# Access2EIC

National Contact Points for Innovation

2020

# HOW TO APPLY SUCCESSFULLY
# - EIC ACCELERATOR

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National Contact Points for Innovation

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## DISCLAIMER

This report was produced within the framework of Access2EIC, the official network of Horizon 2020 National Contact Points (NCPs) for the European Innovation Council (EIC) and Access to Risk Finance (ARF). Access2EIC's main objective is to provide support and specialised services to the network of EIC and ARF NCPs. While every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this document is accurate and up to date, Access2EIC does not assume any liability or responsibility for the completeness, accuracy, or usefulness of the information included in this document. Information is provided strictly "as is".

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# CONTENTS

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# INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The guide 'How to apply successfully - EIC Accelerator' is provided for information purposes only and solely reflects the view of the authors. This guide has been written as part of the Access2EIC project, a Coordination and Support Action funded by the European Commission to strengthen the network of Horizon 2020 National Contact Points (NCPs) for the European Innovation Council (EIC) and Access to risk finance (ARF). More specifically, the project is focused on identifying and sharing best practices in applying for SME-dedicated instruments in Horizon 2020.

The guide 'How to apply successfully - EIC Accelerator' shall assist companies which are preparing a project proposal for the Horizon 2020 **EIC Accelerator pilot call** to understand the requirements of the proposal templates, and provide useful tips and advice.

At the end of 2019, a new pilot for the European Innovation Council (EIC) was launched which transformed the SME Instrument scheme into the "EIC Accelerator Pilot". One major change has been the discontinuation of SME-I Phase 1 and the introduction of a new option for companies, which may now choose between submitting a proposal for a grant only, for a grant with consent or for blended finance (grant + equity). This has led to changes in the proposal template and its focus.

The authors of this guide are Horizon 2020 NCPs who interact regularly with applicants for the EIC Accelerator. In the document, their recommendations appear as **"expert recommendations"** and include feedback from both the EIC Accelerator evaluators employed by the European Commission and from beneficiaries who have been awarded an EIC Accelerator grant. The guide also comprises the evaluators' **evaluation criteria for the EIC Accelerator**.

The document shall guide companies how best to respond to the evaluation criteria of (1) **Excellence**, (2) **Impact** and (3) **Implementation,** and how to structure the **innovation and business aspects** contained in their applications. The guide should be of use to anyone who is preparing a proposal for the EIC Accelerator, and will provide general tips regarding proposal submission.

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# AIM AND CONTENT

The EIC Accelerator Pilot call is directed at individual, non-bankable SMEs with a revolutionary business idea and an underlying technology, all based on a business plan for rolling out a marketable innovative solution – and with an ambition to significantly **scale up**. In 2019-2020, under **the European Innovation Council** (EIC), this instrument focuses on high-risk **market-creating innovations**, **breakthrough** products, services, processes or business models, which open up new markets, with the potential for **rapid growth** at both European and global levels. The current proposal templates have been drafted by the European Commission in this spirit and put stronger focus on these goals than the previous version, which was relevant for 2014-2018.

The examples used in this document are based, among others, on successful proposals that EIC NCPs consulted on, and which have been generalised to render them more universal.

The **expert recommendations** and the **examples** provided in the document are intended to help applicants in developing their own business ideas by clarifying relevant points in the proposal template. The directives do not relate to ongoing projects. They should not be followed blindly, but merely serve to illustrate the expert recommendations. The recommendations are meant to give an idea of the elements that need to be covered in greater detail in the proposal.

As explained above, the three main criteria used to evaluate the innovative aspects of a project proposal for H2020 are:

**EXCELLENCE** This section should demonstrate how the high-risk/high-potential innovation goes beyond the state of the art in its field, in comparison to existing and competing solutions. The applicant should also show that the product/service/model is already at an advanced stage of development (high TRL) (33.3%).

**IMPACT** This section assesses the extent to which the proposed innovation will create substantial demand (including willingness to pay) for the product, service or model. It must moreover assess and quantify the competitiveness and growth of the applying SME, based on the project and in relation to environmental/industrial/social issues. It also needs to show the SME scale-up potential (33.3%).

**IMPLEMENTATION** This section must address, among other things, how the innovative product or process will be managed, and which team resources are available for this purpose. This is of relevance, as an effective innovation management scheme allows the applicant to exploit new opportunities, both inside and outside the project. The SME approach needs to prove the financial needs for the EIC supported funds - the subject of 'non-bankability' and de-risking by financing the project (33.3%).

The structure of this document mirrors that of the proposal template for the EIC Accelerator. It focuses on the three evaluation criteria: Excellence, Impact and Implementation, and the financial Annex 4.

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# HOW TO READ THIS GUIDE

The text of the original SME Instrument templates appears in **Black**.

The recommendations of the Access2EIC NCPs appear in **Orange**.
These recommendations also include the feedback collected from evaluators and companies involved in relevant proposals.

In the Blue boxes, the award criteria are referenced next to the relevant segment in the template.

This guide is limited to annotations to the templates of the EIC Accelerator 2019-2020 calls. For a more general overview of how the Horizon 2020 grants work, see the Online Manual provided by the European Commission. Regarding the EIC Accelerator submission, see the Guidelines for Applicants and the Frequently Asked Questions.

A comprehensive list of all Horizon 2020 reference documents (including legislation, work programme and templates) can be found on the Reference documents page of the Funding and Tenders Portal and the European Innovation Council portal.

Horizon 2020 terms are explained in the Glossary part of the Funding and Tenders Portal.

If you need help, you can also contact the H2020 National Contact Points in your country.

## BASED ON NCPS AND EVALUATORS EXPERTISE:

This guide, developed within the Access2EIC project (H2020-101000002), aims to compile the vast knowledge acquired about the EIC Accelerator by relevant key stakeholders in Europe for the benefit of the participants. This type of information is detailed in **Orange** boxes throughout the document. Key stakeholders include –

▸ Evaluators – Tips from EIC Accelerator evaluators across Europe on how to make your proposal understandable and in line with their expectations.

▸ NCPs – Summarising their key recommendations based on hundreds of EIC Accelerator proposals revised each year.

▸ Successful Companies– Highlighting selected questions that need to be properly addressed in order to succeed.

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# ENHANCED EIC ACCELERATOR PILOT (SME INSTRUMENT PHASE 2)

# ANNOTATED TEMPLATE

Please follow the structure of the template when preparing your proposal. This template has been designed to ensure that the important aspects of your innovation and planned work are presented in a way that will enable the experts to make an effective assessment against the award criteria.

Proposal Part B structure:

- Document 1 – Proposal template (provided in .pdf):

- Introduction,

- Section 1 – Excellence;

- Section 2 – Impact;

- Section 3 – Implementation;

- Document 2 – Annex 1 – 3 (provided in as single .pdf):

- Annex 1 – Security and Ethics;

- Annex 2 – CVs ;

- Annex 3 –Others;

- Document 3 – Annex 4 – Financial and corporate information Excel file (provided as .pdf and .xls/.xlsx/.ods);

- Document 4 – Annex 5 – Pitch-deck (provided in .pdf).

