

# **Horizon Europe – Implementation Strategy Roadshow**

## **The Italian Workshop**

*Synthesis of the Discussion*

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**Anna Panagopoulou**  
@A\_Panagopoulou

👉 The consultation with our stakeholders on **#HorizonEU** Implementation is ongoing: Next stop tomorrow in **#Rome** 🇮🇹 where we discuss on:

- 📄 Novelties in HE
- 📄 Simplification & Control Strategy
- 📄 Evaluation
- 📄 Results & Impact
- 📄 Grant management & Monitoring

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## Introduction

Domenico De Martinis

*MIUR-Department for Higher Education and Research  
Directorate General for Research and Supervision of Research Institutions  
National Office for the Planning and Promotion of Italian Research in International spheres*

This workshop was one of the stages of the roadshow that the European Commission organized with the member states to actively discuss the structural elements of the new program.

The event occurred exactly two years after, the 24th October 2017, the Ministry communication to the European Commission of the vision document on the future European framework program for research and innovation, FP9, eventually named Horizon Europe.

That document followed a path that started ideally already in February 2016, when the Italian Government produced a comprehensive statement on the future of Europe, in which it was emphasized that *“the EU should adopt an integrated set of initiatives, to stimulate knowledge creation through investment in education and research, which are the main drivers of innovation”*.

One year after, in the first semester of 2017, the Ministry for Education, University and Research (MIUR) launched a public consultation, addressed to all those who are registered in the national researchers' database, from the public and the private sector, to collect opinions on Horizon 2020, which was just beyond its halfway, and on the most-wanted (and most unwanted) characteristics of the next FP.

More than 5.000 responses could be analyzed and clustered into a limited number of major inputs, representing the basis for a National Position Statement, which enjoyed also the contributions from the National Representatives in the Configurations of the H2020 Program Committee, in the governance bodies of the Joint Programming Initiatives, in the European Research Area (ERA) Committee and in the ERA-related Groups.

In September of the same year our Minister had the opportunity to anticipate our perspective to Commissioner Moedas in Turin, within the G7 Italian Presidency, and towards the end of the year the vision of our Ministry was eventually **endorsed by the Council of Ministries at the beginning of 2018 to become the *Italian position on the next EU research program***.

The Italian Position was deliberately not going into details of a program but recommended the main principles of excellence, impact, cohesion and attention to society and to the human capital, pointing out the need of *“...making a new generation of European researchers and innovators grow”*.

At that stage, all member states were discussing the main principles of the future of European research. In two years, may milestones have been reached on the path to 2021:

- The definition of the concept of Missions, that will be addressed during today's discussion.
- The first important partial agreement, “within the trilogue”, among the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission, in spring 2019. Crucial step necessary to launch the strategic planning phase for the definition of the Framework Program.
- The public consultation on the strategic planning opened this summer and that should deliver their outputs soon.

- The launch of the process for the identification of the next Commissioners.
- The Research & Innovation days on September 2019, with thousands of participants, that represented a huge exercise of co-creation on the main topics of Horizon Europe.

All those steps have been essential to keep a pace on the development of Horizon Europe, and the *Italian Workshop: Horizon Europe – Implementation Strategy Roadshow*, represents a further step of co-creation too, as the European framework programme for research and innovation was approached in a complete pragmatic way, to discuss the “how-to” of the Framework program, I expect an lively debate between the audience and the Commission and I know that the afternoon sessions will be very “hands on” the different issues.

When the Commission contacted us with the idea of organizing such type of strongly interactive workshop, the initiative was welcomed with enthusiasm. The workshop gathered over one hundred delegates from all Italy from the industry, the academy and the research system.

As we move forward in the discussion and preparation for the next Framework Programme, the European Commission is now focused on what will be Horizon Europe implementation strategy. The EU envisions improved accessibility, as well as simplified and efficient rules, processes and tools as cornerstones of this strategy, and is reaching out the community at large. The consultation events in Member States provide the opportunity to beneficiaries to contribute to the debate, by identifying and discussing good practices and opportunities for improvement, based on their experiences.

This document represents the synthesis of the discussion held at the Ministry for Education, University and Research premises, on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2019.

## Plenary Session

The European Commission opened the workshop, setting the scene through a presentation, aimed at helping the participants to understand the vision of the next EU Research and Innovation Framework Programme (2021 – 2027).

