

Richard Hancock of G & H Associates Limited details how application assistance can prove key to researchers in helping obtain Horizon 2020 funding

The right application

Investment in innovation is the key to economic success, enabling businesses to remain competitive in the global marketplace and is part of the solution to exit from the economic crises. International co-operation is crucial to achieving many of the objectives of Horizon 2020. Involvement in the programme offers major benefits to those organisations engaged in research and who aim to move the frontiers of knowledge and technology forward.

For businesses and academia participating in grant funding programmes, this has many potential benefits including the opportunity to create collaborations across the public and private sectors and bringing together expertise in research. This is in addition to consortium members sharing knowledge, skills and experience at an international level. Involvement also opens up new contacts, networks and markets across Europe and enables organisations to be involved in ambitious and cutting-edge projects.

The new seven-year framework programme, Horizon 2020, officially launched on 1 January 2014 with fresh opportunities for research and innovation in three main pillars:

Excellent Science – this priority aims to raise the level of excellence in Europe and ensure a steady stream of world class research to secure Europe's long-term competitiveness. It will support the best ideas, develop talent within Europe, provide scientists with access to key research infrastructures, and make Europe an attractive location for the world's best researchers.

Industrial Leadership – this priority will aim to make Europe a more attractive location for investment in research and innovation (including eco-innovation) by promoting activities where businesses set the agenda. It will provide major investment in key industrial technologies, maximise the growth potential of European companies by providing them with adequate levels of finance and help innovate SMEs to grow into world leading companies.

Societal Challenges – this reflects on the policy priorities of the Europe 2020 strategy and addresses major concerns shared by citizens in Europe and elsewhere. A challenge-based approach will bring together resources and knowledge across different fields, technologies and disciplines, including social sciences and the humanities. The pillar will cover activities from research to market with a focus on new innovation-related activities, such as piloting, demonstration, test-beds and support for public procurement and market uptake.

Grant funding project applications

Preparing and developing a Horizon 2020 project proposal may seem daunting, especially given the volume of information and number of documents needed. For many organisations, the difficulties involved in

collecting the right information, writing the project proposal, submitting applications and managing the operation of the project will stop them participating in the programme. Some organisations have very little or no awareness of the funds available, whilst others may be put off due to a lack of knowledge, fear of bureaucracy, language problems or past experience.

Engaging with a consultancy that specialise within this area of grant funding and project management could be the answer. They provide knowledge, advice and support to academic and commercial organisations wishing to participate in European research and development projects. They can reduce the burden for organisations and guide you through the maze of requirements needed to develop and submit a potentially successful project application.

There is a variety of tailored support packages available to meet the exact requirements of organisations and each is dependent upon their level of knowledge and experience of the framework programme. Available assistance includes:

- Information and advice on EU programmes and financial instruments;
- Evaluation of ideas to confirm applicability to Horizon 2020 and identify relevant calls;
- Partner search to identify potential project partners and assisting with consortium development;
- Project officer liaison to facilitate communication with the programme case officers at the European Commission;
- Application development to provide assistance with the development and writing of the formal project application documents, including the financial budget; and
- Project management to ensure the project runs smoothly and reporting the progress of the funded project to the relevant consortium members and European Commission.

These services provide support along every stage of the project, from research and innovation to exploitation.

H O R I Z O N 2 0 2 0

Richard Hancock
Director
G & H Associates Limited

B R O W S E www.ghassociatesuk.com