



The Seal of Excellence

*A concrete example of operational synergies
between Horizon 2020 and the ESIF*

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Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation

DG Research & Innovation

HORIZON 2020

The Horizon 2020 logo, where the word "HORIZON" is written in large, white, sans-serif capital letters, and a globe of the Earth is positioned in the center of the letter "O". The background is a blue gradient with light rays emanating from behind the globe.

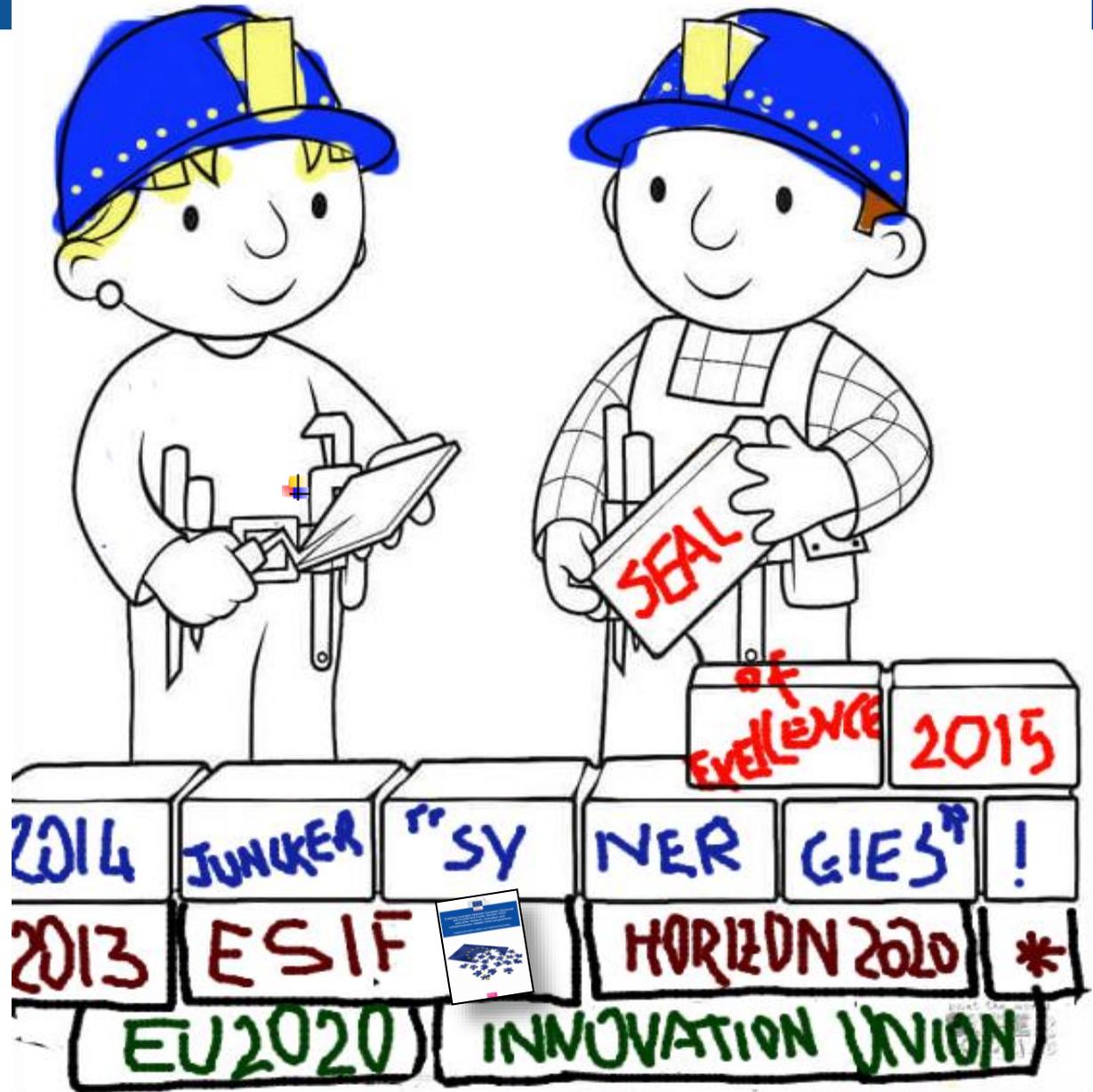


**BUILDING
SYNERGIES
TO MAXIMISE
QUANTITY,
QUALITY AND
IMPACT OF
RESEARCH AND
INNOVATION
INVESTMENTS
FOR JOBS AND
GROWTH**

