HORIZON EUROPE PROPOSAL WORKSHOP

WELCOME

Agenda

- 9:15   Start
- 9:20   Proposal writing tips and trics - Sarah Stroobants (NCP Health – NCP Flanders)
- 10:00   Thematic session – in rooms at first floor
- 13:00   Light Lunch - in this room
- 14:00   Key insights and highlights of the first Horizon Europe Evaluations – Mr. Marc Tachelet (European Commission)
- 15:00   The End

HORIZON EUROPE PROPOSAL WORKSHOP

22 November 2022

General Introduction

speaker: Sarah Stroobants, NCP Flanders

How to write a good proposal – Tips (I)

- Read the **call text & relevant destination** carefully -> **every word counts**

- **Questions before you start:**

  ❑ Why bother? What problem will you try to solve?

  ❑ How does the project idea address the EU policy?

  ❑ Is there already a solution to the problem?

  ❑ Why now (urgency)? Why has it not been done before?

  ❑ Why you? Are you the best people to do this work?

- Ensure your project idea is **fully aligned with the topic description** and activities are within the **scope**

- Prepare an **outline** of your proposal as a first step

Outline or 'one page proposal'

- Serves to **substantiate the project idea**

- Helps define the project idea **in relation to the call topic & the scope**

- **First tool to communicate** the project plan & objectives

- Elements that could go into the outline

- **Graphical presentation** / graphical abstract of your project idea

BRIDGE2HE
with NCPs

One page proposal

The One-Page proposal serves to substantiate the project idea. It will be useful as a basis for the communication with project partners as well as for consultation with e.g. National Contact Points (NCPs).

Programme (Horizon Europe or other):	
Call Topic and Funding Scheme:	
Deadline:	
Planned Title of the project:	
Objectives/Aim of the project:	
Project background:	
Expected results and lead users of these results:	
How do you want to achieve the objectives? Work phases of the project (can correspond to work packages)	
Consortium in brief:	
Planned duration of the project:	
Expected budget:	

Full proposal

Administrative form (Part A - generated by the IT system)	Technical part –Section 1 Excellence (Part B)	Technical part – Section 2 Impact (Part B)	Technical part – Section 3 Quality and efficiency of the implementation' (Part B)
• **General information including proposal title, duration in moths, fixed and free keywords** • **Abstract** • **Participants and organisation data** • **Budget for the proposal** • **Ethics & security**	• **1.1 Objectives and ambition** **1.2 Methodology**	• **2.1 Project's pathways towards impact** • **2.2 Measures to maximise impact – dissemination, exploitation and communication** • **2.3 Summary – Impact canvas**	• **3.1 Work plan and resources** - List of work packages - Work package description - List of deliverables - List of milestones - Critical risks for implementation - Summary of staff effort - Subcontracting cost items - Purchase cost items - Other cost categories items - In-kind contributions • **3.2 Capacity of participants and consortium as a whole**

Importance of abstract, title and keywords !

How to write a good proposal – Tips (II)

- **Answer to all detailed instructions** in the proposal template

- A proposal is a convincing exercise, **NOT a scientific paper**
  - ➢ Pre-significance (instead of post-significance)
  - ➢ Focus on **need-to-know information** – only cite crucial references

- Evaluators make up their mind quickly -> Start with a **brief summary**

- Not all evaluators of your proposal will be expert in your (sub)discipline
  - ➢ Make the proposal **easy to read** – clarity of the proposal!
  - ➢ **Layer technical information**

How to write a good proposal – Tips (III)

- Avoid general statements/being too vague -> **be concrete, be specific**

- **Avoid repetition** -> use cross-references to other parts of the proposal

- Don't promise the world –> **be ambitious but also realistic**

- **Quantify** where possible & meaningful – **Substantiate**

- **Avoid under or over-estimation of resources** to carry out the project

- Make your proposal **visually attractive** (figures, tables, lists, images etc)

- **Ensure consistency** of the different parts of your proposal

Ensure consistency throughout your proposal

- Building the different elements of the proposal while **safeguarding consistency**

