



EUROPE

The blind evaluation pilot



LUXINNOVATION
#MakingInnovationHappen

European RDI Support Team

NCPs and National Delegates for Horizon
Europe



European RDI Support Team

A dual role

National Contact Points

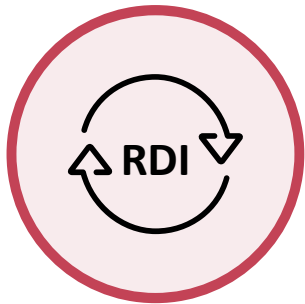
- Supporting applicants in the entire application journey
- Finding the right call and partners
- Responding to legal and financial questions
- Help with administrative matters and project management
- Exchanging best practices with the other NCP networks in other countries

National Delegates to the Programme Committees

- Representing Luxembourg interests in the preparation of the work programmes for R&I
- Participation to the States Representative Groups of public-private partnerships

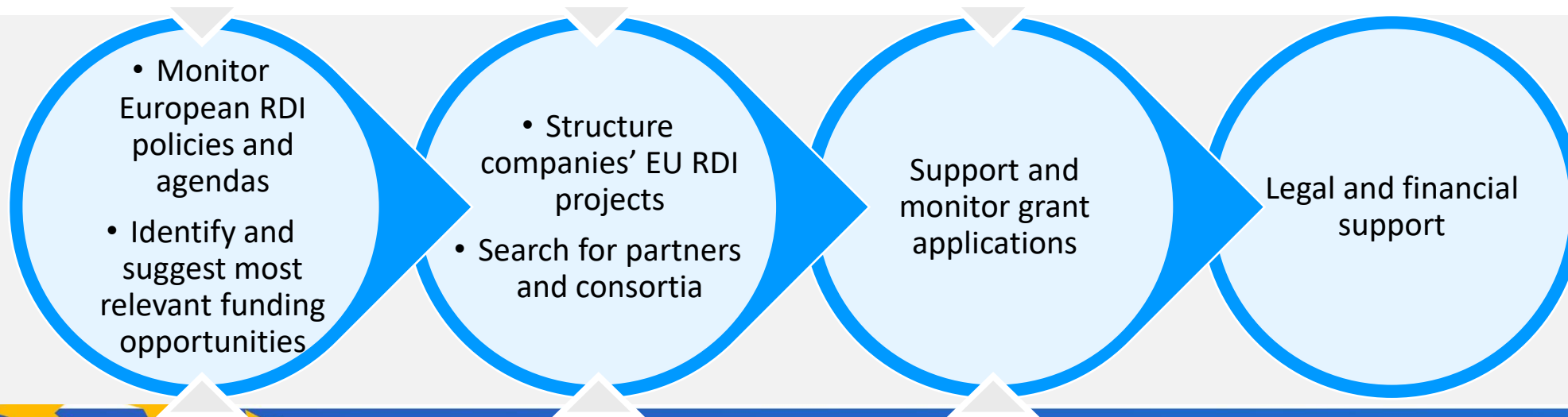
European RDI Support Team

National Contact Point for Horizon Europe



Understand customer's RDI strategy

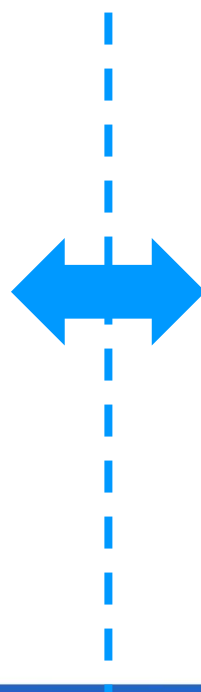
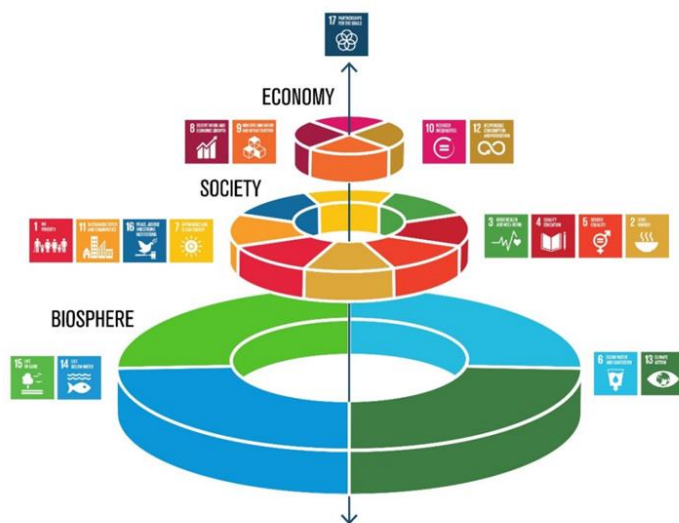
Training and workshops (public or tailor-made)



