

Getting funding from EU's Framework Programs – Facts, Tips & Tricks

Advice from experts and successful applicants

Contents

Thanks to our contributors!

Facts, Tips & Tricks

The calls

Keeping track

Understanding the call

Previously funded projects

Strategy for success

Work strategically

What it takes to succeed

The application

Tips

To consider

Potential pitfalls

Types of calls

SME Instrument

Consortium calls

Build a consortium

Be a reliable partner

Support resources

Available support

EU SME support office

SME funding

Grants offices

EU framework program calls

Keep track of the calls!

Keep track of dates and topics of the programmes/calls that may suit you: [the Funding and Tenders Portal](#) (has replaced the participant portal)

European Commission | Funding & tender opportunities
Single Electronic Data Interchange Area (SEDIA)

English EN
Register Login

SEARCH FUNDING & TENDERS | HOW TO PARTICIPATE | PROJECTS & RESULTS | WORK AS AN EXPERT | SUPPORT

The Funding & Tenders Portal is the entry point (the Single Electronic Data Interchange Area) for participants and experts in funding programmes and tenders managed by the European Commission and other EU bodies.

Feedback

Find calls for proposals and tenders

Search calls for proposals and tenders by keywords, programmes... Search

What are calls for proposals? > | What are calls for tenders? > | How to participate in 5 steps >

Calls for proposals by EU Programme

3rd Health Programme | Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund | Consumer Programme | Creative Europe | Erasmus+ Programme | European Maritime and Fisheries Fund | HERCULE III | **Horizon 2020 Framework Programme**

Register:

Get a Participant Identification Code (PIC)
Download templates

Support:

Online manual etc.

H2020

Understanding the call/topic

Call vs. Topic

- Each call covers a **broader challenge**, e.g. "Better Health and care, economic growth and sustainable health systems"
- Each call is subdivided into **priorities** or is related to cross-cutting **focus areas**
- The most detailed level is specific **topics**, with detailed information. This what most people would probably think of as a "call" (sv. *Utlysning*)
- **Expert advice:** make sure to read the texts about priorities and focus areas, *not just the topics!*

Topic information

- **Specific Challenge** – describes the context of the call and the issues it aims to address, encourages you to transform those into objectives
- **Scope** – outlines expected results of project and an appropriate budget
- **Expected Impact** – provides required outputs and sometimes stakeholders that the project should reach
- **Type of action** – **RIA** (Research and Innovation Action), **CSA** (Coordination and Support Action)... For details of the different types see: [EU H2020 Fact Sheet](#)

What has already been funded?

Don't forget to check out what has already been funded:

[CORDIS](#) is a database of previously funded projects

Useful information may also be mined from other sources, e.g. Swedish funders' project databases or [NIH's Reporter Matchmaker](#)



The screenshot shows the CORDIS (Community Research and Development Information Service) website. At the top, there is the European Commission logo and the text 'CORDIS Community Research and Development Information Service'. Below this is a navigation bar with 'European Commission > CORDIS > Projects and Results > Home'. A search bar is located on the right side of the navigation bar, with a 'Search' button and a 'Sign in' link. The main content area is divided into three sections: 'NEWS & EVENTS', 'PROJECTS & RESULTS', and 'RESEARCH*EU MAGAZINES'. Under 'PROJECTS & RESULTS', there is a section titled 'Browse by:' with a dropdown menu for 'Subject' and a list of 'Programme' categories. The 'Programme' list includes 'Horizon 2020' and various research areas like 'All', 'Excellent Science', 'ERC', 'FET', 'MSCA-ITN', 'MSCA-IF', 'MSCA-RISE', 'MSCA-COFUND', 'MSCA-SUPPORT', 'INFRA', 'Industrial Leadership', 'LEIT-ICT', 'LEIT-NANO', 'LEIT-ADVMAT', 'LEIT-BIOTECH', 'LEIT-ADVMANU', 'LEIT-SPACE', 'RISK-FINANCE', 'SME', 'Societal Challenges', and 'HEALTH'. To the right of the 'Browse by:' section, there is a text block titled 'The primary information source for EU-funded projects since 1990' with a 'Read more...' link. Below this is another text block titled 'Horizon 2020 project information' with a 'report summaries' link. A search bar for 'Search projects and results' is located below the text blocks. At the bottom of the page, there is a 'Latest Results in Brief' section with a photo of a cathedral interior and a link to 'Gender politics in the University of Oxford's collegiate choirs' dated 2018-02-13.

