Agenda

- 9:15   Start
- 9:20   Proposal writing tips and trics  - Sarah Stroobants (NCP Health – NCP Flanders)
- 10:00  Thematic session – in rooms at first floor
- 13:00  Light Lunch  - in this room
- 14:00  Key insights and highlights of the first Horizon Europe Evaluations – Mr. Marc Tachelet (European Commission)
- 15:00  The End
HORIZON EUROPE PROPOSAL WORKSHOP
22 November 2022
General Introduction
speaker: Sarah Stroobants, NCP Flanders
How to write a good proposal – Tips (I)

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

• **Questions before you start:**
  - Why bother? What problem will you try to solve?
  - How does the project idea address the EU policy?
  - Is there already a solution to the problem?
  - Why now (urgency)? Why has it not been done before?
  - Why you? Are you the best people to do this work?

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

• Prepare an **outline** of your proposal as a first step
Outline or ‘one page proposal’

• Serves to **substantiate** the project idea
• Helps define the project idea **in relation to the call topic & the scope**
• **First tool to communicate** the project plan & objectives
• Elements that could go into the outline

• **Graphical presentation** / graphical abstract of your project idea
### Full proposal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrative form (Part A - generated by the IT system)</th>
<th>Technical part – Section 1 Excellence (Part B)</th>
<th>Technical part – Section 2 Impact (Part B)</th>
<th>Technical part – Section 3 Quality and efficiency of the implementation’ (Part B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• General information including proposal title, duration in moths, fixed and free keywords</td>
<td>• 1.1 Objectives and ambition</td>
<td>• 2.1 Project’s pathways towards impact</td>
<td>• 3.1 Work plan and resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Abstract</td>
<td>1.2 Methodology</td>
<td>• 2.2 Measures to maximise impact – dissemination, exploitation and communication</td>
<td>- List of work packages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Participants and organisation data</td>
<td></td>
<td>• 2.3 Summary – Impact canvas</td>
<td>- Work package description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Budget for the proposal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- List of deliverables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ethics &amp; security</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- List of milestones</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Importance of abstract, title and keywords!**

Three sections correspond to the main evaluation criteria of your proposal.
How to write a good proposal – Tips (II)

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

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

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

• Not all evaluators of your proposal will be expert in your (sub)discipline
  - Make the proposal **easy to read** – clarity of the proposal!
  - **Layer technical information**
How to write a good proposal – Tips (III)

• Avoid general statements/being too vague  -> be concrete, be specific
• **Avoid repetition**  -> use cross-references to other parts of the proposal
• Don’t promise the world  →  **be ambitious but also realistic**
• **Quantify** where possible & meaningful  – **Substantiate**
• **Avoid under or over-estimation of resources** to carry out the project
• Make your proposal **visually attractive** (figures, tables, lists, images etc)
• **Ensure consistency** of the different parts of your proposal
Ensure consistency throughout your proposal

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

• Consistency between **PART A & PART B** as well as between different sections of PART B

Some examples:

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

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

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

• Consistency of **terminology, numbers & titles**
Last but not least

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

Get guidance:
- [Funding & Tenders portal](#)
- Support office of your organisation
- National Contact Point

- Don’t wait until the last minute -> **resubmit improved versions**
- Don’t give any excuses to be marked down - **make it worth the investment**
THANK YOU FOR
YOUR ATTENTION
Thematic sessions

• Cluster 1 – THIS ROOM
• Cluster 2 – FIRST FLOOR – 1.11 Room Magnetiet
• Cluster 4 – FIRST FLOOR – 1.10 Room Malachiet
• Cluster 5 – FIRST FLOOR – 1.09 Room Rookkwarts
• Cluster 6 – FIRST FLOOR – 1.01 Room Gogotte
Key insights and highlights of the first Horizon Europe Evaluations

Mr. Marc Tachelet – European Commission
Horizon Europe 1-year after the launch of Horizon Europe in Belgium
The experience of the European Research Executive Agency

Marc Tachelet
Director of REA

Cécile Menétrey-Monchau
REA call coordinator – Cluster 2
REAP’s part (23%) in Horizon Europe

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

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

The 5 EU Missions

- Adaptation to Climate Change
- Cancer
- Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030
- 100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030
- A Soil Deal for Europe

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact area</th>
<th>Key Impact Pathways (9) (some examples)</th>
<th>Short term (outputs)</th>
<th>Medium term (outcomes/results)</th>
<th>Long term (Impacts)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Scientific impact</td>
<td>1. High quality new knowledge</td>
<td>Publications =&gt; citations =&gt; world class science</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Diffusion of new knowledge</td>
<td>Sharing =&gt; diffusing =&gt; collaboration</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Societal impact</td>
<td>4. Addressing EU policy priorities and global challenges</td>
<td>Results =&gt; solutions =&gt; benefits</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Evaluating the Impact criterion for proposals

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

Project’s pathway towards impact

INPUTS

- HE grant, human resources, expertise, etc.

