HORIZON EUROPE

A Brief Guide for NCPs

Regional Cooperation Council

good.
better.
regional.

HORIZON EUROPE
A Brief Guide for NCPs

PREFACE

The publication entitled 'A Brief Guide for NCPs' was prepared under the financial support of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), within the RCC call 'Capacity Building of National Contact Points for Research and Innovation in the Western Balkans'.

The short guide for National Contact Points (NCPs) in the field of Research & Innovation (R&I) comes at the very beginning of the implementation of the EU programme 'Horizon Europe'. All Western Balkan (WB) economies have signed the association agreements with the European Commission and became full members of the programme in the status of 'Associated Country'. For the WB researchers, the Programme is a great opportunity to implement various innovative ideas, develop an innovative environment and improve the technological and economic competitiveness of the region.

This guide aims to significantly facilitate their assigned role and enable them to perform their NCP tasks with the ultimate goal of providing high-quality services to the R&I community in the WB. Also, this guide can be useful material for other researchers and scientists less experienced with the EU science and innovation programmes to deal with various issues related to the implementation of complex EU projects.

'A Brief Guide' provides a very clear and concise overview of the structure of Horizon Europe, the strategic guidelines and programme objectives, and the allocated budget. In addition, the new concepts of EU Missions and EU Partnerships have been explained very concisely. Special emphasis is placed on the simplified presentation of the Rules of Participation and Implementation of Actions in this Programme, which is in special focus of interest of NCPs. Also, the user of this guide goes through the entire procedure of submitting a project application and evaluation.

We would like to express our gratitude to the Regional Cooperation Council for the support in the implementation of this task. We do hope that this short guide will be very useful material for all NCPs in fulfilling their mission.

Authors

CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Meaning
EU	*European Union*
EC	*European Commission*
FP	*Framework Programmes*
JRC	*Joint Research Centre*
MS	*Member States (of the European Union)*
ERA	*European Research Area*
CoE	*Council of Europe*
UN SDG	*United Nations Sustainable Development Goals*
GDP	*Gross Domestic Product*
R&I	*Research and Innovation*
IPR	*Intellectual Property Rights*
ERC	*European Research Council*
MSCA	*Marie Sklodowska Curie Actions*
EIC	*European Innovation Council*
EIT	*European Institute of Innovation and Technology*
AC	*Associated Countries (economies associated to the Programme)*
DNSH	*Do No Significant Harm (principle)*
KIC	*Knowledge and Innovation Centre*
RIA	*Research and Innovation Action*
IA	*Innovation Action*
CSA	*Coordination and Support Action*
TMA	*Training and Mobility Action*
IMDA	*Innovation and Market Deployment Action*
PCP	*Pre-Commercial Procurement Action*
PPI	*Public Procurement of Innovative Solutions Action*
VAT	*Value Added Tax*
MIM	*Mutual Insurance Mechanism*
F&T portal	Funding and Tender portal
PIC	*Participant Identification Code*
FAQ	*Frequently Asked Questions*
REA	*Research Executive Agency*
GEP	*Gender Equality Plan*
ERCEA	*ERC Executive Agency*
KIP	*Key Impact Pathways*
IER	*Individual Evaluation Report*
ESR	*Evaluation Summary Report*
EthSr	*Ethics Summary Report*
NCP	*National Contact Point*
AGA	*Annotated Grant Agreement*

CHAPTER 1

ABOUT THE HORIZON EUROPE PROGRAMME

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The political basis of Horizon Europe, as well as previous framework programmes, is found in European treaties (EU Treaties). These agreements describe different policies for the given areas in which the member states of the European Union (EU) want to cooperate. Based on the agreements signed by these treaties, the institutions of the European Union, primarily the European Commission (EC), prepare relevant policies. The policy text provides details on how member states will work together to achieve the objectives defined in the treaties. As such, policies are written documents of a strategic type, which need to be implemented adequately. The European Union has two basic instruments at its disposal for the implementation of policies, namely European legislation and funding programmes.

The European Union Framework Programmes (FPs) is the main instrument of the European Union (EU) for the implementation of its common policies in the field of research and innovation. If we follow the history of the programme, we can say that the beginnings of the framework programmes are closely connected with the idea and development of the EU, back in 1950. The Joint Research Center (JRC), established in 1957, is the European Commission's science and knowledge service that employs scientists to conduct research to provide independent scientific advice and support for EU policies. In the same year, the so-called EURATOM agreement was signed, with the primary aim of researching the field of nuclear fission and peaceful development of European nuclear resources.

1.2. GENERAL AND SPECIFIC PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

Horizon Europe plays a key role in shaping, supporting and achieving European policy priorities, in cooperation with the Member States (MS) and future 'Associated Countries' through the European Research Area (ERA). The political guidelines for the EC in the period 2019-2024 give six general priorities for a given period, which are important even after 2024. The priorities are based on the 'New Strategic Agenda 2019-2024', adopted by the Council of Europe (CoE) in June 2019, which aims at similar overarching goals.

The six priorities of the EC are:

1. *European Green Deal,*
2. *An economy that works for people,*
3. *A Europe fit for the Digital Age,*
4. *Promoting our European way of life,*
5. *A stronger Europe in the world, and*
6. *A new push for European democracy.*

Together with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs), they aim to shape the future responses of the European Union (EU) to define challenges and steer the ongoing transition towards strengthening the European economy and society. Research and innovation in the EU have an important role to play in enabling, guiding and supporting each of these priorities. Thus, research and innovation become the driving force of transitions and changes in European society and economy.

The **overall objective** of the Horizon Europe programme is to ensure the scientific, economic and social impact of EU investment in research and innovation, to strengthen the EU's scientific and technological base, to foster its competitiveness (inside and outside of EU), achieve the Union's strategic priorities, and contribute to tackling global challenges (such as defined in UN SDG) for sustainability and development.

The **specific objectives** of the programme will be to:

- **support the creation and dissemination** of high-quality new knowledge, skills, technologies and solutions to global societal challenges;
- **strengthen the impact of research and innovation** on the development, support and implementation of EU policies and support the introduction and uptake of innovative solutions in industry and society to address global challenges;
- **encourage all forms of innovation**, including breakthrough innovation, and strengthen the introduction of innovative solutions on the market;
- **optimise the provision of programmes** for greater impact within the strengthened ERA.

By achieving the stated general and specific goals in the field of research and innovation, the programme would attain **other added values** of the Horizon Europe programme, such as:

- facilitating **transnational cooperation**, exchange and networking,
- creating the **critical mass needed to address global challenges**,
- competitiveness of financing with the **promotion of excellence**,
- **increasing the visibility** of leading research and innovation initiatives,
- bringing about **transnational mobility**,
- creating **new market opportunities**,
- **strengthening** the European research and innovation environment, and
- **attracting** the best talent.

1.3. EXPECTED OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS OF THE PROGRAMME

The suitability of project proposals and the consortium of institutions implementing them are checked by independent evaluators selected by the European Commission from a

common database of registered researchers, who are competent for the given research area. Each EU member state makes a financial contribution to the framework programme fund. The size of financial contribution is determined based on the gross domestic product (GDP) and there are no national quotas, i.e. predetermined funds that each member state will receive back regardless of the success of projects its researchers are running. Framework programmes are highly competitive programmes aimed at financing the best and, from the European point of view, the most useful projects that will contribute to the overall progress of European society.

Compared to previous programmes, Horizon Europe is expected to achieve:

- **new and modern knowledge and technologies, promotion of scientific excellence and significant scientific performance** - encouraging cross-border cooperation, transnational and cross-sectoral coordination of investments in R&I.

- **positive effects on growth, trade and investment flows, as well as on quality jobs and international mobility for researchers in the ERA** - expected to achieve an estimated average GDP increase *of 0.08% to 0.19% over 25 years* (each euro invested can bring a return of up to 11 EUR of GDP in the same period) thus directly creating up to *100,000 jobs*.

- **significant impact on society and the environment** - transforming results into new products, services and processes, aiming to achieve political goals, but also social and eco-innovative priorities.

1.4. BASIC PROGRAMME CHARACTERISTICS

The programme's main features are:

- **Open to the world** - International cooperation and partnerships with third countries and other international partners are crucial to leverage the highest quality knowledge and expertise around the world, to achieve and use a critical level of resources to address global societal challenges,

- **Gender Equality** - insists on gender equality in the issue and importance of gender equality in research. The novelty is the obligation to submit a Gender Equality Plan for all public institutions in the application phase as of 2022,

- **Open Science and Open Access** – for more efficient dissemination and exploitation of research and innovation results generated in publicly funded projects such as EU framework programmes, so that science and research are as transparent and open as possible, global, creative, collaborative, and as close to society as possible. As in the previous programme, Horizon Europe has retained GREEN and GOLD Open Access and FAIR principles (FAIR – Findable, Accesible, Interoperable, Reusable data),

- **Simplified rules for participation** – keeping the good practices from the previous programme and introducing new simplifications related primarily to the financial aspects of the project implementation,

- **Synergy with other EU programmes** - seeks to ensure effective and operational synergies with other Union programmes, in particular, to develop more effective science and policy cooperation to address policy needs, as well as to promote faster dissemination and acceptance of R&I results to achieve common goals and areas of action (such as partnership or mission areas),

- **Ethics** - there is a clear need to conduct an ethical evaluation at the conceptual stage of the proposal, not only to respect the legal framework but also to improve the quality of research, implying the application of basic ethical principles and rules in all domains of research,

- **Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)** - The identification of IPR issues should be possible at all stages of project development and implementation, depending on when knowledge of the need to determine the rights has arisen, and the definition of IPR issues is done before the start of the project for known IPR issues. Ownership of the results belongs to the partner that generated that result, while joint ownership of the results may occur if two or more partners participated in the generation of those results.

1.5. PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

The programme is planned in line with the seven-year EU budgetary period, starting on 1 January 2021 and ending on 31 December 2027. The **three-pillar structure** of the Horizon Europe programme is inherited from Horizon 2020. The European Commission said in their communication documents that the new programme is "*evolution, not revolution*".

Figure 1. Horizon Europe structure
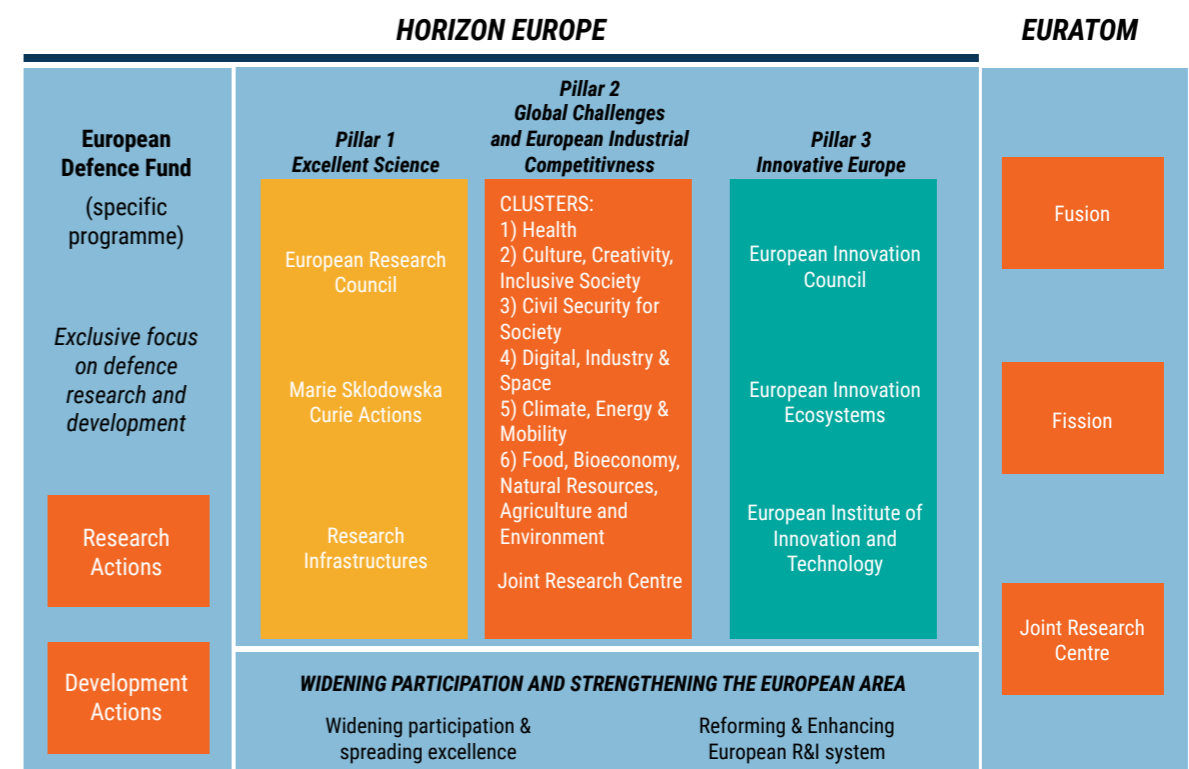
The **Excellent Science pillar** aims to increase the EU's global scientific competitiveness and position Europe above other developed regions. It will support the frontier research projects defined and driven by top researchers themselves through the **European Research Council** (ERC), such it was a case in the previous programme. The most successful programme part of Horizon 2020, **Marie Sklodowska Curie Actions** (MSCA), kept the name and the scope. They will fund fellowships for postdoctoral researchers, doctoral training networks, exchanges of researchers and staff, as well as co-funding actions based on mobility. Real research is not possible without proper **research infrastructure** and the EC decided to further invest in world-class research infrastructures that will be at the disposal to all researchers that need it.

