Tips and tricks
After two years of Horizon Europe

The experience of the European Research Executive Agency

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Novelties under Horizon Europe

- **Reinforced focus on impact**

- **Lump sum funding and unit costs**

- **Cross-cutting features**

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Strengthened focus on impact for the programme

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

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

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How to address impact in HE – some tips

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

- Get terminology right: output, outcome, impact

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

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

- Identify and address possible negative environmental outcome or impact

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

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Lump sums

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

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

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

Work package completed = payment

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

Two lump sum options

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

Option 1:

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

Option 2 (most common for REA):

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

Writing a lump sum proposal

- To write a lump sum proposal, applicants:

  - Use the standard Horizon Europe application form

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

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

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

- The cost estimations must approximate **applicant actual costs**.

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

  - must be in line with your normal practices

  - must be reasonable / non-excessive

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

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Evaluating lump sum proposals

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

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

- Experts will:

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

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

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

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Resources available

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

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

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Lump Sum Grants

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

Gender Equality Plan

Gender Equality Plan (compulsory as of 2022 calls):

- MSs and Acs public bodies;
- research organisations
- higher education establishments

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

Eligibility condition

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Specific attention points

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

Additional questions in Horizon Europe evaluations

- Scope of the application

- Additional funding

- Use of human embryonic stem cells (hESC)

- Use of human embryos (hE)

- Activities not eligible for funding

- Exclusive focus on civil applications

- Do no significant harm principle

- Artificial Intelligence

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Lessons learned

Identified issues in 2021 proposals

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

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

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Lessons learned from the first HE calls

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

    - 2-step process for Grant Agreement preparation

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

    - More complex change in case of UK coordinator

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

    - Higher uptake of reserve list proposals

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Lessons learned on lump sums (II)

- **Stepwise roll-out of lump sum funding**: Higher page limit for lump sum proposals (from work programme 2023).

- Personnel cost **dashboard for experts**

- **An improved Excel tool for lump sum** budget table is released .

Do's and Don'ts for proposal writing

Do's:

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

- Use the templates – fill out tables as required

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

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

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

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Do's and Don'ts for proposal writing

Don'ts:

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

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

- Use buzzwords. Explain your project in realistic terms

- Submit last minute (Stress leads to mistakes)

- Write more than the page limit

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Do's and Don'ts

Tips:

- Identify/learn from successful applicants

- Resubmit improved versions until the deadline

Thank you

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