**Document 1, Sections 1 – 3, is covered by page limit of 30 pages in total.** If you upload a proposal longer than 30 pages before the cut-off date, you will receive an automatic warning and will be advised to shorten and re-upload the proposal. After the call cut-off date, excess pages will be automatically made invisible and will not be taken into consideration. **Please do not consider the page limit as a target!** It is in your interest to keep your text as concise as possible, since experts rarely view unnecessarily long proposals in a positive light.

Please respect the following formatting constraints: Times New Roman, Arial or similar, at least font size 11, page size A4, margins (2.0 cm side and 1.5 cm top and bottom), at least single line spacing.

Further guidance is available in the Guide for Applicants.

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# GENERAL TIPS

**Make sure that the proposal fits the concept of the EIC Accelerator**

The evaluator is looking for an **excellent** company – focus also on the **team**; the company's and/or founder's track record, **strategy**, potential and its ability to **scale up**.

**Think about the evaluators as investors**.

**Tell a story**

A good proposal should aim for **pleasant reading**; Let the evaluator have a good time reading your proposal as a continuously interesting **and consistent story**, clear, fluent, accessible, appealing.

Review and polish the language; avoid repetitions.

**Make it visually attractive**

Use **appealing acronyms**, **pictures, graphics** and **diagrams** to describe processes; market segmentation; emphasise your strong points. Maintain **font type and size**, margins and numbering of chapters and sections, add links where necessary (evaluators are not obliged to look at links).

**A good proposal is to the point**

Be **coherent** in proposal and its goals; make sure to be **concise** (and not general or theoretical). For example, be evidence-based (POCs), verifiable, realistic (e.g. fitting info on company website). Substantiate information with links in footnotes – make sure, however, that links only contain additional details. All relevant information belongs in the proposal.

Ask the 'Why' question when declaring a statement. For instance: Why do costumers want to pay for this product?

**Use EIC Accelerator  key-words and phrases**

▸ Provide a clear description of the TRL of the product and activities.

▸ Measure in **Euro** and use words such as**:**

→ **Market creating** innovation
→ **Disruptive**, groundbreaking
→ For the first time…
→ **Scale-up,** growth (in Europe and globally)
→ **High-risk** and high potential
→ **Non-bankable**
→ Value proposition
→ Selling points

**Reviewing the proposals**

Before submitting, let others read and comment on your proposal. Choose people who are not from your field of expertise and make sure that the proposal is easily understood.
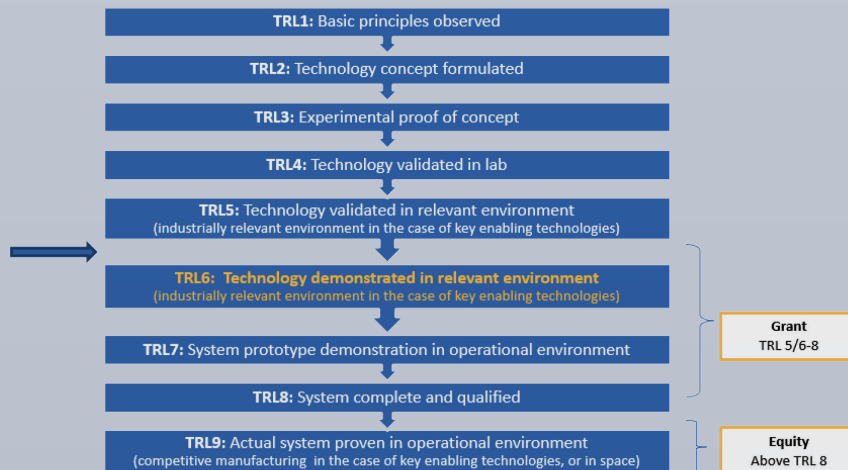
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## The new EIC pilot

This programme provides support in the form of a grant only or blended finance (combining grant and equity).

Proposers applying for a grant only have the option to give "consent" to the European Commission to receive a "counteroffer". The Commission may make a counteroffer if the evaluators conclude that there are activities above TRL 8 in the proposal; they would then provide the requested amount of grant funding in the form of blended finance. In addition, the Commission also has the flexibility in duly justified cases to propose an amount of equity even if not requested at the time of submission, should they consider it necessary for the successful implementation of the project.

In order to request a grant with consent, the applicant must click the "consent" box in Part A section 5, call specific questions, of the application form.

Detailed information about the TRL level is requested. Activities **above TRL 8** can only be funded as **equity** through blended finance option. The **grant** component will only apply to activities with a **TRL of 5/6 to 8**.



**TRL1:** Basic principles observed
**TRL2:** Technology concept formulated
**TRL3:** Experimental proof of concept
**TRL4:** Technology validated in lab
**TRL5:** Technology validated in relevant environment (industrially relevant environment in the case of key enabling technologies)
**TRL6:** Technology demonstrated in relevant environment (industrially relevant environment in the case of key enabling technologies)
**TRL7:** System prototype demonstration in operational environment
**TRL8:** System complete and qualified
**TRL9:** Actual system proven in operational environment (competitive manufacturing in the case of key enabling technologies, or in space)

**Grant** TRL 5/6-8

**Equity** Above TRL 8

**Definition of non-bankability:** "The inability to attract sufficient funding" due to a high risk level or market failure. For example: No revenues and no assets at all / Not enough assets to be able to generate revenues / Not yet profitable commercial activities / Not yet attractive to (other) investors.

You should refer in your proposal to the term **'non-bankability'** - Evidence that the applicant company **cannot leverage enough investments** from the market. This applies to applicant companies requesting **blended finance** support, a grant only or a grant with consent. More information on bankability can be found in the Frequently Asked Questions section (FAQs "Section L – Bankability") dedicated to non-bankability.

**Definition of scalability:** The company has clearly **quantified the funding needs** (equity, debts) to achieve successful **market deployment** and **scale-up** within the associated timing.

Scalability is relevant and must be reflected in the proposal (Impact – commercialisation strategy/scale-up potential; Implementation - financing needs) and Annex 4.

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Eligible applicants are for-profit SMEs, including start-ups and early stage companies, from any sector with a typically strong intellectual property component. Blended finance support aims to address high-risk projects that are not yet attractive for market players. The EIC Fund will usually invest in companies with no (or very limited) turnover and negative EBITDA. Growth-stage companies are not within the focus of this pilot phase.

**Keywords**

Applicants can choose up to three keywords and up to three sub-keywords. On this basis, submissions are sent to the remote evaluators. Make sure to select relevant keywords, which may be cross-sector, if needed.

**Further reading**

Information on the specific challenges, scope and description of the call, as well as links for proposal submission and additional documents can be found on the EIC Accelerator topic page. It is strongly recommended to read the Guide for Applicants, Work Programme, Investment guidelines and FAQs.

# INTRODUCTION

▸ The Introduction page should give a rapid understanding of the innovation and put it in context; use it wisely.

