

## Q&A from the Secure Societies Info Day 13/14 MARCH 2019 in Brussels

### Part 1: Questions on the General Aspects of the Work Programme 2019, Legal and Financial Aspects, Ethics and Security Issues and Gender Dimension

#### 1. Questions on general aspects of the work programme, conditions for participation and other legal and financial aspects

##### 1.1: Is an international organizations (e.g. NATO, INTERPOL, United Nations University,..) eligible for funding under H2020?

As specified in the [General Annexes 2018-2020](#) part A an international organization may receive exceptional funding from the EU if it is deemed essential to the implementation of the action, which can be justified by unique know-how or competences, access to information or research infrastructure or similar differentiators. It is important that applicants indicate in the proposal why exceptional funding should be granted. This can be best done in part 4.1 "Participants" when describing this organization, its role in the proposal and possible infrastructures or equipment made available, so that the experts can take an information-based decision during the evaluation regarding this point.

##### 1.2: Will proposals with UK partners or UK coordinators be evaluated differently given the political context?

The process and the outcome of the *scientific evaluation* will not be influenced by the status of the UK with respect to the EU at the moment of the evaluations, i.e. these proposals will be evaluated as any other proposals.

Please note, however, that the future status of the UK might have an impact on the fulfilment of the eligibility conditions (including possible additional ones) and the eligibility to receive EU funding (cf. question below). We advise all applicants to regularly check [the Horizon 2020 websites for updates on the eligibility of British applicants](#).

##### 1.3: Should the participation of UK partners in a proposal be addressed as a risk for the project implementation?

If the risk of UK becoming a third country (i.e. having neither member state nor associated country status) still exists at the time of proposal submission, it might be useful for the applicant to assess its impact on the project (in terms of eligibility or implementation of the future action) and, if relevant, to address this point and to propose mitigation actions within the proposal critical risks under part 3.2 of the proposal.

##### 1.4: The [work programme](#) foresees that for SEC topics with more than one open sub-topic, "at least the highest ranked proposal per sub-topic will be funded provided that it attains all thresholds" (cf. p. 52/53). Does this also apply for proposals under subtopic "open" or only for pre-defined sub-topics?

The sub-topic “open” is considered in the same way as the pre-defined sub-topics when it comes to set the priority order for funding: the highest ranked proposal under sub-topic “open” would be included in the funding range provided it is above threshold.

**1.5: Where can applicants find information on retained proposals under a specific call or topic from the 2018 evaluations?**

The outcome of the 2018 evaluations has been published as flash info on the [funding and tenders portal](#) in January 2019: applicants will find the relevant information under Topic conditions and documents / Additional Documents of the corresponding topic of 2018. More details on the proposals (full abstract, partners, funding, ...) will be made available on the [CORDIS](#) pages from May on, after signature of these proposals.

In addition, where relevant, information on the retained proposals has been published under the section Topic Updates of the 2019 topics (e.g. retained critical infrastructures for INFRA01 and content of proposals retained under sub-topic “open” in DRS, BES and FCT topics).

**1.6: How can applicants get further information or clarifications on topic descriptions or conditions regarding a participation in the Secure Societies work programme 2019?**

Applicants should check first if their question has already been answered in the [FAQ](#) section of the portal. If not, please submit your question in the central [Research Enquiry Service](#) of the portal. All questions labelled under the programme area “01.20 Secure Societies...” will be sent to our services and answered individually in due time.

**1.7: What is the best section of the proposal to elaborate references to EU policies? Excellence or impact?**

Security research is very much policy driven. References to EU policies should therefore be added wherever it adds value to the credibility of the proposal. As a guidance on the most appropriate on what information to add in which section: if EU policies are an integral part of the scope of the topic and/or are essential for the chosen approach and the methodology, applicants should elaborate on this in section 1 “Excellence”. If the action will have impact on the implementation of existing EU policies or will produce output essential to EU policy makers applicants should describe this in section 2 “Impact”.

**1.8: What are accession forms?**

The grant agreement is e-signed only between the coordinator and the Agency/Commission. All other beneficiaries must e-sign the "accession forms" within 30 days after signature of the grant agreement in order to participate in the project. Templates of the accession forms are appended as Annex 3 to the [Model Grant Agreement](#) (MGA).

**1.9: In very small legal entities, is the LEAR authorised to exert additional roles with regards to H2020 or the proposal/project?**

Yes, one person – identified by his or her ECAS account – can cumulate several roles.

**1.10: When drafting the budget for the proposal, should all partners foresee a Certificate on the Financial Statements (CFS)?**

No, this applies only to entities for which the maximum grant amount *excluding the indirect costs* exceeds the ceiling of EUR 325,000. These entities should foresee the costs of the CFS under other direct costs and include it in their budget.

Entities claiming a cumulative funding of more than EUR 325,000 (*without the indirect costs*) will need to provide the CFS at the *final* payment.

**1.11: Can a beneficiary introduce more than one linked third party?**

Yes, the [Model Grant Agreement](#) (MGA) does not limit the number of third parties linked to a beneficiary.

According to Article 14 of the MGA, beneficiaries can call upon linked third parties to implement action tasks, provided there is an established link beyond the sole purpose of implementing the action. However, should the linked third parties perform a substantial share of the work with respect to the beneficiary it is recommended that they join the project as beneficiaries.

**1.12: In case of subcontracting, do national regulations and company practices apply?**

Yes. According to Article 6 of the [Model Grant Agreement](#) (MGA), subcontracting must comply, with, among other requirements, the applicable law on taxes, labour and social security in order to be considered as eligible cost.

