HOW TO write your proposal

STEP 1: align your idea with the topic

To write a successful proposal, it is crucial that your idea aligns well with the given topic. This means your proposal must directly address what the topic is asking for, and you should clearly demonstrate how your proposal meets those requirements.

To help you in this process: 1) make sure to thoroughly understand the topic by reading it multiple times, 2) remember that you are expected to address all required aspects of the topic, and 3) break down the topic into its key components to ensure you are covering everything it describes.

Important tip: you need to fit your proposal to the topic. You should not fit the topic to your proposal.

Start your proposal by outlining the overarching goal of your project, followed by specific objectives, the underlying concept, methodology, and the expected impact. Once these elements are clearly defined, you can then develop a more detailed plan for the work and implementation.

Useful tools: the NCPs can help you interpret the topic, as they act as a bridge between you and the European Commission and can thus forward specific questions you might have while writing the proposal. You can also attend the info days held by the Commission.

STEP 2: getting started

- Start in advance
- Register in the Funding and Tenders portal.
    - Typically, the draft proposal is launched by the Coordinator, who then invites the partners of the consortium. The coordinator creates the draft proposal and invites the partners. Partners can only edit their own section in Part A, while the Coordinator can edit all sections, upload Part B and submit the proposal.
- Prepare a concise 2-page project summary (concept note) to organize your ideas effectively.
- Make sure you have identified the "what," "why," "how" and "who."

STEP 3: use the right template

- Download all templates from the proposal submission system (Funding and Tenders Portal) for the specific topic you have selected.
- Before you begin writing your proposal, carefully review the application form and structure your proposal accordingly. It is crucial to adhere to the template structure and guidelines provided, including formatting and page limits.
- Avoid repetition and ensure each section of the form is filled appropriately. Take the time to understand where each piece of information belongs within the form.

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Useful Resource: <u>Annotated Template</u> - this is a helpful document with tips and insights from experienced NCPs. Additionally, there's a dedicated video providing tips on effectively addressing the impact section, tailored especially for proposals originating from Cluster 2.

STEP 4: learn more about the evaluation criteria

Before drafting your proposal, familiarize yourself with the evaluation process and consider all evaluation criteria.

Useful tools:

- For insights into the evaluation criteria and the questions evaluators address when assessing your proposal, access these slides <u>here</u>.
- For additional guidance and useful information to aid you in completing your proposal effectively, see the briefing videos to HE experts, <u>here</u>.

Tips & Tricks:

- Do not lose track of the topic, while writing your proposal. Always have the topic and template form nearby for reference.
- Be clear, specific, focus on facts and evidence;
- Support your statements with corroborating evidence and justifications; demonstrate the validity of your arguments.
- Before the deadline, step back from your proposal, revisit it, and make any necessary revisions.

- Seek feedback from an external person by sharing your proposal with them for review.
- Avoid waiting until the last minute to submit your proposal. Aim to submit at least 2 days before the deadline, allowing for any potential resubmissions.
- Encourage the use of terminology specific to the call topic and Horizon Europe language to ensure alignment with expectations.
- Keep in mind that the information provided will form the basis of the project grant agreement in the event of a successful application.
- Attend the pre-proposal check event hosted by the Net4Society network.
- Take advantage of proposal screening services offered by NCPs, the Net4Society proposal screening event, and the WIDERA project.
- Utilize NCPs for proposal revision and feedback. Note that NCPs maintain confidentiality and provide this service free of charge.

Useful tools and resources:

- <u>How to prepare a successful proposal in Horizon Europe</u> (relevant <u>presentation</u>)
- <u>A successful proposal for Horizon Europe: Scientific-technical excellence is key, but don't forget the other aspects</u>
- <u>Dissemination & Exploitation in Horizon Europe</u>
- <u>The Funding & tenders Portal for beginners</u>
- <u>Recipe for success: Tips and Tricks while writing your Horizon Europe proposal</u>
- <u>Common mistakes to avoid when applying for Horizon Europe funding</u>

- Refer to the Programme Guide of Horizon Europe for essential tips and explanations on cross-cutting issues. Access it <u>here</u>.

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