to provide tools and ready-for-use solutions, the overwhelming number of calls/topis makes the multiplicity of variables so great that practical instructions on all of them would never in practice be forthcoming. Regrettably selective focusing on one type of action, also unfocusses a lot of other variables. Focusing on one set of variables runs the risk of doing a superlative job on an irrelevant issue.

However, the section below elaborates principles that lead to *excellence in proposal writing for Horizon Europe. As it addresses the **main challenges to overcome in proposal writing**. Your philosophy for success includes knowing how to avoid or overcome four typical challenges: to read and implement the instructions; to make statements with enough supporting evidence to convince evaluators; to give sufficient detail of the activities that will be carried out; to be consistent in what you write in different parts of your proposal. And proposal writers who apply the following instructions will get the maximum score.*

Planning is something that is done on a continuous basis. Whenever a project initiator gets an idea for a new proposal, it should be documented in some format. When a draft work programme is

published, these ideas can be revisited, and partners can be contacted to discuss possible collaboration.

The preparation phase is the most important part. This is when the idea is discussed in detail. It is also the most interesting part as new ideas are discussed and new scenarios and approaches are examined.

Writing the actual proposal is just one step in the grant-seeking process, and it is not the most time-consuming step. Far more time is normally spent analysing context, stakeholders, relevant documents, data gathering, researching problems, strategies and possible solutions, finding adequate partners, developing the project, and cultivating appropriate co-funders or officials, than on the actual preparation of a proposal. Roughly estimated, proposal writing represents approximately one-third of the overall workload.

Successful grant seekers capitalize on the intelligence they gather or partnership they build with stakeholders during the pre-proposal phases and cast their projects in ways that mesh with sponsors' values. For novice writers, a common mistake is a psychological orientation towards their own ideas or needs, while successful writers focus on donors' interests.

The Draft Work Programmes are published up to six months before the call for proposals. These drafts indicate the areas and topics that will be covered in the call. At this stage, project leaders should start planning their proposals. This usually involves contacting a core team of potential partners and discussing possible proposal ideas. When the call for proposals is published, this is the time to start preparing and writing the proposal and adding other partners. If you write the proposal yourself, try to give yourself deadlines for completing each section and create a clear **action plan with a timeline of the proposal writing** process to manage partners' expectations and integrate relevant partner' inputs.

Intelligently Interpreting instructions

Despite its length, you are strongly advised to ***read and analyse all reference documents*** before you start putting your proposal together. By far the biggest problem with proposals occurs because applicants do not **read and respond to the information and advice** provided by the EU programme background documents, proposal call information and Guide for Applicants! Thus, for example, the majority of questions by proposers could have been answered by **reading the Work Programme and/or Guide for Applicants!**

Every word in Work Programme and Topic Description has a meaning. You can hardly write the winning proposal if you misinterpret a meaning of a single word. Having identified a suitable funding source to develop your idea your starting point is to carefully read the relevant background documentation for the funding scheme on programme objectives, objectives of the call and the Guide for Applicants. And your philosophy for success at this stage is to know ***how to interpret those words*** - to get *inside the minds of the programme developers* to understand what ***they want you to achieve with their money.*** Go through all these documents and highlight the keywords, phrases and sentences to which you will need to respond to ensure that your proposal does ***what they want you to do.***

✓ **Example:** *"close cooperation"* - you must give the evidence to demonstrate that the cooperation will indeed be close, by describing a number of major interactions between your institution and each partnering organisation, and not just token cooperation by a single short visit and exchange of a few emails, for example!

✓ **Example:** *"outstanding"*- only one word, but it will require several pages of text from you to give all the evidence that each of your partnering organisations is indeed outstanding, and not just another average-quality European organisation! By definition, the majority or organisations will be average, so your partner organisations have to give you all their measures of esteem to convince the evaluators that they really are outstanding: all their Nobel prize winners, notable patents, awards, other prizes, high numbers of visiting workers, track-records in training, publications in Nature and Science, as well as an above-average number of good-quality publications per year, etc. ...!

