How the EU Evaluates Project Proposals and How Students Can Take Part

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Agenda

- **Why** the EU funds projects
- **Who** checks the proposals
- **How** the evaluation works
- The three main criteria: **Excellence**, **Impact**, **Implementation**
- A simple **smart traffic** example
- **How students** can join such projects

EU Research and Missions

The **European Union** invests money in research and innovation.

EU **missions** focus on big problems like climate, cancer, oceans, cities and healthy soil.
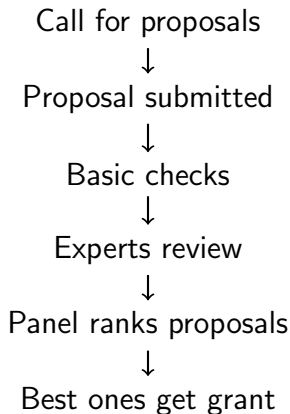
From Call to Project

- The EU publishes a **call text** with a topic and rules.
- A group of partners writes a **project proposal**.
- They send the proposal on time through the online portal.
- After the deadline, the proposal enters the **evaluation process**.
- Only the best proposals become **funded projects**.

Who Evaluates the Proposal?

- Proposals are checked by **independent experts**.
- Experts come from **different countries** and backgrounds.
- They are chosen for their **knowledge** in the topic.
- They must follow **conflict of interest** rules (they cannot judge their own project).
- Each proposal is read by **several experts**, not only one person.

Evaluation Pipeline

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Call for proposals

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Proposal submitted

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Basic checks

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Experts review

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Panel ranks proposals
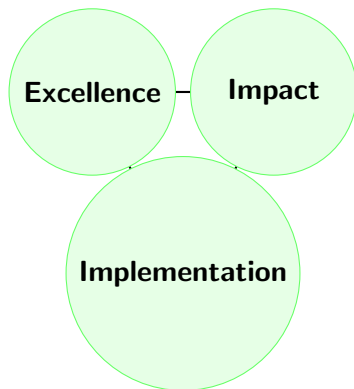
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Best ones get grant

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Each step removes proposals that do not fit the rules or have low quality.

Scoring System

- Experts give scores from **0** (very poor) to **5** (excellent).
- Scores are given for each **criterion**.
- A proposal must reach a **minimum score** to stay in the game.
- Later, experts meet and agree on a **common score**.
- Then the EU creates a **ranked list** from the best to the worst.

Every proposal is judged on these three **pillars**.

Excellence: The Idea

- The proposal must start with a **simple and clear problem**.
- It must explain what people **already know** about this problem.
- It must show what is **missing** or what is not solved yet.
- It should have **clear goals** that the team wants to reach.
- The idea should follow a **logical plan** and make sense.

Excellence: The Method

- The proposal must show **how** the team will work.
- It should list the **tools** and **techniques** they will use.
- It must explain **why** these tools are the right choice.
- It should say how they will **collect** and **study** data.
- It must mention possible **problems** and how they will solve them.

Impact: The Change

- Describes what will **change** if the project is successful.
- Links the project to **EU missions** or strategies.
- Explains who will **benefit** and how.
- Gives simple **numbers** to measure success (for example fewer accidents, less energy use).

Impact Plans: Use and Communication

- Shows how results will be **used** after the project (for example product, service, policy).
- Explains how results will be **shared**: reports, websites, open events, training.
- Talks about the **target groups**: cities, companies, citizens, students.
- Makes sure the project does not end in a **drawer**.

Implementation: Work Plan

- Breaks the project into **work packages**.
- Each work package has tasks, a leader and a time period.
- Shows a simple **timeline** (Gantt style).
- Explains how partners will **manage** the project: meetings, reports, risk checks.

Implementation: The Team

- A good consortium mixes:
    - **Universities** (knowledge)
    - **Companies** (market and products)
    - **Cities or users** (real-life testing)
- Each partner has a **clear role**.
- The coordinator has experience in **project management**.

Short Overview of the Three Criteria

Excellence	Quality of the idea and method. Clear problem and clear objectives.
Impact	Useful change in society or the market. Strong link to EU goals.
Implementation	Realistic work plan, good team and management.

Example Project: Smart Traffic

- Goal: make a city **safer** at busy crossings.

- University builds an **AI model** to predict risky situations.

- Company builds **smart cameras** and software.

- City installs the system at real junctions.

Smart Traffic Project and the Criteria

- **Excellence**: clear accident problem, new AI-based solution.

- **Impact**: fewer injuries, supports green and smart city mission.

- **Implementation**: clear work packages, 3-year plan, partners with real responsibilities.

Typical Weak Points in Proposals

- Problem is **not clear** or too broad.
- Many nice words but **no concrete impact**.
- Work plan looks **too optimistic** for the time and budget.
- Missing important partners (for example no city partner for a city project).
- Risks are ignored or only written in one short line.
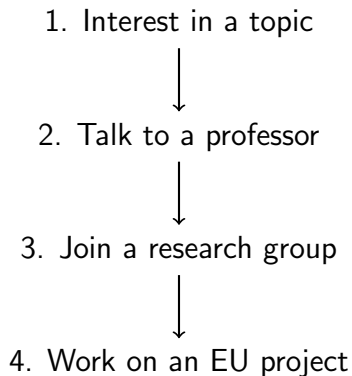
What Makes a Proposal Strong

- Simple and **clear story** that everyone understands.
- Real **innovation**, but still realistic.
- Impact that matches **EU missions**.
- Work plan that looks **doable**.
- Team that has the **right skills**.

Students in EU Projects

- Students cannot be **main applicants**.

- But they can work inside a **university team**.

- They help with data, coding, tests and reports.

- This gives strong **experience** and a good CV.

How a Student Can Join a Project

1. Interest in a topic

2. Talk to a professor

3. Join a research group

4. Work on an EU project

Typical Student Roles

- **Data work**: collecting, cleaning and simple analysis.
- **Programming**: small modules, scripts, dashboards.
- **Testing**: trying out prototypes in the lab or in the field.
- **Support**: helping with figures, slides and documentation.
- **Thesis**: writing a project-related bachelor or master thesis.

Benefits for Students

- Learn how real **EU projects** work.
- Build an **international network**.
- Gain experience that looks strong on a **CV**.
- Understand how research ideas become **funded projects**.

Summary

- EU projects are evaluated on **Excellence**, **Impact** and **Implementation**.
- Only clear, realistic and high-impact proposals are funded.
- Students cannot lead these proposals but can **join** them.
- Working in such a project is a strong step for a **future career**.

Thank you for listening.

Questions?