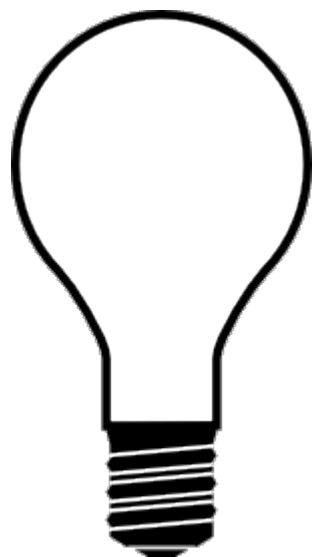#InvestEUresearch

Horizon 2020
Work Programme
for Research & Innovation
2018-2020

H2020 Proposal Writing: Designing and structuring

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Research and Innovation

**It's not sufficient
to have an excellent idea ...**

**But it is important to organize the
proposal preparation in an excellent way**

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We will talk about:

1. Basic Facts of proposal preparation
2. How to find a suitable call in the Participant Portal
3. Topic identification: decoding a call
4. Designing and structuring
5. Consortium building
6. Proposal drafting

TO DO LIST

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1. Basic facts of proposal preparation

12 facts you need to know about Horizon 2020 proposal preparation I

1. An overview of scheduled calls can be found in the respective work programme & on the „Funding Opportunities" site of the Participant Portal

2. Proposal submission always in response to „calls for proposals" only

3. Typically calls open on an annual basis

4. There is no one single date of all calls opening

12 facts you need to know about Horizon 2020 proposal preparation II

5. A call is at least open for **3 months** (full proposal)

6. The majority of the calls for proposals are **top down**: topic descriptions describe very detailed what the planned project has to pursue

7. The **structure** of a proposal is **fixed** through a template

8. The proposal always consists of a **part A** and **part B**

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12 facts you need to know about Horizon 2020 proposal preparation III

9. Proposal **structure** of Part B is oriented towards the **evaluation criteria**

10. **One-stage** or **two-stage** proposal submission (depends on the area)

11. **Online** proposal submission only
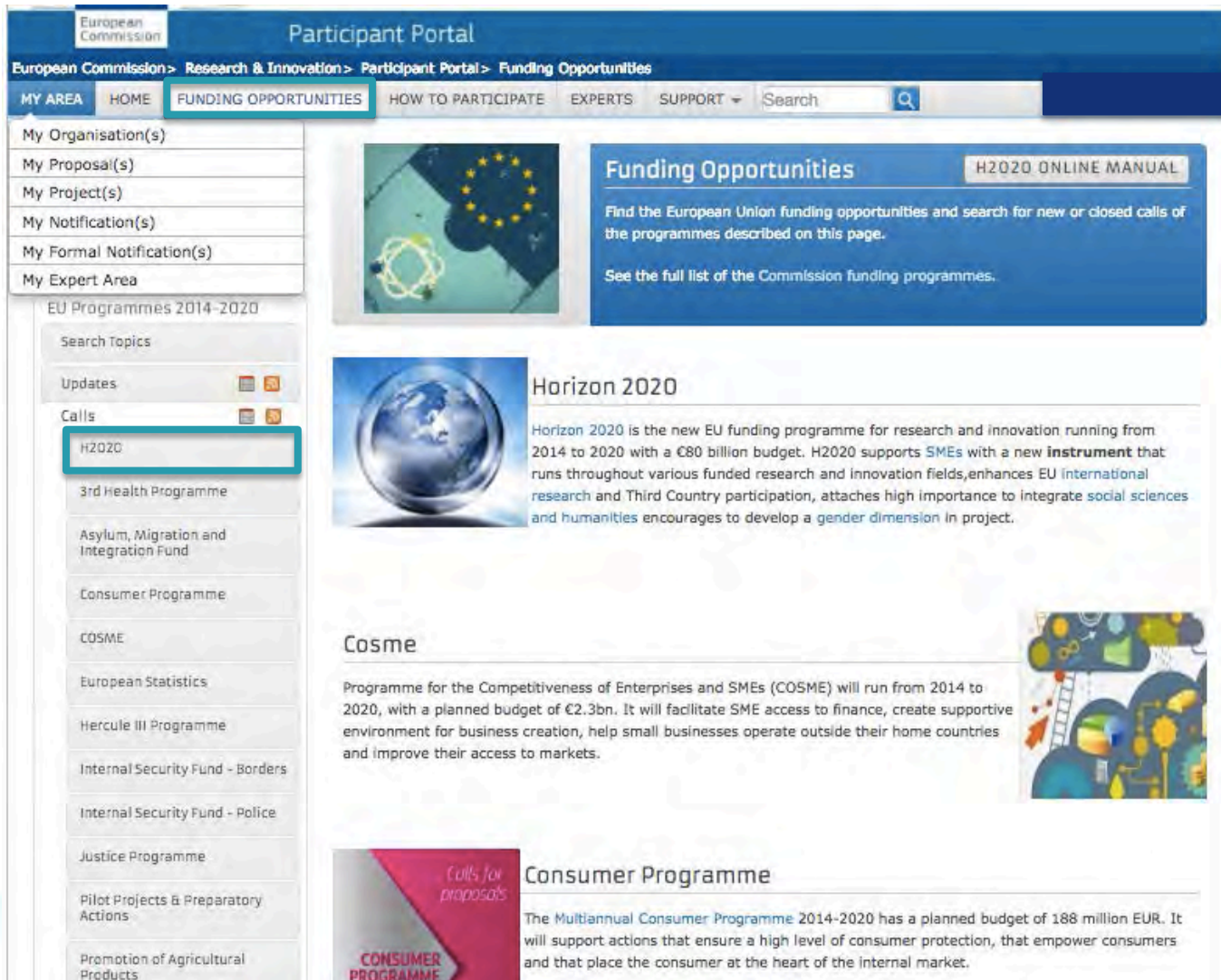
12. Time to grant in general max. **8 months**, thereof max. 5 month for evaluation