**POLITICAL
MANDATE ->**

LEGAL BASIS ->

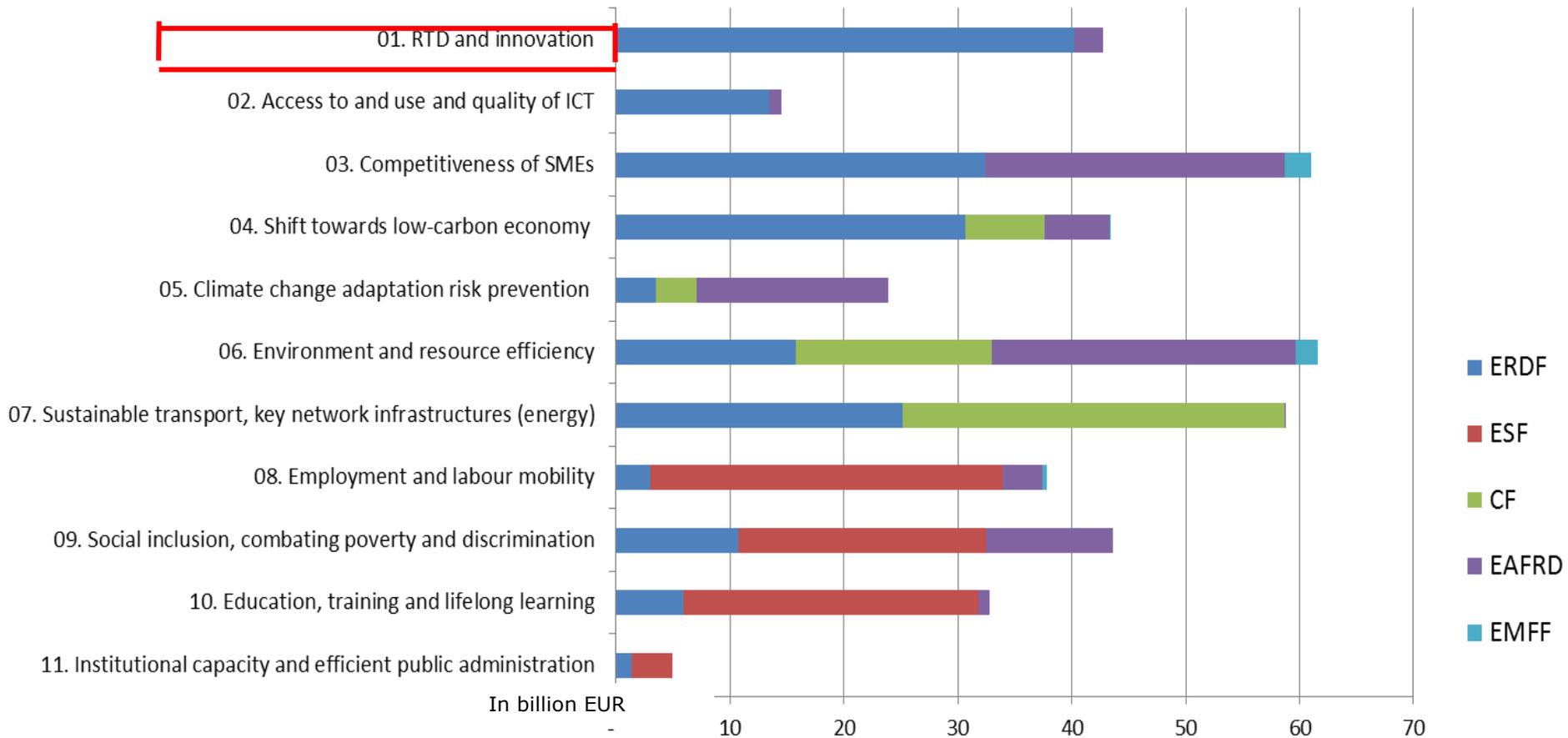
COMMITMENT ->





Around €160 billion invested in research and innovation, SME competitiveness, digital growth, energy efficiency & renewable energies, low-carbon transport
Around 60 billion in Business R&I

