

European Researchers' Night Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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General Aspects

Q1: What is the main objective of the European Researchers' Night (NIGHT)?

A: The NIGHT aims to bring researchers closer to the general public and to increase awareness of research and innovation activities, with a view to supporting the public recognition of researchers, creating an understanding of the impact of researchers' work on citizen's daily life, and encouraging young people to embark on scientific careers.

Q2: When do the European Researchers' Night projects take place?

A: The NIGHT events are held yearly, on the last Friday of September. Supported public events can start early Friday afternoon and last until early morning on the following day.

Q3: What can be the duration of a project?

A: The maximum duration of a project is two years from the starting date specified in the Grant Agreement. The Grant Agreement should cover two editions of the NIGHT, in successive years. However, projects for one single edition of the Night may also be considered. In the case of two-year projects, as a rule they should last until maximum two months after the second event.

Q4: Who can apply?

A: Any legal entity from any Member State (MS) or Associated Country (AC), or an international European interest organisation, may apply and take part in the project. The minimum condition is the participation of one legal entity. However, consortia composed of organisations that significantly represent the science community of the territory concerned are also welcome.

Q5: Which countries can participate in the NIGHT?

A: The full list of MS and AC can be found in the General Annexes of the Horizon 2020 Work Programme.

Q6: What is an Associated Country?

A: "Associated Country" means a country that is associated to Horizon 2020, not FP7. Each Framework Programme has its own association agreements, which are independent. For more information please see: http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/hi/3cpart/h2020-hi-list-ac_en.pdf
An agreement associating Switzerland to **parts of Horizon 2020** was signed on 5 December **2014**.

Q7: What is the potential participation of Swiss entities and researchers in the NIGHT?

A: Following its signature on 5 December 2014, the agreement associating Switzerland to parts of Horizon 2020 is applicable among others to the "Excellent Science" pillar, containing the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions (MSCA).

In practical terms this means that for MSCA calls with a deadline for submission between 15 September 2014 and 31 December 2016, Swiss entities are automatically eligible for funding and count towards the minimum number of participants required for a project (eligibility criteria).

Q8: What kind of project can be funded?

A: The NIGHT funds public science outreach activities aiming at bringing research closer to society and encouraging young people to take up a research career.

Q9: Does a project have to be transnational?

A: **It is not mandatory to develop a transnational project.** Nevertheless, such a situation is encouraged as the European Researchers' Night is an EU funding initiative which aims at developing transnational features. **These might be a consortium composed of entities from different countries developing a single proposal, or several regional or national proposals converging on the same topic and developing some international activities jointly.**

Q10: Is there any restriction regarding the topic of the project?

A: No, all MSCA have a bottom-up approach meaning that specific activities conducted during the event, as well as the topic they relate to, are freely chosen by the applicants.

Q11: What are the NIGHT opportunities for academic organisations or SME and companies?

A: Academic organisations or companies (including SMEs) may be coordinator or beneficiary of the project. Indeed, any legal entity from any Member State (MS) or Associated Country (AC), or even an **international** European interest organisation, can take part and/or lead a project.

Q12: How can an event be associated to the NIGHT in 2015?

A: This information concerns **events that were either not part of proposals submitted to the NIGHT call in 2014, or were not retained after the call evaluation. If the event was not within a proposal submitted to the call, or was in a proposal scored below the minimum threshold**, the event will be assessed by external experts commissioned by the Research Executive Agency (REA). This will follow a transparent and clear procedure based on the selection criteria established for the NIGHT call. The assessment will be based on the application form created for the associated events. The other case concerns **events within a proposal that there was insufficient call budget to fund**. The coordinators of these proposals will be contacted by letter. This will state that the events of those consortia will be associated to the NIGHT if requested.

The country where the project is going to be undertaken, the title of the project, and its link to the website will be advertised on the European Researchers' Night (NIGHT) website in the events section. The project organisers will indicate clearly on the website of the project and in any promotional material (on-line and off-line) produced under the project that it is associated to the NIGHT event with the following wording:

The (XXX) project is an associated event to the European Researchers' Night initiative of the European Union funded under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions. Call identifier: H2020-MSCA-NIGHT-XXX (title of the project and specific number of the call to be included).

Q13: What does the EU funding cover and what activities can be funded?

A: Funding covers any expenses linked to the organisation of a research outreach event. The grant can be spent on preparations and publicity, the event itself, and assessment of its impact.

Activities that can be supported include among others: **hands-on experiments** conducted by researchers; **science shows** with public participation; **debates**; **"researchers' dating"** (meet a researcher and ask them questions); **competitions** (science quizzes, games, puzzles, photo and art contests, etc); **workshops** for children; **guided visits** of labs, research institutes, and other relevant places that are usually closed to the public; **crime investigation**; **presentation of prototypes**; **riddles** solved with assistance of specialised researchers; **display of science films**; **science demos and shows**. Please note that the most effective activities have proven to be those involving the audience directly and actively. Other successful activities were linked to hot topics (likely to capture the attention of visitors as being very close to their concerns) or to popular characters or formats (TV shows, TV programmes).

Eligibility

Q14: Can researchers of any nationality participate in NIGHT?

A: Researchers of any nationality can participate in the NIGHT. Participation of researchers funded by another Horizon 2020 grant is encouraged, including MSCA calls. However the NIGHT project must be developed in the territory of at least one Member State or Associated Country to Horizon 2020.

