EU Funding & Tenders

Online Manual

EU Funding Programmes 2021-2027

Version 1.2
01 November 2025

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
Version	**Publication date**	**Changes**
1.0	08.02.2021	▪ Initial version (document covering all programmes managed through the Funding & Tenders Portal; updated to the new MFF)
1.1	15.09.2022	▪ Update of hyperlinks. ▪ Clarifications and updates in sections on: ▪ Roles and access rights ▪ Terms and Conditions of Use and Data privacy ▪ Complaints ▪ Proposal submission (who can apply; instructions on macro-supported xlsm documents; special security requirements) ▪ Work packages and deliverables ▪ Security scrutiny
1.2	01.11.2025	▪ Participant Registration section updated to align with updated Validation Rules. ▪ Expert section updated (EMI phase-out; instructions on VAT exemption certificate request; explanation of the calculation of the EUR 90 000 threshold).

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The **Online Manual** is a **user guide** that aims to explain to **applicants** and **beneficiaries** how EU grants, procurements and prizes work and how to manage them electronically in the Funding & Tenders Portal.

The Online Manual is limited to procedural aspects and explaining the functionalities of the IT tools behind the Portal *(roles & access rights, proposal submission and evaluation, grant management, amendments, etc)*.

Legal and policy aspects are covered rather in other documentation, such as the Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment, EU Grants AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement (which annotates the provisions of the MGAs) and the Programme Guides that exist for some EU funding programmes *(e.g. Horizon Europe Programme Guide, Erasmus+ Programme Guide, European Solidarity Corps Programme Guide)*.

A comprehensive list of all relevant documentation *(including legislation, work programmes and calls, guidance and templates)* can be found on Portal Reference Documents.

Terms frequently used are explained in the Portal Glossary.

User questions are covered by the Portal FAQ.

Table of contents

1. My Area — User account and roles

Getting access to My Area

The EU Funding & Tenders Portal ('Portal') is the central electronic portal for all EU funding and tenders.

It is managed by the European Commission and used by itself and other EU services (together 'EU') for their grants, prizes and procurements.

The Portal has two parts: A public section with general information *(Funding Opportunities, Reference Documents, etc)* and My Area, which is a secured, personalised section (Portal electronic exchange system) used by the participants for managing their proposals and grants/contracts.

For security reasons, access to My Area is based on:

- **EU Login account —** unique identifier for individuals. All you need to open an EU Login account is your work e-mail address.

- **Roles & access rights** (Identity and Access Management System — IAM)

- **PIC number** — unique identifier for organisations. This 9-digit number is received after you register in the Portal Participant Register.

In My Area you can:

- get access to non-public information on your proposals, projects/contracts, organisations, etc

- register in the Participant Register and update your organisation/natural person data

- sign contracts, submit reports, cost claims, invoices and receive payments

- communicate with the EU services about your ongoing projects/contracts

- for Experts working with the EU services: register, sign contracts, manage tasks, submit cost claims and receive payments

- for external audit firms working with the EU services: register and manage tasks

Individual users:

- have to register as a user only once

- will be asked to agree to the Portal Terms and Conditions on their first login

- will have specific access rights, depending on their roles in the organisation/projects/contracts

Organisations:

- will be asked to agree to the Portal Terms and Conditions when they appoint their LEAR.

1.1 EU Login

EU Login provides a single sign-on to a large number of services and tools available on the Portal.

To access to the functions available on My Area, you must have an EU Login account.

- To create an EU Login account, you click on the Register button on the Portal homepage; all you need is your **name** and **work e-mail address**.

- If you already have an EU Login account, you must use that one.

⚠ EU Login is the new name for the previously used ECAS account (European Commission Authentication System); old accounts continue to work, there is no need to create new ones.

Creating an EU Login account

1 Go to the Portal Register page and enter:

- your first name, last name and e-mail address

- the displayed security code.

2 Select Create an account

You will receive an e-mail to the address that you specified, containing a link you should use to complete the registration process.

3 Click the link you will be asked to choose and confirm a password.

4 Go back to the Portal homepage.

5 Click on Login and log in with your registered e-mail (user name) address and password.

⚠ Your EU Login **password and user name** is personal — do NOT share it with colleagues or anyone else. All transactions made with your account *(user name, password)* will be considered as having been made by yourself. Keep your password secure and change it regularly.

Logging in to the Portal with your EU Login account

After logging in, you can use the personalised services and tools available on the Portal.

⚠ Your EU Login account gives you only general access to My Area, but it will NOT yet give you access to project/contract data of your organisation. This access depends on your roles and access rights.

FAQ

- FAQ on EU Login help page

1.2 Roles and access rights

Roles and access rights restrict the information a user can view and the tasks they can perform *(for instance, only a person with the coordinator role can delete a draft application).*

Access rights are linked to a user's roles in the Portal personalised area (My Area), which are in turn linked to their functions within their organisation or in relation to a particular project/contract and their nomination by the organisation's LEAR (or other authorised person).

How are access rights managed?

Roles are divided into 2 main sections:

- **Organisation roles** are linked to the whole organisation and its data (but without any access to the projects/contracts)

- **Project/contract roles** are defined first in the proposal, and then transferred to the project/contract when you have been invited to sign with the EU. They are managed application by application and project by project, covering all types of access (read/write/submit).

One user can have several roles at the same time.

How are the roles assigned?

Most of these roles can be freely assigned and managed by you or your organisation, according to your needs:

- you can start creating an application yourself

- you can be invited by other users who have created an application to join their application

- persons in your organisation can give you (and revoke) access to roles of your organisation

- the initiator of an application (or persons in your organisation involved in an on-going application) can give you (and revoke) access to roles in the application

- persons involved in on-going projects/contracts can give you (and revoke) access to roles in their projects/contracts.

All access rights are linked to the user's EU Login account.

Exceptions

The EU services intervene in the assignment of the following 2 key roles:

LEAR (Legal Entity Appointed Representative) — *organisation role*

The LEAR is the person that is officially nominated by an organisation to manage rights and obligations related to the use of the Portal and to act as main administrative and legal contact in case of issues. Usually, LEARs are staff members in the central administration of the organisation. The LEAR handles all the organisation-related data on the Portal and appoints the persons within their organisation that are allowed to electronically sign grants/contracts and cost claims.

There can only be one LEAR per organisation.

LEARs are validated by the Central Validation Service as part of the registration in the Participant Register. Learn more about the detailed procedure for appointing the LEAR.

Primary Coordinator Contact — *project role*

The Main Contact/Contact Point of the Coordinator/Group Leader in the application will become the PCoCo (Primary Coordinator Contact). This person is by default the one creating the application in the Portal and thereby becomes the main person responsible for the application. As such, they can submit requests, reports and notifications to the EU on behalf of the consortium.

There can only be one PCoCo per project/contract.

During the application phase and before call deadline, the PCoCo may transfer this role to someone else in the application.

Afterwards (i.e. after call submission is closed), a new PCoCo can be assigned only by the EU Project/Procurement Officer. If such a replacement becomes necessary, the Coordinator should send a request to the Officer via the Portal Messaging Service (My Projects/My Contracts > Actions > Manage Project/Contract).

Exceptionally — and only until a LEAR has been appointed — **self-registrants** have certain roles (that were not assigned to any of the other users listed above).

Roles — Overview

The picture below shows all the roles involved in managing organisations and projects/contracts in the Portal.
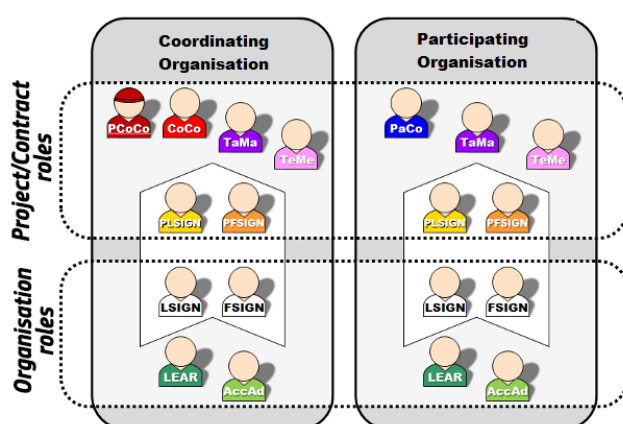
Figure 1 - Distribution of roles

For some funding programmes *(e.g. Horizon Europe ERC and MSCA grants)*, additional roles are used. See the **HOW TO** for more details.

Organisation roles

Legal Entity Appointed Representative (LEAR)

The LEAR is the formally nominated main responsible for an organisation's use of the Portal and thus bears the final responsibilty for all the organisation's actions in the Portal.

LEARs have system rights to:

- update their organisation's data

- nominate/revoke representatives of their organisation to electronically sign grant/contracts

- nominate/revoke representatives of their organisation to electronically sign cost claims/invoices

- nominate/revoke Account Administrators within their organisation to help them with their work.

⚠ The LEAR does NOT assign the Legal Signatories and Financial Signatories for a particular project/contract. This is done by the Coordinator Contact (CoCo) or Participant Contact (PaCo) of that project/contract.

Self-registrant

The Self-registrant is the person who first registers an organisation in the Portal Participant Register.

Before the LEAR is validated, Self-registrants can provide the EU with requested information and documents about their organisation.

Once the LEAR has been formally validated (normally after the organisation has been validated by the Central Validation Service), the role of Self-registrant is revoked and replaced by the LEAR.

Account Administrator

The LEAR may delegate tasks to one or more Account Administrators. Though the LEAR keeps the full responsibility, Account Administrators can fulfil tasks for their LEAR. An organisation can have an unlimited number of Account Administrators.

If the organisation nominates a new person as their LEAR, the existing Account Administrators remain, but can be revoked by the new LEAR.

Legal Signatory (LSIGN)

LSIGNs must be nominated for an organisation by the LEAR or an Account Administrator *(see Figure 3)*.

LSIGNs are assigned to a particular project by a Coordinator or Participant Contact *(see Figure 3)*. An organisation can have an unlimited number of LSIGNs.

Financial Signatory (FSIGN)

FSIGNs must be nominated for an organisation by the LEAR or an Account Administrator *(see Figure 3)*.

FSIGNs are assigned to a particular project by a Coordinator or Participant Contact *(see Figure 3)*. An organisation can have an unlimited number of FSIGNs.

Primary Audit Contact (PAuCo) and Audit Contact (AuCo)

Audit roles can be assigned in the Portal only when the organisation is audited.

The LEAR is automatically assigned the Primary Audit Contact (PAuCo), and can nominate other PAuCos in the organisation.

The PAuCo(s) must also nominate at least one Audit Contact (AuCo) as main contact for audits on the organisation, and additionally, assign both the AuCo and the audit to an audit team within the organisation.

PAuCos have the following system rights for their organisation:

- nominate other PAuCo(s) for the organisation and the AuCo(s) for an audit (My Organisations > Actions > View Roles, click the **Roles** tab). Detailed explanations are available in the 🛈 **HOW TO**

- manage the teams in the organisation to assign the audits and the audit contacts to them (My Organisations > Actions > View Roles, click the **Teams** tab). Detailed explanations are available in the 🛈 **HOW TO**

- revoke other roles

AuCos can nominate other AuCos for the teams to which they are assigned. They can also revoke other AuCos in their team.

An AuCo assigned to a team has the following system rights for those audits:

- perform the audit tasks for their organisation

- communicate with the EU auditors *(receive and send formal notifications, submit audit documents, etc)*

Summary organisation roles
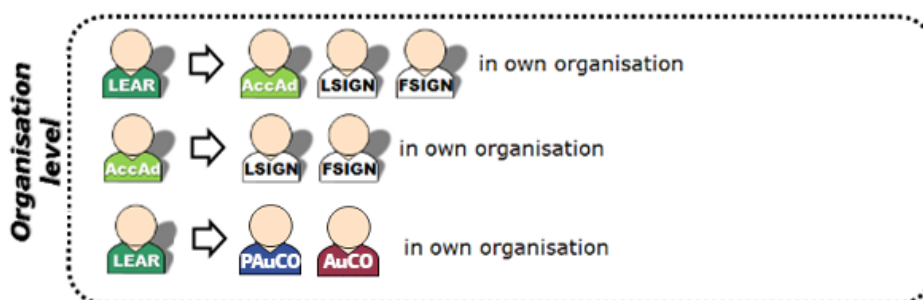
Figure 2 - Who can appoint and revoke organisation roles?
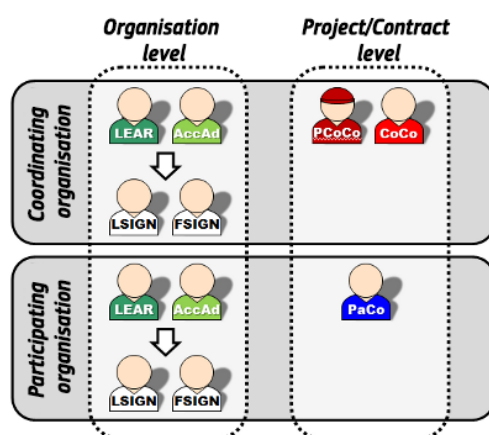
Figure 3 - Nomination of LSIGNs and FSIGNs

When nominating FSIGNs or LSIGNs, the **LEAR can add comments** that can help the Participant Contacts to select the right LSIGN/FSIGN for their project *(e.g. "Mr Smith can sign for projects run by Department X from 1 February 2014.")*. Such comments can be useful for defining the scope of responsibilities or duration of FSIGNs or LSIGNs in large organisations with different departments.

Proposal roles

When preparing your proposal, you will need to define the participating organisations and the organisation/proposal contact(s). Both are set in the application online form.

For grants and prizes: The proposal will contain the following types of participating organisations:

- Coordinator. A proposal can have only one, and you may submit an application with just one Coordinator and no other participating organisations. You need to name a

Coordinator immediately to launch your application, but you can change it later on, before submission.

- Partner. A proposal can have none, one or more. The number of Partners in an application (and other aspects such as the country where they are registered, etc) are subject to the call conditions (i.e. the specific requirements for each call for proposals).

- Partners can also have Affiliated Entities linked to them (through a permanent legal or capital link or as members of an association; former Linked Third Parties). Affiliated Entities are allowed to fully participate in the grant and claim costs. They must comply with all eligibility conditions (same as a Partner).

- Associated Partners. This kind of participating organisation contributes to the project but cannot claim costs. They are normally not linked to any Partner and do not need to comply with the eligibility conditions.

Then, you will need to define the contact persons for each participating organisation. There are two possible types of contacts:

- Main Contact. You need to define one per participating organisation.

- Contact Person. You may define one or more Contact Persons for each Partner. You may further define their kind of access as Coordinator/Participant Contact (full access) or Team Member (read-only access).

The roles in your proposal will afterwards become project roles:

- The Main Contact of the Coordinator will become the Primary Coordinator Contact (PCoCo). This role is automatically assigned to the initiator of the application who submits the proposal to the EU.

- The Main Contacts of the Partners will become Participant Contacts (PaCo).

- The Contact Persons of the Coordinator/Partners will become Team Members (TeMe) if they had read-only access in the application form or Participating Contacts (PaCo) if they had full access.

For tenders:

The tender will contain the following types of participating organisations:

- Group Leader. A submission can have only one, and you may submit a tender with just one Group Leader and no more participating organisations.

- Group Member. A submission can have none, one or more (often none).

In a call for tenders, you need to provide one single contact: Contact Point. One per application. This Contact is always linked to the Group Leader.

During the submission phase, this is the only role which will be defined. The Contact Point will then become the Primary Coordinator Contact (PCoCo).

Project/contract roles

Depending on your project roles you can have read-only, read-write or read-write-submit rights to information, documents and online forms.

(Primary) Coordinator Contact (PCoCo/CoCo)

The Primary Coordinator Contact is for each project the main contact between the consortium and the EU for a particular project/contract. By default, it is the person that creates the application in the Portal.

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The PCoCo can nominate/revoke a Coordinator Contact (CoCo) for the project/contract (unlimited number possible), who will then have the same rights — except the right to revoke the PCoCo.

All Coordinator Contacts can:

- nominate/revoke Participant Contacts for other organisations in the consortium

- nominate/revoke Task Managers and Team Members in their own organisation

- assign Legal and Financial Signatories in their organisation to their projects

- make changes to project documents on the Portal

- communicate with the EU services and submit applications and project documents to the EU.

⚠ It is important to list your partner organisations (and their contact persons) relatively early on in the application process, because this will give them access to the application and allow them to appoint other roles for their organisation.

Participant Contact (PaCo)

The PaCo is a representative of an organisation in the consortium that is not the coordinating organisation.

An organisation can have an unlimited number of PaCos per project, and each will be able to:

- nominate/revoke other PaCos in their organisation

- assign Legal and Financial Signatories in their organisation to their projects/contracts

- submit their work to the Coordinator

- nominate/revoke Task Managers and Team Members in their own organisation

- make changes specifically to the participant-related sections of the project documents on the Portal

- submit information directly to the EU services (if required under the Grant Agreement)

Task Manager (TaMa)

TaMas can perform some limited actions: creating, updating and uploading documents about their organisation's participation and completing, modifying or deleting project/contract information.

An organisation can have an unlimited number of TaMas per project. They cannot nominate or revoke anybody, nor submit information to the Coordinator or EU.

This role is not used during the application phase.

Team Member (TeMe)

TeMes have limited access rights: search and read-only functions.

Project Legal Signatory (PLSIGN)

The PLSIGN has the right to sign the grant/contract (and amendments) for a specific project on behalf of the organisation.

The LEAR (or Account Administrators) must first appoint LSIGNs; the Coordinator and each participant (PCoCo/CoCos/PaCos) can then assign PLSIGNs for a given project to act as legal signatory for the participant in the project.

An organisation can have can have an unlimited number PLSIGNs per project.

They have the same rights as CoCos/PaCos for project/contract information. Cannot assign/revoke any roles.

Project Financial Signatory (PFSIGN)

The PFSIGN has the right to sign cost claims/invoices on behalf of the organisation.

The LEAR (or Account Administrators) must first appoint FSIGNs; the Coordinator and each participant (PCoCo/CoCos/PaCos) can then assign PFSIGNs for a given project to act as financial signatory for the participant in the project.

An organisation can have an unlimited number of PFSIGNs per project.

They have the same rights as CoCos/PaCos for project/contract information. Cannot assign/revoke any roles.
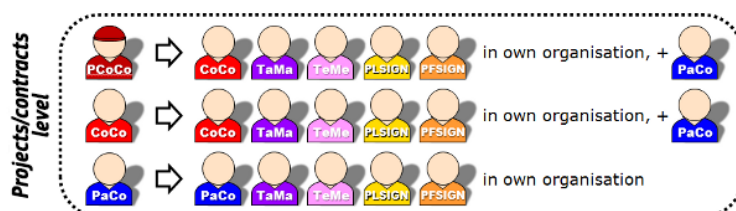
Summary project/contract roles

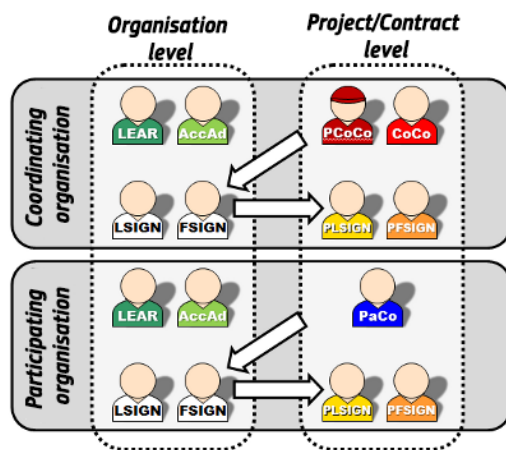Figure 4 - Who can appoint and revoke Project / Contract roles?

