

Horizon 2020 framework programme for research and innovation 2014-2020

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This second Monitoring Report on Horizon 2020 focuses on the implementation of the second year of the Work Programme 2014-2015, which was adopted in December 2013.

Horizon 2020 marks a shift towards the use of indicators that aim to capture results and impacts. The legal basis of Horizon 2020 specifies a list of compulsory Key Performance Indicators to be taken into account in its evaluation and monitoring system.

It provides timely information on participation, implementation, cross-cutting issues, as well as overviews by thematic area.

The report largely relies on input indicators in the form of EU funding, participations and applications. Early output has started to become available from the funded projects, such as publications, patent application and patent awards. These kinds of data, as they start to become more robust, will provide valuable evidence on the performance of Horizon 2020 in the future.

The report found good progress had been made on the 14 horizontal cross-cutting issues assessed, even though the ambitious target for climate change has not yet been reached. Progress remains to be made in terms of data gathering and monitoring of outputs of the programme, in particular on the Key Performance Indicators.

The main positive findings of the monitoring report are as follows:

- Interest in Horizon 2020 is growing: there was a strong increase in the general number of applications by 23.9% over 2014 (or close to 30 000 more).
- Horizon 2020 is attractive to private business: Horizon 2020 saw an increase in the number of applications from the private sector by 26.5% from 2014 to 2015 (or over 11 000 more applications). Horizon 2020 is also an attractive means for academia and industry to collaborate this was underlined by the survey of National Contact Points (NCPs), in which 83% agreed that Horizon 2020 provides sufficient opportunities for cooperation between science and business.
- There is high potential for R&I in Europe: only one out of every four high quality proposals is funded. An additional EUR 41.6 billion would have been necessary in the first two years of Horizon 2020 to fund all the over 25 000 high quality proposals, which were not funded. This underlines the huge potential for high quality research and innovation in Europe.
- Funding going to EU-13 Member States rose slightly: there was an observable trend towards more funding for those Member States which joined the EU in 2004 (EU-13) or more recently in Horizon 2020. The total share of the funding going to these countries increased from 4.3% in 2014 to 4.7% in 2015. However, success rates for EU-13 applicants remain lower than for the other EU Member States.
- Grant signature has accelerated: the average time elapsed from call deadline to grant signature keeps declining throughout Horizon 2020: the average time-to-grant dropped by 31.7 days from 2014 to 2015 (or 15% shorter).
- The monitoring report also highlights some points requiring attention:
- Oversubscriptions: in spite of very similar funding rates in 2014 and 2015, the growing interest in Horizon 2020 presents a challenge. In total, over 8 500 more proposals were submitted in 2015 than in 2014. This is reflected in lower success rates in 2015 than in 2014 throughout Horizon 2020: both in terms of numbers of proposals, from 13.2% to 10.7%, and in terms of funding, from 14.2% to 10.9%.
- International collaboration: although the share of participation of non-EU countries in internationally open collaborative projects increased from 2.1% in 2014 to 2.8% in 2015, and for all projects from 1.7% in 2014 to 2.0% in 2015, the share of non-EU country participation in FP7 was higher (i.e. 4.0% for all projects and 4.3% for collaborative projects).
- Newcomers: the participation of newcomers to the programme was identified by the NCP survey, as the most challenging area. On average, applications from participants with FP7 (7th Framework Programme for RTD) experience have success rates that are 4 percentage points higher, and the difference is even higher for SMEs. In addition, the shares of newcomers participation vary greatly across the programme: from 1.4% (for the ERC) to 38.3% (in Societal Challenge 3).