The **Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness pillar** will support research efforts relating to solving societal challenges and reinforcing technological and industrial capacities through selected clusters. The clusters introduced here aim to channel and focus the efforts on resolving societal challenges. This pillar also includes activities pursued by the JRC which supports EU and national policymakers with independent scientific evidence and technical support.

The **Innovative Europe pillar** aims to make Europe a leader in market-creating innovation with the actions from the European Innovation Council (EIC). The aim is to develop and strengthen the overall European innovation ecosystem through the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) which fosters the integration of the knowledge triangle of education, research and innovation. This pillar is of utmost importance for SMEs as the funding for them is allocated here through different parts of EIC such as EIC Pathfinder, EIC Acceleration and EIC Transition.

The **part Widening Participation and Strengthening the European Research Area** intends to increase support to the EU Member States in their efforts to make the most of their national research and innovation potential on one side. On the other side, this part of the programme will continue to fund actions as Twinning, Teaming and ERA Chair enabling widening economies to bridge the gap and further develop their research potential

European Defence Fund and EURATOM will be complementary parts of the Horizon Europe programme and will find specific research and development actions that deal with sensitive data. Therefore, they are placed outsidethe main programme, but will have some interaction with it – e.g. MSCA mobility actions will be able now to accept mobility of researchers dealing with nuclear science topics and their funds will be secured from the EURATOM programme, but the administration will go through the MSCA.

1.6. KEY NOVELTIES

The Commission considered the Horizon Europe programme to 'evolve' from the previous programme and therefore made a list of key novelties, some of which have already been mentioned.

- **EIC** is established as a support for potential breakthrough and disruptive innovations with scale-up potential that may be too risky for private investors.

- **Five EU Missions** are novelty presenting sets of measures to achieve bold, inspirational and measurable goals within a set timeframe.

- **New approach to partnerships** that are now objective-driven and more ambitious partnerships with industry supporting EU policy objectives from relevant strategies.

- **Open Science policy** intends to become the modus operandi for all researchers with the potential to increase the quality, efficiency and impact of research and innovation that will lead to greater responsiveness to societal challenges.

- **Extended association possibilities** will allow more third countries or economies to become associated and use the benefits of full participation in the programme.

- **Spreading excellence** aims to decrease the gap between widening economies and scientifically advanced MS/AC. As the result of this effort the ERA shall be stronger and will facilitate Europe's path to the leadership position in research and innovation.

- The **impact-driven design** of Horizon Europe aims at maximisation of the effects of the R&I investment using new terms such as '*Destinations*' that are describing the expected impacts identified in different EU strategies, and '*topics*', describing the related expected outcomes essential for having the impacts.

- **Security Appraisal Procedure** is a novelty in the evaluation system ensuring application of security rules and conformity with any relevant Union and national law related to protected information. The specific security-related obligations are introduced in the Model Grant Agreement (Article 13 and Annex 5).

- **'Do No Significant Harm' principle (DNSH)** has been introduced in European Green Deal but also other relevant EU regulations. The DNSH principle is included in the cluster work programmes having in mind their importance for the environmental outcomes and impacts.

- **Innovation procurement** is used to boost the development and adoption of innovative solutions that can improve the quality and efficiency of addressing societal challenges and the creation of new business opportunities for companies in Europe, as well as to bring innovations to the market.

According to the **official Rules for participation (COM(2018) 435 final, as of 7.6.2018.), the main simplification features set out** are:

- **Continuity** in the simplification measures applied to Horizon 2020 which were appreciated by participants, such as the three-pillar programme structure, the simple funding model and the Funding and Tender Portal;

- **Simplification of the funding landscape**: the approach to partnership, for example, is streamlined, with only three types and a clear set of criteria for their selection and implementation, to ensure that they contribute to the general and specific objectives of Horizon Europe;

- **Further simplification of the current real cost reimbursement system**, in particular as regards personnel costs;

- **Broader acceptance of *beneficiaries*' usual accounting practice**, in particular for internal invoicing and services which would also cover the equivalent to Horizon 2020 large research infrastructures;
- **Increased use of simplified cost options**, as provided for by the new Financial Regulation, in particular of lump-sum project funding in appropriate areas and taking account of the lessons from the pilot under Horizon 2020;
- **An increased cross-reliance on audits to reduce the audit burden** for beneficiaries taking part in several Union funding programmes;
- **Extending the Participants' Guarantee Fund** (renamed Mutual Insurance Mechanism) to beneficiaries of any directly managed Union programme, and for actions not covered by the fund under Horizon 2020 (Article 185 Initiatives);
- An acceptance of **the seal of excellence**, for which proposals may receive support from the European Regional Development Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Social Fund+ or the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development;
- Maintaining **key elements of the proposal evaluation and selection process** throughout all parts of Horizon Europe. A broader range of expertise will however be sought in function of the scope of the calls, including expertise from user groups and civil society organisations. The novelty of the mission-based approach will be to go from assessing excellence and impact only at the level of individual proposals to also assessing how excellent proposals fit together as a portfolio. While the main principles are spelled out in advance in the rules, the work programmes will provide further details on the application of the award criteria depending on the objectives of the calls and instruments (e.g. the aspects to be taken into account in the evaluation procedures).

1.7. THE BUDGET

The budget of the Horizon Europe programme was adopted after reasonably difficult and intensive discussions and dialogues at all relevant levels of the EU mechanism. The MS decided to support the proposal of the EC with a **total amount of 95.5 billion EUR, including 5.4 billion EUR from the budget of '*Next Generation Europe*'** an EU programme for recovery from COVID-19 crisis.

As expected, the majority of funding will go for resolving issues stipulated in Pilar II – Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness, in the amount of 53.5 billion EUR. Following the experiences and success from the previous programme, Excellent Science will receive 25 billion EUR and support to Innovative Europe pillar will be close to 14 billion EUR. For Widening participation and strengthening the ERA the Commission proposed 3.4 billion EUR. The detailed budget breakdown is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Horizon Europe budget breakdown

	M EUR	M EUR
EXCELLENT SCIENCE		25011
European Research Council	16004	
Marie Sklodowska Curie Actions	6602	
Research Infrastructure	2406	
GLOBAL CHALLENGES AND EUROPEAN INDUSTRIAL COMPETITIVENESS		53516
Health	8246	
Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society	2280	
Civil Security for Society	1596	
Digital, Industry and Space	15349	
Climate, Energy and Mobility	15123	
Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment	8952	
JRC (non-nuclear direct actions)	1970	
INNOVATIVE EUROPE		13597
European Innovation Council	10105	
European Innovation Ecosystem	527	
European Institute of Innovation and Technology	2965	
WIDENING PARTICIPATION AND STRENGTHENING THE ERA		3393
Widening participation and spreading excellence	2955	
Reforming and Enhancing the European R&I system	438	

CHAPTER 2

MISSIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Horizon Europe uses a variety of instruments and approaches to target investment in research and innovation more effectively to maximise the impact of public investment in achieving global challenges and European policy goals. Among the tools for implementing the programme are missions and partnerships, with missions being a completely new approach, while the partnership approach has undergone a major reform based on the experience of Horizon 2020.

2.1. EU MISSIONS

EU missions are a **way of tackling major and significant societal challenges** such as combating cancer, adapting to climate change, protecting the oceans and waters, living in greener cities and ensuring soil and food health. Each mission will have a **specific timeframe and budget according to the degree and severity of the challenge**. Their task will be to find solutions that will overcome the existing level of research and innovation and thus initiate innovation in the sectors to find effective solutions to problems. Missions will **play a key role in achieving EU priorities**, such as the European Green Agreement and the European Cancer Plan. At the global level, missions are a major contribution to meeting the UN's sustainable development goals.

To achieve this mode of cooperation, the EC formed **five committees** for five missions that will help in determining, designing and conducting missions for the Horizon Europe programme. The committees were formed based on an open call for expression of interest for participation in the work of the committee, and each mission committee **consists of 15 eminent** experts in the field of innovation, research, policy making, civil society and relevant organisations.

Each mission area also has a **Mission Assembly** that brings together a large number of high-level experts whose task is to provide additional ideas, knowledge and expertise that will be able to actively contribute to the success of the missions. The European Commission wants to create Horizon Europe missions and initiatives together with citizens and actors through Internet discussions and surveys on social media, civic and specialised conferences to discuss mission focuses, and to participate in a range of other activities during mission development and evolution.

As mentioned, five missions have been foreseen in total:

1. **Adaptation to Climate Change** - support at least 150 European regions and communities to become climate resilient by 2030.

2. **Cancer** - improving the lives of more than 3 million people by 2030 through prevention, cure and for those affected by cancer including their families, to live longer and better

3. **Climate-neutral and Smart Cities** - deliver 100 climate-neutral and smart cities by 2030 and to ensure that these cities act as experimentation and innovation hubs to enable all European cities to follow suit by 2050

4. **Restore our Oceans and Waters** - protecting 30% of the EU's sea area as well as restoring marine eco-systems and 25,000 km of free-flowing rivers, prevent and eliminate

pollution by reducing plastic litter at sea, nutrient losses and use of chemical pesticides by 50% and make the blue economy climate-neutral and circular with net-zero maritime emissions

5. **Healthy Soil and Food** - to protect and restore soils in Europe and beyond contributing to Green Deal targets relating to sustainable farming, climate resilience, biodiversity and zero-pollution so that future generations inherit clean, productive and resilient soils. (A Soil Deal for Europe: 100 living labs and lighthouses to lead the transition towards healthy soils)

2.2. EU PARTNERSHIPS

European Partnerships are undertakings committed to jointly (the EU, private and public partners) support the development and implementation of R&I programmes. European Partnerships help to avoid the duplication of investments by bringing private and public partners together, and contribute to reduction of the fragmentation of R&I landscape. The **key features** of European Partnerships are:

- simplicity of partnership architecture and relevant tools,
- coherent approach throughout the life cycle,
- strategic orientation to key social challenges.

There are 3 types of European Partnerships organisations:

1. **Co-Programmed European Partnerships** - are realised based on a memorandum of understanding and/or a contractual arrangement between the EC and private and/or public partners stating the objectives of the partnership, the obligations of all parties involved (institutions) for financial and/or in-kind contributions, key performance indicators and effects, the results to be delivered and defines the dynamics and methods of reporting. Implementation runs first and foremost through the Horizon Europe work programmes and their calls for proposals. The grants resulting from these calls are fully funded by Horizon Europe.

