The role of Independent Experts and the Evaluation Process

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Main source : "Standard briefing for Horizon 2020 Proposal Evaluation. General Briefing for Evaluators H2020"

Characteristics of an Expert Evaluator

- It is a **personal work**, does not act on behalf of any organization or country.

- Requires a **timely dedication** (aprox. 2 weeks)

- Generally used two types of evaluation: **face-to-face** and **remote**.

- Gender assessments **balance** (40% women in panels), while there are only 15% of women in the databases.

SKILLED
EVALUATORS
→

Other benefits
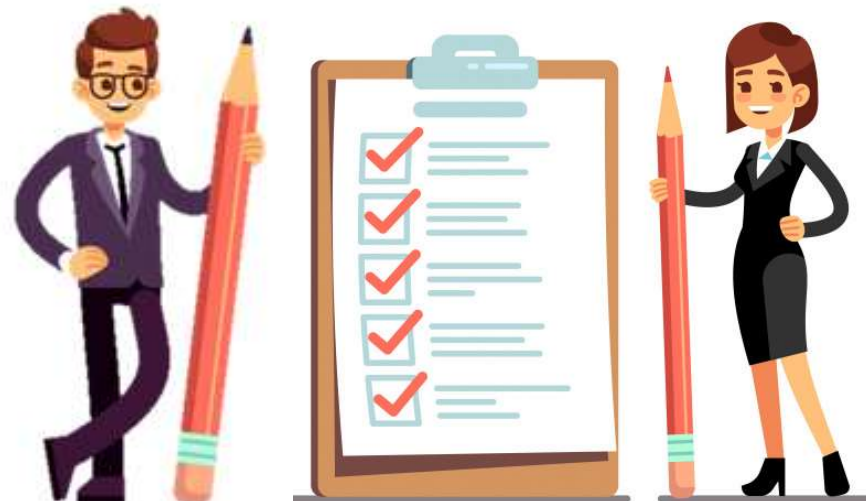
✓ Possibility to see first hand the latest advances in the different areas of knowledge.

✓ Learn the structure and content that have the successful European proposals.

✓ The professional exchange among evaluators.

✓ Possibility to establish contacts with officers from the European Commission and be familiar with its procedures.
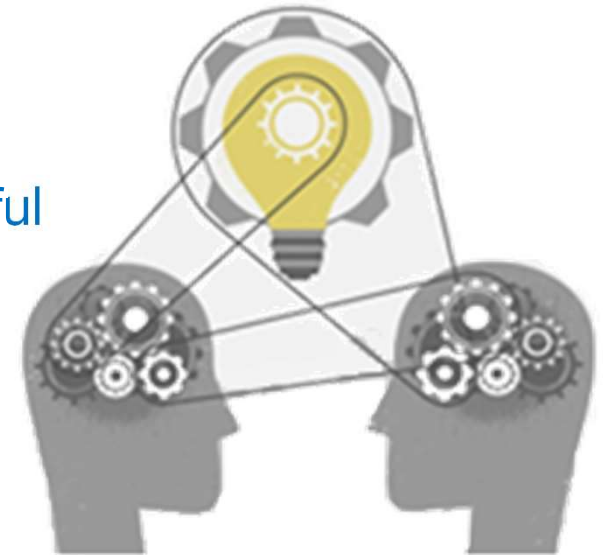
Who can be an Expert Evaluator?

Any expert who:

✓ Has a high-level of **expertise** in the relevant fields of research and innovation

✓ Can be **available** for occassional short term-assignments

✓ **Forms part of the list os Experts of the European Commission**

How to become an Expert Evaluator?