PROJECT’S RESULTS

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

- Other project results

DISSEMINATION & EXPLOITATION

WORK PROGRAMME OUTCOME: “Innovative accessibility and logistics solutions applied by the European Transport sector”

WORK PROGRAMME IMPACT: “Seamless, smart, inclusive and sustainable mobility services”

PROJECT’S CONTRIBUTION TO THE EXPECTED OUTCOME

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

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

PROJECT’S CONTRIBUTION TO THE EXPECTED IMPACT

- Other expected outcomes

- Other expected impacts

IMPLEMENTATION

Effects
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
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 be an approximation of applicants actual costs. They:
  - are subject to the same eligibility rules as in actual costs grants
  - must be in line with your normal practices
  - must be reasonable / non-excessive
  - must be in line with and necessary for your proposed activities.
Evaluating lump sum proposals

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

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

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

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

- Cost estimations that are clearly overestimated or underestimated lead to a **decreased score** under the implementation criterion.
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
Unit cost for personnel (under preparation)

- Further simplification measure to reduce error rates in financial claims. Advantages similar to lump sums (no auditing, no proof documents, etc.)
- Building further on the use of average personnel costs (already on offer)
- Applicable, by applicant/beneficiary, across the board (all or nothing)
- Pre-fixed rate, calculated as a global average for an entity’s total personnel
- Can be updated every two years – applicable only for new grants
- When: possibly already in the course of 2023.
Pilot on Blind evaluation

Blind evaluation

- A pilot to **avoid bias** towards large well-known organisations (A recent independent study has not revealed such a bias)
- The pilot aims to identify whether the implementation of blind evaluation creates any difficulties and/or effectively mitigates the (perceived) risk of reputational bias
- It will be launched in the WP 2023-24 for all first of two-stage calls in 2023
- Blind evaluations will be announced in the WP (specific eligibility criterion)
- **Make sure you do not present yourself or your consortium in a way that would allow you to be identified**
**Pilot on Right-to-react (Rebuttal)**

**Right-to-react (Rebuttal)**

- to increase transparency, to correct any factual errors or major misunderstandings by experts at an early stage.
- Applicants send their reactions to draft experts comments
- Experts take applicants’ reaction into account during consensus discussions.

we disclose individual experts readings without quality control

**Calls participating in the pilot:**

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

**Preliminary findings (EC still to assess)**

- Positive for pathfinder (different evaluation process)
- Applicants try to add new info
- Higher no of evaluation review
- Assessment: coordinators + experts neutral
- Impact only in 1 out 89 cases
Gender Equality Plan (starts being applicable in calls with deadline in 2022)

Legal entities from MSs and ACs that are public bodies, research organisations OR higher education establishments must have a gender equality plan, covering minimum process-related requirements (announced in WP general annexes and in participant registry).

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

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

Check the General Annexes of the WP for complete information.
Specific attention points

Evaluation form includes:

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

**Additional questions in Horizon Europe evaluations**

- Scope of the application
- Additional funding
- Use of human embryonic stem cells (hESC)
- Use of human embryos (hE)
- Activities not eligible for funding
- Exclusive focus on civil applications
- Do no significant harm principle
- Artificial Intelligence
Use of human embryonic stem cells (hESC) and human embryos (hE)

- experts assess whether the proposal involves the use of hESC and hE. This is independent of, and serves to verify, the applicants’ answers in the ethics issues table.
- If you consider that your proposal involves hESC, you must state whether the use of hESC is, or is not, necessary to achieve the scientific objectives of the proposal and the reasons why.

Your answers to these questions and the comments provided will be used by the ethics experts in charge of the ethics assessment. Proposals involving hESC can be funded only if the use of hESC is necessary to achieve its objectives.
Participants confirm that the proposal has an exclusive focus on civil applications. Activities to serve military purposes cannot be funded.

Evaluators are asked to confirm that this is the case.

Evaluators will not reject proposals for this reason but will reflect the removal of the disallowed activities in the final score (disregarding these activities may lead to a lower score).
In line with the European Green Deal objectives, economic activities should not make a significant harm to any of the six environmental objectives (EU Taxonomy Regulation).

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

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

The six environmental objectives:
- Climate change mitigation
- Sustainable use & protection of water & marine resources
- Pollution prevention & control
- Climate change adaptation
- Transition to a circular economy
- Protection and restoration of biodiversity & ecosystems

Check support video in the portal!
Artificial Intelligence in HE

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

- AI is an important driver for European Industry that needs close monitoring; if not well developed it can also become a problem (e.g. Microsoft’s Tay Chatbot)
- experts in HE assess whether a proposal involves AI and the robustness of it
Success rates & SME participation
Key statistics, comparison with previous FPs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>H2020</th>
<th>HE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Success rate</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe+ BE</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SME particip.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe+ BE</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lessons learned
## Identified issues in 2021 proposals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cross-cutting priority</th>
<th>First impressions (REA view)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open science (excellence)</td>
<td>Well understood and often properly addressed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 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:  
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
Lessons learned on lump sums (II)

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

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

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

• An improved Excel tool for lump sum budget table will be released soon.
Do’s and Don’ts for proposal writing

Do’s:

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

• Use the templates – fill out tables as required

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

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

• Enrol to become an expert – exp. experts become excellent proposal writers
Do’s and Don’ts for proposal writing

Don’ts:

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

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

• Use buzzwords. Explain your project in realistic terms

• Submit last minute (Stress leads to mistakes)

• Write more than the page limit
Do’s and Don’ts

Tips:

• Contact NCPs
• Identify/learn from successful applicants
• Resubmit improved versions until the deadline
Thank you
Please drop your evaluation forms in the boxes

Hope to meet again!