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2. How to find a suitable call in the Participant Portal

Look for suitable calls in the Participant Portal

Horizon 2020

H2020 Funding Opportunities
Open, Closed, Forthcoming Calls for Proposals

Call search – Identify your call

Identify your topic!

Topic description – Topic conditions and documents

3. Topic identification: decoding a call

The idea behind this:

Lisbon treaty,
EU Strategy 2020

Legal basis texts
Horizont 2020

Work programme
2018-2020

Calls

Topics → Projects

No time limit, respectively until 2020

7 years run-time

Generally bieannual/triannual

Generally annual calls

Generally 24 - 60 months

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The Work Programme

In general each thematic part of Horizon 2020 has its own Work Programme part

What information do thematic work programmes provide you with?

- Introduction

- Overview of the scheduled call(s)

   - **Description of the topics**

   - **Call Key data:**

      - **Opening date, deadline**

      - **indicative budget per Topic/Call**

      - **one-stage/two-stage procedure**

      - **indicative date for evaluation outcome & grant signing**

- Budget
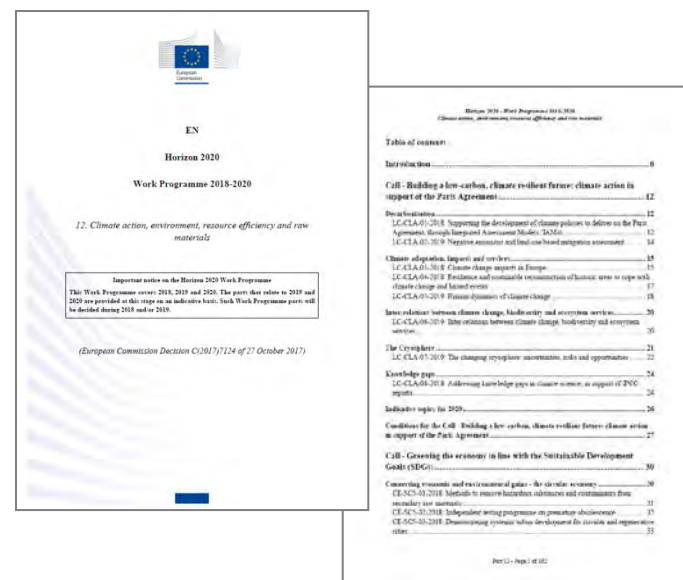
Decoding a call text: Once you have found your topic

Topic Identifier

Example: **SFS-32-2018: Supporting microbiome coordination and the International Bioeconomy Forum**

Specific challenge

Specific challenge: Knowledge of the potential of microbial systems, or microbiomes, throughout the food chains, is seen as a promising means to ensuring the sustainability of our food system. [...]

Scope

Scope: Proposals should aim at a platform for collaboration and coordination across various microbiome-related research and innovation programmes, in Europe and worldwide, throughout the food systems and beyond, including both terrestrial and aquatic environments (e.g. linkages among microbiome related work in plants, animals, soils, marine and human health). [...]

Indicative Budget

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU in the range **of EUR 3 million** would allow this specific challenge to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts. [...]