Furthermore, the beneficiary must ensure that the award of the subcontract complies with the principle of best value for money and avoids any conflict of interest. In case of audit, the auditors will request supporting documents detailing the selection criteria applied by the beneficiary to award the (sub)contracting.

**1.13: Concerning the award of subcontracting, where can we find the definition of “*conflict of interest*”?**

Article 35 of the [Model Grant Agreement](#) defines "*conflict of interest*" as "*any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the action is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest*".

**1.14: In the description of the subcontracting under section 4.2 of the proposal, is it advisable to name the subcontractors if already known?**

Applicants should provide, in section 4.2 of part B of the proposal, an elaborate description of the foreseen tasks and the estimated cost of the subcontracting and include the budgeted costs in the foreseen column of the budget table of part A.

If the subcontractor is preselected, it can be named (and its selection justified) in section 4.2 of the proposal or – later during grant preparation – of the grant agreement. However, even

in this case, the principle of best value for money still applies and the Commission/Agency may reject the costs in case of evidence of non-compliance.

**1.15: Does the two-year timeframe for ex-post audits also applies to closed FP7 projects?**

No, this rule only applies for H2020. For FP7, all supporting documents must be kept up to 5 years after end of the project.

**1.16: For an Innovation Action (IA), what is the effective funding rate of the direct costs for an entity qualifying for 70% reimbursement rate, given the flat rate of 25% for the indirect cost?**

The 25% indirect cost is added to the direct costs (with the exemption of costs for subcontracting and in kind contributions) before applying the 70% reimbursement rate: the maximum of the EC contribution is therefore capped at 87.5% of the direct cost (assuming no subcontracting or in-kind contributions).

## **2. Questions on Ethics Issues**

**2.1: In the Ethics Issues table of part A, applicants can only indicate one page reference to related information in the proposal. How can we change it?**

In the Ethics Issues table of part A, the applicants need indeed to indicate the proposal pages related to the potential ethics issues. If the foreseen field should not allow to indicate all references, please indicate the most important one. More detailed information should be given in section 5.1 "Ethics" of the proposal where the consortium will need to describe what the potential ethical issues are, how it will comply with national and ethical requirements and how it intends to address these issues in practice.

**2.2: Is it mandatory to have an Ethics Advisory Board?**

At proposal stage, there is no requirement to have an ethics board foreseen. However, the inclusion of an Ethics Advisory Board might become a mandatory requirement following the outcome of the ethics screening when it comes to grant preparation.

Nevertheless, if the applicants are already aware that they will deal with sensitive ethical issues, it may be good to foresee it and describe its composition and mandate already at the proposal stage, giving additional credibility to the implementation part.

**2.3: Of what consists the additional ethics work package, created during grant preparation, in case of post-Grant-Agreement requirements?**

If the ethics screening concludes that the consortium will need to deliver documents proving the compliance with ethical regulation and principles *after* the start of the grant agreement, the IT system automatically generates a new WP with deliverables corresponding to these requirements serving as repository for these documents.

#### **2.4: Is it recommended to have an Ethics Work Package (WP) in the proposal?**

At proposal stage, applicants can foresee reporting on the handling of ethics issues during the future implementation of the proposal as part of the management work package.

If the outcome of the ethics screening requires actions for compliance with the ethical rules *after* the start of the project, an additional work package will be automatically created in the Grant Agreement preparation phase that will serve as repository for the required documents.

A separate work package on ethics at proposal stage may be useful if the analysis of potential ethics issues is an integral part of the research and innovation activities or is necessary to reach maximum impact.

### **3. Questions on Security Aspects**

#### **3.1: Can projects involving EU Classified Information (EUCI) participate in the Open Research Data Pilot?**

In principle, projects involving EUCI can participate in the Open Data Pilot, but we advise projects using or producing EUCI to opt out of this pilot. EUCI-related data cannot be shared and no open access can be given to this kind of data.

#### **3.2: Does the EU have an agreement on the exchange of EU Classified Information (EUCI) with Switzerland?**

Yes. The EU has concluded such agreements with several countries outside the EU, among them Switzerland, as well as with several international organisations. Please check if your prospective partners are covered by such agreement(s).

#### **3.3: In section 6 “Security” of part B the proposal, should applicants already indicate potential use (generation) of EU classified background (foreground) information?**

Yes. If applicants know already at proposal stage that a project would use or produce EU classified information, they should indicate this in the proposal under section 6.2 “*EU classified information*”. For further guidance, please consult the [Guidelines for the Classification of Information in Research Projects](#).

#### **3.4: Is it mandatory to have a Security Advisory Board?**

At proposal stage, there is no requirement to have a Security Advisory Board. However, the inclusion of a Security Advisory Board might become a mandatory requirement following the outcome of the security scrutiny when it comes to grant preparation.

If applicants are already aware that they will deal with potentially sensitive security issues, it may be good to foresee it and describe its composition and mandate already at the proposal stage.

#### 4. Questions on Gender Dimension

**4.1: Four topics of the 2019 work programme have been identified as relevant for the integration of the gender dimension in the content of research and innovation. For all other topics, does that mean that the integration of the gender dimension is *not* relevant and therefore *not considered during the evaluation*?**

For the topics flagged as relevant for the integration of the gender dimension, applicants should indeed address the gender dimension by default. Accordingly, evaluators will check how it has been taken into account in the proposal and will reflect it in the evaluation of the Excellence or Impact criterion.

For other topics, applicants are free to address the gender dimension and should do so if this adds value to research or impact in the specific context of their proposal. Hence, the gender dimension will not be considered for the evaluation by default.