Best Practices Catalogue

for

Horizon 2020

National Contact Points
Introduction

National Contact Points (NCPs) provide guidance, practical information and assistance on all aspects of participation in Horizon 2020. NCPs are established in all EU member States as well as in many non-EU and non-associated countries (“third countries”). In general, they offer basic services in accordance with the NCP Guiding Principles\(^1\) agreed by all countries. Briefly, they

- offer guidance on choosing relevant H2020 topics and types of action
- advice on administrative procedures and contractual issues
- offer trainings and provide assistance on proposal writing
- ensure distribution of documentation (forms, guidelines, manuals etc.), and
- offer assistance in partner search

The NCP systems can vary from one country to another, from highly centralised to decentralised networks, and a number of very different actors, from ministries to universities, research centres and special agencies to private consulting companies. Consequently, the type and level of services offered may differ from country to country.

NCPs of different countries and different Horizon 2020 programmes are connected in so called NCP networks. These networks facilitate transnational cooperation among NCPs, upgrading their systemic knowledge and tools in order to raise their standard of support. These networks have been consulted for identification and compilation of this „Best Practices“ document. It’s aim is to enable knowledge - and experience transfer between the different national NCP systems. The overarching goal is to constantly improve the NCP services as outlined above, and consequently ensure good quality and successful applications in Horizon 2020. This compilation of selected best practices tackles different needs of different stakeholders and is organized in sections based on the recipients/target groups of the best practices (see Table of Contents on next page).

Each case description includes key features such as: target audience, methodological approach, impact, success factor, potential for replicability, NCP contact details, related Web site(s).

Some of best practices examples are illustrated with testimonies and pictures of their beneficiaries.

We hope that this catalogue will sum up the successful service of NCPs in Horizon 2020 and become a useful handbook for newly appointed NCPs in Horizon Europe. We would like to thank all the National Contact Points and all NCP networks for contributing to this catalogue.

\(^1\) Minimum standards and Guiding principles for setting up systems of National Contact Points (NCP systems) under Horizon 2020.
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1. The Idea Check

Target Audience
Any researcher (from academia or private sector) seeking European funding for her/his collaborative research.

Objective
1. Comparing the project ideas or RDI needs of a client with funding or partnering opportunities on EU level and assessing their thematic suitability.
2. Ensuring a good match between applicant’s research and scope of a thematic topic.
3. Streamlining work of an NCP by avoiding proposals to topics that do not align with research/expertise of applicants.

Methodological Approach
To compare the project ideas or needs of a client with EU funding or partnering opportunities an Idea Check Assessment Form is sent to client to be filled out. The filled and returned form allows the NCPs to perform a preparatory assessment to identify:
- if topics and research of applicants match,
- identify major gaps,
- propose next steps for successful proposal writing.

Impact
- Align project idea of client with thematic topic in efficient and timely manner
- Effectively identify gaps between topic text and project idea
- Reduce number of submissions of proposals not adequately matching the topic

Validation
Quality check of Idea Check Service by NCP and by service process owner; Feedback by Clients.

Success factors
1. The client needs to invest enough resources/time to fill out the Idea Check form.
2. The NCP needs to plan enough time to evaluate the filled-out form and to identify gaps.
3. If Idea Check reveals a good match, the NCP should ensure seamless support to client until submission through e.g. offering a proposal review or giving consortium advice.

If Idea Check reveals no match with topic, NCP should signpost client to:
- other topic in same thematic domain;
- other thematic NCP, or ERC/MSCA NCP (not thematically prescriptive programmes);
- other (inter-)national funding programme.

Constraints
This service requires that the client already has a basic knowledge on the European Research Programme Horizon 2020. The Idea Check service to clients requires dedicated resources from NCPs.
Sustainability
High sustainability as service can be offered with regards to any call. The Idea Check Assessment Form remains the same.

Replicability and/or up-scaling
Replicability: High, not dependent on a specific institution or country.
Upscaling: may easily be upcaled.

Conclusion
This service unifies two central aims:
- Ensuring a good match between the researcher/applicant and the topic he/she applies to, thus lowering number of submission of proposals below threshold due to content not matching the topic.
- This service aims at more effective use of NCP resources threshold due to content not matching.

Publisher
Euresearch.

Stakeholders and Partners
Euresearch National Contact Points.

NCP contact details
Euresearch Idea Check Process Owner: Riccardo Scarinci
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Related Website(s)
www.euresearch.ch

Related resources that have been developed
Idea Check forms for particular thematic areas.
2. The Topic Preview

**Target Audience**
All potential participants of Horizon 2020 (researchers, companies, NGOs, public bodies etc.).

**Objective**
Provide a simple and compact summary of individual thematic work programmes or cross-cutting thematic fields and their topics.

**Type of Best Practice?**
- Service
- a document
- event/training
- a video
- meeting
- study visit
- prize
- platform

**Methodological Approach**
1. NCP compiles data from newly published or updated Work Programmes: she/he retrieves Topic ID, Topic Title, Type of Action, TRL level, and Deadline for every Topic of a WP into a table. The topic titles are hyperlinked to the topic webpage in the participant portal. This document is referred to as Topic Preview.
2. NCP publishes Topic Preview on Euresearch Website.
3. NCP and Euresearch Offices in the Regions distribute Topic Previews among clients.

**Validation**
A quality check of Topic Preview is performed by NCP and communication unit. Feedbacks are collected from Euresearch Offices in the Regions and from the clients.

**Impact**
- “Hands-on” and “in a nutshell” information on upcoming funding opportunities for clients.
- Information on funding opportunities for Euresearch Offices in the Regions.
- Raised general awareness of Horizon 2020.

**Success factors**
- Regular and prompt update of Topic Previews by National Contact Point (NCP).
- Good cooperation between NCPs and Euresearch Regional Offices.
- Widespread dissemination.
- Interest by clients.

**Constraints**
The Topic Preview document dissemination is mainly limited to registered clients and Euresearch website users. The quality control depends mainly on the individual NCP.

