



Questions and Answers

European Researchers' Night

January 2017

General Aspects

Question 1: What is the main objective of the European Researchers' Night (NIGHT)?

Answer The NIGHT aims to bring researchers closer to the general public and to increase awareness of research and innovation activities, with a view to supporting the public recognition of researchers, creating an understanding of the impact of researchers' work on citizen's daily life, and encouraging young people to embark on scientific careers.

Question 2: When do the European Researchers' Night projects take place?

Answer The NIGHT events are held yearly, on the last Friday of September. Supported public events can start early Friday afternoon and last until early morning on the following day.

Question 3: What can be the duration of a project?

Answer The maximum duration of a project is two years from the starting date specified in the Grant Agreement. The Grant Agreement should cover two editions of the NIGHT, in successive years. However, projects for one single edition of the Night may also be considered. In the case of two-year projects, as a rule they should last until maximum two months after the second event.

Question 4: Who can apply?

Answer Any legal entity from any Member State (MS) or Associated Country (AC), or an international European interest organisation, may apply and take part in the project. The minimum condition is the participation of one legal entity. However, consortia composed of organisations that significantly represent the science community of the territory concerned are also welcome.

Question 5: Which countries can participate in the NIGHT?

Answer The full list of MS and AC can be found in the General Annexes of the Horizon 2020 Work Programme.

Question 6: What is an Associated Country?

Answer "Associated Country" means a country that is associated to Horizon 2020, not FP7. Each Framework Programme has its own association agreements, which are independent. For more information please see:
http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/hi/3cpart/h2020-hi-list-ac_en.pdf

Question 7: What is the potential participation of Swiss entities and researchers in the NIGHT?

Answer Following the ratification of the Protocol on the extension to Croatia of the Free Movement of Persons Agreement between the EU and Switzerland by the Swiss Federal Council on 16 December 2016, as of 1 January 2017 Switzerland is associated to the whole of Horizon 2020, Euratom Programme 2014-2018 and the activities carried out by Fusion for Energy. This means that for all grant agreements signed as from 1 January 2017 onwards Swiss legal entities will be treated as entities from an Associated Country.

In practical terms this means that for MSCA calls with a deadline for submission from January 2017, Swiss entities are automatically eligible for funding and count towards the minimum number of participants required for a project (eligibility criteria).

Question 8: What kind of project can be funded?

Answer The NIGHT funds public science outreach activities aiming at bringing research closer to society and encouraging young people to take up a research career.

Question 9: Does a project have to be transnational?

Answer It is not mandatory to develop a transnational project. Nevertheless, such a situation is encouraged as the European Researchers' Night is an EU funding initiative which aims at developing transnational features. These might be a consortium composed of entities from different countries developing a single proposal, or several regional or national proposals converging on the same topic and developing some international activities jointly.

Question 10: Is there any restriction regarding the topic of the project?

Answer No, all MSCA have a bottom-up approach meaning that specific activities conducted during the event, as well as the topic they relate to, are freely chosen by the applicants.

Question 11: What are the NIGHT opportunities for academic organisations or SME and companies?

Answer Academic organisations or companies (including SMEs) may be coordinator or beneficiary of the project. Indeed, any legal entity from any Member State (MS) or Associated Country (AC), or even an international European interest organisation, can take part and/or lead a project.

Question 12: How can an event be associated to the NIGHT 2016 call?

Answer

Coordinators of projects that passed the evaluation thresholds but were not retained for funding due to lack of financial resources received an information letter from the REA, indicating that should they request their event to be associated to the European Researchers' Night, such request would be automatically approved by the REA.

No funding will be provided for associated events.

The country where the project is going to be undertaken, the title of the project, and its link to the website will be advertised on the European Researchers' Night website in the events section. The project organisers will clearly indicate on the website of the project and in any promotional material (on-line and off-line) produced under the project that it is associated to the NIGHT event with the following wording:

"The (XXX) project is an associated event to the European Researchers' Night initiative of the European Union funded under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions. Call identifier: H2020-MSCA-NIGHT-2016 (title of the project and specific number of the call to be included)".

Question 13: What does the EU funding cover and what activities can be funded?

Answer

Funding covers any expenses linked to the organisation of a research outreach event. The grant can be spent on preparations and publicity, the event itself, and assessment of its impact.

Activities that can be supported include among others: hands-on experiments conducted by researchers; science shows with public participation; debates; "researchers' dating" (meet a researcher and ask them questions); competitions (science quizzes, games, puzzles, photo and art contests, etc); workshops for children; guided visits of labs, research institutes, and other relevant places that are usually closed to the public; crime investigation; presentation of prototypes; riddles solved with assistance of specialised researchers; display of science films; science demos and shows.

Please note that the most effective activities have proven to be those involving the audience directly and actively. Other successful activities were linked to hot topics (likely to capture the attention of visitors as being very close to their concerns) or to popular characters or formats (TV shows, TV programmes).

Eligibility

Question 14: Can researchers of any nationality participate in NIGHT?

Answer Researchers of any nationality can participate in the NIGHT. Participation of researchers funded by another Horizon 2020 grant is encouraged, including MSCA calls. However the NIGHT project must be developed in the territory of at least one Member State or Associated Country to Horizon 2020

Question 15: Is the geographical coverage an evaluation criterion?