Expected impact

Expected Impact: In line with the EU Bioeconomy Strategy, in the short/medium term proposals will:

- Improve coherence and reduce the overlap between national and EU funding in microbiome research; reinforce collaborations and knowledge exchange with international networks to promote coherence and applicability of microbiomes; [...]

Type of action

Type of Action: **Coordination and support action**

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Decoding a call text:

- Specific Challenge: introduces the problem/question at stake

- Scope: presents what exactly is expected to be done

- Expected impacts: lists what is supposed to be achieved

- Make sure that the proposal takes up every single task of the topic description

- Use the wording of the topic description in the proposal

- Do not ignore wording such as „and", „should", „recommended" etc.

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Type of action

Type of Action[1]	Code	Minimum Conditions[2]	Funding Rate	Typical Duration	Average EC Contribution	Aim
Research & Innovation Action	RIA	≥ 3 legal entities from 3 MS/AC	100%	36-48 months	€ 2.0 – 5.0M	collaborative research projects
Innovation Action	IA	≥ 3 legal entities from 3 MS/AC	70%[3]	30-36 months	€ 2.0 – 5.0M	produce plans & arrangements or designs for new, altered or improved products, processes or services
Coordination & Support Action	CSA	1 legal entity	100%	12-30 months	€ 0.5 – 2.0M	accompanying measures (standardisation, dissemination, policy dialogues etc.) no research
MSCA[4] (except Cofund)	MSCA	see separate factsheet				facilitate mobility of researchers for training & career development
ERC Grants	ERC	1 legal entity in MS/AC	100%	60 months	Starting: ≤ € 2.0M Consolidator: ≤ € 2.75M Advanced: ≤ € 3.5M	support excellent investigators and their research teams to pursue ground-breaking, high-gain/ high-risk research
Prizes	PRI	1 legal entity	n/a	n/a	variable; see respective topic	- recognise past achievements - induce future activities
SME Instrument	SME	1 SME in MS/AC	3 phases: • Phase 1: lump sum of € 50K / project • Phase 2: € 1 – 2.5M / project (1-2 years) (70% of eligible costs reimbursed) • Phase 3 : no funding			combination of demonstration activities (testing, prototyping, …), market replication
Fast Track to Innovation	FTI	≤ 5 legal entities from 5 MS/AC	70%[3]	tbd	≤ € 3.0M	produce plans & arrangements or designs for new, altered or improved products, processes or services

[1] Defined in the Work Programme.
[2] Additional conditions may be listed in the respective Work Programmes.

[3] 100% for non-profit organisation (= any legal entity except companies)
[4] MSCA = Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions

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2. Designing and structuring

Produce a first outline of your idea

> Write preliminary 2-3 pages about your:

> objectives
> target group
> major steps (work packages)
> intended consortium (countries, types of organisations)

> Internal reality check: Use it as a first base to discuss with potential partners

> External reality check: Consult with market actors – check their understanding and interest. Profit from their feedback to decide whether to take your idea forward

How to write a convincing abstract

Title/ACRONYM	
Objective	The aim of the proposal is to… The key research question/challenge is to… Conformity with the call and work programme.
Background/ short description	• Why bother? What problem are you trying to solve? • Is it a European priority? Could it be solved at National level? • Is the solution already available? • Why now? What would happen if we did not do this now? • Why you? Are you the best people to do this work?
Results/impact	• Expected results - what will come out of the project? Who will use the results? • Why do the people interested in the results should use the results? • How are you planning the transfer of results? • What will be changed? Post project situation

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3. Consortium building

Design and invite your consortium

- Be selective – make an appealing choice!

- Stay consistent – keep to your objective & target group

- Do not cover the EU/world map artificially – make a fitting choice

- Explore alternatives early, but be ready to change plan – change/renounce a country if you do not secure THE right partner

- Keep your partners motivated - agree on a working method for the proposal phase, make a plan for their contributions

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As you know…

In EU-collaborative funded projects,
you need **at least three organizations from different EU Member States or Associated Countries**, after this minimum number you can involve **Third Countries**

But…
Keep in mind that it's not just a matter of quantity but always of QUALITY!

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Type of participation

> Coordinator

> Participant

> Third parties

Beneficiaries

The coordinator

The Coordinator is the only contact point between the Commission and the Consortium.

The Coordinator is the one who signs the GA with the Commission.

