HOW TO PREPARE A GOOD PROPOSAL

Please consider this presentation as the view of a researcher, not an expert designer!

WHY HORIZON AND LIFE ?

Objective Horizon Europe (2021-2027): HE is the EU's €95.5 billion flagship research and innovation programme, aiming to **generate scientific, technological, economic, and societal impact**. It seeks to strengthen the EU's scientific and technological base, boost industrial competitiveness, foster innovation, and address global challenges like climate change and the SDGs.

Objective of LIFE PROGRAMME: bring a positive change to the state of the environment and climate by supporting proposed solutions to **environmental problems** defined in EU legislation, that offer **measurable impact**.

Why to connect LIFE and HORIZON programmes?

- LIFE as a follow-up to HORIZON´s results, the **bridge between research and commercialisation** stage: results verification in real conditions (prototype testing, scaling up and preparing for entry onto market)

- **Common priority themes**

- **Similar administration rules** based on identical core documents

COMPLEMENTARITY TO HORIZON

LIFE programme: Objectives

- The LIFE Programme (the Financial Instrument for the Environment) is the EU's main tool for protecting the environment and biodiversity, and for mitigating and adapting to climate change

1. **Protect the environment and halt and reverse biodiversity loss**, including support for the Natura 2000 network and tackling **ecosystem degradation** by **safeguarding habitats, species and biodiversity**, as well as **reducing greenhouse gas emissions** by promoting the efficient use of natural resources.
2. **Support climate change mitigation** and adaptation by combating polluting emissions and the impacts arising from climate change.
3. Facilitate the transition towards a **sustainable, circular, energy-efficient** and climate-resilient economy, and protect, restore and improve environmental quality.

COMPLEMENTARITY TO HORIZON

LIFE programme: Objectives

- The LIFE Programme (the Financial Instrument for the Environment) is the EU's main tool for protecting the environment and biodiversity, and for mitigating and adapting to climate change

Governance and policy

4. Further support **environmental and climate governance** at all levels by strengthening the capacities of public and private stakeholders and civil society participation, and by improving environmental and climate information and awareness-raising.
5. Develop, demonstrate and promote **innovative techniques, methods and approaches to achieve the objectives of EU legislation and policies** on the environment, nature and biodiversity, and on climate action, the transition to renewable energy and increased energy efficiency—catalysing the large-scale uptake of technical and strategic solutions proven effective for implementing the relevant legislation and sectoral policies, replicating results, integrating the related objectives into other policies and into public and private sector practices, mobilising investment and improving access to finance.

COMPLEMENTARITY TO HORIZON

LIFE programme: Objectives

- The LIFE Programme (the Financial Instrument for the Environment) is the EU's main tool for protecting the environment and biodiversity, and for mitigating and adapting to climate change

6. Encourage the **replicability** of successful projects and best-practice local examples by integrating their objectives into public and private sector practices.
7. **Mobilise investment and improve access to finance**.
8. Support the **implementation of the European Green Deal**, which aims to transform the EU into a fair and prosperous society with a modern, resource-efficient economy, zero net emissions, and economic growth decoupled from resource use—while safeguarding people's health and wellbeing and respecting the Earth's natural limits.

COMPLEMENTARITY TO HORIZON

LIFE programme:

COMPLEMENTARITY TO HORIZON

LIFE programme:

- It is based on and takes upon the results of research projects.
- Aims at testing new/**demonstrating pilot/ innovative solutions** under real, market conditions (K2M).
- Thrives at **replicating** promising new technologies/ methods/ techniques and their further dissemination to commercial markets.
- Supports international projects within EU community and international **cooperation**.
- Does **not support basic research activities**, nor common operation of institutions, does not fund great infrastructure excluding prototypes.

SINERGIES BETWEEN Horizon and Life

HORIZON, Cluster 6 Work Programme for 2024

Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

- Understand and address direct drivers of biodiversity decline
- Plan, manage and expand protected areas
- Mainstream biodiversity, ecosystem services and natural capital in the society and economy
- Develop and improve practices in agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture
- Interconnect biodiversity research and support policies and processes

LIFE sub-programme

Nature and Biodiversity sub-programme

- Halting and reversing biodiversity loss
- Restoration and management of Natura 2000 network – priority species and habitats
- Nature conservation projects – endangered species and habitats protection

SINERGIES BETWEEN Horizon and Life

HORIZON, Cluster 6 Work Programme for 2024

Circular Economy and Bioeconomy Sectors

- Circularity, including local and regional focus.
- Bio-based innovation
- Multifunctional and sustainable management of European forests
- Aquatic biological resources and blue biotechnology

Clean Environment and Zero Pollution

- Halting pollution of air, soil and water
- Improving circular bio-based systems

LIFE sub-programme

Circular Economy and Quality of Life sub-programme

- Transition toward a sustainable, circular, toxic-free, energy-efficient and climate-resilient economy
- Protecting, restoring and improving the quality of the environment, either by direct interventions or by supporting the integration of those objectives in other policies
- Recovery of resources from waste, water, air, noise, soil and chemical management as well as environmental governance

SINERGIES BETWEEN Horizon and Life

HORIZON, Cluster 6 Work Programme for 2024

Land, Ocean and Water for Climate Action

- adaptation and resilience of natural and managed ecosystems
- climate change mitigation in the primary sectors
- sustainable management of scarce resources

LIFE sub-programme

Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation sub-programme

- farming, land use, peatland management, renewable energies and energy efficiency
- reduction of greenhouse gas emissions
- urban adaptation and land-use planning, resilience of infrastructure, sustainable management of water in drought-prone areas, flood management
- preparedness for extreme weather events

SINERGIES BETWEEN Horizon and Life

HORIZON, Cluster 6 Work Programme for 2024

Innovative governance, environmental observations and digital solutions in support of the Green Deal

- innovative governance models enabling sustainability and resilience
- further deployment and exploitation of environmental observation data, products and "green" solutions
- strengthened Global Earth Observation System of Systems

LIFE sub-programme

Climate Governance and Information (part of climate sub-programme)

- support to the European Climate Pact, sustainable finance activities, awareness raising, training and capacity building
- information, awareness and dissemination projects on climate matters
- public and stakeholder support for EU policy-making

BUILDING A LIFE PROJECT

Main issue: PET species bycatch → Does your question fit the call?

Problems: Gaps in knowledge

- Estimates and bycatch rates
- Delayed mortality/survivability
- Bycatch Reducing Devices (BRDs)

Needs

Improved monitoring →
- Monitoring surveys
- Technologies (REM, PAM)
- Tagging

Key areas (Hot spots) →
- Species distribution
- Effort

→ Risk assessment

Effective BRDs →
- Technical
- Socio-economic

BUILDING A LIFE PROJECT

STANDARD ACTION PROJECTS

- **Run in partnership,** recommended not less than 5 partners
- **Project lifespan:** max.10-year duration, 5 years on average
- **Average budget:** 3 –6 mil. Euro,
- **EU co-financing rate: 60% (Usually)**
- **National co-funding possible**

BUILDING A LIFE PROJECT

Key points

- **Applicants** - Companies, research institutes, NGOs, public administrations active in the field of environment and climate protection ; all legal persons registered in the EU

- Emphasis on replicability/transferability, long-term sustainability, and an EU added value of the project results

- **Not focused on research** (Horizon Europe) (but in a certain way you can do it)

- **No large infrastructure**; not focused on rural or regional development (agricultural, structural funds)

- **Support and monitoring**: from Contracting Authority (EASME or European Commission) and external monitoring team

BUILDING A LIFE PROJECT

Remember!

- **You can't get a grant if you don't submit an application.**
- **It takes time and money to prepare an application**
- **Proposals that fail are poorly prepared or simply no good as the others, funding is limited (or because the reviewers didn’t like your proposal)**

Distinct Approaches

Best Practice
…applies appropriate, cost-effective, state-of-the-art techniques and methods.

Testing and evaluating of best practice techniques **should NOT be part of the project** as they are already state of the art. Or you can do it in a very first part of project, as preliminary actions!

Monitoring, however, is obligatory.

Distinct Approaches

Demonstration

… puts into practice, tests, evaluates and disseminates actions, methods or approaches that are **new or unfamiliar in the project's specific context** and that could be applied elsewhere in similar circumstances.

Monitoring, evaluating and dissemination are integral parts of the demonstration approach.

LIFE NATURE Projects

The LIFE programme prioritizes nature and biodiversity through specific, actionable areas aimed at **supporting EU legislation and the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030**. **Key priority sectors** include:

Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries: Focusing on sustainable, nature-friendly practices that **enhance biodiversity**, such as organic farming, agroecology, sustainable forestry management, and responsible FISHERIES.

Ecosystem Restoration and Conservation: Implementing the "Space for Nature" initiative, including the restoration of degraded ecosystems,marine and coastal areas, and protected habitats.

Biodiversity Protection: Halting biodiversity loss through species protection, strengthening ecological networks (Natura 2000), and reducing the impact of invasive species.

Marine and Coastal Management: Addressing the specific needs of marine ecosystems, reducing pollution, and supporting sustainable blue growth.
Governance and Monitoring: Strengthening the implementation of EU environmental policy, including better monitoring, reporting, and management of protected areas.

LIFE ENV Projects

Key priority sectors also include

Circular Economy: Focuses on reducing waste, improving resource efficiency in key value chains, and promoting sustainable product design.Air Quality: Aims at reducing pollutants in compliance with EU legislation, particularly in urban and industrial areas.

Water Management: Focuses on improving water quality and quantity, enhancing marine and coastal management, and developing innovative treatment technologies.

