How to write a good proposal

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Get prepared to submit a proposal...

1. Study the call documentation
2. Select your partners
3. Plan your project and prepare the Technical Description (Template Part B)
Horizon Europe + CBE requirements

Horizon Europe (HE) conditions

Evaluation criteria

Annual Work Programme 2024
- Topics
- Specific requirements
- Budget

Proposal structure

Part A

Part B
1. Excellence
   1.1 Objectives and ambition
   1.2 Methodology

2. Impact
   2.1 Project’s pathways towards impact
   2.2 Measures to maximise impact

3. Implementation
   3.1 Work plan and resources
   3.2 Capacity of participants and consortium as a whole
1. Excellence

Are the objectives clear?
• pertinent to the topic?
• measurable and verifiable?

Is the state-of-the-art well presented? Is it clear to what extent the proposal goes beyond the state-of-the-art?

Is the proposed work ambitious enough to be innovative, but not so ambitious that it is unrealistic?

Is the initial and targeted Technology Readiness Level (TRL) properly described and realistically achievable within the proposed project?

The targeted TRL of a topic is required for at least the core technology, process or product developed.

Proposal – Part B

1. Objectives and ambition
1.2 Methodology
2. Project’s pathways towards impact
2.2 Measures to maximise impact
3. Work plan and resources
3.2 Capacity of participants and consortium as a whole
1. Excellence

Does the proposal show that the proposed methodology is appropriate and effective for achieving the objectives (incl. overcoming challenges)?

If AI-based systems/techniques are used, is their robustness demonstrated?

- Do No Significant Harm principle
- Feedstock
- Ex-ante environmental performance assessment
1. Excellence

Are **relevant initiatives** identified (incl. BBI/CBE projects) and, when meaningful, appropriate interactions considered?

In case of R&I activities with a relevant **gender dimension**: Has it been considered in the proposal?

- Digital technologies
- Cross-disciplinary aspects and Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH)
- Multi-actor approach *(IA incl. Flag, selected RIA and CSA)*
1. Excellence

Does the proposal demonstrate **open science** practices?

⚠️ In HE, ‘open science’ is more than ‘open access’: It is an approach to science based on open, cooperative work and sharing of knowledge and tools as early and widely as possible.

include publication of LC(S)A output

(*IA incl. IA-Flagship topics*)

Does the proposal provide details on **data management** in line with the FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable)?

⚠️ In the grant, there will be mandatory deliverables “Data Management Plan”.

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Proposal – Part B

1. Objectives and ambition

2. Project’s pathways towards impact

3. Work plan and resources

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1.1 Objectives and ambition

1.2 Methodology

2.1 Project’s pathways towards impact

2.2 Measures to maximise impact

3.1 Work plan and resources

3.2 Capacity of participants and consortium as a whole
2. Impact

Is it clear which unique contributions would be made to:

- the outcomes specified in the topic text? (medium term)
- the wider impacts beyond the immediate scope and duration of the project? (longer term)

Is it clear which target groups will benefit?

Have the scale and significance of the contribution been indicated?

Have relevant requirements and potential barriers to outcome and impact been determined?

Have appropriate mitigating measures, within or beyond the project, been described?

Tip! Provide quantified estimates whenever possible and meaningful.

- management risks (3.1 Work plan and resources)
2. Impact

⚠️ First sketch of the Dissemination, Exploitation and Communication plan = **admissibility criterion** (In the grant, there will be mandatory D&E&C deliverables.)

🔍 Is the plan to **disseminate** results to candidate user audiences appropriate?  

Tip! Provide quantified targets.

Are actions included to **communicate** project activities and results to multiple audiences (beyond project’s community)?

Is the strategy to **exploit** the project’s results appropriate? (incl. management of IPR)

⚠️ Include a preliminary overview of relevant IPR, both within and outside the consortium.

- Economic viability check (*RIA*)
- Business Case + Model (*IA incl. IA-Flag*)
- Business Plan (*separate Annex; IA-Flag*)
3. Implementation

Does the **work plan** have a good and clear structure?

Have the different **work packages** (WP) been scheduled and linked appropriately? Are their inter-dependencies clear?

Are **milestones** and **deliverables** well defined and appropriately timed?

Are the WPs and associated tasks **sufficiently described** to provide a good understanding of the work involved and justify the proposed resources to be allocated?

- Table 3.1a List of work packages
- Table 3.1b Work package descriptions
- Table 3.1c List of deliverables
- Table 3.1d List of milestones
- Table 3.1e Critical risks for implementation
- Table 3.1f-j Staff effort, Different costs, Contributions
3. Implementation

Are the described organisational structure and decision-making mechanisms appropriate to the scale and complexity of the project?

Are the management procedures, including quality management and conflict resolution, appropriate to the scale and complexity of the project?

Are critical internal and external risks related to project implementation described with appropriate mitigation measures and severity/probability estimates?

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3. Implementation

- Ex-post environmental performance assessment
  *(RIA, IA: LCA and IA-Flag: LCSA)*
- Recommendations to stakeholders
  *(IA incl. IA-Flag)*
3. Implementation

Does the consortium bring together the necessary expertise for the project?

Has the complementarity of the participants been convincingly described?

Does each partner have a valid role and adequate resources (both effort and budget) to fulfil that role?

⚠️ If a participant requesting funding is based in a third country not eligible for funding: Is clearly explained why participation by this entity is essential to carry out the project?
Build a strong consortium

Match elements of Topic (Scope) and Part B (Excellence) to individual partners in the consortium.

- Are there any competence gaps in the consortium?

Use the networking opportunities offered by the Funding & Tenders Portal, CBE and BIC

During proposal writing:

- Significant level of upfront commitment from all partners is crucial, as costs are not eligible before project start.
- High level of confidence between partners is key.
- Talk early about handling of IPR – these will need to be confirmed formally in the Consortium Agreement before signature of the Grant Agreement.
A competitive bioeconomy for a sustainable future

How to write a good proposal

Aim for total “Topic eclipse”

Topic\(^+\) = Topic text + HE requirements + CBE specific requirements

- every single word in topic text counts
- every single requirement counts
Thank you for your attention!