Strategy for success

Work strategically!

- Learn the process and be patient and persistent!
- Decide early on what you want to do in the project – and be clear about this to your project partners
 - Find a call that suit your research/project
 - Define your own agenda within the overall project plan, what do you want to accomplish?
 - In a bigger project the main focus may not to be 100% relevant to you, but the project could still be beneficial to you if your part of the work is something you want to achieve
- The success rate may be as low as 8-10% success rate
 - Don't rely completely on any single application
 - It may benefit you to participate in several applications
- Establish and maintain stable relationships with partners that are strong at the EU level – show them you are a desirable partner for any future projects they initiate

What it takes to succeed

- The project idea should fit the WP topic 100%!
- A project that you can sell to the evaluators
 - Present an attractive case: identify what will make a difference and make this the focus
 - A clear impact!
 - Can you provide a unique solution?
 - Projects should clearly go beyond the current state-of-the-art
 - Address IP issues if applicable
 - Include all of the requirements in your project design
- A dedicated team / An excellent consortium
 - Collaboration of partners with very diverse expertise will be an asset
 - High level of motivation from all!
- Sometimes you may need external support for writing etc.
- Patience, energy & perseverance – Have fun during the process!
 - Repeated attempts may be required...

The application

Tips for your application

- Educate the evaluator!
 - There is a difference between H2020 and the Swedish research councils
 - The evaluators are scientists, politicians, bureaucrats, business people
 - The evaluators consider scientific excellence, political, social, commercial and economic aspects
- Be smart about your deliverables!
 - Consider the type, number and timing
 - Aim to minimize the extra work related to deliverables, harmonize them with work you will do anyway, e.g. publications/workshops
 - Evaluators are not generally impressed by a large number of deliverables, they are after true social/industrial impact
- Dedicate people to write about the organisation, exploitation, dissemination etc.
 - These parts are as important as the research/work plan!
 - You can often make use of previous applications here, but don't cut and paste!
 - Highlight the credibility of the team!

Remember to consider...

- The direction provided by the call/topic information
 - Priorities, Focus areas
 - Scope, Expected Impacts...
- How will proposed work advance state-of-the-art?
- What makes the proposal "special"?
- Are the basic and applied aspects of the science well connected?
- How can findings be best disseminated, tested, demonstrated and applied
 - in different European settings?
- How are users/stakeholders of research outputs involved in the implementation of the work?
- Include a clear plan/contract for any IP rights that play a large role in the project

Potential pitfalls

- Don't spend time on “hopeless” applications
- Avoid projects where there is no dedicated coordinator

For specific projects / applications:

- Avoid any substantial commitments outside your expertise
 - E.g. Public dissemination events if you are research focused
- Be careful about research tasks that demand a lot of synchronization with other project partners or that depend on others delivering the right thing at the right time
- Don't forget Support letters and Letters of intent (from project partners, customers, incubators) or statements about co-funding

Different types of calls

The SME Instrument

Biggest challenges

- What is my market?
- Who is my customer?
- What are the regulations?
- What are the ways of distribution?
- What do I want to do with my product/service?
- Why is the customer interested?

General tips

- Be clear about previous financial support and what a new grant will lead to
- If a pitch is needed, highlight sought-after aspects & keep to the time limit!