ESIF Basics: 11 Thematic objectives



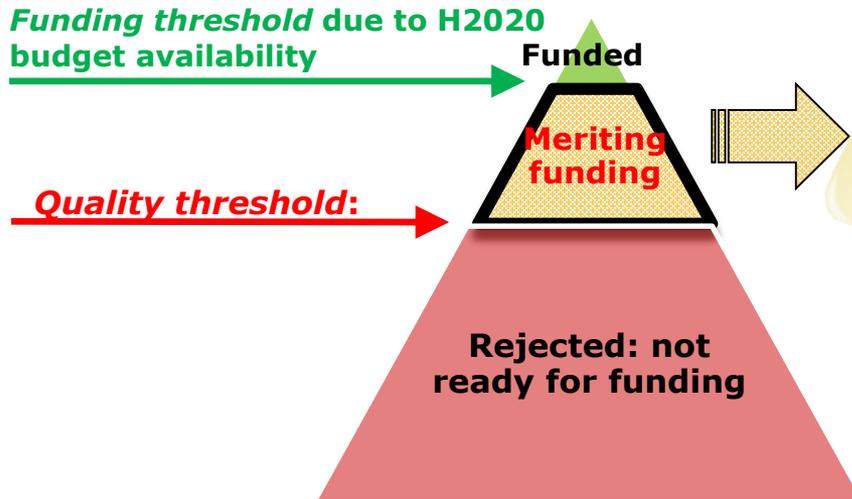
Research and Innovation

THE SEAL OF EXCELLENCE

Key Features



Horizon 2020 evaluation:



Excellent proposals receive the SEAL OF EXCELLENCE certificate



Pilot using the SME Instrument

- ✓ Close to intervention logic of ESIF authorities:
- ✓ Single company
- ✓ Small scale R&I actions
- ✓ Close to market

Regions/MS taking-up 'seal of excellence' proposals:

- ✓ Benefit from pre-screening by H2020
- ✓ Make the most of a unique, high quality evaluation process
- ✓ Better use the resources
- ✓ Invest on high local impact proposals