2. **Co-funded European Partnerships using a programme co-fund action** - is realised based on a grant agreement between the EC and a consortium of partners, where partnerships involving EU MS, with research funders and other public authorities at the core of the consortium.

3. **Institutionalised European Partnerships** - are partnerships in the field of research and innovation between the Union, MS and/or industry. These partnerships require legislative proposals from the EC and are based on a Council Regulation (Article 187) or a Decision by the European Parliament and Council (Article 185). They are implemented by dedicated structures created for that purpose. Institutionalised partnerships will only be implemented where other parts of the Horizon Europe programme, including other types of partnership, would not achieve the desired objectives or expected impacts. EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) are also institutionalised partnerships.

Most of the European Partnerships are established under the following thematic clusters of the "*Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness*" pillar of Horizon Europe:

- Cluster 1 – Health,
- Cluster 4 – Digital, industry and space,
- Cluster 5 – Climate, energy and mobility,
- Cluster 6 – Food, bioeconomy, natural resources, agriculture and environment.

The Commission selected **49 candidate partnerships**, as follows:

- **11 Institutionalised partnerships** (10 based on Article 187 (Single Basic Act and EuroHPC proposal) and one on Article 185 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)),
- **9 EIT-Knowledge and Innovation Communities**,
- **12 co-programmed partnerships**, based on a Memorandum of Understanding, and
- **17 co-funded partnerships**, based on programme co-fund actions.

CHAPTER 3

RULES FOR PARTICIPATION

3.1 Eligible participant institutions

As a general principle, any formally established, legal entity, regardless of its place of establishment, or international organisation is allowed to participate in this Programme. Entities are eligible for funding if they are established in a Member State or economy associated to the Programme.

Entities shall be part of a **consortium that shall include at least three independent legal entities each established in a different MS or AC and with at least one of them established in a MS**, unless:

    (a) the work programme provides otherwise if justified;

    (b) the action is one referred to ERC, EIC, MSCA and so on.

As a general rule, the entities established in non-associated third countries should bear the cost of their participation. **Low to middle income third non-associated countries** are eligible for funding and this should be cross-checked with the Work programme eligibility rules. Industrially advanced third countries **could be eligible for funding** in an action if:

- the third country is **identified in the work programme** adopted by the Commission; or

- the Commission or funding body consider that its participation is **essential for the implementation** of the action.

Affiliated entities are eligible for funding in an action if they are established in a MS/AC, or in a third country identified in the work programme adopted by the Commission.

Types of participants in the projects:

-     Beneficiaries,

-     Affiliated Entities, and

-     Associated Partners.

3.2 Types of action

The Programme has several types of actions depending on their purpose and goals to be achieved. Table 2 shows the funding rates for different types.

Research and Innovation Action (RIA)

This is the most common action in the Programme. The projects written for this type of action should aim to establish new knowledge or to explore the feasibility of a new or improved technology, product, process, service, or solution. For this action type, there is no co-funding and the EC is paying 100% of eligible costs.

Innovation Action (IA)

Another very frequent type of action is Innovation Action. This type of action aims to **produce plans and arrangements or designs for new, altered or improved products, processes or services**. Usually, these actions foresee that the innovation has to have a certain level of TRL (TRL – Technology Readiness Level, see Annex III) in the application phase and also to result in the TRL that is either close-to-the-market or deployed at the market. The funding rate for non-commercial organisations (such as public universities and public research centres) is 100%. In the case of for-profit companies and organisations, the EC funds 70% of eligible costs, while the organisation should co-fund the remaining 30%.

Coordination and Support Action (CSA)

These are the 'easiest to participate' actions in the Programme as they do not require research tasks to be done. This **excludes R&I activities**, except for the '*Widening participation and spreading excellence*' part. CSA Activities **should contribute to the objectives** of the Horizon Europe Programme and EU policy in the relevant domain of the action.

Training and mobility actions (TMA)

These actions aim to **improve the skills, knowledge and career prospects of researchers based on mobility** between economies and, if relevant, between sectors or disciplines. (MSCA, ERC). The funding rate of eligible costs is 100%.

Innovation and market deployment actions (IMDA)

Activities that embed an **innovation action** and other activities necessary **to deploy an innovation on the market**. (EIC) The funding rate is the same as for Innovation Actions – 100% for non-profit and 70% for for-profit organisations.

Table 2. Funding rates for different types of actions

Type of Action	Funding rate
Research and innovation action	100%
Innovation action	70% (except for non-profit legal entities, where a rate of up to 100% applies)
Coordination and support action	100%
Programme co-fund action	Between 30% and 70%
Innovation and market deployment	70% (except for non-profit legal entities, where a rate of up to 100% applies)
Training and mobility action	100%
Pre-commercial procurement action	100%
Public procurement of innovative solutions action	50%

Other actions

There are some other types of actions that are less frequently used than those previously mentioned.

These are:

- **Programme co-fund actions** - A **programme of activities established or implemented by legal entities managing or funding R&I programmes**, other than EU funding bodies. The funding rate can vary from 30% to 70%.
- **Pre-commercial procurement actions** (PCP) - Activities that aim to help a buyers' group **to strengthen the public procurement of research**, development, validation and, possibly, the first deployment of new solutions. The funding rate is 100%.
- **Public procurement of innovative solutions actions** (PPI) - Activities that aim to strengthen the ability of a buyers' group **to deploy innovative solutions early**. The funding rate is 50%.

3.3 Eligible costs

Eligible activities are described in call conditions in relevant Work programme. Activities must focus on civil applications and must not:

- aim at human cloning for reproductive purposes;
- intend to modify the genetic heritage of human beings which could make such changes heritable (except for research relating to cancer treatment of the gonads, which may be financed);
- intend to create human embryos solely for research, or for stem cell procurement, including by means of somatic cell nuclear transfer;
- lead to the destruction of human embryos.

To be eligible, the costs must be:

- **Timely** - actually incurred by the beneficiary during the runtime of the project, starting with the date on Grant agreement and ending on the last day of the project,
- **Budgeted** - indicated in the estimated budget,
- **Planned** - in connection with the action as described in the project description,
- **Identified, verified and recorded** - by the beneficiaries' accounts as in regular accounting practice,
- **Legal** - comply with applicable national law on taxes, labour and social security,
- **Reasonable and justified**.

Direct eligible costs are directly linked to the implementation of the project activities and without them, implementation is not possible.

Personnel costs are direct eligible costs for employees or equivalent that worked in the action (persons working for the beneficiary **based on an employment contract or equivalent appointing act**). They **must be declared as actual personnel costs** or unit costs and may include: fixed salary, complements (fixed and variable based on internal accounting rules), taxes and contributions linked to reimbursement. In other words, personnel costs are calculated in gross amount with all contributions included. Personnel costs are calculated as 'daily rate' multiplied by the number of days worked on the project.

Subcontracting should be planned in the application phase and realised under the regular tender process during the project implementation. These costs cover subcontracted action tasks through service contracts for parts of the project that are not implemented by the beneficiary itself. The task can be given to the subcontractor only if the consortium does not have the capacity to do it and that action is necessary for the project. Subcontracting must comply with the applicable national laws on public procurement and must be done on the basis of 'best value for money'. These costs are declared as actual costs.

Purchase costs consist of three different cost types:

- **Travel** costs (based on invoices and based on the costs incurred and **in line with the beneficiary's usual practice** on travel),
- **Equipment** costs (Should be declared as actual costs and based on the depreciation of the equipment not exceeding the purchase price. Cost of renting or leasing can be eligible as well as the purchase **of equipment, infrastructure or other assets that may be declared as full capitalised costs**,
- **Other** goods, works and services (all services that are not an essential part of activities but are directly needed for implementation, e.g. IPR costs, consumables, supplies, etc. and must be declared as actual costs).

Indirect eligible costs are not directly linked to the project activities but complement what direct costs are not covering. Still, they must be in relation to the project activities to be eligible. Examples of such costs are rent of premises for project implementation, electricity, heating, small office equipment, phone costs, postage, printing and copy costs (but not printing of dissemination materials) and some administrative costs. For this, **the Programme dedicates 25% of total direct eligible fixed costs. Indirect costs are not taking into consideration the Subcontracting costs**.

The programme includes the following **types of costs that are not fixed:**

Actual costs, **Unit** costs, **Flat-rate** costs, and **Lump-sum**.

Actual costs must be:

- actually incurred by the beneficiary;
- incurred during the project (exception of costs relating to the submission of the final periodic report);
- declared under one of the budget categories;
- incurred in connection with the action and necessary for its implementation;
- identifiable and verifiable;
- comply with the applicable national law on taxes, labour and social security;
- must be reasonable, justified and comply with the principle of sound financial management (cost benefits and efficiency).

Unit cost must be:

- declared under one of the budget categories;
- actually used or produced by the beneficiary;
- be necessary for the implementation of the action;
- the number of units must be identifiable and verifiable.

Flat-rate cost must be:

- declared under one of the budget categories;
- costs or contributions to which the flat-rate is applied must be eligible and related to the project period;
- must be identifiable and verifiable.

Lump-sum costs must be:

- declared under one of the budget categories;
- the work must be properly implemented by the beneficiary following Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement.
- the deliverables/outputs must be achieved in the period of project duration.

The budgeting of the project activities is rather simple and based on person-months of work on the project (Table 2. and Figure 2.).

Table 3. Sample budget calculation

Eligible costs (per budget category)					EU Contribution		
(A) Direct personnel costs	(B) Other direct costs	(C) Direct costs of sub-contracting	(F) Indirect costs	(H) Total estimated eligible costs	(I) Reimbursement rate (%)	(J) Maximum EU Contribution	(K) Requested EU Contribution
Actual	Actual	Actual	=0,25* (A+B)	=A+B+C+F	100%	(=H*I)	
10.000	2.000	500	3.000	15.500	15.500	15.500	15.500

Figure 2. Different budget categories that are completed online

No	Participant	Country	(A) Direct personnel costs/€	(B) Other direct costs/€	(C) Direct costs of subcontracting/€	(D) Direct costs of providing financial support to third parties/€	(E) Costs of inkind contributions not used on the beneficiary's premises/€	(F) Indirect Costs/€ =0,25* (A+B-E)	(G) Special unit costs covering direct & indirect costs/€	(H) Total estimated eligible costs/€ =A+B+C+ D+F+G	(I) Reimbursement rate (%)	(J) Max. EU Contribution/€	(K) Requested EU Contribution/€
1			0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0	0.00	100	0.00	0.00
	Total		0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0	0.00		0.00	0.00

(A) Personnel Costs

(C) Subcontracts

(F) Indirect Cost

(B) Travel, Consumables, Depreciation of Equipment, Goods Works and Services, In-kind-contributions of third parties etc.

(G) Special Unit Costs (EeB)

(E) In-kind contributions of third parties not on the premises of the beneficiary

3.4 Ineligible costs

Ineligible costs are all costs not defined previously under the direct eligible costs. Here is a non-exhaustive list of ineligible costs:

Costs or contributions that do not comply with the conditions set out above (Article 6.1 and 6.2), in particular:

- Costs related to return on capital and dividends paid by a beneficiary,
- Debt and debt service charges,
- Provisions for future losses or debts,
- Interest owed,
- Currency exchange losses,
- Bank costs charged by the beneficiary's bank for transfers from the granting authority,
- Excessive or reckless expenditure,
- Deductible or refundable VAT (including VAT paid by public bodies acting as a public authority),
- Costs incurred or contributions for activities implemented during Grant Agreement suspension,
- Costs or contributions declared under other EU grants (exception possible),
- Costs or contributions for staff of a national (or regional/local) administration, for activities that are part of the administration's normal activities (i.e. not undertaken only because of the grant),

- Costs or contributions (especially travel and subsistence) for staff or representatives of EU institutions, bodies or agencies.

If you have any doubts about the eligibility of costs, consult your Legal and Financial NCP.

3.5 Mutual Insurance Mechanism (MIM)

The Mutual Insurance Mechanism (MIM) in Horizon Europe is replacing the Guarantee Fund in H2020. Similar to the Guarantee Fund, MIM can vary **between 5% and 8% - from case to case**. This amount will be defined at the Grant Agreement preparation and, as in H2020, the **amount will be deducted from the prefinancing and will be sent to the MIM**.