Soil Protection: Prioritizes protecting the quality of EU soil resources.

Chemicals & Noise: Aims to reduce the impact of hazardous substances and decrease pollution in densely populated urban areas.

LIFE common structure

Where Relevance, Impact, and Quality fit (and how they're scored)

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

Importance of abstract, title and keywords !

LIFE common structure

Where Relevance, Impact, and Quality fit (and how they're scored)

Part B (Technical Description) – high-level structure

Project Summary

1. Relevance (baseline, objectives, alignment, methodology)
2. Impact (ambition, credibility, sustainability, replication)
3. Implementation (work plan, stakeholders, monitoring, comms)
4. Resources (consortium, management, budget, risk)
5. Other (ethics, security)

Award criteria (example SAP call): max 20 pts each

In many SAP calls, "Impact" is weighted more heavily.

Design your narrative to make the impact pathway and credibility unmistakable.

LIFE common structure

1. Relevance — make the case that the project should exist

What evaluators look for

A quantified baseline: where you start, where you act, who/what is affected

Clear objectives linked to LIFE priorities and the call/topic scope

A sound intervention logic (problem → objectives → actions → results)

Methodology that is feasible in the chosen location/sector

Synergies/co-benefits and complementarity (when applicable)

Relevance checklist (quick self-test)

- Can a non-expert restate the problem in 1 sentence?
- Do you show baseline numbers, not only narrative?
- Is every objective measurable and action-linked?
- Is alignment to the call explicit (not implied)?

Common evidence to cite

- Monitoring data / official statistics
- Policy/strategy references (EU/national/regional)
- Prior project results you build on
- Stakeholder needs assessment

LIFE common structure

1. Relevance — make the case that the project should exist

1.Relevance (0–20 points)

• Relevance of the contribution to one or more of the specific objectives of the LIFE programme and of the specific sub-programme

• Extent to which the project is aligned with the description included in the call, including, where applicable, its specific priorities

• Reasonableness and robustness of the overall intervention logic

• Extent to which the project delivers co-benefits and promotes synergies with other policy areas relevant to achieving EU environmental and climate policy objectives

LIFE common structure

2. Impact — quantify, justify, sustain, replicate

Needs → Objectives → Actions (WPs/Tasks) → Results (outputs) → Impacts (benefits)

Impact must answer 4 questions

Ambition: What changes during the project and up to ~5 years after?

Credibility: Why will impacts happen (assumptions, calculations, evidence)?

Sustainability: What continues after EU funding ends (who pays/owns/runs)?

Catalytic potential: How will results be replicated and/or upscaled?

Minimum "impact kit"

- 6–10 KPIs with baseline → target
- Methods + frequency + responsibility
- Assumptions transparent (show steps)
- A clear replication pathway

Red flag to avoid

- Claiming broad impacts with no quantified link to activities
- Mixing impacts from other projects into yours
- No plan for sustaining results

LIFE common structure

2. Impact — quantify, justify, sustain, replicate

2. Impact (0–20 points; weight 1.5)

• Ambition and credibility of the expected impacts during and/or after the project thanks to, or as a result of, the proposed activities, including potential negative impacts on other specific objectives of the LIFE programme, and including assurance that those objectives will not be significantly harmed

• Sustainability of the project results after the end of the project

• Potential for the project results to be replicated in the same or other sectors or locations, or to be scaled up by public or private actors or through the mobilisation of additional investments or financial resources (catalytic potential)

• Quality of the measures for exploitation/uptake of the project results

LIFE common structure

3. Quality — demonstrate feasibility and operational excellence

Work plan clarity & feasibility

- WPs/tasks are logically grouped and sequenced
- Deliverables/milestones are verifiable
- Geographic focus is justified

Stakeholder mobilisation

- Who matters, when, and why
- Engagement tasks are resourced, not aspirational

Impact monitoring & reporting

- Monitoring design fits KPIs
- Data collection responsibilities are clear

Communication, dissemination & visibility

- Target audiences + channels + metrics
- Visibility of EU funding planned

Quality checklist (what to show)

- WP structure proportionate to project complexity
- Dependencies and critical path understood
- Stakeholder engagement plan is concrete
- Monitoring plan links to KPIs and timing
- Communication plan includes indicators
- Risks identified + mitigations (in Resources)

LIFE common structure

3. Quality — demonstrate feasibility and operational excellence

3. Quality (0–20 points)

- Clarity, coherence, and overall feasibility of the work plan
- Appropriate geographical focus of the activities
- Quality and reliability of the plan to monitor and calculate environmental impacts
- Identification and involvement of relevant stakeholders
- Appropriateness and quality of the measures proposed to communicate and disseminate the project, its objectives, and its results to the different target groups

LIFE common structure

4. Resources

4.Resources (0–20 points)

• Composition of the project team—either a consortium or a single beneficiary—in terms of skills, capacity and responsibilities, and adequacy of the management structure

• Adequacy of the budget and resources and their consistency with the proposed work plan

• Budget transparency: cost items must be sufficiently justified

• Extent to which the project's environmental footprint is considered and mitigated, including through the use of green procurement. The use of recognised methods to calculate the project's environmental footprint (e.g., PEF or OEF methods or similar) or environmental management systems (e.g., EMAS) is an advantage

• Value for money of the proposed project

LIFE common structure

Common mistakes

• Too many objectives, or objectives that are too generic

• Lacks important details needed to clearly assess the problems to be addressed and the status of preparatory actions

• Does not provide sufficient qualitative and quantitative information, nor relevant baseline information on threats and environmental issues

• Does not adequately describe the results of previous research and experience

LIFE common structure

Common mistakes

• The number of WPs and actions is redundant: reduce it to the actions that are truly essential to achieving the project objectives.

• A clear and logical link is missing between actions and expected results, or between actions and identifiable deliverables (outputs).

• The demonstrative or “best practice” project does not include concrete actions that are well identified or clearly described.

• Actions X and Y include activities to identify the problems and threats to be addressed. But this knowledge should already be available before the project starts!

LIFE CONSORTIUM

The consortium may be composed of:

- Beneficiaries (Article 7)
- Affiliated entities (Article 8)
- Other participants involved in the action (Article 9):
  - o Associated partners;
  - o Third parties providing in-kind contributions (staff, equipment, etc., without implementing any action);
  - o Subcontractors;
  - o Third parties receiving financial support in the form of grants, prizes, etc.

Beneficiaries (Coordinating and Associated) are those who **sign the Grant and are collectively responsible from a technical standpoint and individually responsible from a financial standpoint** for implementing the action. They must ensure that they carry out the action in good faith and by making available their best skills.

If you decide to apply for Coordinator, remember that you will probably have to do everything yourself!!

LIFE CONSORTIUM

Internal relations between beneficiaries must be governed by the **Consortium Agreement!**

Beneficiaries must:

- Update the Participant Portal;
- Inform the competent authority (and the other beneficiaries) of any issues that may delay implementation of the action;
- Submit financial statements, deliverables, and any other documents or information requested by the Commission to the coordinator on time, within the deadlines set out in the Grant.

The **coordinator** must:

- Check that the action is implemented correctly;
- Act as an intermediary between the other beneficiaries and the Commission;
- It takes contact with the monitoring team
- Administer the Commission's payments.

These **activities may not**, under any circumstances, **be subcontracted** unless the coordinator is a public entity. In that case, activities related to reporting management and the distribution of payments may be handled by **entities affiliated** with or controlled by the coordinator that have an "authorisation to administer".

Eligible applicants (Beneficiaries)

- Legal entities based in the EU (exceptions Iceland, the Ukraine):

o Public entities (regional authorities, municipalities, universities)

o Private commercial entities and research institutions

o Private non-commercial entities - NGOs.

- Experienced applicants with a clear vision of measurable change that can help fulfil the programme objective and hence support the EU environmental and climate legislation.

Eligible applicants (Beneficiaries)

Public and private entities from the following countries

a) EU Member States (including the Overseas Countries and Territories)

b) Non-EU (Art. 10): Among the countries of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) that are signatories to the European Economic Area (EEA) Agreement, only Iceland has expressed its interest in the LIFE Programme.

c) Non-EU (Art. 10): Candidate countries, potential candidates, and countries acceding to the European Union. To date, **the following have expressed an interest in participating in the LIFE Programme: Albania, Turkey, North Macedonia, Ukraine, Andorra, Israel, and Moldova**.

NB: The rules on eligible countries do not apply to international organisations

Lessons from the LIFE Evaluation Phase

Project Design (1)

Set your goals in agreement with LIFE Multiannual Work Programme!