▸ Take time to think about a good ACRONYM – You will talk about it – so keep it pronounceable, short and catchy. Explain acronyms or initialisms on first occurrence. Make sure it does not have a 'double meaning' in English.

▸ If you use many abbreviations, consider adding an index table. Better try to avoid using too many abbreviations, as this will force the reader to go back to the abbreviation index every time.

## BASIC INFORMATION

▸ **Title of proposal:**

▸ **Acronym of proposal:**

▸ **Details of applicant:**

| Name of the entity | |
|---|---|
| Country | |
| Creation date (if applicable) | |
| Type of entity | |

▸ **Company Description:** Please provide a short description of the company, relevant products, services or other achievements (which may include previous projects or activities connected to the subject of the proposal), and significant infrastructure and/or any major items of technical equipment relevant to the proposed work (200 words).

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## SUMMARY

**Describe your innovation in no more than 200 words, avoiding jargon or technical language.**

**Briefly explain, in no more than 200 words, how your innovation relates to the overall strategy of your company.**

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# WRITE IT AS A PITCH (1 PAGE MAXIMUM)

**Keep it short and simple!** Leave out redundant content and focus on the core message. Any layperson who reads your description and summary should clearly understand who you are and what your company does, what you aim to sell, what the objectives of the proposed project are, and how you are going to measure success.

**Start with a bang!** Entice the evaluator to read on. What are the Unique Selling Points (USPs) of your company? What are you doing that nobody else is? Emphasise your strong parts! Push hard whatever makes you stand out. Answer the question "why you and not someone else?"

**Problem, solution & opportunity** should be the essence of your summary – what problem does the project solve, how does the project solve it and what is the market for this solution. This part should also include your **value proposition** and your Unique Selling Points. Who are the clients, their willingness to pay, and what is the market size (with a European and global dimension angle), the competition and your competitive advantage, the pricing model and the go-to market strategy.

Structural suggestion for the Summary: *problem – solution – competitive advantage – company strategy – customers – market size – business model and commercialisation– key partnerships*

**Be clear on your capital needs:** Which amount is required to get you to the next milestones, and what are those milestones?

**Prove credibility of the company**; perhaps referring to 'letters of intent' from European and global partners. Demonstrate high probability of successful commercialisation and ascertain trustworthiness of the company. Describe the team in short but powerful sentences.

**Highlight relevant achievements and experience**: projects, products, money raising, awards, grants, appearances in the media, conferences, participation in accelerators, publications, members of advisory board, equipment, infrastructure, etc.

**Strong knowledge of your sector:** Collect as much information about your sector as possible. Show that you are an expert in the room when it comes to your industry - even if the evaluators have invested in similar sectors it is your job to educate and inform, giving them as much information as they need to help them reach a decision.

You may include a very **brief financial summary**. Main KPIs, such as revenue, EBITDA, number of employees (provide some financial information, such as the company's valuation, history and future of revenue, cash, expenses and losses/profits). This will help the investors get an idea of what return they can expect (but the summary does not need to outline your entire business plan).

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# SECTION 1 – EXCELLENCE

▸ In this section you are requested to present your technology and innovation. Make sure that the innovative aspect of your project is clear. You need to convince the evaluators that your innovation is **excellent**, that your product, process or service or business model is **disruptive** in the market(s) of interest, and that it has the **potential to change** the dynamic of the market and possibly to address a **societal challenge**.

▸ Know the difference between innovation and disruption – disruptors are innovators, but not all innovators are disruptors. While innovation and disruption are similar in the sense that they are both 'makers and builders', disruption differs by the fact that it displaces an existing market, industry or technology, and produces something new, more efficient and worthwhile. It is at once disruptive and creative.

▸ Try not to be too technical. The evaluator might not be from your exact field, and too many technical terms might distract them.

▸ **Idea and solution:** Describe your innovation in detail, what are the objectives and what are the challenges or problems – business, technological or societal (climate change, environment, gender dimension, etc.) - that you seek to address by bringing your innovation to market.

▸ Discuss the product - technology and innovation (proven results) and how they address the **unmet needs** and **pain points** (as a solution). What is the problem and how do you solve it?

▸ Show that your solution is a "**must have**" and not a "nice to have". Show how your product is innovative but also how the usage of it is innovative.

▸ Know and address the **European Union's challenges and policies** – meeting more than one challenge is great. Adding references to these challenges can help, but do not oblige the reader to perform additional reading outside the proposal. Know the United Nation's 17 sustainable development goals.

▸ If you are developing a platform, show its **overall potential** to disrupt the market, not only in your current application. Demonstrate the potential use of the platform for other applications and the current stage of development (TRL) of those other applications (perhaps there will be further applications in the future).

▸ **Innovativeness:** How is your innovation better or significantly different than other existing alternatives? Why is the timing right for your innovation?

**High-risk/high-potential innovation idea** that has something that nobody else has. It should be better and/or significantly different to any alternative. **Game-changing** ideas or breakthrough innovations are particularly sought after.

Its **high degree of novelty** comes with a high chance of either success or failure.

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- ▸ What differentiates you from your **competitors** or **substitute solutions** regarding **features and traits**? Why should the customers switch to your solution?

- ▸ Make sure not to compare companies (will be detailed in the Impact session) but rather alternative technologies/products/approaches.

- ▸ Perhaps add a diagram that presents the competitive landscape and your USP (Unique Selling Points).

- ▸ What do you do that has never been done before – why was it not done before and why can you do it now? What is the **window of opportunity** you want to exploit? Clearly explain your competitive edge, for instance: Providing a new solution or improving what is now in the market.

**Highly innovative solution that goes beyond the state of the art** in comparison with existing or competing solutions, including based on costs, ease of use and other relevant features as well as issues related to climate change or the environment, the gender dimension, any other benefits for society.

- ▸ Further information on climate action and sustainable development can be found in the H2020 online manual.

- ▸ **Stage of development:** Describe the current stage of development (you may refer to Technology Readiness Levels), including the activities and results achieved so far.  What are the steps planned to take this innovation to the market?

Realistic description of **current stage of development** (at least TRL 6, or something analogous for non-technological innovations), and clear outline **of steps planned to take this innovation to market**.

- ▸ You need to explain and prove that you have reached **TRL 5/6** – '**Technology demonstrated in relevant environment'**. Then provide an explanation and demonstrate how you would obtain **TRL 8** – '**System complete and qualified'**.

- ▸ You may include results from early field trials, prototype development, reference site installations, etc.

- ▸ If your solution includes different parts with different TRL levels, you should present the relevant key parts and how you plan to make them an integral part of the final product/ technology/ business model.

- ▸ You should also state clearly how **TRL9** – '**Actual system proven in operational environment'** will be achieved; whether it will be obtained through the **EIC Fund or via other funds**. If you do not request blended financing, indicate how you will finance the additional steps towards commercialisation and how you will make sure that the reviewers trust your plan (show credibility, action steps, previous achievements in raising money, etc.).

- ▸ You can add a timeline that shows the development over the last years and predicts the project's progress as well as the date (in general) for market entry – which should be around the end of the EIC Accelerator project.