### Morning session – speakers

Welcome - Domenico de Martinis, MIUR

Introduction – Alessandro Damiani, APRE

Setting the scene – What is new in Horizon Europe? Peter Haertwich, European Commission

### Main structural aspects in HEU – Interactive plenary session APRE - MIUR

Missions - Marco Falzetti, APRE

Partnerships – Luciano Catani, MIUR

Low TRL Research – Caterina Buonocore, APRE

European Innovation Council - Antonio Carbone, APRE

Cross-programmes coordination – Martina De Sole, APRE

### 1.2 Main structural aspects in HEU- Interactive Plenary Session

After the general presentation of the European Commission, the morning session has been structured tackling five different topics very distinctive of the upcoming Horizon Europe: missions, partnerships, low TRL research, EIC, and cross - programme coordination.

Each topic has been introduced by a moderator with a general introduction (about 5 minutes) followed by a direct interaction of the public with the European Commission (for about 15 minutes) through sli.do. The questions and statements collected with sli.do have been discussed and reflected upon.

Here below a general summary about the principal points emerged during each discussion.

#### 1.2.1 Missions

Among the principal novelty of Horizon Europe is the introduction of mission concept. Many pending elements, still affect a clear view on how the missions will be set and how they will operate. It is not just a problem of mission's content definition, but it entails the definition and understanding of the mechanisms of implementation and governance. Despite no final official positions already fixed, the discussion has been a possibility to highlight the main open questions, doubts and expectations from the audience on this subject.

Below is reported a selected list of the main questions, answers, comments, statements raised during the discussion time by the participants and Commission.

Legend of the contributions:

- Questions from participants
- ✓ Comments/replies from Commission
  - Comments/replies from Audience

### Synergy dimension of missions

- To what extend the mission oriented calls will take into consideration national priorities/missions in the view of creating synergies with ERDF?
- How do you want to facilitate the interaction among the EU National and European funds? What kind of concrete instruments the EC thinks to apply in HEU?
  - ✓ The Commission is not willing to push the community against their own national positions on HEU budget. The invitation is to advocate for a high budget on research, as an interest of the whole national R&I community
    - The citizen involvement in the missions will be a complex problem. The ways and means for the involvement of subjects other than usual stakeholders will be identified by the final objective and structure of the missions.
    - In any case, a great preparatory set of actions has to be done at MS level. The contribution to the missions definition should not result in an uncontrolled, free, spontaneous exercise, but it should be organized, defined and pushed at national level.

### Structure and implementation of the missions

- What is the latest status of the definition of Mission Boards? (e.g. working procedures, evaluations)
- If a group of project will answer to a mission in synergy, does it mean that all selected projects will need to cooperate? Looks like a big networking effort.
- How these missions will be declined? Will missions be divided in many subtopics or will they remain generic in order to be approached only by big projects?
  - ✓ The mission board have been established and the groups already started their work. One of the first Mission Boards tasks is to start a roadshow to collect inputs/feedbacks. These events will be used to define the way to better involve citizen. All the different Mission board are now working mostly independently, as the “one fits all” approach would not be effective.
  - ✓ The Mission Boards are “open systems”, open to be in contact and consider the inputs of the usual stakeholder community, but also of any other subject from the civil society.
  - ✓ The definition of concrete specific objectives of mission, starting from a broad area definition, with a limited amount of financial resources and that could be achievable in a certain limited time, requires a lot of inputs from you. Convincing ideas will be certainly listened by the boards
  - ✓ The Commission is going to contribute to the definition of the objectives of the missions, but the way these objectives will be achieved (the solutions) will be up to the stakeholder community. Focusing not on a single project but on a portfolio of complementary projects could be a solution.
  - ✓ General agreement among the audience and the Commission on the idea that the missions have to be leveraged by other different instruments (external to HEU) attracting activities that contribute to the missions objectives.

- ✓ The Mission Boards are asked to act interdisciplinary and beyond the sectors that are usual the core of research and innovation, and are currently entitled by the Commission to drive the missions agenda.

