



Receiver(s): Aarhus University

Guide

How to understand and prepare addressing topics in Horizon 2020 Work Programmes

This is a guide on how to navigate in a Horizon 2020 work programme and how to understand a topic. The aim is to guide you through a work programme, identify the most important information, find out if the topic you have chosen is the right one for you and teach you how to deconstruct a topic in order for you to address the right things in your application. This guide can be applied on topics within pillar 2 and 3 of H2020, which is *Industrial Leadership* and *Societal Challenges*.

Once you have found the work programme relevant to your research, you are ready for the 5 steps that will help you to understand a Horizon 2020 topic.

Step 1: the table of content

On one of the first pages, you will find a table of content. The table of content is structured around all the calls with specific topics available within the particular work programme. The table of content have interactive links, which allows you to click on the call or topic of your interest, which will lead you directly to the relevant section without scrolling through the entire document.

The table of content provides a simple overview of the research areas that the EU will be funding, so it can be worth reading this as the first step to get a good overview.





In the first part of the work programme you will also find a general introduction. Here you can read about the political background, the aim of the work programme and the themes within which you can apply for funding. It is recommended to read this introduction as it gives an understanding of the context, which is important to know when writing an application. In the beginning of each call you will equally find an introduction which is also recommended to read. Do not underestimate the relevance of addressing the political context in your application as pillar 2 and 3 in the work programmes in large parts are focused on identifying new and innovative solutions to societal and industrial challenges to increase the European growth.

Step 2: types of actions

Once you have found the relevant topic you must first identify what **type of action** the topic is. The type of action will tell you what kind of project it must be. There are three main types of actions within Horizon 2020:

TYPE OF ACTIONS	
Research and Innovation Action [RIA]	Action primarily consisting of activities aiming to establish new knowledge and/or to explore the feasibility of a new or improved technology, product, process, service or solution. For this purpose they may include basic and applied research, technology development and integration, testing and validation ...
Innovation Action [IA]	An action primarily consisting of activities directly aiming at producing plans and arrangements or designs for new, altered or improved products, processes or services. For this purpose they may include prototyping, testing, demonstrating, piloting, large-scale product validation and market replication.
Coordination and Support Action [CSA]	An action consisting primarily of accompanying measures such as standardisation, dissemination, awareness raising and communication, networking, coordination or support services, policy dialogues and mutual learning exercises and studies, including design studies for new infrastructure and may also include complementary activities of networking and coordination between programmes in different countries.

The type of action is stated under the specific topic as either RIA, IA or CSA and you should check this when choosing your project.

Step 3: deconstruction of topic

Once you have chosen a specific topic you **must** read it very carefully as you will be presented with several pieces of information that are relevant to consider when writing your application. As you read through the topic the level of details of what the project must entail will increase.

Specific challenge: In this section, you will find information about the challenge that the EU wants to address on an overall level. You will be able to find out the background for



developing this particular topic and this will give you an understanding of the context of the topic.

Scope (budget): Under scope you will be provided with many details about what the project should contain. The budget of each project is also stated under scope. In the end of the work programme you can find the overall budget, which will indicate approximately the number of projects that will receive funding.

This is also the section where you should pay much attention to details such as the wording of the text. For example, you will see that words such as **should** and **must** will appear several times. If the text says that you **must** address something specific then it is mandatory. If it says **should** it leaves some room for interpretation, but be careful and read between the lines. The words are there for a reason and you must try to address everything in your application and argue for not addressing certain aspects in the project if that is the case.

Highlight keywords and interpret the research fields involved, dimensions of the project etc.

References to existing projects is valuable information. The purpose of looking for previous projects is to get an overview of what the Commission has formerly granted. It is not likely that the Commission will finance the same project twice. Additionally, the Commission's project portal CORDIS might shed light on potential competitors as well as on prospective partners.

Expected impact: Here you will find what the EU expects that will come out of the project. Underline the keywords and interpret stakeholders. Who would have to be involved? Perhaps you already know them or maybe you need to find them in order to deliver on the expected impact. Do not underestimate the importance of addressing the expected impact. It is important to have stakeholders within the consortium to address all the expected impacts.

Type of action: see step 2



In general, you should ask yourself if the project is feasible within the provided budget- and timeframe. Do you understand the specific challenge? Can you gather a consortium that can address the scope of the project? Can you deliver on the expected impact?

Step 4: condition for calls

Following each call with the specific topics, you can find the conditions for the call. For example, you will be able to find information regarding opening dates, deadlines, indicative budgets, whether it is a single- or two-stage application etc.

Step 5: type of roles

There are several ways to participate in an EU project and you should consider what kind of role you are ready to play. Being the coordinator of a project entails a large responsibility and is highly time consuming. If you are new to EU projects, being a partner could be a good place to start.

TYPE OF ROLE	
Coordinator	The coordinator of a consortium who submits the project in the name of the consortium . In case of successful application it participates in the grant preparation in the name of the consortium and during the project period keeps contact with the European Commission in the name of the consortium.
Partner (participant)	Part of the consortium. Any legal entity carrying out an action or part of an action . Having rights and obligations with regard to the European Union under the terms of the Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation.
Work package leader	The coordinator will typically divide and delegate along the lines that are established during the grant proposal phase of the project. A work package leader will have tasks and responsibilities regarding quality assurance, evaluation and validation

Being an evaluator of proposals is another way to learn about how other researchers are addressing a topic in writing their proposals. You can find information on how you can sign up for being an evaluator [here](#).

Contact information

If you need help with Horizon 2020 the Research Support Office can be contacted [here](#)
Please find more information about the Research Support Office [here](#)