- Consistency between **PART A & PART B** as well as between **different sections** of PART B
  Some examples:

  ➢ Effort and resources in PART B (Section 3.1) and Budget table in PART A

  3.1 Work plan and resources *[e.g. 14 pages – including tables]*
  ⚠ *Please make sure the information in this section matches the costs as stated in the budget table in section 3 of the application forms, and the number of person months, shown in the detailed work package descriptions.*

  ➢ Consistency between Section 2 Impact (dissemination, exploitation, communication) and Section 3 Implementation (e.g. dissemination level to be indicated for each of the deliverables)

- Consistency of **terminology, numbers & titles**

Last but not least

- Ask **feedback** from a colleague/support staff not directly involved

- Ask for **support**

Get guidance:
- **Funding & Tenders portal**
- Support office of your organisation
- National Contact Point

- Don't wait until the last minute -> **resubmit improved versions**

- Don't give any excuses to be marked down - **make it worth the investment**

THANK YOU FOR
YOUR ATTENTION

Thematic sessions

- Cluster 1 – THIS ROOM
- Cluster 2 – FIRST FLOOR –1.11   Room Magnetiet
- Cluster 4 – FIRST FLOOR – 1.10   Room Malachiet
- Cluster 5 – FIRST FLOOR – 1.09   Room Rookkwarts
- Cluster 6 – FIRST FLOOR – 1.01   Room Gogotte

Key insights and highlights ofthe first Horizon Europe Evaluations

Mr. Marc Tachelet – European Commission

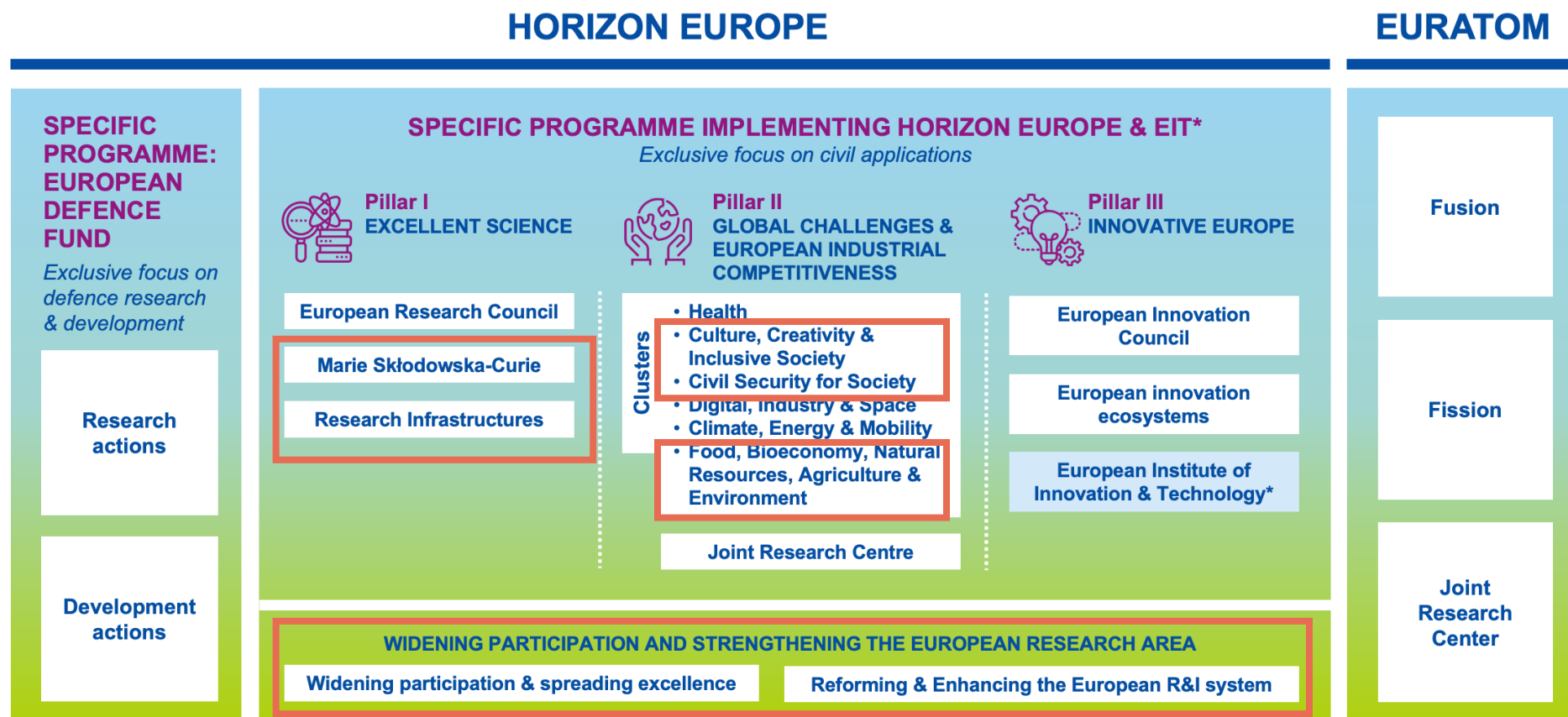# Horizon Europe 1-year after the launch of Horizon Europe in Belgium