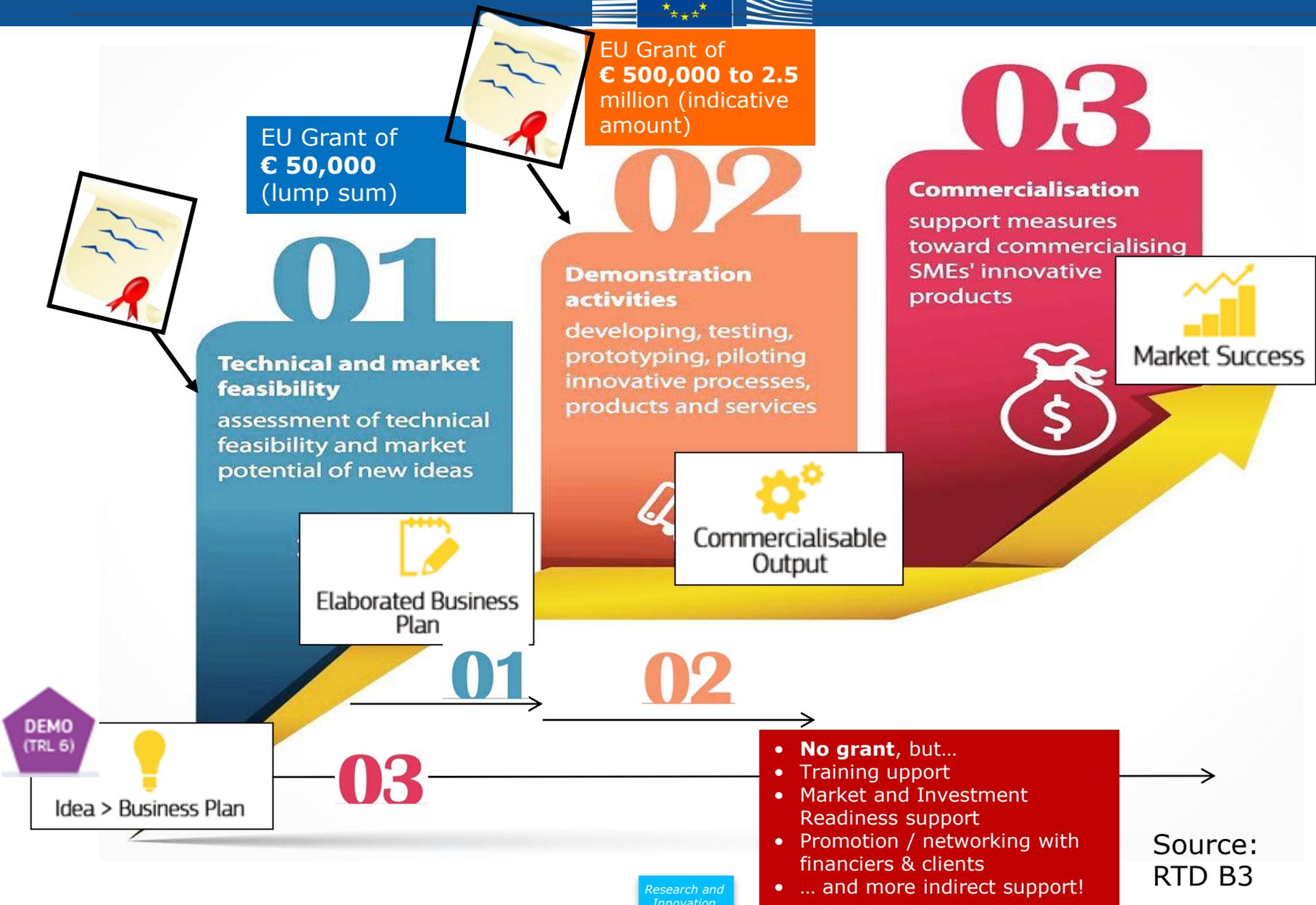
FEATURES OF THE CERTIFICATE



The SEAL OF EXCELLENCE:

- Awarded to ALL** qualifying SME instrument **PROPOSALS**
- Downloadable** only by the SME/s from 'My area' in Participants Portal
- Informs**
- Builds reputation**
- Explains**
- Shows Political committment**
- Fraud-proof**
- Accompanying letter**

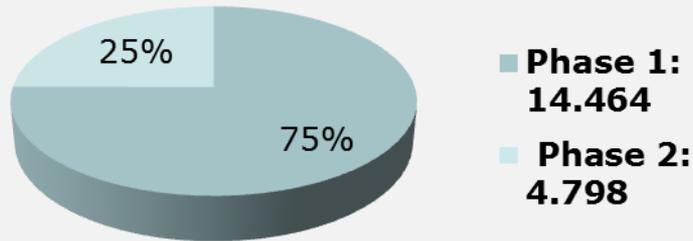
The SME INSTRUMENT AND THE SEAL: Who - When





Highly popular:

Proposals submitted



Very Competitive:

Phase 2

3.101

1.697

Phase 1

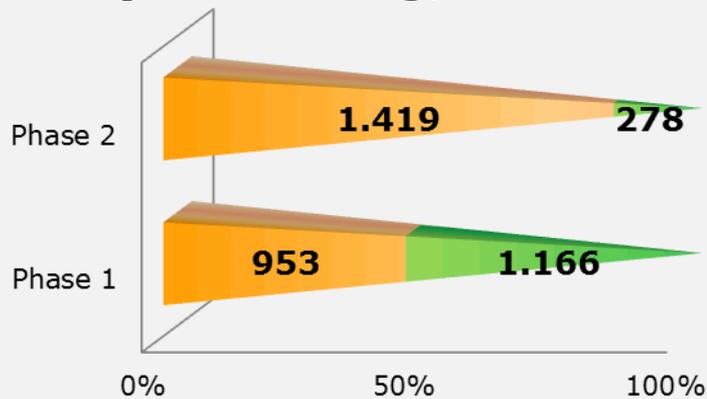
12.345

2.119

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

- Proposals below quality threshold
- Proposals above quality threshold

Many deserving, few funded:



- Above threshold not funded
- Above threshold Funded

Almost 19.500 proposals submitted
Almost 1.500 proposals funded

More than 2300 proposals (Between 45% and 84% out of all proposals above threshold) are NOT funded (these have by now all received the seal of excellence)

KEY MESSAGES TO SMEs ABOUT THE SEAL

*SMEs usually welcome the seal, understand its value and were asking for it.
Expectations have to be managed:*

- > A great opportunity, but process just starting: be patient!
- > No guarantee of 'automatic' alternative funding and/or to the funding intensity of H2020 / No to be used for DOUBLE FUNDING
- > Search pro-actively: only you (SMEs) receive the seal and can use it....
- > ...if you wish so (no obligation!)
- > Make available to the funder ALL documents at your disposal (Full Proposal, Evaluation Summary Report,...)
- > DIVERSIFY your search for funding, in terms of sources (public (ESIF or own resources) / private) and type (grants / financial instruments)