Horizon Europe:

EU R&I funding programme 2021-2027: €95.5 B€ for 7 years, of which 35% for funding climate change related projects

International impact



European **twin transition**



+ Just transition/ leave no one behind concept

Projects

of different Nature and Approach

Collaborative:

Consortia must be composed of at least three legal entities, established in different Member States or Associated States.

Individual:

a single institution submits and carries out the project.

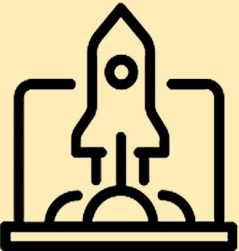
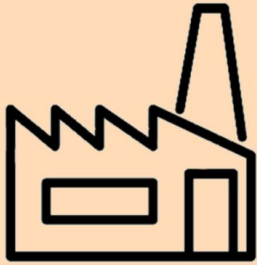
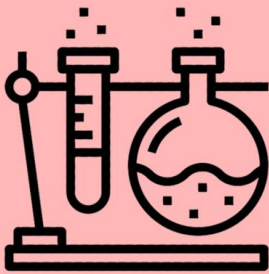
Bottom-up (free subject):

"open" calls that accept projects from all technological fields or sectors of activity.

Top-down (compulsory subject):

calls that only accept projects that meet specific thematic or business sector criteria defined by the European Commission.

Everyone can play a role

					
Start-up	Company	Researcher	Patient care / support / NGO	City	Public office
Expertise, networking, visibility	New markets, networking, pilot	Valorisation	Testing new solutions, co- design	Testing new solutions, co- design	Piloting, data- based policy, valorisation
Innovative ideas, concepts, solutions	Manufacturing, products	Cutting edge findings	End user access	Testbeds	Data

 **What you get**

 **What you bring**

Horizon Europe

The blind evaluation pilot



Horizon Europe

Pilot on Blind evaluation

- In HE WP 2023-2024, **all two-stage calls will be evaluated blindly**, except one call for Widening (legal basis on article 28 of HE Regulation)
- Aim is to tackle some concerns that the evaluation process could be perceived as biased towards well-known organisations in countries with better performing Research and Innovation systems (a recent independent study has not revealed such a bias).
- The pilot aims to identify whether the implementation of blind evaluation within the EC legal requirements and operational context creates any difficulties. If this is not the case, it might lead to a modified approach, with a greater use of blind evaluations, which could effectively mitigate the risk of real, potential or perceived reputational bias.

Article 28

Award criteria and selection

1. A proposal shall be evaluated on the basis of the following award criteria:
 - (a) excellence;
 - (b) impact;
 - (c) quality and efficiency of the implementation.
2. Only the criterion referred to in point (a) of paragraph 1 shall apply to proposals for ERC frontier research actions.
3. The work programme shall lay down further details concerning the application of the award criteria laid down in paragraph 1 including any weighting, thresholds and where relevant rules for dealing with *ex aequo* proposals, taking into consideration the objectives of the call for proposals. The conditions for dealing with *ex aequo* proposals may include, but shall not be limited to, the following criteria: SMEs, gender, and geographical diversity.
4. The Commission and other funding bodies shall take into account the possibility of a two-stage submission and evaluation procedure and where appropriate, **anonymised proposals** may be evaluated during the **first stage of evaluation** based on one or more of the award criteria referred to in paragraph 1.

Pilot on Blind evaluation

Key facts

- It will be launched in the WP 2023-24
- **All two-stage calls** in 2023 and 2024 should take part in the pilot (except justified cases)
 - Cluster 1, Cluster 4, and Cluster 6
- It will only concern the **first stage application** of two-stage calls
- NEW admissibility criterion: Applicants submitting a proposal under the blind evaluation pilot must not disclose their organisation names, acronyms, logos nor names of personnel in Part B of their first-stage application.