Each beneficiary's financial liability is in principle limited to its own debt and undue amounts paid for costs declared by its affiliated entities. It is only for the contribution to the MIM that financial responsibility is shared among beneficiaries.

Upon the end of the project and acceptance of the final report, this amount will be reimbursed with the closing payment.

CHAPTER 4

SUBMISSION PROCESS

4.1. Actions to be completed before submission

> **!**
> To be able to submit a proposal, you must first register on the Portal for an **EU Login account**.

Go to the Funding & Tenders Portal (F&T Portal):

On top right corner you will find button named 'Register' (Figure 2) and click on it.

**Figure 3. Registration button on Funding and Tender portal**

The **EU Login – Create an Account** screen will show up, and it is easy to enter the requested data for registration on the pop-up screen. The registration process is presented in Figure 3.

Read the privacy statement by clicking on the link. If you agree with it, close the privacy statement window and tick the privacy statement box acceptance under the '**Enter the code**' field, and then click on '**Create an account**' button.

If you fail to provide the required information in any of the fields, or entered a wrong captcha code, the system will prompt you to go back and correct the errors before you can sign up. Upon that, the message displays confirming the creation of the account.

Figure 4. The process of registration
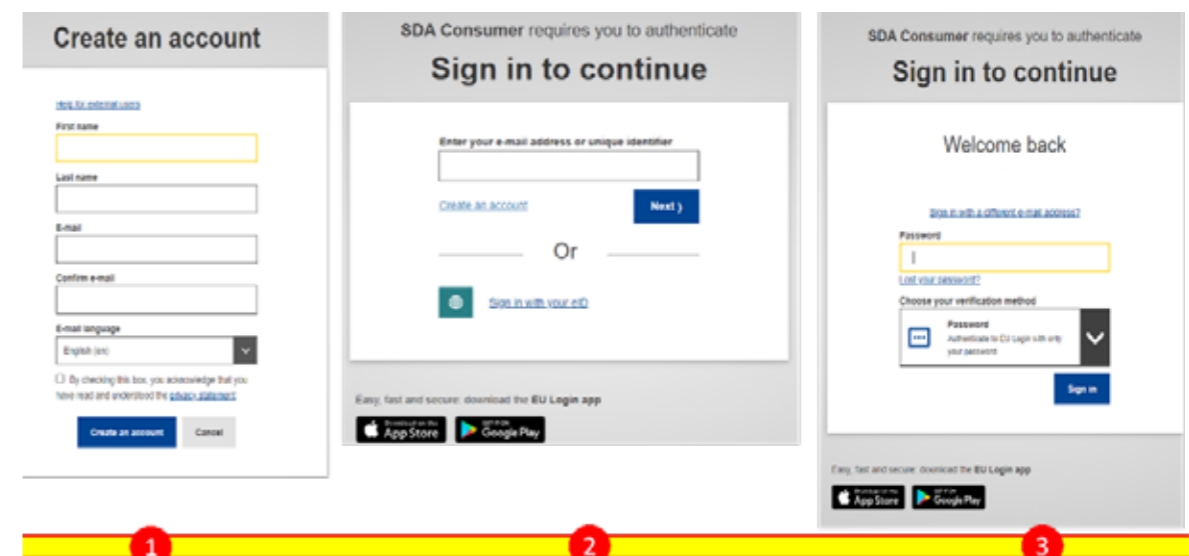
The system will send a confirmation email to the email address you specified in the sign-up form with the activation link provided to activate your account. You have a maximum of 24 hrs, starting from the time the message was sent, to click (or copy in browser) on the given link to create a password for the account.

Following the instructions on the screen to create a password, a message on the screen will confirm that the password has been changed.

Click on '**Proceed to log in automatically to your new account**' or go back to the Funding &Tenders portal and click on '**Login**' button and log to the system.

> **!** **Make sure all participants are registered (PIC)**

All participants (Beneficiaries, Affiliated Entities and Associated Partners) must be registered in the Participant Register and have their **9-digit Participant Identification Code (PIC)**. The Coordinator of the project has to be identified with PIC number of institution at Step 3 of the Submission wizard, while other participants are introduced at Step 4.

Find a call

The EC publishes calls for proposals on the Funding & Tenders Portal (Portal) only. The calls can be found using different functionalities of the portal:

- **search from the portal's home page** by entering different keywords that characterise best your field of interest, and then refine the results with the help of further filters, or

- **search by selecting one of the EU funding programmes** listed on the home page, **and then navigate** via the quick links to the calls for proposals of a specific programme.

Figure 5. "Search funding and tenders" functionality of the Portal
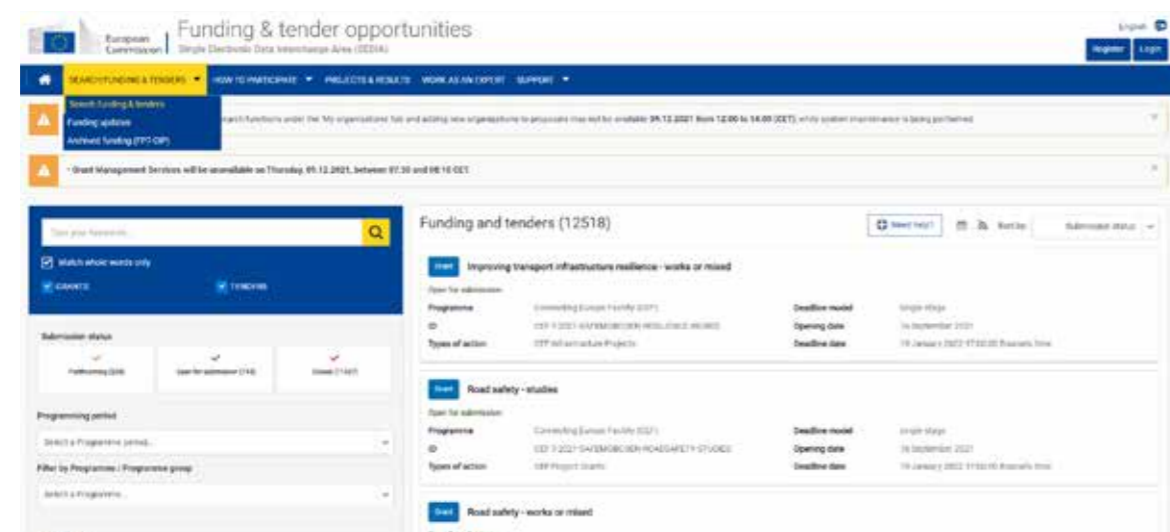
After implementing filters, a list of the calls matching your criteria for selection will appear on the right hand side of the screen as shown in Figure 5 in case of grants for postdoctoral research mobility.

Figure 6. Example of how to find a MSCA call for postdoc funding
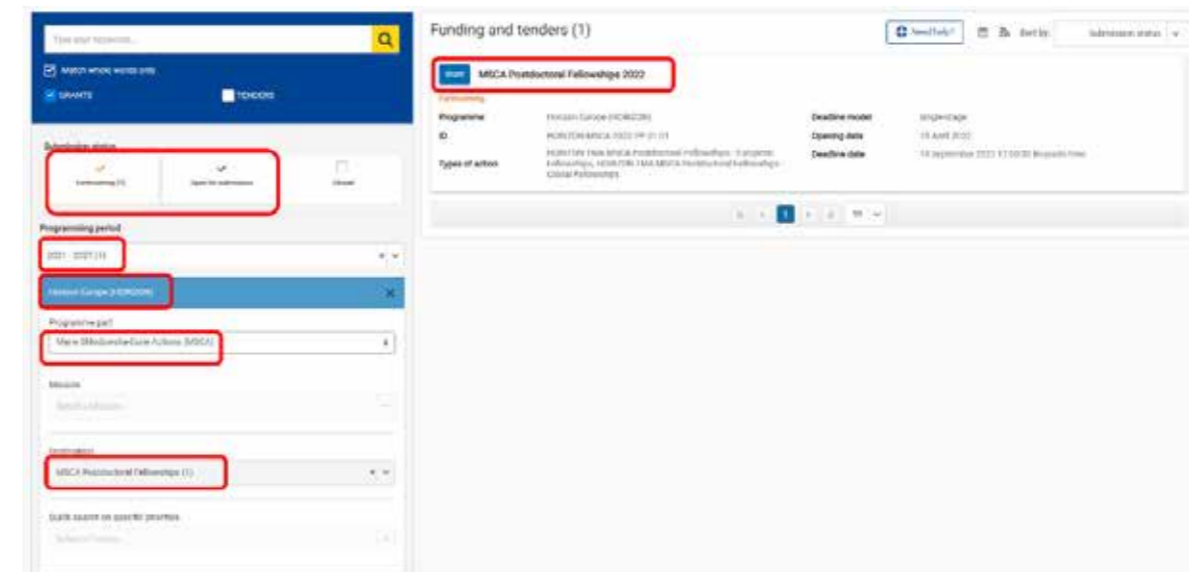
Simply click on te title of the call and new screen with call details will appear as in Figure 6.

Figure 7. Elements of the call page with all necessary details for participation
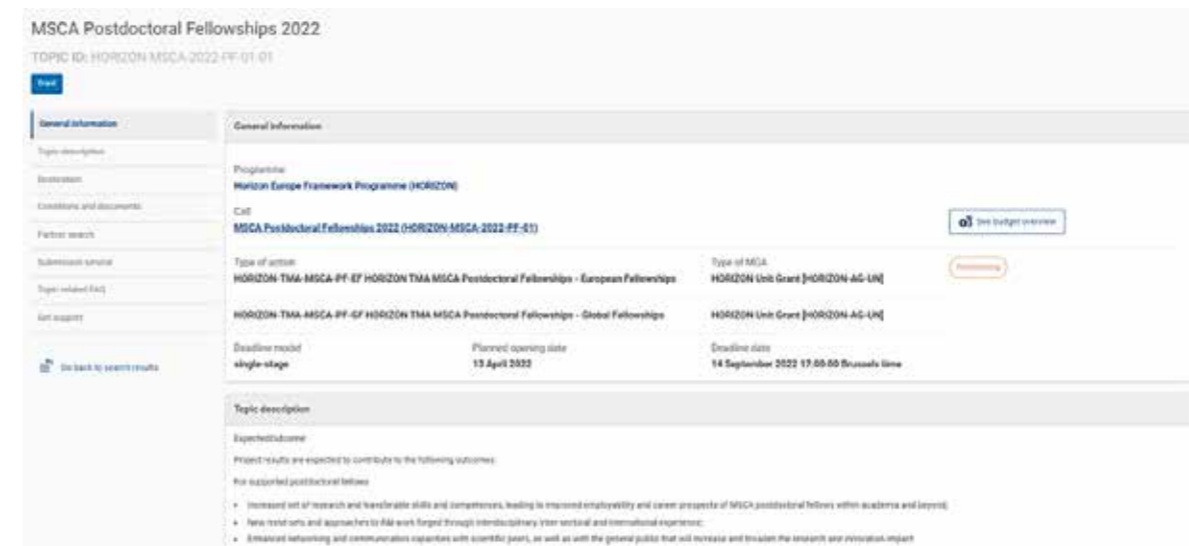
Here we should pay attention to the left menu consisting of 8 tabs for navigating the call page.

In "**General Information**" you can read important information on call deadlines, action type, budget, etc.

In "**Topic Description**" you can read about the expected outcomes that your project should contribute to as well as other relevant details.

In "**Destination**" you can find out what exactly your project should do and what are the expected impacts of your project.

In "**Topic conditions and documents**" you can find links to documents relevant for planning, preparing and implementing your project.

Section "**Partner search**" is a part of the call page where you can see which organisations/ institutions are offering or asking to join you in preparation and application of the proposal. Organisations listed here are interested exclusively in that call. You can contact the relevant person in the organisation and start negotiations on joint work. Also, your organisation can post partner search request here too.

