Lessons learnt from Calls 2022-2023

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Topic interpretation questions: please use info@cbe.europa.eu, not Slido

Table of contents

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

- **Creation timing vs. success rate**

- **Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) analysis**

  - Evaluation process

  - Most common shortcomings and weaknesses

Table of contents

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Use of generative AI in ==proposal preparation==

Disclaimer included in Application Forms (Part B)

*"When considering the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools for the preparation of the proposal, it is imperative to exercise caution and careful consideration. The AI-generated content should be thoroughly reviewed and validated by the applicants to ensure its appropriateness and accuracy, as well as its compliance with intellectual property regulations. **Applicants are fully responsible for the content of the proposal** (even those parts produced by the AI tool) and must be transparent in disclosing which AI tools were used and how they were utilised".*

Specifically, **applicants are required** to:

- **Verify the accuracy, validity, and appropriateness** of the content and any citations generated by the AI tool and correct any errors or inconsistencies.
- **Provide a list of sources used to generate content and citations**, including those generated by the AI tool. Double-check citations to ensure they are accurate and properly referenced.
- **Be conscious of the potential for plagiarism** where the AI tool may have reproduced substantial text from other sources. Check the original sources to be sure you are not plagiarising someone else's work.
- **Acknowledge the limitations of the AI tool** in the proposal preparation, including the potential for bias, errors, and gaps in knowledge".

Artificial intelligence

Relevant for evaluation…and thus proposal writing

- Experts must answer an additional question as part of their individual evaluations on whether the activities proposed involve the **use and/or development of AI-based systems and/or techniques**.

- If you answer 'yes' to this question, you must **assess the technical robustness** of the proposed AI-system as part of the excellence criterion (if applicable).

- In addition, your answer to this question will help us to with the **proper follow-up** of any aspects related to **Artificial Intelligence** in projects funded under Horizon Europe.

(*) Technical robustness refers to technical aspects of AI systems and development, including resilience to attack and security, fallback 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.

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Table of contents

Table of contents

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  - Evaluation process

  - Most common shortcomings and weaknesses

Circular
Bio-based
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Table of contents

Table of contents

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- **Call 2023:** 344 proposals *created* in Portal
  - 105 remained in draft ('test' proposals...or missed submission deadline?)
  - 77 deleted
  - 162 submitted
- **162 submitted proposals**
  - 7 proposals did not pass eligibility and admissibility, or were withdrawn
  - 51 proposals did not pass one or more of the evaluation threshold(s)
  - 74 proposals were above the evaluation thresholds, but below the funding available (= including proposals on the 'reserve list')
  - 30 proposals were invited for GAP ('main list')

➢ *Would there be correlation (or even causation) between the creation time of a proposal and its success rate?*