Common gaps

- Sometimes, the sequence of actions does not follow logically
- Baseline descriptions are often not detailed enough, sometimes even absent, although they are essential for evaluating the project impact
- Expected results and quantitative output indicators should be provided for, and fit with, each action
- Potential for replicability and transferability often not taken into account and activities to achieve them often not sufficiently elaborated
- Include buffer period for unexpected developments

Lessons from the LIFE Evaluation Phase

Project Design (2)

- EU added value often not clear
- Activities/plans to ensure sustainability of the project results are often poor
- Clear description of staff involved in specific actions sometimes missing (sometimes unclear link to budget)
- Green procurement and carbon footprint are often not considered
- Private companies are sometimes reluctant to share results (and documents), even though they are obliged to

- **Mismatch between time frame and planned activities!!**

Lessons from the LIFE Evaluation Phase

Project Design (3)

- Difference between milestones and deliverables:
  - Milestones are significant or important events - number of milestones should be limited (in some cases even 60 for 2–year projects)
  - Deliverables are 'products' resulting from project actions
  - ☐ Activity reports are not deliverables

Lessons from the LIFE Evaluation Phase

Project Design (4)

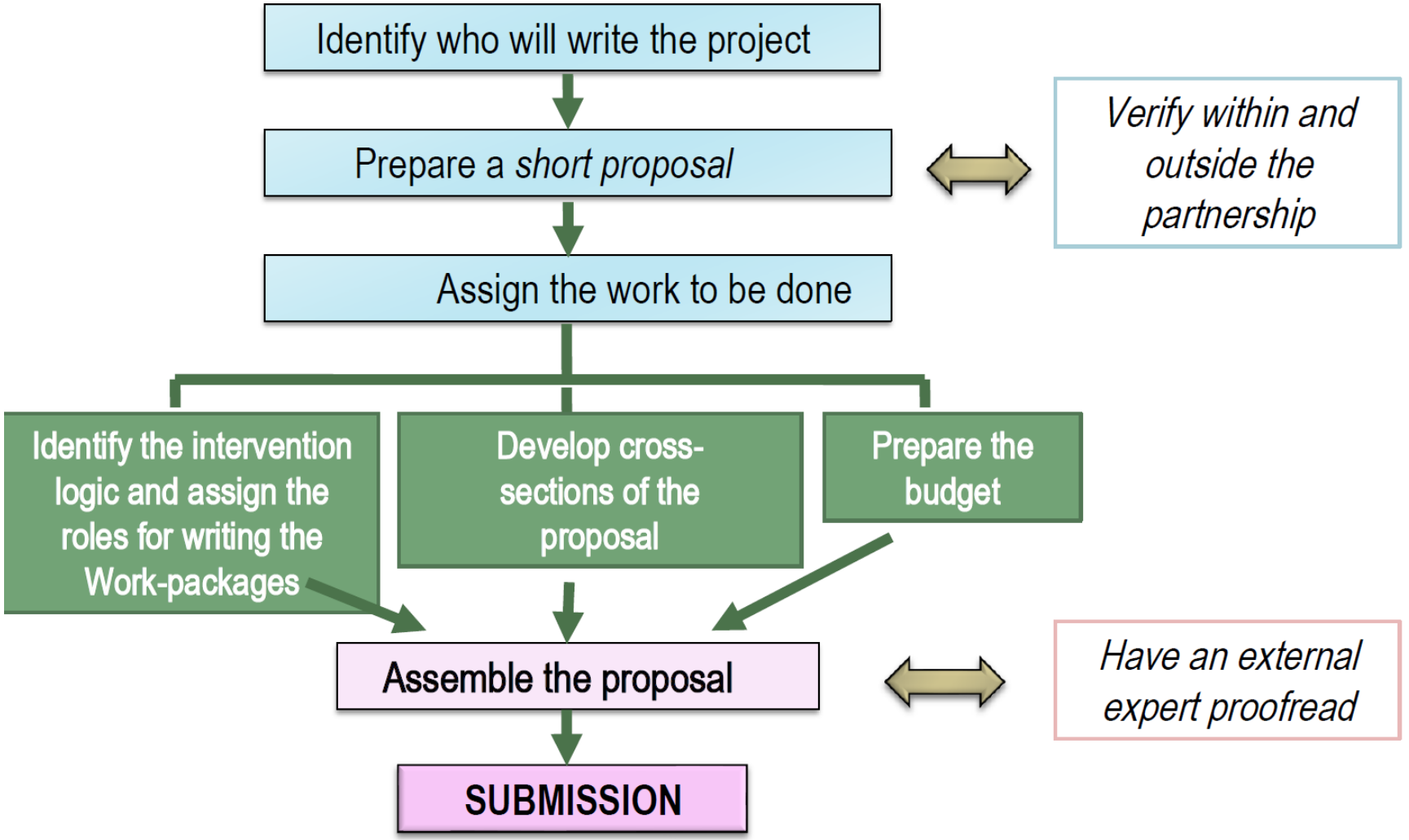
It is mandatory to clearly report the

EU financial support

in any document produced for dissemination

Lessons from the LIFE Evaluation Phase

Project Planning (1)



Lessons from the LIFE Evaluation Phase

Project Planning (2)

Project duration should take into account:

- Possible delays due to weather, problems in public procurement or other external events,
- Delays in obtaining permits and authorisations
  - authorisations needed, procedure and time needed to get them should be clearly described
  - some applicants initiate the procedures before actual project start (might be risky)

Lessons from the LIFE Evaluation Phase

Project Planning (3)

Project duration should take into account:

- Sufficient project duration to gather information about the impact of project activities (and a need to verify the baseline situation)
- Sufficient time to ensure co-financing, in case that external grants are needed (in particular in case there are several partners in the project)

Lessons from the LIFE Evaluation Phase

Project Management

- Partnership structure – problems with too many partners, not clear who is doing what. Complementarity vs. redundancy of expertise
- Important stakeholders should be involved in application phase
- Project management – if technical/administrative support is subcontracted, regular contact with the CB should be ensured
- Co-financing must be guaranteed (MPAs)

Lessons from the LIFE Evaluation Phase

Good design

- ☐ Motivated and full time project manager
- ☐ Motivated consortium
- ☐ Complete consortium
- ☐ Important stakeholders integrated
- ☐ User is part of team
- ☐ Solid research of pre-situation
- ☐ Clear objectives

Common problems

- ➢ Poor partnership (or too many partners)
- ➢ Partners don't fit regarding know-how, language or interest
- ➢ Insufficient consultation
- ➢ Over-optimistic objectives/actions
- ➢ Objectives too broad
- ➢ Insufficient background data
- ➢ Lack of initial stakeholder support
- ➢ Fragmented or overlapping actions
- ➢ Wrong time duration or action's duration

Project Budget

- Daily rates of personnel costs are too high (or too low) or the beneficiary uses flat rates
- Double funding risk – project or certain activities funded by another EU programme
- Direct treaty often selected for relatively high amounts or slicing technique applied to avoid threshold (130,000 € in EU) for a public tender procedure
- Some costs are put in wrong categories:
  - ☐ Catering should be under other costs
  - ☐ Software costs should be in equipment category
  - ☐ Costs for dissemination materials (normally) should be other costs
  - ☐ Please read carefully the Application Guidelines and General Conditions!

Project Budget

Points of view

EU Commission

- Contributes to reach the general targets of the Programme
- Is in line with general rules
- Demonstrates project's capability of the beneficiary
- Respect the priciple: best-value-for-money
- Is in line with GA
- Monitored during and after the project

Project manager

- Convenient
- Enough detailed but flexible
- In line with the internal rules of the beneficiary
- Administrative manageable

Auditors

- Was everything spent?
- Respect the GA?
- Respect the general rules?

Project Budget

- Should be: clear, realistic, transparent, comprehensible
- Costs must be eligible! (this depends on type of project)
- Consider Co-financing

- Expenses must be done DURING the project
- Expenses should be done according to the GA
- Data and costs supported by documents and Info

Project Budget

Budget: direct costs

They are directly assigned to project and supported by documents of expenses

- Personnel
- Equipment or durable goods
- Service or external assistance (it is based on best offer, therefore it is not feasible to insert the name of a company in the proposal)
- Consumables
- Travel
- Other costs (i.e. Renting boats)

Project Budget

Budget: indirect costs (general costs or overheads)

They are non directly assigned to project, they are linked to the general activity of the beneficiary (i.e. Expenses for energy, water etc.)

- Usually do not request supporting documents
- Usually they are based on a flat rate of direct costs (i.e. 7 % of direct costs)

Direct costs + indirect costs = Eligible costs

Project Budget

Funding percentages

- Eligible direct costs (staff costs, travel expenses, consumables, equipment, subcontracts, etc.) are generally funded up to 60%. However, depending on the type of project and the legal status of the applicant entity, the funding rate may vary (see the table in the next slide).

- Indirect costs are recognised up to a maximum of 7% of direct costs.

Project Budget

Budget: Start from where?

Preliminary considerations

- How much is the total financing of the call
- How's the total percentage of the financial contribution
- How much is the maximum total contribution?
- Which are internal resources to be allocated to the project?
- Which external services/competences do I need to involve?

- Is the project appealing? Financial contribution, enhancement of knowledge, feasible
- Sustainable? Can we spend all the budget?
- Are we able (personnel, devices boats etc.)

Guidelines for applicants

Project Budget

Budget: Application form

- Administrative section (data of all partners)
- Technical section
- Financial section

Ineligible Costs

- Costs in any category over and above that foreseen in the budget (budget transfers accepted in line with art II.22)
- Recoverable VAT and VAT of public authorities (unless public authorities provide an official certificate stating that VAT cannot be recovered for costs related to the project)
- Costs incurred in relation to activities not foreseen in the project
- Costs incurred for the purchase of durable goods or communication material not bearing the LIFE logo
- Costs incurred for an action which benefits from aid under other Union financial instruments

Other....

A Few Reminders

All beneficiaries:

- Must contribute financially to the project's costs
- Must comply with applicable tender rules
- Shall maintain up to date books of accounts
- Shall keep all supporting documentation for all expenditure and income for at least 5 years after the final payment
- Ensure that all invoices include a clear reference to the project in all categories and a link to the analytical accounting system
- May not act as sub-contractor/supplier to each other (no invoicing among partners!!)

What they look for in Final Reports

- ☐ Technical and commercial application
- ☐ Environmental benefits / Biodiversity improvement
- ☐ Relevance for policy areas
- ☐ Long-term sustainability
- ☐ Economic and social benefits
- ☐ Demonstration, transferability, cooperation
- ☐ Innovation

KPI!!