**Sustainability**
High sustainability as the Topic Preview can be constantly updated and is also adaptable to new Framework Programmes.
**Replicability and/or up-scaling**

The replicability is high, and not dependent on a specific institution or country. May easily be upscaled to European level, i.e. through NCP networks. Furthermore, Topic Previews are not limited to Work Programmes but may also be used cross-thematically (e.g. for SSH Integration topics).

**Conclusion**

It is an effective and efficient document, which provides an overview of the funding opportunities for individual Work Programmes or cross-cutting thematic areas.

**Publisher**

Euresearch.

**Stakeholders and Partners**

- Euresearch National Contact Points: drafting, publishing, and distributing the Topic Previews.
- Euresearch Offices in the Regions: distributing Topic Previews.

**NCP contact details**

Euresearch Topic Preview Process Owner: Joël Graf
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**Related Website(s)**

www.euresearch.ch

**Related resources that have been developed**

Thematic and cross-thematic Topic Previews.
3. Strategic Consultation Formats ‘ERA Dialogue’ and Core Customer Concept (C3)

**Short Description**
Since the beginning of Horizon 2020, FFG started offering new “strategic consultation formats” (in contrast to individual consulting of researchers). These comprise mainly two formats:
- the “ERA Dialogue”, which is targeted at universities and big research organisations, and
- the “Core Customer Concept” (in short: C3), which is targeted at high-potential companies.
The aim of these new formats was to inform, empower and support organisations to fully exploit possibilities in EU-RTDI Programmes on a more strategic level. They are a continuous process/dialogue, with regular meetings and follow-up activities.

**Target Audience**
For “ERA Dialogue”: Vice Rectors for Research of universities or big research institutions.  
For “Core Customer Concept”: CEOs, Heads of R&D or Heads of Funding Management or similar positions of selected, high-potential companies (big companies and SMEs)

**Objective**
- Support organisations to fully exploit possibilities in EU-RTDI Programmes on a strategic level (early information about calls and strategic developments tailored to the needs and strategic goals of the customer).
- Communicate current developments in EU-RTDI programmes.
- Translate and evaluate EU Programme-portfolios and (strategic) networks/initiatives.
- Support strategies on internationalisation.
- Identify opportunities to position research priorities of organisations.
- Provide a single point of contact to facilitate interaction and communication.
- Enforce organisations’ networks on a regional, national and international level.
- Deepen expertise in applying for EU funding and in managing EU projects.

**Methodological Approach**
- Continuous process/”dialogue”.
- ERA-Dialogue starts with a first (pre)meeting to discuss objectives and process, followed by at least 1 meeting/year, plus several follow-up activities and feedback/reflection meetings/questionnaires.
- C3 starts with a first meeting including a detailed analysis of the company’s needs and targets, followed by ongoing (approx., 1/month) communication and meetings whenever necessary.
- Before every meeting, detailed internal preparation including analysis of current performance, opportunities in upcoming calls, policy updates, current important developments in ERA and relevant EU-RTDI programs etc.
Methodological Approach (continued)

The meeting encompasses detailed discussion of status quo and relevant current and future developments. Follow-up activities for further support are defined: they range from more detailed analysis (benchmarking, network analysis...) to internal organizational changes (changes in grant service support, HR Award, ERC mentoring...), workshops etc.

Validation

ERA-Dialogue: Feedback talks/questionnaires on a regular basis (in writing, or by phone/meeting).
C3: Detailed report on the year’s activities including a foresight to the next year with feedback from all customers.

Impact

- Empowerment at organisational level.
- Long-term strategic view on “how to best use EU funding programmes”.
- Strengthened EU funding expertise at organisational level.
- Raised awareness at organisational level of current & future EU-RTDI + ERA developments.
- Support for organisations to network on EU level.

Success factors

- Access to good data monitoring and analysis, plus customer database.
- Enough NCP resources.
- Good knowledge of the respective organisation with a hands-on approach, especially for SMEs.
- Ability to gain the trust of the organisations.
- Interest and openness of organisations for strategic consultations.

Constraints

It requires NCP resources (persons, time and traveling), preparatory tasks and capacities for follow-up tasks.

Sustainability

High sustainability, since continuous long-running process and contact in most cases.

Replicability and/or up-scaling

- Replicability: medium. Every case is different and handled on a customized basis due to the different needs and strategies in the respective organisations.
- Upscaling dependent on internal resources (how many organisations can be accompanied in this quite intensive format, e.g. ALL universities, or focus on high potential? Which companies to select as Core Customers?)
Conclusion
Very good experiences with these kinds of formats, now running very well and highly accepted in the Austrian community. The set-up in initial phase took some time.

Publisher
Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG).

Stakeholders and Partners
- Cooperation internally at FFG with data monitoring unit, and where useful in combination with national funding programmes.
- Local partners (e.g. grant offices at universities) are involved.
- Thematically relevant NCPs and programme managers.
- C3 meetings: Regional agencies (when outside of Vienna).

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ERA Dialogue: Andrea Hoffmann andrea.hoffmann@ffg.at
Core Customer Concept: Christian Frey christian.frey@ffg.at

Related Website(s)
ERA Dialogue:
https://www.ffg.at/sites/default/files/downloads/Presentation ERADialog_english1.pdf

C3 is a format that is not proactively advertised. The companies are chosen by the experts.
Testimonial ERA Dialogue

Mag. Dr. Edith Huber, Head - Office for Research Services, Danube University Krems:

“A knowledgeable analysis of strong and weak points was conducted, which helps the Danube University Krems to increasingly participate in the upcoming calls in Horizon Europe. Furthermore, FFG offers targeted trainings (focus on COST and Marie Curie) directly at the University in Krems.”

Dr. Barbara Haselsteiner-Zach, Director Research Management and Service, University of Graz:

“Overall, we see the ERA Dialogue as gratifying initiative, as it enables a regular exchange between FFG and the University of Graz at rectorate’s level. Beside regular monitoring reports of the University's participation figures within the overall context, it provides impetus for further strengthening the University of Graz within the EU-context.”
Dr. Jama Nateqi, CEO, Symptoma GmbH:

"We expected only basic funding advice. Instead, we received precisely tailored recommendations for calls, which we have already successfully addressed, and advice on our strategic direction. This was far beyond our initial expectations. The level of support is often better, more detailed and coordinated than that of business consultants. As recommended by FFG, we have hired a dedicated Chief Research Officer who has already increased our scientific collaborations to +63 worldwide. We have now +30 research projects under our belt validating Symptoma.com."