#### Comitology and missions

- What will be the interaction between HEU programme committees and Mission Boards?
  - ✓ *The missions will be implemented through calls under WPs and the WPs, as usual, will be under the control of programme committee*

#### Players in missions

- What would be the role of universities and research organisations in missions, in the commission's views?
  - *Certainly, University and RTO will be fully involved in the missions, but many other opportunities will still exist for such players outside the missions.*

#### **1.2.2 Partnerships**

European Partnership (EP), the new funding instruments for R&I Partnerships in Horizon Europe, is one of the major novelties in the EC proposal for the Framework Programme 2021-27. EPs will contribute to rationalise the landscape, remove current silos (e.g. public vs public-private partnerships), create new opportunities for collaboration between public funders and private sector and guarantee long term sustainability.

Moreover, a coordination process for the governance of the EPs will be established under HEU, and, to foster the alignment of national programmes with the priorities of the EP research agendas, will be supported by a similar coordination process at national level.

#### **1.2.3 EIC – European Innovation Council**

An enhanced EIC Pilot 2019-2020 has been established for the final part of Horizon 2020 in order to support top-class innovators, entrepreneurs, small companies, researchers and scientists with bright ideas and the ambition to scale up internationally. It will act also as a field trial to better understand how to set up the fully-fledged European Innovation Council.

Within this framework the need to understand better has clearly emerged among the participants. The mix of funding and support instruments included under the EIC Pilot as well as the declared seamless support approach covering the entire value chain until the deployment on the market of disruptive innovations still need deeper clarification. Among the main points arisen:

- ✓ This enhanced Pilot of the European Innovation Council focuses on identifying and scaling up breakthrough and disruptive innovation. Compared to the previous support measures to innovation available since the beginning of the current Horizon 2020 programme (FET, SME Instrument), the new EIC pilot increases the support to breakthrough innovators beyond the technology development towards the market deployment. It is important to better define and communicate:
  - the expected targets for each of the EIC actions;
  - which type of innovation will be targeted under the overall EIC and each EIC calls;

- will any monitoring process be established to ensure a link between EIC funded projects (mainly bottom-up) and the priorities set up in Horizon Europe, including the Missions?
  - how to ensure a direct link between the various EIC actions/calls so that the beneficiaries can continue with the project follow-up;
  - the role of the new EIC Advisory Board in advising the Commission on the EIC pilot and provide guidance on designing a fully-fledged EIC for the next European research and innovation framework programme;
  - will there be the provision of business acceleration services to any beneficiary of EIC calls or only to funded SME?
- ✓ A new *blended finance option (grant + equity)* is available under the EIC Accelerator. It aims to facilitate the market deployment of those innovations deemed not attractive for the private capital market, for different reasons linked to their inherent disruptive nature (very high risk, long innovation cycle...).
- How and when the new EIC Fund will take shape;
  - what will the role of EIB be;
  - how and when the EC/EIC Fund will involve potential private co-investors;
  - how and when the EC/EIC Fund will involve the national promotional institutions.
- ✓ Under the Pathfinder the main novelty in the current Pilot is represented by the launch of the Transition to Innovation Activities to help turning promising results into disruptive innovations. In view of Horizon Europe:
- How will the Programme Managers ensure a more flexible and pro-active management under the Pathfinder calls;
  - Will FET Open and FET Pro-Active be maintained in the current shape?
  - Will Transition to Innovation Activities be still considered as a Research and Innovation Actions?
  - Will the FET Innovation Launchpad be strengthened in terms of allocation of budget and flexibility of rules in order to better ensure a transition from Pathfinder and Accelerator?

#### 1.2.4 Low TRL Research

Low TRL (Technology Readiness Level) research is a much more consolidated area in the framework programme, unlike the missions and the still challenging partnerships, but it is important to understand how it will interact to position themselves towards the other pillars in Horizon Europe.

To do this, it is important to reflect on two important concepts: impact and synergy.

Although the fundamental research is associated to the first pillar about “Excellent Science”, and in particular on ERC, MSCA, Research infrastructure, it is necessary in this phase to reflect on where it is possible to find the fundamental research in the other pillars of the framework programme.

In Horizon Europe the fundamental research is encompassed in all the parts of the programme, included the European Innovation Council, and so it is crucial to think about possible synergy among the pillars and which tools the European Commission is planning to use to connect them.

