



#HorizonEU

# THE EU RESEARCH & INNOVATION PROGRAMME

2021 – 2027

Lessons learnt and tips  
from previous calls

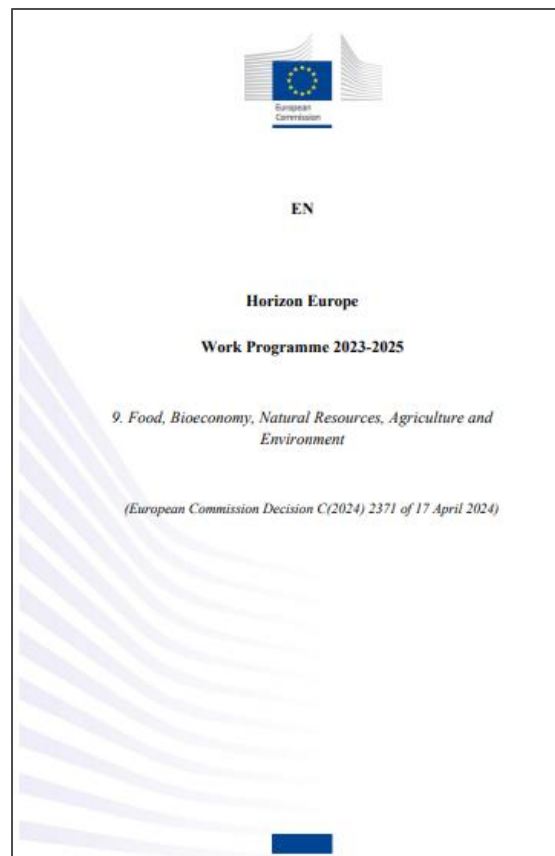
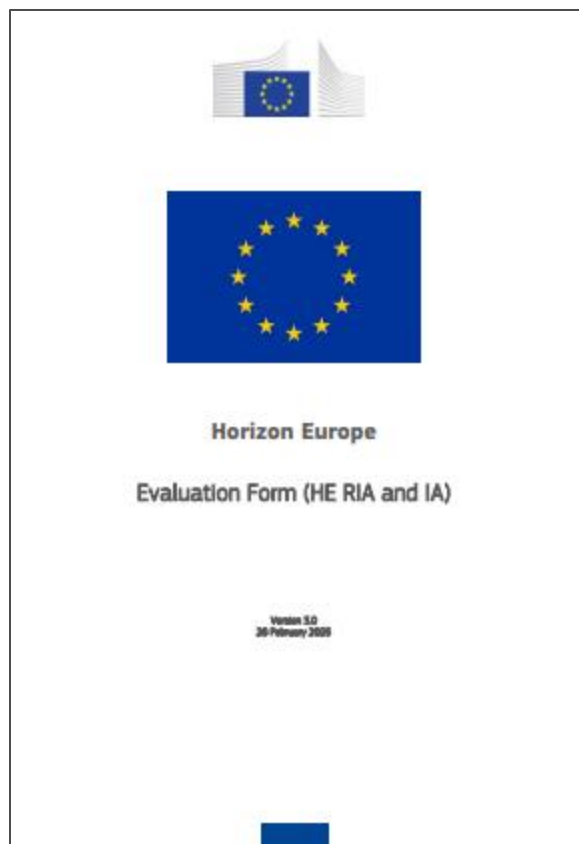
Astrid Guiffart, European  
Research Executive Agency

28/05/2025

# Outline

- Evaluation documents
- Key principles
- Horizon Europe evaluation key aspects
- Do's and don'ts in your proposal (Excellence, impact & implementation)
- Further information

# Evaluation documents



[EU Funding & Tenders Portal](#): point of reference for evaluation forms and proposal templates

# Key principles

- **Be relevant** - show that you have understood well the topic and the political context and priorities
- **Be simple and convincing** - convey your message in a clear, straightforward and assertive language
- **Write with the evaluators in mind** - educate the evaluator with "facts" and "figures" and back-up your statements
- **Be complete** - ensure that you meet all conditions for admissibility and eligibility
- **Note the Type of Action and specific eligibility conditions**