Step 1 [Register]: *As an expert advising the Commission, create an account.*

Step 2 [Login]: *When you have finished creating your account.*

http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/experts/index.html

Selection Process Considerations

➢ **Horizon 2020 experts** are selected **from the expert database** by the European Commission, its Executive Agencies and Joint Undertakings on the basis of their:
  - ✓ Skills
  - ✓ Experience and
  - ✓ Knowledge

➢ But also considers **balances** (to ensure a good balance within the expert groups and the evaluation panels):
  - ✓ Geographical diversity
  - ✓ Gender
  - ✓ If needed, academics and experts with industrial experience

➢ **Other considerations:**
  - ✓ Number of proposals participating in the call
  - ✓ Availability of other experts
  - ✓ Combination of experts

Proposal evaluation panel

A proposal is evaluated by a core team that:

May be composed by the same or different experts for each proposal within the same call.

Currently experts have different background

Different experts evaluates the same proposal	Expert on the subject of the project
	Expert on socio-economic issues
	NGOs experts
	Industrial experts
Number of experts depends on the type of call	Participation in calls with only two experts
	Up to four of five experts

Role of independent experts

➢ To **evaluate proposals** submitted in response to a given call.

➢ **Be responsible** for carrying out the evaluation of the proposal yourself.
   *(Delegate the work to another person is **not allowed**)*

Responsibillity

➢ Significant **funding decisions** will be made on the basis of your advice.

Guiding principles of independent experts

Independence	• You are evaluating in a personal capacity • You represent neither your employer, nor your country
Impartiality	• You must treat equally all proposals (about their merits, irrespective, origin or identity of the applicants)
Objectivity	• You evaluate each proposal as submitted; meaning on its own merit, not its potential if certain changes were to be made
Accuracy	• You make your judment against the evaluation criteria and the call/topic the proposal addresses, and nothing else
Consistency	• You apply the same standard of judgement to all proposals

Confidentiality

You must:

- ❖ **Not discuss evaluation matters**, such as the content of proposals, the evaluation results or the opinions of fellow experts, with anyone, including:
    - Other experts or Commission/Agencies staff or any other person not directly involved in the evaluation of the proposal
    - The sole exception: your fellow experts who are evaluating the same proposal in a consensus group or Panel review

- ❖ **Not contact partners in the consortium, sub-contractors or any third parties**

- ❖ **Not disclose the names of your fellow experts**

- ❖ **Maintain the confidentiality of documents**, paper or electronic, at all times and wherever you do your evaluation work (on-site or remotely)

Conflicts of interest

You have a COI if you:

- Were involved in the preparation of the proposal
- Stand to benefit directly/indirectly if the proposal is successful
- Have a close family/personal relationship with someone involved in the proposal
- Are a director/trustee/partner of an applicant or involved in the management of an applicant's organisation
- Are employed or contracted by an applicant or a named subcontractor
- Are a member of a Horizon 2020 Advisory Group or Programme Committee
- Are a National Contact Point or are directly working for the Enterprise Europe Network

- Act as a referee in the case of Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions evaluators
- Are in any other situation that compromises your impartiality such as:
  - were employed by an applicant or sub-contractor in the last 3 years
  - were involved in a grant agreement/decision, the membership of management structures or a research collaboration with an applicant in the last 3 years
  - are in any other situation that casts doubt on your impartiality or that could reasonably appear to do so

Conflicts of interest

- You must inform the Commission/Agency as soon as you become aware of a COI
  - Before the signature of the contract
  - Upon receipt of proposals, or
  - During the course of your work

- If there is a COI for a certain proposal you cannot evaluate it
  - Neither individually
  - Nor in the consensus group
  - nor in the panel review
  - The Commission will determine if there is a COI on a case-by-case basis and decide the course of action to follow

- If you knowingly hide a COI, you will be excluded from the evaluation and your work declared null and void
  - The allowance/expenses you claimed may be reduced, rejected or recovered
  - Your contract may be terminated

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Overview of the Evaluation Process

Evaluators

| Receipt of proposals | Individual evaluation | Consensus group | Panel Review | Finalisation |

Eligibility check

Allocation of proposals to evaluators

Individual Evaluation Reports

(Usually done remotely)