Section "**Submission service**" is the place where your application process starts. Selecting and clicking on desired action, you are leaving the Portal and entering another EC service for submission of the applications. For this, you will be asked to log-in if not already.

In "**Topic related FAQ**" you can read questions and answers collected by the REA (Research Executive Agency) employees in charge of the call, as well as the answers to these most common questions without the need to contact REA.

Last section is "**Get support**" where you can find links to different documents that can additionally help you with participation in the programme.

Find a partner

There are two ways you can search for partners using functionalities of the Funding and Tender Portal. First one, and easiest for filtering, is when you already visit call page of interest. There you go to the "**Partner search**" section to find potential partner (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Partner search functionality at the call page
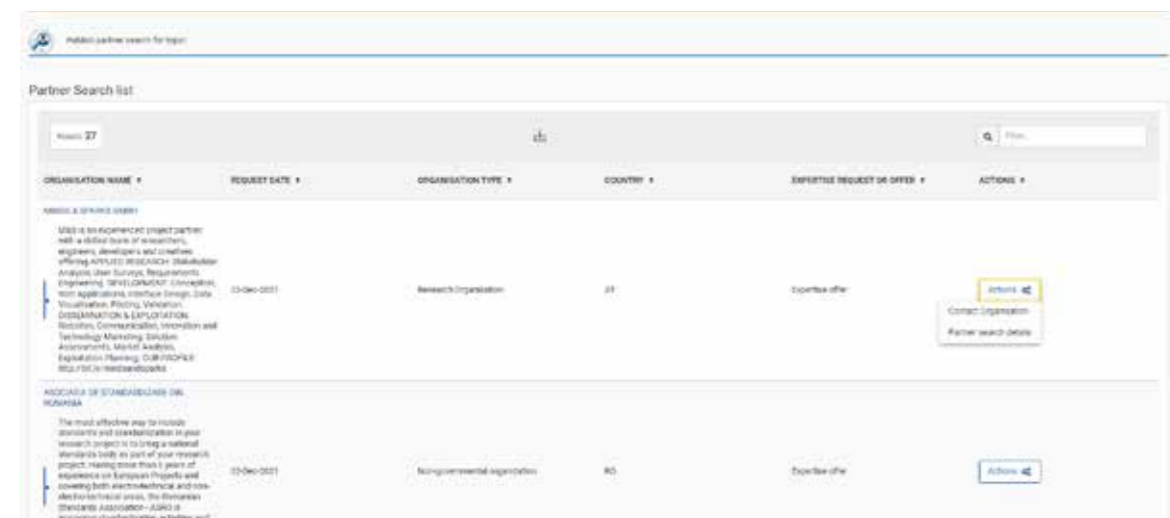
The organisations are listed there and on the right hand side of the line of the selected organisation there is a button '**Actions**'. If you click on it, the options '**Contact organisation**' and '**Partner Search Details**' will appear. Under '**Partner Search Details**' you can see more details about the organisation you want to contact such as the number of projects, etc. Clicking on '**Contact organisation**' will open internal e-mailing system and for this functionality you have to be logged in.

The other option is to start from the Funding and Tender Portal main menu, clicking on '**How to participate**' and then on '**Partners search**' as shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9. "Partner search" facility from the main menu line
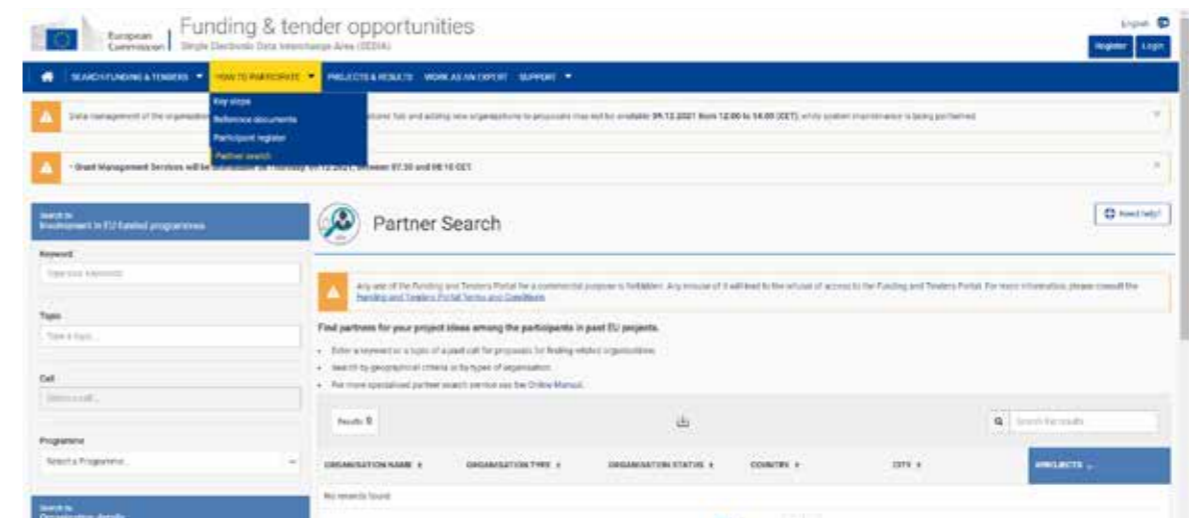
Using the available filters, you are now searching among all organisations and institutions that registered an interest in participation.

4.2. Submission steps

Click on '**Login**' and enter your registration details (email and password as explained in section 4.1).

4.2.1. Step 2 – Loging in and finding a call

After successful login, navigate to call page and to section '**Submission service**'. Select the action you want to apply and click on button '**Confirm**' (Figure 10). From this point on, you have to be registered and logged in.

Figure 10. Step 2 of the application process
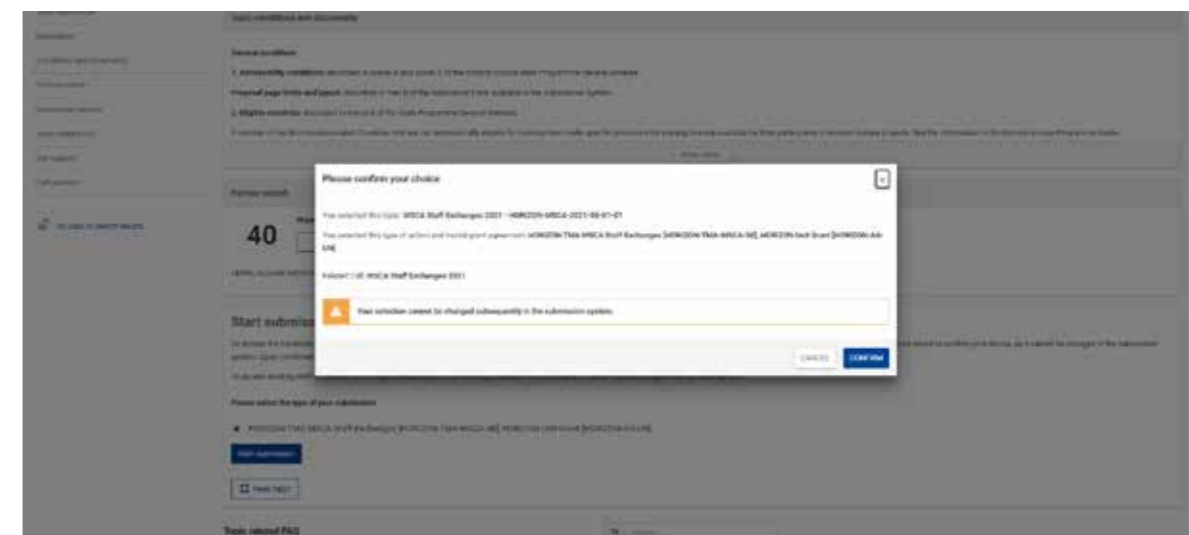
4.2.2. Step 3 – Creating a proposal

Figure 11. Step 3 of the application process

If successful, screen as shown in Figure 10. will appear. Here you can select your organisation (either inserting PIC or selecting from the list), insert your role in the project, provide title, summary and keywords (in case you are coordinator), etc. as requested on the screen. In the left-hand part of the screen, you can see the '**Call data**' and click on '**Support and Helpdesk**' links. This support is directly linked to the process of submission of the application and there are '**Online manual**' with general explanations and '**IT How to**' for more technical explanations. However, if you have some technical problems you can contact '**IT Helpdesk**'. Prior to contacting helpdesk, read '**FAQ**' as the answer can be already there.

Very important is to download Part B templates from the left-hand side menu. There you will download a compressed file with all templates for the given call.

Click on '**Save and go to next step**' and if successful, new pop-up window will appear where you have to mark option starting with '**I agree…**'.

4.2.3. Step 4 – Participants

In this section the participating organisations are inserted by the coordinator. In order to do this, the coordinator needs only to have PIC numbers of the organisations and contact details of persons for the project. (Figure 12) The participants are added one-by-one clicking on '**Add partners**'.

Figure 12. Step 4 of the application process
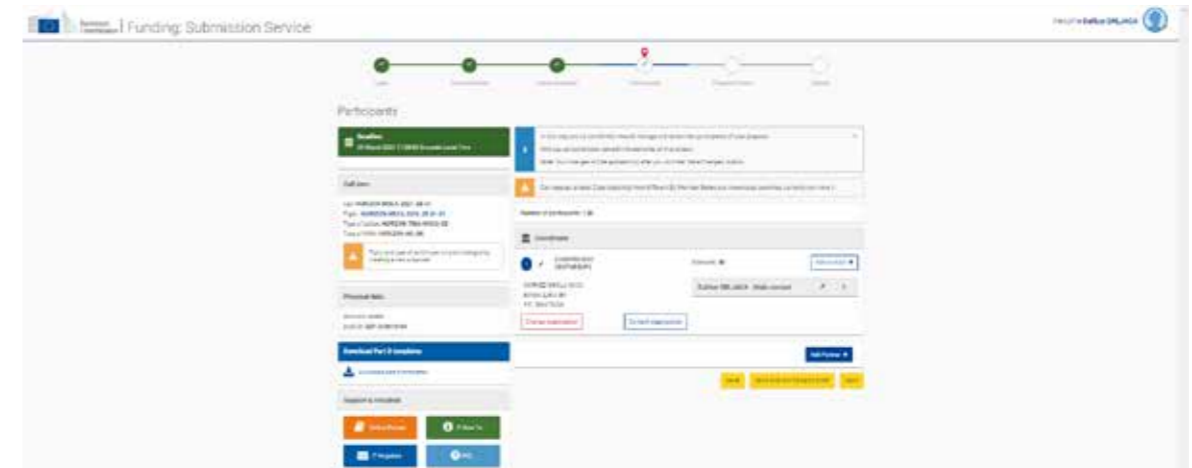
4.2.5. Step 5 – Proposal forms upload

If successful, your next step will be to upload documents prepared with your partners. In the first section, you can edit Part A of the application form that was generated partially in Step 3. Here you will be able to edit the form and enter the budget of the project.

In section '**Part B and Annexes**' there is only a field for uploading prepared documents and it is simple procedure as attaching the document to an email. The list of uploaded files will appear below. (Figure 13)

Figure 13. Steps 5 and 6 are completed on this form
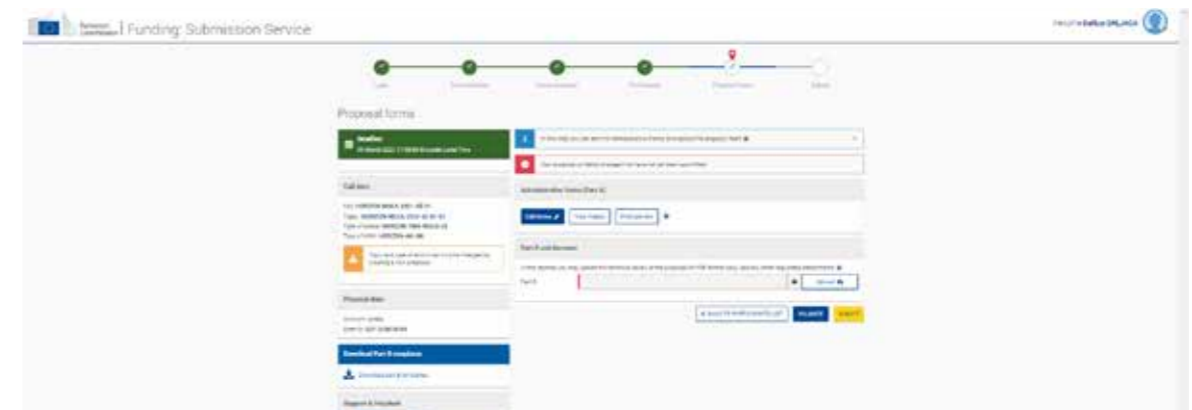
4.2.6. Step 6 - Submission

At the same place, you can revise all elements of application and submission process before clicking on '**Submit**' button. The recommendation is to click on '**Validate**' button and the system will check for the potential problems or missing documents.