Nils Berger, CEO, Viewpointsystem GmbH:

“FFG - for me this actually means "Financing Future Growth". It includes everything that a deep tech company could wish for from a financing partner: to initiate growth potential in a future-driven, goal-oriented and research-financing way. It is always a pleasure for us to work with people who know what they want the future to be like. Not to forget the tailor-made core customer support provided by FFG - we feel perfectly supported at all times.”
4. E-learning Videos

**Target Audience**
Horizon 2020 beneficiaries – mainly project managers.

**Objective**
- To provide information to beneficiaries in a user-friendly way.
- To make life easier for LaF NCPs who have to repeat the same things many times (we send videos instead of explain the issues – e.g. on validation, roles, reporting, FTOP etc).
- To make our events more entertaining (we use these videos as part of the events).

**Methodological Approach**
Video (e-learning) on a website.

**Validation**
We have a group of people who send us comments whether a video is good or not and what to improve (thematic NCPs, colleagues from PR department and IT department).

**Impact**
We can see how many people already watched a given video. After section videos have been published on the website, LaF NCPs have received less questions on those topics.

**Success factors**
Beneficiaries have to know about the existence of the videos. There are still many who do not know. It is important to introduce this possibility at each NCP event and in the newsletters.

**Constraints**
Creating the correct content, graphical design and then the video itself is very time-consuming. It requires more competences than NCPs often have.

**Sustainability**
Very sustainable.
Conclusion
This tool seems very successful. It makes life easier for Legal and Financial NCPs (even though it is very time-consuming to create the videos), it makes events more interesting and is positively assessed by the beneficiaries.

Publisher
The Technology Centre of the CAS.

NCP contact details
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Related Website(s)

Related resources that have been developed
5. Training for EIC Accelerator Pitching

**Target Audience**
Those companies that have been selected to pitch their EIC Accelerator proposals in Brussels (Step 2 of the application process).

**Objective**
To prepare participants for successful pitching sessions in order to secure EIC Accelerator funding.

**Type of Best Practice?**
- [ ] service
- [ ] a document
- [x] event/training
- [ ] a video
- [ ] meeting
- [ ] study visit
- [ ] prize
- [ ] platform

**Methodological Approach**
Simulation of the actual pitching session. The company’s representatives deliver their pitch, and mock panel asks relevant questions. The mock panel consists of SME NCPs and other Business Finland senior advisors/directors. Strengths and weaknesses of the presentation, ideas for improvement are discussed. It allows participants to get to know what to expect in the actual pitching situation as well as best practices.

**Impact**
Company representatives feel more prepared for the pitching session and can be more successful as a result.

**Success factors**
Our pitching training is successful when:
- the applicant company’s representatives are interested in the added value provided by the training,
- we have a well-rounded mock panel,
- we can schedule training sessions well in advance of the actual pitching event.

**Constraints**
Not all companies invited to Step 2 pitching are willing to take advantage of the training. It can also be a challenge to schedule training times, but we can usually always make it work.

**Replicability and/or up-scaling**
The pitching training is easy to set up and it can be replicated for all Finnish applicants.

**Conclusion**
Companies generally feel better prepared for pitching after our mock panel training session. Feedback has been quite positive.
Publisher
Business Finland.

NCP contact details
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Target Audience
Financial Managers, Project Managers and Accounting Departments.

Objective
To collect, explain and summarize Horizon 2020 financial rules in one document and align them with Croatian legislation.

Methodological Approach
- Collect all problematic issues of financial implementation sent as enquiries to Financial & Legal NCPs.
- Gather feedback from the members of the Working Group on problematic aspects of financial implementation.
- Explain and align these issues with Croatian legislation.

Validation
Ministry of Science and Education

Impact
The Guideline received strong positive feedback from its targeted audience and they have become an example of success story in Croatia (when it comes to the financial implementation of Horizon 2020 projects in Croatia).

Success factors
The Guideline is a document that collects and summarizes rules on financial implementation of Horizon 2020 projects, all in one place.

Constraints
The Guideline should be considered as a helping/counseling document and its recommendations may only be used for informational purposes. It should not be considered as a binding document.

Sustainability
The Guideline will be updated according to the new provisions and rules of Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe Programmes, due to the increase in the number of applicants for above-mentioned Programmes.
Replacibility and/or up-scaling
The Guideline will be updated in accordance with future changes/updates of the Annotated Model Grant Agreement.

Conclusion
It has been shown that the Guideline is an extremely useful document that, all in one place, includes an explanation of the rules for financial implementation of Horizon 2020 projects and aligns these rules with Croatian legislation.

Publisher
Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes (Financial & Legal NCPs) and Ministry of Science and Education.

Stakeholders and Partners
To design the Guideline, a Working Group was formed. Members of the Group were employees of project offices in public scientific organizations.

NCP contact details
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Martina Kožul Kolarič (Legal NCP)
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Related Website(s)

Related resources that have been developed
Workshop on "Financial Reporting and Fundamentals of Horizon2020 Contractual Obligations".
Testimonial on The Guidelines for Financial Implementation of the Horizon 2020 Projects in the Republic of Croatia

Ivana Klarin, Centre for EU projects, Projects and Programmes Manager at the University of Rijeka):

The Center for EU projects represents the central point for all EU funding-related questions at the central level of the University of Rijeka. As the University of Rijeka participates in a significant number of research, infrastructural and cooperative projects, we deal mainly with Horizon 2020, Erasmus+, European Regional, and Development Fund and European Social Fund projects. The document „Smjernice za financijsku provedbu projekata iz programa Obzor 2020.“ contains great guidelines for our researchers, research support staff and I always direct colleagues to it, especially newcomers. These national guidelines represent daily help and show that we can always rely on our NCPs’ support.
7. Starting a H2020-funded Project  
(Financial & Legal Management)

Target Audience
All companies that have been granted Horizon 2020 funding, in particular SMEs, which received SME Phase 2 grant and are just starting their project.