Figure 5 - Appointment of LSIGNs and FSIGNs to a specific project

Rights associated with roles
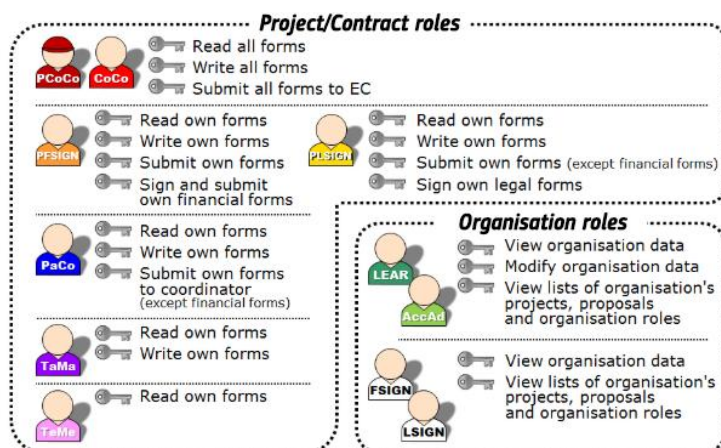
Figure 6 - Which roles can perform which actions?

Nomination process

Some roles are automatically given based on the information in your application:

- The proposal initiator will become the Primary Coordinator Contact (PCoCo).

- The main contact persons in the participating organisations will become Participant Contacts (PaCos).

- Persons with read-only access to the proposal will become Team Members (TeMes).

⚠ Once your organisation is validated by the Central Validation Service, it is important that you appoint a LEAR to make sure that you can manage the access rights to the Portal.

How to nominate/revoke someone

To grant a role, the LEAR (or other authorised person) must enter the user's e-mail address. It must be the same as the address the person used to open their EU Login account.

If the person does not already have an EU Login account, they will automatically receive an invitation to create one.

Organisation roles — to grant/revoke, go to My Organisations > Actions > Edit Organisation Roles > Add Roles.

Project/contract roles — to grant/revoke, go to My Projects > Actions > Manage Consortium > Edit Roles.

How many different roles are needed in a consortium?

A user's EU Login account can carry any combination of roles, this depends on the participants. Thus, a user can acquire a differentiated set of access rights to different functions for managing projects, contracts or organisation data.

⚠ For small organisations or Beneficiaries who are individuals (natural persons), this means that one single person can combine all the access rights needed to manage their projects/contracts *(i.e. LEAR, CoCo/PaCo, PLSIGN and PFSIGN)*.

The **minimum configuration** for a consortium in any given project is:

- 1 Primary Coordinator Contact (PCoCo)

- 1 Participant Contact (PaCo) per beneficiary

- 1 LEAR per organisation

- 1 Project Legal Signatory (PLSIGN) per organisation

- 1 Project Financial Signatory (PFSIGN) per organisation.

One person can have several roles at the same time.

⚠ Organisations that participate as Affiliated Entities (or other type of participant — *Associated Partner, Subcontractor, etc*) do NOT need any access roles in the Portal, since they are not allowed to use it. All actions in the Portal are handled for them by the Coordinator/Beneficiary they are linked to.
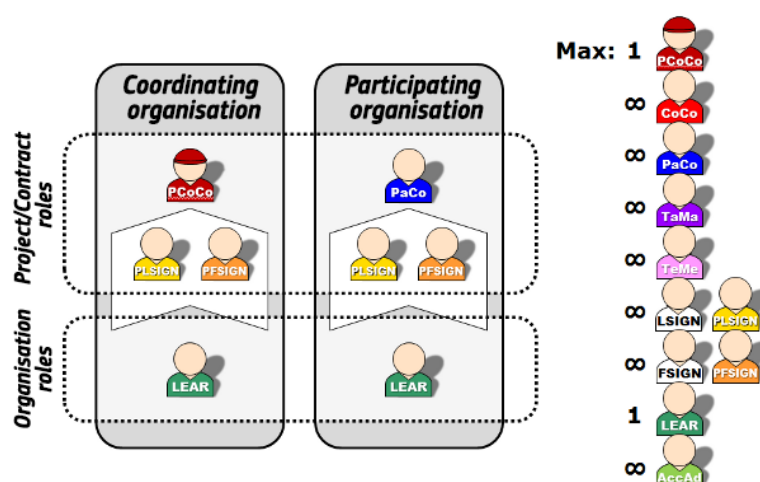
Figure 7 - What is the minimum configuration of roles to run a project?

FAQ

- FAQ on users' roles and access rights

1.3 Accepting the Terms and Conditions of Use

The Portal is part of the Single Electronic Data Exchange Area set up under Articles 147 and 128 of the EU Financial Regulation.

On the first login to My Area, users must agree to the Portal Terms and Conditions and the Portal Privacy Statement.

Organisations will be asked to agree to the Terms and Conditions when they appoint their LEAR (declaration of consent). ⚠ Every time you access to My Area, you are implicitly reaffirming your acceptance of the Terms and Conditions valid at that time.

Personal data will be kept and processed for the purposes of the Single Electronic Data Exchange Area, i.e. for the management and implementation of your EU grants, contracts, prizes and other transactions managed through the Portal. The detailed conditions for the processing of your personal data are set out in the Portal Privacy Statement.

2. Participant Register — Register your organisation

If you want to submit a proposal, your organisation needs to be registered in the Portal Participant Register and have a 9-digit Participant Identification Code (PIC).

If your **proposal** is **successful**, you will receive a notification and be asked to:

- provide supporting documents to confirm the administrative and legal information declared during the registration (legal entity validation)

- appoint a Legal Entity Appointed Representative (LEAR appointment)

- provide supporting documents to verify the financial capacity of your organisation (financial capacity assessment, if applicable)

- validate the bank account for payments (bank account validation, only for coordinators).

⚠ The appointment of the LEAR in the Participant Register is mandatory for all validated participants. Without LEAR it will NOT be possible to update the legal entity data in the Participant Register, nor sign any contracts electronically in the Portal.

2.1 Registration and validation of your organisation

Before submitting an application, all participants involved in the proposal must first be registered in the Portal Participant Register and have their 9-digit Participant Identification Code (PIC number).

You can verify directly on the Portal whether your organisation is already registered and has a PIC. If not, please proceed with the registration following the instructions on the same page (the **Registration wizard** will help you through the process). Once completed, you get the PIC to be used in your online application form and further correspondence with the EU services.

If you do not have an user account (EU Login), you will first need to create one, before starting the registration process. If you already have a user account (EU Login), you can log in and directly start registration.

⚠ Please note that the Participant Register is primarily directed at organisations and that not all of the labels fit for individuals (natural persons). Enter your information as appropriate *(e.g. country of residence instead of country of registration, passport number instead of registration number, etc)*.

What you need to register your organisation

To **register your organisation**, you will need to provide basic administrative and legal information, in addition to contact details.

❶ Get ready

Since the declared information will be verified against supporting documents later on, it is useful to have the relevant documents at hand when you complete the registration, to make sure you fill in everything correctly *(legal form, non-profit, public/private, etc)*.

② Check for already existing PIC

In order to avoid creating duplicate PICs, you should first check whether your organisation (or another department) is already registered in the Portal and use that PIC.

Go to How to Participate > Participant Register > Search a PIC > Search a PIC and put in your organisation data. ⚠ Check several variants to make sure there is really no entry.

③ If no PIC is registered, start registration

Go to How to Participate > Participant Register > Register your organisation. The **Registration wizard** will guide you step-by-step through the process.

Detailed explanations are available in the HOW TO.

You do not need to complete the registration process in a single session. You can enter some information, save it and continue later on. To resume your registration, go to My Organisations > Continue Registration. Incomplete draft registrations are automatically deleted after one year.

If you create by mistake a new PIC, *see below Data updates*.

PIC number

After completing a new registration, you will receive the 9-digit **Participant Identification Code (PIC)** — to be used in your online application form and further correspondence with the EU services.

The newly created PIC will be provisional (declared/non-valid status) until it is formally validated at a later stage.

Nothing else is expected from you after the PIC has been generated, the Central Validation Service will contact you later, to initiate the validation process.

Validation of your organisation

If your proposal is successful, you will be contacted for the **validation of your PIC registration** data.

Validation is needed only for certain types of participants (grants: Beneficiaries and Affiliated Entities; procurement: Contractors). It is not needed for Associated Partners, Subcontractors or other participants.

It will be done by the Central Validation Service which carries out the validation for all EU services using the Portal.

The Central Validation Service will contact the person who registered the organisation (Self-registrant) and ask them to:

- upload official supporting documents (via the My Organisations page)

- clarify any details.

The documents that are required will be listed in the notification you receive. You will need to fill out a legal entity identification form and provide us with an official VAT document, registration extract, statutes or act of establishment, etc. The detailed list of documents is also explained in the Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment.

The Central Validation Service will check that your organisation is legally recognised (has legal personality). If this is not the case (exceptionally this is allowed), you will have to prove that the representatives have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on the organisation's behalf and that the organisation has financial and operational capacity equivalent to that of legal persons.

The Central Validation Service will also check whether your organisation qualifies for some of the special legal statuses that are required for some funding programmes *(private or public body, non-profit, international organisation)*.

The outcome of this process is the validation of your organisation (validated PIC). The Central Validation Service will send a confirmation message once the process is completed and the PIC is validated.

⚠ Please don't forget that all communications with the Central Validation Service must take place through the Participant Register (My Organisations page). Emails and other communications will NOT be accepted.

Please also note that if you apply for a call with specific eligibility criteria that are not validated by the Central Validation Service, these will be checked by the responsible EU service managing the call — *in addition* to the validation, which means that they may come back to you with additional questions.

Validation of the organisation is a prerequisite for the LEAR appointment.

Data updates

Updates to the registered organisation data must be requested via the Participant Register (My Organisations > Actions > Modify Organisation):

- by the LEAR (or Account Administrators) for **validated entities**

- by the Self-registrant if your organisation has **not been validated** yet.

If your organisation has already a validated PIC and a new one is created by mistake, your LEAR or Account Administrator should contact the Central Validation Service via the Portal Messaging Facility (My Organisations > Actions > Modify Organisation). The information will be transferred from the duplicate PIC to the correct PIC and the duplicate flagged.

SME self-assessment

In addition to the standard validation, a **SME self-assessment** is needed if you apply for a call where SME status is an eligibility criterion (or allows for a higher funding rate or other advantages).

If there is no recent (not older than 2 years) SME self-assessment information available in the Participant Register, the Portal Submission System will automatically prompt you to go through the **SME self-assessment wizard** to establish your SME status. You will need to enter the financial figures of the last approved accounting period of your organisation and of any other organisation that might be directly or indirectly related to you. If the result confirms your SME status, you will be able to proceed with the application process.

⚠ Please note that the SME self-assessment is only needed if the SME-status is an eligibility criterion (or gives special advantages); otherwise, you will simply self-declare your SME status in the Legal Information tab and proceed with the registration.Detailed rules are explained in the Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment.

Links

- Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment

- Participant Register: User Guide

FAQ

- FAQ on Participant Register, organisation data management and SME-self-assessment

2.2 LEAR appointment and validation

Parallel to the validation of your organisation, you will be requested by the Central Validation Service to appoint your **Legal Entity Appointed Representative (LEAR)**.

This must be done by a legal representative of your organisation with the necessary legal authority to commit the organisation for this type of decisions *(e.g. typically CEOs, rectors, Director-Generals, etc... always in accordance with the statutes of your organisation)*. ⚠ If such decisions are normally reserved for joint decision-making by several representatives, the appointment must be done together (single signature on LEAR documents, but internally the applicable procedures with joint decision-making must all have been complied with).

The LEAR role, which can be performed by any member of the organisation (typically from the central administration), is key. They are formally nominated to manage your organisation's use of the Portal and thus bear the final responsibility for all your actions in the Portal. Once validated, they will be responsible for:

- keeping an overview of all the proposals/projects/contracts your organisation is involved in

- managing all the legal and financial information about your organisation

- managing the access rights at organisation-level (and read-only access at project-level)

- appointing the persons which will be able to electronically sign grants/contracts (Legal Signatories — LSIGNs) and cost claims/invoices (Financial Signatories — FSIGNs).

Applicants that are natural persons do not need to prove their capacity to become a LEAR, but still need to enter their LEAR data and submit supporting documents.

⚠ The appointment of the LEAR in the Participant Register is mandatory for all validated participants. Without LEAR it will NOT be possible to update the legal entity data in the Participant Register, nor sign any contracts electronically in the Portal.

Further details about the LEAR's rights and responsibilities are explained in the Roles and access rights section.

Appointing and validation of your LEAR

⚠ Please note that registration and validation of your organisation is a prerequisite for the validation of your LEAR.

❶ Identify the person in your organisation who will act as LEAR and the legal representative who will appoint them

The person who initially registered the organisation in the Participant Register (the Self-registrant) will receive the notification from the Central Validation Service to launch the LEAR appointment procedure.

❷ Encode in the Participant Register the name and contact information of the LEAR and the legal representative appointing them

To do so, the Self-registrant must go to My Organisations > Actions > Modify Organisation.

The Participant Register will, then, generate the necessary documents to be signed:

- LEAR appointment letter (including LEAR roles and duties and declaration of consent to the Portal Terms and Conditions; generated as a single document).

The system will automatically check the existence of an EU Login account for the LEAR *(e-mail address, first and last name)*. In case of inconsistencies, the system alerts the Self-registrant. If no EU Login account exists, the system will start creating one and the LEAR will be requested (via a notification e-mail) to finalise it. The LEAR appointment process will be blocked until this is done.

❸ Get your organisation's legal representative to:

- Date and sign the LEAR appointment letter generated by the system (covers LEAR appointment, LEAR roles and duties and declaration of consent to the Portal Terms and Conditions; ⚠ all sections must be signed in blue-ink or with qualified electronic signature within the meaning of the eIDAS Regulation (QES))

- read the Portal Terms and Conditions.

❹ Upload the following documents in the Participant Register:

- the LEAR appointment letter (dated and signed by the legal representative and the LEAR)

- copies of an official valid proof of identity (ID-card, passport; integral copy with photo and signature) of:

    o the legal representative and

    o the appointed LEAR

- documents proving the authority of the legal representative; these documents must:

    o clearly indicate the person's role/function within the organisation as legal representative

    o identify and appoint the individual (by name) as the person covering that specific role/function.

⚠ Don't forget that you MUST keep the originals of all documents you uploaded, so that they are available in case of EU controls, checks or audits. Since your registration in the Participant Register is valid for this and any future EU funding and tenders procedures your organisation will ever apply for, the originals must be kept permanently, as long as you are using the Portal (and until the end of the data retention periods that we have defined for

controls, checks and audits, etc; *for details see retention rules in the Portal Privacy Statement*). You should therefore NOT throw them away and ensure that they are maintained also in case of insolvency, takeover or change of control.

5 Validation of the LEAR appointment by the Central Validation Service

After receiving the above-listed documents and once the corresponding PIC has been validated, the Central Validation Service will also validate the LEAR appointment in the Participant Register.

6 Activate the LEAR's online user account

After validation, the LEAR account (with the special access rights) can be be activated by:

- following the instructions the LEAR receives by e-mail

- using the account activation PIN code which will be sent to the LEAR by post, or by SMS if the LEAR's mobile phone number was provided

Should you encounter any problems with the LEAR appointment, please contact the Central Validation Service via the Portal Messaging Facility (My Organisations > Actions> Modify Organisation).

Data updates — Changing the LEAR

If you need to replace an already validated LEAR, you can designate a new LEAR by making a new appointment (same steps as initial appointment).

If you are a LEAR and your e-mail address has changed, please inform the Central Validation Service via the Portal Messaging Facility (My Organisations > Actions > Modify Organisation), in order to obtain instructions on how to proceed for the change.

How can you contact the LEAR?

For contacting LEARs of other organisations, go to How to participate > Participant Register > Search a PIC to find the organisation. Then, select Actions > Contact Organisation. This will launch a contact form that allows you to send a message to the LEAR (and their Account Administrators). The LEAR can then contact you directly.

To contact your own LEAR, log in and then go to My Organisations > Actions > Contact Organisation.

Links

- Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment

FAQ

- FAQ on LEAR appointment

2.3 Bank account registration and validation

Registration and validation of the bank account for payments

In addition to the validation of the participating organisations, we also have to validate the bank account that will be used for our payments to you (usually bank account of the Coordinator).

The Central Validation Service will contact the Coordinator after the PIC is validated, to enter the bank account details into the Participant Register and upload the necessary supporting documents (My Organisations > Actions > Modify Organisation).

The documents required will be listed in the notification you receive. In general, you will need to provide the bank account details and either a bank statement or financial identification form.

The Central Validation Service will cross-check this information and validate the account.When registering your organisation for the first time, you do not need to declare any bank account information. You will be prompted to do this only later on, if your proposal is successful.

Data updates

If you need to change an already validated bank account, please declare the new bank account details via the Participant Register and upload the required supporting documents.

Please note that it can happen that not all types of modifications are supported. In case of an issue, please contact the IT Helpdesk.

2.4 Financial capacity assessment

Assessment of your financial capacity

For some participants, we will also have to check the **financial capacity** before awarding grants/contracts.

For grants, the criteria for checking financial capacity are set out in the call conditions.

Normally, the financial capacity assessment will be done for all Beneficiaries and Affiliated Entities, except:

- public bodies (entities established as public body under national law, including local, regional or national authorities) or international organisations

- if the individual requested grant amount is EUR 60 000 or below.

Specific rules apply for some programmes *(i.e. only for coordinators; only for grants above a certain threshold; State guarantee; see Horizon Europe Programme Guide, Erasmus+ Programme Guide)*.

The Central Validation Service will contact you during grant preparation to upload the necessary financial documents (My Organisations > Actions > Modify Organisation).

The documents required will be listed in the notification you receive. In general, you will need to provide documents showing your financial situation for the last two closed financial years *(profit and loss account and balance sheet, business plan, audit report produced by an approved external auditor, certifying the accounts for the last closed financial year, etc)*.

The analysis is based on neutral financial indicators *(liquidity, financial autonomy, solvency and profitability)*, but will also take into account other aspects, such as dependency on EU funding and deficit and revenue in previous years. The results of your financial capacity assessment will be taken into account when evaluating your ability to implement the project (and to take on the Coordinator role, if it is the case).

If we consider that your financial capacity is not satisfactory, we may require:

- an enhanced financial responsibility regime, i.e. joint and several liabiliy for all Beneficiaries or joint and several liability of Affiliated Entities

- prefinancing paid in instalments (multiple/additional prefinancing)

    – (one or more) prefinancing guarantees

  or

    – propose no prefinancing or

    – request that you are replaced or, if needed, reject the entire application.