Work Breakdown Structure responding to the Type of Action and Topic Description

A work breakdown structure (WBS) is a visual, hierarchical and deliverable-oriented deconstruction of a project. Work Packages are constituted of Tasks. Giving each task a number makes it easy to identify them. A description defines what the task is, and provides an activity description for the team when it is time to execute it. The owner is a Partner who oversees the task from assignment to completion and ensures that it has been properly executed.

WBS and Objectives of winning proposals have been developed to ensure that the Expected impacts of the Topic description will be fully achieved and be measurable and verifiable.

In designing WBS/tasks start with analysis type of action and topic description. Examine previous projects. Break the topic description into a series of phases that will take you from conception to completion. What are your Outputs? List them all and note what is necessary for those outputs to be deemed successfully delivered (outcomes, deliverables, work packages, resources, participants, etc.) Take your deliverables from above and break them down into **every single task and subtask that is necessary to deliver them**. Make a list of all these tasks. Double-check the topic description and also with experienced partners if you have *intelligently interpreted words in the call text* and covered everything. With the tasks now laid out, assign them to existing Partners or *rethink if you have included the best Partners for the tasks.* The process of creation of the initial WBS is a crucial one for the creation of the excellent consortium equally as for the design of a high-quality proposal.

Proposal Templates available at the Funding and Tenders portal can help you understand the **expected structure,** but **the most effective way to learn** is to *examine previously funded projects under the same topic if available. Searching CODRIS database helps and examining funded projects' websites.*

Link: *CORDIS Projects and Results*

Causality in proposal design

Causality (also referred to as causation, or cause and effect) is the relationship between the definition of needs, solutions to address those needs are project outcomes, activities implemented to achieve outputs, outputs are used to achieve outcomes, outcomes are used to achieve impacts, and impacts

respond to stakeholder needs. In a nutshell, analyzing project causality is an examination of questions for each project activity, work package, and the entire project: Why? What? And How?

Therefore, you need to start with 'Why are you proposing a project (Stakeholders needs etc)'. Respecting the Causality principle if Why is a cause then What is the effect, What you are proposing should directly correlate to Why. Your proposed project objectives should be a direct repose to stakeholder needs etc. In top-down calls/topics, the EC explicitly stated for you what they want you to address. Similarly, the answer to How is a link between your proposed Activities (methodology, resources etc) and project Objectives (What). During proposal evaluation it is easy to spot when proposal objectives do not correspond directly to stakeholders' needs, or if you have proposed too many, or too few activities to achieve Objectives, equally so with proposed resources.

INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	IMPACTS

Picture Causality

Consistency in the proposal text

It is very easy for you to fail to be consistent because you write the text little by little in the course of several weeks or months, yet evaluators read your whole proposal in just a few hours, and for them, any inconsistency will be easy to see: The total budget presented in Part A differs from that in Part B of the proposal.'

Achieving consistency in what you say throughout your proposal is a major challenge, so constantly check what you have said elsewhere in the proposal, especially when approaching the submission deadline when you are trying to match the person-months and budget to the activities, and vice versa. Qualitative and quantitative changes to activities are frequently necessary during this process and inconsistencies in the texts can easily arise.

    ✓ *Example: If you state "improving proposal writing skills" as a project objective, make sure you describe activities somewhere in the rest of the proposal to achieve this!*

Educating evaluator about evaluation criteria

In order to get the money, your proposal has to compete successfully against perhaps several hundreds of other proposals all wanting to make use of the same money that you want! Be aware that the competition for EU-funded projects is normally fierce. Therefore, your philosophy for success is to know how to make your project proposal the best that the evaluators will read: to get the maximum score for every one of the evaluation criteria. So, you need to know how to write your project proposal to make it impossible for the evaluators **to take off any marks from your score**; this typically means getting the highest score for each section of the proposal. Target your proposal to be the only one that is worth funding! To achieve this, your proposal will need to have something really special about it, so make sure you do not repeat the same things that everyone else will say!