Objectives
- To provide the Beneficiary with sufficient expertise mainly in financial, but also in legal management of Horizon 2020-funded project.
- To provide a guideline on how to manage, report and make payment requests correctly and successfully.

Type of Best Practice?
- Service
- Event/training
- Meeting
- Document
- Video
- Study Visit
- Platform
- Prize

Methodological Approach
A face-to-face meeting or a Skype meeting with company representatives and L&F NCP. At the meeting the main financial and legal matters including articles of the Grant Agreement are discussed. Furthermore, all specific financial questions asked by the Beneficiary are answered. The company representatives are also introduced to the main sources of information: Funding &Tenders portal, Annotated Model Grant Agreement (AMGA), special training organised by us (Business Finland) etc.

Impact
Company representatives feel more prepared to manage their H2020-funded project. They know to whom to turn to with possible questions and where to find more information.

Success factors
A launch meeting is successful when:
- it is scheduled before the H2020 project starts, so the Beneficiary can carry out the project and monitor the costs correctly right from the beginning,
- the Beneficiary’s reports and payment requests are approved without delay,
- no errors are revealed by audits,
- customer feedbacks.

Constraints
Limited time and NCP resources. Not all companies are willing to take advantage of this training, or it is challenging to schedule a meeting. NCPs can only give advice and correct information, but are not able or allowed to interpret complex situations or give any “official” conclusions on behalf of the Commission.
Replicability and/or up-scaling
The launch meeting is easy to set up and it can be replicated for all Finnish participants in H2020 and in future Framework Programmes.

Conclusion
Feedback has been positive. Companies generally feel better prepared and confident in the financial and legal management of their H2020-funded projects. L&F NCPs get valuable feedback from Beneficiaries on what is challenging for them, and how these processes could be improved.

Publisher
Business Finland

Stakeholders and Partners
L&F NCPs, SME NCPs

NCP contact details
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Related Website(s)
businessfinland.fi

Related resources that have been developed
Guidelines for SMEs on financial matters in Horizon 2020 (written document in Finnish).
8. Study Visits to Brussels

**Target Audience**
EU Research Programmes target groups: higher education institutions, research institutes, large companies, SMEs, NGOs.

**Objective**
The main objective of the study visits is to increase the participation of the Polish in the European Research and Innovation Programme Horizon 2020, and in the key European thematic initiatives. In addition, a study visit is a unique opportunity to present achievements to foreign partners and to the European Commission, and to exchange good practices and experiences.

**Methodological Approach**
The study visits have been organised six times already in different thematic areas related to H2020. A study visit agenda always comprises of the following elements:

**Day 1**
- Networking lunch
- Opening session
- Presentation of Polish potential in a thematic area (participants’ pitch presentations)
- Presentations given by EU officers representing the thematic area, followed by panel discussion
- Networking dinner

**Day 2**
- Presentation of H2020 projects coordinated by Polish partners or with Polish participation
- Panel discussion with EU and Polish speakers and a networking lunch.
- A visit to an interesting company or a research facility is also an option. In most cases a Polish–Belgian mini brokerage event has been organised as well.

**Impact**
Each study visit gathered approximately 60 participants representing various types of H2020 stakeholders. Representatives of Polish companies, research institutes, higher education institutions and non-governmental organizations had a unique opportunity to meet in person with European Commission Policy officers. It has been an opportunity to discuss the challenges of the Polish participation in H2020 and to present the most successful teams. Furthermore, mini brokerage events with Belgian partners have allowed for some participants to join international consortia applying to H2020 or to create other business opportunities.

**Validation**
- 2015 – study visit Energy [1]
- 2016 – study visit Chemical Industry [2]
- 2017 – study visit ICT [3]
- 2017 – study visit Bioeconomy [4]
- 2018 – study visit Circular Economy [5]
- 2019 – study visit Transforming Industry [6]
Success Factors
- Interesting agenda.
- Notable speakers.
- Cooperation with the Permanent Representation of the Republic of Poland to the EU in Brussels, the Polish Embassy in Brussels and the European Commission.

Constraints
Participants need to pay their travel and accommodation costs.

Sustainability
6 study visits organised, next one is planned for 2019 (Space).

Replicability and/or up-scaling
Study visits are fully replicable for other countries/thematic areas.

Conclusion
Study visits are an effective tool to encourage potential beneficiaries to apply to Horizon 2020 by presenting them closely to the EC research and innovation ecosystem. It is also a good opportunity to present a country’s success stories of participation to H2020 as well as its general research and innovation potential.

Publisher
National Contact Point for Research Programmes of the EU, Institute of Fundamental Technological Research Polish Academy of Sciences.

Stakeholders and Partners
- The Permanent Representation of the Republic of Poland to the EU in Brussels.
- The Polish Embassy in Brussels.
- The Ministry of Science and Higher Education, the Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Technology, and the Ministry of Investment and Economic Development, other thematic ministries (for example the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture).
- Higher education institutions, research institutes, large companies, SMEs, NGOs.

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Related Website(s)
link 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Related resources that have been developed
Testimonial Study Visits

Dr. Eng. Agnieszka Sznyk, CEO, The Institute of Innovation and Responsible Development INNOWO

Two-day study visit “3Revolution: Reduce, Reuse, Recover” was a unique opportunity to present achievements to foreign partners, the European Commission and the exchange of good practices and experiences. It highlighted the awareness of benefits resulting from joining international cooperation programs, expert groups, European public-private partnerships and advisory bodies. We have also visited a company that focuses on the concept of circular economy.
9. Crystal Brussels Prize

**Target Audience**
Beneficiaries of the EU Research Programmes.

**Objective**
The award has been created to give credit to the Polish institutions that are active on the international level, but also to motivate other institutions to be more active in that sense and to demonstrate the fact that participation in Framework Programmes is worthwhile.