Consensus Report

(May be done remotely)

Panel report

Evaluation Summary Report

Panel ranked list

Final ranked list

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European Commission

Evaluation Process

HORIZON 2020
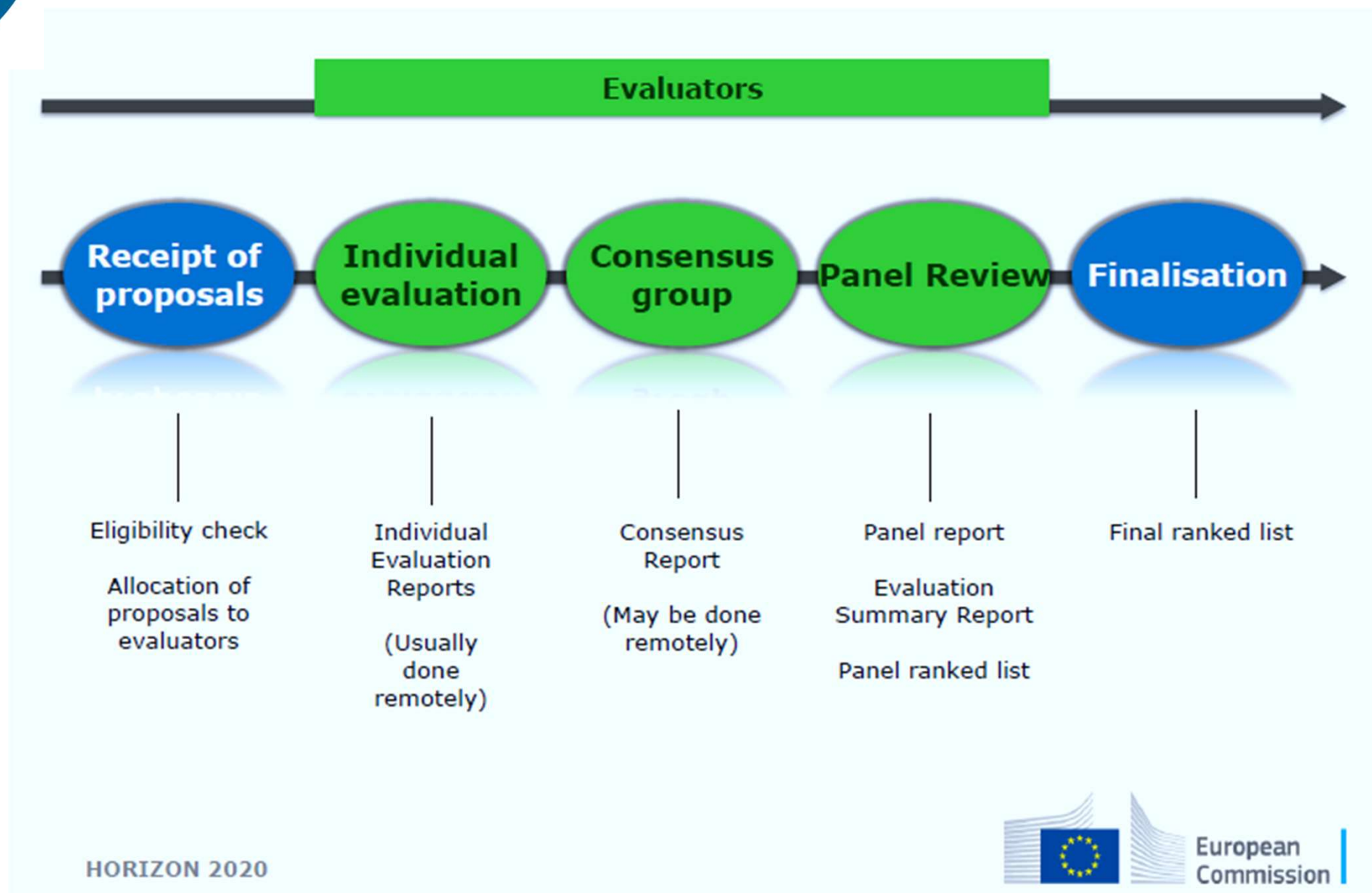
Evaluation Criteria