Bear in mind that reviewers must go through a large number of proposals. Get straight to the point. Write a **very brief intro or a sentence stating evaluation criteria** and provide **measurable and**

credible evidence as to why you should receive a maximum score for each evaluation criterion. Prioritize and reduce the quantity of information in such a way that evaluators have no space for subjective assessment.

You are going to need consistently high marks in all criteria! Make it easy for the evaluators to give you high marks. Don't make them work at it. Don't write too little, cover what is requested. Don't write too much. Don't leave the evaluators to figure out why your proposal is good, tell them why it is such. Leave nothing to the imagination - Never assume!

Write clearly and concisely, use facts and figures

How do you write down exactly what you mean? Firstly, start each paragraph with the conclusion of that idea. Secondly, following this conclusion, focus on writing sentences that support the conclusion only. Then apply the same steps to the rest of the proposal to ensure concise writing. It is very important to format text to make it easy for the evaluators to read. Use subheadings, indents, and break up text with tables or pictures occasionally. Make it easy for the reader to understand your messages.

Remember that every half-mark in the evaluation will count! Think of the finishing touches which signal quality work: in presentation, clear language, well-organized contents, no typos, no inconsistencies, no obvious paste-ins, no numbers which don't add up, no missing pages, etc.

Providing a sufficient level of detail and evidence

How much detail do you need to write? It depends! Adjust the amount of detail you give to describe the work/activities/tasks to be done according to: the project scale, the project type, your level of experience in writing project proposals, your success rate for getting them funded, and the space available in the application form for giving the information.

If this is your first project proposal, i.e. you have no previous track record of success, then you will need to provide more detail of each activity than if you are leading a project consortium that has already established a track record of success for large-scale collaborative international projects.

For each activity, you should provide ***needs analysis, sufficiently detailed activity description to guarantee impact, and impact description.***

Example:	*"One of our young R&D scientists will spend one month in project year 1 at Institute X in Paris to be trained in how to use an ABC machine." (This is a commonly used erroneous statement as it lacks NA-AD-IA approach elaborated below)*
Needs analysis:	*"Our institute currently has no ABC machine, though we plan to buy one in project Year 1, as it is essential to develop the diagnostic tests of Objective 4."*
Activity Description:	*"Thus, 1 of our talented scientists will analyse pasta DNA in the institute of Dr X in Paris for 1 month immediately before commissioning our ABC machine. Dr X has used ABC since 2001. She has 2 machines, one of which is regularly used to train visiting workers."*
Impact analysis:	*"Upon return to our institute, the young R&D scientist will help commission the new ABC machine and provide training in its use to others to ensure dissemination and sustainability of the newly-acquired expertise."*

**Test your applications against the evaluation grid**

You should either use the services of experienced proposal writers and evaluators for your proposal review. This is the best option you can choose. Alternatively, download self-assessment/evaluation grid from the Funding and Tenders portal. And check if you have provided **credible evidence for a maximum score on each evaluation criteria**. Evaluation criteria are publicly available. Funding and Tenders portal section "How to participate" contains "Reference documents" with Templates and Forms including the Evaluation criteria. Ideally, also examine Frequently asked questions (FAQ) from evaluators, if available, for the call/topic you selected. In most cases, you can find them by internet search.

Example of general evaluation principles for RIA and IA: Picture: General evaluation principles for RIA and IA

EXCELLENCE	IMPACT	QUALITY AND EFFICIENCY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION
✓ Clarity and pertinence of the **project's objectives**, and the extent to which the proposed work is ambitious, and goes beyond the state-of-the-art.	✓ Credibility of the **pathways** to achieve the expected **outcomes and impacts** specified in the work programme, and the likely scale and significance of the contributions due to the project.	✓ Quality and effectiveness of the **work plan**, assessment of risks, and appropriateness of the effort assigned to work packages, and the resources overall.
✓ Soundness of the proposed **methodology**, including the underlying concepts, models, assumptions, inter-disciplinary approaches, appropriate consideration of the **gender dimension** in research and innovation content, and the quality of **open science practices** including sharing and management of research outputs and engagement of citizens, civil society and end users where appropriate.	✓ Suitability and quality of the **measures to maximize expected outcomes and impacts**, as set out in the dissemination and exploitation plan, including communication activities.	✓ Capacity and role of each **participant**, and extent to which the **consortium** as a whole brings together the necessary expertise.