The experience of the European Research Executive Agency

Marc Tachelet
Director of REA

Cécile Menétrey-Monchau
REA call coordinator – Cluster 2

REA's part (23%) in Horizon Europe

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

HORIZON EUROPE

EURATOM

SPECIFIC PROGRAMME: EUROPEAN DEFENCE FUND

Exclusive focus on defence research & development

- Research actions
- Development actions

SPECIFIC PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTING HORIZON EUROPE & EIT*
Exclusive focus on civil applications

Pillar I
EXCELLENT SCIENCE

- European Research Council
- Marie Skłodowska-Curie
- Research Infrastructures

Pillar II
GLOBAL CHALLENGES & EUROPEAN INDUSTRIAL COMPETITIVENESS

Clusters
- Health
- Culture, Creativity & Inclusive Society
- Civil Security for Society
- Digital, Industry & Space
- Climate, Energy & Mobility
- Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture & Environment

Joint Research Centre

Pillar III
INNOVATIVE EUROPE

- European Innovation Council
- European innovation ecosystems
- European Institute of Innovation & Technology*

WIDENING PARTICIPATION AND STRENGTHENING THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA
- Widening participation & spreading excellence
- Reforming & Enhancing the European R&I system

Fusion

Fission

Joint Research Center

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

Novelties under Horizon Europe

- Missions
- Reinforced focus on impact
- Lump sum funding and unit costs
- Blind evaluation and rebuttal (right-to-react)
- Cross-cutting features

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Novelties in Horizon Europe - Missions

The 5 EU Missions

- Adaptation to Climate Change

- Cancer

- Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030

- 100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030

- A Soil Deal for Europe

EU Missions are a novelty of the Horizon Europe research and innovation programme for the years 2021-2027. They will deliver impact by putting research and innovation into a new role, combined with new forms of governance and collaboration, as well as by engaging citizens.

