

Integration of Social Sciences and Humanities in the EU funding programmes for research and innovation

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ABSTRACT

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Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) ¹ are necessary to tackle many of the complex societal challenges addressed in the EU Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation.

Contributions from one or more SSH disciplines are frequently key to a successful application to the funding programme. The approach is usually interdisciplinary and involves either the collaboration between SSH disciplines and/or the collaboration between SSH and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) disciplines.

In Horizon Europe, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation for the period 2021-2027, the topics that would particularly benefit from an SSH dimension are ‘flagged’ as SSH-relevant. The flagging is the result of processes of co-design with stakeholders and co creation of the topics among the Directorates-General of the European Commission.

The topic text indicates the requirement for an effective contribution of SSH disciplines, the involvement of SSH experts and institutions as well as the inclusion of relevant SSH expertise to produce meaningful and significant effects enhancing the societal impact of the related research activities.

During the proposal evaluation process, independent external experts assess under each of the evaluation criteria how the contributions from SSH disciplines are reflected.

When a topic is not flagged for SSH, applicants can still decide to address it in their proposal if they find it relevant.

Grant agreements stemming from successful applications to SSH-flagged topics are monitored periodically. This includes the SSH dimension, which is part of the cross-cutting issues of the Framework

Programme. The integration of SSH responds to the obligation set in the Framework Programme as a key cross-cutting issue.

Since the previous Framework Programme Horizon 2020 (2014-2020) and with help of the NET4SOCIETY4 Coordination and support action ², the European Commission has a comprehensive methodology for assessing the integration of SSH. To monitor the development of this cross-cutting issue, various dimensions are examined, such as the budget going to SSH partners, qualitative aspects, performance of disciplines and sectors involved, as well as which countries are represented as participants and coordinators. The *5th Monitoring Report on projects funded in 2018 under the Horizon 2020 programme* ³ is publicly available and a new edition is currently being prepared.