Specific rules apply to programmes with Mutual Insurance Mechanism (MIM, former Participant Guarantee Fund; *e.g. Horizon Europe*). For these programmes, prefinancing guarantees and joint and several liability of Beneficiaries are normally excluded.

Financial capacity self-check

You can check your financial capacity yourself by using the Financial capacity self-check simulator.

⚠ The self-check is not available for all programmes (because of the algorithms used).

Moreover, it is only a simulation. If a formal financial capacity assessment is required, you will have to go through the formal procedure.

Links

- Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment

2.5 Data updates

Who can update the online information about your organisation?

- Initially, only the person who first registered the organisation or any other appointed Self-registrant

- once appointed, only the appointed representative (LEAR) and appointed Account Administrators.

To change the information on your organisation, go to My Organisations > Actions > Modify Organisation.

Please upload legal/financial supporting documents for any updates you submit so that the Central Validation Service can validate them. Maximum size for uploads: 6MB per file

Changes of legal status

If your organisation changes status or address, your LEAR should immediately update the information in the Participant Register (My Organisations > Actions > Modify Organisation) and, if possible, directly inform (via your Coordinator) your EU Project Officers in ongoing grants (Coordinator uses the Portal Messaging Facility: My Projects > Actions > Manage Project > Process communications > New message).

Some changes like, for instance, partial or universal transfers of rights will moreover require amendments in case you have ongoing Grant Agreements/Procurement Contracts.

Managing roles in the organisation

If organisation roles need to be changed, your LEAR should immediately update them in the system (My Organisations > Actions > Edit Organisation Roles)

If project/contract roles need to be changed, your CoCo/PaCo should immediately update them in the system (My Projects > Actions > Project Consortium).

⚠ If grants/contracts or cost claims/invoices are signed in the system by persons whose access rights should have been revoked, this will be your responsibility and you will have to bear the consequences. Their signatures and other actions will be considered valid by the EU services.

Links

- Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment

2.6 Complaints about validation

If you believe that a validation result is flawed, you can submit a **complaint** (following the deadline and procedure set out in the message on the validation result).

Generally, the means of redress are the following:

- request for validation review — within 30 days of receiving the message

- request for review of legality under Article 22 of Regulation 58/2003 — within 1 month of receiving the message (using the Article 22 complaints form template)

- action for annulment under Article 263 TFEU — within 2 months of receiving the message.

⚠ You are free to choose any of the above means of redress. However, in the interest of good administration and procedural efficiency, it is recommended to use first the available administrative review procedures (if any). The objective of these procedures is to re-examine the circumstances of the validation procedure and to reach a final decision on your registration. Deadlines for further redress will therefore run as from when you receive our reply with the final position.

Please note that notifications which have not been opened within 10 days after sending are considered to have been accessed and that deadlines will be counted from opening/access *(see Portal Terms and Conditions)*.

When filing a complaint, please take into account that the formal decision was taken by the Central Validation Service hosted in the REA executive agency, and that complaints must therefore be directed against that agency (NOT against the European Commission).

In case you consider that there has been maladministration on the part of the Central Validation Service, you can also address a complaint to the European Ombudsman — within 2 years after you became aware of it AND after having used all the means of administrative redress available *(validation review and Article 22 request)*.

3. Grants

3.1 Applying for funding

3.1.1 Search funding opportunities — Find a call

The Portal is the single point of entry for all EU funding and tenders, i.e. grants, prizes and procurements managed by the European Commission and other EU services.

The Portal currently hosts the following EU funding programmes:

MFF programming period 2021-2027

Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)

Border Management and Visa (BMVI)

Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV)

Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)

Creative Europe (CREA)

Customs Control Equipment (CCEI)

Customs (CUST)

Digital Europe

Erasmus+

EU Anti-Fraud (EUAF)

EU External Action (RELEX)

EU Renewable Energy Financing Mechanism (RENEWFM)

Eu4Health (EU4H)

Euratom

Europe Direct

European Defence Fund (EDF)

European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF)

European Parliament (EP)

European Social Fund + (ESF)

European Solidarity Corps (ESC)

Fiscalis (FISC)

Horizon Europe

Humanitarian Aid (HUMA)

Information Measures Common Agricultural Policy (IMCAP)

Information Measures for the EU Cohesion policy (IMREG)

Innovation Fund (INNOVFUND)

Internal Security Fund (ISF)

Interregional Innovation Investments (I3)

Just Transition Mechanism (JTM)

Justice Programme (JUST)

Pilot Projects and Preparatory Actions

Programme for Environment and Climate Action (LIFE)

Promotion of Agricultural Products (AGRIP)

Protection of the Euro against Counterfeiting (PERICLES IV)

Research Fund for Coal & Steel (RFCS)

Single Market (including COSME, Consumers, European Statistics)

Social Prerogative and Specific Competencies Lines (SOCPL)

Technical assistance for ERDF, CF and JTF (ERDF-TA)

Technical Support (TSI)

Union Civil Protection Mechanism(UCPM)

MFF programming period 2014-2020

Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)

Civil Protection (UCPM)

Consumer Programme

COSME

Defence and Industrial Development (EDIDP)

European Statistics (ESP)

Health (3HP)

Hercule III

Horizon 2020 (H2020)

Internal Security Fund – Borders and Visa (ISFB)

Internal Security Fund – Police (ISFP)

Justice (JUST)

Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)

Pilot Projects and Preparatory Actions

Promotion of Agricultural Products (AGRIP)

Research Fund for Coal & Steel (RFCS)

Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC)

You can **access calls and topics** in your area of interest through the Portal Search funding & tenders page. This page allows you to search in the text of the call and topic titles, call and topic identifiers, topic description and keywords and tags. You can also filter using the quick search per topics related to specific EU priorities.

If you would like to receive updates on new calls, you can subscribe to the Funding Opportunities RSS feed.

The Search funding & tenders page also hosts calls for tenders (EU procurements) and prizes. It does NOT cover financial instruments (EU loans and venture capital) — these are normally managed through financial partners (banks), but the Portal homepage has a direct link to the Access to finance page on Europa.

Calls and topics

On the Portal most **calls** are divided into **topics**.

Call — Group of topics that are open in parallel and address the same policy domain.

Topic — Part of a call with one opening and closing date. The proposals submitted to the topic will be evaluated together and compete against each other.

The Search funding & tenders page will display the list of open topics; the name of the call they belong to is visible on the Topic page.

The Topic page contains all the information you need to have for your proposal *(call conditions, legal framework and key documents, standard application form and other practical information you need to prepare your proposal)*. The Topic page also specifies the call deadline and contains a link to the **Portal Submission System**, through which you can submit your proposal. The Topic page also contains call and topic updates (changes or important information for the applicants).

Deadline for submission

A topic is considered open until the **deadline** for submission has passed (call deadline).

Each topic will specify deadlines and/or cut-off dates.

Deadline models

Single-stage

For most topics, you must submit a **full** proposal by the call deadline.

Two-stage

Some topics have a **2-stage** submission procedure, which means that you have to submit a short outline proposal for stage 1 and then a full proposal only if you are invited to stage 2 (meaning that your project looks promising).

Multiple cut-off

Some topics are **continuously open**, where you can submit a proposal at any time, and cut-off dates mean that all proposals received by a given cut-off date will be evaluated after that deadline.

Types of action

Types of action designate funding schemes, i.e. calls with the same characteristics: policy domain (scope of funded activities), award criteria, reimbursement rate and in some cases form of funding *(budget-based grant, lump sum grant, unit grant, prize, procurement, debt and equity facility, etc)*.

The types of action depend on each EU programme.

There are two main types: action grants (for projects) and operating grants (to support organisations and their running costs).

In addition, most programmes distinguish the following:

- Project Grants

- Lump Sum Grants

- Unit Grants and

- Framework Partnerships.

However, especially larger programmes have developed their own specific set of types of action, for instance:

- Horizon Europe: Research and Innovation Actions, Innovation Actions, Coordination and Support Actions, Pre-commercial Procurements, Public Procurement of Innovative Solutions, etc

- Digital Europe: Simple Grants, Coordination and Support Actions, SME Support Actions, Grants for Financial Support, Grants for Procurement, PAC Grants for Procurement, Lump Sum Grants, Framework Partnerships

- CEF: Project Grants, Infrastructure Projects, Lump Sum Grants, Unit Grants, Framework Partnerships

- Single Market Programme: Project Grants, Lump Sum Grants, Grants for Financial Support, PPI Grants for Procurement, Framework Partnerships, European Statistics, etc.

Within the types of actions, EU grants fund all kinds of activities *(collaborative actions, coordination and networking actions, coordination and support actions, support to organisations, technical assistance and capacity building actions, mobility actions, cofund actions to existing grant schemes/procurements of the Beneficiaries, infrastructure actions, etc)*.

Technology readiness levels (TRL)

Calls in the field of innovation (close to market) often use the notion of **technology readiness level** to specify also the level of technology readiness that is expected from the projects. There are 9 technology readiness levels:

- TRL 1 — basic principles observed

- TRL 2 — technology concept formulated

- TRL 3 — experimental proof of concept

- TRL 4 — technology validated in lab

- TRL 5 — technology validated in relevant environment

- TRL 6 — technology demonstrated in relevant environment

- TRL 7 — system prototype demonstration in operational environment

- TRL 8 — system complete and qualified

- TRL 9 — actual system proven in operational environment.

3.1.2 Projects that can be funded — Conditions for funding

The **types of projects and activities** that can be funded are set out for each call in the call conditions on the Topic page.

The **other conditions** *(eligibility of participants, admissibility requirements, exclusion grounds, operational and financial capacity requirements, award criteria, etc)* are also explained on the Topic page.

⚠️ Please note that for some programmes *(e.g. Horizon Europe, EDF and AMIF)*, projects may need to undergo additional checks and procedures before funding can be awarded, such as specific ethics review, security scrutiny, third country control check, etc.

3.1.3 Apply with partners or as individual

Who can apply?

To see whether your **organisation** is **eligible** for funding, check the call conditions on the Topic page.

In general, most EU funding programmes require that participants (Beneficiaries and Affiliated Entities) are:

- legal entities (public or private bodies, including international organisations)

and

- established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:

- o EU Member State (including EU overseas countries and territories (OCTs))

- o eligible non-EU countries:

  - o EEA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway — *if opted-in for the programme*)

  - o associated countries (countries associated to the funding programme by paying a contribution — *list differs for each programme*).

⚠ Please be aware, however, that almost all programmes have **additional criteria**, which widen or narrow the group of entities that can apply. Some programmes are open to participants from the entire world *(e.g. Horizon Europe)* others are deliberately limited to EU countries only. In addition, the situation can be different from call to call even within a programme. It is therefore very important to carefully look at the call conditions.

Moreover, participants must be registered in the Participant Register (mandatory for Beneficiaries, Affiliated Entities and Associated Partners) and be validated by the Central Validation Service by the time the grant is signed (mandatory for Beneficiaries and Affiliated Entities).

Multi-participant or mono-participant actions

Most of the calls for EU grants target multi-beneficiary consortia made up of participants from different countries — to enhance the EU added value, promote cooperation between organisations in different countries, reinforce the quality of applications and ensure fair competition and equal opportunities throughout the EU.

Some programmes formalise this, by adding specific requirements for the consortium composition *(e.g. Horizon Europe, UCPM, etc)*.

To see whether a call requires minimum consortium composition, check the call conditions on the Topic page.

How to find partners for your project ideas?

To find partners for your project ideas, you can:

- • Use the Partner Search function of the Portal. The function allows to:

  - o look for organisations which received funding in the past

  - o create and check Partner Search requests by call/topic

- • Use other Partner Search tools and services. A list of recommended support sites is offered under the Helpdesks & Support Services page.

- • Participate in conferences, brokerage events organised by the EU or networks in the Member States *(National Contact Points or Desks, Enterprise Europe Network, etc)*.

Portal Partner Search 🛈 HOW TO

If you want to find experienced partners who already have ongoing projects, or if you want to browse in the database of registered organisations, visit the Partner Search page. You can search by keyword/geographical area/funding type, etc. Search results include complete organisation profiles with lists of funded projects and the possibility to contact representatives.

If you have selected your area of interest via the Topic search, you may publish your offer/interest for one or more of the open/forthcoming topics of a call on the Portal. All your published offers/interests will be visible on your organisation's page too.

Enterprise Europe Network Cooperation Opportunities database — The Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) publishes an extensive number of innovation and technology profiles from international companies and research organisations to help identify suitable partners for bilateral business, innovation and technology cooperation. The EEN database is updated with new profiles on a weekly basis. All profiles are published anonymously. Express your interest in collaboration by filling in and sending the Expression of Interest form to your local EEN office, who will establish the contact.

Consortium roles and responsibilities

When setting up your grant consortium, you should think of organisations that help you reach objectives and solve problems.

Beneficiaries — Affiliated Entities — Associated Partners — Subcontractors

The roles should be attributed according to the level of participation in the project. Main participants should participate as **Beneficiaries** or **Affiliated Entities** (former Linked Third Parties); other entities can participate as Associated Partners, Subcontractors, Third parties giving in-kind contributions, etc.

Associated Partners and **Third parties giving in-kind contributions** do not get any part of the grant money and will therefore have to organise other funding sources *(bear their own costs, internal reallocation of funding inside the consortium, find investors, etc)*.

⚠ **Subcontracting** should normally constitute a limited part of the project and will need to be justified (give reasons). Tasks may NOT be subcontracted inside the consortium (between Beneficiaries or Affiliated Entities).

Coordinator — Other Beneficiaries

The **Coordinator** is responsible for managing the project, submitting reports and deliverables and acting as intermediary for all contacts with the EU Granting Authority.

The **other Beneficiaries** must implement their part of the project and contribute to the grant administration *(preparing the grant, reporting, etc)*.

The consortium participants will be **jointly responsible** for implementing the project activities (in accordance with their proposal/description of the action). If a project is not finished (or badly implemented), the grant money may have to be reduced for everyone.

3.1.4 Submit a proposal — Portal Submission System

Proposal submission

Proposals must be submitted electronically using the **Portal Submission System**.

Where? Access to the Submission System is available through the Topic page on the Portal> Start Submission.

Who? Proposals must be created and submitted by a contact person of the coordinating organisation. Exceptions exist for some programmes/types of action which are fully focused on individuals *(e.g. the Principal Investigator in Horizon Europe ERC grants or the Fellow in Horizon Europe MSCA grants)*.

How? The **Submission wizard** will guide you step-by-step through the process. You will need to use the online forms and templates available in the Submission System. The application form is described below.

Submission process

Get prepared: Finding your topic > Find partners > Plan your work and budget

Electronic proposal submission: Get an EU Login account > Get a PIC number (Participant Register) > Launch Submission wizard > Pre-register your draft proposal > List participants, contact persons > Fill in Administrative Forms (Part A) > Upload Technical Description (Part B) > Submit your proposal > Acknowledgement of receipt

Application form (Part A and B)

Proposals are submitted using the application forms available in the Submission System. The **application form** is structured in into two parts, Parts A and B:

- Part A: contains the structured Administrative Forms with data on the participants, legal declarations and contact persons (retrieved from the Submission System screens). It may also include some programme-specific questions.

- Part B (the narrative part): Technical Description of the project with the planned activities, work packages, costs, etc (must be uploaded as PDF).

Part A is generated while entering the data into the Submission System; Part B needs to be prepared in advance (using the template downloaded from the system; do NOT use the standard template from the Topic page).

Part B will also include annexes and supporting documents if required by the call conditions *(detailed budget table, declarations from national authorities, CVs, annual activity reports, etc)*.

⚠ All participants can contribute to the parts, but it is the person from the coordinating organisation who created the application who must finalise and submit the application.

For programmes with specific security requirements, special instructions may apply *(e.g. for EDF, documents must be uploaded through a password-word protected zip file)*. For such programmes, detailed instructions will be available in the call documentation.

Tasks of the Coordinator:

- Mandate: Make sure that you have the mandate of all participants to submit the application (explicit agreement to participate).

- Quality check:

  Check that the application is coherent and that Part A and B are consistent (especially budgetary information).

  Make sure that the template has been followed and all sections are completed; make sure that no annexes are missing.

Confidentiality

EU services will treat your proposal **confidentially**, as well as any related information, data and documents received.

Our evaluators (both in-house and external Experts, if any) are also bound by an obligation of confidentiality.

⚠ Please do NOT discuss your proposal with persons that might act as Expert evaluator for us or be otherwise involved in the evaluation, since this could lead to a conflict of interest with adverse consequences both for you and the concerned person.

Security, data protection and document retention

Your proposal and all the information received from you will be stored under **secure** conditions at all times. The Portal is a closed, secured platform with multiple safeguards.

After the evaluation, we will keep the proposals for audit trail purposes (at least 5 years for unsuccessful proposals and 10 years after project end for successful proposals and, possibly, longer if needed for controls, checks and audit purposes).

Personal data will be handled according to the standards set out in Regulation No 2018/1725 and in line with the Portal Privacy Statement.

⚠ Please be aware that your proposal MUST NOT contain any classified information (Decision 2015/444 or national rules).

Access to proposals

The proposals will remain sealed and closed until after the call deadline.

However, in order to plan the evaluation process *(organise translations, evaluation capacities, evaluators with specialist knowledge, etc)* we will ask you for permission to access to certain information already before:

- call title and topic for which the proposal is submitted

- title of your application, proposal abstract, keywords

- PICs of the participating organisations

- relevant panel (for proposals submitted to specific panels, *e.g. Horizon Europe MSCA, UCPM*).

⚠ A warning will inform you that the Granting Authority will be accessing this information and will give you the opportunity to refuse access.

Links

- Proposal Submission Service: User Manual

FAQ

- FAQ on Proposal submission and evaluation

3.1.4.1 Get prepared

Before you can start completing your application, you should study the call documentation, select partners and plan your project.

❶ Study the call documentation

Choose your topic**,** and then read carefully the **related documents** and **standard templates** that are available on the Topic page.

⚠ The Submission System will check some basic admissibility and eligibility requirements, but NOT all of them. It is therefore very important that you carefully read the call conditions. Please note that whenever there is a contradiction between the IT checks in place and the call documentation, the call documentation prevails.

② Select your partners for the project

Most calls require several participants in the proposal *(see call conditions on the Topic page)*.

You can use the Portal Partner Search to find partners. Other partner search tools are explained in the Helpdesk & Support Services page.

③ Plan your project and prepare the Technical Description (Part B)

Planning of the work (work packages, deliverables, milestones)

Look at the **call conditions**, **award criteria** and standard application form (**Technical Description** (Part B)) on the Topic page.

For most types of action the Technical Description must give a detailed description of the project idea and work plan *(work packages, milestones and deliverables, division of responsibilities and resources, time schedule, project management structure, dissemination and communication activities)*.

Work packages

All project activities should be grouped in a logical, consistent and structured way into separate **work packages**. All work packages must present a clear, logical link to the project objectives and to the other work packages. Ideally, each work package should constitute a sub-part of the project, a step leading to the achievement of the project's overall goals.

Projects should normally have at least 2 work packages:

- work package 1 — management and coordination activities

- work package 2 — outputs related to the project goals.