KEY MESSAGES TO ALTERNATIVE FUNDING SOURCES

(ie: Managing authorities, nat/reg agencies, private foundations, banks, VCs, bus.angels)

- > SoE are excellent projects, not left-overs from Horizon 2020 (strict criteria, international panel, transparent and competitive evaluation)
- > Great opportunity to exploit H2020 first-class evaluation system : leading to gain time, use resources efficiently in a period of scarce resources and increase R&I performance and impact at local level
- > Keep the process as simple as possible: no need to re-evaluate the content
- > Different support can be provided: grants/loans/guarantee/... general support
- > 'Seal'- under-performing MSs: consider the learning curve!
- > The Commission services support funding bodies interested in taking up these projects, through the **COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE** and promoting relevant schemes!



The COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE (CoP):

- ✓ **Purpose:** Exchange of know-how on the best ways to implement the 'seal of excellence' approach through ESIF
- ✓ **Creation:** by the Commission since July 2015 following the presentation of the 'seal' concept at EGESIF meeting
- ✓ **Membership:** on voluntary basis, restricted to National or Regional authorities that have a funding power and other Funding Agencies for Innovating SMEs (including private banks and investors) **committing to set up 'seal-friendly' schemes**
- ✓ **Working Methods:** Regular meetings + IT platform SINAPSE

FOR JOINING : Send to RTD-SEAL-OF-EXCELLENCE@ec.europa.eu



Since the launch (October 2015):

> **2 meetings (Oct15 – Jan16): total of 70 organis. from 19 MS**

> **Membership in March: 134 members from 24 MS**

> Members only at **national level** (MSs):

CY; DK; EE; EL; FI; HR, HU, IE, LT; LV; NL, PL; RO; SE; SI; SK

Both Nat and regional level: AT (Carintia, Lower Austria); **BE** (Flander); **CZ** (South Moravia); **DE** (NRWestphalia, Berlin, Sachsen-Anhalt, NiederSachsen); **ES** (Aragon, Asturia, Galicia, Cantabria, Andalucia, Catalonia); **FR** (Centre, Alsace; Loire; Basse Normandie, Bretagne); **IT** (Puglia, Umbira, Piemonte, Trentino, Abruzzo, Emilia Romagna, Calabria, Lazio, Sicilia, Trentino); **PT** (Azore); **UK** (Scotland, Northen Ireland - Wales)

> **HORIZON 2020 ASSOCIATED COUNTRIES (NO)**

> **PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS (IT) ; Funding agencies**



- **RAISED INTEREST!**
- **INDUCED RECIPROCAL KNOWLEDGE**
- **FAVOURED CROSS-FERTILISATION**
- **CONCRETE ISSUES -> CONCRETE SOLUTIONS:**
 - CALL DESIGN -> **clarity and simplification (DG REGIO)**
 - INFORMATION GAP -> **aggregated data available on request**
 - STATE AID -> **discussion channel with DG COMP opened**

NB: Funding of Seal of excellence proposals under ESIF (and compliance with State rules) IS POSSIBLE! We try to make it even smoother



CURRENT 'seal'-friendly actions:

- **Targeted calls for 'seal proposals' Phase 1**
(very soon: Lombardy, Spain, Vinnova-Sweden; Norway, ..)
- **Support service package for 'seal proposals'**
(Tekes-Finland , Norway,...)
- **Calls to support Phase 2 (grant/financial instruments)**
(Italy nat. OP Southern regions, Lombardy, Poland, Trento, Cyprus..)
- **Private Investors platforms** (access to InvestHorizon, ...)
- **NCPs** – actions in favour of seal

SEAL OF EXCELLENCE INITIATIVE: Schemes Examples (2/2)



NORWAY

The national fallback will require SMEs to apply for the SMEI and score above threshold to be eligible for the national scheme will only fund enterprises above threshold which do not receive EU-funding to minimize administrative cost and therefore a new application for the national fallback only need to forward the SMEI application documents from the European level. The national scheme will perform a check that the applicants satisfy the conditions for financing. As the national support scheme, the grants will be provided as de minimis. Another check will be to ensure that the national regulations accordingly. The SMEs will receive a rate EUR 50.000 grant and the same level of coaching would have been if funded from SMEI. The coaching will be provided by the Enterprise Europe Network as well as the advisory apparatus of Innovation Norway.