- ▸ The TRL definitions can be found here.

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▶ What is the technological, practical and economic feasibility and what are the risks faced when bringing your innovation to market?

**Very good understanding of both risks and opportunities** related to successful market introduction of the innovation from both technical and commercial points of view. Documentation on the **technological, practical and economic feasibility of the innovation.**

*The 'feasibility' aspect is particularly examined in Step 2 of the evaluation of the proposals ('face to face interview').*

**Objectives for the innovation proposal** as well as the **approach and activities** to be developed are **consistent with the expected impact** (i.e. commercialisation or deployment resulting in company growth). Appropriate definition provided of specifications for outcome of project and criteria for success.

▶ Explain and prove **feasibility** (technological, practical, and economic) and **risk management** regarding market introduction, for example:

→ Explain how your solution or product solves the stated problem and avails of the **business opportunity**.
→ Identify and explain the **market size** and the first and secondary market application.
→ List **key stakeholders** for the implementation of the project.
→ Finalise the **business model**.
→ **Non-Bankability** and insufficient/prior financial track record.

▶ If you had a successful SME Instrument Phase 1 or 2 project, and/or a national equivalent, refer to the results of its feasibility.

▶ Add a risk assessment, for instance in form of a table, comprising the technical risks of the project and product as well as the company's **counteractions to the risks**.

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# SECTION 2 – IMPACT

This is not a research programme. Make sure that the proposal is **business oriented** and focuses on the **market potential** of your innovation.

▶ **Market and customers:** Describe your assessment of the potential market for your innovation (including conditions and growth rate) and the potential customers or users. What is your unique selling point and key differentiation from competitors?

Convincing description of **targeted users or customers** of the innovation, how their needs have been addressed, why the users or customers identified will want to use or buy the product, service or business model, including compared to what is currently available if anything at all.

▶ What is the market in terms of **type** (e.g. niche, high volume, new/mature) and **size** (e.g volume, value, geographical scope)? Quantify numbers, give examples.

▶ Identify and prioritise **user needs** and detail user profile(s). Furthermore, identify and quantify **client segments** - show the segmentation of the market and customers, who you will turn to first (target groups), what are your chances of success, what are their market shares.

▶ Demonstrate the market need and show thorough knowledge about your market. Provide arguments for how your solution addresses these **market needs.**

▶ Explain why the customers will be **willing to pay** for your product, given its competitive advantage. If you already have **market connections or relationships** with potential **customers/distributors**, show it by adding (as annexes, and reference here) letters of intent, memorandums of understanding, even contracts/agreements.

▶ If you already have **paying customers**, do not forget to mention this – this might be one of the most important factors in the evaluation.

▶ Appropriate use of **graphical elements** is recommended.

Convincing specification of the potential to create new markets or create market disruption together with a convincing specification of the **substantial demand** (including willingness to pay) for the innovation.

Total **market size** envisaged.

▶ Research the **global marketplace**. Do not narrow your research to a few national markets, if possible. Avoid talking only about your own country, even if it is a large market. Demonstrating international expansion is crucial, yet **remember the European market**.

▶ Note that a market-sizing exercise needs to be performed bottom-up and not top-down. Keep in mind that your **total addressable market** (**TAM**) is only a subset of the overall industry market and can often be only a fraction of it.

▶ Prioritise your markets – which international markets would be **targeted first**? Consider how you will **communicate** with buyers.

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Realistic and relevant analysis of **market conditions and growth-rate**, competitors and competitive offerings, key stakeholders, clear identification of opportunities for market introduction, market creation or disruption (e.g. via new value-chains).

▸ Make sure to include **an in-depth competitor analysis**. Show that you know your competitors (as well as your competitive advantage – why you are better than them).

▸ The statement "we have no competition" is never true – do not forget that indirect competitors are also relevant. Any product that competes with you for the client's money/attention is a competitor. Point out how you are better (for example: price, product size, market experience, innovative and new product, etc.)

▸ Create a table comparing **key qualities and performances** of competing features, including your solution.

▸ You may use any graphical element to illustrate your competitor analysis.

▸ Explain the **market conditions, the current trends**, and the evolution of the competition.

▸ **Commercialisation strategy:** Describe your strategy for commercialisation, including regulatory approvals/ compliance needed, time to market/deployment, and revenue model.

Realistic and relevant **strategic plan for commercialisation**, including approximate time-to-market or deployment. Activities to be undertaken after the project.

*The 'commercial strategy' aspect is particularly examined in Step 2 of the evaluation of proposals.*

**Alignment of proposal with overall strategy of applicant SME (or SMEs)** and commitment of the **team** behind them. Demonstration of need for commercial and management experience, including understanding of the financial and organisational requirements for **commercial exploitation** as well as key third parties needed.

▸ Explain your **revenue model** (**BM - business model, PM - pricing model, RM - revenue model**). Do you sell your product? Do you provide it for free but make money from advertising and/or for selling data you have gathered? If you do not sell directly to end users, do you intend to use licensing or other business models? Are post-sale services a money-making element, too? Is your revenue model based on SaaS, licensing fees or other?

▸ If relevant, what post-sale assistance services will be required?

▸ You may also include a business model canvas/lean canvas.

▸ Provide a good description of how this proposal is aligned with and fits the **overall strategy of your company** – is it congruent with the ambition and vision/mission of the company?

▸ How is the **team commitment** in line with the strategy and ambition of the company?

▸ **External Strategic Partners**: Identify the key partners required to develop and commercialise your innovation, what their roles/competences are, and to what extent they are already committed and incentivised.

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- Identify the **key events** in your target market where you will showcase your product/service.

- Specify the **communication means** to promote the project and its results during the time span of the project (for instance – company website, participation in conferences and international events …).

- Consider different audiences in your communication strategy.

- Have a clear **marketing message** for each target audience.

- What are the **barriers** to entry and how are you going to overcome them? Types of barriers to market entry could be capital costs, economies of scale, legal barriers, vertical integration, predatory pricing, etc.

- You may use the Access2EIC toolbox, which contains a business-plan generator, a value proposition tool, a business model check tool and a competitive analysis tool.

- **Green Deal (May 2020 cut-off only)**: Describe the contribution to the Green Deal implementation in terms of delivery of at least one of the sustainability goals. How will your proposal impact the sustainability goal(s)? How do you quantify this contribution? (Explain the methodology you use). Provide evidence in support of the computation(s).

This question refers to the May 2020 Green Deal only.

- **Intellectual property:** Specify your Intellectual Property Rights in relation to your innovation. What are the key assumptions and what measures are needed to ensure freedom to operate (e.g. IP, etc.)?

Evidence of or realistic measures to ensure **'freedom to operate'** (i.e., possibility of commercial exploitation), convincing **knowledge-protection strategy**, including current IPR filing status, IPR ownership and licensing issues. **Regulatory and/or standards requirements** addressed.

- Describe your **IP strategy**, including the intellectual property **assets** related to the innovation, **knowledge management** and measures taken to protect the assets and ensure **freedom to operate**.