Within the framework about the impact in ERC, MSCA and Research Infrastructure, the participants expressed some needs:

- To understand if there will be different KPIs to evaluate fundamental research in some specific area than another
- If the EC is considering the possibility to let applicants decide which type of action (RIA, IA, CSA) and consequently level of TRLs?
- How fundamental research will be considered in EIC?

### 1.2.5 Cross-programs coordination

The last topic to be tackled has been another structural aspect of Horizon Europe: the cross program coordination.

This issue might be tackled at 3 different levels, being the cross programme coordination within Horizon Europe the first level.

The other two levels of coordination would be firstly between EU funding programmes, as the new HEU is promoting enhanced synergies among specific programmes, from Digital Europe, to EU Invest, from European Defense Fund, to LIFE, to the longstanding synergies with the Structural Funds. With the latter, we have already experimented synergies thanks to the introduction of the Seal of Excellence.

Secondly the coordination among direct and indirect funds, with a specific focus on the State Aids rules with an ongoing targeted review of the General Block Exemption Regulation GBER.

But focusing on the intra Horizon Europe coordination, it has already been understood from the previous presentations, both the nature of the global challenges and the identification of themsatics, missions, partnerships require the involvement of all the instruments available in the 3 pillars to assure to generate the expected impact and to contribute to solve the challenges.

Also going beyond the missions approach, which naturally draws resources from different part of the programme, we can have many different examples of themsatics that will be addressed across the 3 pillars. So, how can we guarantee to address global challenges coherently across HEU?

We need to reflect on an effective form of governance that will be both able to assure a coherent work programme design and also a form of governance that enables the monitoring and the valorization of project results related to a specific thematic area.

## Parallel discussion

In the afternoon sessions the participants worked together with a participatory approach guided by APRE. Each theme has been analysed in two different perspective: critical issue and possible solution.

### 1. *Simplification and control Strategy*

#### Forms of Costs

##### Critical Issues

###### Lump sum

This form of cost may cause lack of cash flow during the project implementation for WPs.

An alignment of payments and accomplishment of scientific results is needed.

Lump sum scheme seems to make rigid the research that should be flexible and re-think to the method to write the proposals. The risk is that proposals will be designed fragmenting the activities in order to receive payment during the implementation of the project. In this case coordinator and partners will follow a new approach to design the proposal.

With lump sum method each beneficiary need project management expertise.

Lump sum may lead to complex reporting procedure since technical and financial report do not coincide

##### Possible Solutions

###### Lump sum

Lump sum is useful for industrial partners that have to perform limited task.

The better option of lump sum is the once with detailed Grant Agreement where the budget split among the partners is specified.

###### Unit costs

Internal invoices should be recognized. This would be particularly important for the use of research/technology infrastructures of a beneficiaries. Usual accounting practices of a beneficiaries should be the base for the calculation and acceptance of costs.

Whenever possible it is preferred a wider adoption of unit costs.

#### Audit

##### Critical Issues

###### Ex ante controls

Defaulting beneficiaries can apply and this causes problems to consortia.

Certificate of Financial Statements Auditor skills can be an issue.

External Auditors are not trained/informed on EU funding rules.

Auditors might become less flexible for a specific situation the more examples are provided in the Annotated Model Grant Agreement.

###### Ex post audits

The same information is requested several times.

High turnover of Project officers.

No examples available on subcontracting.

## Possible Solutions

### Ex ante controls

Black list of defaulting beneficiaries (by the EC) would be advisable.  
 Single database for pre-audit information/documents  
 Pre-audit questionnaire should be kept on electronic format for any future audit  
 External auditors should be trained on the application of EU funds rules to National research institutions  
 Make it clear that the examples provided in the AMGA are not binding nor exhaustive.  
 It would be helpful for beneficiaries to get feedback on ex ante evaluation to be able to manage their risk profile  
 Time limit for ex ante audits and also for suspension of payment

### Ex post audits

Single database for audit information/documents  
 Establish a time limit for the release of the final audit report  
 External auditors should have access to the Audit page on the Funding & Tenders portal  
 Use digital copies of expenses to reduce paper use  
 When a beneficiary is audited on a project, it should be considered "reliable" for a longer period of time and further audits should be delayed based on the positive results achieved in the first "successful" auditing process.

