



European Plant Science Organisation

<https://epsoweb.org>

## Statement

# European Commission First Draft Implementation Strategy for Horizon Europe

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*Brussels, 3.6.2020*

**EPSO welcomes the EC First Draft Implementation Strategy for Horizon Europe and offers to collaborate with the European Commission, the Member States, and stakeholders to finalise and implement it.**

EPSO congratulates the EC for defining expected **impacts** (goals), but not the path to get there, inspiring innovative comprehensive solutions.

EPSO fully supports including the UN SDGs in the Key Impact Factors, encouraging co-benefits and also a comprehensive approach to address several SDGs in parallel – e.g. Food and Nutritional Security, environmental sustainability, and human health.

Regarding the level of TRLs in collaborative research, EPSO urges closing the R&I cycle by giving stronger support to basic research in there, thus becoming equivalent to applied research, demonstration and innovation actions.

EPSO appreciates increasing **transparency and simplification**, particularly a more concrete, simplified approach regarding the budgetary responsibility to truly encourage and enable interdisciplinary projects across intervention areas and clusters to address the UN SDGs and achieve co-benefits. Examples EPSO suggests are concepts like 'diverse crops for diverse diets and human health and resilient production', as well as 'combined approaches on crop improvement, crop management and crop processing'. As challenges and science are global, EPSO welcomes further improving international cooperation.

Fostering **synergies with other EU spending programmes**, particularly allowing accumulation of funds from different programmes in one project is most appreciated by scientists and can help to widen participation.

Finally, EPSO encourages the EC to **ease access and outreach**, as outreach and stakeholder engagement are key to public appreciation and support of the R&I efforts we undertake. EPSO is happy to discuss our experience with stakeholder engagement, arts & science, and the Fascination of Plants Day with the EC to truly enable scientists to better engage with the public throughout the R&I process.

We provide further insight on how these concepts can benefit the implementation of the strategy and on how plant scientists can contribute to this in the Annex.

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<b>Useful links</b>	Most comprehensive are R3 and R10 EPSO <a href="http://www.epsoweb.org">www.epsoweb.org</a>
[R1 HE]	EPSO <a href="#">Statement on the Horizon Europe Strategic Plan</a> , 18.2.2020
[R2 FP9]	EPSO <a href="#">position on FP9</a> , 19.9.2017
[R3 FoPD]	EPSO: <a href="#">The Fascination of Plants Day Success Stories 2019</a> , 10.12.2019
[R4 F2F]	EPSO: <a href="#">Statement on the Farm to Fork Strategy by the European Commission</a> , 2.6.2020
[R5 NS]	EPSO: <a href="#">Contributions from plant science towards Nutritional Security and human health</a> , Draft Statement, 11.5.2020
[R6 Diverse crops]	EPSO <a href="#">Submission to the EC consultation on EU research and innovation missions (FP9)</a> , 30.3.2018, incl. 1001 Crops – diverse crops for diverse diets and human health and sustainable production.
[R7 NGT]	EPSO <a href="#">Statement on the EC study on New Genomic Techniques (NGTs)</a> , 27.5.2020
[R8 Feed]	Plant ETP and ATF: Policy Brief Research and Innovation towards a more sustainable and circular European agriculture: <a href="#">Exploring synergies between livestock and crop sectors</a> , 18.5.2020
[R9]	EPSO <a href="#">submission on orientation towards strategic programming</a> , 20.12.2019 (17.11.2019 Contribution ID 666b7610-ddca-4262-b4be-dc125b7ec2cf) to the EC
[R10 GE]	EPSO <a href="#">Genome editing – improving legislation and starting flagships to better address climate, environmental, food and health challenges</a> , 4.11.2019
[R11 MiBi]	EPSO <a href="#">Implementing a Plants and Microbiomes Strategy in Europe – Recommendations</a> , 18.10.2019
[R12 F2F]	EC: <a href="#">Farm to Fork Strategy</a> , 20.5.2020
[R13 Biodiv]	EC: <a href="#">Biodiversity Strategy for 2030</a> , 20.5.2020
[R14 Impl HE]	EC: <a href="#">First Draft Implementation Strategy</a> , 30.4.2020
[R15 Green Deal]	EC: <a href="#">A European Green Deal</a> , 11.12.2019