- What are the **main intellectual property assets** related to the company's products, services and/or technologies? (i.e. patents, designs, trademarks, copyrighted material, trade secrets, knowhow, etc.)

- How are the company's IP assets protected? Enclose the list of assets, including **status for registration** and other measures taken to ensure their protection, and including information management and contracts (i.e. employment, technology licensing, collaboration agreements, NDA's, etc.)

- What **measures** have been taken to ensure **freedom to operate** for the company? Enclose the results of the FTO analysis, including the sources and conclusions. Comment on existing patents and/or regulatory issues that may limit the company's ability to develop and commercialise the technology, products or services.

- What is the company's IP strategy? Elaborate on how IP will be developed and managed during the lifetime of the project funded by the EIC Accelerator and beyond.

You can use the open source tools: European Patent Office, World Intellectual Property Organization, Google patents

Or address the IPR helpdesk for SMEs in the EC.

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Realistic and relevant description of how the innovation has the **potential to scale-up the applicant company (or).** This should be underpinned by a convincing business plan with a clear timeline, and complemented, where possible, by a track-record that includes financial data. (following the cut-off of 5 June 2019: including financial needs to ensure the company's success)

*The 'potential to scale-up' aspect and associated financial needs are particularly examined in Step 2.*

▸ This part should focus specifically on scaling and there is no need to repeat what was written earlier.

▸ **Scale-up potential:** Describe how you intend to scale up your innovation, including the potential to **develop new markets,** and what the **impact** of the innovation on the growth of the company will be.

▸ In how many countries do you already have presence with **clients/ distributors/ staff/offices/production facilities**?

▸ Are you commercialising with your own **sale force/ distributors/ partners**?

▸ Consider using different commercial channels for the different **geographical areas** in order to accelerate market penetration. You may need to have a separate approach per market segment/country.

▸ Know the different countries' export **regulations and licensing laws**. Do not forget about foreign import regulations. Get export counselling.

▸ Should there be a need to localise the product – make sure to explain how it will be changed to meet local conditions.

▸ If the company is planning to **increase** their company's **personnel** during the project, provide a detailed explanation - why it is necessary, the number of added employees, their specific position and value to the project.

▸ As part of the EIC Accelerator pilot, the company must submit Annex 4 – financial details. We recommend adding a short description or table regarding the specific financial projections for the project.

▸ **Key Performance Indicators:** Provide a list of KPIs for the expected outcomes and the related success criteria for the innovation (i.e. the technological, practical, economic, market), indicating the current values and the target values at specified dates (breakeven point, etc.).

▸ How to measure success and performance = Key Performance Indicator (**KPI**). A good KPI should act as a compass, helping you and your team to see whether you are on the right path towards your strategic goals. KPIs should be quantifiable. Use the KPI's as a focus point for the entire proposal.

▸ **The anatomy of a structured KPI includes:**

→ **A measure** – Every KPI must have a measure. The best KPIs include a number of expressive measures.

→ **A target** – Every KPI needs a target that matches your measure and the time period envisaged for reaching your goal. It is generally a numeric value you are seeking to achieve.

→ **A data source** – Every KPI needs a clearly defined data source to ensure that there is no grey area in how everything is being measured and tracked.

→ **Reporting frequency** – Different KPIs may have different reporting needs, but a good rule to follow is to report on them at least monthly.

▸ Make sure relevant information appears in Annex 4 as well.

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▶ **Broader impact:** What will the broader societal, economic, environmental or climate impacts be if your innovation if successfully commercialised?

**European/global dimension** of innovation with respect to both commercialisation and assessment of competitors and competitive offerings.

▶ Make sure to expand on your **project's impact**. For example; how does it relate to **EU polices and studies**? How does it contribute to reach targets set by the European Commission? Does it solve **Societal Challenges**?  What and how is the positive impact on Europe?

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# SECTION 3 - IMPLEMENTATION

▶ ▶ **Team and capabilities:** Describe your team, the different roles, commitment and achievements/experience (strategic, technical and commercial) in relation to your innovation. Explain the role of the company's owner(s) if not part of the team. For each team member (including management and company founders where relevant) please provide relevant information, including shareholding and stock options in the company.

What are the main strengths and weaknesses of the team, and what is the plan to acquire currently missing competencies? How are the team members incentivized?

In addition, please provide a curriculum vitae for each member of the team in Annex 2.

| Team Member (Name and Surname) | Position | Department | Function/ key competences | Commitment (from 1-100 % where 100 % is full time, i.e. no other commitments/roles/responsibilities outside of the company). |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

**Technical/business experience of the team**, including management capacity to lead a growing team. If relevant, the proposal includes a plan to acquire missing competences, namely through partnerships and/or subcontracting*, and explains why and how they are selected (subcontractors must be selected using 'best value-for-money' principles).

*The 'team' aspect is particularly examined in Step 2 of the evaluation of Phase 2 proposals (interview in Brussels).*

▶ You will need to convince the evaluator that your company has the **operational capacity** and capability to **execute** the project at hand.

▶ The industry **experience of the management team** must be convincing. Make sure to show that you have relevant experience in all fields: technology, marketing, staffing, fundraising, etc.

▶ Properly present the **key people** in your management structure.

▶ Make sure to show the **commitment** of your team to the project and company (not only in the table above). If they are not committed 100%, explain why.

▶ Keep in mind that you will be required to provide further information on your company and its operational capacity in Annex 2.

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▸ **Financing needs:** estimate the total financial resources required, and timing of financial needs to develop your innovation and to reach the break-even point.

Please provide (1) a breakdown between the grant requested under the EIC pilot (up to 70% for innovation activities), (2) the equity investment requested under the EIC (Grant with consent applicants specially), and (3) remaining financing provided by other sources in Table 5 of Annex 4. Outline your plans to ensure the subsequent (post break-even point) financing of your innovation (next rounds, top-up financing, etc.). Please detail these elements in the cashflow section of Table 1 of Annex 4) and provide a brief explanation below.

| Equity (All applicants should fill in this section) |
| --- |
| Describe what the requested equity component will be used for and how much equity share the company plans to give in return. |
| Describe/comment how the valuation of the company has developed over time (e.g. financing rounds) and the rationale behind it - relevant metrics/milestones achieved from start to present. |
| Explain the company ownership and capital structure presented in Table 4 of Annex 4. If there are different classes of shares, describe why. |
| What exit strategy do you expect, including the timeline and expected return on investment? Explain the assumptions. |

▸ This section is relevant for companies which are asking for equity. Nonetheless, companies requesting grants, and especially those requesting a grant with consent, are also encouraged to fill in as much information as possible to give experts the best overview possible of the company in case they would like to make a counteroffer.

▸ You should explain **how much money you need, what it is for, and why you need it**. Do you have **investors** (existing or future ones)? Make a **realistic estimation**.

▸ When sizing your request, consider your company stage, the type of investor you are pitching to, investment terms, what you will be using the funds for, and the projected return on investment.