**Type of Best Practice?**
- Service
- Event/training
- Meeting
- Study visit
- Prize
- Platform

**Methodological Approach**
The Crystal Brussels Prize is awarded in various categories: research teams, enterprises, public administrations, non-profit organizations and individual scientists. The laureates are ranked based on statistical data concerning their participation in the Framework Programmes. The number of submitted and awarded proposals, the amount of funding and the number of coordinated projects were taken into account in the selection.

The nominees of the individual award are selected from a group of people proposed by the scientific community. The criteria of selection include: active participation, coordination of projects, work in Programme Committees and expert groups, promotion of Framework Programmes and participation in initiatives that foster Polish participation in Framework Programmes.

The list of nominated organizations and people is prepared in line with rules prepared by the Polish NCPs. Laureates are selected by the Competition Jury of the Crystal Brussels Award, which includes members of the public authorities, institutions that provide support to scientists and the industry. The Jury is appointed by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

**Impact**
The Crystal Brussels prize has been a motivation for EU Research programme beneficiaries since 2001. Due to its large public recognition it is also an important instrument for dissemination of information about international research, successful researchers and their projects, key project results etc.

**Validation**
The Crystal Brussels was awarded for the first time in 2001. In the most recent edition the Crystal Brussels Prize 2018 was awarded to the best Polish scientists and entrepreneurs for their success in the Framework Programmes (5FP, 6FP, 7FP, Horizon 2020). The Crystal Brussels Prize 2018 was exceptional because it summarized the last 20 years of Polish participation in the Framework Programmes.
Success Factors

- Access to participation statistics; preparation of award criteria, conducting a thorough analysis of gathered data.
- Competition Jury.
- Financial resources to organize a Gala and produce the statuettes for the winners.
- Involvement of Ministry of Science and Higher Education (Minister present at the Gala).

Sustainability


Replicability and/or up-scaling

The Crystal Brussel Prize has full potential for replicability.

Conclusion

The Crystal Brussel Prize is a unique way to reward the top H2020 participants and to motivate applicants.

Publisher

National Contact Point for Research Programmes of the EU, Institute of Fundamental Technological Research Polish Academy of Sciences.

Stakeholders and Partners

The Crystal Brussels is an exceptional prize for the top performing and most active scientific institutions (universities, research institutes), enterprises and individual participants, who have been extremely successful in applying for funding from the Framework Programmes.

NCP contact details

Magdalena Głogowska, PhD
magdalena.glogowska@kpk.gov.pl

Related Website(s)

http://en.kpk.gov.pl/Crystal-Brussels-Prize/

Related resources that have been developed

Brochure about the Crystal Brussels Prize 2018 summarizing the last 20 years of Polish participation in Framework Programmes (in Polish):
Testimonial Crystal Brussels Prize

Krzysztof Samp, ITTI Sp. z o.o. (IT Company)

"Crystal Brussels Award has increased our recognition and credibility among foreign and domestic partners, so we could strive for more responsible roles (e.g. coordinator) in subsequent Horizon 2020 competitions and in the European Space Agency's programmes."
10. Mission to Countries of Less Experienced NCPs

**Target Audience**
Newcomers / less experienced national contact points (NCPs) from Associated & Third Countries.

**Objective**
The main objective is to improve the standard of support services offered by Bio-NCPs, and organisation of capacity building workshops / infodays in less experienced countries outside Europe.

**Methodological Approach**
The basic condition for BioHorizon was that the project supported workshops/info days on-site, but did not organise them. The BioHorizon provided know-how and trainers (coaching, not organisation). Such events were executed as part of the mentoring scheme - the MISSION module.
Method could be used for assisting local NCPs with the info day organization, mobilization of the stakeholders, new entrees, potential applicant’s engagement, synergies with national funds and local partners.
Methods are flexible and fully adapted to the needs of the NCP and its clients. It could be easily modified according to the specific requirements. Specific workshop could be: (i) how to write IMPACT in you EU proposal, or (ii) how to maximize your matchmaking opportunities for a brokerage event.

**Validation**
To be agreed with the local organizer.

**Impact**
- Connecting new potential applicants on the local level.
- Improve the knowledge of potential applicants.
- Improve the standard of support services offered by local Bio-NCPs.
- Optimization the networking activities between Bio-NCPs globally.
- Strengthening the connection between Bio-NCPs.

**Success factors**
Number of participants (feedback forms might be used in the future).

**Constraints**
Human resources, travel costs of experts from the outside.
Sustainability
Depends on the needs of single National Contact Point (NCP).

Replicability and/or up-scaling
Events on the international level, involving The EC, project trainers, successful coordinators from the country.

Conclusion
High demand on this kind of activities among new NCPs fellows.

Publisher
BioHorizon Project

NCP contact
bozena.podlaska@kpk.gov.pl

Stakeholders and Partners
Direct support in organization of the event dedicated to SC2 and KET-B stakeholders in the country of newcomer / less experienced NCP.
- Workshop - up to 30 participants;
- Info Day- up to 100 participants;

Related Website(s)
www.ncp-biohorizon.net
Testimonial Mission to Countries of Less Experienced NCPs

Liliia Kalachniuk, Bio-NCP from Ukraine

“I liked very much the relaxed but energetic environment of the events, the kind and respectful relationship between the trainers and trainees, experts, and both the more and the less experienced Bio-NCPs in attendance.”
11. Framework Programme Compact

Short Description
Five-day event/training (Monday-Friday) about the EU Framework for Research and Innovation for a maximum of 25 participants; twice a year. Participation fee 250 Euro.

Target Audience
New Horizon 2020 advisers in Higher Education Institutions, research institutions, companies and newly appointed NCP colleagues.

Objective
New advisers/multipliers for Horizon 2020 will get to know the FP for Research and Innovation extensively, including all Horizon 2020 parts (including an outlook on HEU), political context and crosscutting issues such as legal and financial aspects, grant application, evaluation, partnership instruments etc. An additional objective is fostering the networking between the participants themselves and between the participants and the NCP representatives.