## Personnel cost

### Critical Issues

#### Horizon 2020

The timesheet requirements foreseen in the MGA are very high.  
 It is complicated to manage Professors productive hours because they spend their time both in research and teaching activities. The Italian Universities often use a precautionary approach: they deduct from 1720 hours the time for teaching activities.

#### Novelties in Horizon Europe – daily rate

Risk of overlapping between H2020 and HEU system (two different systems for reporting personnel costs). In addition, this mechanism is not compatible with other programmes: a daily rate would complicate the reporting of personnel costs since the institutions are engaged in other National/Regional programmes, where they use a system based on hourly rate. This would mean that timesheets are needed anyway and it will add an additional calculation for the beneficiaries.  
 Some Institutions have an internal account system which could not integrate daily rate.  
 Doubts:  
 If the declaration is based on trust, what controls are needed?  
 How to deal with overtime?

## Possible Solutions

### Horizon 2020

Clearer rules for persons who spend their time in research and teaching activities (i.e. specify the rule, the MGA foreseen only the double ceiling in EU and EURATOM grants).

### Horizon Europe Rules

Application of same rules for all EU programmes.  
 Introduction of unit costs with country correction coefficient (like for SMEs owner).

## 2. Evaluation

### Evaluation Principles and processes

#### Critical Issues

##### Two steps evaluation

The two steps evaluation, even if generally welcome, is not suitable for all programmes and instruments. There are often discrepancies between the evaluation of stage 1 and stage two.

##### Scoring

The scoring system is very simplified and might not reflect the complexity and the granular differences among different proposals.

##### Negotiation

The shorten time to grant, even if positive in terms of timing, impedes de facto to improve the proposal during the negotiation phase, leading to the need of amend in a second moment increasing the burocratic burden both on the coordinator and the project officer.

#### Possible Solutions

##### Two steps

The two steps evaluation procedure should be foreseen only for the programme/instruments where there is a need to avoid oversubscription

##### Resubmissions

To avoid discrepancies between the evaluation of phase one and phase two, the ESRs of the first stage evaluation should be provided to the evaluators of the second stage.

##### More panels, more evaluators

To assure that the evaluators will give enough time to the reading and scoring of each proposal, more evaluators should be enrolled for each call.

##### Interviews/hearings

Interviews, foreseen for ERC and the SMEs instruments, and hearing foreseen by DG CNCT, have proven to be a very effective tool to better evaluate proposals. This practice could be extended to other parts of the programme, especially for projects with a huge budget or a broad expected impact.

##### Subcriteria

Where there is an agreement on the use of three criteria for evaluation, the introduction of different subcriteria per type of action or programme, could help in better evaluate the proposals.

### How to ensure the competence of the evaluation panel

#### Critical Issues

- Increase transparency in the selection of evaluators to ensure a large coverage of skills.
- Sometimes there is poor linkage between skills and funding instruments.
- Improve the application process to select evaluators to ensure the necessary competences in specific matters.
- The turnover of evaluators might affect negatively the average quality. The most expert are out after the first calls.
- Gender and geographical balance needs sometimes might negatively affect the quality of the panels.
- Need for longer time for plenary sessions (for reading and ranking).
- More attention on Conflict of Interest.

- On MSCA, evaluators should more focus on Excellence and Impact criteria rather than transversal aspects.  
 Still on MSCA the abolition of Consensus meeting was a problem.

### Possible Solutions

- Update salaries/normalization of salaries with the national working costs.
- Training for evaluators
- Provide an application Enrich ESRs with the provision of Evaluators skills/background + more details on evaluation results
- Increase evaluation criteria (more watch-up) for evaluators
- External monitoring of evaluators fairness (respect of guidelines and rules). Fire non compliant evaluators.
- Evaluators assessment + Formalization of a black and white pool list.
- Re-introduce consensus meeting (as in MSCA).
- For those evaluators not accepting evaluators, exclusion in next calls.
- Standing panel (as in ERC) for Pillar II

## Robustness of the ESR

### Critical Issues

#### Coherence between phase 1 and phase 2 of the evaluation

There is a lack of coherence between the evaluations of step one and step two of the proposals. Removing the ESR will not be a solution to address this problem.

There is a lack of coherence also in the evaluation in case of resubmission.

### Information

Often, the justifications and the level of informations given in the ESRs are considered insufficient.