    Beyond that, create only as many as you need (as many as necessary, as few as possible).

Work package 1 should normally cover all activities related to the general management and coordination of the project and any activities that do not relate to any of the work packages leading to a specific result, but which are directly linked to the project as a whole.

For the other work packages, describe the:

- objective(s)

- activities to be implemented — *in specific terms*

- (tangible and intangible) outputs to be produced.

Milestones & deliverables (if required)

Concerning the outputs:

1. Distinguish between **milestones** and **deliverables**:

- milestones: control points in the project that help to chart progress *(kick-off meetings, steering committes, first-draft of a survey, prototype, etc)*

- deliverables: outputs to be submitted to the EU *(publication, leaflet, progress report, brochure, list, etc)*

2. Be as specific as possible, *e.g.:*

- *events — the number of events, title, content, duration, number of participants, etc.*

- *publications — number of pages, language, format (printed/electronic), number of printed copies (in each language), etc.*

3. Be realistic about what you can achieve within the project duration. The scope of your project should be large enough to make a difference, but it doesn't need to produce an excessively high number of outputs.

4. Refer only to major outputs. Do NOT include minor sub-items, internal working papers, meeting minutes, etc. Adapt the number of deliverables to the size of your project and work packages (use as many as necessary, as few as possible). You may be asked to reduce or increase the number during grant preparation.

Budget

Look at the **budget table** in the Administrative Forms (Part A) in the Submission System. Only the white cells need to be filled in (the grey cells are not applicable or automatically filled by the system)*.*

Cross-check with Part B to see if you will also need to submit a detailed budget table or outline budgetary details also in Part B.

The budget categories to be used for the call are set out in the call conditions and explained in the AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement.

The budgeted costs should be based on a detailed and accurate estimation of your estimated project costs (based on the cost eligibility rules set out in the Grant Agreement). They should include *all* your estimated costs (those of your Affiliated Entities should be presented separately, for each participating entity).

Keep your estimates on file — you may be required to produce them later on.

Annexes & supporting documents

If required by the call conditions, you will need to prepare additional **annexes** and **supporting documents** *(consortium description, declarations by the national authorities, CVs, annual activity reports, etc)*.

⚠️ Use the templates provided inside the Submission System (NOT the ones on the Topic page).

Detailed budget table (if required)

Many programmes require the submission of a detailed budget table (templates are usually in format .xlsx or .xlxm).

Simple .xlsx files can simply be filled-in, merged and uploaded. For .xlsm files, you can usually — after the table has been filled-in and completed using the macro-support — save a copy as .xlsx and use that copy for merging and uploading the file.

If you are asked to merge and upload a table as PDF (usually for needed for GAP), please proceed as follows:

Sheets per participant must be filled in for each Beneficiary/Affiliated Entity; sheets for the entire project must be filled in by the Coordinator — after having received all the information by the other participants.

Combine into a single PDF:

1. Save participant sheets into one PDF per Beneficiary/Affiliated Entity (choose sheets via 'Options' when saving as PDF)

2. Save participant sheets and project sheets into a PDF for the Coordinator.

3. Combine into a single PDF for upload (using Adobe Acrobat or the Preview App on Apple Macs).

4. Upload in the system.

CVs (if required)

Provide **CVs** for the core project team (these are the key staff you have listed in part B and may include outside experts, if key to your proposal).

You can submit CVs in any format. If standard CVs are required in the call conditions we strongly recommend you to use the Europass format. If short outlines are requested, there are no specific formatting requirements (but please keep the information on each person to name, birthdate and 1-2 paragraphs describing studies and most relevant work experience).

As far as possible, upload them in a single PDF file, rather than individually.

If you are still recruiting, please provide the job profile.

Activity report of last year (if required)

This report should describe your organisation's activities for the last year.

It should be detailed enough to allow us to check your organisation's aims and activities and its operational and professional capacity.

No finalised annual report yet? Submit the draft version, certified by your organisation's legal representative.

No report of this type available? Create one for this application and have it certified by your legal representative.

Online versions — If your report is available on your website, you can just provide a link (directly to the document(s), not simply to the homepage) and indicate the link on a separate sheet and upload it as annex (PDF format).

3.1.4.2 Electronic proposal submission

Electronic proposal submission: Get an EU Login account > Get a PIC number (Participant Register) > Launch Submission wizard > Pre-register your draft proposal > List participants, contact persons > Fill in Administrative Forms (Part A) > Upload Technical Description (Part B) > Submit your proposal > Acknowledgement of receipt

Proposals must be **submitted online** using the Portal Submission System and before the call deadline.

Detailed explanations are available in the .

Actions to be completed before submission

1 Create your user account to login to the Portal

To be able to submit a proposal, you must first register on the Portal for an EU Login account.

2 Make sure all participants are registered (PIC)

All participants (Beneficiaries, Affiliated Entities and Associated Partners) must be registered in the Participant Register and have their 9-digit Participant Identification Code (PIC). The Coordinator has to be identified with its PIC number at Step 3 of the Submission wizard, while other participants at Step 4.

Read more about registration and PIC search in the Registration and validation of your organisation section**.**

Submitting the application

The **Submission wizard** will guide you step-by-step through the process.

Detailed explanations are available in the HOW TO .

⚠ Do not forget to check the system requirements for using the Submission System.

1 Launch the Submission wizard and enter information for the Administrative Forms (application form (Part A))

Go to the topic on the Search funding & tenders page > Start Submission.

2 Upload Part B (Technical Description) and annexes and supporting documents

Part B (and the annexes and supporting documents) can be uploaded in Step 5 of the wizard. Detailed instructions for preparing these documents are available in the section Get prepared.

Tips

Do not wait until the end to submit

It is highly recommended to submit your proposalas early as possible and at least **48 hours before** the deadline. This will avoid technical problems *(system requirements, local configuration settings, system congestion, etc)*.

⚠ Please note that you can submit the proposal as many times as you want. Every submitted version will replace the previous one. Your proposal is sealed and closed. It will not be accessed before the deadline of the call. There is no reason to delay submission for fear of disclosure.

Affiliated entities

In Step 4 of the wizard you specify the organisations participating in the consortium. As from 2021, this will include Affiliated Entities and Associated Partners. They will therefore need to have registered beforehand and have their PIC. Their budget will also have to be individualised already at application stage (separate row in the budget table).

Access rights of individual contact persons

In Step 4 of the wizard you also specify the contact persons for the organisations. To read more about the levels of access rights, *see the Roles and access rights section*.

Changes to organisation-related data during proposal preparation

If your organisation is already registered, but organisation-related data has changed during proposal preparation, you cannot update it directly in the Submission System.

The update must first be requested via the Participant Register (My Organisations > Actions > Modify Organisation):

- by the LEAR (or Account Administrators) for **validated entities**

- by the Self-registrant if your organisation has **not been validated** yet.

Page limits and formatting requirements for the Technical Description (Part B)

Don't forget that applications may have mandatory page limits and formatting requirements (indicated at the beginning of the application form). Excess pages will be automatically made invisible, and will not be taken into consideration by the evaluators.

Checklist for submission

Before submitting the proposal, check that:

- your proposal fulfils the call conditions

- the proposal (both the Administrative Forms (Part A) and Technical Description (Part B)) is complete, readable, accessible and printable

- the requested declarations have been made

- all consortium members have:

  o obtained a user account to log in to the Portal

  o registered in the Participant Register.

Mock evaluation

For some programmes, you can find standard evaluation forms similar to those used by our evaluators on Portal Reference Documents. Try them out. Ideally, ask a disinterested colleague to carry out a mock evaluation.

Multiple versions of proposal

You can submit your proposal several times before the deadline, to make updates or changes. To view or change your submitted proposal, go to My Proposals > View Submitted > Re-edit proposal. As long as the call has not been closed, the newly submitted version will overwrite the previous one.

⚠ Please note that the re-edit functionality is not available for continuously open calls.

Multiple proposals

If the Coordinator submits a number of similar proposals, the Granting Authority may ask them to choose one or more of them to be withdrawn.

Specific submission schemes

Two-stage submission schemes — You must submit a short outline proposal for stage 1 and will be invited to submit a full application only if you pass to stage 2. The full application must be consistent with the short outline proposal (no substantial differences allowed).

Calls with multiple cut-off dates — The call has a final closure date (usually the end of the funding programme) and several cut-off dates that trigger evaluation. There is an evaluation session after each cut-off date and the final closure date (normally within a month). After each cut-off date, the submitted proposals are grouped, reviewed and ranked together. Evaluation results are made available and proposals invited for grant preparation. If you miss a cut-off date, the proposal will be evaluated with the next batch in the next evaluation session.

After submission

At submission, the application package is combined into one document, sealed and an e-receipt is generated (with date and time of submission).

All contact persons of the coordinating organisation will receive an e-mail (after each submission if several). ⚠ If you have not received this e-mail, the application has not been submitted. Please try again or contact the IT Helpdesk.

After the submission, there is normally no further contact between you and us until after the end of the evaluation. The competent EU service will contact you only if there is a need to clarify issues or request additional information or if the call foresees a hearing/interview as part of the evaluation procedure.

Withdrawal of submitted proposals

Before the call deadline, a proposal can be withdrawn at Step 6 of the wizard (My Proposals > View Submitted > Withdraw proposal). After the call deadline, withdrawal has to be requested via the IT Helpdesk.

Once withdrawn, the new status will be shown on the My Proposals page (and you can delete the application with the Delete button).

After the call deadline

Once the call deadline has passed, no further corrections or re-submissions are possible. However, you can have read-only access to the submitted proposal (My Proposals > View Submitted).

Proposals that were never submitted (remain in draft status) are accessible for 90 days after the call deadline (My Proposals > View Draft).

3.1.5 Complaints about failed submission

If you think that submission of your proposal failed and this was due to a technical error on the Portal side, you may lodge a complaint through the IT Helpdesk.

The complaint must be filed **within 4 calendar days** after call closure. You will receive an acknowledgement of receipt the same or next working day.

What else to do? You should secure a PDF version of the part B and annexes of your application holding a time stamp before the call deadline *(file attributes listing the date and time of creation and last modification)*, as well as proof of the alleged failure *(screenshots)*. You may be requested by the IT Helpdesk to provide these items.

EU services will check the IT logs (application log files and access log files) and see if they show a technical problem on the Portal side which prevented you from submitting (or resubmitting) the proposal.

You will be notified about the outcome as soon as possible.

If your complaint is justified, the files you provided to the IT Helpdesk will be used as your proposal and sent for evaluation. If you didn't provide any files, the last version recorded in the IT system will be used.

Links

- Proposal Submission System: User Manual

3.2 Selection — From evaluation to grant signature

3.2.1 Admissibility and eligibility check

Once you have submitted a proposal, the Granting Authority will check:

- **admissibility** (complete and properly put together) and

- **eligibility** (fulfills eligibility conditions)

and then

- ask an independent evaluation committee to **evaluate** it.

Admissibility criteria

The **admissibility conditions** are set out in the call conditions on the Topic page.

They are generally the same across all EU programmes. The proposal must:

- be submitted through the online Submission System before the call deadline

- be complete — application form correctly filled out, all sections of Parts A and B completed, all annexes and supporting documents provided

- be readable, accessible and printable.

Furthermore, the proposal should respect the page limit set out in the application form. Excess pages will be automatically made illegible, and will not be taken into consideration by the evaluators.

Eligibility criteria

The **eligibility criteria** are also set out in the call conditions on the Topic page.

The basic eligibility check involves for most EU programmes if the content of the proposal is in line with the topic description and if it involves participants coming from the right countries.

Additional criteria depend on the programme or specific topic *(i.e. minimum consortium composition, type of participant, geographic location of the project activities, coordinator from an EU country, etc.)*.

For more information on participation of non-EU participants, *see Who can apply section*.

Outcome of the admissibility and eligibility check

If a proposal is inadmissible or ineligible, the participants will be informed (through the coordinating organisation) and the **rejection letter** will be posted in their Portal library (My Proposals > Actions > Follow-up > Proposal Management & Grant Preparation > Documents).

For complaints procedures against such rejections, *see section* *Complaints about proposal rejection*.

3.2.2 Evaluation

Admissible and eligible proposals are sent on to evaluation by an independent evaluation committee.

For most programmes the **evaluation committee (panel)** is made up of EU staff from the Granting Authority and other services. They are often and assisted by external Experts for individual evaluation and consensus group evaluation. For some programmes however *(e.g. Horizon Europe)*, the committee is usually composed exclusively of external Experts — for all stages of the evaluation process (no internal staff).

The evaluation committee will also take position on the operational capacity of the consortium and individual participants to properly implement the tasks planned. This assessment will be based on the competence and experience of the participants, including operational resources (human, technical and other) and is, for many programmes, integrated into the award criteria.

3.2.2.1 Award criteria

Award criteria, scores thresholds and weighting

Proposals are evaluated and scored against **award criteria** set out in the call conditions on the Topic page.

The award criteria, scores, thresholds and weightings depend on each programme and type of action.

Globally speaking most programmes evaluate the following quality parameters: project relevance, quality/implementation and impact. But in practice the labels vary and the parameters are broken down into different aspects and focal points *(see call conditions and, for some programmes, the Programme Guides, e.g. Horizon Europe Programme Guide, Erasmus+ Programme Guide, AGRIP Programme Guide)*.

To be considered for funding, your proposal must score above a certain **threshold** for each individual award criterion, and above an overall threshold for all of them together.

Moreover, in order to receive funding, your proposal must be ranked sufficiently to be above the budget-threshold (relative positioning in the list of all proposals, compared to the other proposals). For calls which provide for weightings, this ranking will also depend on the weighting.

⚠️ Your proposals will be evaluated on its own merit, and not its potential should certain changes be made. Proposals with an inflated budget are likely to receive a lower score.

3.2.2.2 Evaluation and evaluation results

Evaluation process

Briefing

Evaluation: Individual evaluation > Consensus group > Panel review

Briefing of evaluators

Before starting the evaluation process, the evaluators are briefed on:

- the evaluation processes and procedures (including award criteria)

- the content of the topics under consideration

- the need to evaluate proposals as they were submitted, rather than their potential should certain changes be made

- for external Experts: the terms of their contract *(confidentiality, impartiality, conflicts of interest, completing tasks and approving reports, penalties for non-compliance, etc)*.

⚠ For most EU programmes, there is no scope for recommending improvements to proposals (including improvements on the budget).

Individual evaluation

During the individual evaluation, the evaluators work individually. Each evaluator gives a score for each criterion, with explanatory comments, and prepares an individual evaluation report (IER).

Proposals are normally evaluated by at least three individual evaluators *(for some programmes and types of action, two may suffice; for many it is five)*.

The evaluators should also indicate if they consider that the proposal:

- is out of scope or

- involves security issues that will need further scrutiny.

Consensus group

After the individual evaluation, all evaluators who have evaluated the proposal will get together in a **consensus group**, to agree on a common position on comments and scores.

For consensus groups made up of external Experts, the group will normally be assisted by a member of the Granting Authority staff who will act as **moderator** to:

- seek a consensus, impartially and

- ensure that each proposal is evaluated fairly, according to the award criteria.

Panel review

After the consensus phase, the evaluation committee (panel) will take over and discuss the proposals to:

- reach an agreement on the scores and comments for all proposals evaluated together, checking consistency across the evaluations

- if necessary, propose a new set of marks or revise comments, and resolve cases where evaluators were unable to agree

- rank the above-threshold proposals and give a priority order for proposals with the same score.

Proposals with the same score

The evaluation committee will recommend a **priority order** for proposals with the same score**,** using the procedure set out in the call conditions.

Interviews/hearings

If provided for in the call conditions, the evaluation committee (panel) may arrange **interviews/hearings**.

In this case, invitations are sent to the coordinators of above-threshold proposals (and, sometimes, also to those with scores above individual thresholds but below the overall qualifying threshold).

The interviews/hearings may be held remotely or on site, in Brussels.

The questions to be asked will be determined by the panel beforehand and sent to all proposals. The interviews/hearings will be used to get further information to clarify the proposals and help the panel establish its final ranking list and scores. They may not serve to change proposals or add missing information.

Outcome of evaluation

On the basis of the report and ranked list provided by the evaluation committee (panel), the Granting Authority reviews the evaluation result, puts together the **final ranking list** and **informs** the participants.

You can find the **timing** the evaluation and information on evaluation results in the call conditions on the Topic page.

Final ranking — Reserve list — Rejections

The Granting Authority produces the **final ranked list** and the list of applications **proposed for funding**.

The number of proposals in the list depends on the available budget. If the available budget is too small to fund all above-threshold proposals (normally the case because EU grants are heavily oversubscribed), some proposals may be put on a **reserve list**. These will then be offered funding if a higher-scoring project does not go ahead or additional funds become available.

The below-threshold proposals will be **rejected**.

⚠ Proposals will NOT be offered funding if the Granting Authority finds that it is already funding very similar work elsewhere, or a proposal is in any way manifestly contrary to EU general principles or established EU priorities or policies.

Evaluation result letters — Evaluation summary report

The participants will be informed (through the coordinating organisation) about their evaluation result (together with the evaluation summary report (ESR)) and it will be posted in their Portal library (My Proposals > Actions > Follow-up > Proposal Management & Grant Preparation > Documents).
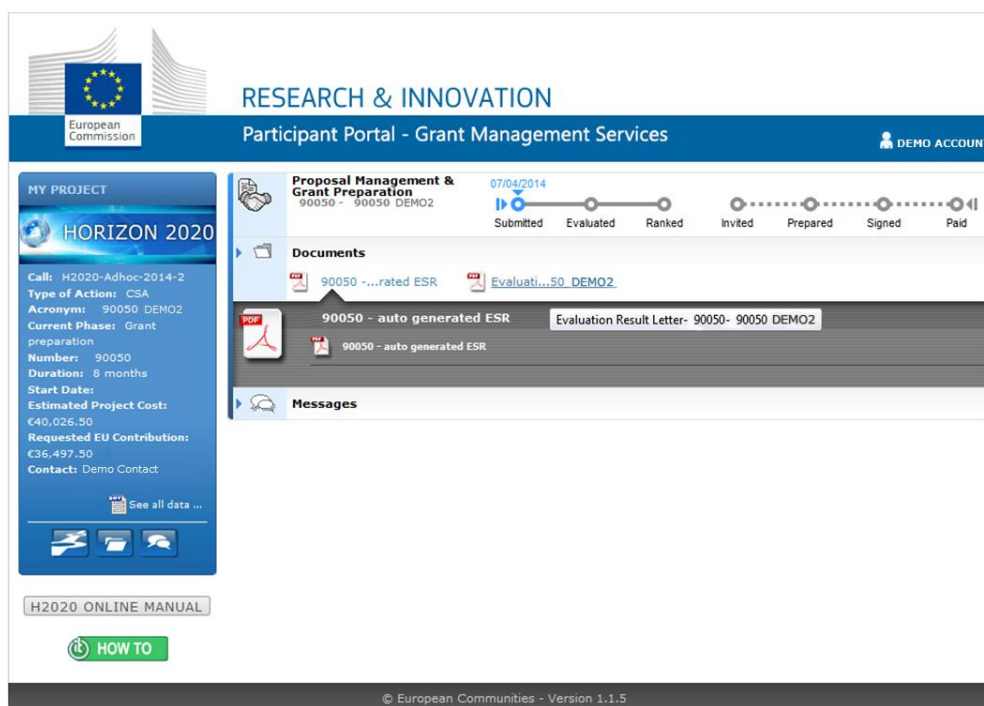
If your proposal was successful, you will get a **grant preparation invitation letter**. To follow the further steps of preparing your grant, you will be prompted for each of the actions that need to be carried out. Details are explained in the next section Grant preparation.