Methodological Approach
Mixed methodological approach: lectures (PPT), interactive sessions, working in small groups accompanied by two social events on the 1st and 3rd evening.

Validation
The chosen format has been proven to work very well and it is well known and highly appreciated in the community of FP multipliers in Germany.

Impact
Transfer of a lot of knowledge within a short time, establishment of networks, and establishment of contacts with NCPs.

Success factors
Feedback from participants (feedback form and feedback slot) and speakers, demand from newly appointed multipliers.

Sustainability
The five-day format enables intensive learning, questions and discussions are always welcome. The networking of the participants and the meeting of many NCPs create important contacts which can be used at any time for questions and advice. The exercises are practical and take up the tasks of FP multipliers. Detailed reference materials support sustainability additionally.
Replicability and/or up-scaling
The format can be replicated and adapted. The current format has been optimized on the basis of many years of experience.

Conclusion
Excellent, well-established and well received event format for FP multipliers in Germany.
Publisher
Organised by the EU Bureau of the BMBF, DLR-PT as the coordinator of the NCP system in Germany, on behalf of the German NCP system.

Stakeholders and Partners
The complete NCP system in Germany. Within the five-day event every NCP introduces their specific framework part and additional contact points (e.g. COST, Women into EU Research etc.) plus other stakeholders (such as an experienced Horizon 2020 adviser from a university, an experienced evaluator, a representative of the Federal Ministry of Research and Education in Germany) are present to introduce their framework part.

NCP contact details
https://www.eubuero.de/rp-kompakt.htm

Related Website(s)
https://www.eubuero.de/rp-kompakt.htm

Related resources that have been developed
Participants receive a detailed folder with all lectures and additional information.
12. Overview of Italian Participation in Horizon 2020

**Target Audience**

Italian Research & Innovation community.

**Objective**

The report shows the figures of the Italian participation in Horizon2020. The document (> 500 pages) analyzes the Italian performance in the first 3 years of the H2020 programme. The report is divided into two main sections: the first gives a horizontal overview about the Italian numbers in the programme also with a comparison with other EU countries; the second section focuses on an analysis at the level of single H2020 themes.

The report includes not only a detailed statistical analysis but also specific comments to the figures and tables, a policy overview by the Italian Ministry for Research and University, and a comment on each theme by the national representative at the H2020 configuration that aims to justify the figures and numbers shown in the report.

**Methodological Approach**

Statistical analyses.

**Impact**

It is the first report that analyses the Italian participation in H2020. The report is public and includes more than 500 pages and more than 100 figures and tables.

**Success factors**

It is a complete analysis about the performance of a country in H2020 that takes into consideration both the horizontal aspects of the programme, and the specific characteristics of each theme.

Other key factor is the annual update of the horizontal section of the report.

**Constraints**

The report requires a strong effort in collecting and elaborating all the data needed for the analysis.

**Type of Best Practice?**

- Service
- Event/Training
- Meeting
- Prize
- Platform

- Document
- Video
- Study Visit

**Success factors**

- Methodological analysis
- Clear and comprehensive report
- Annual update
Sustainability
Accessibility to raw data.

Replicability and/or up-scaling
- Annual update.
- Possibility to use the methodology to replicate the report in other countries.

Publisher
Agency for the Promotion of European Research (APRE).

Stakeholders and Partners
The report was under the responsibility of APRE. A strong cooperation between the NCPs, the Italian ministry, and national representatives was the key element for having a detailed, updated and interesting report.

NCP contact details
APRE, Responsible for the report:
Serena Borgna (sc2 NCP) borgna@apre.it
Matteo Sabini (from the APREdati team) Sabini@apre.it

Contact for the NCP Academy:
Caterina Buonocore (SC1 NCP) buonocore@apre.it

Related Website(s)
https://www.apre.it/apredati/
13. Working Group for Regional Contacts

**Short Description**
Working group + meetings + common communication platform.

**Target Audience**
Selected and nominated project managers from different Czech regions.

**Objective**
To provide more information to advanced regional project managers who can disseminate it in their regions. To receive feedback from the regions and individual beneficiaries (more contact with real life).

**Methodological Approach**
- Train-the-trainer approach.
- Mutual learning.
- Meetings twice a year (usually right after the LaF NCP meeting in Brussels).
- Common communication platform ninet@ninet.cz.
- Common event calendar.

**Validation**
No formalized procedure. Feedback from regional project managers.

**Impact**
Better dissemination of information from Brussels.
Better dissemination of real cases and problems and information from beneficiaries.

**Success factors**
Active participation of regional project managers.

**Constraints**
Some regional project managers would like to use the platform only for receiving information and are not willing to share their experience (due to the lack of time, confidentiality, etc.). This poses problems especially with the use of the common event calendar, which should prevent the organization of events on the same day, duplication of events organised by different regional and national contacts and so forth. While the calendar is welcomed by all, not all enter their events in it.
Sustainability
Depends on the activity of the organiser (Technology Centre CAS).

Conclusion
Existence of a working group of regional and national contacts is a very good platform for exchange of information and knowledge.

Publisher
The Technology Centre of the CAS.

Stakeholders and Partners
Project managers from the regions and NCPs.

NCP contact details
Lenka Chvojkova, chvojkova@tc.cz

Related Website(s)
http://ninet.cz/
Working Groups for Regional Contacts
14. Training Programme for New Horizon 2020 NCPs in Finland

**Target Audience**
Newly nominated National Contact Points (NCPs).

**Objective**
New NCP acquires as soon as possible the necessary knowledge and skills that allow her/him to start working as an NCP, to provide good services to customers, and to be an active member in the national and European NCP networks.

**Type of Best Practice?**
- Service
- Event/training
- Meeting
- Study visit
- Prize
- Platform

**Methodological Approach**
- On-site face-to-face training sessions with exercises for a new NCP to do before and after the date/specific sessions.
- Possibility for personal/individual training sessions with NCP Coordinator, L&F NCPs or other experienced NCPs.