➢ *Does an early proposal creation indicate a higher success rate?*

- Green = 30 'main list' proposals
- Red = submitted but unsuccessful
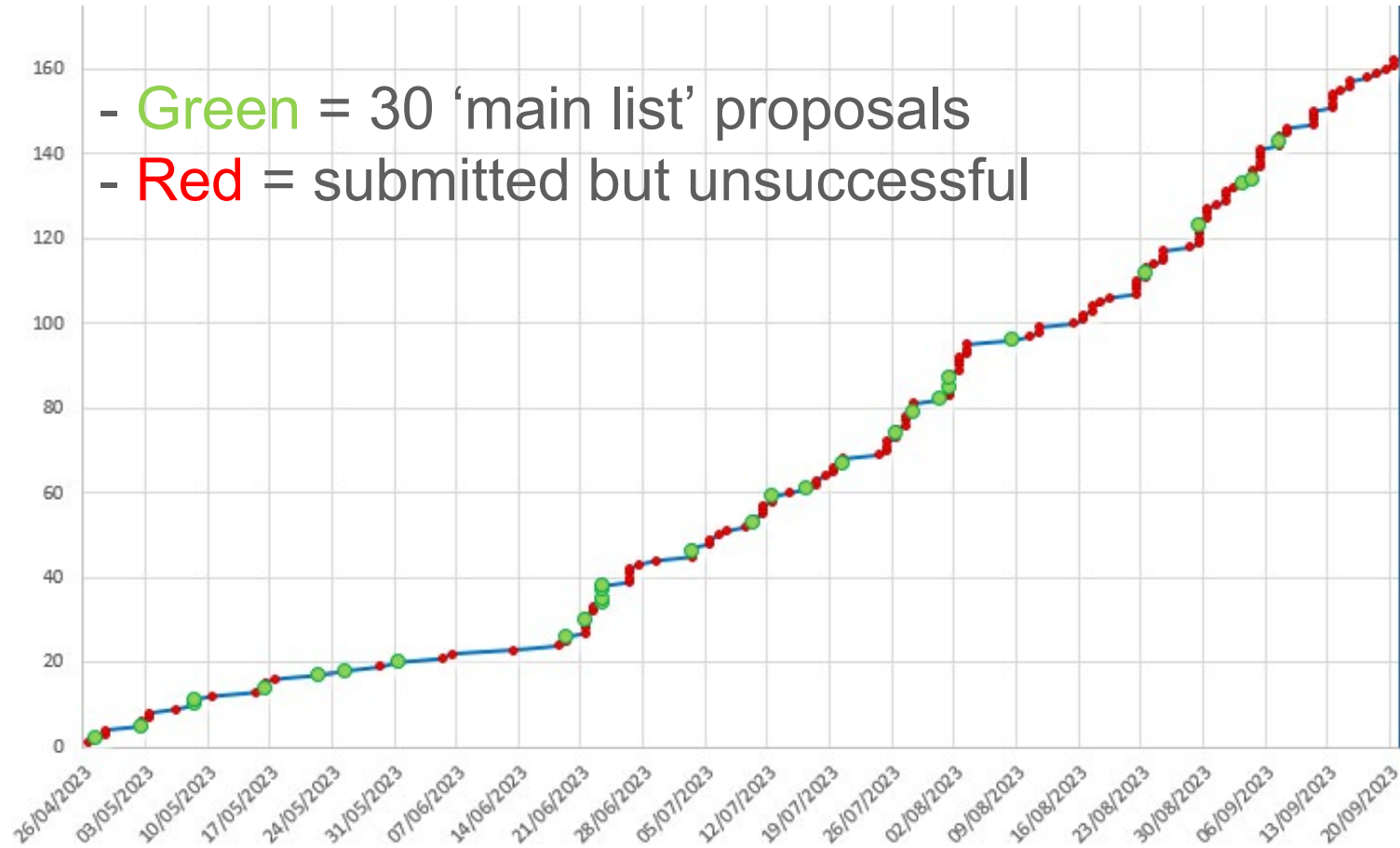
- **Data analysis**

	Created between…	Median creation date	Created in September
30 x Main list	27/04 - 07/09	03/07/2023	3 (10%)
74 x above threshold(s)	28/04 - 19/09	26/07/2023	14 (19%)
51 x below threshold(s)	26/04 – 18/09	19/08/2023	14 (27%)
7 x ineligible/withdrawn	06/05 - 20/09	29/08/2023	3 (43%)

- **Conclusions**
  - Positive *correlation* between early proposal creation and success rate
  - Possible reasons for *causality*: more time to build a solid consortium and cover all requirements, expecially for IAs + FLAGs
  - **Early creation** = earlier awareness about elements blocking submission (IT tool provides warnings) = more time to solve them *=> starting to work in the Portal asap adds value!*

Table of contents

Table of contents

- Artificial Intelligence (AI)
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- **Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) analysis**
  - Evaluation process
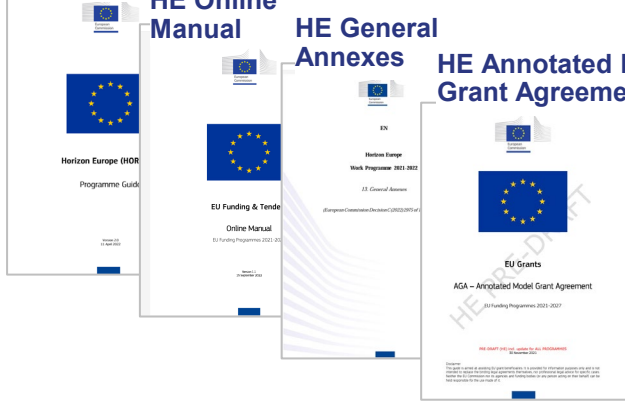 - Most common shortcomings and weaknesses

CBE proposal & evaluation template
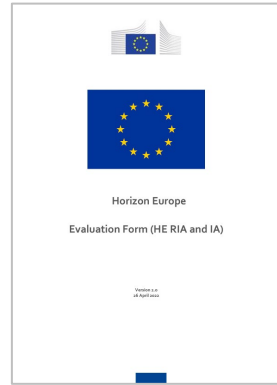
Horizon Europe (HE) conditions

HE Programme Guide

HE Online Manual

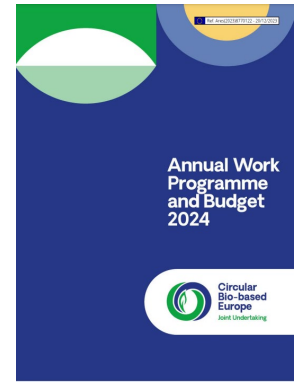HE General Annexes

HE Annotated Model Grant Agreement

Evaluation criteria

Horizon Europe

Evaluation Form (HE RIA and IA)

Annual Work Programme 2024

- Topics
- Specific requirements
- Budget

Annual Work Programme and Budget 2024

Part A

Part B

Proposal structure

European Commission | EU Funding & Tenders Portal

Horizon Europe scoring principles

0 — The proposal **fails to address the criterion** or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.