⚠ Please note that invitation to grant preparation is NOT a formal commitment for funding. The final decision on your project will only be taken at a later stage — this depends on the finalisation of grant preparation and further checks which we still need to make *(i.e. financial capacity, non-exclusion, etc)*.

If your proposal was not succesful, you will receive a **rejection letter**. The means of redress for such rejections are described in the section Complaints about proposal rejection*.*

3.2.3 Special procedures: Ethics review, security scrutiny, Ownership control check

Ethics review

In order to avoid funding of ethically problematic activities, some funding programmes require an ethics review procedure to clear the projects *(e.g. Horizon Europe, Digital Europe, EU4H, AMIF)*.

The details and the scope of the ethics review depend on each programme. Most programmes simply check whether projects raise ethics issues and, if so, whether these are adequately addressed. Some programmes, such as Horizon Europe, have a more elaborated review procedure which includes several steps depending on the complexity of the issues *(see Horizon Europe Programme Guide).*

The participants will be informed (through the coordinating organisation) of the ethics review result and it will be posted in their Portal library (My Projects > Actions > Manage Project > Document Library).

If the ethics review leads to requirements to be implemented *before* grant signature, you will need to take immediate action to comply (and may also have to adapt the description of the action (DoA Part B) to reflect this). If the review leads to additional requirements to be fulfilled

during the project, they are automatically added as ethics deliverables into the system and DoA Part A and will be placed in an automatically generated work package called ethics requirements. If the review shows that there are serious ethics issues that cannot be solved, funding may have to be refused.

⚠ You may be asked to provide additional information if this is needed to complete the ethics review *(e.g. in case of serious or complex ethics issues or missing information)*.

Links

- How to complete your ethics self-assessment

Security scrutiny

In order to ensure that classified information *(for EU classified information (EUCI), see Decision 2015/444)* is protected from unauthorised disclosure and that security issues emerging from project activities are appropriately addressed, some EU programmes systematically provide for a security review procedure for applications that operate in security relevant contexts *(e.g. European Defence Fund, Horizon Europe, Digital Europe)*.

The details and the scope of the security review depend on each programme. Some programmes, such as Horizon Europe and Digital Europe, have a more elaborated security review procedure which includes several steps depending on whether the topic under which a proposal is submitted is flagged as security sensitive or not *(see Horizon Europe Programme Guide)*.

The security scrutiny (which is the final step of the more elaborated security review) is essentially the same for all programmes: proposals must be cleared by the Security Scrutiny Group (composed of national security experts nominated in agreement with their national security authorities (NSAs)). The Security Scrutiny Group will determine the level of sensitivity of the application and check whether all security aspects are being handled appropriately. You will be informed about the result through your coordinator.

If the security scrutiny leads to requirements to be implemented before grant signature, you will need to take immediate action to comply. If the scrutiny leads to classification and additional requirements to be fulfilled during the project, this will be automatically reflected in the system *(classification of existing deliverables, limited dissemination of existing deliverables due to security reasons, security aspect letter (SAL), security classification guide (SCG), appointment of project security officer, establishment of security advisory board, etc.)*. If the scrutiny shows that the project is too security sensitive, funding may have to be refused.

Links

- How to handle security-sensitive projects

Third country control

Some programmes (or calls) limit the participation of entities which are controlled by third countries *(e.g. European Defence Fund, Digital Europe, Horizon Europe, CEF)*. In this case, a special procedure is needed to verify ownership control of participants.

Links

- Guidance on participation in EU restricted calls with ownership and control restrictions

- Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment

3.2.4 Grant preparation

Grant preparation

The Grant Agreement must be prepared directly in the Portal Grant Management System.

Where? Access to the Grant Management System is available through My Projects > Actions > Manage Project > Proposal Management & Grant Preparation > Grant agreement data preparation.

Who? The Grant Agreement data should be prepared by the consortium participants together and submitted by the Coordinator.

How? You will be prompted by e-mail for all the actions that you need to carry out for the grant preparation. For more details, *see the list of grant-related notifications*.

What? The grant preparation process consists of:

- setting up the Portal Grant Management System with the:

    o participants' legal, administrative and financial information

    o description of the action *(DoA, Annex 1 GA)*

    o estimated budget *(Annex 2 and 2a GA)*

    o project variables *(when the project starts, reporting periods, amount of prefinancing, GA options, etc)*

    o legal documents needed for grant signature (declarations of honour)

- so that the system can generate the Grant Agreement

and

- trigger signature directly inside the system (Grant Agreement and Accession Forms).

In parallel, the Granting Authority will perform the remaining legal checks to ensure that all the successful proposals can receive EU funding *(legal entity validation, financial capacity check, non-exclusion check, etc)*.

⚠ Our Grant Agreement clauses are common to all EU programmes and mandatory for all Beneficiaries. They are explained in more detail in the AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement.

Grant preparation process

Enter & submit grant data: Entering legal, administrative & financial data > Preparing the Description of the Action (DoA)

Signing the Grant Agreement

Description of the Action (DoA) (Part A and B)

The **description of the action (DoA, Annex 1)** is structured like the application form into two parts, Parts A and B:

- Part A: contains the structured tables with project information (retrieved from the Grant Management System tabs)

- Part B (the narrative part): is based on Part B of the application form and must be uploaded as a PDF.

Creating Part B of the DoA is straightforward, as it can be derived directly from Part B of the application. The instructions for this are available on Portal Reference Documents.

The system will merge the Parts A and B, generating a single PDF with the full description of the action (DoA).

⚠ All participants can contribute to the parts, but it is the Coordinator who will have to finalise and submit it.

Tasks of the Coordinator:

- Workplan tables: Complete the workplan tables in Part A, *(work package descriptions, deliverables and milestones)*

- Check that all PICs have been validated by the Central Validation Service

- Quality check:

  Check that the DoA is coherent and that information in Part A and B is consistent. ⚠ Some programmes will ask you not to simply attach the application, but to adapt Part B. In this case, try to avoid overlaps between Parts A and B *(delete work plan tables from Part B, etc)*.

  Check that DoA and the application match: please check if the content of the DoA differs from the application, as this must be in compliance with your invitation letter to start grant preparation. In addition, you may correct shortcomings identified by the evaluators in the evaluation summary report. The information presented in the DoA can be made more consistent if necessary. Any errors should be corrected *(data displayed in a table or figure is at odds with the description, etc)*.

  Check that the DoA and the legal and administrative information match: for example, it must describe the role and tasks performed by each Partner *(Coordinator, Beneficiary, Affiliated Entity, Third party providing in-kind contributions, etc)* defined in the structured part.

  Make sure that the template has been followed and all sections are completed and no annexes are missing.

Termination of grant preparation

If the consortium decides against the grant during grant preparation, they can launch the termination process directly in the Portal.

Detailed explanations are available in the ⓘ HOW TO .

⚠ This type of termination works only during grant preparation. Afterwards (after grant signature), the grant must be formally terminated by amending the GA (early termination amendment).

Links

- Horizon Europe Coordinators' Day 2022 event page (including recording of the event and presentations)

- How to successfully manage a Horizon 2020-funded project — 10 practical tips on research project management

- Communication to Horizon 2020 beneficiaries: How to avoid errors when claiming costs in H2020 grants

- [FAQ on grant preparation](#)

3.2.4.1 Enter & submit grant data

Actions to be completed before grant preparation

❶ Organise access rights and roles

All Beneficiaries need access rights in order to prepare their grant data in the system and sign the legal documents (declarations of honour, Grant Agreements and Accession Forms).

The contact persons of each organisation indicated in the proposal will automatically receive access rights during grant preparation:

Proposal	Grant preparation
Person who created the application ou submit the proposal?	PCoCo
Contact persons with full access rights	CoCos (for Coordinator) + PaCos (for other Beneficiaries)
Contact persons with read-only rights	Team Members (TeMes)

In addition, if your organisation has already been validated, the LEAR will normally also already have been appointed.

Other persons and roles (especially LSIGNs and FSIGNs) will have to be appointed first by the LEAR (My Organisations > Actions > Edit Organisation Roles > Add Roles) and then assigned to the project by the CoCos and PaCos (My Projects > Actions > Project Consortium > Edit Roles).

The **minimum setup of roles** that you need to prepare and conclude the Grant Agreement are the following:

- for the Coordinator:

    o Primary Coordinator Contact (PCoCo) — already appointed

    o Legal Entity Appointed Representative (LEAR)

    o Project Legal Signatory (PLSIGN)

- for other Beneficiaries:

    o Participant Contact (PaCo)

    o Legal Entity Appointed Representative (LEAR)

    o Project Legal Signatory (PLSIGN).

The same person can fulfil several or all of the above roles.

⚠️ Our system allows for only one signature on your side. If your internal rules require several signatories, you must give an internal mandate to one of them and ensure that the

electronic signature in our system is executed only after all the necessary internal authorisations were given. These authorisations must be collected, stored and kept by you in line with your usual management practices (usually paper-based) so that they can be provided to us in case of EU controls, checks or audits.

More details about nomination are in the Roles and access rights section.

❷ Make sure all participants are registered and validated (PIC)

All Beneficiaries and Affiliated Entities must be registered and validated in time for grant signature *(see section on Registration and validation of your organisation)*.

Associated Partners need to be only registered (have a PIC); no validation is needed, because they will not receive any grant money.

❸ Prepare and sign a consortium agreement (always recommended; in many cases mandatory)

Consortium agreements are mandatory for many EU programmes. But even if they are not, it is highly recommended to have arrangements in place to cover consortium-internal issues that may arise during the project *(e.g. decision-making procedures, resolve conflicts, safeguard intellectual property rights, etc)*. The consortium agreement should normally be signed before the Grant Agreement. For details, *see AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 7 and the How to establish your H2020 consortium agreement*.

Enter legal, administrative & financial data

You need to prepare the Grant Agreement in the Portal Grant Management System.

Detailed explanations are available in the 🛈 **HOW TO** .

❶ Enter the structured information into the system (Part A of the DoA)

Go to My Projects > Actions > Manage Project > Proposal Management & Grant Preparation > Grant agreement data preparation and transfer the information from your application form (Part B) to the Work Packages, Deliverables, Milestones and Critical Risks screens.

You can move work packages up and down by drag & drop to position them in the order of your preference. When a work package is moved to a new position, the numbering of WPs (and also the relative numbering of deliverables) is automatically adapted.

❷ Enter the other grant data into the system

a) Set the project starting date

Set the date on which the project is to start (starting date of the action) on the Project Summary screen.

The options may vary depending on programme and type of action *(see call conditions)*, but generally there are 2 options:

- the first day of the month after entry into force (signature by EU) — default option

- if needed, a fixed starting date may be agreed — this should be the first day of a month and normally after grant signature (unless authorised otherwise by the Granting Authority).

⚠ If you enter a fixed starting date, you will be asked to justify your choice. If you chose a starting date before grant signature, you must explain why your project requires this. Please note that the starting date can normally NOT be before the date on which your application was submitted (unless explicitly allowed in the call conditions). Please also note that any project activities taking place before grant signature bear the risk that the grant may finally not be signed.

b) Check the project reporting periods

The reporting periods will be pre-filled for each call on the Reporting Periods screen.

To minimise administrative burden for you, we will choose the smallest possible number of reporting periods. On average, most programmes tend to have reporting periods between 12 and 18 months.

c) Check the prefinancing for the project

The standard prefinancing percentage will be pre-filled for each call on the Project Financial Information screen.

The final prefinancing amount for each project will however be fixed only later, once the budgetary information is completed from your side and the Granting Authority has examined the results from the financial capacity assessment *(see section Financial capacity assessment)*. The prefinancing may be lowered in case of low financial capacity.

d) Complete the legal and administrative information for the participants

Fill in the missing information for each participant on the Partner Summary screen and complete the Affiliated Entities and Associated Partner screens.

e) Define the budgets for the participants

Fill in the budget for each participant on the Partner Financial Information screens.

Make sure the budget details match the proposal and the GAP invitation letter (and the detailed budget table, if required).

f) Provide the banking details for the Coordinator

Select the bank account to be used for payments from the dropdown menu on the Coordinator's Bank Account screen.

⚠ If your preferred bank account is not listed, you must ask your LEAR to add the bank account in the Participant Register (My Organisations > Actions > Modify Organisation). Once the new bank account has been validated (this may take a few days), it will appear in the dropdown menu and you will be able to select it.

f) Enter other information as prompted

③ Upload Part B of the description of the action (DoA)

Upload Part B on the Documents screen. Follow the instructions from Portal Reference Documents.

④ Sign the declarations of honour (DoH)

For each Beneficiary, the PLSIGN must sign a declaration of honour (DoH) directly in the system (grant declaration).

Affiliated entities also need to sign a DoH. For them, the responsible Beneficiary must download the template from Portal Reference Documents, ask each entity to complete and sign it (blue-ink/QES electronic signature), then upload the scanned DoHs for their linked third parties.

5 Joint and several liability of Affiliated Entities (if required)

If the Granting Authority requires joint and several liability of an Affiliated Entity, the declaration on joint and several liability must be submitted together with the Accession Form.

The Beneficiary must download the form prepared by the system, ask the Affiliated Entity to sign it (blue-ink/QES electronic signature)and upload the scanned declaration when signing the Accession Form.

For more details, *see AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 22*.

6 Prefinancing guarantee (if required)

If the Granting Authority requires a prefinancing guarantee, you need to obtain this from a bank or approved financial institution (using the template available on Portal Reference Documents), send a scanned copy through Portal Formal Notifications (My Projects > Actions > Manage Project > Launch new interaction with the EU > Formal Notification) and the original by registered post with proof of delivery to the mail address of the service responsible for your grant.

For more details, *see AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 23*.

7 Submit grant preparation to the Granting Authority

8 Assessment by the Granting Authority and finalisation of GA data

The Project Officer will enter the EU grant preparation data *(GA options, etc)* and check the data submitted by the consortium. If needed, they will send back the session to the consortium for changes/addition information (ping-pong).

Tips

Changes to consortium composition/project during grant preparation

⚠ Please note that consortia/projects can be altered ONLY under exceptional circumstances, and ONLY if duly justified.

Nonetheless, there may be circumstances where you may need to change/adjust the consortium composition/project before grant signature *(bankruptcy, merger/acquisition, loss of a key member of staff that is needed to carry out the project, etc)*.

In this case, your Coordinator should contact the EU Project Officer explain why and propose a solution *(reassign tasks and budget within the consortium or to a new participant, adjustments to the project, etc)*.

If accepted, you may need to update the Grant Management System screens and upload a new Part B.

⚠ Please note that the proposals may NOT be substantially changed and that all changed elements must comply with the call conditions for the call. Redistribution of tasks must be in line with the competences of the participants concerned and the quality of the project/consortium must be guaranteed.

If no acceptable solution is presented, we will request you to withdraw the proposal and terminate grant preparation.

Deadlines

In the interest of all sides, we will try to handle grant preparation as swiftly as possible (ideally 3 months after you receive the GAP invitation letter).

To make this happen, we will ask you to comply with relatively strict deadlines during grant preparation:

- Preparation grant data & annexes (first version): **3 weeks** after GAP invitation letter

- Finalisation grant data & annexes: up to **2 weeks** after reply by Project Officer

- Sign declaration of honour (DoH): at the latest **6 weeks** after GAP invitation letter

- Grant signature: **3 months** from GAP invitation letter.

Deadlines can be extended under exceptional circumstances by the EU Project Officer.

⚠ Please note that if you have not been granted an extension, and fail to meet the established deadlines, preparation of your Grant Agreement may be terminated and your proposal rejected.

3.2.4.2 Final legal checks

During grant preparation, we will also finalise the mandatory legal checks *(legal entity validation, operational and financial capacity, exclusion and double funding)*.

In case of issues, we may need to contact you.

3.2.5 Grant signature

Signing the Grant Agreement is the last step of the grant preparation phase. It is done directly in the Portal Grant Management System (electronic signature) and demonstrates that both contracting parties formally approve the agreement and its annexes.

The Grant Agreement enters into force with the last signature (normally the EU because the Coordinator usually signs first).

Where? Access to the Grant Management System is available through My Projects > Actions > Manage Project > Proposal Management & Grant Preparation > Sign.

Who? The Grant Agreement is signed by the EU and the Coordinator. The other Beneficiaries do not sign the Grant Agreement itself, but accede to the Grant Agreement through Accession Forms. Affiliated Entities or Associated Partners do not sign and do not become formal parties to the Agreement.

How? You will receive e-mail notifications prompting the tasks needed for grant signature. For more detail, *see the list of grant-related notifications.*

Signing EU Grant Agreements electronically — What's involved?

The electronic signature in the Portal requires:

- a **chain of trust** with Beneficiaries — to guarantee signatories' identity

- a **system of digital signatures** protected by multiple security features — to guarantee documents' reliability and authenticity

This type of electronic signature is used for signature of contracts, amendments and cost claims (Financial Statements and invoices).

Appoint LEAR (blue-ink)	LEAR appoints LSIGN of organisation	CoCo/PaCo selects LSIGN for project =PLSIGN	PLSIGNs sign Declaration of Honour	PLSIGN of coordinator signs Grant Agreement	PLSIGN of participants signs Accession Forms
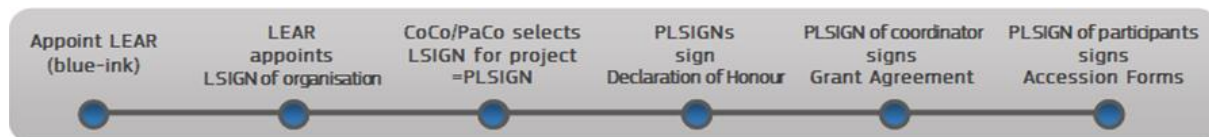
The chain of trust

❶ LEAR

The Legal Entity Appointed Representative (LEAR) appointed by the Beneficiary's legal representative (blue-ink/QES electronic signature; LEAR documents uploaded in the Participant Register) is the centrepiece of the chain of trust. More in the section LEAR appointment and validation.

❷ LEAR appoints all LSIGNs and FSIGNs for the organisation

The LEAR vouches for the organisation data entered into the system and the nominated persons. They appoint the individuals authorised to sign:

- Grant Agreements and amendments (Legal Signatories, known as LSIGNs)

- Financial Statements (Financial Signatories, known as FSIGNs).

The LEAR is responsible for keeping these lists constantly updated.

❸ PaCO selects LSIGN and FSIGN for project

Participant Contacts (PaCo) or Coordinator Contacts (CoCos) have to select the Project Legal Signatories (PLSIGNs) and Financial Signatories (PFSIGNs) from the LSIGN and FSIGN lists nominated by the LEAR. For more information, *check the section on Roles and access rights*.

❹ Closed system where access rights are strictly controlled.