Key Factors for Project Sustainability

- Sustainability factors included in project design
- Institutional structures & willingness to support work
- Funding mechanisms
- Good reputation
- Sound demonstration
- Based on solid scientific data
- Financial incentives
- Stakeholder support, participation and engagement

Letters of support from key stakeholder/Ministries/Regional Admin

Importance of Links to Policy/Legislation

- Increasingly important to show relevance to policy/legislation in application and throughout project
- Project is expected to keep up to date with policy
- Opportunities should be taken to engage with policymakers
- What is the impact of LIFE project on policy and legislation? And vice versa…

Dissemination and Networking

- An obligation and an opportunity yet often poorly delivered
- Interest in dissemination should be made clear in application
- Projects should be attending events such as Green Week
- All projects can benefit from a communication plan and identification of Main Target Audiences
- Assess value of networking before/during/after project
- MEPs and local politicians have an interest

Pitfalls-barriers to long-term success

- ☐ Uncertain funding
- ☐ Not all technical problems resolved
- ☐ User is not involved from the beginning
- ☐ Motivation does not last beyond project
- ☐ Poor dissemination of results
- ☐ Lack of interest from authorities / changes in Public sector
- ☐ Effect of solution not visible enough / lack of monitoring

Important section of the proposal: KPIs!!

Common Reasons for Failure of Applications

- Not convincingly demonstrative or pilot project (ENV, CCA and CCM)
- Non-realistic objectives or indicators (often missing baseline, monitoring of results/indicators not included in the application; objectives already reached or unreachable)
- Unclear responsibilities/guarantees of project partners
- Missing theory of change (too many fragmented actions with a weak link to the foreseen results)

Remember

- LIFE does not finance:
  - Actions that should be (or are) financed under Structural Funds or CAP (Common Agricultural Policy)
  - Research projects
- Be clear and precise – applications are evaluated on what is submitted (not on the potential of the idea)
- Read and edit documents before submission
- Read about and talk to ongoing projects

➢ START EARLY!!!

Preliminary review from experts strongly suggested!!

Communicating with the Monitoring Team (1)

The **Monitoring Team** of a life project acts as the project's navigator, continuously tracking performance against the original plan to ensure objectives are met within scope, budget, and time constraints. They provide critical oversight by reviewing KPIs, identifying risks early, and implementing corrective actions to prevent project failure.

- ☐ It is <u>always</u> necessary to send to the Monitoring Team **copy of all correspondence** sent to the Commission (same documents, same annexes).
  - ➢ Consult draft versions with the Monitoring Team!
- ☐ In case you need simple clarifications, it is better to send an email message **only to the Monitor**, without contacting directly the Commission. In case it is needed, the Monitor will involve the LIFE Unit/EASME.

Communicating with the Monitoring Team (2)

- Please be reminded that the Monitoring Team **is not entitled** to take any decision on behalf of the Commission/Agency (GC, II.1.4).
- Please be aware that **travel or accommodation expenses** benefiting the Monitoring Team cannot be accounted for, as they are ineligible (VI Financial and Administrative Guidelines).

A LIFE PROPOSAL CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The sections highlighted in red constitute **the core elements of the intervention/vertical logic**, which is the first element that must be defined when writing any project.
Evaluating the intervention logic is also a primary element for evaluating this section in LIFE projects.

A LIFE PROPOSAL CONTENTS

A LIFE PROPOSAL CONTENTS

Horizon Europe

THE EU RESEARCH & INNOVATION PROGRAMME

2021 – 2027

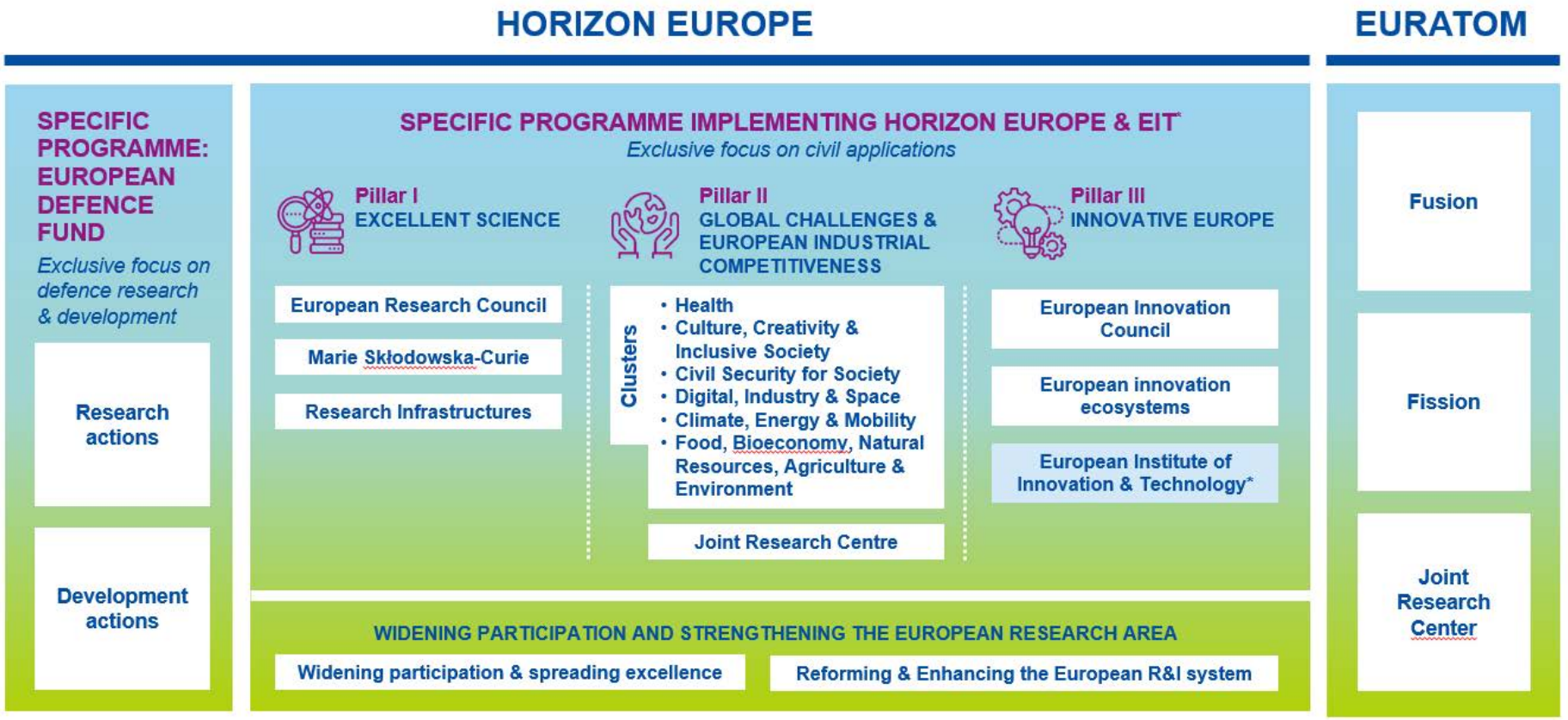
Horizon Europe

The EU's key funding programme for research and innovation:

- Tackles climate change
- Helps to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals
- Boosts the EU's competitiveness and growth
- Facilitates collaboration and strengthens the impact of research and innovation in developing, supporting and implementing EU policies while tackling global challenges
- Supports the creation and better diffusion of excellent knowledge and technologies
- Creates jobs, fully engages the EU's talent pool, boosts economic growth, promotes industrial competitiveness and optimises investment impact within a strengthened European Research Area.

About Horizon Europe

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



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

European Commission

About Horizon Europe

Pillar I

EXCELLENT SCIENCE:

reinforcing and extending the **excellence of the Union's science base**

European Research Council

Frontier research by the best researchers and their teams

€16 billion

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions

Equipping researchers with new knowledge and skills through mobility and training

€6.6 billion

Research Infrastructures

Integrated and inter-connected world-class research infrastructures

€2.4 billion

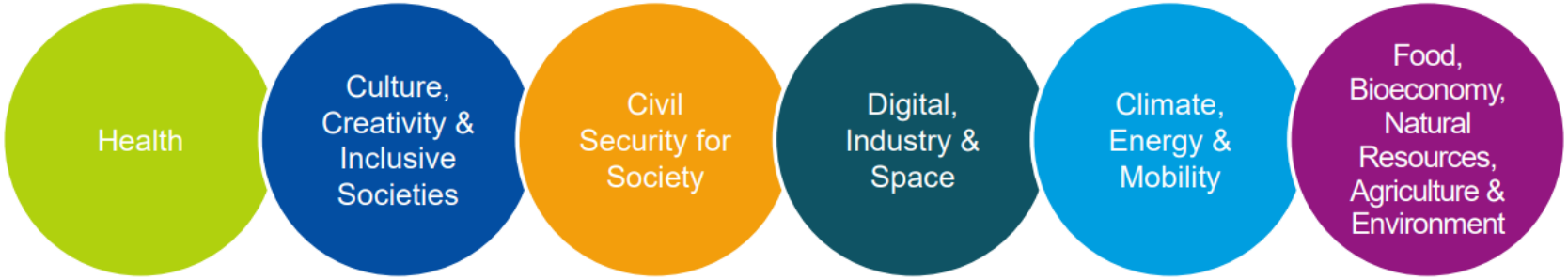
European Commission

About Horizon Europe

Pillar II - Clusters

GLOBAL CHALLENGES & EUROPEAN INDUSTRIAL COMPETITIVENESS:

boosting **key technologies** and solutions underpinning **EU policies & Sustainable Development Goals** (6 clusters and JRC – non-nuclear direct actions)



