Electronic proposal submission

FIRST STEPS TO SUBMISSION

1. **Create your user account to login to the Participant Portal**

   To be able to submit a proposal, you must first register on the Portal for an ECAS account.

2. **Beneficiary registration - Participant Identification Codes (PIC numbers)**

   All participants of a proposal must be registered in the central Beneficiary Register of the Commission managing Horizon 2020. Organisations have to be identified with their Participant Identification Codes, the 9-digit PIC number in the submission forms (the coordinator has to be identified with its PIC number at step 3, while other participants at Step 4).

   Failure to do so, blocks the preparation and the submission of the proposal!

   Do you have a PIC-number?

   - If your organisation has already participated in a 7th Framework Programme, it is likely that it already has a PIC number. An online tool to search for existing PIC numbers and the related organisations is available in the submission tool or on the Beneficiary Register page of the Participant Portal.
   - Organisations without a PIC must self-register on the Beneficiary Register page. Self-registered PIC data can then be used in the submission system with a short delay of maximum 3 hours. Should you encounter any technical problems, please contact the IT Helpdesk.
   - The Third Parties do not need a PIC at the proposal stage (exception: partner organisations of MSCA ITN proposals that need a PIC).

   Read more about the beneficiary registration or the PIC search in the Register an organisation section of the online manual.

   SME registration and SME self-assessment: If you have been registered as SME in the Beneficiary Register before, please note that the financial year data that you provided at that time cannot be older than 2 years. Otherwise, you need to do the SME self-assessment in the Beneficiary Register. For instance, if in 2014 your SME validation was based on financial information dating back to 2011 or older, you are required to fill in the SME self-assessment again. If the financial year of the data was either 2012 or 2013 then there is no need for a new self-assessment.

3. **Access the proposal submission system**

   Access to the submission system is provided from the topic's page after choosing the required action type. To access it you have to login on the Portal with your ECAS credentials.

   - Watch also the video about 'accessing the submission system to your selected topic'

   Once you have created the first draft of your proposal, you do not have to come back to this page again, as any previous drafts are accessible via the My Proposals section of the Participant Portal.

   To edit, delete, withdraw or to view the submitted version of your proposal, go to the My Proposals section of the Portal after login.

4. **Check the system requirements necessary for using the submission system.**

PRE-REGISTRATION (STEP 3 OF THE SUBMISSION WIZARD)

Proposals must be created and submitted by a representative/contact person of the coordinating organisation ('coordinator'/'host institution'). Certain types of action differ from this standard: in fellowships and in proposals for the European Research Council's types of actions, the individual researcher (Fellow/Principal Investigator) takes the lead on the proposal.

For the preparation of the draft proposal, the **coordinating organisation must be identified with its Participant Identification Code (PIC number)**, and the basic indicative **pre-registration data** has to be filled in (call title and topic, type of action, title of proposal, short summary (optional), panel (only for Marie Curie actions and ERC), keywords). Most of this data can be modified later in the administrative forms, except for the choice of the PIC number and the related organisation data.

Before the **draft proposal is created**, a **disclaimer** will inform applicants that the service in charge (the respective call coordinator) may access this limited set of data before call deadline exclusively for the planning of the evaluations.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AND ACCESS RIGHTS (STEP 4 OF THE SUBMISSION WIZARD)

The proposal **coordinator** can

- set up the consortium ('Add Partners'), and
- give access to other contact persons.

Organisations, additional partners ('participants'/'partner organisations' depending on the call) must be identified at this step by their nine-digit PIC numbers.

Please read the above section on **Beneficiary registration - Participant Identification Codes (PIC numbers)**.

To facilitate the consortium set-up, a search function is provided in the system or on the Beneficiary Register page of the Participant Portal. All participants have to be registered in the system before this step so that they can be found with the search function.

Linked Third Parties should not be inserted as separate entities in the administrative forms, they should only be mentioned in the narrative part of the proposal (part B). No PIC is necessary at the proposal stage. Only for a successful project entering the grant preparation phase, a PIC has to be provided for the linked Third Party and the budget for the Third Party has to be specified separately.

Access rights of individual contact persons

When granting access rights to a **contact person** for a given proposal, the e-mail address of the person (the one that s/he uses for her ECAS account) serves as the main identifier.

1. The coordinator must also define the **level of access rights** for each contact person:
    - full access (Coordinator contact or Participant contact level of rights) or
    - read-only rights (Team member) are supported.

    To read more about the level of access rights check also the Roles & access rights section of the online manual.
2. For each contact person the **role within the project** must be defined:
    - Main contact person/contact person in most actions or
    - Principal Investigator/Fellow, Main Host Institution contact, contact person in ERC and in MSCA fellowship actions.

For the Main contact person and Principal Investigator/Fellow full details will be required later in the administrative form.

Please note that the name and e-mail of main contact persons (including the Main contact, Principal Investigator, Main Host Institution contact) are read-only in the administrative form, only additional details can be edited there. First give access rights to the person - identifying the contact with the name/e-mail/phone) and save the changes, then further details become editable in the form.

Once the coordinator saves the changes, an **automatic invitation** is sent to the given contacts' e-mail addresses. The invited persons can **access the proposal** after logging into the Participant Portal - with the ECAS account linked to the given e-mail address - under the **My Proposals** menu.

On Step 4 the coordinator is able to delete or reorganise participants and contact persons any time before the call deadline.

ADMINISTRATIVE FORMS (STEP 5 OF THE SUBMISSION WIZARD)

By clicking on the **'Edit Form' button** at Step 5 of the wizard, users can fill in the administrative forms for their proposal. Each type of action may have a different administrative form. Differences are mainly in the budget table, in the call specific questions and in the list of declarations.

