

How CRCs can access Horizon 2020

As we have previously written, *Horizon 2020* – the European Union’s massive research and innovation program – presents a range of excellent opportunities for CRCs to deliver on their mission.¹

However, being a foreign program, Australian actors can find it difficult to comprehend and even more difficult to access.

The first of these challenges is easily solved – we at Montroix are Australia’s foremost experts on Horizon 2020 with decades of experience being directly involved with European Union programs as well as facilitating Australian participation in them. Contact us at info@montroix.com to discuss how we can help.

The second challenge can only be answered by firstly identifying, broadly, what your motivation is for seeking to build collaborative relationships with Europe?

- Is your interest purely scientific? That is, you wish to share and be a part of the latest scientific advances.
- Do you wish to provide career advancement opportunities, or build your professional networks? Or,
- Are you interested in promoting your capabilities and expertise to a diverse public and private audience in Europe (with a view to develop research and business partnerships)?

These are the three primary reasons that Australians choose to get involved in Horizon 2020, but there are many others. In any case, because of the diverse range of opportunities presented in Horizon 2020, the way in which you will access them depends entirely on your motivation.

Below is a summary of the first simple steps we recommend:

1. Participation in Horizon 2020 requires the involvement of European partners. Hence, it is important that you establish contact with your colleagues in Europe, inquiring about their future plans for developing proposals. We can’t imagine any CRC that doesn’t have any professional links into Europe. However, if you need a starting point, you can explore the variety of European networks in your field as a way to quickly access those who are already embedded in Horizon 2020 activities.²
2. All Australian researchers (of all career stages) interesting in getting involved in Horizon 2020 should register to be expert evaluators for the European Commission.³ If you are selected to evaluate Horizon 2020 proposals, you will gain

¹ <http://crca.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Montroix-CRC-newsletter-part-2-introducing-Horizon-2020.pdf>

² For example, consider joining a COST Action (<http://www.cost.eu/>) or attending a Horizon 2020 infoday or brokerage event (<http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/newsroom/573>)

³ <http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/experts>

valuable insight into how the process works, and importantly make contact with others in your field who are already part of this European landscape.

3. Contact research management experts (in your partner universities and public agencies), many of whom have had prior experience and involvement with Horizon 2020's predecessor programs. These individuals can keep you informed of local Horizon 2020 issues and events.

A quick note of caution before you begin your journey into Horizon 2020. Whilst Australian researchers and innovators can fully participate in all of these areas, the possibility of receiving direct funding from the European Commission for your involvement is limited. So, you will most likely need to consider using your existing budgets (or seek additional domestic funds) to facilitate your participation.

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