Q15: Is the geographical coverage an evaluation criterion?

A: With a strong focus on excellence and innovation, Horizon 2020 does not target any given country. Instead, it gives priority to the highest quality proposals that can bring a change in the way research and innovation activities are undertaken in Europe.

As part of the MSCA, the NIGHT activities have been broadened in Horizon 2020 and require strong interaction between researchers and the general public. Being funded under the Excellent Science pillar, the NIGHT proposals are assessed first by their excellence, followed by their impact and implementation.

Project Implementation

Q16: On what basis are proposals ranked if they obtain the same score during the evaluation?

A: If necessary, the panel will determine a priority order for proposals which have been awarded the same score (*ex aequo* proposals). The following approach will be applied successively for every group of *ex aequo* proposals requiring prioritisation, starting with the highest scored group, and continuing in descending order:

(i) Proposals that address topics not otherwise covered by more highly-ranked proposals, will be considered to have the highest priority.

(ii) These proposals will themselves be prioritised according to the scores they have been awarded for the criterion *excellence*. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on scores for the criterion *impact*.

If necessary, any further prioritisation will be based on the following factors, in order: size of budget allocated to SMEs; gender balance among the personnel named in the proposal who will be primarily responsible for carrying out the research and/or innovation activities.

If a distinction still cannot be made, the panel may decide to further prioritise by considering how to enhance the quality of the project portfolio through synergies between projects, or other factors related to the objectives of the call or to Horizon 2020 in general.

(iii) The method described in (ii) will then be applied to the remaining *ex aequos* in the group.

Q17: How the project will stress the European dimension?

A: The European dimension may be taken into account by the undertaking of international activities among different funded projects or by developing an international project encompassing different national territories. Furthermore, each NIGHT will have to set up at least one "European corner", meaning a meeting point in a frequented area where the European dimension and gender balance in research and innovation will be promoted. For further information about the European Corner, please refer to the Guide for Applicants.

Q18: How do the beneficiaries receive the EU contribution?

A: The EU financial contribution is paid to the coordinator's bank account. In case of a multipartner consortium, the coordinator will distribute the contribution between the partners as agreed amongst them.

Proposal

Q19: How are the proposals evaluated?

A: All NIGHT projects are selected through open competition and by independent experts, using a set of predetermined transparent criteria stated in Annex 2 of the Guide for Applicants, entitled "Evaluation Criteria and Procedures to be applied for this Call".

Q20: What could be the average EU contribution per event? What is the total budget allocated for the NIGHT call covering 2014-2015?

A: There is no maximum amount established per event. Nevertheless, it is important to be aware that all NIGHT projects are selected on competitive basis. Regarding the EU contribution to each of the projects, there is no legal limit fixed but based on experience and taking into consideration the available budget, an average EU contribution about € 70-80 000 per event seems probable. The total budget allocated for 2014-2015 is 8 million euros.

Q21: Can coordinators and beneficiaries look for other external funding sources apart from the EU contribution?

A: Coordinators and beneficiaries can look for other funding sources and indeed this possibility is highly encouraged in order to enhance the organisation of the event.

Q22: What percentage of project costs may the EU contribution cover?

A: The EU contribution may cover up to 100% of the costs of the project. Nevertheless, it is encouraged to find other funding sources to enhance the action.

Q23: Will all sections of the proposal Part B be evaluated, or only those sections to which the page limit is applied (Excellence, Impact, Implementation)?

A: All sections of the proposal form part of the evaluation. But the maximum total length of Part B of the proposal is 30 pages. Please note that experts will be instructed to disregard any excess pages above the 30 page limit.

Q24: Might there be more than one proposal (submitted /selected) per country?

A: There is no limitation regarding the number of proposals either that can be submitted or selected per country. Should several proposals concerning the same country be selected, then a **minimum coordination is encouraged amongst them**, namely:

- A common website for all the projects taking place in the same country (with possibly direct links to each of the various projects);
- A common visual identity at national level (one single logo/visual, possibly declined according to the various projects covered);
- Some common actions, in particular with regards to the awareness activities at national level: common press conference, common TV announcement for instance.

Q25: May different proposals cover the same city?

A: As a rule, it is advisable that there is only one project per city for the sake of avoiding media and audience confusion. Should however activities resulting from different projects be kept in the same city, to maximise impact such activities would need to **be commonly publicised and promoted and synergies amongst them organised** from the very start.

Evaluators might also suggest removing some cities from a project for an increased effectiveness and clarity of the various actions.

Q26: At what points in the project is the EU contribution paid?

A: For this purpose, we need to distinguish among proposals covering 2 years period or 1 year. In the proposals covering two years, 40 % of the total contribution at the signature of the Grant Agreement, with 5 % of the EU total contribution being retained for the Guarantee Fund¹. Upon submission and approval of the report related to the first event, a 50% of the EU total contribution is paid. Finally, the rest of the EU contribution, (10% of the total contribution + 5 % retained for the Guarantee Fund) upon submission and approval of the reports (second periodic +final) related to the second event.

In the case of the proposals covering one single year, 80 % of the EU contribution is allocated at the signature of the Grant Agreement, with 5 % of the EU total contribution being retained for the Guarantee

¹ See Annotated Grant Agreement for more information on the Guarantee Fund

Fund. The final balance of 20% of the total contribution + 5 % retained for the Guarantee Fund is paid upon submission and approval of the report related to the second event.