

Horizon 2020 Framework Programme for research and innovation 2014-2020: rules for participation and dissemination

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The Committee on Industry, Research and Energy adopted the report by Christian EHLER (EPP, DE) on the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down the rules for the participation and dissemination in 'Horizon 2020 – The Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020).

The parliamentary committee recommends that the European Parliament's position adopted at first reading in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure should be to amend the Commission's proposal as follows:

Transparency of rules: the rules for the participation and dissemination should be clear and transparent and ensure to the largest possible extent the participation of SMEs. All relevant instructions and guidance notes for beneficiaries should be available from the beginning of the first Horizon 2020 work programme onward.

Gender dimension: Members stress the importance of a reinforced gender perspective in the design, implementation and delivery of Horizon 2020.

Public-private partnership: the rules applicable to participation and dissemination should include rules for the establishment of public-private partnerships. In particular, the establishment of public-private partnerships should be subject to conditions that ensure that an effective competitive environment is maintained and that opportunities for new entrants to join in at any stage are ensured.

EU financial assistance: this make be provided in **different forms** by choosing the most appropriate measure that suits the specific needs of the targeted beneficiaries and should always aim at producing the largest possible leverage effect. In order to **reduce the complexity of the existing funding rules** and increase participation, a simplified cost reimbursement system should be adopted with enhanced use of lump sums, flat rates and scale of unit costs, allowing also a full-cost option, as well as applying the **usual accounting practices** of the beneficiary.

Financing rates: the rules for the participation and dissemination should establish a limited combination of funding rates and options for reimbursement of indirect costs, while maintaining the current differentiation between universities/research centres, non-profit organisations and SMEs and industry, as stated in the [European Parliament's resolution of 11 November 2010](#).

For the reimbursement of eligible costs, Members propose that the following maximum rates should apply:

- for a non-profit participant or an SME participant, the grant may reach a maximum of 100 % of the direct eligible costs;
- for a non-profit participant or an SME participant that has opted to determine its indirect eligible costs based on indirect costs actually incurred, the grant shall be limited to a maximum of 70 % of the direct eligible costs;

- for an industry participant, the grant shall be limited to a maximum of 70 % of the direct eligible costs;
- for an industry participant that has opted to determine its indirect eligible costs based on indirect costs actually incurred, the grant shall amount to 50% of total eligible costs;
- for programme co-fund actions and other indirect actions that consist mainly in large-scale experimental development activities, the applicable rate may be a maximum of 35% of direct eligible costs.

Value-added tax (VAT) paid by and which cannot be refunded to, the beneficiary according to the applicable national legislation, shall be considered as an eligible cost.

Costs relating to free access to publications of research funded under the Horizon 2020 budget, published during or after the expiry of the lifetime of a project should be reimbursable.

New forms of financing: to strengthen the idea of common body of rules, a new title “Specific Provisions” should be introduced in the participation rules covering the **specific types of funding organisations**, as well as new forms of financing available, including venture capital investment for innovative companies, and in particular SMEs, and where the pursued results cannot be effectively achieved by grants.

Structural Funds: Members call for the **synergies between the Structural Funds and the Horizon 2020 Programme** to be exploited more than hitherto to attain the objective of spreading excellence and expanding participation. This should be done in particular by linking up-and-coming centres of excellence located in less innovative, less well-performing Member States and regions with world leading European research partners.

SME participation: the rules should take account of the specific funding needs of SMEs in order to release their full research and innovation potential, with due regard to the specificities of different types of SMEs and different sectors.

Deadline for the submission of project proposals and the conclusion of the grant agreement: in Members’ opinion, the deadlines laid down in regard to deciding on the successful bids should be a priority. In general, the period between the deadline for the submission of project proposals and the conclusion of the grant agreement (time to grant) should not exceed **six months**. The Commission shall ensure that participants receive money owed to them within **30 days** of the necessary paperwork being submitted to the Commission.

Simplification: the Commission should continue its efforts to simplify the procedures in ways made possible by the **improvement of IT systems**, such as the further expansion of the Participants Portal as the single entry point from the publication of the calls for project proposals, followed by their submission, until implementation, for all programmes, with the aim of establishing a one-stop shop. The Commission should draw up a **guide to the selection process**, explaining the application of the award criteria and defining the implications of specific weightings and thresholds for the selection process.

Exploitation and dissemination of results: while recognising the importance of intellectual property rights, Members nevertheless consider it important to further emphasise the need for the exploitation and dissemination as widely as possible of knowledge acquired as a result of the activities supported. The **setting up of patent pools** should be encouraged in order to allow the sharing of patented scientific data and increase collaborative efforts and R&D cooperation on specific technological needs.

Complaints: the Commission shall set up a formal complaints procedure for participants, which may include appointing an **ombudsman** or equivalent body specifically dedicated to research and innovation projects under Horizon 2020.

Communication: the ethics approval process shall be transparent to participants and to applicants, especially when the process is the source of a delay in the initiation of projects.