### Quality

There is no homogeneity in the quality of ESRs, many lacks in realistic constructive feedback.

### Possible Solutions/Opportunities

#### Keep the ESR

In general agreement, it has been requested to keep the ESRs and to improve the quality and the coherence. Everyone expressed concern regarding the potential introduction of a checklist or predefined phrases (like in MSCA) also for collaborative projects.

#### Consensus

The consensus it has been considered as the best guarantee for transparency and for assuring that the votes expressed by evaluators with different expertise and background will be well balanced. Therefore it is suggested to keep the consensus for all the type of instruments.

It has been suggested for the EC to have a bigger role in supervising the consensus.

#### Quality

A cross reading across the panel and a quality check but the EC would be ausplicable to improve the quality of the ESRs. The ESRs should be an instrument for giving useful feedback to the proposers to help them understanding their shortcomings and have a chance to improve for the future.

### 3. Impact

#### Reflection on proper KPIs beyond S&T KPIs

Critical Issues
<p><b>KPIs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Today there are different approach to KPIs according to the stage of development (TRL), areas and sectors covered by the projects</li> <li>- There is no or few focus on KPIs during the life cycle of the project (Negotiation, Implementation, Monitoring)</li> <li>- There is few coherence between proposal templates (lack of specific tables/guidelines in the Impact Section) and evaluation guidelines</li> </ul>
<p><b>Templates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The same proposal template for RIA and IA is not a good starting point It is not easy to identify the right KPIs (societal and economics)for each project.</li> <li>- There are not today KPIs' specialist in the evaluation process</li> <li>- Any specific connection in Horizon Europe between KPIs and Missions?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Possible Solutions</b></p> <p><b>KPIs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure consistency</li> <li>- Provide KPIs at Work Programme Level. As alternative at “cluster of topics” or at funding instrument level.</li> <li>- Provide guidelines/checklist of pertinent KPIs. They can be differentiated for areas/sectors according to the lessons learnt from successful projects.</li> </ul> <p><b>Templates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Insert predefined table under the proposal template, including “What”, “KPIs”, “Target”, “Related objectives”, “Timetable”</li> <li>- Increase visibility (communication) of “success cases” at WP/Area/TRL level.</li> <li>- Include KPIs specialist in the evaluation process or also a dedicated panel</li> </ul>

#### Communicating impact

Critical Issues
There are 3 main critical issues:
<b>Lack of understanding, skills and interest.</b>
Among the scientific community, the difference between communication and dissemination is still confused. This leads to a poor understanding of communication specific objectives, and therefore an underestimation of the communication needs and the importance of the actual potential impacts of real communication skills.
<b>Difficulties in engaging the society</b>
In times where there is a real need to rebuild trust in research from the general public, it is crucial to find effective ways of engaging the society. Still the researchers and industrial community is lacking the tools for an effective engagement.
<b>Information overload</b>
Another outstanding issue is the overload of information, so communication and dissemination of results might often end to be overlook.

## Possible Solutions

### Engage communication experts (and stakeholder engagement experts)

It is important to involve in consortia communication and stakeholder engagement experts. The request already present in many topics could be extended to all the WPs.

Specific exhibitions organised by the EC can offer the opportunity to effectively promote the results and raise the impact.

### Create clusters of projects

As already happens in parts of the Programmes, projects can be invited to cluster and work together especially on the communication and information/data exchange to maximize the impact.

A stronger emphasis on communication in the evaluation can also be considered as a potential solution.

## Alignment with the SDGs

### Critical Issues

#### Lack of awareness

The most critical issue is a lack of awareness regarding the policies underlining the future HEU, and the lack of understanding how these could be used to better, strategically justify the impact of the proposal.

#### Need of coherence

Different programmes might require different approaches, a coherent request throughout the different European, National, Regional and Local programmes would be necessary.

(even though the SDGs are now pretty pervasive in all levels of intervention, ndr)

### Possible Solutions/Opportunities

#### Creation of a mindset:

To better ensure an alignment with the SDGs several actions could be put in place:

#### Awareness creation:

- ***SGD and Research campaign:*** the promotion of SDGs relevant for HEU and how the proposal could help achieving these goals.
- ***creation of a checklist:*** to help understand which are the implied SDGs and how the proposal check them off.
- ***definition of certain SGDs as potential KPIs***

#### Trainings:

- organisation of ***trainings for evaluators*** to better evaluate the impact based on the SDGs
  - Big industry is already envisaging internal sustainability policies through sustainability managers.
- The ***involvement of Industry*** would help in the awareness creation about SDGs

#### Proposal drafting level:

Opportunity of drafting the project in terms of Impact using the achievement of SDGs goals as a driver.