### About EPSO

EPSO, the European Plant Science Organisation, is an independent academic organisation that represents more than 200 research institutes, departments and universities from 31 countries, mainly from Europe, and 2.700 individuals Personal Members, representing over 26 000 people working in plant science. EPSO's mission is to improve the impact and visibility of plant science in Europe, to provide authoritative source of independent information on plant science including science advice to policy, and to promote training of plant scientists to meet the 21st century challenges in breeding, agriculture, horticulture, forestry, plant ecology and sectors related to plant science. <https://epsoweb.org> | EU Transparency Register Number 38511867304-09

### Annex: EPSO suggestions for the implementation of the EC Draft Implementation Strategy for Horizon Europe

Draft Implementation Strategy – hereafter you find an extract of the content *to which EPSO makes ► suggestions for the implementation and offers to get involved, referring to previous publications [R1-11 listed above]:*

The Implementation Strategy

#### Objective Maximising impacts:

- Clearer specify expected impacts:
  - New: targeted impacts at call or group of topics level, BUT topics will be open to a range of different pathways to achieve those impacts
    - *EPSO: welcome ► Define goals, but not the path to get there [R2 FP9; R1 HE]*
  - Expected outcomes continue per topic
- Monitoring and reporting:
  - Key Impact Pathways (KIP) to better measure scientific, societal and economic impacts of projects (incl. their contributions in meeting SDGs)
    - *EPSO: welcome SDGs in KIP ► Encourage co-benefits / comprehensive approach to address several SDGs in parallel [R1 HE]*
  - Level of TRLs in collaborative research

- *EPSO: urges to ► Close the R&I cycle by giving stronger support to basic research in there, equivalent to applied, demo and innovation actions [R1 HE]*

### **Objective Ensuring greater transparency and further simplifications**

- Shorter proposals (↓page limit),
- Two- stage calls simplified: shorter pre-proposals – possibly only on excellence √; Pilot anonymous pre-proposal
  - *EPSO: Not sure how well this will work ► Test carefully*
- Improve interaction between experts and applicants → *EPSO: most welcome!* e.g.
  - interviews like ERC, EIC and hearings under FP7
  - Or right to react (rebuttal)
  - ↑level of detail in feedback given to applicants
- Simpler Model Grant Agreement (MGA) → *EPSO: most welcome!*
  - Simplified costs: Single formula for calculating personnel cost; Lump sum-based projects
- Rationalise and simplify control regime → *EPSO: most welcome!*
  - System and Process Audits (SPAs) – test of controls and transactions .... positive SPA may reduce audit burden of beneficiaries ...
- Executive Agencies to implement budget and legacy so that RTD continues focusing on policy making
  - *EPSO: welcome, but ► improve feedback to RTD on ongoing / ended projects*
- General governance of HE
  - Concerted, simplified flexible approach of the budgetary responsibilities
    - *EPSO: welcome to ► truly encourage and enable interdisciplinary projects across intervention areas and clusters to address SDGs, co-benefits*
- International cooperation further improve
  - *EPSO: most welcome! Science is global*

### **Objective Fostering synergies with other EU spending programmes**

- Allow accumulation of funds from different programmes in a single project, or with alternative funding when HE cannot cover all high-quality proposals
  - *EPSO: most welcome! ► Support widening participation*

### **Objective Easing access through digital transformation and outreach**

- Outreach and stakeholder engagement will be a continuous process...all interested parties provide their input and feedback
  - *EPSO: most welcome ► Happy to discuss (Stakeholder groups, art & science [R1 HE]; ► Provide better resources (e.g. FoPD) [R3 FoPD]*
- National Contact Points (NCPs): .. special support to NCPs in widening countries
  - *EPSO: most welcome ► Widen participation [ISE statement on HE in preparation]*