Finland

Finnish proposals with the Seal of Excellence will receive support from TEKES

Tekes - the Finnish Funding Agency for Innovation recognizes the Seal of Excellence as a proof of an innovative business venture with a very high potential. Tekes actively scrutinizes the Finnish SMEs which have received the Seal. On a case-by-case basis, it seeks to build a tailor-made national funding

and services

Italy

The Region of Lombardy issues vouchers for SMEs that were positively evaluated (but not funded) under Phase 1 of the Horizon 2020 SME Instrument

The Region of Lombardy issues vouchers with the value of €25 000 for those SME applicants that

did not receive funding from the SME instrument under Horizon 2020 but not funded due to the Lombardy Region are encouraged to apply under a SME Instrument - Horizon 2020 proposal and by the European Commission.

SPAIN

Since 2015, Spanish companies that have scored 12 or more on the SME instrument phase 1 can bid in the call, "Horizonte PYME", issued by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness with the Spanish Innovation Agency.

The grants allow the SMEs to conduct the full SME instrument phase 1 based on the *de minimis* regime. SMEs have the possibility to request the help of a business coach. The call had a budget of 8.6 M€. Since its opening, the call has attracted a very positive response from the SME community. More than 220 SMEs presented the proposal in the two weeks following the call opening in July 2015. Out of those 220 SMEs, 135 SMEs were selected for funding. By the end of 2015, all the SME's selected received their pre-financing

SEAL OF EXCELLENCE INITIATIVE: Reactions (2/2)



TWITTER: #Sealofexcellence



Neuron Guard @neuronguard · 19 janv.
We are a #SMEInstrument with a #SealOfExcellence
Thanks @EU_Commission @H2020SME @EEN_EU

Mary Franzese @maryfranzese
Neuron Guard: #SMEInstrument #SealOfExcellence menzionata dalla
European Commission fb.me/Ca2uuJN5



sciamlab @sciamlab · 2 févr.
@SciAmLab with IES srl awarded with #sealofexcellence by
@EU_Commission #H2020! Great and welcome!!



*Certificate delivered by the European Commission,
as the instrument of the
the EU Framework Program
The
HOLIOT (I*



sintermedical @sintermedical · 3 févr.
@sintermedical has received the #SealofExcellence for our AM project for
implants with sponge-like structures



Certificate delivered by the European Commission,

Social Corner

Tweets



Marc Pattinson
@MarcPattinson2

A tool #sealofexcellence that
deserves more publicity and
promotion.
twitter.com/Moedas/status/...

3 days





- **CONTINUE STRONG COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN:**
 - Latest : EEN 8/02; SME NCPs 17/02; thematic NCPs..
 - EURADA, ERRIN, Business Europe, UEAPME, ... - other stakeholders
- **SUPPORT AND PROMOTION:** of 'seal-friendly' actions on web
- **MONITORING PROGRESS:** maximising feedback from SMEs & MAs
- **FIRST STOCK TAKING – June 2016 – WIRE CONFERENCE**



- **EXPAND TO OTHER ACTIONS:** Widening (TEAMING, ERA CHAIR), MSC, ERC proof of concept,



RESEARCH & INNOVATION

Synergies with Structural funds

SEAL OF EXCELLENCE WEBSITE



Highlights

12 October 2015

Seal of Excellence



This quality label is awarded to project proposals submitted for funding under **Horizon 2020**, which succeeded in passing all of the stringent selection and award criteria but could not be funded under the available Call budget. The 'Seal' identifies project proposals which merit funding from alternative sources **public or private, national, regional, European or international**.

[Know more](#)

Why?

Not all the good proposals get funded in Horizon2020. The SEAL will benefit:

- **SMEs:** get a 2nd chance to get funding
- **Regions:** identify and support high quality proposals with a clear territorial impact

[Know more](#)

How?

The action concerns, for this initial 'pilot' phase, only proposals applying for the SME instrument and in particular all those SME instrument proposals evaluated above the quality threshold.

[Know more](#)

9 October 2015

Commissioner Moedas to announce the 'Seal of Excellence' initiative

The Commissioner will announce, jointly with Commissioner Creţu, the launch of the 'Seal of Excellence' for proposals under the 'SME Instrument', at the opening session of the 13th edition of the OPEN DAYS - European Week of Regions and Cities.