European Commission

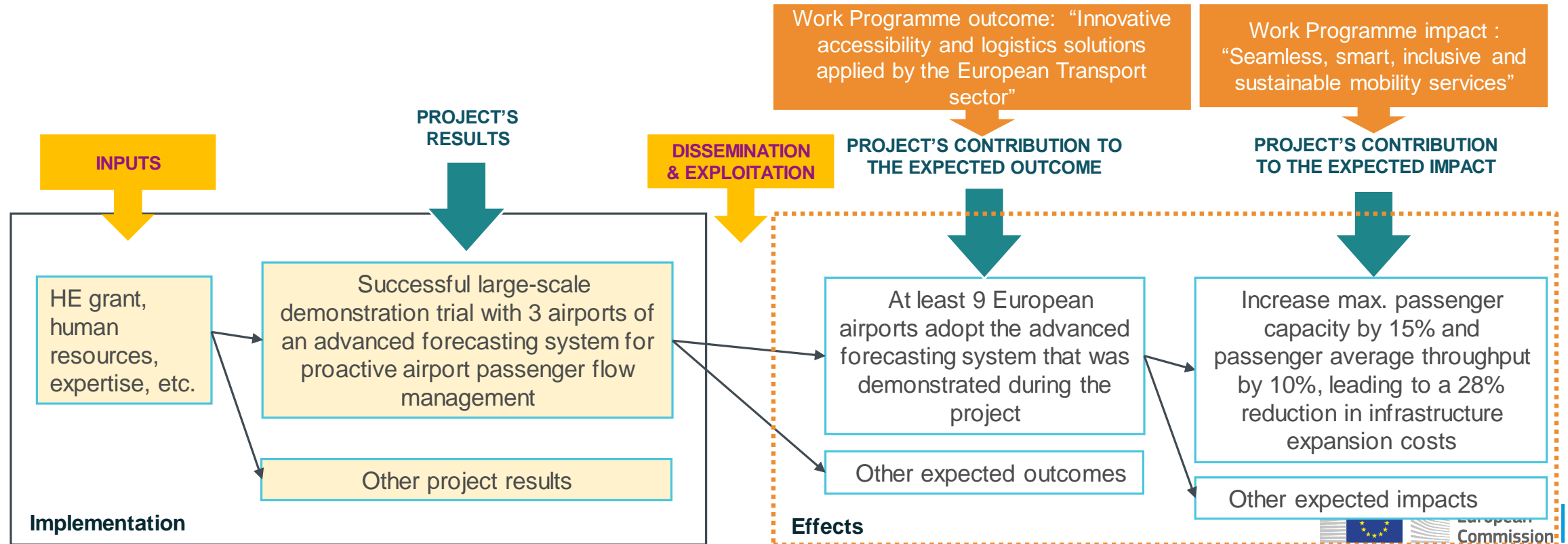# Strengthened focus on impact for the programme

- HE is Impact driven: focus on wider long-term effects on society (including the environment), the economy and science

Impact area	Key Impact Pathways (9) (some examples)	Short term (outputs) Medium term (outcomes/results) Long term (Impacts)
1. Scientific impact	1. High quality new knowledge	Publications => citations => world class science
	3. Diffusion of new knowledge	Sharing => diffusing => collaboration
2. Societal impact	4. Addressing EU policy priorities and global challenges	Results => solutions => benefits
3. Economic impact	7. Innovation based growth	Innovative results => innovations => economic growth

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Evaluating the Impact criterion for proposals

Project's pathway towards impact

…by thinking about the specific contribution the project can make to the expected outcomes and impacts set out in the Work Programme.

Work Programme outcome: "Innovative accessibility and logistics solutions applied by the European Transport sector"

Work Programme impact : "Seamless, smart, inclusive and sustainable mobility services"

INPUTS

PROJECT'S RESULTS

DISSEMINATION & EXPLOITATION

PROJECT'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE EXPECTED OUTCOME

PROJECT'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE EXPECTED IMPACT

HE grant, human resources, expertise, etc.

Successful large-scale demonstration trial with 3 airports of an advanced forecasting system for proactive airport passenger flow management

Other project results

Implementation

At least 9 European airports adopt the advanced forecasting system that was demonstrated during the project

Other expected outcomes

Increase max. passenger capacity by 15% and passenger average throughput by 10%, leading to a 28% reduction in infrastructure expansion costs

Other expected impacts

Effects

European Commission

How to address impact in HE – some tips

- WP spells out the expected mid-term outcome and long-term impact.
    - Check topic description for expected outcome (scope)
    - Check destination text for expected impact

- Get terminology right: output, outcome, impact

- Demonstrate the expected outcome/impact against what is expected. Do not paraphrase the WP, translate it to your proposal.