**HORIZON-CL6-2022-BIODIV-01-07: Protection and sustainable management of forest genetic resources of high interest for biodiversity, climate change adaptation, and forest reproductive materials**

## Specific conditions

<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 8.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 8.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions

Expected Outcome: In line with the EU biodiversity and climate change objectives, successful proposals will support the protection and sustainable use of forest genetic resources by contributing to a better insight into the characteristics of genetic resources in the climate change context, adaptive and biodiversity supporting practices in forestry and the enhancement of Europe's ambition in the international biodiversity agenda and international conventions.

Project results are expected to contribute to all of the following expected outcomes:

- Improved cooperation and knowledge sharing on deploying and conserving forest genetic resources in Europe;

Scope: Diversity of forest genetic resources provides the adaptive potential for tree species and populations to cope with climatic changes and future challenges. The adaptive potential of forests depends on their demographic history and the forces of natural selection. It also depends on forestry activities and the choice of species and populations that show better potential for adaptation to climate change or to subsequent effects of climate change. Provenance trials and common garden trials allow for the assessment of phenotypic responses in various environmental conditions and genomic backgrounds and therefore, genotype X environment interactions. New provenance trials in new environments including populations from range and habitat margins, coupled with genomic analysis of the provenances should provide insights to improve adaptive forest management.

Proposals should:

- Conduct research and networking on provenance trials or common gardens, with new trials and reassessment of older provenance tests using phenotypic traits related to

# Key principles



**Ensure that proposed work is within the scope of the topic**



**Demonstrate that the idea is ambitious and goes beyond the state of the art**



**Your scientific methodology must take into account interdisciplinary, gender dimension and open science practices**



**Show how the proposed work could contribute to the outcomes and impacts described in the work programme (the pathway to impact)**



**Describe the planned measures to maximise the impact of the project ('plan for the dissemination and exploitation including communication activities')**



**Demonstrate the quality of the work plan, resources and participants**

# Standard evaluation process



# Evaluation criteria and page limit

**1. Excellence**

**2. Impact**

**3. Quality and efficiency of the implementation**

## Proposal page limit

- RIAs and IAs type of actions: limit for a full application is **45 pages (50 for lump sum)**
- CSAs: limit is **30 pages (33 for lump sum)**
- Cofund: limit is **70 pages**

# Evaluation criteria (RIAs and IAs)

## EXCELLENCE

- ✓ Clarity and pertinence of the **project's objectives**, and the extent to which the proposed work is ambitious, and goes beyond the state-of-the-art.
- ✓ Soundness of the proposed **methodology**, including the underlying concepts, models, assumptions, interdisciplinary approaches, appropriate consideration of the **gender dimension** in research and innovation content, and the quality of **open science practices** including sharing and management of research outputs and engagement of citizens, civil society and end users where appropriate.

## IMPACT

- ✓ Credibility of the **pathways** to achieve the expected **outcomes and impacts** specified in the work programme, and the likely scale and significance of the contributions due to the project.
- ✓ Suitability and quality of the **measures to maximize expected outcomes and impacts**, as set out in the dissemination and exploitation plan, including communication activities.

## QUALITY AND EFFICIENCY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION

- ✓ Quality and effectiveness of the **work plan**, assessment of risks, and appropriateness of the effort assigned to work packages, and the resources overall.
- ✓ Capacity and role of each **participant**, and extent to which the **consortium** as a whole brings together the necessary expertise.

*Proposals aspects are assessed to the extent that the proposed work is within the scope of the work programme topic*



# Horizon Europe score interpretation

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**.

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**.