The coordinator

Tasks of the coordinator that cannot be delegated:

- monitor that the action is implemented properly

- act as the intermediary for all communications between the beneficiaries and the Commission

- request and review any documents or information required by the Commission and verify their completeness and correctness before passing them on to the Commission

- submit the deliverables and reports to the Commission

- ensure that all payments are made to the other beneficiaries without unjustified delay

- inform the Commission of the amounts paid to each beneficiary, when required under the Agreement or requested by the Commission

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The Beneficiary

- Perform work, monitor, respond to consortium requests

- Identify the responsible person for the project

- Give all necessary information

- Participate to project meetings

- Contribute to the proper implementation of the action

- Comply with their own obligations under the GA and support the coordinator in his obligations

- Send all documents/information via the coordinator

Third Parties

Horizon 2020 distinguishes 4 basic types of third party support:

1) the purchase of goods and services
2) subcontracts
3) work done by "linked third parties"
4) third party contributions in-kind

4. Proposal drafting

Before you start... key documents

- **Work Programme:** background, topics and budgets

- **General annexes to the general Work Programme:** list of countries, eligibility and admissibility conditions, evaluation criteria and procedure, scoring and thresholds, etc.

- **Submission forms and templates:** essential forms and guides to draw up and submit your proposal

- Guide to the submission and evaluation process

Participant Portal

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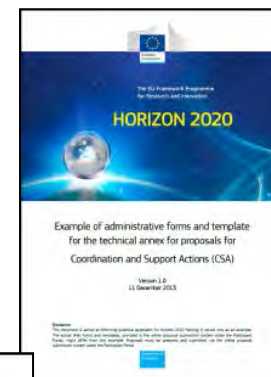
Working with the right documents

"Good to have"- Documents

- <u>Annotated Model Grant Agreement</u>

  - Eligible costs
  - Management of IPR
  - Open Access, Ethics
  - Many examples and best practice solutions

- <u>Desca Model Consortium Agreement</u>

  - Governance Structure of the project
  - Dissemination and access rights to results
  - Version with „elucidation notes" and explanations available

Working with the right documents

„Nice to have"-Documents

✓ **Ethics Guide**

✓ **Open Access** Guide

✓ **Guidelines on Data Management** in H2020

✓ **Communicating EU research and innovation guidance for project participants**

✓ **Project reporting templates**

✓ Proposal Submission Service **User Manual**

✓ **Annotated Model Grant Agreement**

✓ **H2020 online Manual**

✓ Strategic/political background documents

Guidlines exist for a number of proposal aspects!

Participant Portal

Official EU website

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Structuring the proposal – Part B

1: Excellence	2. Impact	3. Implementation	4-5
• 1.1 Objectives • 1.2 Relation to the work programme • 1.3 Concept and methodology • 1.4 Ambition	• 2.1 Expected impacts • 2.2 Misure to maximize impact • Dissemination and exploitation of results • Communication activities	• 3.1 Work plan – work packages, deliverables • 3.2 Management structure, milestones and procedures • 3.3 Consortium as a whole • 3.4 Resources to be committed	• 4 Members of the consortium • 4.1 Participants • 4.2 Third parties • 5 Ethics and Security • 5.1 Ethics • 5.2 Security

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Scientific Excellence: tips

Objectives

- Quantifiable and clear targets

- Formulated to maximize impact

- **Concept and Methodology**

- Clear descriptions giving sufficient details while avoiding jargon

- Keeping it transparent, identifying data sources, assumptions and possible hurdles

- **Innovation potential and progress beyond the state of the art**

- Describing the state of the art, including previous and ongoing projects and patents, and explaining how the project builds on and goes beyond the previous work

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Impact: tips

Expected Impact

- Supporting the expected impact with quantifiable information

- Appropriate measurable indicators to convincingly demonstrate how the projects will contribute to all the expected impacts

- Justify the reasons for focusing on a specific area of the call and how this is reflected in the expected impacts

Exploitation, dissemination and Communication

- Explain how open access will be ensured

- Credibly describe exploitation and uptake beyond the project and how long-term sustainability is accomplished

- Clearly define the different target audiences, including media and public

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Implementation: tips

Work plan and resources

- Activities and resources responding to the Type of Action, the challenge and methodology

- Clear and credible interactions and integration between WPs and partners, including for interdisciplinary work

- Linkage between responsibilities – tasks – deliverables – resources

Risk management

- Key risks covered and risk level indicated

- Effective mitigation measures and contingency plans

Management structure

- Clearly identified roles, composition and interaction of management and advisory bodies, including decision making