Common mistakes

- Idea is unclear / not described convincingly
- Low innovation ambitions
- Lack of understanding of SME instrument purpose
- Low awareness & understanding of market trends & needs, current competitive / state-of-the-art solutions
- Poor description of applicant capacity and competences to successfully implement the project
- Proposed technology has not reached required Technology Readiness Level
- Unclear go-to-market strategy

Consortium calls (RIA,IA etc.)

Coordinate a project?

- Takes time & effort during both the application and the project execution
- Provides visibility, but may mean less financing for actual research
- Avoid coordinating if the *entire* project idea is not of interest to you
- Starting out as a coordinator on you first EU application is difficult and costly, it may be beneficial to start by being a partner in a consortium

Find partners

- Identify & contact key people in already funded projects to see about opportunities for participating in future applications
- Participate in EU “Information days” & “networking sessions” in your area
- Join relevant networks/organizations – see and be seen!
- Make contact with existing/potential partners 3-6 m before deadline
- Prepare a description of your key competence and a clear plan for what you want to contribute

Building a stable consortium

If you are the coordinator or among the initiators

- Develop the idea in a smaller group, e.g. 2-3 partners
- Create a mental image of the perfect consortium
- Invite additional partners successively
- Be specific about the role you want new partners to take on
- Be critical when selecting partners, remember to consider:
 - network, previous collaboration, previous EU projects
 - Including SMEs
 - Age & Gender
- Remember: Projects require partners from at least three different EU member/associated countries!

Be a reliable project partner!

Be a reliable partner in projects & applications!

- Complete your work on time
- Work responsibly
- Your opportunities for being invited to future applications depends on your previous reliability
 - Being a good partner can pay off even if you have lost faith in the present application
- If possible, avoid very time consuming parts of the application
 - Be clear with your partners about what you can and cannot provide and why

Support resources

Make use of the available support!

Take advantage of the support and resources available to you, e.g. ...

For SMEs

- EU SME Support Office resources
- Targeted financial support

For researchers and others with academic affiliation

- Grants Office/Research Services/similar at your university

Other resources or partners could be found through other networks, e.g.:

- [EIT Health](#)
- [ITEA3](#)
- EUREKA/Eurostars



ITEA3



EU SME Support Office

- National network of partners with long term experience of EU's framework programmes and supporting Swedish industry
- Free "**one stop shop**" support service for SMEs
- Helpdesk function provides a reply within 48 hours
 - helpdesk@eusme.se
- Available resources include:
 - Feedback on application drafts
 - Feedback for redrafting rejected applications
 - Workshops and personal meetings
 - Help with reporting and before audits of approved grants
- eusme.se

Financial support for SMEs

- Support for EIC pilot programme from SweLife (50% funding rate)
 - Max SEK 150,000 per applicant for "SME instrument phase 2" or "Fast Track to Innovation"
- "EU card" (50% funding rate, western Sweden only)
 - Max SEK 150,000 per applicant, supporting participation in EU Research and Innovation Program, Horizon 2020
- Runner up from VINNOVA (24 projects/year)
 - Lump sum of SEK 500,000. For projects with "application score" above the "SME instrument phase 1" threshold who did not receive EU financing

Grants Office services

Exact services vary but often include:

- Help finding suitable calls/topics
- Support for budget and administrative concerns of project
- Workshops/courses
- Advice/feedback on certain parts of application
- Support for reporting and audits

Some universities may also offer grants for researches coordinating an application/project.

Follow the links on the right to find out what specific support is available for you...

Make the most of the offered support by contacting Grants Office early in the process!

Links:

[LU](#)

[LiU](#)

[UmU](#)

[KI](#)

[KTH](#)

[ORU](#)

[Chalmers](#)

[GU](#)

[LTU](#)

[BTH](#)

[UU](#)

Thanks to our facts, tips & tricks contributors!

- Agneta Hånell Plamboeck, Grants Office @ Umeå University
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