- **Admissibility** and **eligibility** are checked by the **Commission/Agency**.
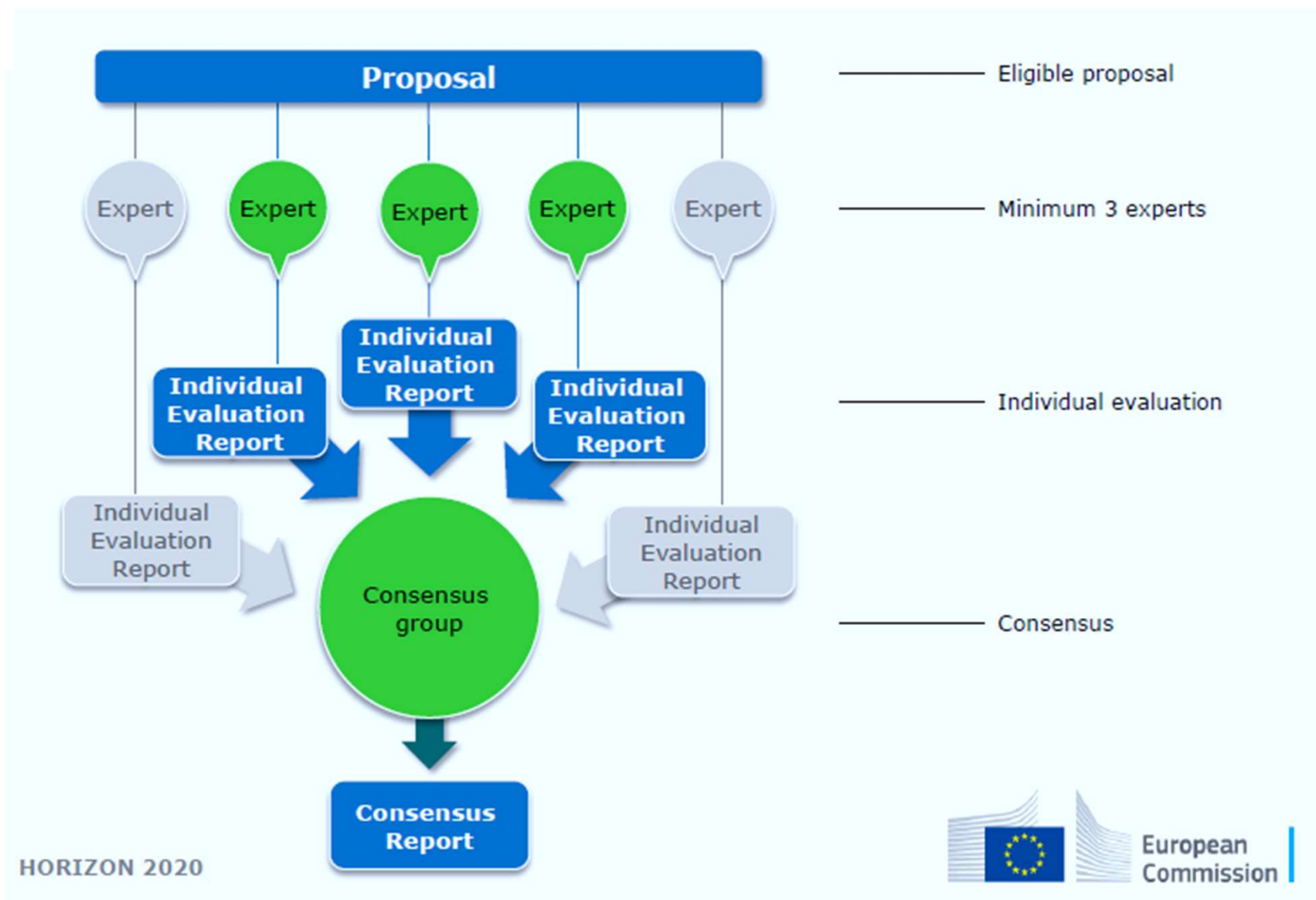
- There are three evaluation **criteria**:
  - ❖ **Excellence** (relevant to the topic of the call)
  - ❖ **Impact**
  - ❖ Quality and efficiency of the **implementation**