€53.5 billion

European Commission

About Horizon Europe

Pillar III

INNOVATIVE EUROPE:

stimulating **market-creating breakthroughs** and **ecosystems** conducive to innovation

European Innovation Council

Support to innovations with breakthrough and market creating potential

European innovation ecosystems

Connecting with regional and national innovation actors

European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)

Bringing key actors (research, education and business) together around a common goal for nurturing innovation

The budget: **€10.6 billion**, incl. up to **€527 million** for ecosystems (including NGEU – Recovery Fund parts dedicated to EIC).

circa **€3 billion**

European Commission

About Horizon Europe

- **the world's largest single funding programme for research and innovation**
- **Budget** : around 95.5 billion Euro
- **Overarching goals:**
  - European Research Area, promoting cooperation in the EU and globally
  - Strengthening the European research landscape
  - Supporting groundbreaking innovations
- **Key focuses:**
  - Climate neutrality and digitalization
  - Promoting health, climate and environmental research
  - Industrial innovation, social resilience

European Commission

About Horizon Europe

RIAs (Research and Innovation Actions): focus on research and development (100% funding, low/medium TRLs) (45 pages)

IAs (Innovation Actions): aim for market demonstration and prototyping activities (70-100% funding, high TRLs). (45 pages)

CSA (Coordination and Support Actions): actions that fund accompanying measures for research, such as networking, standardisation, communication, and strategic studies. They do not cover direct scientific research, but support the implementation of research policies, reimbursing 100% of eligible costs. (30 pages)

EIC Pathfinder (under the European Innovation Council (EIC): funds high-risk, high-gain, interdisciplinary, early-stage research (TRL 1-4) to develop breakthrough, "deep-tech" technologies. It supports visionary, science-towards-technology research with grants typically up to €3-4 million, aiming to create new, disruptive market opportunities. (17 pages)

European Commission

About Horizon Europe

Eligibility

Consortium composition (collaborative projects)

- at least one independent legal entity established in a Member State, and
- at least two other independent legal entities each established either in a different Member State or an Associated Country.

Gender Equality Plan (applicable only from 2022 on)

Participants that are public bodies, research organisations or higher education establishments from Members States and Associated countries **must have a gender equality plan**, covering minimum process-related requirements.

- A self-declaration will be requested at proposal stage (for all types of participants).
- Included in the entity validation process (based on self-declaration)

About Horizon Europe

Who is eligible for funding?

EU COUNTRIES

- Member States (MS) including their outermost regions
- The Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) linked to the MS.

NON-EU COUNTRIES

- Countries associated to Horizon Europe (AC)
- Low and middle income countries: See HE Programme Guide.
- Other countries when announced in the call or exceptionally if their participation is essential

SPECIFIC CASES

- Affiliated entities established in countries eligible for funding.
- EU bodies
- International organisations (IO):
  - International European research organisations are eligible for funding.
  - Other IO are not eligible (only exceptionally if participation is essential)
  - IO in a MS or AC are eligible for funding for Training and mobility actions and when announced in the call conditions

European Commission

Associated Countries

For the purposes of the eligibility conditions, applicants established in Horizon 2020 Associated Countries or in other third countries negotiating association to Horizon Europe will be treated as entities established in an Associated Country, if the Horizon Europe association agreement with the third country concerned applies at the time of signature of the grant agreement.

Specific situation of UK

- The UK is expected to soon become an associated country to Horizon Europe. UK entities can take part in the first calls for proposals of Horizon Europe
- The UK is associating to the full Horizon Europe programme with the only exception of the EIC Fund (which is the loan/equity instrument of the EIC).

Activities eligible for funding

Eligible activities are the ones described in the call conditions

Activities must **focus exclusively 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 the purpose of research, or for the purpose of stem cell procurement, including by means of somatic cell nuclear transfer;
- lead to the destruction of human embryos.

About Horizon Europe

Maximum funding rates

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 funding rates may be set out in the specific call conditions

European Commission

Application form (proposal template)


Horizon Europe Programme
Standard Proposal Template (RIA, IA)

Same structure

The proposal contains two parts:

- **Part A** (web-based forms) is generated by the IT system. It is based on the information entered by the participants through the submission system in the Funding & Tenders Portal.
- **Part B** is the narrative part that **includes three sections that each correspond to an evaluation criterion.** Part B needs to be uploaded as a PDF document following the templates downloaded by the applicants in the submission system for the specific call or topic.

About Horizon Europe

Application form (proposal template)

- **Title & Acronym:** Clear, 200-character limit.

- **Part A (Administrative):** Participant info (PIC), budget, ethical issues.

- **Part B (Technical - 45 Pages Max):**
  - **Excellence:** Ambitious, goes beyond state-of-the-art.
  - **Impact:** Credible pathways to, and measures for, dissemination and exploitation.
  - **Implementation:** Consortium quality, work plan, and resources.

- **Lump Sum Focus:** Detailed budget table must be submitted as an annex.

About Horizon Europe

IMPACT overall objective	Long term change to which the action will contribute (at country, regional or sector level)
OUTCOME specific objective	Medium term changes in the behaviour of the target groups **under control of beneficiaries**
OUTPUTS	The goods / servicies directly delivered by the project **under control of project**
ACTIVITIES	What the project does to produce the results (utilisation of resources)
INPUTS	Financial / Human / Physical Resources

European Commission

About Horizon Europe

Many projects confuse immediate results with impact, thus reducing the true expected value of research to a mere technical achievement. If the information provided in the "Impact" section refers only to the "results" obtained, the presentation will not only be very superficial and will not truly explain the project's impact, but it will also fail to meet the European Commission's expectations as communicated in Horizon Europe.

Horizon Europe is looking for innovative and disruptive research projects that truly address global challenges. How can we bridge the gap beyond project results?

In Horizon Europe, unlike previous framework programmes, the features and requirements introduced in the Impact section allow us to answer these questions: What will happen after we achieve our objectives and obtain results? What will happen once the project ends? What might be the next steps that go beyond the project's scope? What will be the project's "legacy"?

Evaluation in Horizon Europe

Evaluation criteria (RIAs and IAs)

Excellence

- Clear objectives and ambitious concept
- State of the art and innovation beyond it
- Sound methodology and credible approach
- Interdisciplinarity where relevant

Impact

- Outcomes & benefits for target groups
- Pathways to impact, measures and KPIs
- Dissemination, exploitation and communication
- Contribution to expected outcomes

Implementation

- Coherent work plan (WPs, tasks, deliverables)
- Resources match the work (PMs, budget)
- Consortium quality and governance
- Risk management and quality assurance

Evaluation in Horizon Europe

Follow the official proposal structure (Part B)

A strong idea can still fail if the structure is non-compliant

Use the template as a checklist — and as a reviewer navigation tool.

1. Excellence
Why this is new and doable

2. Impact
Who benefits & how change happens

3. Implementation
Work plan, consortium, resources

What "good" looks like

- Short, clear storyline (one idea per paragraph)
- Consistent terminology across sections and tables
- Figures that reduce text and highlight logic
- No surprises: every claim has evidence in the plan

Common avoidable issues

- Objectives not linked to expected outcomes
- Impact promises without measures or owners
- Work packages that are too broad or not testable
- Budget not explained by tasks and responsibilities

Points to consider when writing a proposal in HE

Key principles

Your proposed work must be within the scope of a work programme topic

You need to demonstrate that your idea is ambitious and goes beyond the state of the art

Your scientific methodology must take into account interdisciplinary, gender dimension and open science practices.

You should show how your project could contribute to the outcomes and impacts described in the work programme (the pathway to impact)

You should describe the planned measures to maximise the impact of your project ('plan for the dissemination and exploitation including communication activities')

You should demonstrate the quality of your work plan, resources and participants

Policy and horizontal considerations

Open Science across the programme

Gender dimension in R&I content

Pathway to impact

Measures to maximise impact

Artificial intelligence

These aspects must normally be considered in all Horizon Europe calls (unless explicitly mentioned in the topic description).

Specific calls may include other aspects to take into account.

European Commission

Open Science across the programme

Open Science

Open science is an approach based on open cooperative work and systematic sharing of knowledge and tools as early and widely as possible in the process. Including active engagement of society

Mandatory immediate Open Access to publications: beneficiaries must retain sufficient IPRs to comply with open access requirements;

Data sharing as 'open as possible, as closed as necessary': mandatory Data Management Plan for FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) research data

- Work Programmes may incentivize or oblige to adhere to **open science practices** such as involvement of citizens, or to use the **European Open Science Cloud**
- Assessment of open science practices through the **excellence award criteria** for proposal evaluation. Under **quality of participants** previous experience on open sciences practices will be evaluated positively.
- Dedicated support to **open science policy actions**
- **Open Research Europe** publishing platform

Gender dimension in R&I content

Gender Dimension

Addressing the gender dimension in research and innovation entails taking into account sex and gender in the whole research & innovation process.

The integration of the gender dimension into R&I content is mandatory, unless it is explicitly mentioned in the topic description

Why is gender dimension important?

- Why do we observe differences between women and men in infection levels and mortality rates in the COVID-19 pandemic?
- Does it make sense to study cardiovascular diseases only on male animals and on men, or osteoporosis only on women?
- Does it make sense to design car safety equipment only on the basis of male body standards?
- Is it responsible to develop AI products that spread gender and racial biases due to a lack of diversity in the data used in training AI applications?
- Is it normal that household travel surveys, and thus mobility analysis and transport planning, underrate trips performed as part of caring work?
- Did you know that pheromones given off by men experimenters, but not women, induce a stress response in laboratory mice sufficient to trigger pain relief?
- And did you know that climate change is affecting sex determination in a number of marine species and that certain populations are now at risk of extinction?