- Credible mechanisms for quality assurance and

- performance monitoring

Finish with the fine-tuning

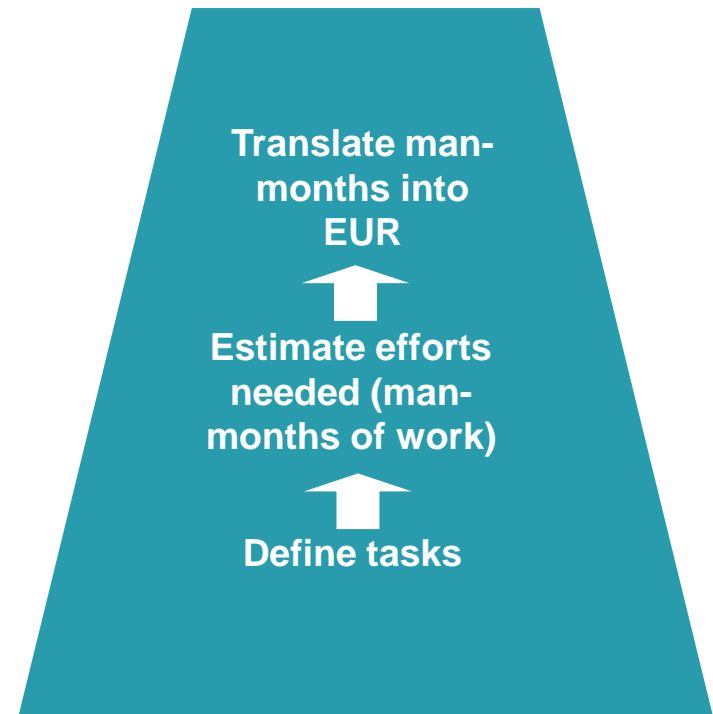The technical annex must give a detailed description of the project idea and **work plan**, which:

- divides the planned work into **work packages**,

- assigns the related responsibilities and resources within the consortium,

- sets out a project time schedule, main **milestones and deliverables**,

- describes the project management structure,

- describes the communication and exploitation plans.

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Establish the budget

- Design your budget "bottom-up"

- Wait until the tasks are sufficiently specified and agreed – then design the budget

- Check consistency regularly while advancing on your Work Plan - share of resources, appropriate levels between partners, appropriate weight of man-months between major work steps

Translate man-months into EUR

↑

Estimate efforts needed (man-months of work)

↑

Define tasks

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TIMING: FROM OPEN CALL TO DEADLINE

|		
1st stage **Consortium meeting**	Aim of the project, research question, distribution of work (Science, Management and Editors!!)	5-6 months before deadline
2nd stage **Homework**	Proposal writing (inputs from partners – WP leaders and coordinator!)	4-5 months before deadline
3rd stage **Preparation of first draft Proposal**	First proposal draft (summarised by lead scientist and support service: science, impact, implementation)	3 months before deadline
4th stage **Core group meeting**	IN or OUT Final agreement (aim and research question, WP, timeline, outputs/deliverables, budget, etc.)	3 months before deadline
5th stage **Full proposal completion**	Proposal writing (including editing, proof read and external review) (Lead scientist, Support service, External experts)	Last two months

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Timeline: From idea to project

Project idea

Proposal writing

3 to 6 months

Proposal submission

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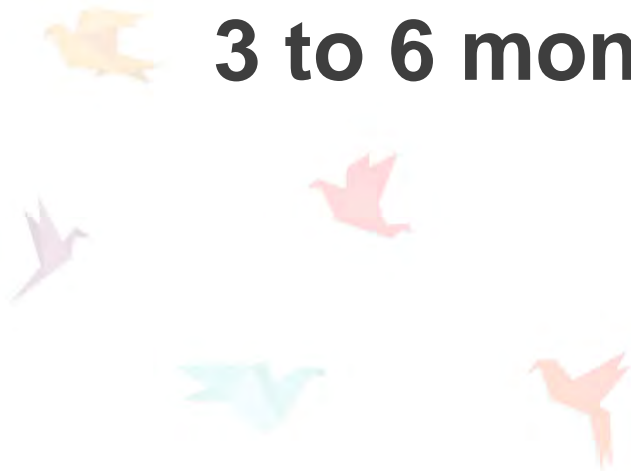
Timeline: From idea to project

Proposal Submission

Evaluation

5 months

First indication from EC

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Timeline: From idea to project

First indication from EC

Grant Preparation

3 months

Grant Agreement

Timeline: From idea to project

Kick-off Meeting

Periodic Reports

3 to 5 years

Final Meeting

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Timeline: From idea to project

Project Idea

4 to 6 years

Final meeting

Best practice for successful proposals:
Become an evaluator yourself!

Register in the expert database in the Participant Portal:
http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/experts/index.html

Thank you!

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www.ec.europa.eu/research
Participant Portal
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