The chain of trust is built in a closed electronic exchange system. Each individual must identify themselves with their personal EU Login account and access is strictly controlled.

Signing the Grant Agreement
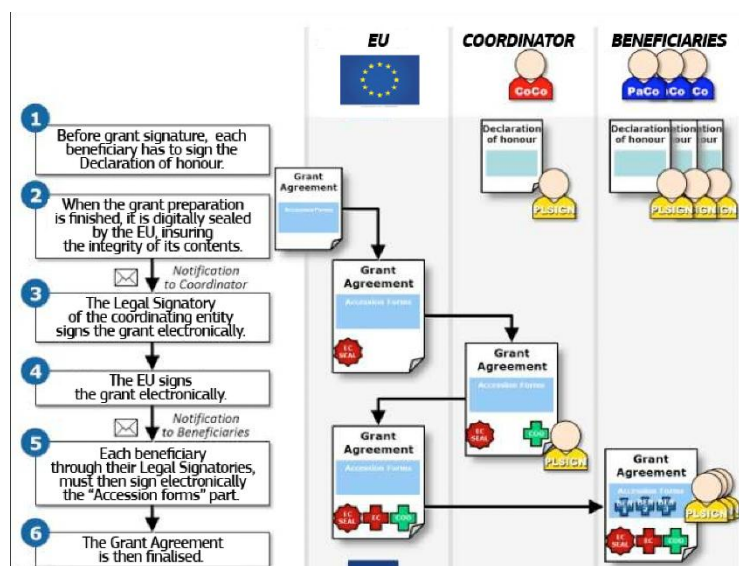
❶ Sign the declarations of honour (DoH)

Before the Grant Agreement can be signed, the PLSIGN of each Beneficiary must sign a declaration of honour (grant declaration). For more details, *see Enter legal administrative & financial grant data*.

❷ Grant agreement ready for signature

The system prepares the Grant Agreement for signing (PDF document, digitally sealed to guarantee its security, reliability and authenticity).

❸ Coordinator signs the Grant Agreement

The Coordinator's PLSIGN logs into the Portal My Projects > Actions > Manage Project > Proposal Management & Grant Preparation > Sign.

During signature, a pop-up explains that this means the signatory is preparing to sign. It then asks the PLSIGN to confirm that they wish to sign and a second prompt asks the PLSIGN to enter their EU Login password.

After signature, the system creates a new version of the PDF document (with a digital seal, a time stamp**,** and the signatory's EU Login credentials on the signature placeholder). The validity of the signature can be verified by opening it in a compatible PDF reader and clicking on the image of the digital signature.

The Grant Agreement can be previewed, downloaded or printed (before or after signature) from the Documents screen if desired.

The LEAR of the Coordinator and the other Beneficiaries are informed that the Coordinator has signed the Grant Agreement.

❹ Granting authority signs the Grant Agreement

The EU Authorising Officer is prompted to countersign the Grant Agreement from their side (same procedure as under point 3).

The Participants will be informed and the countersigned Grant Agreement will be available in their Portal Library (My Projects > Actions > Manage Project > Document Library).

5 Participants sign the Accession forms

All other Beneficiaries' PLSIGNs are prompted to sign their Accession Forms (same procedure as under point 3) — within 30 days after entry into force (signature by EU).

The CoCos and LEAR of the Coordinator and PaCo and LEAR of the concerned Beneficiary are notified when an Accession Form has been signed.

6 Grant Agreement is finalised

Not signed Grant Agreement

- If the Coordinator does not sign, the Granting Authority may stop preparing the grant and reject the proposal.

- If a Beneficiary does not sign the Accession Form within 30 days of the Grant Agreement entering into force, the Granting Authority may terminate the Grant Agreement. In this case, in order to continue with the project, the Coordinator must: request an amendment, so that any changes needed to ensure that the project is carried out properly can be made.

    o This request must be made within 30 days after the missed deadline for signing the Accession Form.

    o The request for an amendment does not affect the Granting Authority's right to terminate the Grant Agreement.

    The Accession Form template is available for information on Portal Reference Documents.

Project starting date

The project starting date is calculated as from the entry into force of the Grant Agreement (last signature = signature by the EU).

Prefinancing

The entry into force and starting date also determine the baseline date for the prefinancing *(i.e. the float that we normally pay immediately after grant signature)*.

Depending on the programme *(see call conditions)*, prefinancing is either paid 30 days from:

- *Horizon Europe, Digital, SMP, etc:* the entry into force or 10 days before the starting date or submission of the prefinancing guarantee (if required) — depending on which is the latest

or

- *CEF, LIFE, EMFAF, Erasmus, etc:* the entry into force or submission of the prefinancing guarantee (if required) — depending on which is the latest.

Links

- eSignature of grant documents video ▣

3.2.6 Complaints about proposal rejection

If you believe that the rejection of your proposal was based on an error in the selection procedure, you can submit a **complaint** (following the deadlines and procedures set out in the evaluation result letter).

Generally, the means of redress are the following:

- request for admissibility/eligibility or evaluation review (redress review) — within 30 days of receiving the letter

- for decisions by EU executive agencies: request for review of legality under Article 22 of Regulation 58/2003 — within 1 month of receiving the letter (using the Article 22 complaints form template)

- action for annulment under Article 263 TFEU — within 2 months of receiving the letter.

⚠ You are free to choose any of the above means of redress. However, in the interest of good administration and procedural efficiency, it is recommended to use first the available administrative review procedures (if any). The objective of these procedures is to re-examine the circumstances of the selection procedure and to reach a final decision on your application. Deadlines for further redress will therefore run as from when you receive our reply with the final position.

Please note that notifications which have not been opened within 10 days after sending are considered to have been accessed and that the deadlines will be counted from opening/access *(see Portal Terms and Conditions)*.

Complaints will be subject to the following conditions:

- Complaints must focus on aspects concerning the evaluation of the proposals *(e.g. admissibility or eligibility checks, evaluation procedure, etc)*, not their merits. Thus, applicants can raise procedural irregularities, factual errors, manifest errors of assessment or abuse of powers *(e.g. lack of coherence between scores and comments, lack or inadequate reasoning of the conclusions, the existence of a conflict of interests, exceeding the limits of discretion, etc)*. Mere repetitions of the content of the proposal or disagreements with the result or reasoning of the technical evaluation will not be considered.

- Only one request for review per proposal will be considered. The request cannot refer to the evaluation of proposals submitted by other applicants or under different or previous calls.

- Review requests will not always necessarily also lead to a re-evaluation of your proposal (new technical evaluation with new group of evaluators). The administrative review procedure will re-examine your case, but a re-evaluation will be decided only if your complaint demonstrates that the procedural irregularity, factual error, manifest error of assessment or abuse of powers affects the decision on whether to fund the proposal. Thus, for example, a problem relating to one of the evaluation criteria will not lead to a re-evaluation if, even by adding the maximum points under this criterion, the final score of the proposal would still remain below the threshold for funding.

- Re-evaluations will be made on the proposal as it was originally submitted; no additional information will be admitted. Re-evaluations will be partial (limited to the criterion affected by the error) or full (when the whole evaluation has been recognized as flawed) — depending on the case. They may be assigned to the same evaluation panel or a new one, depending on the internal procedures of the Granting Authority.

- The score following a re-evaluation may be lower than the original score.

- All requests for review will be treated as confidential.

Please pay attention to who took the formal decision and who the complaint must be addressed to. If a decision was taken by an EU executive agency or other EU body, both redress review

and applications for annulment must be directed against that agency/body (NOT against the European Commission). Only Article 22 complaints must be addressed to the respective Directorate-General of the Commission (parent DG of the executive agency).

In case you consider that there has been maladministration on our part, you can also address a complaint to the European Ombudsman — within 2 years after you became aware of it AND after having used all the means of administrative redress available *(redress and Article 22 request, if any)*.

3.3 Grant management

3.3.1 Keeping records

All participants must keep **records and other supporting documentation** in order to prove the proper implementation and the costs claimed *(see AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 20)*.

For Lump Sum grants, records on costs incurred are exceptionally NOT needed; it is enough to keep the evidence to prove the proper implementation of the action.

Links

- AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 20

- Horizon Europe Coordinators' Day 2022 event page (including recording of the event and presentations)

3.3.2 Amendments

Amendments requested by the consortium

If there are any changes to the Grant Agreement *(e.g. data or options specific to that agreement)* or its annexes, they must be done through a formal amendment directly in the Portal (electronic signature).

Where? Access to the Grant Management System is available through My Projects > Actions > Manage Project > Launch new interaction with the EU > Request for Amendment.

Who? Amendments can be prepared by the consortium participants together, but only the Coordinator can launch, sign and submit them.

The EU Granting Authority can also propose amendments, but for practical reasons we will often as you to initiate the procedure.

When? Amendments must normally be done before the end of the project, but some amendment clauses are also open afterwards *(addition of Beneficiary/Affiliated Entity/Associated Partner, change of Coordinator, change of Annex 1, change of Annex 2, change of bank account, error amendments, etc)*.

What? Cases requiring a formal amendment are listed in the AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 39.

Detailed explanations are available in the   .

Amendments are normally NOT necessary for:

- budget transfers covered by the budget flexibility

- name or address changes of a participant — done directly in the Participant Register

- universal takeovers (merger/acquisition) of a participant — done directly in the Participant Register

- changes of the banking details — done directly in the Participant Register.

⚠ The signed amendment is the legal document containing the changes to the Grant Agreement. It is legally binding and will be incorporated into the Agreement. The consolidated version is only for information.

Amendment process

Get ready > Launch amendment > Amendment preparation > Consult Commission > Sign&Submit > Assessment > Countersign

Amendment request

The **amendment request** consists of:

- updated structured information on the Grant Management System screens

- amendment request letter: the letter with the request and reasons for the amendment

- amendment core (including new version of GA Annexes 1 and 2, if needed): the legal document with the list of amendment clauses

- supporting documents: documents uploaded by the consortium, consolidated Grant Agreement, etc.

All participants can contribute to the amendment, but it is the Coordinator who will have to launch, finalise, submit and sign the request.

Tasks of the Coordinator:

- Check that the updated information Grant Management System screens is correct.

- Quality check: Check that the Amendment documents are correct and all supporting documents attached.

Actions to be completed before amendment

❶ Make sure new participants are registered and validated (PIC)

New Beneficiaries and Affiliated Entities must be registered and validated in the Participant Register before the amendment can be requested *(see section on Registration and validation of your organisation)*.

Associated Partners need to be only registered (have a PIC); no validation is needed, because they will not receive any grant money from us.

❷ Make sure that new bank accounts are registered and validated

New banking information must be registered and validated in the Participant Register before an amendment can be requested *(see section on Bank account registration and validation)*.

Submitting an amendment

Amendments must be prepared in the Portal Grant Management System.

Detailed explanations are available in the ⓘ **HOW TO**.

❶ Get ready

Before launching your amendment request, prepare the supporting documents and, if needed, discuss the request beforehand with the EU Project Officer (— recommended for more complicated cases).

❷ Launch the amendment

Go to My Projects > Actions > Manage Project > Launch new interaction with the EU > Request for Amendment

Amendment reference number (ID) — Once you have launched the request, the amendment is automatically assigned a reference number. Please use this unique identifier in all contacts with the Granting Authority during the amendment process.

❸ Change the grant data in the system

Go to My Projects > Actions > Manage Project > Amendment > Amendment preparation.

Once the amendment is been launched, you can amend the grant data in the same way as as you did when preparing the Grant Agreement.

❹ Enter the amendment information into the system

a) Justification

Fill out the field to justify the request on the Amendment Information screen.

b) Amendment clauses

On the basis of the changes to the grant data, the system will automatically select the relevant amendment types (automatic clauses) on the Amendment Information screen.

Other types of amendment have to be selected manually by the EU Project Officer, *(change of Annex 1, change in the maximum grant amount, resuming the action after suspension, etc)*. Contact the Project Officer to activate the clause.

⚠ In case a change triggers the need for another change, a prompt will appear.

❺ Upload annexes and supporting documents

You will be prompted to upload mandatory supporting documents. These depend on the type of amendment and the specific case *(e.g. a new Beneficiary must provide the DoH and the Accession Form)*.

❻ Consult Granting Authority

Once ready, the amendment request must be submitted to the Granting Authority for informal assessment.

7 Informal assessment by the Granting Authority

The Project Officer will check that the amendment request is correct and admissible. If needed, they will send it back to the consortium for changes/additional information (ping-pong).

8 Coordinator signs & submits the amendment request

Once the request for an amendment is complete and ready to be submitted, the system generates the 2 documents (amendment request letter and amendment core) for signature (PDF document, digitally signed to guarantee its security, reliability and authenticity).

The Coordinator's PLSIGN logs into My Projects > Actions > Manage Project > Amendment > Sign & Submit (same procedure as for Grant Agreement; *see Signing the Grant Agreement*).

The amendment can be previewed, downloaded or printed (before or after signature) from the Documents screen if desired.

⚠️ As Coordinator, you cannot alter a request for an amendment once it has been signed and submitted. There are 2 options:

- You withdraw it.

- The Granting Authority rejects it (amendment rejection letter).

9 Formal assessment by the Granting Authority

The Granting Authority has 45 days to accept or reject the request.

This deadline will be extended if needed *(e.g. if the amendment are complex, specific compliance checks are needed for a new participant, or if the project has to be reviewed to assess the changes)*.

10 Granting authority signs the amendment

Acceptance: If the Granting Authority accepts the request, they countersign it from their side (same procedure as for Grant Agreement; *see Signing the Grant Agreement*).

The Coordinator and Beneficiaries will be informed and the countersigned amendment will be available in their Portal Library (My Projects > Actions > Manage Project > Project Library).

Rejection: If the request is rejected, the consortium will be informed by amendment rejection letter.

Amendment number — Once the amendment is countersigned, it is automatically assigned a sequential amendment number *(1, 2, 3, etc)*. For instance, an amendment request with the reference AMD-345622-6 is assigned number 2 if it is the 2nd signed amendment for the grant. Rejected amendments are assigned a number *(R1, R2)*; but they are saved, so that they can be reused to draw up a new request.

The Coordinator's PLSIGN can **withdraw** a submitted request until it is countersigned. Withdrawn requests are saved and can be reused to submit a new request.

Entry into force & taking effect

An amendment proposed by a consortium **enters into force** on the day the Granting Authority signs it.

It **takes effect** (i.e. the changes to the Grant Agreement start to apply) either:

- on a specific date specified in the amendment or

- on the date of entry into force (last signature = signature by the EU).

⚠ Depending on the nature of the amendment, the date on which it takes effect may affect the eligibility of costs *(e.g. if a Beneficiary is added, costs are eligible from the accession date specified in the Accession Form).*

Coordinator change without their agreement

If the Coordinator is to be replaced without their agreement, another Beneficiary (acting on behalf of the other Beneficiaries in the consortium) must submit the amendment request.

To do this, you will need to contact the EU Project Officer, so that they can give you (exceptional) PCoCo access rights in the system.

⚠ Please note you will have to provide proof both of the consortium decision to change the Coordinator, to nominate you to act on their behalf AND the opinion of the changed Coordinator (or at least proof that the opinion was requested) — otherwise the termination will be considered improper.

Amendments initiated by the Granting Authority

If the Granting Authority requests an amendment, the request is also prepared and signed electronically in the Portal Grant Management System.

You will receive an e-mail notification prompting you to accept the request.

To do so, the Coordinator's PLSIGN must countersign the amendment on the consortium's behalf.

Links

- Amendment Guide

- AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 39

- Horizon Europe Coordinators' Day 2022 event page (including recording of the event and presentations)

3.3.3 Continuous reporting on milestones & deliverables

During the project, you are expected to provide regular updates on the status of the project: the continuous reporting.

The continuous reporting includes:

- progress in achieving **milestones**

- **deliverables**

- updates to the **publishable summary**

- response to **critical risks, publications, communications activities, IPRs**

- programme-specific monitoring information (if required).

Where? The Continuous Reporting Module is accessible through the link you receive at the beginning of the project.

Who? Milestones and deliverables should be submitted by each participant for their work.

What? You should report on milestones and deliverables in accordance with the schedule set out for them.

The Continuous Reporting Module also allows you to report on critical risks, prepare the summary for publication and the programme-specific information on indicators *(e.g. Trainings, Gender, Open Data, etc — if available for your programme and type of action)*.

Milestones — Control points in the project that help to chart progress *(kick-off meetings, steering committes, first-draft of a survey, prototype, etc)*. They may correspond to the completion of a key deliverable, which allows the next phase of the work to begin or is needed at intermediary points.

Deliverables — Outputs to be submitted to the EU *(publication, leaflet, progress report, brochure, list, etc)*.

All this information is automatically compiled to create part A of the periodic Technical Report, at the moment this report is prepared (Locked for review).

Reporting in the Continuous Reporting Module

At the beginning of the project, you will receive a notification (+ link) that the Continuous Reporting Module is activated and that you can contribute to it on an ongoing basis.

Detailed explanations are available in the 🟢 **HOW TO** .

❶ Update the project summary 🟢 **HOW TO**

⚠️ Please note that you must provide a separate summary for each periodic report (just update the summary for the previous period).

The summary must be suitable for **direct publication** by the Granting Authority, especially:

- be a stand-alone text — no references to other parts of the report, only to publicly available information.

- easily understandable by a general audience

- preferably not longer than 7,480 characters (roughly 2 pages)

- with no confidential/sensitive data

You can upload diagrams or photographs illustrating and promoting your project work (⚠️ only as images and you must have cleared any rights of third parties advance).

You can also mention the websites used to promote the EU project *(see section Communicating and promoting the project)*.

❷ Update the deliverables 🟢 **HOW TO**

The deliverables must be submitted according to the timing specified in the Continuous Reporting section.

At the time the periodic report is submitted, check if all deliverables due have been provided and, if not, give an explanation in the Comments column (especially for missing or late deliverables and/or cancelled or grouped deliverables).

③ Update the milestones 🛈 **HOW TO**

Specify whether the milestones were achieved or not. If not, enter an estimate of when.

The milestones table included in each periodic report is cumulative (it shows all milestones from the beginning of the project).

④ Update the critical risks 🛈 **HOW TO**

Assess the state of play of the listed risks and if necessary specify new mitigation measures or add newly identified risks.

⑤ Programme-specific monitoring information (if required)

Some programmes *(e.g. Horizon Europe)* have additional policy-monitoring screens on indicators which require input *(Publications, Dissemination, Patents (IPR), SME participation, Gender, Infrastructure, Innovation, Open data, ABS Regulation, Trainings)*.

Links

- AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 21

- Horizon Europe Coordinators' Day 2022 event page (including recording of the event and presentations)

3.3.4 Reports and payment requests

In order to receive payments, the consortium must submit periodic reports (following the schedule set out in the Grant Agreement). When these are due, they must be submitted directly in the Periodic Reporting Module of the Portal Grant Management System.

Where? Access to the Grant Management System is available through My Projects > Actions > Manage Project > Periodic Reporting > Technical Part contribution/Financial Statement drafting.

Who? The periodic report should be prepared by the consortium participants together and submitted by the Coordinator.

How? You will be prompted by e-mail for all the actions that you need to carry out for the periodic reporting.