Commissioner Moedas will also announce the establishment of a 'Knowledge Exchange Platform' (KEP), jointly set by DG Research and Innovation and the Committee of the Regions. The objectives of the KEP are to set up learning mechanism for regions and cities on research and innovation activities, valorise new knowledge created through Horizon 2020 projects and maximise synergies between Horizon 2020 and the European Structural and Investment Funds.

Social Corner

Tweets

Alicia O'Rourke @aor_4
Interested in the Seal of Excellence? Check out Q&A europa.eu/1JQ49XU #sealofexcellence #h2020 #EUOpenDays pic.twitter.com/8A26knDRJm
2h

F. Hacque-Cosson @FHacque
#EUFunds synergies up thx to New #SealofExcellence btw #H2020 #ESIF @CorinaCreţuEU @Moedas ow.ly/TktzE Pilot: phase #H2020SME
3h

Annamaria Zonno @ZonnoA
#sealofexcellence: 100 proposals submitted to H 2020 SMEs Instrument funded with national funds
3h

Karin Aase @IKarinAase
#sealofexcellence in a Swedish context: ec.europa.eu/easme/en/news/... #EUOpenDays @H2020SME @vinnovase
4h

Annamaria Zonno @ZonnoA
#sealofexcellence presented at Open Days: funding innovative SMEs for competitive territories
4h

[More tweets](#) [Tweet about this topic](#)

Seal of Excellence

In a period of scarce resources, the impact of our investments in Research and Innovation needs to be maximised: creating synergies between Horizon 2020 and other funding sources (such as, but not exclusively, the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)) is a way to achieve it.

This was also a clear mandate from President Juncker to Commissioners Moedas and Creţu.

«We fully support the 'Seal of Excellence' as an important first step in a longer term process of building synergies between Horizon 2020 and the European Structural and Investment Funds. It will help innovative companies to access and enhance the knowledge economy in their regions, contributing therefore to the implementation of smart specialisation strategies»

Why a 'Seal of Excellence' ?

Every year, thousands of organisations in Europe apply to the Horizon 2020 Programme investing precious resources and time. The European Commission runs one of the most complete evaluation systems in the world, using international independent experts. The evaluation screens against three defined criteria (excellence, impact and quality & efficiency of implementation) and identifies those proposals not mature enough to receive funding (below quality threshold) and those that are considered as meriting funding (above threshold). Only some of the above threshold proposals receive funding depending on the available Horizon 2020 budget.

The 'Seal of Excellence' certificate will be awarded to the applicants of above threshold not funded proposals: a holder of the certificate can then approach alternative funding sources (regional, national, private or public) and present the certificate as a label of a high-quality project proposal. Thanks to the 'Seal', high quality proposals from **innovative Small and Medium Enterprises** will have additional chances to be funded. The precious time and effort SMEs invested in the proposal and idea development will thus not be wasted.

The 'Seal of Excellence' offers at the same time a unique opportunity for **regions and Member States** (and any other interested actor) to fully exploit the high-quality Horizon 2020 evaluation process: to easily identify and possibly support high-impact proposals coming from promising innovative companies, with an ambition to grow and compete internationally.

Seal of Excellence



What it is

Who can benefit

How to use it

More Information

- [Regional Policy: Research and Innovation](#)
- [Community of Practice](#)
- [The Horizon 2020 SME Instrument](#)
- [Guide on Synergies](#) 2.0 MB

Case Studies

- [Italy: The Experience of Lombardy](#)
- [Sweden: Building on the H2020 SME Instrument](#)

Links and documents

- **SYENRGIES and SEAL OF EXCELLENCE WEBSITE:**
<http://ec.europa.eu/research/regions/>
- **MORE INFO: email to:** RTD-seal-of-excellence@ec.europa.eu
- **Guide for authorities on synergies between ESIF and Horizon2020 and other EU programmes:**
<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/other/index.html>
- **Horizon 2020 regulations & rules for participation,**
http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/funding/reference_docs.html
- **Evaluation procedure of the SME Instrument**
http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/funding/sme_participation.html



Thank you for your attention!

Magda.De-Carli@ec.europa.eu

DG Research & Innovation

HORIZON 2020

The Horizon 2020 logo, featuring the word "HORIZON" in large, white, sans-serif capital letters, with a globe of the Earth in the center of the letter "O". The word "2020" follows in the same font. The background is a blue, glowing horizon with light rays emanating from the globe.