▸ **Need for EIC support:** explain why it is not possible for your company to raise the required financial resources from private investors or other sources, including a description of your company's track record and current efforts (to complement the information provided in Table 3 of Annex 4). What would the impact be if you do not receive financial support from the EIC pilot?

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# Access2EIC
National Contact Points for Innovation

Following the cut-off date of 5 June 2019 only: evidence that the applicant company **cannot leverage sufficient investments** from the market and or, particularly for applicant companies requesting blended finance support, evidence that the applicant company is **deemed 'non-bankable'** by the market, in view of the activities to be developed.

*The 'leveraging of investments' and 'bankability' aspects are particularly examined in Step 2 of the evaluation of Phase 2 proposals.*

▸ This section is extremely important as it will convince the evaluator of your proposal as a whole.

▸ Make sure to explain the funding you are asking for (**grant or blended**), as well as amounts. What is the justification for it? And **why now**?

▸ Make sure the budget amounts mentioned in Part B are consistent with the amounts mentioned in Part A, the work packages and in Annex 4.

▸ You should provide a specific explanation as to what would happen to your project if this proposal **were not funded**, all with respect to the EU dimension.

▸ Explain the issue of **non-bankability** regarding your proposal - de-risking and attracting investors through the support of the EIC.

▸ Provide a convincing explanation of why you have **not** been able to raise **sufficient** investment to carry out the project and why you need the support of the EIC.

▸ Clearly communicate the bankability status at the time of the application, as well as the expected point when the status will change and become bankable.

▸ Applicants should relate to **further financing rounds**. For example, if a company has investors for 80% of the stakes – how should further rounds work? How will the EIC Fund equity work?

▸ The main keys to determine future bankability are: willingness to pay, commercialisation plan, financial projections and operations management.

▸ Elaborate on how the EIC funding will **impact your scalability**.

▸ Companies submitting a grant-only proposal must provide detailed information on how they are planning to secure additional funds for TRL 9 activities and beyond.

▸ **Risks:** With reference to the risks previously identified, what measures do you intend to take to mitigate them?

▸ Show the evaluator that you have given it serious thought and that you have analysed and prepared for all the **risks**. Reflect the **mitigation measures** in your task action plan.

▸ When preparing your risk assessment, indicate the relevant work package for the specific risk.

▸ Bear in mind that there can be different types of risks. For example: technological, financial, team, market, etc.

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▶ **Approach:** Based on the objectives and strategy set out in your proposal, please explain the overall structure, approach and timing of work packages and activities to be developed with the grant contribution. Provide Gantt chart or similar.

▶ Add a **Gantt chart** that specifies your work packages and their timelines.

▶ Try not to indicate a specific date or month (since you do not know when you will sign your GA). Instead count the months in numbers (month 1, month 2).

▶ Give each WP a **title and segment** it to the different tasks. Add **milestones**.

▶ **Try not to combine equity and grant in the same work package**. Make sure to indicate specifically whether a budget is requested in the form of grant or equity.

▶ The budget indicated in the work packages table of Part B of the proposal should show the total costs for each activity. The total cost for grants should be the same as the total cost shown in column J of the budget table in Section 3 Part A. The total equity amount should be equal to the amount indicated in Section 5 of Part A.

▶ There are typically between 4-6 work packages in an EIC Accelerator proposal, **it is recommended to refer to 5 WP.**

▶ Fill in a summary table of the project below (including TRL 9 / market deployment activities covered by EU investment in equity up to break-even point). We recommend including not more than 5 Work Packages and only essential deliverables (ideally one deliverable per Work Package).

| Work Package (number and title) | Start month | End month | Deliverable (number and title) | Milestone (description and date) – if applicable | Person months | Indicative budget | Indicate if requesting financing by grant or equity investment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Work package** means a major sub-division of the proposed project.

**Deliverable** means a distinct output of the project, meaningful in terms of the project's overall objective. It can be a report, a document, a technical diagram, a piece of software etc.

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**Milestones** are control points to help to chart your progress. Milestones may correspond to the completion of a key deliverable. They may also correspond to other inputs, allowing the next phase to begin, to decide on further steps or to take corrective measures.

▸ Please provide a brief description of each Work Package including main deliverables (not more than half a page):

| Work package number | |
|---|---|
| Work package title | |

| Start month | | End month | |
|---|---|---|---|

| Person months | |
|---|---|
| Budget | |
| Indicate if requesting financing by grant or equity investment | |

**WP description** (You should provide enough detail to justify the proposed resources and also quantified information so that progress can be monitored, including by the Commission):

**Description of tasks:**

**List of deliverables** (only the ones presented in the summary table above)

| Number | Deliverable name | Type | Dissemination level | Delivery date (in months from the project start) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

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**KEY:** *Deliverable numbers in order of delivery dates. Please use the numbering convention <WP number>.<number of deliverable within that WP>.*

**Type:** *Use one of the following codes:*

→ R:  Document, report (excluding the periodic and final reports)
→ DEM:      Demonstrator, pilot, prototype, plan designs
→ DEC:      Websites, patents filing, press & media actions, videos, etc.
→ OTHER: Software, technical diagram, etc.

**Dissemination level:** *Use one of the following codes:*

PU = Public, fully open, e.g. web
CO = Confidential, restricted under conditions set out in Model Grant Agreement
CI =  Classified, information as referred to in Commission Decision 2001/844/EC.

**Realistic timeframe and comprehensive description of implementation** (work-packages, major deliverables and milestones, risk management) taking the company's or applicant's innovation ambitions and objectives into account.

## OVERALL ON THE WP

▶ Provide a **realistic** timeframe.

▶ Give **full details**. Base your account on the logical structure of the project and the stages in which it is to be carried out.

▶ The number of work packages should be **proportionate** to the scale and complexity of the project. Make sure the activities in the work packages **match** the rest of the proposal.

▶ Include details of the **resources** to be allocated to each work package - they should be in line with their **objectives and deliverables**.

▶ WP descriptions need to match your (current) TRL 5/6 status and demonstrate TRL increase.

▶ Give enough information at task level to fully understand what you are aiming to do.

▶ Make sure the information about **subcontractors** is also included in the relevant WP.

**Resources**

▶ What are the resources, equipment and facilities required for the project and how you will access them?

▶ Please complete the table below only if the sum of the costs for 'travel', 'equipment' and 'goods and services' exceeds 15% of the personnel costs (according to the budget table in section 3 of the proposal administrative forms).

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| | Cost (€) | Justification |
|---|---|---|
| Travel | | |
| Equipment | | |
| Other goods and services | | |
| Total | | |

**Availability of resources required** (personnel, facilities, networks, etc.) to develop project activities in the most suitable conditions.

Where relevant, realistic description of how key stakeholders / partners / subcontractors could be involved (subcontractors must be selected using 'best value-for-money' principles).

▸ Describe the **resources** that are available to the company – the facilities, manpower.

▸ If your company is working on other projects/products in parallel, make sure to show that the one at hand has ample resources devoted to it.