- Identify potential barriers (e.g. regulatory; targeted markets; user behavior) and propose mitigating measures

- Identify and address possible negative environmental outcome or impact

- Scale the impact of your proposal to size and scope of your project

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Lump sums

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

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

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

Work package completed = payment

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

European Commission

Two lump sum options

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

Option 1:

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

Option 2 (most common for REA):

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

Writing a lump sum proposal

- To write a lump sum proposal, applicants:

  - Use the standard Horizon Europe application form

  - Present the objectives and methodology of your project and address the expected outcomes and impacts as in any Horizon Europe proposal

  - Describe in detail the activities covered by each work package.

- To define and justify the lump sum, applicants provide a **detailed budget table** with cost estimations for each cost category per beneficiary (and affiliated entity if any) and per work package.

- The cost estimations must be an **approximation of applicants actual costs**. They:

  - are subject to the same eligibility rules as in actual costs grants

  - must be in line with your normal practices

  - must be reasonable / non-excessive

  - must be in line with and necessary for your proposed activities.

Evaluating lump sum proposals

- Proposals are evaluated by independent experts against the **standard evaluation criteria**: excellence, impact, and implementation.

- The cost estimations will be assessed against the proposed activities under the **implementation** criterion.

- Experts will:

  - ensure that the cost estimations are **reasonable and non-excessive**
  - evaluate whether the resources proposed and the split of the lump sum **allow completing the activities described in the proposal**.

- If the experts find overestimated costs, they make **concrete recommendations** on the budget that are recorded in the Evaluation Summary Report. This will be reflected in a modified lump sum amount in the grant agreement.

- Cost estimations that are clearly overestimated or underestimated lead to a **decreased score** under the implementation criterion

European Commission

Resources available

One dedicated **lump sum page** on the Funding &Tenders Portal with:

Guidance documents	• What do I need to know? & Quick guide • Frequently asked questions • Detailed guidance for participants • Lump sum briefing slides for experts
Reference documents	• Model Grant Agreement Lump Sum • Decision authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme
Studies	• European Commission assessment (October 2021) • European Parliament (STOA) study on lump sums in Horizon 2020 (May 2022)
Events	• Future events • Past events and recordings
Funding opportunities	• List of Horizon Europe topics using lump sum funding

HORIZON EUROPE

Lump Sum Grants

in Horizon Europe

Why do we need them and how do they work in practice?

Unit cost for personnel (under preparation)

- Further simplification measure to reduce error rates in financial claims. Advantages similar to lump sums (no auditing, no proof documents, etc.)

- Building further on the use of average personnel costs (already on offer)

- Applicable, by applicant/beneficiary, across the board (all or nothing)

- Pre-fixed rate, calculated as a global average for an entity's total personnel

- Can be updated every two years – applicable only for new grants

- When: possibly already in the course of 2023.

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Pilot on Blind evaluation

Blind evaluation

- A pilot to **avoid bias** towards large well-known organisations
  (A recent independent study has not revealed such a bias)

- The pilot aims to identify whether the implementation of blind evaluation creates any difficulties and/or effectively mitigates the (perceived) risk of reputational bias

- It will be launched in the WP 2023-24 for all first of two-stage calls in 2023

- Blind evaluations will be announced in the WP (specific eligibility criterion)

- **Make sure you do not present yourself or your consortium in a way that would allow you to be identified**

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Pilot on Right-to-react (Rebuttal)