- The criteria are adapted to each type of action, as specified in the WP.

Evaluation Criteria

Research and Innovation/Innovation/SME instrument

- For the first stage of a two-stage procedure, only the aspects of the criteria in yellow are evaluated

Excellence

Clarity and pertinence of the objectives

Soundness of the concept, including trans-disciplinary considerations, where relevant

Extent that proposed work is ambitious, has innovation potential, and is beyond the state of the art (e.g. ground-breaking objectives, novel concepts and approaches)

Credibility of the proposed approach

Impact

The expected impacts listed in the work programme under the relevant topic

Enhancing innovation capacity and integration of new knowledge

Strengthening the competitiveness and growth of companies by developing innovations meeting the needs of European and global markets; and, where relevant, by delivering such innovations to the markets

Any other environmental and socially important impacts (not already covered above)

Effectiveness of the proposed measures to exploit and disseminate the project results (including management of IPR), to communicate the project, and to manage research data where relevant

Implementation

Coherence and effectiveness of the work plan, including appropriateness of the allocation of tasks and resources

Complementarity of the participants within the consortium (when relevant)

Appropriateness of the management structures and procedures, including risk and innovation management

Evaluation Criteria

Coordination & Support Actions

- For the first stage of a two-stage procedure, only the aspects of the criteria in yellow are evaluated

Excellence
- Clarity and pertinence of the objectives
- Soundness of the concept
- Quality of the proposed coordination and/or support measures
- Credibility of the proposed approach

Impact
- The expected impacts listed in the work programme under the relevant topic
- Effectiveness of the proposed measures to exploit and disseminate the project results (including management of IPR), to communicate the project, and to manage research data where relevant

Implementation
- Coherence and effectiveness of the work plan, including appropriateness of the allocation of tasks and resources
- Complementarity of the participants within the consortium (when relevant)
- Appropriateness of the management structures and procedures, including risk and innovation management

Recommendations and good practices

Excellence

- State of the art
- TRLs
- Justified Objectives
- Soundness of the concept

Impact

- KPIs
- Wider impact than the specific from the call
- Stakeholders:
  - Engagement
  - Knowledge
- IPR
- Dissemination target
- Bussiness plan, commercialization channels, target market, business models replication…

Implementation

- Innovation Management
- Consortium as a whole
- Partner's table (1st page) & P-M
- "R&D vs. Demo" balance
- Deriverables
- Management budget: 7-10%
- Partners role:
  - Assignment distribution
  - Non-key tasks
  - Outsourcing
  - Equipment, goods and services
- Risks:
  - Identification
  - Contingency plan

Interpretation of the scores

0 — The proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information

1 — **Poor.** The criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.

2 — **Fair.** While the proposal broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses.

3 — **Good.** The proposal addresses the criterion well, although a number of shortcomings are present.

4 — **Very Good.** The proposal addresses the criterion very well, although a small number of shortcomings are present.

5 — **Excellent.** The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

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New types of calls and proposals (H2020)

- **Calls** are **challenged-based**, and therefore more open to innovative proposals
  - Calls are less prescriptive - they do not outline the expected solutions to the problem, nor the approach to be taken to solve it.
  - Calls/topics descriptions allow plenty of scope for applicants to propose innovative solutions of their own choice.