▸ Make sure to add **subcontracting** to your **costs**, if relevant.

▸ Please complete the following table (or simply state "No third parties involved", if applicable):

| Do you plan to subcontract any tasks?<br><br>*If yes, describe and justify the tasks to be subcontracted and the amount. Explain the measures to comply with the best value for money principle. Please be aware of the page limitation – if needed, add more details in Annex 3.* | ○ **Yes**  ○ **No** | |
|---|---|---|
| **Task(s)** | **Estimated amount** | **Measures to comply with best value for money (eg. criteria used for the selection of the subcontractors)** |
| | | |
| | | |
| Will any of your linked third parties work in the action tasks?<br><br>*If yes, describe the third party, the link of the participant to the third party, and describe and justify the planned tasks to be performed by the third party.* | ○ Yes  ○ No | |
| Will you use contributions in kind provided by third parties?<br><br>*If yes, describe the third party's contributions.* | ○ Yes  ○ No | |

*\*subcontracting is acceptable to the extent required for the implementation of the proposed activities.*

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Subcontracting may be an essential part of the implementation of the project but should not be a disproportionate part of the total estimated eligible costs. Subcontractors must be selected using 'best value- for- money' principles.

## ASSESSMENT OF THE 'BEST VALUE FOR MONEY'

▸ Experts assess the 'best value for money' of subcontracts during the evaluation of the proposal.

▸ For this, subcontracts must be described in **enough detail**.

▸ If you know the subcontractor, include **key information** on the subcontract in the proposal (name of subcontractor, price and task), together with the action task(s) to be subcontracted and an explanation on how the subcontractor and the price are **appropriate**.

▸ If you do not know the subcontractor, your proposal should set out the task(s) to be subcontracted, the estimated budget and the procedure you will follow to ensure the best value for money. Normally, this option is to be used when you have yet not selected a subcontractor for a task.

▸ If the SME uses a subcontractor, they must convince and elaborate on the **contracting procedure**, including the **process of selection**, **credibility** and relevant **characteristics** of the **tender.**

# ANNEXES

⚠️ *Annexes are not covered by the page limit*

Provided as 3 separate documents (preferably in machine-readable format).

▸ Document 2 – Annex 1 – 3 (provided in as single .pdf ):

  ➔ Annex 1 - Security and Ethics;

  ➔ Annex 2 - CVs ;

  ➔ Annex 3  - Others;

▸ Document 3  - Annex 4 - Financial and corporate information Excel file (provided as .pdf and .xls/.xlsx/.ods);

▸ Document 4 – Annex 5 - Pitch-deck (provided in .pdf ).

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## ANNEX 1. SECURITY AND ETHICS (PART OF DOCUMENT 2)

## SECURITY

> **Do not skip this part** - if security is not relevant, briefly explain why this is the case.

Please indicate if your project will involve:

▶ Activities or results raising security issues: ○ Yes ○ No

▶ EU-classified information' as background or results: ○ Yes ○ No

## ETHICS

> ▶ **Do not skip this part** - if ethics are not relevant, briefly explain why this is the case.
>
> ▶ Examples of activities that may raise ethical issues as well as further information on ethics and research integrity can be found under **Article 34** of the H2020 Annotated Model Grant Agreement
>
> ▶ (see link - page 269); should you be processing personal data (such as e-mail addresses or IP addresses, for example), also see **Article 39** on 'Processing of personal data' (see link - page 285).

⚠️ *For more guidance, see the* [document "How to complete your ethics self-assessment"](#)

If you have entered any ethics issues in the ethical issue table in the administrative proposal forms, you must:

▶ submit an ethics self-assessment, which:

→ describes how the proposal meets the national legal and ethical requirements of the country or countries where the tasks raising ethical issues are to be carried out;

→ explains in detail how you intend to address the issues in the ethical issues table, in particular as regards:

‣ research objectives (e.g. study of vulnerable populations, dual use, etc.)

‣ research methodology (e.g. clinical trials, involvement of children and related consent procedures, protection of any data collected, etc.)

‣ the potential impact of the research (e.g. dual use issues, environmental damage, stigmatization of particular social groups, political or financial retaliation, benefit-sharing, misuse, etc.).

▶ provide the documents that you need under national law (if you already have them), e.g.:

→ an ethics committee opinion;

→ the document notifying activities raising ethical issues or authorizing such activities.

⚠️ *If these documents are not in English, you must also submit an English summary of them (containing, if available, the conclusions of the committee or authority concerned).*

⚠️ *If you plan to request these documents specifically for the project you are proposing, your request must contain an explicit reference to the project title.*

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# ANNEX 2. CVS (PART OF DOCUMENT 2)

Provide resumes of team members.

> ▸ This is where you add CV's of the **main employees and key partners** involved in the project.
>
> ▸ CV's are an essential part in determining **commitment** as well as the team's **technical management, business capabilities and experience**.

# ANNEX 3. OTHERS (PART OF DOCUMENT 2)

This Annex is optional. Provide letters of intent from key commercial / strategic partners if available, and / or justification of the best value for money for subcontracting.

> ▸ It is highly recommended to provide **letters of intent**. Make sure there is a **reference** to these documents in the proposal.
>
> ▸ LOI's / MOU's are used to review and determined the **feasibility** of the timeline of the project, communication success, leads and prospects.

# ANNEX 4. FINANCIAL AND CORPORATE INFORMATION (DOCUMENT 3)

Please provide in Annex 4 a completed Excel template (as a separate.pdf and .xls/.xlsx/.ods):

▸ Simplified financial information on your revenues, expenditures, cash flow and balance sheet (Table 1 of Annex 4), and;

▸ Up-to-date financial data relating to cash and debt (Table 2 of Annex 4);

▸ Summary information about major financing events for your company (Table 3 of Annex 4); you may include information on earlier years if you consider relevant;

▸ Summary information on company ownership and capital structure (Table 4 of Annex 4);

▸ Information about your current financing round (Table 5 of Annex 4).

## GENERAL TIPS

> ▸ The purpose of Annex 4 is to give an **overview of the company's development** regarding profit and loss, cashflows and balance sheet.
>
> ▸ Make sure all the information in Annex 4 is as **complete as possible** according to the availability of information. All figures must be in accordance with the rules given in the application form. Untidy and inconsistent information leaves a negative impression.
>
> ▸ Make sure all data is **consistent** with the information provided in the proposal (business model, finance information and timeline).
>
> ▸ All prognoses must be as **realistic** as possible while at the same time showing the company's potential for growth. Stretch goals (ambitious goals) are good. It is important to show that the company's burn rate and

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capital infusions are well planned in order to provide a **stable operation** (i.e. not running of cash).

▶ If your company does not have financial expertise in-house it could be wise to use a CPA. Make sure that the CPA has thorough knowledge of the Horizon 2020 rules.

▶ If you choose to use an external CPA, make sure that you are familiar with the numbers and their meaning (i.e. the company must still "own their numbers" and be able to explain them if asked).

▶ Under 'business metrics and ratios', illustrate the **need for cash**.