Individual evaluation → Reaction → Consensus group → Panel review → Finalisation
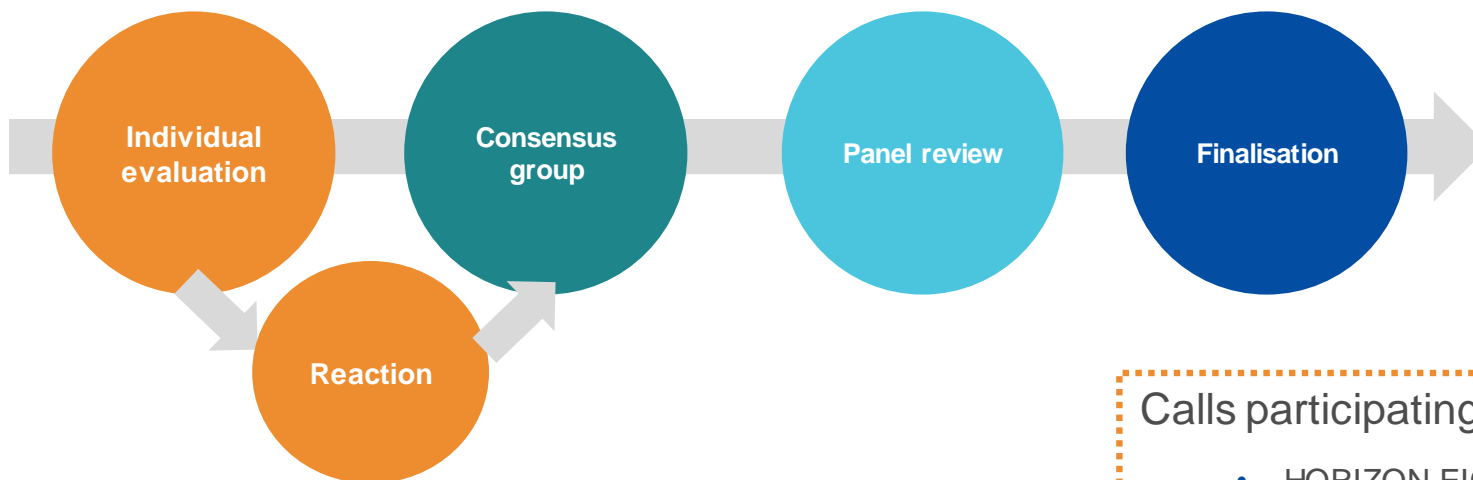
Right-to-react (Rebuttal)

- to increase transparency, to correct any factual errors or major misunderstandings by experts at an early stage.

- Applicants send their reactions to draft experts comments

- Experts take applicants' reaction into account during consensus discussions.

  ➡ we disclose individual experts readings without quality control

Calls participating in the pilot:

- HORIZON-EIC-2021-PATHFINDEROPEN-01,
- HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-02;
- HORIZON-WIDERA-2022-TALENTS-01 (ERA Chairs)
- HORIZON-CL6-2022-COMMUNITIES-02

Preliminary findings (EC still to assess)

- Positive for pathfinder (different evaluation process)
- Applicants try to add new info
- Higher no of evaluation review
- Assessment: coordinators + experts neutral
- Impact only in 1 out 89 cases

European Commission

Gender Equality Plan

Gender Equality Plan (starts being applicable in calls with deadline in 2022)
legal entities from MSs and ACs that are public bodies, research organisations **OR** higher education establishments **must have a gender equality plan**, covering minimum process-related requirements (announced in WP general annexes and in participant registry).

A **self-declaration in THE participant registry** is requested at proposal stage.

This eligibility criterion does not apply to other categories of legal entities, such as private for-profit organisations, including SMEs, non-governmental or civil society organisations.

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Specific attention points

Evaluation form includes:

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

Additional questions in Horizon Europe evaluations

- Scope of the application
- Additional funding
- Use of human embryonic stem cells (hESC)
- Use of human embryos (hE)

- Activities not eligible for funding
- Exclusive focus on civil applications
- Do no significant harm principle
- Artificial Intelligence

European Commission

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

- experts assess whether the proposal involves the use of **hESC** and **hE.** This is independent of, and serves to verify, the applicants' answers in the ethics issues table.

- If you consider that your proposal involves hESC, you must state whether the use of hESC is, or is not, **necessary to achieve the scientific objectives** of the proposal and the reasons why.

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

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Exclusive focus on civil applications (Dual use technologies)

- Participants confirm that the proposal has an exclusive focus on civil applications. Activities to serve military purposes cannot be funded.

- Evaluators are asked to **confirm** that this is the case.