Excellence

Excellence: make the innovation credible

Show novelty + feasibility with a coherent approach

Core elements reviewers look for

- A tight problem statement and SMART objectives
- What is new vs. state of the art (and why it matters)
- Methodology that matches objectives (not generic)
- Clear ambition level, including interdisciplinary aspects
- Gender dimension and open science where relevant

A simple narrative line

Reviewer tip: always connect “ambition” to a testable claim (what will be proven, compared, or demonstrated).

If the methodology is the same regardless of the call, it is probably too generic.

Evaluating the excellence criterion (1/2)

Assess the project's objectives:

- Are they clear and pertinent to the topic?
- Are they measurable and verifiable?
- Are they realistically achievable?
- Is the proposed work ambitious and goes beyond the state-of-the-art?
- Does the proposal include ground-breaking R&I, novel concepts and approaches, new products, services or business and organisational models?
- Is the R&I maturity of the proposed work in line with the topic description?

Please bear in mind that advances beyond the state of the art must be interpreted in the light of the positioning of the project. For example, expectations will not be the same for RIAs at lower TRL, compared with Innovation Actions at high TRLs.

Following questions are adapted to RIA and IA type of actions (ToA). Similar questions will be asked for other ToAs, in line with the instructions in the specific applications forms.

Evaluating the excellence criterion (2/2)

Following questions are adapted to RIA and IA type of actions (ToA). Similar questions will be asked for other ToAs, in line with the instructions in the specific applications forms.

Assess the scientific methodology:

- Is the scientific methodology (i.e. the concepts, models and assumptions that underpin the work) clear and sound?
- Is it clear how expertise and methods from different disciplines will be brought together and integrated in pursuit of the objectives? if applicants justify that an inter-disciplinary approach is unnecessary, is it credible?
- Has the gender dimension in research and innovation content been properly taken into account?
- Are open science practices implemented as an integral part of the proposed methodology?
- Is the research data management properly addressed?
- For topics indicating the need for the integration of social sciences and humanities, is the role of these disciplines properly addressed?

Describing the impact of your proposal

Impact: make change measurable

A credible pathway to impact beats big claims

Build a chain from results to outcomes to impacts — with owners and indicators.

Project Results
Outputs, demonstrators, data, tools

→

Outcomes
Adoption, capability, behaviour change

→

Impacts
Societal/economic/environmental benefits

What makes Impact convincing

- A short list of exploitable results (KERs) and target users
- KPIs with baselines and end-of-project targets
- Concrete measures: pilots, standards, policy uptake, market steps
- A realistic dissemination + exploitation + communication plan

Typical weaknesses

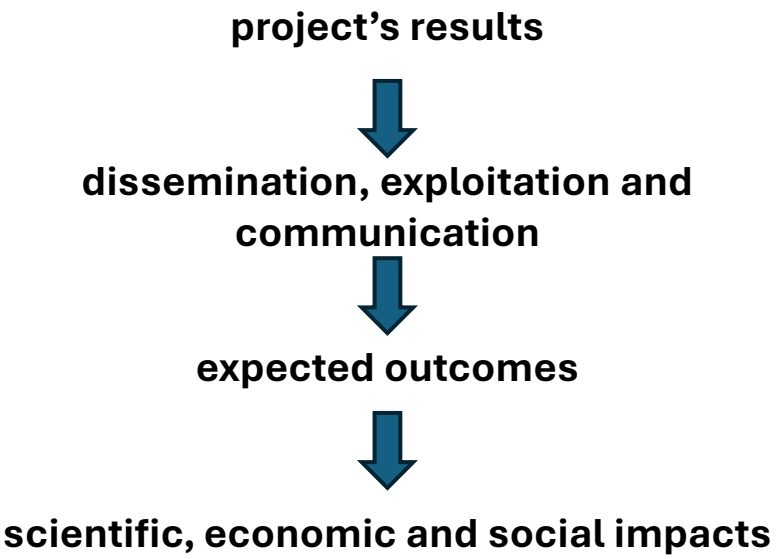
- "Will increase awareness" without channels or metrics
- No stakeholder engagement plan or ownership
- Impacts not linked to expected outcomes in the call
- Over-claiming (timelines, TRL leaps, policy change)

Describing the impact of your proposal

2.1 Project's pathways towards impact [e.g. 4 pages]
Provide a narrative explaining **how the project's results are expected to make a difference in terms of impact, beyond the project's immediate scope and duration**. The narrative should include the components below, adapted to your project.

(a) Describe the unique contribution that your project's results will make (1) to the **outcomes specified** in this topic and (2) to the broader, **long-term impacts** indicated in the respective Destinations of the work programme.

What is an IMPACT PATHWAY?



Describing the impact of your proposal

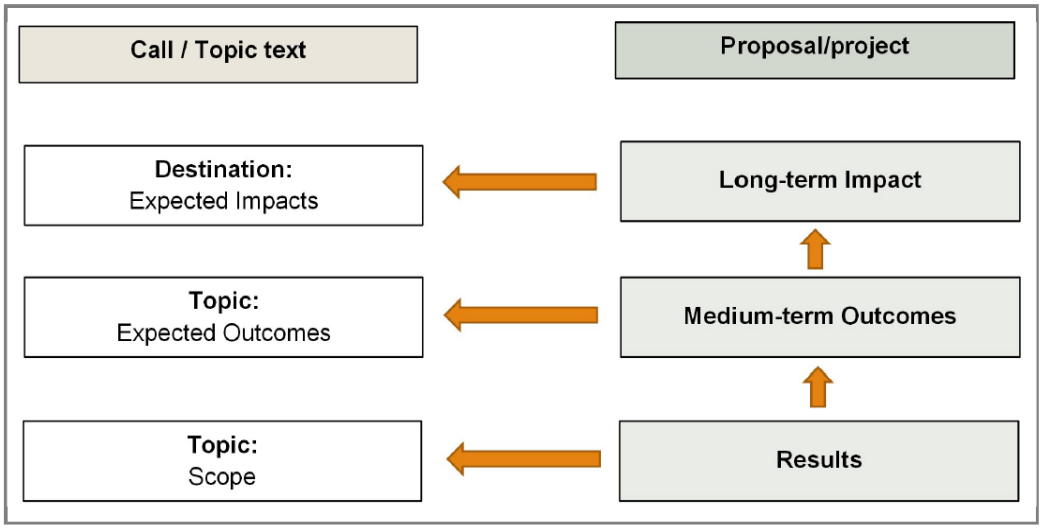
Three types of impacr tracked through Key Impact Pathway

Describing the impact of your proposal

Evaluation criterion (what is assessed in section 2.1):
Credibility of the pathways to achieve the outcomes and expected impacts specified in the work programme, as well as the likely scale and relevance of the project's contributions.

Include a narrative explaining how the project's results are expected to contribute to each of the outcomes expected under the topic. **Be very specific, referring to the project's concrete effects and not to R&I in general in this field.**

Use key performance indicators (KPIs).



Describing the impact of your proposal

Project outcomes and impacts can be:
Scientific, e.g., contributing to specific scientific advances (across disciplines or within a discipline), creating new knowledge, strengthening scientific equipment and instruments, computing systems (i.e., research infrastructures);

Economic/technological, e.g., introducing new products, services or business processes to the market, increasing efficiency, reducing costs, increasing profits, contributing to standards, etc.;

Social, e.g., reducing CO_2 emissions, decreasing mortality, improving policies and decision-making processes, increasing consumer awareness.

Include **only those outcomes and impacts to which your project will make a significant and direct contribution**. Avoid describing very weak links to broader impacts. However, include any potential negative environmental outcomes or impacts of the project, including when expected results are scaled up (e.g., commercially). Where relevant, explain how potential harm will be managed.

Proposals should aim to cover **as many of the Key Impact Pathways mentioned above** as possible, together with their respective narrative strands.

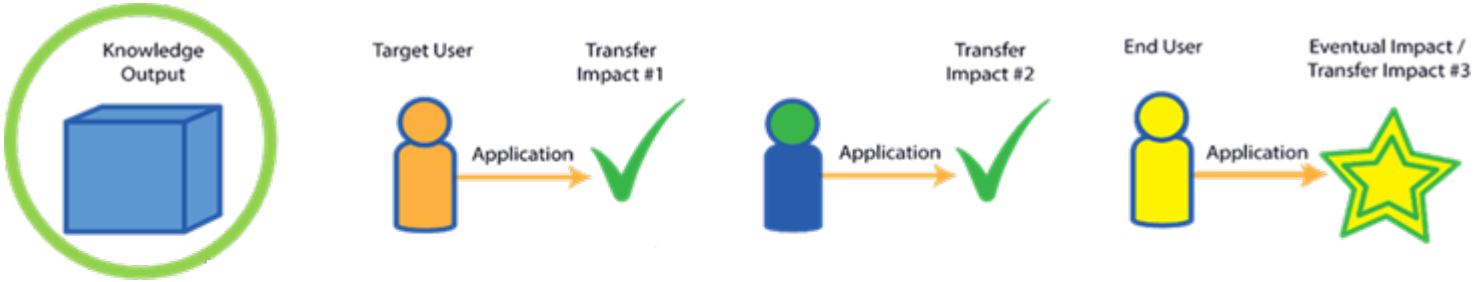
That said, **the opposite scenario should also be avoided: trying to "cover everything"** but with weak or vague links to the proposed project.

Use separate chapters for each KIP, indicating what concrete impact your project will deliver in each case.