IX GRANT AGREEMENT PHASE AND PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

If you have been awarded a Horizon Europe grant - Congratulations! Before you can start working on the project you have to finish the final preparation steps of the so-called 'grant agreement phase'. You have grant agreement available at the Funding and Tender Portal in the Reference document section.
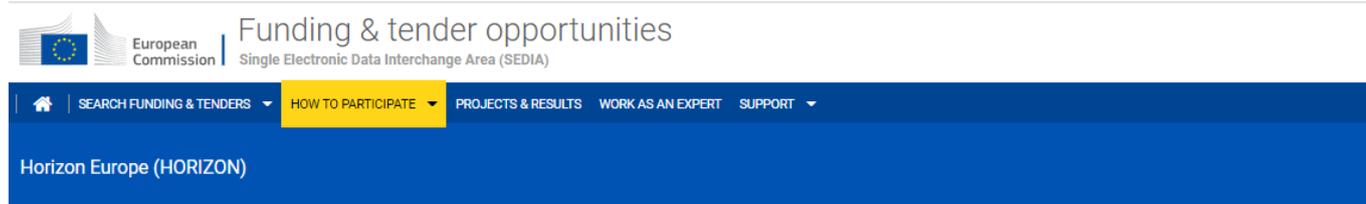
Video lesson about the Grant Agreement is available at https://youtu.be/_1wywAOPdW0.

Grant agreement defines your rights, *for example*: *to receive EU funding, under the terms and conditions defined in the grant agreement, to help you to accomplish your project; to own the results of the project that you have generated; to ask for amendments of the grant agreement (if something needs to be changed);* Next, Obligations such as*: to Implement the project as planned in the description of the action; Submit reports at the time and for the periods defined in the grant agreement; Display the EU emblem and reference to Horizon Europe funding (e.g. information material, equipment funded by the grant, major results);* And all other relevant details i.*e. How much money you can get.* Grant agreement phase must be finished within a timeframe set out by the European Commission (EC).

During the grant agreement phase, you must provide the necessary documentation and finish the grant agreement document. It consists of the formal agreements between the EC and the project consortium, the timeline and budget of the project and the description of the action. Complete exploitation, dissemination and communication plan has to be submitted during the first six months of the project. In this phase any commitment during the proposal or negotiation phase should be replaced by consortium agreement that should be concluded before signing the grant agreement. This agreement should consist of all the parties' rights and obligations, such as: workplan, IP and quality management, specific liability, dissemination, communication within the consortium, etc.

Indicative timeline for evaluation and grant agreement is normally described in the relevant Work Programme section. More details are provided at the Topic Description page, in the support section, particularly relevant is the Online Manual, as the entire communication during the implementation is conducted over the Funding & Tenders Portal.

> Funding & Tenders Portal Online Manual

Project implementation is defined by the grant agreement and your *description of work* in the proposal becomes legally binding. Experienced coordinators usually provide to novice partners guidelines for implementation and templates for reporting. Yet the most important point regarding project implementation is good planning in the early phases of proposal writing which reduces failures and increases the quality of results. The essence of project management is risk management. It reduces the number of surprises and leads to a better understanding of the most likely outcomes of negative events as well as stakeholder satisfaction.

Project managers need to take a proactive approach to **manage stakeholders' expectations** and perceptions. Active stakeholder involvement keeps the project team focused on the objectives and reduces misunderstandings and dissatisfaction. Control and Gantt charts are useful vehicles for monitoring time performance. The cost-schedule system allows the manager to have a positive influence on cost and schedule in a timely manner. The ability to influence cost decreases with time. Contingency plans increase the chance that the project can be completed on time and within budget. As for the financial control, the best practice is to consult Auditing authority at early stages "to get ready for mandatory or possible control".

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