- Evaluators will not reject proposals for this reason but will reflect the **removal of the disallowed activities** in the final score (disregarding these activities may lead to a lower score).

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Do no significant harm principle (DNSH)

European Green Deal → *In line with the European Green Deal objectives, economic activities should not make a significant harm to any of the six environmental objectives (EU Taxonomy Regulation)*

- Applicants **can refer to the DNSH principle** when presenting their research methodology and the expected impacts of the project.

- However, evaluators **will not score applications in relation to their compliance with the DNSH principle** unless explicitly stated in the work programme
(e.g. actions in the European Innovation Council Work Programme 2021).

The six environmental objectives :

- Climate change mitigation

- Sustainable use & protection of water & marine resources

- Pollution prevention & control

- Climate change adaptation

- Transition to a circular economy

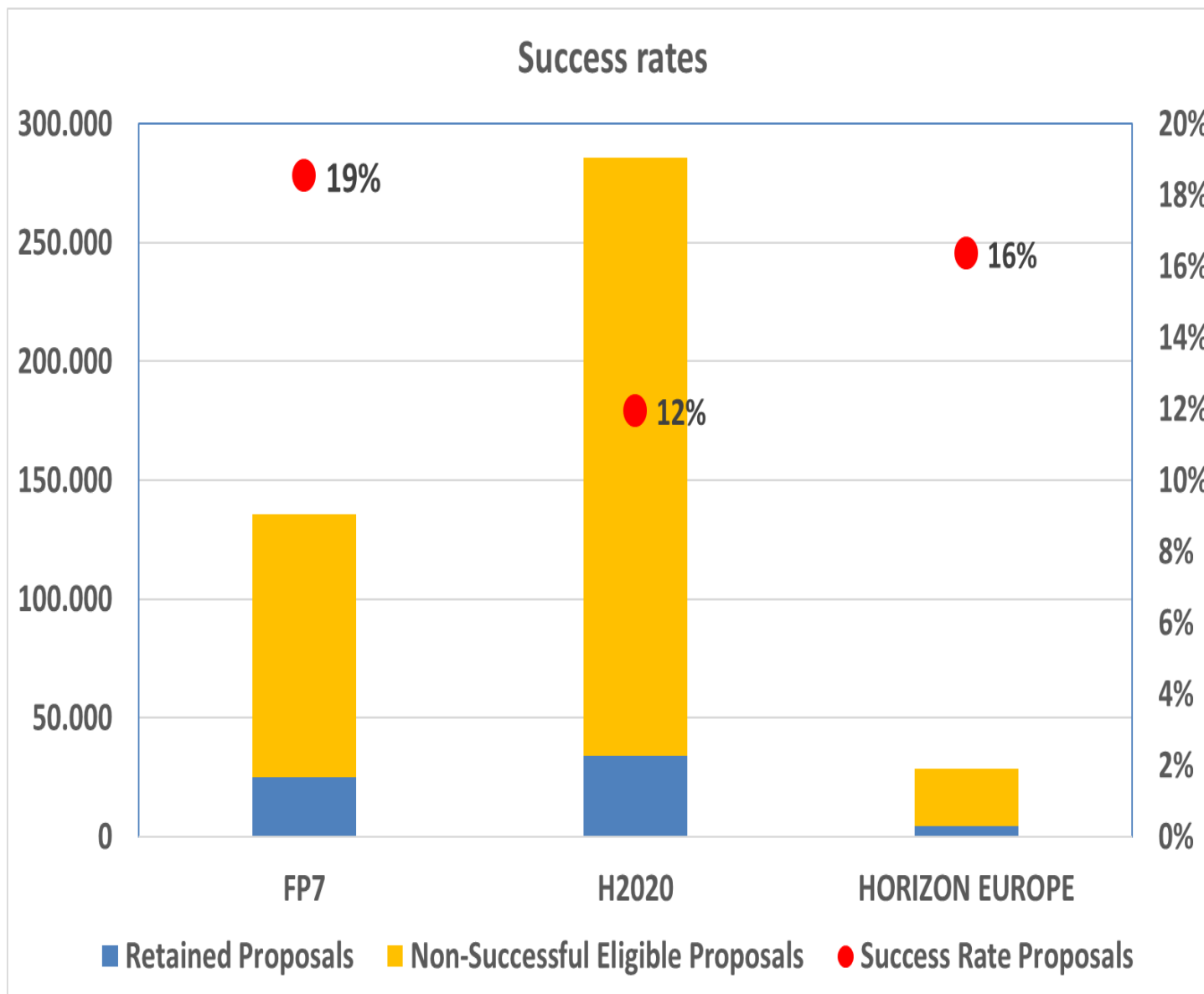- Protection and restoration of biodiversity & ecosystems