Clicking on '**Submit**' button you will initiate submission of documents as your final version. Before clicking on '**Submit**' you can upload different versions of the documents, make corrections and upload again, or change the partner, etc. However, the last version that was in the system on the closing of the call will be considered as submission.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION PROCESS

After the successful submission of the project proposal, it is now on the REA and EC to perform evaluation process and to grant the Grant Agreement to successful participants. The rules for evaluation have been slightly changed in order to increase success rate and to simplify the whole process.

As in Horizon 2020, the **evaluation process may take maximum 5 months following the date of the deadline for submission of proposals**.

5.1 Admissibility and eligibility

Admissibility is the administrative check performed by the REA upon deadline for receipt of the applications. Applications must be **submitted before the call deadline, electronically** via the Funding & Tenders Portal. Applications must be **complete, readable, accessible and printable, and include a plan for the exploitation and dissemination of results**, unless provided otherwise in the specific call conditions. Incomplete applications will not be evaluated. For each call, there is a pack of templates for application and other relevant documents (such as Hosting institution declaration, Researchers declaration, etc). Only templates downloaded in Step 3 window are eligible and you must respect instructions for completing the application from the technical aspect (font type, font size, margins, etc). The best advice is – do not alter anything in the application form – just type the proposal in.

As admissibility condition, the number of pages in proposal is limited and all pages above the foreseen number will be shaded and disregarded by the evaluators.

The EC and REA have made substantial reduction in **maximum number of pages** as follows:

- RIAs and IAs type of actions: limit for a full application is 45 pages,
- CSAs: limit is 30 pages,
- First stage proposals: limit is 10 pages,
- EIC Pathfinder: limit is 17 pages,
- Exceptions, if any, would be specified in the call text.

Consult your application form for exact number of pages as it may differ from call to call and in different programme parts.

Eligibility is another factor that REA checks in the administrative evaluation of the proposal. The primary goal of eligibility check is to check the structure or composition of the consortium participating in collaborative type of action. For collaborative project, the unified rule is that the consortium must be composed of min. 3 institutions from 3 different EU/MS, where min. 1 institution must be from the MS. Other 2 entities can be established in either MS or AC.

The novelty from 2022 is that REA will check existence of Gender Equality Plans (GEP) for public bodies, research organisations or higher education establishments from MS and AC which must have a GEP, covering minimum process-related requirements. This plan should

exist in a form of a self-declaration and submitted at proposal stage (for all types of participants). Based on self-declaration, GEP will be included in the entity validation process.

5.2 Standard evaluation criteria

Upon administrative check (admissibility and eligibility check), REA is organising the evaluation process that is based on only three main evaluation criteria, such was the case in Horizon2020:

- **Excellence**
- **Impact**
- **Implementation**

The exemption of this rule are the projects evaluated in ERC (ERCEA) where the only criterion is EXCELLENCE.

5.3 Evaluation process

Compared to the previous programmes, in the Horizon Europe Programme the evaluation criteria are simplified in the number of aspect that should be taken into consideration. This ensures that there is no redundancy in the evaluation process and that the same aspect is not evaluated twice.

There is a new approach in evaluation of IMPACT and that is '**Key Impact Pathways**'(KIP). With this the EC intents to strengthen real impact of the projects implemented not only during the implementation but also after the project expires.

The assessment of the management structure is removed from evaluation, and instead of assessment of operational capacities, the quality of applicants is now assessed under IMPLEMENTATION criteria.

Figure 14. Standard evaluation process in Horizon Europe

Standard evaluation process (Figure 14) starts again with the **individual evaluation**, done by minimum three (often five) independent evaluators selected by relevant implementing agency (mainly REA) according to their qualifications. Each evaluator can have more than one project (sometimes more than 10 depending on call) and for each project creates Individual Evaluation Report (IER). This evaluation is usually done remotely.

Novelty in the evaluation process is that IERs are sent to the applicants for reactions. This step is called '**Right-to-React**' and the applicant can react on draft IER. The objective of this step is to increase transparency, to correct any factual or major misunderstandings by experts at an early stage and provide more detailed feedback to applicants. Experts will take applicants' reaction into account before finalising their final assessment.

The drafts are then sent to '**Consensus group**' where the evaluators negotiate the marks for each proposal. **Evaluation Summary Report** (ESR) is prepared.

Proposals are then sent to the relevant **panel** where they are further considered and ranked per panel.

The last step is **finalisation** of the ranking list in accordance with the criteria for representation of different panels and depending on the quality of proposals.

Previous programmes have shown that this evaluation process is not systematically biased. To be more open and transparent in evaluation, another novelty in Horizon Europe is '**Blind evaluation**' that is to be performed in the 1st stage. Blind evaluation is a way to remove any real or perceived effect of such reputational bias that may appear due to the exposed data on applicants. Therefore, the experts in this phase will not be informed about the identity of participants. The work programme will contain also additional admissibility criterion stating that the applicants identity must not be disclosed in the narrative part of the proposal. This process will be piloted in Horizon Europe and will affect only the selected calls.

5.4 Ethics review

Ethics is an integral part of research in all projects, from beginning to end, and ethical compliance is crucial to achieve real research excellence. During the proposal preparation, the applicant is obliged to conduct '**Ethics self-assessment**' with the '**Ethics Issues Table**' which is included in the template. Useful document that can help preparation of self-assessment is 'How to complete your ethics self-assessment'.

If the applicant checked any of 10 listed ethics issues, then it is mandatory to describe the ethical dimension of the proposal and the compliance with ethics principles. This will be done in Part A of the application and if necessary and required in the call text, the applicant should submit additional documents for support.

All proposals are subject to '**Ethics screening**', which is done by two independent ethics external evaluators. The aim of this task is to identify proposals with potential serious or complex ethics issues. Such proposals will undergo a full ethics assessment that is done by another group of ethics experts.

The Ethics Summary Report (EthSR) is created for the given proposal and is part of Grant Agreement. In the implementation phase, the proposals with ethics issues must submit deliverables on this and must comply with the EthSR requirements. All relevant documents must be kept and submitted on request.

Ethical research conduct implies the application of fundamental ethical principles and legislation and adherence to the highest standards of research integrity as described in the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity.

The EU programmes are obliged also to ensure that the classified information (as defined in EC Decision 2015/444) is protected especially for applications that operate in security relevant context. This refers especially to clusters dealing with such information, such as, for example, Civil Security for Society. The checking procedure is called '**Security scrutiny**' and is performed for different EU programmes by the Security Scrutiny Working Group composed of experts from the national security agencies. The Group can issue requirements that are becoming a part of the Grant Agreement and can also impose specific deliverables that have to be submitted during the project implementation. Also, the Group can refuse funding of the proposal if it is too security sensitive.

CHAPTER 6

ROLE OF THE NCPS

6.1. Minimum standards for NCPs

A system of National Contact Points (NCPs) presents a support structure of highly qualified experts aiming to facilitate the participation of organisations and institutions in the Framework programmes. This system provides equal and consistent support to all interested parties in their respective economy or region.

NCPs are established, operating and financed under the responsibility of the MS/AC economy that appoints them. The relevant national authority must ensure compliance with '**Minimum standards and guiding principles for setting up NCP system**', a document provided by the EC. Usually, the NCP system is organised on the national level (economy), but economies can develop their systems with more hierarchy.

In any case, the relevant national authority must appoint a national NCP coordinator that shall closely collaborate with that authority in all aspects of NCP work.

Horizon Europe has the following structure of NCPs:

1. **NCP Coordinator**

2. **Legal and Financial aspects** (including legal and financial aspects related to gender equality, open access and open science, R&I integrity and ethics)

3. **European Research Council** (ERC)

4. **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions** (MSCA)

5. **Research Infrastructures**

6. **Health** (including related missions and partnerships)

7. **Culture, creativity and Inclusive Society** (including related missions and partnerships)

8. **Civil Security for Society** (including related missions and partnerships)

9. **Digital, Industry and Space** (including related missions and partnerships)

10. **Climate, Energy and Mobility** (including related missions and partnerships)

11. **Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment** (including related missions and partnerships)

12. **The European Innovation Council** (EIC) and European Innovation ecosystems

13. **Widening Participation and ERA** (including funding opportunities related to gender equality, open access and open science, R&I integrity and ethics)

14. **Fission**

15. **Fusion**

16. **Joint Research Centre** (JRC)

17. **European Institute of Innovation and Technology** (EIT)

The MS/AC economy can, depending on availability of experts and estimated costs, appoint one person for two or more domains as recommended by the national NCP coordinator. Also, two persons can be appointed for one domain in case that the interest of MS/AC is located in that domain or there is an increased demand for participation in respective domain.

Each NCP shall respect principles of transparency and equal access to information and calls in Horizon Europe programme. As experts in respective domain, NCPs should work independently and be accessible during the working hours. The practice has shown that NCPs are often accessible even beyond the working hours, but minimum states "during working hours".

Each NCP should be fully informed about the domain covering. For this purpose, the EC is often organising training sessions and even funds the project that networks NCPs in the same domain and enables exchange of experiences and good practices among experienced and less experienced NCPs. Examples of such projects are IDEAL-IST (network of ICT NCP), RICH (network of Research Infrastructure NCPs), SEREN (network of Security NCPs), NET4MOBILITY+ (network of MSCA NCP), etc. All these were Horizon2020 projects, and for Horizon Europe the EC has launched a new portal for all NCPs called '**Horizon Europe NCP Portal**'. This portal continues a good practice from the former 'NCP Academy' project and has already published some interesting and very useful materials for NCPs.

NCP's role is based on the provision of information. This is the core function of NCPs that can be exercised in different ways such as:

- Informing and awareness raising,

- Assisting, advising and training,

- Signposting and cooperation.

Informing and awareness raising is a function that aims to spread information about the Horizon Europe programme and specific domain that NCP covers. This activity includes organisation of information and promotional events (in liaison with the EC when appropriate or not) such as info-days, seminars, conferences, newsletters, websites, brokerage events, fairs, etc. Each NCP should be capable of providing basic information on the whole programme and detailed information on the specific domain of interest.

Assisting, advising and training is another more advanced function focused on a specific domain of NCP. NCP should provide specialised trainings to potential participants, in particular to new actors and industrial sector, to improve the participation rate in the Programme. This includes an explanation of administrative procedures, rules and other issues such as the role and responsibilities of participants in a consortium, costs, rights and obligations of participants, ethical rules etc. NCP can organise courses and training (both physical and virtual) sessions on Horizon Europe and invite successful participants from previous programmes to ensure high quality of advice.

Signposting and cooperation is being used as a function to make stronger ties between different potential participants and different entities providing more specific information

on, e.g. internal market, technology transfer, intellectual property rights (IPR), standardisation, etc.

For these core activities, NCPs can use various tools and techniques, depending on their familiarity and regular practices. A Horizon Europe dedicated web portal should be established by the relevant national authority in every economy, building on existing web portals as appropriate. The portal should be a single-entry point for basic and important information on the Programme and will include relevant EU visual identity, essential references, and clear links to all the relevant national support services. The content of the portal should be presented in local language(s) to be as close as possible to all parties interested in participating in the Programme.