#### Clear request in topics/templates

It will be important to find references to the SDGs both at topic and template level.

A general description of the SDGS (and other relevant policies) shall be part of the introduction to the Work Programme.

## 4. Project Management and Monitoring

### Improved PM centralised electronic tools

Critical Issues
<b>Portal and documents</b>
The financial statement layout is difficult to visualize (too small). The portal is conceived for administrative officers it should become more researchers' friendly. It also presents specific issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The management of project documents is not straightened;</li> <li>• When you are looking for a call, the portal should filter and show only open calls by default;</li> <li>• LEAR is not informed when another profile is created for its entity. Provide the permission to LEAR to remove request of PIC number registration.</li> </ul> Prioritize the communications aspects than language aspects in the portal improvements.
<b>Communication</b>
Lack of communication between services within EC. The P.O. should be the interface between EC and the Coordinator. External auditors cannot access to the audit system.
<b>Possible Solutions</b>
<b>Documents and portal</b>
Provide direct access to the Funding and Tender Portal to the linked third parties. Improvements of the organization of project documents on Sygma for project reviews. Make Cordis more visible (better web ranked) and more user friendly. Improvement of the helpdesk, for example activating a "chat" service. Extension of the filing system provided by the Funding and Tender Portal to the widest majority of the funding programmes (e.g. no paper copies, no original signature). E-mail notification messages referred to documents (that are available on the Portal) should have directly attached the document. Direct interaction with the P.O. through the EU Portal rather than by emails. FAQs databases should be implemented and updated more regularly.

### Effective monitoring of S&T advancement

Critical Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yearly project meeting may not be sufficient to get adequate scientific feedback on ongoing activities.</li> </ul>
<b>Monitoring in lump sum Grant</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applying lump sum form of costs an advanced monitoring for S&amp;T activities is needed.</li> </ul>
<b>Low and High TRL</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty to evaluate and assess the activities between low and high TRL. Monitoring of activities need different approach from low and high TRL.</li> </ul>
<b>Possible Solutions</b>
<b>Assessment of outcomes and KPIs</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the formalism of the reviews (objectives, KPIs, outcomes, deliverables) and measurability of projects' outcomes.</li> <li>• In order to enhance the effective monitoring of S&amp;T identify clear KPIs in projects and take it into consideration during the monitoring activities.</li> </ul>
<b>Experts skills</b>

- Consistent assignment of experts monitoring the project in respect to the activities (specific skills in respect to the activities performed in the project).

## Clustering of projects

### Critical Issues

#### Awareness and access to knowledges/solutions already funded

Lack of awareness about the different activities funded along the programme. The current running projects Commission's DB is useful to lists the different projects and activities, but does not represent a tool for accessing the scientific and technological dimension of the different funded activities

Need for a more robust semantic tool for searching/navigate along the contents (not just titles or abstracts) of the already funded projects (need for a S&T funded projects Portal)

#### S&T governance

Poor commission services coordination and knowledge of the different activities carried out within the same DG and across DGs

Still a lot have to be done in order to achieve an efficient use of funds at level of overall S&T projects portfolio management (avoiding duplications, promote synergies among projects, fine tuning of topics among different parts of the programme)

No clear evidence at *proposal* level of the knowledge and achievement gained in previous funded activities. High risk to reinvent the wheel.

### Communities creation

Better valorisation, and possible financial top up, for those projects that proof a crystal clear evidence of using the final results of previous funded projects and step forward with new activities

Further improvement of already existing Commission approaches in clustering communities (e.g. Material modelling council, characterisation council, etc.), but avoiding the creation of exclusive closed clubs, limited to winner consortia.

Weak connections between projects and potential end users of technologies/solutions created within funded projects.

### Possible Solutions

#### Awareness and access to knowledges/solutions already funded

Evidence of list of already funded projects in the topic call text. The Commission should provide information to applicant to a certain topic call of the essential (previous funded) projects that may be a S&T reference base for activity of the proposals for the new topic call. Applicant should provide evidence how the previous projects results may represent base jump for the expected result of the new project.