Artificial Intelligence in HE

Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to systems that display intelligent behaviour by analysing their environment and taking actions – with some degree of autonomy – to achieve specific goals (from High Level Expert Group)

- AI is an important driver for European Industry that needs close monitoring; if not well developed it can also become a problem (e.g. Microsoft´sTay Chatbot)

- experts in HE assess whether a proposal involves AI and the robustness of it

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Success rates & SME participation

Key statistics, comparison with previous FPs

Success rates

Legend:
- ■ Retained Proposals
- ■ Non-Successful Eligible Proposals
- ● Success Rate Proposals

Chart data points: FP7 = 19%, H2020 = 12%, HORIZON EUROPE = 16%

	H2020	HE
Success rate		
Europe+	12%	16%
BE	17%	24%
SME particip.		
Europe+	20%	17%
BE	22%	20%

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Lessons learned

Identified issues in 2021 proposals

Cross-cutting priority	First impressions (REA view)
Open science (excellence)	Well understood and often properly addressed
Gender (excellence)	- Many last minute GEPs developed for compliance - Uptake of gender dimension in R&I project often poorly addressed (lack of guidance? often confused with gender balance)
Dissemination obligations (impact)	- Often leading to lower score - Check obligations spelled out in the topic conditions "e.g. *proposals must include structured cooperation with the e-platform Embassy of Good science, …*"
AI	- AI robustness difficult to demonstrate (by applicants) and difficult to assess (by experts)

Consult the videos on the expert area on the Funding & Tenders Portal:
https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/support/videos

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Lessons learned from the first HE calls

- UK applicants are eligible to participate in proposals. They cannot be funded but they can remain using national funding.

    - 2-step process for Grant Agreement preparation

    - Most UK participants stay on with UK funding substituting EU funding

    - More complex change in case of UK coordinator

    - We were able to limit delay on Time-To-Grant

    - Higher uptake of reserve list proposals

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Lessons learned on lump sums (II)

- Given the novelty of lump sums and the need for more guidance, there has been a **stepwise roll-out of lump sum funding**: 27 lump sum topics in 2022; first significant wave of lump sum topics in 2023-2024 (1/3 of budget for pilar II).

- Higher page limit for lump sum proposals (from work programme 2023).

- Personnel cost dashboard for experts to help them evaluate the lump sum proposals – a first version has just been released.

- An improved Excel tool for lump sum budget table will be released soon.

Do's and Don'ts for proposal writing

Do's:

- Read the WP – every word matters
  Keep close to WP, objectives and indicated budget

- Use the templates – fill out tables as required

- Use the guidance available
  (proposal template, F&T Portal, internet, Info days)

- Familiarise with the EU policy objectives; put your proposal in perspective

- Enrol to become an expert – exp. experts become excellent proposal writers

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Do's and Don'ts for proposal writing

Don'ts:

- Rush: take you time to develop your idea and find the partners/entities required for your project

- Over-sell (too many/too ambitious outcomes).

- Use buzzwords. Explain your project in realistic terms

- Submit last minute (Stress leads to mistakes)

- Write more than the page limit

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Do's and Don'ts

Tips:

- Contact NCPs

- Identify/learn from successful applicants

- Resubmit improved versions until the deadline

Thank you

Q&A

Please drop your evaluation forms in the boxes

Hope to meet again!