Other tools can be newsletters, targeted email campaigns, participation in TV and radio broadcasts and shows, etc. It is important to wide-spread the information adequately and understandably to initiate and increase interest in the Programme and success in implementation.

6.2. Lessons learnt and hints for NCPs work

Being an NCP is a challenging task. Therefore, in some economies (e.g. Austria or Germany) the NCP positions are full-time positions within specialised governmental agencies. However, the majority of economies are still using employees of different public or private institutions (ministries, research institutes, universities or NGOs) to act as NCPs with part-time engagement. This can cause different effects – both positive and negative.

One of the major problems caused by the appointment of NCPs from the staff of ministries or universities is that they cannot dedicate sufficient time to the tasks of NCP due to their regular daily work. Although they are highly qualified, the lack of time is jeopardising the quality-of-service provision. On the other hand, freelancing NCPs (not attached to the ministries or universities) can be highly qualified and have sufficient time. But, at some point their entrepreneurial spirit will take them to the other side and they will be eager to charge fees for their work. This is not possible as the services should be provided to the clients on a free-of-charge basis and the economy should find a way to stimulate NCPs to do it that way, not to charge any fee from the clients as it may cause reluctance towards the participation in the programme and thus decreased level of withdrawn funds.

Therefore, the obvious solution, as most efficient, is to have this model of full-time engaged NCPs, whether within some governmental agency or non-public institution, if this is feasible. If not, then the economy should decide on the modality of the NCP network establishment and engage the most capable persons for these tasks.

Regardless of the modality, the NCP structure should provide free-of-charge, quality and accurate information to their clients to stimulate participation in the programme and to put best of efforts to withdraw as much as possible funds from the programme.

Study hard and continuously

First of all, NCPs have to study all the materials presented here and much more. There are many supporting documents available primarily at the Funding and Tenders HE portal, un-

der the section 'Reference documents' or at the call page under 'Topic documents' section. These are official and most important documents that each NCP will need and consult each time the call is published to inform themselves on possible changes.

Here we would like to point to different guides for applicants that can be found on the call page. They are extremely important for the application process preparation phase as they contain advice on how to make the application complete. However, this does not guarantee the success and approval of the application as the whole process is based on a competitive basis and quality.

Annotated Model Grant Agreement – AMGA

AMGA is one of the most important documents on the Horizon Europe portal that each NCP should be familiar with. This is a guiding document aiming to assist EU grant beneficiaries, provided for information purposes only and not intended to replace the binding legal agreements themselves, nor professional legal advice for specific cases. The purpose of this document is to help users understand and interpret their Grant Agreements (GAs). By avoiding technical vocabulary, legal references and jargon, it seeks to help readers find answers to the practical questions they may come across when setting up or implementing their projects. Besides legal explanations, there are some examples and how-tos for essential terms. This is an evolving document and the experts working on it are updating it constantly. So, NCPs should be aware that this document is a very useful tool for NCP's daily work and one of the main guiding documents in the Horizon Europe programme. Also, do not forget all other relevant documents you need to study, especially the strategic documents.

Proactivity and networking

We are aware of the fact that nomination for an NCP is an additional task to your everyday work. Naturally, this overwhelms you and requires some time to get "in the flow" like other more experienced NCPs. However, you cannot wait for the EC to push you to work or to invite you for training and so on. Yes, the EC is organising useful trainings for the NCPs and invites them to participate. However, sometimes it is not possible to participate due to regular working duties. You need to find some time to dedicate to learning and to exercise your NCP duties. It is strongly recommended that you get involved in the NCP networking projects. These projects are organised by the network of NCPs in a single domain. The examples of these network projects are:

- IDEALIST2020 project for network of ICT NCPs,
- NET4MOBILITY+ project for network of MSCA NCPs, or
- SEREN4 project for network of Security NCPs, etc.

There is also a new revamped portal of former NCP Academy project. This project was for a network of Legal and Financial NCPs and contained many useful documents, presentations, guidelines, etc. This portal aims to offer information, supporting tools and services for NCPs but also for applicants that are developed by the NCPs.

So, the best way to progress in your knowledge and skills is to learn from more experienced NCPs during the joint meetings, trainings and info sessions organised by the EC and REA. Try to be present at such events and learn from them. You will make useful friendships and you will be able to address your colleagues personally to help you with some issues you are not able to solve, and this is priceless for your client.

Level of assistance to the applicants

As stated in paragraph 6.1. these are the minimum standards prescribed. However, you should organise your assistance as best as possible to help participants be successful. The newcomers should avoid assistance in the writing of the project proposal for the participant and be involved in that process as an author. The client has great expectations from your side, but you have to be clear about your capacities to help them. Your task is to explain the rules for participation, details on the application form, but not write the application for them. This can be very dangerous if you do and not have significant experience. Namely, the evaluation process is very competitive and sometimes small differences in writing style can make huge differences in understanding and thus evaluation of the proposal. You should state to your client that "they know the idea of the project best", "nobody else can write it better than the one with the idea", etc. However, if you feel confident in your knowledge and have experience with national projects or other EU funded projects, you may offer your clients the so-called "pre-screening" service. This means that you will read their application as an evaluator. To read it as an evaluator you must not be involved in the writing process as you might be biased and thus not realistic in evaluation. Again, this task is not compulsory for you as an NCP and strongly depends on your personal knowledge and capacities.

Hence, in general, focus your assistance to your clients on knowledge and skills you possess. Admit if you do not know something your client is asking you and offer them to investigate the answer within the respective NCP network. Also, do not hesitate to contact other NCPs when you do not know the answer. This is why you need to be honest in contact with the clients, but also to prove to them that you are capable to resolve their problems.

Be aware of the conflict of interest as an NCP!

NCPs must be free from conflicts of interest between their NCP activities and the rest of their professional activities. In all circumstances, NCPs must act to avoid any real or perceived conflict of interest and ensure that they provide equal treatment to all participants. NCPs cannot be appointed as proposal evaluators or observers in Horizon Europe proposal evaluations concerning a work programme where they provided NCP services. Special rules apply for the participation of an NCP in a proposal or a project. In this context "participation in a proposal or a project" means a named NCP is identified as either carrying out the R&I activities or as in an advisory or supporting role (e.g. project advisory board). NCPs, acting in that capacity, shall not provide letters of support or similar documents with regards to specific proposals. An NCP must not participate in a proposal or a project concerning the work programme part where he/she provides NCP services, unless, in exceptional circumstances, the Commission allows such participation, due to the specific nature of a given

call. If an NCP host organisation does act as an applicant, mitigating measures should be established within this hositng institution if necessary. In practice, if an NCP participates in a proposal or a project in relation to a work programme part other than the one where he or she provides NCP services, the NCP host organisation must put in place measures to ensure that the NCP concerned does not receive confidential and privileged information from other NCPs, and inform the Commission as soon as they start preparing the proposal (via written declaration) and the national Coordinator of the intended involvement of the NCP, describing the mitigating measures within the institution, and confirming that the necessary measures are in place. An NCP may participate in an advisory or supporting role in a project once grant preparation has started.

Think as an evaluator when helping

This is very important! You have to put yourself in the position of the evaluator and be strict and realistic against the applicant. It is of utmost importance that you keep the necessary level of professionalism even if the applicant is your best friend. You will not help if you just give the praises, or you are afraid/respectful of their scientific and research experience or merit. Your task is to point them to possible problems and lack of clarity in the application despite their authority. Often the clients are coming with their ideas for the project that is not compatible with the call text. You have to prove to them that such an idea will not be funded – either because of limited reach, limited impact, or some other justified reason. In this case, you should guide them to adapt their idea to the call for proposals – to fit it. This is sometimes very difficult and it is better to be open and straightforward to state if the proposal is not fitting the call.

To be able to think as an evaluator, many NCP networks are inviting former evaluators of proposals for internal training sessions. The evaluators are receiving training from REA before the evaluation process and NCP network uses their experience to train them in way of thinking when evaluating the proposal – what are the points of interest of evaluators when evaluating a proposal? So, it is highly recommended for NCP network to have contact with former evaluators and invite them for such events.

The other opportunity is to participate in the NCP projects, where usually the project is organising similar training events.

Know your community (in the research area)

The NCPs are usually selected based on their experience in certain research area/field so presumably familiar with the local research community. It is advised to introduce yourself to that community and to make contact with them offering the assistance as per your capacity. They will understand your goodwill and probably use it when organising info sessions and training events; this familiarity will be useful to have a successful event. Prove them that you are willing to help in explaining the rules and that you are interested in their success. It is very important for you to know more about the capacities and potential of the community if you do not have that data from your relevant ministry. Sometimes, the NCPs are, among themselves, asking for partners for their organisations, e.g. NCP from Germany is searching for a Western Balkan partner but does not know an adequate institution. You

have to be prepared to offer them institutions with quality and experience per their request and to liaise in that partner search. Such intermediation will make your clients more trustful of your work, especially if their joint proposal is successful.

Organise promotion events regularly and timely

You have many tools at your disposal to keep your community updated. You may consider publication of quarterly newsletters or flash notes to be in touch with your community providing them fresh news from the domain. It is very useful if you can organise an in person or online event after the publication of the next work programme for your domain. This is an excellent opportunity to present the new programme, deadlines and most important novelties to the wider community. Later some of them might contact you for more detailed explanations. But pointing to new programme and deadlines is important – the clients will be aware what will be funded with this programme and when. They will have then sufficient time to find the partners and elaborate the project idea. Also, in case there are changes in the work programme, be advised that this kind of change should be communicated to your clients as they might not be aware of it.

They are researchers!

Have in mind that your clients are researchers. Not all of them have the time, skills and knowledge to adsorb complex rules for participation and so-called 'Brussels English' or 'comitology'. As researchers, your clients are dedicating most of their time to the research itself. They are forgetting administrative and financial issues that might jeopardise their research. They are usually, and especially in the Western Balkan economies, not experienced in project management, good practices or local accounting and financial rules and regulations. You must help them in this respect too if needed, especially in the project implementation. On one hand, there are financial rules in project implementation imposed by the EC, while on the other hand there are local rules that sometimes are not compatible (e.g. VAT exemption, or depreciation rules, etc.). The role of Legal and Financial NCP (L&F NCP) is here essential. L&F NCP must interpret the rules in clear and easy to understand language to the client even if the client is not familiar with it.

Researchers often have their take on the text of each call they tend to interpret through their lenses. NCP has to be capable of broadening their view to incorporate existing research ideas in the frame of the call. Many excellent research ideas have been wasted due to rigid approach of the researchers and therefore the NCP should use maximum efforts to facilitate researchers in adapting the idea to the open calls if possible. Naturally, not all ideas will find their place in the open calls, but NCP should also advise the client to reconsider possible alterations of the research idea to be able to create a proposal. Also, that research idea can be just a small part of bigger and wider research and it should be investigated how to adjust it to be part of that bigger research and from which call to fund it.

Having in mind that work programmes focusing on social sciences do not exist, the participation of social scientists has always been challenging. Namely, social sciences are a cross-cutting issue and they could be incorporated in any research. Take as an example the field of psychology. As an illustration, there are no calls strictly dedicated to psychology. However, this scientific field is a crucial part of different research projects dealing with

issues that can influence behaviour. For example, there are calls for artificial intelligence solutions which is a very hot topic. Psychology must be part of this research to prove feasibility, effects on human behaviour and possible problems in accepting or rejecting the proposed solutions from its angle. The research in the Horizon Europe programme must be multidisciplinary and as such should include the most important, crucial aspects of research and effects of its results on humans and the environment. Just to remind you of the 'do not significant harm' principle which can consider situations like described.

National NCP coordinator role

This is a very important role in the NCP system. This person must be most qualified 'among equally qualified'. Besides the role of liaison with the EC on the top level, the primary role of the national NCP coordinator is to keep the national network consistent fostering cohesion within the network. There should be a national strategy related to the participation in the Horizon Europe programme, e.g. focus on relevant research domains where the economy has the most qualified human resources, equipment and other preconditions. NCP coordinator should be able to assist all NCPs within the network if needed and also to represent the interest of the network at the meetings with the EC. A good practice is to meet regularly and to discuss the topics of interest. This should be done at least once per year – to agree on a work plan for the coming year and to analyse NCP activities done in the past year. This is useful to see what to focus on for the next year based on lessons learnt.