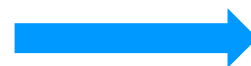
No identification data can be mentioned by applicants in the proposal's **Part B**, otherwise **inadmissible proposal**

Pilot on Blind evaluation

The process

■ Part A of the proposal

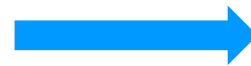
- Once the evaluation session is accordingly configured, the IT system will automatically hide from experts the identification (consortium) data in the Proposal Details page.



Part A is not transmitted to the evaluators

■ Part B of the proposal

- As it is not possible to hide any information from Part B in the SEP IT tool, it is up to the applicant to omit there any identification data in their first-stage application.
- The evaluating officer manually checks whether the applicant included any identification in Part B of the proposal.



If a proposal includes any identification of the applicant in Part B, the proposal will be declared inadmissible.

Pilot on Blind evaluation

Important to know

Difference between clearly inadmissible proposals and ‘grey-zone’ cases, which will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with the help of the legal team.

The EC expect that there will be admissible proposals where the evaluator could guess the identity of the applicant regardless (e.g., small research community).

Mention of country of the applicant does not necessarily mean that a proposal will be deemed inadmissible. However, in case the applicant is clearly identifiable, the proposal will be inadmissible.

Pilot on Blind evaluation

Important to know

- **Proposals with blacked out names and information are not preferred but accepted.**
- **The EC will also consider the intentionality behind the exposure of identity.**
- **The application form template was annotated with more guidance for the applicants regarding the blind evaluation process.**

Pilot on Blind evaluation

Some questions from events

- *How can experts assess the capacity of the partners to perform the work proposed (implementation)?*

Only excellence and part of the impact are evaluated in first-stage proposals, we do not evaluate implementation at this stage.

- *How can applicants support the state of the art or TRL of a proposal without citing their own publications or projects?*

Applicants cannot mention these publications as theirs, but they can mention them from a neutral point of view.

Pilot on Blind evaluation

Some questions from events

- *Can we mention governmental bodies by name in a blind evaluation proposal?*

If they are beneficiaries, then not. The consortium structure cannot be mentioned in the first stage application. The consortium will be revealed in the second stage application, as the second stage is not evaluated blindly.

- *How to manage if we have to mention the location of a pilot plot or type of farm, or a climatic area?*

This could be mentioned (especially when the topic description requires it), as the applicant does not necessarily have to be from this area.

Pilot on Blind evaluation

How to insert references to publications

The proposal can include references to participants' own publications if there is **no emphasis** that the publication is authored by one or more of the proposers.

For example, the following statement will **not be admissible**:

'For climate impact, we will use greenhouse gas emission intensities, following a methodology developed previously by a project partner (Dalin et al.)'

but the following would be ok:

'For climate impact, we will use greenhouse gas emission intensities, following the methodology described in Dalin et al.'

Pilot on Blind evaluation

Examples of statements resulting in inadmissible proposals

- 'Most of project's participants have been involved in the previous H2020 project, NANOCOM...'
- 'For climate impact, we will use greenhouse gas emission intensities, following a methodology developed previously by a project partner (Dalin et al.)'
- 'This task in WP3 will be based on outputs generated by some participants of the consortium', (with in the footnote a link to a YouTube video or webpage where participants can be identified)
- 'The consortium includes the largest research institute in France'
- 'Partner 3 is the leading company in Spain for wind turbine installation'

Pilot on Blind evaluation

Examples of statements resulting in inadmissible proposals

- 'Our current research expands our previous findings described in a recently published article (Wiliam et al, 2022)'
- 'The consortium consists of leaders in the high tech industry, including the biggest in terms of capital constructor of micro chips'
- 'The coordinator organisation was the one who first introduced the concept of m-RNA in vaccines'
- 'The consortium consists of 2 research centres (including an international one based in Geneva) and the oldest university in Belgium'

How to deal with this pilot?

When in doubt, ask your NCP!

Make sure to check if the pilot applies to your proposal: Cluster 1, 4, and 6, two stages calls

Follow the guidance, and PLEASE do not try to outsmart the system! You risk that the proposal is declared not admissible.

Please come to us if you want a second opinion on indirect disclosures of identity

Redress will be possible, but it is always tricky as an option!



Questions?

Thank you!

■ **Stefano Pozzi Mucelli**

*Head of European
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