Guidance on how to fill in the form **is provided directly in the form**. Some parts of the form will be prefilled based on the data entered in the wizard or in the Beneficiary Register. For more information on the administrative forms, please read the guidance in the forms (or in the templates available on the call page provided outside the submission system).

Administrative form templates consist of

1. a general section where the basic proposal details are filled in by the coordinator
2. a list of declarations
3. participants' and contact persons' data
4. budget breakdown by organisation and cost category
5. ethical issues table
6. call specific questions (if relevant)

The budget planned for linked third parties should be added to the budget of the beneficiary to which they belong (no separate row in the budget table for the third party). Only for a successful project entering the grant preparation phase, a PIC has to be provided for the linked Third Party and the budget for the Third Party has to be specified separately.

TIPS: If your organisation is already registered, but **organisation-related data has changed**, you cannot update it directly in the submission system. For validated entities LEARs (or Account administrators) have to request the update via the Beneficiary Register, available on the My Organisations section of the Participant Portal.
If your organisation has not been validated by the Commission yet, update requests can be done by Self-registrant. The organisation data can be updated by any LEAR who was appointed during FP7 or H2020. A LEAR has to be nominated for H2020 by the time (s)he starts appointing the Legal Signatory(ies) (LSIGNs) for signature of a grant agreement.
Please note that after you have updated your organisation data in the Beneficiary register, the edited data does not appear automatically in the submission system. You have to delete your PIC in Step 4 (Step 3 for the coordinator) of the submission system and add it again.

You can edit the form as often as necessary before the call deadline. Do not forget to **validate the form** to check whether there are any blocking errors or warnings provoked by the given information.

TECHNICAL ANNEX (STEP 5 OF THE SUBMISSION WIZARD)

Proposal templates for the technical annex can be downloaded from the system at Step 5. The technical annex and any additional annexes have to be uploaded as PDF documents.

Mandatory *page limits* may apply to the proposal or certain sections of the proposal, as indicated on the call page, in the template and in the system. If there is a page limit on certain parts or annexes, the system will warn applicants about any excess pages. Any remaining excess pages will be overprinted with a watermark, and experts will be instructed to disregard them when evaluating proposals.

The following parts of the proposal do not have page limits:

- the administrative information
- description of the consortium
- the ethics annex including any supporting documents.

SUBMITTING YOUR PROPOSAL (STEP 5 OF THE SUBMISSION WIZARD)

For calls with a specific deadline you can submit your proposal several times before the call deadline, e.g. to make updates or changes. To view and/or change your submitted proposal, go to the **My Proposals** page in the Participant Portal. As long as the call has not been closed, the new submitted version will overwrite the previous one.

For continuously open calls, only one submission is allowed.

Once the deadline has passed, no further corrections or re-submissions are possible. However, a read-only access to the submitted proposal is granted for proposal contacts in case they wish to verify what has been submitted. By default this possibility is available for 90 days after the call deadline from the My Proposals page.

RECEIPT (STEP 6 OF THE SUBMISSION WIZARD)

All contact persons of the coordinating organisation ('coordinator'/Host Institution') will **receive an e-mail after each submission** of the proposal. The submitted proposal package is combined into one document and an **e-receipt** is generated indicating the date and time of submission by the user. When the e-receipt is ready, it can be downloaded from Step 6 of the submission.

There is no further contact between the Commission and the applicants on the proposal until after the completion of the evaluation, with the exception of the following cases:

- if the Commission needs to contact you to clarify matter such as eligibility or to request additional information
- in case the Commission needs more information or supporting documents for ethics screening, security scrutiny, legal entity validation, financial viability check
- in response to an enquiry or complaint made by you
- for calls which are subject to hearings or interviews (if applicable according to the work programme/call text)

WITHDRAWAL (STEP 6 OF THE SUBMISSION WIZARD)

Proposals may be withdrawn before the call deadline at Step 6 using the 'Withdraw' button. These withdrawn proposals will subsequently not be considered for evaluation or for selection, nor count against possible re-application restrictions (e.g. in case of ERC actions).

Please note that a 'Delete' action button is available on the My Proposals page until the proposal has been submitted at least once.

For a proposal to be withdrawn after the call deadline, special rules may apply (read the information package for the call); therefore withdrawal has to be requested via the IT Helpdesk.

LODGING A COMPLAINT ABOUT FAILED SUBMISSION

If you think that the submission of your proposal was not entirely successful due to a technical error on the side of the Commission, you may lodge a complaint through the IT Helpdesk on the Participant Portal. For the complaint to be admissible it must be filed **within 4 calendar days** following that of the call closure. You will receive an acknowledgement of receipt the same or next working day.

What else to do? You should secure a PDF version of all the B-parts and annexes of your proposal holding a time stamp (file attributes listing the date and time of creation and last modification) that is prior to the call deadline dd/mm/yyyy:hh:mm, as well as any proof of the alleged failure (e.g. screen shots). Later in the procedure you may be requested by the IT Helpdesk to provide these items. Please, note that any information regarding the proposal will be treated in a strictly confidential manner.

To consider your complaint is upheld, the IT audit trail (application log files and access log files of the EC IT-systems involved) must show that there was indeed a technical problem at the EC side which prevented you from submitting (or resubmitting) the proposal using the electronic submission system.

You will get notification about the outcome of the treatment of your complaint shorty but at latest within the time indicated in the acknowledgment of receipt. If a decision cannot be reached in this term, you will receive a holding reply.

If your complaint is upheld, the secured files (provided by you to the IT helpdesk), for which the investigation has demonstrated that technical problems at the EC side prevented (re)submitting, will be used as a reference for accepting the proposal for subsequent evaluation. In absence of such documents, the version present in the IT system will be evaluated.