



## *Common mistakes to avoid when applying for Horizon Europe funding*

Submitting a project proposal under Horizon Europe is a challenging task that requires careful planning, precise budgeting, and a seamless collaboration with partners. Here you can read some Dos and Don'ts to help you prepare a quality proposal.

### **Getting ready to apply for EU funding**

#### **Dos**

- Before starting your application, carefully read the [Horizon Europe Work Programme](#) applicable to the call you are interested in, to understand the objectives and guidelines of the specific call for proposals.
- Familiarise yourself with the [EU policy objectives](#) to put your proposal into perspective.
- Take the time to carefully review and understand the evaluation criteria for the specific call you would like to apply for. This can help you identify potential weaknesses in your proposal and address them before submission. Grant proposals are evaluated based on the [criteria](#) of ‘Excellence’, ‘Impact’ and ‘Quality and efficiency of the implementation’. [Check](#) what each of these terms mean.
- Check whether the call/topic you are applying for is a ‘lump sum’ call or an ‘actual costs’ call, as this has different implications in terms of eligibility/admissibility conditions. Also check the type of action foreseen for the call/topic (Coordination and Support Action (CSA); Research & Innovation Action (RIA), Innovation Action (IA) etc.)
- Build a strong and multidisciplinary consortium. A consortium should be composed of partners from different countries bringing together complementary expertise in research. It should also bring innovative solutions to tackle global challenges. The involvement of research organisations, public authorities and civil society organisations would be very welcome, if foreseen by the call. Use the [partner search tools and networks](#) to find the right project partners.
- Take into consideration the human resources and skills required for the implementation of the project beforehand, and design a plan to avoid delays if the proposal becomes eligible for funding.
- Check the [CORDIS website](#) for past and ongoing EU-funded projects to get insights into how these projects have been designed and partnerships established.



- Attend [Info Days](#) on the specific call for proposals you would like to apply for. These are organised to explain each call for proposals, and are a great opportunity to learn about the topics open for funding and to ask questions. If you cannot attend an Info Day, make sure to check the recordings.
- Contact your nearest [National Contact Point](#) (NCP) for support. In addition to advice, some NCPs offer training courses on the drafting of project proposals.

### Don'ts

- Don't rush! Take your time to carefully read the call's requirements to ensure you meet the eligibility rules.
- Don't be hasty when developing your project idea and invest time to find the right partners. Ideally, you should start looking for project partners well before the call for proposals opens.
- Don't leave your submission to the last minute, to avoid unnecessary mistakes or technical setbacks. Have a plan and adhere to it to ensure you are on time. You can reopen and amend your draft proposal as often as you wish before the call deadline.

## Formulate and plan your proposal correctly

### Dos

- Structure your proposal in a logical and cohesive manner. Outline the general project methodology and organise all elements of the project. This will help to align it with the objectives of the specific call and the evaluation criteria.
- Consider the other requirements or policy considerations that are assessed in the evaluation of projects. This may include aspects such as multi-disciplinarity (partners with complementary types of knowledge), the inclusion of Social Sciences and Humanities, Open Science, etc.
- Remember that the budget must match the workload in the different work packages, so that the project is feasible in terms of timing and financial resources.
- Create a timeline for the entire proposal writing process, including specific tasks, deliverables, responsibilities and deadlines. This will ensure that everything is completed by the call deadline.
- Use the [guidance](#) and the [templates](#) applicable to the funding programme you are applying for, available in the submission system on the Funding and Tender Portal. Remember that using the correct template is an admissibility condition.