What? In the periodic report, you should report on the progress of the work and costs claimed *(see below Periodic Report)*. When the Coordinator submits the periodic report, the IT tool will capture the information from the Continuous Reporting Module in order to generate the Part A of the Technical Report. The system will also consolidate the Individual Financial Statements and it will generate the use of resources report (if required) and the Summary Financial Statements (for the consortium).

- *Continuous reporting module*
- *Periodic reporting module*
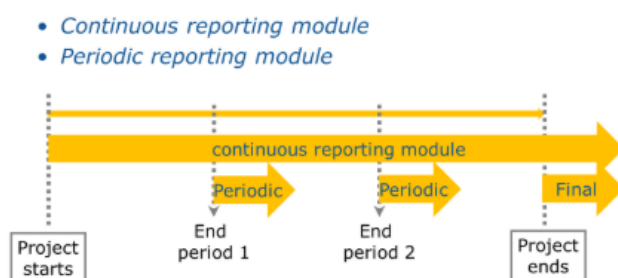
Reporting process

Continuous reporting > Preparing your periodic report > Approving Partners' reports > Submitting the report to the Commission > Acceptance or rejection by the Commission > Interim payment

Periodic report: Technical Report (Part A and B) and Financial Report

The **periodic report** consists of two parts, the Technical Report and Financial Report.

The **Technical Report** is itself also divided in two parts, Parts A and B:

Part A: contains the structured tables with project information (retrieved from the Grant Management System).

Part B (the narrative part): mirrors the application form and requires the participants to report on differences *(delays, work not implemented, new subcontracts, budget overruns etc)*. It must be uploaded as PDF document.

The **Financial Report** consists of the structured individual and consolidated Financial Statements (retrieved from the Grant Management System). In addition, most programmes require either a detailed cost reporting table (excel table) or the use of resources report (online wizard) and, for payments above a certain thresholds, a certificate on the financial statements (CFS).

The technical report Part A and the financial report is generated automatically on the basis of the data in the Grant Management System; Part B needs to be prepared outside the tools (using the template downloaded from the system) and then uploaded as PDF (together with Annexes, if any).

All participants should contribute to the parts, but it is the Coordinator who will have to submit them as a single report.

Tasks of the Coordinator:

- Check that the Continuous Reporting Module is updated in time (before the Periodic Report is Locked for review).

- Check that all participants have submitted their Financial Statements (and CFS, if needed)

- Quality checks:

  Check that the Report is coherent and that information in Part A and B is consistent.

  Make sure that the template has been followed and all sections are completed and no annexes are missing.

Certificate on the Financial Statements (CFS)

The CFS is a report produced by an independent auditor (or, for public bodies, public officer) using the template available on Portal Reference Documents. Its purpose is to give assurance to the Granting Authority about the regularity of the costs claimed.

The thresholds depend on the EU programme and type of action *(see call conditions on the Topic page)*. For the MFF 2021-2027, there is usually a single threshold of EUR 325 000 requested EU contribution.

⚠ Please note that costs already audited by the Granting Authority do not have to be covered again by the CFS (the EU contribution covered by the audit can therefore be excluded from the calculation of the threshold).

The CFS must be uploaded as a scanned copy (PDF) together with the Financial Statement. The originals must be kept in the your files.

Submitting the periodic reports

You should start preparing the periodic report in the Grant Management System right after the periodic reporting is opened at the end of each reporting period (— deadline for submission is normally 60 days).

Detailed explanations are available in the 🔵 HOW TO.

① Make sure that the information in the Continuous Reporting Module is updated

⚠ This must be done before the Technical Report (both parts) is first Locked for review by the Coordinator. Any entries into the Continuous Reporting Module made afterwards will NOT be included in this periodic report.

② Complete your Financial Statements 🔵 HOW TO

Go to My Projects > Actions > Manage Project > Periodic Reporting > Financial Statement drafting and complete the Financial Statements for each participant on their Financial Statement screen.

Make sure the cost details match the use of resources or detailed budget table (if required).

To sign and submit to the Coordinator, the Beneficiary's PFSIGN must log into My Projects > Actions > Manage Project > Periodic Reporting > Sign & Submit (same procedure as for Grant Agreement; *see Signing the Grant Agreement*).

Affiliated Entities must supply their Beneficiary with a blue-ink/QES electronically signed paper Financial Statement; the Beneficiary must then fill in the information in the system and sign and submit.

⚠ If you fail to submit a Financial Statement, your costs will be considered zero for this reporting period (but you can declare them in the next reporting period).

③ Upload Part B of the technical report 🔵 HOW TO

Upload Part B on the Technical Report Part B screen (as a single PDF). Use the template available inside the system. This can be done by any Beneficiary (not only the Coordinator).

If any changes to Part B are needed, you must delete the pdf file and upload a new one.

When both Parts A and B are ready to submit, the Technical Report can be finalised by the Coordinator (My Projects > Actions > Manage Project > Periodic Reporting > Accept & Include).

❸ Coordinator approves Partners' financial reports

The Coordinator must review and explicitly approve the periodic report. If needed, you can send back a Financial Statement to a Partner for further changes, or unlock the Technical Report for editing.

Before submitting, all the accepted Partners' Financial Statements must be included (My Projects > Actions > Manage Project > Periodic Reporting > Include).

Missing statements

Sometimes you may decide to submit the report without Financial Statements from certain Partners *(e.g. if a Beneficiary cannot submit its individual Financial Statement on time)*. If this happens, you will be asked to confirm that you are aware of this and that therefore these costs will not be considered for the current payment. The participant's costs will be considered zero for this reporting period, but they will be able to declare their costs in the next financial report (next reporting period).

❹ Submit the report to the Granting Authority

The Coordinator must submit all parts of the periodc report together (all the individual Financial Statements and Part B of the Technical Report): My Projects > Actions > Manage Project > Periodic Reporting > Submit to EU. The system will automatically generate the report with explanations of the use of resources and the periodic Summary Financial Statements, which includes the request for payment.

❺ Acceptance or rejection by the Granting Authority

The Granting Authority will either:

- **accept** the report and start preparing the payment or

- **ask for changes** to it — which means that the process described above starts again.

❻ Payment

When the Granting Authority approves the payment, the amount due will be paid out to the Coordinator (within 90 days of receiving the report)

If the amount due is above the interim payment ceiling (90% of the maximum grant amount), the amount due will be lowered.

The Granting Authority will send a letter to inform about the payment. After receiving the letter, the Coordinator has 30 days to submit observations, if needed. In case of observations, the Granting Authority will send a confirmation letter to state its final position.

Final report

The Periodic Reporting Module (and periodic reports) are also used for the final report (report for the last reporting period, to close the grant). The system behaviour, screens and documents used are the same.

Beneficiary termination reporting

If one of the Beneficiaries has to leave the consortium, the the Coordinator has to prepare a termination report (Technical Report Part B and Financial Report) and a report on the distribution of payments to this Beneficiary in the Grant Management System.

Detailed explanations are available in the **HOW TO** .

Links

- [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6, 21, 22](#)

- Detailed description of the Portal Grant Management System in the **HOW TO**

- Horizon Europe Coordinators' Day 2022 [event page](#) (including recording of the event and presentations)

- [Communication to Horizon 2020 Beneficiaries: How to avoid errors when claiming costs in H2020 grants](#)

FAQ

- [FAQ on Audit and Certificates](#)

3.3.5 Communicating your project — Acknowledgement of EU funding

Since the EU grants are financed by public funds, EU Beneficiaries are generally expected to actively engage in communication activities, to promote the projects and to publicly acknowledge the EU support.

Communicating and promoting the project

What does communication involve?

The communication activities must already be **part of the proposal** (either as a specific work package for communication or by including them in another work package). Communication will be taken into consideration as part of the award criteria.

A **good communication plan** should define clear objectives (adapted to various relevant target audiences) and set out a description and timing for each activity.

With your communication activities you should draw the attention (general and specialised audiences) to the EU policy area addressed by the call.

Regarding typical communication activities (and indicators to measure them), you can refer to the [communication network indicators](#) we use for our own communication activities.

In addition, some programmes *(e.g. Horizon Europe)* may have more targeted communication guidance *(see [Horizon Europe Programme Guide).](#)*

Good communication

- Starts at the outset of the action and continues throughout its entire lifetime

- Is strategically planned and not just ad-hoc efforts

- Identifies and sets clear communication objectives *(e.g. have final and intermediate communication aims been specified? what impact is intended? what reaction or change is expected from the target audience?)*

- Is targeted and adapted to audiences that go beyond the project's own community, including the media and the public

- Chooses relevant messages *(e.g. how does the action's work relate to our everyday lives? why does the target audience need to know about the action?)*

- Uses the right medium and means *(e.g. working at the right level — local, regional, national, EU-wide; using the right ways to communicate — one-way exchange (website, press release, brochure, etc) or two-way exchange (exhibition, school visit, internet debate, et.); where relevant, include measures for public/societal engagement on issues related to the action)*

- Is proportionate to the scale of the action.

Acknowledgement of EU funding

Beneficiaries of EU funding must display the EU flag and funding statement ("Funded by the European Union" or "Co-funded by the European Union") in all their communication and dissemination activities and any infrastructure, equipment, vehicles, supplies or major result results funded by the grant.

The EU flag and funding statement must be displayed in a way that is easily visible for the public and with sufficient prominence.

EU funding must moreover be acknowledged in all types of public outputs *(including patent applications, EU standardisation of results)*, media contacts and other public statements.

The EU flag and funding statement are available in the Grant Agreement and on the Europa website.

Links

- AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 17

- 60-minute workout webinar to increase the communication impact of your project

3.3.6 Dissemination and exploitation of project results

Since EU grants are financed by public funds, EU Beneficiaries moreover also expected to disseminate their project results. In this way, the projects can benefit a larger group of persons and reach wider target groups.

Several programmes will therefore ask you to upload results on dedicated results portals (accessible through the Portal Projects & Results page).

Some programmes *(e.g. Horizon Europe)* will require more extensive dissemination and exploitation activities *(e.g. open access, exploitation obligation, etc; see Horizon Europe Programme Guide)*.

In case of specific questions on intellectual property, the EU IP Helpdesk may provide support.

- AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 16 and Annex 5

3.3.7 Checks, audits, reviews and investigations

In order to ensure sound financial management and compliance with the Grant Agreement rules, the Granting Authority will perform project reviews and financial audits on participants.

For lump sum grants, since they do not use actual costs, there will be no financial audits focusing on costs. Reviews will focus on the technical implementation of the action or other aspects of the Grant Agreement.

Project reviews HOW TO

The Granting Authority will regularly monitor the project implementation and check the proper implementation of the action and compliance with the Grant Agreement obligations, including assessing deliverables and reports.

In addition, the Granting Authority may also carry out in-depth project reviews. Those reviews focus typically on the technical implementation of the project, but may also cover financial and budgetary aspects or compliance with other obligations under the GA.

Audits HOW TO

In addition, most programmes perform financial audits of participants in EU projects (often with the help of outside audit firms).

Such audits will be performed in accordance with International Standards on Auditing. The auditors comply with ethical requirements and will plan and perform relevant procedures in line with the EU Grants Indicative Audit Programme, in order to obtain reasonable assurance that the Financial Statements are free of material misstatement.

You will receive a draft audit report on which you will be able to provide your observations.

⚠ If systemic errors are found, the Granting Authority may extend the findings of the audit results to non-audited Grant Agreements or non-audited periods.

Anti-fraud strategy — OLAF investigations

In case of fraud suspicions, the Granting Authority will inform the European Anti-fraud Office (OLAF), who may conduct more in-depth investigations.

OLAF also cooperates with national authorities *(through information exchange, on-the-spot checks, coordination of forensic audits etc).*

Related Certifications

Certificate on the methodology for unit cost (CoMUC)

The CoMUC is a factual report produced by an independent auditor (using the template available on Portal Reference Documents). Its purpose is to enable the granting authority to:

- identify your usual cost accounting practices

- check that you have used a suitable unit cost accounting methodology.

Submitting a CoMUC methodology certificate is voluntary. Doing so will help prevent problems later on, if your grant is audited. If the certificate is approved, costs declared in line with this methodology will not be challenged, unless you have concealed information for the purpose of the approval.

For the MFF 2021-2027, only CEF and Digital Europe will be using this certification. For Horizon Europe it has been replaced by the SPA (systems and process audit; *see AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 24*).

The certificate may be requested at any time during the implementation of the programme.

As a minimum, one project should have been started and the data available must give the auditor enough of a basis to carry out the necessary procedures. Ideally, we would recommend submitting the methodology after at least one reporting period has passed.

In case of subsequent changes to your methodology you should notify the Granting Authority. You may also submit a new certificate reflecting the changes.

Links

- AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 25

- EU Grants Indicative Audit Programme

- Commission Anti-fraud Strategy

- European Anti-fraud Office (OLAF) website

- Horizon Europe Coordinators' Day 2022 event page (including recording of the event and presentations)

- Communication to Horizon 2020 Beneficiaries: How to avoid errors when claiming costs in H2020 grants

FAQ

- FAQ on Audit and Certificates FAQ

3.3.8 Communicating with the Granting Authority

Formal notification

The formal notification channel (My Projects > Actions > Manage Project > Launch new interaction with the EU > Formal Notification) can be used ONLY for correspondence requiring acknowledgement of receipt, i.e.

- to dispatch **replies to formal notifications** received from the Granting Authority

and

- for communications under Article 19 of the Grant Agreement

    o information requests

    o information about events and circumstances which impact the action and

- whenever it is clearly stipulated in the Grant Agreement *(e.g. declare conflict of interest, force majeure)*.

Portal Messaging Facility

The two Portal Messaging Facilities should be used for all other communications:

- Participant Register: My Organisations > Actions > Modify Organisation

- Grant Management System: My Projects > Actions > Manage Project > Process Communications)

⚠ The Grant Management System Messaging Facility can be used only by the Coordinator.

4. Procurement

EU calls for tenders are published both on the Portal and on the TED — Tenders Electronic Daily web site.

Currently, calls for tenders are published under the Portal Search funding & tenders page of the Portal and the users are then redirected to the e-Tendering website for the submission of tenders and documentation.

Read about public procurement procedures in the Portal Procurement section and the eProcurement wiki.

5. Prizes

Prizes are also published on the Portal (Search funding & tenders page).

6. Financial instruments

Financial instruments (debt and equity instruments) are not published on the Portal, but they are accessible via a direct link to the Europa Access to finance website, where you can locate banks or funds which provide risk finance supported by the EU.

7. Working as an Expert

Introduction

The EU services managing grants and tenders frequently make use of different types of independent external experts to assist them with the implementation, evaluation and monitoring of their funding programmes. These include:

- evaluators

- observers

- ethics evaluators

- monitors

- ethics monitors

- business coaches

As an Expert you perform this work as an independent individual and do NOT represent a company or organisation.

The EU services recruit Experts from the Funding & Tenders Portal **Expert database**, where you can register at any time. Registration is open to Experts of any nationality including those outside of the EU and Associated Countries.

To find out exactly what type of knowledge and skills we are looking for, see call for expression of interest.

Working as an Expert in short:

- **Place of work**: All or part of the evaluation and monitoring may be carried out at your home or place of work (remote evaluation), or at the offices of the service concerned (usually Brussels or Luxembourg), depending on the type of work to be done. Project review sessions and audits, involving project representatives, may take place either at the service's offices or on the Beneficiaries' premises.

- **Conflicts of interest**: You will NOT be appointed for proposals or projects if you have a vested interest that could influence the way you evaluate them. For more detail, *please see the contracting and payments page and the Model Contract for Experts.*

- **Confidentiality**: If you are going to be handling **classified information**, you will need security clearance before you can sign a contract.

- **Remuneration**: As an Expert, you will normally receive EUR 450 for each full day worked. However for remote evaluation and ethics review, we have developed a new simplified methodology to calculate the amounts, *please see details in the contracting and payments page*. Your travel and subsistence costs will be refunded.

- **Amount of work**: Projects are usually monitored and evaluated in sessions lasting 15 days a year at most. The number of proposals you assess will largely depend on the area concerned. An independent Expert may normally earn up EUR 90 000 in a four calendar year period (excluding allowances and travel costs).

In depth — working as an Expert

- How you can become an Expert: start with registering as an expert.

- You will be offered to sign a contract, if you are selected as an Expert. To find out more visit the contracting and payments page.

- Find out more what steps Experts follow during proposals evaluation or project monitoring under experts roles and tasks.

Links

- Model contract for experts

- Rules on Methodology for expert fees for remote evaluation and ethics review

- Presentation of the facilities for expert evaluators at the Covent Garden building in Brussels video

- IT Helpdesk

FAQ

- FAQ for experts

7.1 Expert registration

Registering as an Expert

To work as Expert, you will first need to register.

To register, go to the Work as an expert page on the Funding & Tenders Portal. To access the registration forms, you'll need an *EU Login account*, which you can set-up on the same website if you don't yet have one.

Once you've done this, you can log in to your account any time and view, update or complete your profile in "My Expert Area".

Click on the "Register as an expert" button. To create your profile, you'll need to specify:

- personal details, knowledge of languages, education and training

- area of expertise

- professional experience (employment, publications or other achievements, etc)

To find out exactly what type of knowledge and skills we are looking for, see the call for expression of interests.

Privacy

Once you have completed all sections and your profile status appears as '100% complete', you become eligible for selection for an assignment. However, registration as an Expert in the database does not guarantee automatic selection. The EU services will select Experts according to their needs of expertise.

If you are selected, you will be contacted directly by the service concerned.

Selection of Experts

Experts will be selected for assignments from the database of experts who registered in the EU Funding & Tenders Portal Expert database.

The Experts will be selected for each assignment on the basis of the specific expertise needed.

For each assignment (e.g. evaluation of a call or monitoring of projects), **a pool of Experts is drawn-up** on the basis of the following criteria:

- Experts have a **high level of skills, experience and knowledge in the relevant area, including project management, innovation, exploitation, dissemination and communication**. Where relevant, **inter-disciplinary Experts**, those with expertise in appropriate disciplines of the social sciences and humanities, as well as gender specialists are included in the 'pool'.

- If this condition is satisfied, the 'pool' should have a **balanced composition in terms of various skills, experience and knowledge, geographical diversity and gender**. With respect to **gender**, the policy of the EU is one of equal opportunities for women and men and, in this context, we have a target of 40% of the under-represented gender in evaluation panels and expert groups.

- A **private-public sector balance** is assured, if appropriate.

- **Experts are regularly rotated** by ensuring that individual Experts are not paid more than EUR 90 000 over a rolling four-year period. This calculation considers the sum of fees already paid, fees anticipated in signed contracts that have not yet been paid, and the total fees specified in contracts under validation. Importantly, this threshold does not include travel, daily, and accommodation allowances. The period is dynamic and

rolls over to accommodate the last four calendar years, meaning that as soon as we enter a new year, the earliest year within the four-year frame is excluded from the calculation. This rollover allows Experts to be contracted again as soon their total compensation over the current applicable four-year span falls below the EUR 90 000 limit. With respect to evaluations in particular, for each call, at least 25% of experts included in the 'pool' should be newcomers, i.e. not have evaluated for the same programme in the previous 3 years.