Development of a *S&T funded projects Portal* opened to the public. This implies the development of a new, strong semantic engine in order to achieve an efficient level of searchability and navigation for an easy access to all the past results. The semantic engine should be developed taking care of the main S&T domains covered by HEU and the main EU related policies too.

#### S&T governance

To improve the awareness of Commission services about the different content of running projects in the whole HEU.

Introduction of common (to all the Commission services tag/meta tags) for classifying, clustering activities in projects may be an option to be explored. Periodic activities of common brainstorming among services managing projects clustered by same tags should be considered. These activities could be limited to Commission's services or opened to concerned projects representatives.

Commission should promote the exchange of projects experiences and results, for specific common areas/communities, in order to avoid duplication and enhance valorisation of knowledge. Cost related to the implementation of such exercise should be considered eligible costs of projects.

Applicants of new project proposals should give mandatory evidence of the potential background knowledge generated by already funded projects, and exemplifying clearly of they will valorise the previous work and how they will step forward. This is something that should become structural in HEU application/evaluation.

Cross review of projects affecting a certain areas (the communities could be the place where to do the activities, see point below).

Top up of cross activities generated from communities of cluster projects. The generation of unexpected S&T value from synergies of already running projects should be rewarded and promoted by financial top up.

#### **Communities creation**

To extend the creation of already existing examples of project community creations. The Commission should promote and support the creation of such communities (as done with the *councils*). These communities could be created starting from the clustering of running, or just completed projects dealing with a specific S&T area/problem. Commission should propose schemes to support financially such activities.

It is mandatory not to keep close to the projects participants these communities. Other subjects (e.g. ETPs, associations, etc) should be part of the exercise in order to bring the loop opened to the a larger communities (not funded consortia, potential newcomers, etc.)

To evaluate the possibility of using the COST actions to support the communities creation on a structural base

## Participants

ART-ER  
ASI  
Centro Nazionale Ricerche  
Confindustria  
ECODOM  
ENEA  
Engineering Ingegneria Informatica SPA  
EnginSoft S.p.A.  
Eurac Research  
Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane S.p.A.  
Fiat  
Fondazione CRUI  
Fondazione Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia  
INAF  
INFN  
INGV  
INTESA SANPAOLO  
Ispra  
Istituto Italiano di Studi Germanici  
Istituto Spallanzani  
Istituto Superiore di Sanità  
Libera Università Maria Ss. Assunta  
LUMSA  
Miur  
Nextworks  
Parthenope  
Politecnico di Milano  
Poste Italiane  
Rina Consulting SpA  
Sapienza Università di Roma  
Scuola Normale Superiore  
ST Microelectronics  
Università IUAV di Venezia  
Università degli Studi della Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli"  
Università Commerciale Luigi Bocconi  
Università degli Studi di Bologna  
Università degli Studi di Brescia  
Università degli Studi di Brescia  
Università degli studi di Cagliari  
Università degli Studi di Camerino  
Università degli Studi di Catania  
Università degli Studi di Ferrara  
Università degli Studi di Firenze  
Università degli Studi di Milano

Università degli Studi di Milano Bicocca  
Università degli Studi di Modena e Reggio Emilia  
Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore  
Università degli Studi di Napoli "Parthenope"  
Università degli Studi di Padova  
Università degli Studi di Pavia  
Università degli studi di Perugia  
Università degli Studi di Pisa  
Università degli Studi di Roma "Foro Italico"  
Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata  
Università degli Studi di Siena  
Università degli Studi di Torino  
Università degli Studi di Trento  
Università degli Studi di Verona  
Università degli Studi Roma Tre  
Università Politecnica delle Marche  
Università degli Studi Suor Orsola Benincasa - Napoli  
Università Vita -Salute San Raffaele -Ospedale San Raffaele



Anna Panagopoulou  
@A\_Panagopoulou

Grazie mille @APREh2020  
@MiurSocial and all participants  
for this amazing event 🌟 on  
#HorizonEU Implementation  
today #Rome 🇮🇹👉 Lots of  
valuable feedback & ideas we  
take back ✈️ to #Brussels !  
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## Photos