The role of the national NCP coordinator is even more important in crisis such as COVID-19 pandemic. In case of unforeseen problems that are beyond NCPs to solve, the NCP coordinator should undertake all available measures to enable and facilitate the work of NCPs within the economy. Therefore, the NCP coordinator should be in close contact with the relevant authorities that can provide important information and support to the NCP system (e.g. Ministry of Science or other relevant ministries). NCP coordinator should in such cases organise online consultations with the NCPs and advise them how to proceed with the work. This can include also training on how to use communication tools for online work with clients, etc.

Another important role of the NCP coordinator is liaison with the EC and relevant bodies. NCP coordinator should represent their economy's interests in public fora and be proactive in learning new working modalities for the NCP network and timely inform own network on substantial changes and strategic orientations in the programme.

Participation in different events – visibility of NCPs

NCPs have to promote their existence and work. This should be done from the very beginning. You should be proactive and address your communities, not wait for the authorities to inform them. Make this first step and introduce yourself offering assistance. Try to find public events (on-site or online) organised by research performing (universities, institutes) or research funding (ministries and agencies) organisations and ask for a presentation of the NCP system and services offered. Some economies are organising launch events to promote new programmes and to introduce the NCP system which is a good way to promote the network and its support. However, this is not often the case, and the NCP structure must find a way for this to happen.

Another very interesting event is MSCA and Citizens project (former European Researchers' Night) that is usually granted to one or more institutions in the economy to create stronger links between the researchers and the general public. You may find the responsible organisation that won this grant and ask them to give you time and space during the event to promote your existence and services. MSCA NCPs should be present at each of these events organised each year.

The NCPs should ensure their visibility through a simple web search engine. The easiest and most productive way is to establish an NCP website, which is also recommended by the minimum guiding principles. Bosnia and Herzegovina had an excellent website dedicated to FP7 and Horizon 2020 with plenty of information for the applicants, collected by NCPs. This functional NCP site can be of assistance when NCPs are not available, as first-hand assistance. It was observed that after the successful implementation of Bosnian NCPs site, some neighbouring economies have implemented this model for promotion and assistance. Using dedicated social media accounts, you can also reach your community and provide proximity assistance.

It is all about the quality

Quality must be in your focus – the quality of information and quality of service that NCP provide, the quality of knowledge transfer, the quality of research idea you should support, etc. Therefore, you as an NCP should also insist on quality when advising your clients. It is a usual situation that the researchers from the Western Balkan economies face lack of international research/academic visibility (no SCI listed scholarly papers, not participating in most important conferences, not presenting papers at these conferences, etc.) This is quite a problem in some cases where the evaluators should evaluate the merit of persons working on the project. However, this is not elimination criteria. You as NCP should encourage them to be more proactive and to work more on personal promotion. Indeed, publishing in high quality and relevant journals is expensive, but there are always less expensive options and events where the researcher can participate and influence its visibility. And also, do not forget national funding schemes that exist in most Western Balkan economies to support publishing; even some institutions are contributing to this effort.

There is no guarantee of success

The projects competing in the Horizon Europe programme are of high quality, high innovation potential and as such are very competitive. Bear in mind that everyone is participating to get the funding and gives its best in that effort. There are usual questions from clients – is there lobbying involved, can we pay someone to help us pass, etc. The lobbying exists but not on the level of an individual project proposal. However, the whole programme is about the impact and research excellence and this should be your guiding star when advising your clients.

Usually, the proposals fail to be funded despite beyond state-of-art research ideas and importance for society in general. This can be due to many reasons, but it is the subjective opinion of the evaluators reading the proposal of your client.

The proposal will be granted if you persuade all evaluators (with your proposal text and descriptions) that the project is worth funding and will generate benefits for the overall community. This is quite a difficult task as you have minimum of three experts in the field (often with very high references such as Nobel prize laureates) that are evaluating the proposal. Each of them has their mindset shaped after years of experience and the professional environment. So, there is no guarantee that the proposal will pass just because the idea is extremely good. The elaboration must be so precise, clear and persuasive to affect the evaluators giving the highest marks. Remember, the competition is extremely high (some calls will fund only 1 or 2 projects/actions in total) and only the highest marks count regardless of the minimum threshold. For example, in MSCA Individual Fellowships (in Horizon 2020) the projects scoring 90 points (out of 100) were not funded due to high competition and a large number of quality proposals. We often have seen a situation where the applicant resubmitted the application and received even fewer points than in the first evaluation. This can happen too, and you have to prepare your client for such a situation.

ANNEXES

Annex I International cooperation countries

Overseas countries and territories (OCTs) linked to Member States Legal entities from OCTs can participate and receive funding under equivalent conditions as legal entities from Member States.

The OCTs (and their linked Member States) are:

Aruba (NL), Bonaire (NL), Curaçao (NL), French Polynesia (FR), French Southern and Antarctic Territories (FR), Greenland (DK), New Caledonia (FR), Saba (NL), Saint Barthélemy (FR), Sint Eustatius (NL), Sint Maarten (NL), St. Pierre and Miquelon (FR), Wallis and Futuna Islands (FR).

Third countries associated to the Horizon Europe programme – 'Associated Countries' (AC)

Association to Horizon Europe is governed by the Horizon Europe Regulation 2021/6954. Legal entities from 'Associated Countries' can participate under equivalent conditions as legal entities from the EU Member States, unless specific limitations or conditions are laid down in the work programme and/or call/topic text. These economies are (upon negotiation and signatory of the agreement):

Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Georgia, Iceland, Israel, Kosovo*, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom.

Liechtenstein does not intend to associate to Horizon Europe.

Other third countries

Participants from the following low to middle-income countries are automatically eligible for funding:

- Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Azerbaijan
- Bangladesh, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi
- Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Comoros, Congo (Democratic Republic), Congo (Republic), Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba
- Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic
- Ecuador, Egypt (Arab Republic), El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia
- Fiji
- Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana
- Haiti, Honduras
- Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic), Iraq

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

- Jamaica, Jordan

- Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Korea (Democratic People's Republic), Kyrgyz Republic

- Lao (People's Democratic Republic), Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya

- Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Micronesia (Federated States), Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar

- Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria

- Pakistan, Palestine10, Papua New Guinea, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines

- Rwanda

- Samoa, São Tomé and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Sudan, Surina-me, Syrian Arab Republic

- Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu

- Uganda, Uzbekistan

- Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic), Vietnam

- Yemen Republic

- Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Participants from other countries (i.e. countries that are not EU Member States, economies associated to Horizon Europe, or countries listed above) are not automatically eligible for funding and therefore by deafult have to participate at their own cost (BRICS countries, Singapore, Japan, USA, etc). These participants should explain in the proposal how their funding will be secured.

Annex II European Partnerships

EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIPS IN HEALTH

	Partnership Title
1	European Partnership for EU-Africa Global Health
2	European Partnership for Innovative Health
3	European Partnership for Chemicals Risk Assessment
4	European Partnership - ERA for Health Research
5	European Partnership on Health and Care Systems Transformation
6	European Partnership for Personalised Medicine
7	European Partnership on Rare Diseases
8	European Partnership for One Health/AMR Antimicrobial Resistance -AMR

EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIPS IN DIGITAL, INDUSTRY AND SPACE

	Partnership Title
1	European Partnership for High Performance Computing
2	European Partnership for Key Digital Technologies – KDT
3	European Partnership for Smart Networks and Services
4	European Partnership on Artifical Intelligence, Data and Robotics
5	European Partnership for Photonics
6	European Partnership for Clean Steel - Low Carbon Steelmaking
7	European Partnership on Metrology
8	European Partnership Made in Europe
9	Processes4Planet – Transforming the European Process Industry for a sustainable society
10	European Partnership for Globally Competitive Space Systems

EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIPS IN CLIMATE, ENERGY AND MOBILITY

	Partnership Title
1	European Partnership for Transforming Europe's Rail System
2	European Partnership for Integrated Air Traffic Management (ATM)
3	European Partnership for Clean Aviation
4	European Partnership on Clean Hydrogen
5	People-centric sustainable built environment (Built4People)
6	European Partnership – Towards zero-emission road transport (2ZERO)
7	European Partnership on Connected and Automated Driving (CCAM)
8	European Partnership on zero-emission waterborne transport
9	European Partnership for an Industrial Battery Value Chain
10	European Partnership – Driving Uban Transitions to a Sustainable Future
11	European Partnership for Clean Energy Transition

EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIPS IN FOOD, BIOECONOMY, NATURAL RESOURCES, AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

	Partnership Title
1	European Partnership: Accelerating farming systems transition: agroecology living labs and research infrastructures
2	European Partnership for Animal health (PAH)
3	Agriculture of data
4	European Partnership for rescuing biodiversity to safeguard life on Earth
5	European Partnership for a climate neutral, sustainable and productive Blue Economy
6	European Partnership for Safe and Sustainable Food Systems
7	European Partnership for a Circular Bio-based Europe
8	European Partnership Water Security for the Planet (Water4All)

EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIPS ACROSS VARIOUS THEMES

	Partnership Title
1	European Partnerships Innovative SMEs
2	European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) Partnership
3	EIT Climate-KIC
4	EIT InnoEnergy-KIC
5	EIT Digital-KIC
6	EIT Health-KIC
7	EIT Food-KIC
8	EIT Manufacturing-KIC
9	EIT Raw Materials-KIC
10	EIT Urban Mobility-KIC
11	EIT Cultural and Creative Industries-KIC

Annex III Technology readiness levels (TRLs)

Where a topic description refers to a TRL, the following definitions apply, unless otherwise specified:

- **TRL 1** – basic principles observed
- **TRL 2** – technology concept formulated
- **TRL 3** – experimental proof of concept
- **TRL 4** – technology validated in lab
- **TRL 5** – technology validated in relevant environment (industrially relevant environment in the case of key enabling technologies)
- **TRL 6** – technology demonstrated in relevant environment (industrially relevant environment in the case of key enabling technologies)
- **TRL 7** – system prototype demonstration in operational environment
- **TRL 8** – system complete and qualified
- **TRL 9** – actual system proven in operational environment (competitive manufacturing in the case of key enabling technologies; or in space)

About authors

Dalibor P. Drljača, PhD in Information Technologies, is full-time employed at the Research Centre of the University Clinical Centre of Republika Srpska. At the same time Mr. Drljača is Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Information Technology of the Pan-European University APEIRON Banja Luka and Consultant at the EUROPROJEKT centar s.p. Banja Luka. For more than 10 years he was a National Contact Point (NCP) and a Programme Committee member within FP7 and Horizon2020 programmes for several domains. He has published several publications related to the Horizon2020 programme and the book "Horizon Europe 2021-2027: Next generation of research and innovation", all of them in Serbian language. He was engaged by the European Commission to deliver different training and information sessions in South-East Asia and Africa. Together with Mr Markez, he set up EURAXESS Bosnia and Herzegovina network and this year he was engaged to conduct preparatory work for establishment of EURAXESS Africa hub. He has participation in a dozen of EU and World Bank funded projects since 1995.

Đorđe Markez, MSc in Law, is full-time employed at the University of Banja Luka as a Secretary-General to the Rector. For more than 10 years he also served as a NCP for several domains - most important one is Legal and Financial NCP for Bosnia and Herzegovina – as well as the Programme Committee member. Together with Dr Drljača he participated in creation of EURAXESS Bosnia and Herzegovina network. Several international consulting companies have engaged him for different activities related to the higher education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He was a member of a Bosnian team that produced a strategic document titled Western Balkan Regional R&D Strategy for Innovation. He is also engaged by the EUROPROJEKT centar s.p. as a consultant.

good.better.regional.

RegionalCooperationCouncil

@rccint   RegionalCooperationCouncil   RCCSec

regionalcooperationcouncil_rcc   Regional Cooperation Council

Powered by RCC.int