The proposal must **refer to the KIPs mentioned in the Horizon Europe Programme Guide.**

Describing the impact of your proposal

NOTE: **Identify the target groups** that will benefit from the project's results/outcomes. Even if target groups are mentioned in general terms in the work programme, here you should be specific, breaking them down into particular interest groups or societal segments relevant to this project.



A recommended way to ensure robust impact pathways is to involve a variety of stakeholders in the co-creation of the project from the very beginning of proposal writing. Such an approach can generate broad benefits, as sought by the European Commission.

These target groups should be included in the consortium (end-users) or otherwise secured/ensured by the consortium.

Describing the impact of your proposal

2.1 Project's pathways towards impact [e.g. 4 pages]
Provide a narrative explaining **how the project's results are expected to make a difference in terms of impact, beyond the project's immediate scope and duration**. The narrative should include the components below, adapted to your project.

(b) **Indicate the scale and relevance of the project's contribution** to the expected outcomes and impacts, should the project succeed. Provide quantified estimates where possible and meaningful.

What is meant by "scope/scale" and "relevance"?

"Scale" refers to **how widely the outcomes and impacts are expected to spread—for example, in terms of the size of the target group** (or the proportion of that group) that should benefit over time.

"Relevance" refers to the importance or value of those benefits.

Describing the impact of your proposal

2.1 Project's pathways towards impact [e.g. 4 pages]
Provide a narrative explaining **how the project's results are expected to make a difference in terms of impact, beyond the project's immediate scope and duration**. The narrative should include the components below, adapted to your project.

(b) **Indicate the scale and relevance of the project's contribution** to the expected outcomes and impacts, should the project succeed. Provide quantified estimates where possible and meaningful.

Provide **baselines**, benchmarks and the assumptions used for these estimates. Where possible, quantify your estimate of the project's expected effects.

Explain your assumptions, referring for example to relevant studies or statistics. Where appropriate, try to use a single methodology to calculate your estimates: **avoid different methodologies for each partner**, region or country (extrapolation should preferably be prepared by a single partner).

Estimates must relate only to the project; the effect of other initiatives must not be taken into account.

Describing the impact of your proposal

2.1 Project's pathways towards impact [e.g. 4 pages]
Provide a narrative explaining **how the project's results are expected to make a difference in terms of impact, beyond the project's immediate scope and duration**. The narrative should include the components below, adapted to your project.

(c) **Describe any requirements and potential obstacles**—stemming from factors outside the project's scope and duration—that could determine whether the desired outcomes and impacts are achieved. These may include, for example, other R&I work within and outside Horizon Europe; the regulatory context; target markets; user behaviour. Indicate whether these factors could evolve over time. **Describe any mitigation measures you propose**, within or outside the project, that may be needed if your assumptions prove wrong or to address the critical factors identified.

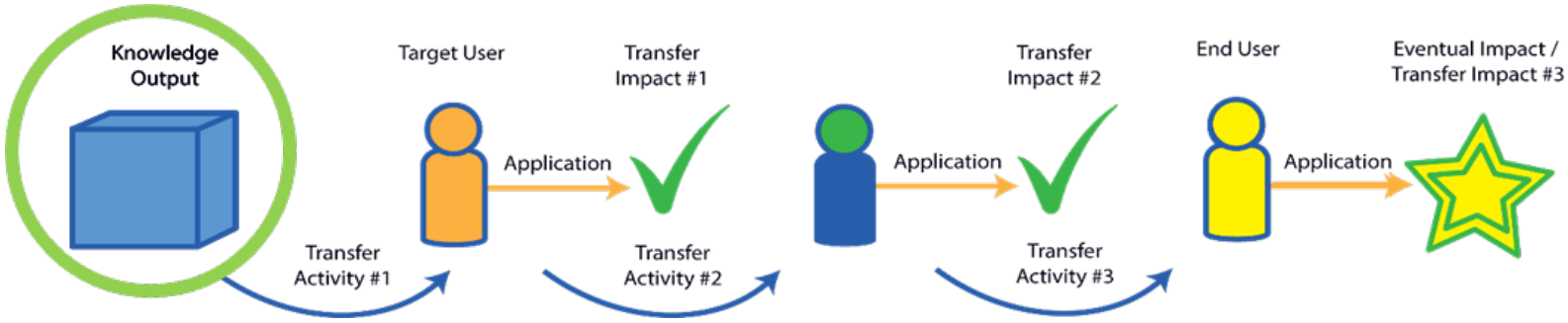
This does not include critical risks inherent to project management itself, which should be described later in the 'Implementation' section.

Describing the impact of your proposal

All measures should be proportionate to the project's scale and include concrete actions to be implemented both during and after the end of the project (e.g., standardisation activities).
The plan should adequately consider possible follow-up developments after the project ends.

In your justification, explain **why each chosen measure is the most appropriate** to reach the identified target group. Where relevant—especially for innovation actions—**describe the planned measures for a plausible commercialisation p**athway for the innovations.

Describe the planned dissemination, exploitation and communication measures, and the target groups they address (e.g., the scientific community, end-users, financial actors, the general public).



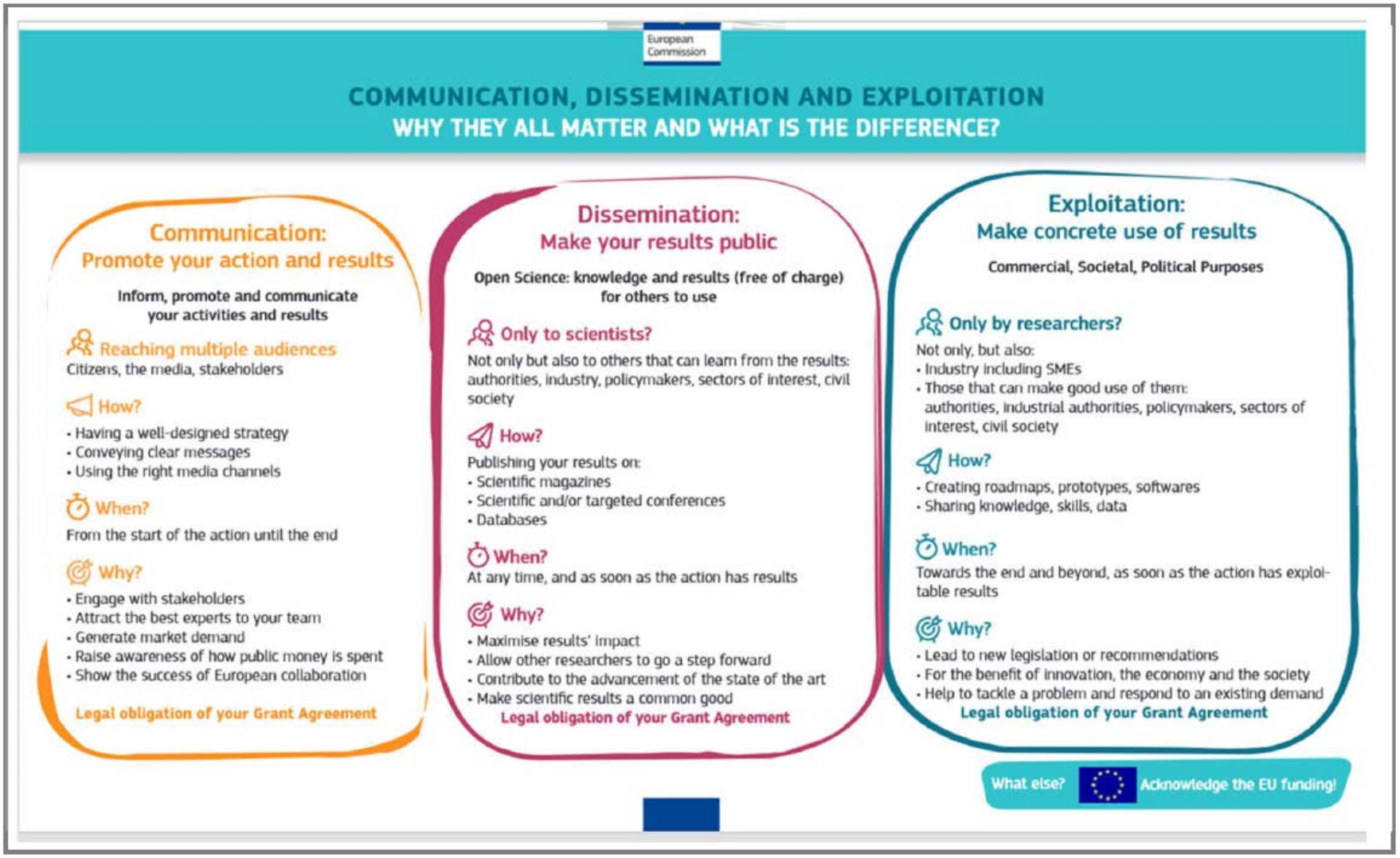
Describing the impact of your proposal

2.2 **Measures to maximise impact – Dissemination, exploitation and communication [e.g. 5 pages]**

Must be divided into three sub-sections. Each sub-section must be very clear and detailed, and for each you must indicate the specific target groups and the dedicated channels to reach them.

What is meant by COMMUNICATION?	Communication measures should **promote the project** throughout its duration **to the general public**, possibly involving a two-way exchange. The aim is to inform and engage society, showing the activities carried out as well as the use and benefits the project will deliver to citizens.
What is meant by DISSEMINATION?	**Promotion of the project's results to specific stakeholders** (researchers, industry, policy-makers, etc.) to facilitate their uptake and use in future activities (e.g., research, policies, training).
What is meant by EXPLOITATION?	**The future use of results (exploitation) maximises the project's impact, fostering the development, production, commercialisation or standardisation of products and services.** These results can be used by the scientific community, industry, policy-makers, authorities and citizens.