- There is a **greater emphasis on impact**, in particular through each call/topic impact statements
  - Applicants are asked to explain how their work will contribute to bringing about the described impacts
  - During the evaluation, you are asked to assess this potential contribution.

- Proposals may be both **inter-disciplinary** and **cross-sectoral** in nature to tackle specific challenges
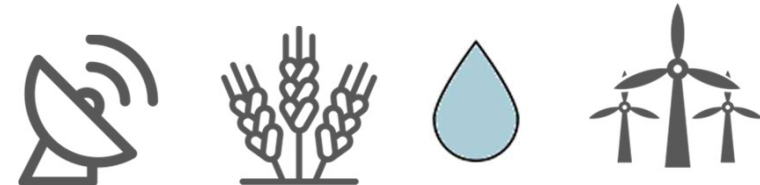
Cross-cutting issues

- **Cross-cutting issues are fully integrated in the work programme (WP):**
    - Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) is integrated across all Horizon 2020 activities to successfully address European challenges
    - Gender dimension in the content of R&I - a standard question on relevance of sex/gender analysis is included in proposal templates
    - The new strategic approach to international cooperation consists of a general opening of the WP and targeted activities across all relevant Horizon 2020 parts
        - The approach to providing 'automatic funding' to third country participants is restricted – see list of countries
        - you should check requests for „exceptional funding"
    - Other cross-cutting issues such as science education, open access to scientific publications, ethics, standardisation … may also be included in the WP

- **When you evaluate a proposal, you need to take into account cross-cutting issues if explicitly mentioned under the scope of the topic**
    - A successful proposal is expected to include these elements, or convincingly explain why not relevant in a particular case

Impact of grant preparation on evaluation

- **No grant negotiation phase!**
  - The time from submission of a proposal, evaluation and signature of the grant has been reduced to a **maximum of 8 months** (max. 5 months for evaluation + max. 3 months for grant signature)

- **What does this mean for the evaluation of proposal?**
  - ✓ You evaluate each proposal as submitted, not on it's potential if certain changes were to be made
  - ✗ You do **not recommend substantial modifications** such as change of partners, additional work packages, significant budget or resources cut, additional scientific activities to strengthen the concept, trans-disciplinary aspects not appropriately covered…
  - ✓ If you **identify significant shortcomings**, you must reflect those in a lower score for the relevant criterion Proposals requiring substantial modifications are not expected to pass the relevant thresholds

- **Is there a margin for making some recommendations?**
  - ✓ Minor and specific corrections to be implemented without negotiation, e.g. timing of work package…
  - ✓ Obvious clerical errors

Logistics

- **A new electronic system for the evaluation of proposals is available and accessible via your ECAS password**

- **Please bring your own device**
  - You are invited to bring your own laptop/tablet/notebook for the on-site evaluation in Brussels
  - There are no fixed computers available in the open space/reading rooms of the evaluation building in Brussels
  - Laptops are available upon request
 - Fixed computers are available in the meeting rooms

- **Reduction of paper copies**
  - A few printers are available in the evaluation building in Brussels
  - Copies of proposals will be still made available for the on-site evaluation

- **Electronic workflow**
  - The processing of your payment requests is done electronically (no more queues for reimbursement)
  - Please make sure you know your ECAS login and password
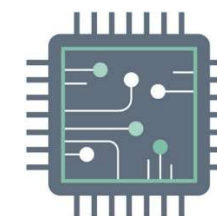
INFODAY H2020:
Información práctica para propuestas del programa Ciencia con y para la Sociedad (SWAFS) y relevancia de la implementación de la Investigación e Innovación Responsable (RRI) en H2020.
NUEVO PROGRAMA HORIZON EUROPE.
10.12.2019
Sede FEUGA. Rúa Lope Gómez de Marzoa s/n Campus Vida. Santiago de Compostela

SAVE THE DATE

Thank you for your attention!

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