**Impact**
H2020 potential applicants, participants and intermediaries receive up-to-date, high-quality and prompt guidance and advice, information and other services they need in order to successfully participate in H2020 or guide and advice on H2020 (intermediaries).

**Success factors**
Customer satisfaction: based on feedback received from customers.
NCP satisfaction: feedback received from the new NCP as well as from other NCP colleagues on whether or not the new NCP is fully conversant with her/his new role and tasks.

**Constraints**
Time and NCP resources; not all NCPs in Finland work full-time as an NCP but they have other tasks and responsibilities as well, and sometimes it is difficult for an expert/adviser to find a good balance between these different tasks.
Conclusion
In a decentralized NCP system that we have in Finland, this has proven to be a very good way to support and assist a new NCP to acquire the necessary basic knowledge and skills that he/she needs to be able to start working as an NCP both independently and as a member of the national & European NCP network. This is a learning-by-doing exercise also to the NCP Coordinator and the core EU team supporting the NCP network in Finland, so we are improving and developing this NCP training programme also for our future needs (eg. Horizon Europe programme).

Publisher
Business Finland.

Stakeholders and Partners
NCP Coordinator with the core EU team, incl. L&F NCPs.

NCP contact details
Eija Auranen
H2020 NCP Coordinator
eija.auranen@businessfinland.fi
## 15. Best Practices for Trainings

### Target Audience
(SCS) National Contact Points (NCPs).

### Objective
To improve (SCS) NCPs’ training skills. This is achieved by offering a guide with methods for 7 thematic trainings.

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<th>Type of Best Practice?</th>
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### Methodological Approach
Methods for each thematic training are described in the guide. This guide can be found at NCPs CaRE website (see below under “relevant link”).

- **Topic 1:** Exercise on Communication, Dissemination and Exploitation
- **Topic 2:** Reporting. Practical insight into how a consortium works. Differences between milestones and deliverables
- **Topic 3:** Partner search
- **Topic 4:** How to increase your competitiveness in Horizon 2020 calls?
- **Topic 5:** Project writing
- **Topic 6:** Project evaluation
- **Topic 7:** Project management

### Sustainability
Methods could be easily modified according to specific NCP needs (e.g. different examples or texts could be used/replaced).

### Replicability and/or up-scaling
Suitable for all NCPs (e.g. specific case studies could be replaced by thematic texts).

### Conclusion
The guide consists of 7 different topics with suitable methods to help NCPs carry out NCP trainings on these topics to clients.

### Publisher/ NCP contact details
NCPs CaRE Project  
[Ulle.napa@etag.ee](mailto:Ulle.napa@etag.ee)

### Relevant Link
16. E-Booklet of Best Practices

**Target Audience**
(SC5) National Contact Points (NCPs).

**Objective**
The “E-booklet of Best Practices“ was compiled to provide practical help to all National Contact Points (NCPs) of Horizon 2020 programme Societal Challenge 5 “Climate Action, Environment, Resource Efficiency and Raw Materials” (SC5). The booklet facilitates and fosters common knowledge as well as best practices shared within the member organisations of NCPs CaRE network.

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<td>study visit</td>
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<td>Online manual</td>
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**Methodological Approach**
Descriptions of different best practices.

**Validation**
An impact assessment has been conducted.

**Impact**
The conducted impact assessment stated high impact on new SC5 NCPs.

**Constraints**
Very SC5-NCP specific material.

**Replicability and/or up-scaling**
General best practices would be useful to other NCPs as well. Partly applicable also to the new Framework Programme.

**Conclusion**
The main aim was to create a versatile practical guiding manual, which would identify and openly disseminate good practices of supporting interested researchers and programme applicants within the network.

**Publisher/ NCP contact details**
NCPs CaRE Project
Ulle.napa@etag.ee

**Relevant Link**
17. What is My EEN Job About?

**Target Audience**
(SC5) National Contact Points (NCPs).

**Objective**
This NCPs CaRE staff exchange programme or study visit allowed a National Contact Point on Societal Challenge 5 (Climate action, environment, resource efficiency and raw materials) to make a study visit to an Enterprise Europe Network advisor from his/her country for up to a day and a half. The objective was to boost synergies between the National Contact Point (NCP) and Enterprise Europe Network services at national/regional level. NCPs CaRE helped the NCP to identify the relevant EEN adviser and had a budget to reimburse domestic travel expenditures of the NCP.

**Methodological Approach**
Guidelines were elaborated to explain the programme to both the NCP and EEN services.

**Impact**
Output: 11 of such exchanges were organised in Germany, Portugal, Poland, Turkey, Tunisia, Slovakia, Belgium (Wallonia), Estonia, Helsinki (with 2 NCPs), France, Switzerland. Excellent feedbacks were received from all participants, both from the EEN and NCP sides. This was very helpful in particular for the validation of profiles for the 3rd brokerage event organised by NCPs CaRE, for which the involvement of EEN co-organisers in cooperation with their “local” NCPs was easier.
Impact: currently under evaluation but one impact already identified is the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which was signed between the Portuguese NCPs (hosted at FCT) and EEN Central Portugal during one exchange, and which led to the elaboration of a template for MoU made available to all SC5 NCPs.

**Success factors**
- Having a double agent (NCP / EEN) able to put the NCP in contact with the most relevant persons.
- Support of the relevant sector group in EEN.
- Incentive of the project so that NCP takes the time to do it.
- Good communication campaign (at the beginning a misleading name of the programme was chosen, which hampered the initial uptake of the project).

A budget for reimbursing (local) transportation and eventual accommodation was less of a success factor as it was not much used.
**Constraints**
Time consuming match-making; Lack of time of NCPs and EEN advisers to organise a visit. The organisation of the matching is time consuming.

**Replicability and/or up-scaling**
Can be replicated in other NCP Networks.

**Conclusion**
Typically, both NCPs and EEN advisers have a very broad portfolio of activities to carry out and a considerable part of their daily work consists of reacting to clients’ requests. To counter this daily routine, simple incentives and gentle pushes towards an exchange activity are needed. The incentives provided by the NCPs CaRE project resulted in some cases in very concrete cooperation activities and good results.
Testimonial What is My EEN Job About?