The pool of Experts is drawn-up well in advance of the assignment in question and the final list of Experts selected from the initial 'pool' is made once the precise needs in terms of expertise are known, e.g. in the case of an evaluation, after the call deadline once the proposals are known. Consequently, extra Experts are generally included in the 'pool' to ensure the expertise required is covered and to foresee a sufficient reserve, should some no longer be in a position to carry out the task.

7.2 Signing a contract and payment

Contracts

If you are selected as an Expert, you will be offered a contract to be signed and managed through the Funding & Tenders Portal. This contract (including its annexes) defines all the rights, obligations, terms and conditions applicable to you. It is not an employment contract or agreement.

Your contract will be based on the Model Contract for Experts. The contract will indicate

- whether or not your work will involve travel

- the maximum amount of fees that you will be paid and

- the planned calendar for your work.

Your correspondence with the EU services

All your correspondence with us is **electronic**. You should use only My Expert Area (Funding & Tenders Portal) to communicate about your contract, e.g.

- submitting your identity/bank account details

- signing your contract (electronic-signature)

- making requests for payment and providing related supporting documents.

For any other correspondence related to your contract that the My Expert Area does not currently support, use the email address indicated in Section 6 of your contract.

Signing the contract

You must sign the contract **online** in My Expert Area on the Funding & Tenders Portal. You will receive an email notification inviting you to do so, with a link to the contract. The contract enters into force only once it has been signed by both parties. The contract must be signed by both yourself and the EU service concerned by the day on which you start working as an Expert. *Please do not forget to obtain permission from your employer to carry out your expert activities if your employer requires this for outside activities – this is your responsibility.* You may start work as soon as the contract has entered into force. If you have a contract to act as an evaluator or monitor, you will be granted **access to the IT system** for the relevant proposals or project reports once the contract has entered into force.

Code of conduct

You need to adhere to the Expert Code of Conduct of the model contract, which includes rules on the performance of the contract and obligations of impartiality and confidentiality. Please carefully read the code of conduct before signing the contract.

Conflicts of interest

When contracting independent Experts, the EU services ensure — to the best of their knowledge — that you, as an Expert, do not have any conflicts of interest on the activity that you are being asked to undertake and, in particular, any proposal or project you are called upon to assess.

You should be independent, impartial and objective, and behave professionally at all times.

The contract you sign before starting work includes a **declaration** that you accept and will abide by the **code of conduct**. This means, amongst other things, that:

- you declare that **no conflict of interests exists** and

- you will **inform** the EU service concerned if you should discover that any such conflict arises in the course of your duties.

If, at the time that you sign the contract, you are already aware that you may be in a position of conflict of interest, you are required to declare this.

Conflict of interest impact?

To avoid situations of conflict of interest, the EU services may withdraw Experts from evaluation or monitoring duties if it deems that this is necessary. You will be informed if this happens to you and advised as to what to do if you need to take action.

- If you knowingly conceal a conflict of interest and this is discovered during your activities as an Expert, you will be dismissed with immediate effect, your contract will be terminated and the measures laid down in the contract will be taken.

    Example: Submitting proposals for funding while working as an Expert

- If you submit a research proposal for evaluation, you are not necessarily excluded from acting as an Expert evaluator, provided that you declare it and that there is no conflict of interest. In this case, you will not be assigned to evaluate your own proposal or any proposals which may be competing with it.

We strongly advise you make sure that you have properly understood the provisions laid down in the code of conduct, especially which situations are automatically considered to be a conflict of interest.

Confidentiality

⚠️ The work itself and all data, documents or other material disclosed in the context of your work as an Expert must be kept **strictly confidential**.

If your role involves handling **EU classified information**, you will need security clearance before entering into a contract.

Transparency

The EU publishes an annual list of experts who have worked for us but we do not disclose who has worked on which proposals.

Before assigning a project to you for **monitoring** activities, the EU services may inform the project consortium of your name. The consortium may reject our choice of Expert in the interests of commercial confidentiality.

Payment

Requests for payment

Once your work is completed, you will receive an **e-mail inviting you to submit your request** for payment through My Expert Area on the Funding & Tenders Portal.

Travel expenses **—** When you claim your travel expenses, you should upload scanned copies of all the original supporting documents as requested. You must keep records and other supporting documents for at least two years after the payment is made to show that you have complied in full with the terms of your contract.

Deadline **—** You should submit your request for payment within 30 days of receiving the email invitation.

Bank account — You should request payment on one of the bank accounts which you have listed in My Expert Area.

The EU services will make payments within 30 days of receiving the reports, deliverables or completed payment requests (whichever comes latest) provided they are complete and approved.

Amount of the payment

The daily rate is EUR 450 for work including travel such as participating at evaluations, monitoring activites or meetings at the EU or Beneficiary premises. This is calculated to the nearest half day (EUR 225) except in the following two cases:

- **for remote work** carried out by evaluators, any work that you are specifically asked to carry out remotely will be paid in accordance with Section 3 of your contract

- you are covered by one of the exceptional situations for which a **zero fee** contract must be issued (e.g. for former EU staff in receipt of an allowance) or you requested that a zero fee contract be issued.

The contract sets out the maximum amount of fees that you can be paid. This is an upper ceiling. The actual amount that you will be paid is based on the actual task assigned and worked; this may be less than the maximum amount.

⚠ Please note that you will not receive payment for tasks that are not covered by the contract (or an amendment to it) and which are not specifically assigned to you, either via the relevant IT system, or in writing by us.

The reimbursement of travel expenses and payments of accommodation allowance and daily allowance (see below) are made on request and in accordance with the Commission Rules on the reimbursement of expenses of experts (Decision C(2007)5858) and guidance note.

Travel expenses

If your contract includes activities involving travel, expenses are refunded for this travel - normally between the address indicated in the contract (the address registered in your Expert profile) and the meeting venue indicated in Section 2 of the contract. If you exceptionally need to travel to or from a different location than the address in the contract, you need our explicit agreement prior to purchasing your tickets.

You should book your travel as soon as possible to keep costs reasonable, but you should NOT book your travel before your contract has been signed by both Parties.

Accommodation and daily allowances

We will also pay accommodation allowances and daily allowances:

- **accommodation allowance is EUR 168** per night

- **daily allowance is** a flat rate of **EUR 113** to cover all expenditure at the place where the meeting/work is held, including meals and local transport (bus, tram, metro, taxi, parking, motorway tolls, etc.) as well as travel and accident insurance

- Experts who live less than 100km from the meeting venue receive a **daily allowance of EUR 56.50**, and are not eligible to receive the accommodation allowance

- allowances may be increased for Experts with special needs/disability *(see below)*.

Other expenses

Expenses that you incur as a **result of special instructions** received in writing from the EU services, different from the contract terms, may be reimbursed in justified cases on presentation of supporting documents.

Extra travel expenses due to **special needs/disability** may also be refunded upon prior request (covering, for instance, travel costs, accommodation and daily allowances for an accompanying person).

⚠ Please note that NO other expenses will be reimbursed.

Taxation issues — VAT exemptions

You are obliged to ensure compliance with your national legislation on taxes and social security law – this is **your** responsibility. Payments you receive are NOT exempted from national taxes.

However, if you are considered to supply a taxable service under national tax law and you are registered for VAT as a natural person in an EU Member State, you can benefit from a **VAT exemption certificate** for EU payments made under your contract.

⚠ Please note that in this case your invoice needs to bear a special indication *"VAT exemption / European Union / Article 151 of Council Directive 2006/112/EC"* (specific incidations are mandatory for some countries, *like Belgium, Luxembourg or Italy*).

To receive a VAT exemption certificate, you must contact the EU granting authority, via the email address indicated in section 6 of the contract, specifying the expert contract number, for which you wish to receive the certificate.

In order to process your request for a VAT exemption certificate, please complete the VAT section under My Expert Area > Personal Data on the Funding & Tenders Portal. You will need to fill in the VAT registration date, the VAT number, the country of VAT registration and the language in which you wish to receive the VAT exemption certificate. As a supporting document, you need to upload a scanned copy of the official VAT registration document.

Detailed explanations are available in the 🛈 HOW TO .

Record-keeping — Supporting documents

You must keep records or other supporting documents **for two years from the date of the last payment** made under the contract that the work relates to. The EU services may ask you to provide these documents as evidence that the contract was carried out correctly and that any expenses claimed are genuine.

7.3 Experts roles and tasks

If you have registered as an Expert and have the required profile, the EU service will contact you in due course to let you know whether you have been selected. This depends on whether there are any **proposals to be evaluated** or **projects to be monitored** requiring your particular expertise.

Roles and tasks assigned to Experts

As an Expert, you can perform a variety of roles and tasks:

1. **Evaluators** are responsible for evaluating proposals submitted in response to a call for proposals. Evaluators may also act as a **rapporteur**, **chair**, or **vice-chair** at consensus discussions or meetings of panels of evaluators. **Rapporteurs** are responsible for drafting the **consensus report (CR)** of a consensus meeting.

2. **Observers** provide the EU services with independent advice on the conduct and fairness of all phases of the evaluation process, on how evaluators apply award criteria, and on how to improve the procedure. The observer may attend any meeting held during the proposal evaluation process and drafts a report on the evaluation session observed.

3. **Monitors** assist EU services in monitoring the implementation of projects that have received funding, taking into account work descriptions, reports and deliverables.

All Experts' tasks are laid down in their contract. See the Model Contract for Experts for further details.

Evaluations of EU project proposals (evaluators and observers)

The underlying principles to bear in mind during evaluation are:

- **Excellence** — projects must demonstrate a high level of quality in relation to the topics and criteria set out in the calls

- **Transparency** — funding decisions must be based on clearly defined rules and procedures, and applicants should receive adequate feedback on the outcome of the evaluation

- **Fairness and impartiality** — all proposals must be treated equally and evaluated impartially on their merits, irrespective of their origin or the identity of the applicants

- **Confidentiality** — all proposals and related data, knowledge and documents must be treated in confidence

- **Speed and efficiency** — proposals should be evaluated and grants awarded and administered as swiftly as possible, without compromising quality or breaking the rules

Evaluation criteria

The evaluation criteria ('award criteria') to be applied by the evaluators are set for each programme in the call conditions.

Thresholds may vary according to the work programme. For two-stage submission schemes, thresholds and the maximum overall score may vary between the first and the second stage.

Procedure

The diagram below shows the main steps of the evaluation process and highlights at which stages the Experts intervene:
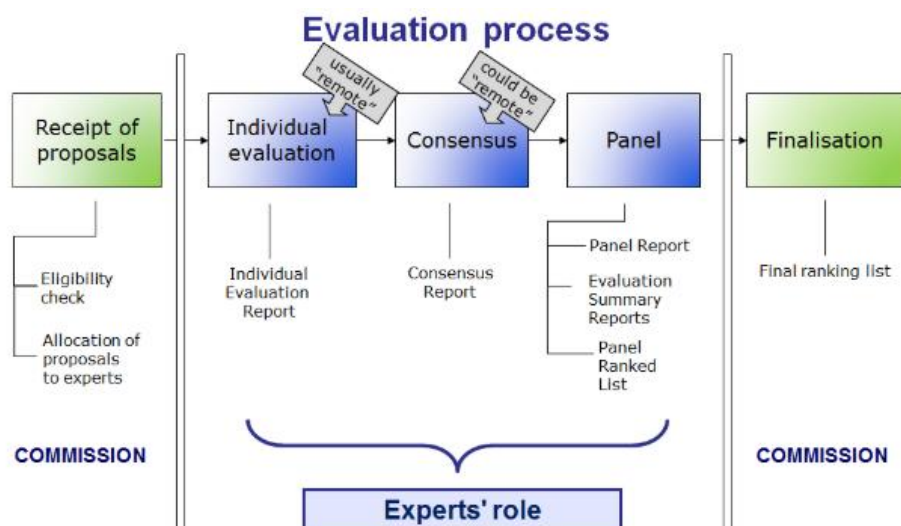
There are three main phases in the Experts' involvement in the evaluation process.

Before starting their work, **Experts are briefed** on evaluation procedures (including remote evaluation), the topics of the relevant calls for proposals and the terms of their contracts. This briefing can be done in Brussels or remotely (e.g. web-streaming).

❶ For each proposal, Experts presents their evaluation results in an **individual evaluation report (IER)**, explaining the evaluation scores. Expert evaluators also pre-screen each proposal (on the basis of the applicant's ethics self-assessment) to see if it raises ethical issues. All evaluation forms are completed online. This report can be completed and signed remotely or in Brussels.

In principle, proposals will be evaluated initially by at least three Experts (in a number of cases, five or more). However, for the first stage in two-stage submission schemes and for low-value grants, only two Experts may be involved.

❷ A **consensus group** is convened in order for all the Experts who assessed the proposals in question to discuss the individual evaluation reports and agree on comments and scores.

The consensus group discussion is led by a moderator (normally an official from the concerned EU service), who seeks a consensus and ensures that proposals are evaluated in a fair manner and in line with the established criteria.

The consensus group discussion results in a **consensus report (CR)** including justifications of scores and dissenting views, if any. The moderator is responsible for ensuring that the consensus report reflects the consensus reached. The report is signed by the rapporteur and the Experts evaluating the proposal discussed.

The discussion usually takes place in Brussels and includes Experts who participated in the individual evaluation. It is also possible to convene a remote consensus group.

③ **Panel review** consists of reviewing all the proposals within a call, or part of a call, to:

- ensure that the consensus groups have been consistent in their evaluations

- if necessary, propose a new set of marks or comments and

- resolve cases where a consensus could not be reached and a minority view was recorded in the consensus report.

Exceptionally, in some cases, justified by the specific call circumstances, the outcome of the consensus group will constitute the final result of the evaluation, and there will be no panel review. These cases will be signalled in the guidance documents.

The panel review is led by a **panel chairperson** (normally an official from the concerned EU service) who ensures fair and equal treatment of the proposals.

The panel review should result in a **panel report** which includes the **evaluation summary report (ESR)** for each proposal, a list of proposals passing all thresholds, along with a final score, (**panel ranked list**) and, where necessary, the panel's recommendations for priority order in the event of equal scores, using the procedure set out in the work programme. A rapporteur may be appointed to draft the panel report.

Project reviews (monitors)

Project reviews serve to assess the work carried out over a given period and make recommendations to the EU services. They may cover technical, scientific, and other aspects of the implementation of the project and Grant Agreement.

The monitoring Expert's task is to **review** how the **project has progressed** with regard to:

- the initial work plan

- deliverables

- planned and used resources

- relevance of the objectives

- scientific and industrial quality

- management procedures and methods

- Beneficiaries' contributions, and

- the expected potential impact in scientific, technological, economic, competitive and social terms, and the plans for the use and dissemination of results.

Depending on the project's complexity and progress, the review may include remote work entailing reading and analysis of the Grant Agreement, grant decision and other background information and deliverables and finally drafting the report. The Expert may also be required to attend project meetings at the EU services offices or at the premises of the Beneficiary.

The EU services may require the Expert to carry out on-site visits to verify whether critical milestones are being met, or to assist in carrying out research integrity (scientific misconduct) analysis during implementation.

Types of project reviews

- Periodic reviews (generally linked to payment)

- Ad-hoc reviews, which the EU services can request at any time, where necessary, and which may involve reviewing financial and technical aspects, or only technical aspects.

Procedure

- **Review meeting and assessment** — Experts read all relevant documents before and attends the review meeting. They then assess the project on the basis of the written material and information provided at the meeting. In the event of remote monitoring, the assessment is based on written documents only.

- **Monitoring report** — the Expert draws up the monitoring report on a project, and the EU service sends it to the consortium via the Coordinator, but it is not made public. If more than one Expert is involved in project monitoring, they issue a single consolidated report written by a rapporteur.

- **Recommendations** — the monitor will also assist the EU services by recommending any changes that may be required. However, the final decision on recommendations and changes is taken by the EU services alone.

- **Observations** — Beneficiaries may comment on the monitoring report within one month of receiving it.

- **Project assessment by the EU services?** — taking the Experts' formal recommendations into account, the EU services inform the Coordinator of their decision, which, however, may depart from the recommendations. It may entail:

  - accepting or rejecting the deliverables

  - allowing the project to continue in its existing form

  - suggesting modifications, or

  - taking steps to terminate the Grant Agreement or to exclude a Beneficiary from taking part.

8. Help

In case you need further help, please contact:

- IT Helpdesk — for IT-related questions

- Participant Validation Helpdesk — for legal questions relating to participant validation and LEAR appointment

- Europe Direct — for general questions on the EU

If you have specific questions relating to a funding programme or call, please contact the competent EU service through the functional mailbox mentioned in the the call documentation or in the Portal Support page.

For Horizon Europe, please contact the Research Enquiry Service or your National Contact Point.

Acronyms

AC   Associated country
AGRIP   Promotion of Agricultural Products Programme (EU programme)
AE   Affiliated entity (type of participant)
AMIF   Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (EU programme)
AoR   Acknowledgement of receipt
AP   Associated partner (type of participant)
AuCo   Audit contact (role)

BA   Bank account
BAF   Bank account file
BEN   Beneficiary (type of participant)

CFS   Certificate on the financial statements
COO   Coordinator (type of participant)

COSME   Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs (EU programme)
CR   Consensus group report

DoA   Description of action (Annex 1 GA)
DoH   Declaration of honour

EDF   European Defence Fund (EDF)
EEN   Enterprise Europe Network
EIC   European Innovation Council (EU service)
EIT   European Institute of Technology (EU service)
EMFAF   European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EU programme)
ERC   European Research Council (EU service)
ESR   Evaluation summary report
ESTAT   Eurostat (EU service)
EURATOM   European Atomic Energy Community

FTP   Funding & Tenders Portal (eGrants/Procurement IT tool)
FCA   Financial capacity assessment
FEL/LEF   Legal entity file
FPA/SGA   Framework partnership agreement/Specific grant agreement
FSC   Facility security clearance
FTS   Financial transparency system (EU website)

GA/AGA/MGA   Grant agreement
GF/PGF/MIM   Guarantee Fund/Participant Guarantee Fund/Mutual Insurance Mechanism

HE   Horizon Europe (EU programme)

IBA   Actions by invitation (named Beneficiaries and SGAs)
IER   Individual evaluation report
IO   International organisations (type of participant)
IPR   Intellectual property rights
ISF   Internal Security Fund

JRC   Joint Research Center (EU service, Type of participant)
JUs   Joint undertakings (EU service)
JUST   Justice Programme (EU programme)

K

LE   Legal entity
LEAR   Legal entity appointed representative
LSIGN   Legal signatory

MFF   Multi-annual financial framework
MGA/GA/AGA   Model grant agreement
MSCA   Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions (part of Horizon Europe)

OLAF   European Anti-Fraud Office (EU service)

PaCo	Participant contact (role)
PIC	Participant identification code
PNS	Participant notification system
PTRO	Partial takeover
RAO	Responsible authorising officer (all levels AO, AOD, AOSD) (role)
REA	Research Executive Agency (EU service)
RFCS	Research Fund for Coal and Steel (EU programme)
SAL	Security aspects letter
SME	Small Medium Sized Enterprises
T	
UCPM	Union Civil Protection Mechanism (EU programme)
UTRO	Universal takeover
VAT	Value added tax