AARHUS UNIVERSITY

Receiver(s): Aarhus University

Guide
How to understand and prepare addressing topics in Horizon Europe "Pillar 2" Work Programmes

This is a guide on how to navigate in a Horizon Europe (HEU) 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 of HEU, which is Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness.

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 Europe topic.

Step 1: table of content
On one of the first pages in each work programme, you will find a table of content. The table of content is structured around overall destinations with underlying calls describing the specific topics. The table of content have interactive links, which allows you to click on the call or topic of your interest. This 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. Here you can also see the year of the deadline for each specific topic.

After the table of content you will meet the following structure of the work pro-
gramme:

STRUCTURE	
Introduction	This is **a general introduction** for the entire work programme. Here you can read about **the political background**, **the aim** of the work programme and **the destinations (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.
Destination	Under each destination you will find an **introduction to the specific theme** of the destination, which is recommended to read in order to understand the **overall expected impact**. These expected impacts are **following the Horizon Europe Strategic Plan**, and the proposals for topics under the destinations should contribute to this solving this. Here you will also find the **overall budgets** and **deadline**s for the calls under the specific destination
Call	Each destination is then **divided into specific calls**, which are the **targeted impacts** for the destinations. Here you will also find the **conditions** for the specific topics.
Topic	The topics are **the lowest level** in the structure of the work programme, and is here you will find **the actual presentation of the expected outcome and scope** and what your project should be focused on – but be aware that the other levels also offer much important knowledge for **understanding the political context**.

Do not underestimate the relevance of addressing the political context in your applica-
tion. The work programmes are in large parts focused on identifying new and innova-
tive solutions to societal and industrial challenges.

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 Europe:

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: Condition for calls

You can also find an overview of the conditions of the call with detailed information
about opening dates, deadlines, indicative budgets, expected number of projects to be
funded, whether it is a single-stage or two-stage application etc.

Step 4: deconstruction of topic

You're now ready to select the relevant 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 conditions: In this section you will be provided with the conditions for the specific topic: expected EU contributions per project, indicative budget and type of Action.

In general, you should ask yourself if the project is feasible within the provided budget- and timeframe. Do you understand the specific challenge? Should you be a partner or a coordinator? (see step 5) Can you gather a consortium that can address the scope of the project? Can you deliver on the expected outcome?

Expected outcome: Here you will find what the EU expects that will come out of the projects funded through this topic. Underline the keywords and interpret stakeholders. Who would have to be in–volved? Perhaps you already know them or maybe you need to find them in order to deliver on the expected outcome. Do not underestimate the importance of addressing the expected outcome. To a greater extent than Horizon2020, Horizon Europe is built around a portfolio mindset, where it is the overall portfolio of projects that must meet the stated expected outcomes. It is however still important for the consortium to include stakeholders with a broad range of expertise that allows you address major parts of the expected outcome.

Scope: Under scope you will be provided with many details about what the project should contain. In this section, you will find information about the challenge that the EU wants to address at an overall level, and you will find the background for developing this particular topic and this will give you an understanding of the context of the topic. You will also find a paragraph on what the proposal is expected to address, and here you should pay much attention to details such as the wording of the text. For some topics you are expected to address all aspects, for others not necessarily all. You will for example also 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. Such words and many other words of choice 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 type of project twice. Additionally, the Commission's project portal CORDIS might shed light on potential competitors as well as on prospective partners.

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, but on the other hand it also gives you a good opportunity to influence the direction and structure of the project. If you are new to EU projects, being a partner could be a good way 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.

More information
Please find more information about Horizon Europe at the Research Support Office website. If you need help with Horizon Europe the Research Support Office can be contacted here.