Borhane Mahjoub, Horizon 2020 National Contact Point or Climate action, resource efficiency and raw materials, Tunisia:

“It went well! I think that a good link has been established between the Tunisian EEN representatives and me.”
18. NCP & EEN Brokerage Events

**Target Audience**
SC5 National Contact Point (NCP) and SC5 client.

**Type of Best Practice?**
- Service
- Event/training
- Meeting
- Prize
- Platform

**Objective**
Initial objective: preparing NCPs to attend EEN brokerage event with a reimbursement from NCPs CaRE. Second objective: Encouraging clients to take part to the 3rd brokerage event of NCPs CaRE.

**Methodological Approach**
Good preparation is an important success factor for a client to make the most of a brokerage event. Thus a synthetic and short document was elaborated, with 2 versions targeted at different publics (an internal one for NCPs, a public one for clients).

**Impact**
Difficult to evaluate, but good feedback from NCPs.

**Success factors**
Targeting the document to the audience it is aimed at was key.

**Constraints**
Clients reluctant to pay for their own trip to attend a brokerage event.

**Sustainability**
The document can be reused.

**Replicability and/or up-scaling**
The document is not SC5 specific, it can be also used by EEN.

**Publisher/NCP contact details**
NCPs CaRE Project
clepinay@hub.brussels

**Stakeholders and Partners**
Elena Angiolini made a presentation also in a joint webinar for NCPs CaRE and ETNA 2020.

**Relevant Links**
- Version for NCP for the moment only on NCPs CaRE intranet
19. Measuring Impact in NCP Networking Projects

Short Description
Inclusion of impact assessment Work Package in NCP networking project (C-Energy V2 2020).

Target Audience
European Commission and Horizon 2020 Energy NCPs.

Objective
- To establish impact monitoring and assessment to ensure that the activities are developed and implemented with a view to the impact they deliver in order to maximise the impact of the project, the impact of NCP activities in H2020 and Horizon Europe, and the sustainability of actions;
- To ensure activities are delivered efficiently and effectively, to help capacity building within the NCP network to carry out individual NCP activities and to share learning with applicants to ensure impact is addressed effectively within submitted proposals;
- To ensure the needs of all NCPs are considered given their different backgrounds, roles and time available for NCP work.

Methodological Approach
The project includes a Work Package establishing impact monitoring and assessment, to ensure that the project activities are developed and implemented to maximise impact, both within the project and for future NCP activities in H2020 and Horizon Europe. Activities will be monitored and lessons learned used to improve ongoing or future activities. A report on impact within the project and projections for impact in the longer term will be provided at the end of the project. A key aim will be to ensure sustainability of activities and their impact beyond the project. The tasks included in the impact measurement Work Packages are:

- Development of an impact framework - project tasks have been reviewed with the WP/task leaders to ensure objectives are measurable and realistic, that KPIs have been set where possible with the expected impact from activities being identified. Task leaders have completed a performance indicator table to be able to monitor their activities during implementation. This includes tools to use to monitor change resulting from activities e.g. increased knowledge of a subject. The table works as a management tool to help review the success of activities to see whether modifications to delivery are needed to increase impact in the future.
- Delivery of a webinar on impact for all Energy NCPs – the presenters explained the approach of monitoring impact in the project and the role of all NCPs in the impact monitoring and reporting. The webinar also provides capacity building for all Energy NCPs, who need to be able to provide support to applicants who are developing proposals for submission under H2020.
- Incorporation of impact monitoring into all activities – tools such as “Mentimeter” and “SurveyMonkey” are used to monitor the short term impact of activities. The project SharePoint system is being used for ongoing monitoring.
Methodological Approach (continued)

- Consideration of impact by the Management Group when planning activity – impact is discussed at all Management Board meetings.
- Preparation of an impact report – the report will identify impact achieved during the project, impact expected beyond the project duration and lessons learned.

Approach

Task leaders are encouraged to pay particular attention to the planning and preparation of activities, to ensure priority topics are covered, that the relevant stakeholders attend and that preparatory material (e.g. background reading) is sent in advance. A needs analysis is used to identify topics of greatest relevance, and polls on availability are used to ensure maximum participation at events. Task leaders are asked to incorporate impact monitoring at different stages in their activity, for example using Mentimeter during an activity and SurveyMonkey shortly after an event and in the longer term, for example six months later to see if there are longer term benefits.

Validation

The approach was drafted by the WP leader and validated by the project coordinator.

Impact

Impacts foreseen from the activity are:
- Increased effectiveness of the NCP networking project through the consideration of impact in all aspects of the project i.e. planning, delivery and reporting. Activities with the highest impact are prioritised.
- Improved knowledge amongst energy NCPs of the importance of impact and how to measure it, providing capacity building to help them deliver their role at a national level.
- Harmonisation of performance of the NCP service across the network.
- Improved NCP support to H2020 proposers on impact.

Constraints

- It is a challenge to incorporate the measurement of impact into existing practices e.g. of Work Package leaders who have delivered similar activities for many years.
- Some see this approach as time-consuming rather than an approach which should be built in any activity as a matter of course.
Stakeholders and Partners
- Partners: the Work Package is led by the UK partner with input from all Work Package and Task leaders to complete the activity planning to consider impact, impact measurement and reporting.
- Stakeholders: C-Energy 2020 partners and all other Energy NCPs.
- Stakeholders: Users of NCP services.

NCP contact details
Work package leader: Microwire (UK H2020 Energy NCP)
http://www.c-energy2020.eu/

Related Resources
Online survey template + Feedback survey template + Webinar content.
<table>
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<td>1. The Idea check</td>
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<td>Euresearch</td>
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<td>3. Strategic Consultation Formats ‘ERA Dialogue’ and Core Customer Concept (C3)</td>
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<td>5. Training for EIC Accelerator Pitching</td>
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<td>6. Guideline for Financial Implementation of Horizon 2020 Projects in Croatia</td>
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<td>7. Starting a H2020-funded project (Financial &amp; Legal Management)</td>
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Personal Notes