Describing the impact of your proposal



Describing the impact of your proposal

EXPLOITATION

Stakeholder	Results	Impact
Research community	Publications (Papers, Books) Posters, Presentations, Data, Softwares	• Further research activities and publications containing new insightful results
Industry	• Patenting • Pilot plants and prototypes • Transfer agreements • Joint venture/Start-ups • New products and services • Development of standard tests and procedures • Codes of conduct	• Generate economic growth • Development of a new product or service • Improvements of production processes and competitiveness • Improve product quality and consumer protection
Civil society	• New products, services or technology • Trainings, presentations and visits • Educational materials • Skills and knowledge	• Increase quality of life • Improve living environment • Improve urban and rural services • Improve healthcare • Reduce energy consumption • Increase product quality control • Improve employability
Policy makers	• Reports • Policy papers and recommendations • Roadmaps • Operational guidance	Revision or creation of a new directive or regulation (EU Law)

Project partners are the first to exploit the results (or to facilitate their use by others) through innovation management, rights, data and stakeholder engagement. Common instruments include patents, spin-offs/start-ups, open/copyleft licences, and academic use (PhD, post-PhD).

Describe the possible feedback to policy measures generated by the project, which will help design, monitor, review and, if necessary, adjust existing policy and programme measures, or define and support the implementation of new initiatives and policy decisions.

Link between policy priorities and project results

Strategic Planning and Programming (EC)

STRATEGIC PLAN

WORK PROGRAMME

EU POLICY PRIORITIES	Overall priorities of the European Union (Green Deal, Fit for the Digital Age,…)
KEY STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS	Set of strategic objectives within the EC policy priorities where R&I investments are expected to make a difference
IMPACT AREAS	Group of expected impacts highlighting the most important transformation to be fostered through R&I
EXPECTED IMPACTS = DESTINATIONS	Wider long term effects on society (including the environment), the economy and science, enabled by the outcomes of R&I investments (long term). It refers to the specific contribution of the project to the work programme expected impacts described in the destination. Impacts generally occur some time after the end of the project.
EXPECTED OUTCOMES = TOPICS	The expected effects, over the medium term, of projects supported under a given topic. The results of a project should contribute to these outcomes, fostered in particular by the dissemination and exploitation measures. This may include the uptake, diffusion, deployment, and/or use of the project's results by direct target groups. Outcomes generally occur during or shortly after the end of the project.
PROJECT RESULTS	What is generated during the project implementation. This may include, for example, know-how, innovative solutions, algorithms, proof of feasibility, new business models, policy recommendations, guidelines, prototypes, demonstrators, databases and datasets, trained researchers, new infrastructures, networks, etc. Most project results (inventions, scientific works, etc.) are 'Intellectual Property', which may, if appropriate, be protected by formal 'Intellectual Property Rights'

PROJECT PROPOSALS

Application process (researchers)

European Commission

Implementation

Implementation: show you can deliver

Turn the story into a work plan with owners, timing, and resources

Work plan essentials

- Work packages (WPs) with clear objectives and interfaces
- Tasks with measurable outputs and responsible partners
- Deliverables and milestones that prove progress
- Governance, quality management and decision making
- Risks with triggers, mitigation and contingency actions

Example: compact WP timeline

Make the work plan “auditable”: every objective maps to tasks → deliverables → KPIs.

Consortium

Consortium: assemble capabilities, not names

Complementarity, access to users, and credible management

Consortium design principles

- Cover the full value chain: research → validation → uptake
- Include end-users and implementers early (co-design)
- Show unique roles (no duplicated partners)
- Balance geography and expertise as the call expects
- Clarify IP background/foreground and access rights

Governance that works

- Steering committee + WP leaders with clear authority
- Technical board for integration decisions
- Advisory board for stakeholder relevance
- Data/ethics lead where relevant

Evidence reviewers trust

- Named pilots/testbeds and access to data
- Letters of commitment from adopters (where allowed)
- Track record aligned to the proposed role

Budget

Budget & resources: explain the numbers

Evaluators look for proportionality and realism

A budget becomes credible when it is a direct consequence of the work plan.

What to show (without overloading)

- Person-months justified by task effort and partner role
- Key cost drivers: pilots, equipment, travel, subcontracting
- Resources match timing (e.g., pilot effort peaks in pilot WP)
- Contingency is managed via risk plan, not “hidden” costs

Red flags reviewers notice

- Large effort for partners with minor roles
- Subcontracting used to cover missing consortium skills
- Many deliverables but little effort in technical WPs
- No effort for dissemination/exploitation or data management

Tip: add short “resource rationale” lines per WP (1–2 sentences) to prevent misinterpretation.

Cross-cutting requirements: don’t leave points on the table

Ethics, open science, data, security, gender, and beyond

Common requirements (check your call)

- Ethics self-assessment and mitigation measures
- Open science practices and data management planning
- Gender dimension in content (when relevant)
- Security and export-control considerations (when applicable)
- Communication obligations and visibility of EU funding

How to handle them well

- Assign owners (partner + WP) and include tasks/deliverables
- Use clear policies (data access, IP, ethics governance)
- Be specific: datasets, repositories, target audiences, channels

Avoid “checkbox” language

- Replace generic statements with actions, timelines and evidence
- If not applicable, explain why (briefly) and move on

Writing tactics that improve scores

Make it easy for evaluators to say “yes”

Clarity & navigation

- Use the evaluation questions as micro-headings
- Start paragraphs with the main claim (then evidence)
- Repeat key terms consistently (no synonym soup)
- Explain acronyms once; keep sentences short

Evidence & persuasion

- Quantify: baselines, targets, sample sizes, timelines
- Use figures/tables to show logic (not decoration)
- Name owners: partner, WP lead, task leader
- Stress-test with an “external reviewer” reading

If a reviewer has to infer your logic, they may infer it differently. Make links explicit.

Final pre-submission checklist

Reduce avoidable losses in scoring and eligibility

Checklist

- [ ] Call fit: every expected outcome is addressed explicitly
- [ ] Structure: follows the official template; tables completed
- [ ] Consistency: objectives ↔ WPs ↔ deliverables ↔ KPIs ↔ budget
- [ ] Impact: clear target groups, measures, channels, timelines
- [ ] Risks: top risks identified with mitigation and contingency
- [ ] Ethics/open science/security: owners + concrete actions
- [ ] Formatting: page limits, fonts, figures readable, no overflow
- [ ] Submission: upload early; validate forms; final PDF check

A proposal is “finished” when it is easy to evaluate. Optimise for reviewer time.

Artificial intelligence

Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence

Due diligence is required regarding the trustworthiness of all AI-based systems/ techniques used or developed in projects funded under Horizon Europe.

Under Horizon Europe, the technical robustness* of the proposed AI based systems must be evaluated under the excellence criterion.

(*) Technical robustness refers to technical aspects of AI systems and development, including resilience to attack and security, fullback plan and general safety, accuracy, reliability and reproducibility.

AI-based systems or techniques should be, or be developed to become:

- **Technically robust**, **accurate and reproducible**, and able to deal with and inform about possible failures, inaccuracies and errors, proportionate to the assessed risk posed by the AI-based system or technique.
- **Socially robust**, in that they duly consider the context and environment in which they operate.
- **Reliable and function as intended**, minimizing unintentional and unexpected harm, preventing unacceptable harm and safeguarding the physical and mental integrity of humans.
- Able to provide a suitable explanation of its **decision-making process**, whenever an AI-based system can have a significant impact on people's lives.

Proposal template Part B: technical description

List of participants

1. Excellence #@REL-EVA-RE@#

1.1 Objectives and ambition #@PRJ-OBJ-PO@#

- Describe the general objectives linked to EU policy (i.e. monitoring, mitigation, policy)
- Following: specific objectives! (link this to the specific Action!)
- State of the Art and specific challenges: baseline with numbers!

1.2 Methodology

- Conceptual structure
- Describe in detail means, tools, gear, methods (TRL of each solution)
- Availability and Commercial Involvement to ensure exploitation
- Maps of areas/activity
- Data analysis
- AI
- National and international R&I activities that will feed in to project's outcomes (list of available and replicable projects results)
- Multi-actor approach, disciplines, training, and exploitation
- Sex and/or gender aspects
- Open Science practices
- Research data management (FAIR: Findability, Accessibility, Interoperability, Reusability

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Proposal template Part B: technical description

2. Impact #@IMP-ACT-IA@#

2.1 Project's pathways towards impact

2.2 Measures to maximise impact - Dissemination, exploitation and communication

2.3 Impact Summary

3. Quality and efficiency of the implementation

3.1 Work plan and resources

3.1.1 Work Packages and their Interrelation

3.1.2 Timing of the Work Packages and Tas

3.1.3 List of Work Packages

Gantt chart

3.1.4 Work Package Description

WP Leader

Task description with task leader

Short but detailed

List of Deliverables and Milestones with deadlines

Critical risks for implementation

Summary of staff effort and costs

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Proposal template Part B: technical description

3. Quality and efficiency of the implementation
3.1 Work plan and resources
3.1.1 Work Packages and their Interrelation
3.1.2 Timing of the Work Packages and Tas
3.1.3 List of Work Packages
Gantt chart
3.1.4 Work Package Description
3.2 Capacity of participants and consortium as a whole
3.2.1 Consortium Complementarity
Competence/partner matrix
3.2.2. Management structure and responsibilities

European Commission