1 — **Poor.** The criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.

2 — **Fair.** The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.

CBE JU evaluation thresholds: 3/5 or 4/5 (impact)

3 — **Good.** The proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.

4 — **Very Good.** The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.

5 — **Excellent.** The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

- **155 proposals** (162 submitted – 7 ineligible/withdrawn) were sent for evaluation to external experts
- **4 types of actions** (CSA, RIA, IA, IA-Flagship)
  - 155 Evaluation Summary Reports (ESRs) all use the same format / structure
  - ESR texts include the Horizon Europe score qualifiers (minor shortcomings, shortcomings, and 2 types of weaknesses)
- **Which data extracted from ESRs?**
  - Split up the ESR structure into different evaluation subcriteria...
  - ...and count the amount of (non-minor) shortcomings and/or weaknesses per subcriterion in the 155 evaluated Call 2023 proposals

Top 5+1 most common <u>shortcomings</u> ordered by frequency

1. Impact – expected outcomes (= bullet points in topic text)
2. Implementation – work plan (incl. Tasks, deliverables,...)
3. Excellence – ambition level, (going beyond) SOTA, TRLs
4. Implementation – risk & mitigation measures
5. Excellence – scope (bullet points in topic text)
6. *(For RIAs: Impact – economic viability check)*

*The 3 'biggest' evaluation elements*

Top 5 most common <u>weaknesses</u> ordered by frequency

1. Excellence – methodology
2. Excellence – ambition level, (going beyond) SOTA, TRLs
3. Excellence – scope (bullet points in topic text)

You can't hide a bad idea…

4. Impact – expected outcomes (= bullet points in topic text)
5. Implementation – work plan

Equally interesting: what **ISN'T** there...the IA IKOP evaluation subcriterion

- **Use these insights to support the preparation of Call 2024 proposals**...

- **...but beware of (reverse) survivorship bias**

  – During WW2, the US air force analysed damage or returning planes (red dots in the figure)

  – At first, airplane manufacturers wanted to strenghthen the areas with red dots...

  – ...until they realised that planes returned *notwithstanding* this damage, so they should actually reinforce the 'non-red' areas...

  – So: yes, please take into account the Call 2023 ESR analysis outputs...

  – ...but don't neglect other proposal elements with historically better scores
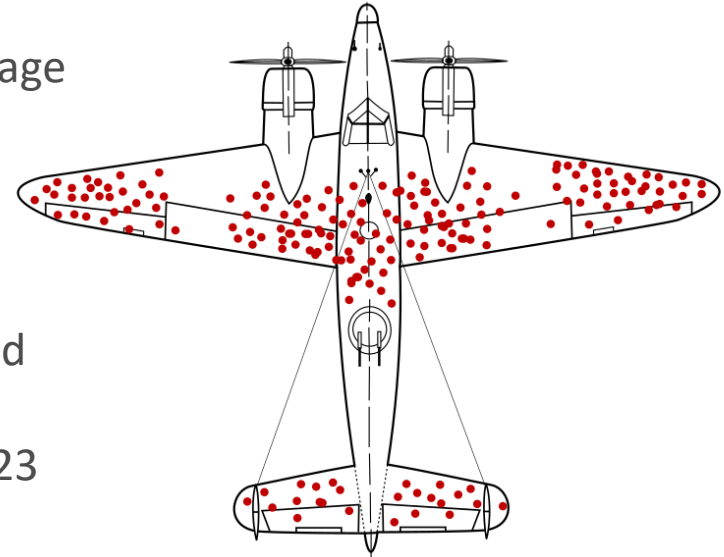
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Survivorship_bias#/media/File:Survivorship-bias.svg

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10:45 – 12:45
Session 3 | Information on CBE JU Call 2024

Chair: Dieter Brigitta, CBE JU Call Coordnator

Call submission & evaluation of proposals
Dieter Brigitta, CBE JU Call Coordinator

Call management rules & conditions
Marta Campos Iturralde, CBE JU Acting Head of Administration and
Finance Unit and Legal Manager

CBE JU-specific call requirements
Pilar Llorente Ruiz de Azua, CBE JU Programme Officer

How to write a good proposal
Oliver Zobell, CBE JU Deputy Call Coordinator

Lessons learnt from call 2022-23
Dieter Brigitta, CBE JU Call Coordinator

Q&A session and next steps