Answer With a strong focus on excellence and innovation, Horizon 2020 does not target any given country. Instead, it gives priority to the highest quality proposals that can bring a change in the way research and innovation activities are undertaken in Europe.

As part of the MSCA, the NIGHT activities have been broadened in Horizon 2020 and require strong interaction between researchers and the general public. Being funded under the Excellent Science pillar, the NIGHT proposals are assessed first by their excellence, followed by their impact and implementation.

Question 16: On what basis are proposals ranked if they obtain the same score during the evaluation?

Answer If necessary, the panel will determine a priority order for proposals which have been awarded the same score (ex aequo proposals). The following approach will be applied successively for every group of ex aequo proposals requiring prioritisation, starting with the highest scored group, and continuing in descending order:

- i. Proposals that address topics not otherwise covered by more highly-ranked proposals, will be considered to have the highest priority.
- ii. These proposals will themselves be prioritised according to the scores they have been awarded for the criterion excellence. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on scores for the criterion impact.

If necessary, any further prioritisation will be based on the following factors, in order: size of budget allocated to SMEs; gender balance among the personnel named in the proposal who will be primarily responsible for carrying out the research and/or innovation activities.

If a distinction still cannot be made, the panel may decide to further prioritise by considering how to enhance the quality of the project portfolio through synergies between projects, or other factors related to the objectives of the call or to Horizon 2020 in general.

iii. The method described in (ii) will then be applied to the remaining ex aequo in the group.

Question 17: How the project will stress the European dimension?

Answer The European dimension may be taken into account by the undertaking of international activities among different funded projects or by developing an international project encompassing different national territories. Furthermore, each NIGHT will have to set up at least one "European corner", meaning a meeting point in a frequented area where the European dimension and gender balance in research and innovation will be promoted. For further information about the European Corner, please refer to the Guide for Applicants.

Question 18: How do the beneficiaries receive the EU contribution?

Answer The EU financial contribution is paid to the coordinator's bank account. In case of a multipartner consortium, the coordinator will distribute the contribution between the partners as agreed amongst

Proposal

Question 19: How are the proposals evaluated?

Answer All NIGHT projects are selected through open competition and by independent experts, using a set of predetermined transparent criteria stated in Annex 2 of the Guide for Applicants, entitled "Evaluation Criteria and Procedures to be applied for this Call".

Question 20: What could be the average EU contribution per event? What is the total budget allocated for the NIGHT call covering 2016-2017?

Answer The total budget allocated for 2016-2017 is 8 million euros. There is no maximum amount established per event. Nevertheless, it is important to be aware that all NIGHT projects are selected on competitive basis. Please note that the proposals can cover one single edition or two editions of the NIGHT, in successive years.

Question 21: Can coordinators and beneficiaries look for other external funding sources apart from the EU contribution?

Answer Coordinators and beneficiaries can look for other funding sources and indeed this possibility is highly encouraged in order to enhance the organisation of the event.

Question 22: What percentage of project costs may the EU contribution cover?

Answer The EU contribution may cover up to 100% of the costs of the project. Nevertheless, it is encouraged to find other funding sources to enhance the action

Question 23: Will all sections of the proposal Part B be evaluated, or only those sections to which the page limit is applied (Excellence, Impact, Implementation)?

Answer All sections of the proposal form part of the evaluation. But the maximum total length of Part B of the proposal is 30 pages. Please note that experts will be instructed to disregard any excess pages above the 30 page limit.

Question 24: Might there be more than one proposal (submitted /selected) per country?

Answer There is no limitation regarding the number of proposals either that can be submitted or selected per country. Should several proposals concerning the same country be selected, then a minimum coordination is encouraged amongst them, namely:

- A common website for all the projects taking place in the same country (with possibly direct links to each of the various projects);
- A common visual identity at national level (one single logo/visual, possibly declined according to the various projects covered);
- Some common actions, in particular with regards to the awareness activities at national level: common press conference, common TV announcement for instance.

Question 25: May different proposals cover the same city?

Answer As a rule, it is advisable that there is only one project per city for the sake of avoiding media and audience confusion. Should however activities resulting from different projects be kept in the same city, to maximise impact such activities would need to be commonly publicised and promoted and synergies amongst them organised from the very start.

Evaluators might also suggest removing some cities from a project for an increased effectiveness and clarity of the various actions.

Question 26: At what points in the project is the EU contribution paid?

Answer For this purpose, we need to distinguish among proposals covering 2 years period or 1 year. In the proposals covering two years, 40 % of the total contribution at the signature of the Grant Agreement, with 5 % of the EU total contribution being retained for the Guarantee Fund¹.

¹ See Annotated Grant Agreement for more information on the Guarantee Fund

Upon submission and approval of the report related to the first event, a 50% of the EU total contribution is paid. Finally, the rest of the EU contribution, (10% of the total contribution + 5 % retained for the Guarantee Fund) upon submission and approval of the reports (second periodic +final) related to the second event.

In the case of the proposals covering one single year, 80 % of the EU contribution is allocated at the signature of the Grant Agreement, with 5 % of the EU total contribution being retained for the Guarantee Fund. The final balance of 20% of the total contribution + 5 % retained for the Guarantee Fund is paid upon submission and approval of the report related to the second event.