# Do's and don't: Excellence



## 1. Objectives 2. Methodology

- Define **key objectives**
  - Be ambitious but **realistic**
  - Provide **sufficient detail** on the approach and methodology
  - Create links with **previous networks**
  - Don't forget **Open Science and Gender Dimension**
- Objectives covering **not all aspects of the scope** of the topic
  - Progress beyond the state of the art is not **demonstrated**
  - Lack of integration of **interdisciplinary** approaches
  - **Multi-actor approach** requirements not fully addressed

# Do's and don'ts: Impact

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1. Pathways to impact
  2. Measures to maximise impact

- Describe **specific contributions** to expected outcomes & relevant expected impacts
- **Define well your key results**
- **Quantify and measure your contribution** (scale, significance, benchmarks) for each expected outcome and impact
- Consider seriously existing **barriers**

- Proposal not convincingly demonstrating its contribution to **all expected outcomes**
- **Scale and significance** not provided for each expected outcome/impact
- Communication, exploitation and dissemination are not **differentiated**
- Target audience or key performance indicators are not **specified**

# Do's and don't: Implementation



1. Work plan & resources
2. Capacity of participants & consortium as a whole

- Provide a **precise planning** with well-timed tasks and activities
- **Justify the resources distribution** overall and among partners
- Plan **adequate resources** for horizontal tasks such as CDE<sup>1</sup>, data management, ethics, etc...
- Demonstrate the **complementary expertise** of the consortium

- Work packages not in line with **objectives** and not clearly interlinked
- Work plan not sufficiently **detailed** and allocation of resources not adequately **justified**
- Consortium composition not in line with **objectives & methodology**

<sup>1</sup> CDE: Communication, dissemination and exploitation

# Contribute as an expert

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

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There is currently an issue with the contact form preventing you from submitting your request. We are doing our best to resolve the issue as soon as possible. We apologize for any inconvenience caused.

Legal Entity and Bank Account validations tasks will experience issues in the Grant Management Services Services on Wednesday, 02.12.2020, between 07:30 and 08:10.

[Need help?](#)

### Work as an expert

The European Union Institutions appoint external experts to assist in the evaluation of grant applications, projects and tenders, and to provide opinions and advice in specific cases.

Being an expert for the European Commission...

In particular, experts assist in:

- Evaluation of proposals, prize applications and tenders
- Monitoring of actions, grant agreements, public procurement contracts

In addition, experts provide opinion and advise on:

- Preparation, implementation and evaluation of EU programmes and design of policies.

In order to select experts, the European Union Institutions publish regularly calls for expression of interest (see list below) detailing the selection criteria, the required expertise, the description of the tasks, their duration and the conditions of remuneration.

Interested? Please join the database of external experts.

[Register as expert](#)

#### News

21 Apr, 2020

**Call for experts to assist the European Commission and other EU bodies with tasks in connection with pilot projects and preparatory actions**

The European Commission is launching a call for experts for the Funding & Tenders Portal expert database, for assignments in connection with EU pilot projects...

05 Feb, 2020

**INEA looking for experts to assess CEF Energy calls**

The Innovation and Networks Executive Agency (INEA) is looking for experienced experts in energy to assess project proposals submitted under the 2020 Connecting...

[All news >](#)

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>

- Get hands-on experience with the evaluation process
- Know more about latest research trends
- Serve the EU research community
- Enjoy a networking opportunity

# For more information

## ... check recorded webinars

- Cluster 6 info-day (20- 21/05/2025): [Event page](#)
- Finding opportunities and submitting a proposal in Horizon Europe (13/03/2025): [Horizon Implementation Day: Finding opportunities and submitting a proposal in Horizon Europe \(13 March 2025\)](#)

... check the [FAQ](#) and contact the [Research Enquiry Service \(RES\)](#)

... access the [Online Manual](#) (guide for business processes) and the [IT How To](#) wiki (guide for IT processes)

... check the [news section of the F&T portal](#) regularly

... check REA tips & tricks: [Common mistakes to avoid when applying for Horizon Europe funding - European Commission](#)

## CLUSTER 6 - INFO DAYS

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# Thank you

**Questions?**

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