## Don'ts

- Don't oversell your idea with too many or too ambitious objectives.
- Don't 'overwrite' your proposal - try to remain simple and straightforward.
- Don't use buzzwords. Try to explain your project in realistic terms.
- Don't forget to present the [ethics and security issues](#) relevant to your proposal. All applicants are required to complete the [ethics self-assessment for their proposal](#), [regardless of whether they consider that their proposed work raises ethics considerations or not](#).
- Remember to explain how you will address gender dimensions in your research, if applicable.
- Don't forget to prepare well in advance and submit a detailed [Gender Equality Plan](#) (GEP). This is mandatory for legal entities from Member States and Associated Countries that are public bodies, research organisations or higher education establishments. For these legal entities, a GEP will need to be in place at the time of the Grant Agreement signature. Learn more about [gender dimension in research and Gender Equality Plans](#).
- Don't exceed the page limit. For the Research & Innovation Action (RIA) and the Innovation Action (IA), the length can be at most 45 pages. For the Coordination and Support Action (CSA), the limit is 30 pages. For a first-stage application, it is at most 10 pages. For lump sum calls, the limit is 50 pages for RIA/IAS and 33 pages for CSAs.

## Address the project's pathway towards impact

## Dos

- Explain clearly the relevance of the challenge your project aims to address and why it should be tackled now. Provided arguments should demonstrate why the problem matters and for whom.
- Explain how the proposed intervention will have a long-term impact on the market, on industry, technology, environment, or society in general.
- Foresee novel research and an interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, or transdisciplinary approach.
- Think how your project can contribute to the expected outcomes and impact set out in the Horizon Europe Work Programme.
- Explain how you will comply with legal obligations. Check the [Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement](#) and watch this [video](#) to learn more about the legal obligations.
- Demonstrate how the consortium is well-suited to carry out the project. This includes highlighting the relevant capacities of the organisations and individuals leading the project, a well-structured project management plan, a clear division of roles, effective dissemination and communication strategies, and a risk mitigation approach. The



eligibility conditions set a minimum consortium size, but there is no maximum. However, do bear in mind that the proposal must remain manageable.

- Plan activities to increase the impact of your project results. Learn the differences between [Communication, Dissemination and Exploitation](#).

### Don'ts

- Don't paraphrase the Work Programme. Translate it into your proposal.
- Don't forget to explain clearly the connection between the aims, the activities in the project and the expected outcomes.
- Don't confuse the terms results, research output, outcomes and impact.
  - Results are what is generated during the project implementation (for example, the know-how, innovative solutions, algorithms, proof of feasibility, new business models, policy recommendations, guidelines).
  - The research output refers to the results generated by the action to which access can be given in the form of scientific publications, data or other engineered outcomes and processes such as software, algorithms, protocols and electronic notebooks.
  - A project's outcomes are the expected effects, over the medium term, of projects supported under a given topic. The results of a project should contribute to these outcomes, fostered in particular by the dissemination and exploitation measures. This may include the uptake, diffusion, deployment, and/or use of the project's results by direct target groups. Outcomes generally occur during or shortly after the end of the project.
  - A project's impact is the wider long-term effect on society (including the environment), the economy and science; the impact generally occurs sometime after the project's end.

### Hasznos linkek:

- [Horizon Europe – Programme guide](#)
- [Horizon Europe – Who can apply](#)
- [Horizon Europe - Who can apply \(Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions specific guidance\)](#)
- [Horizon Europe - How to apply](#)
- [Horizon Europe - How to apply \(Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions specific guidance\)](#)
- [Funding and Tenders Portal](#)
- [The research and innovation community platform](#)
- [Tackling gender equality in Research and Innovation: gender dimension and Gender Equality Plans](#)



- National Contact Points (NCPs) – get guidance, practical information and assistance on participation in Horizon Europe. There are also NCPs in many non-EU countries.
- Partner Search Services - helps you find a partner organisation for your proposal.

## Webinars

- How to prepare a successful proposal in Horizon Europe (part 1)
- How to prepare a successful proposal in Horizon Europe (part 2)
- Recipe for success: Tips and Tricks while writing your Horizon Europe proposal
- Lump sum funding in Horizon Europe
- The Gender Equality Plan eligibility criterion in HE: Who is concerned? How to comply with it?
- How to evaluate Open Science in Horizon Europe proposals
- How to evaluate Social Sciences and Humanities in Horizon Europe proposals

A tippek forrása a European Research Executive Agency

2023.03.08.