▶ If you apply for blended, show how funds will be used on TRL level 5/6-9 (equity primarily on TRL 9 activities).

▶ For further information see link to Access2EIC toolbox

## TABLE 1: P&L

▶ **Debt**: Amount of debt raised and payment profile.

▶ **R&D expenses** are needed to develop the company. They may be capitalised or presented as direct cost. If, as a result, the figures could imply that your company is in a financial crisis, you need to explain why this is not true (i.e. if the company had capitalised the cost, this would result in lower cost and higher result, hence positive effect equity). This topic should be discussed with your CPA.

## TABLE 2: COMPANY UP-TO-DATE FINANCIAL DATA

▶ Provide the best and most recent data possible.

## TABLE 3 AND 4: COMPANY FINANCING HISTORY AND OWNERSHIP STRUCTURE

▶ Tidy cap table is good.

▶ Make sure the entrepreneurs/owners or principals have a significant stake in the project/company (**skin in the game**).

▶ Is the company too dependent on public financing?

▶ Insert relevant comments, if needed

▶ Why is your company/project **non-bankable**? Take this into account under "Ownership structures and previous financing rounds" (table 3 and 4). Why is EU funding needed? Show that you are not a grant-entrepreneur.

## TABLE 5 CURRENT FINANCING ROUND

▶ Make necessary comments, if needed

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## ANNEX 5. PITCH DECK (DOCUMENT 4)

Provide a pitch deck presentation as a separate .pdf as Annex 5, which will also be used for the jury interview in the event that you are invited to the second step of the evaluation process.

Please note that the presentation in the interview will be limited to 10 minutes and it is not possible to update the pitch deck before the interview date.

The size of the file should not exceed 10MB.

## GENERAL TIPS

▸ The Pitch Deck provides a snapshot of important issues from the proposal. It can have an impact on the evaluation - since some evaluators look at it before going into detail with the proposal to get a first impression. It must **complement and confirm** what is written in the proposal.

▸ At the time of submission of the application, save the date of the interview week.

▸ Be at the interview site on time (or even early) and plan for possible delays.

It is recommended to take a look at the Evaluation Criteria in the Guide for applicants (page 16-17).

Please note that it is not possible to change the Pitch Deck before the interview.

▸ **Contact your NCP** for additional advice and support schemes.

## WRITING THE PITCH DECK AND YOUR STORY

▸ Have your audience in mind. These are not your fellow colleagues. Only **one of the jury members** reads through the entire proposal, the others base their judgment entirely on the proposal abstract (which all review before the interview), the briefing, and your presentation.

▸ Choose the most **outstanding** detail/ figure/ fact to begin with – in order to engage and "recruit" the audience right away. It is a good start to secure the audience's attention and curiosity within the first minutes.

▸ A good presentation should not be too wordy. Do not overburden the presentation, but instead highlight, focus on and emphasise the **key messages** and figures. Remember, the proposal cannot be conveyed in detail in 10 minutes, choose where to focus.

▸ There is a difference between a PowerPoint presentation and a handout. Do not design your presentation like a handout!

▸ The presentation should be **simple, clear, concise and cohesive**. It must be reader-friendly for non-experts also. Do not only design a presentation – the pitch must be a story that someone who hears it for the first time would be able to repeat and report about to someone else.

▸ Include only the **most important facts, numbers and diagrams** that "catch the eye" and are relevant to a specific part of the pitch (such as company growth, market opportunities, financial projections, known companies that will support or be part of the project). Do not use small fonts or a great amount of numbers.

▸ Make figures understandable, do unit calculations and pricing. **Balance between visual vs. text.**

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▶ If you want to show a video of your product (at the beginning or end), use one which is silent (some background music is ok) and which serves as a tool for you to give the audience a feel of the product. It is recommended to avoid a video that attracts more attention than you do. **Note**: Only videos sent in advance through the functional mailbox will be accepted and displayed during the interview. You may also bring a demonstrator or samples.

▶ **Scalability** - the company must convince that the project (as well as the company), has the ability to scale up. For instance, **show market traction, commercialisation strategy, potential strategic collaborations, realistic timeline**, etc.

▶ Remember that during the pitch you will have to **prove the need for the EIC fund**. If you have submitted a grant-only proposal, you must demonstrate your ability to **secure other resources** for the activities above TRL 8. If you have submitted a blended proposal, be sure to emphasise that the project is not appealing enough to attract sufficient funding ('**non-bankable**').

▶ Make sure the project is presented in a cost-effective way (be ready to defend your reasonable estimations). Show that you have interacted with your future customers and how their feedback affects your **business model** and your **product**.

▶ Show your project's **EU contribution** and its **social and environmental impact**.

▶ Balance between tech and business during the pitch: do not forget to explain the technological side but focus on the business model and the process of commercialisation. Explain the market segmentation, how you intend to **enlarge your market share** and the **scalability** of your commercial strategy.

▶ Other important aspects are related to the ability to properly demonstrate **market traction** through STRONG partners, pilots or any other means.

▶ If there are IP aspects in the project, you should be able to clearly explain their **scope** and **status**.

## PREPARING TO PRESENT THE PITCH

▶ Make a list of things you want to say.

▶ Check the consistence of the information you will present as you may be challenged on gaps/ inconsistencies.

▶ Timing is crucial: there is a timer during the interview which will not allow continuing after **exactly 10 minutes**. You will be interrupted – even in the middle of a sentence. **Practice** your presentation as much as possible to fit the timing; perhaps include half a minute buffer time to make sure you are within the limit. There will be a "time remaining" sign – make it part of your timing practice.

▶ Prepare in such a way that you will **speak naturally** during the pitch, do not read or do assisted reading from the PowerPoint slides.

▶ Film yourself while **rehearsing** and identify possible improvements this way. After recording the presentation, type and trim it in order to make it more effective. Use easy words and easy sentences. **Every word counts!**

▶ Pitch the presentation to outsiders unfamiliar with your project. Do this at least 2 or 3 times.

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- ▶ **Practice** presenting as a **team**: Who is the main speaker, who speaks when, where does everyone stand. When someone else speaks, do not take the attention away from them (do not move around or make hand gestures. Instead listen or nod). "Let the best driver drive ", but make sure that everyone has a role in the pitch and/or in the Q&A session.

- ▶ Sometimes the pitching room is small and crowded – be prepared for that.

- ▶ If you have a handy exhibit of your prototype, bring it with you and **demonstrate** it.

## DURING THE PITCH AND Q&A

- ▶ Describe your innovation in **simple words which are easy to understand for everyone**. Also, avoid detailed technical explanations and describe your product in view of its application ("putting products in real life situations").

- ▶ Pay attention to **body language** during the pitch and when responding to questions of the jury. Pay attention to the interaction between team members.

- ▶ Pitching is not acting: **Be yourself**, find your style, be emotional, have fun, have energy on stage. Use your voice – fit your voice to what you say.

**Be ready to answer questions about issues that you did not include in your presentation**. The questions' section is very important: even the best pitch cannot "save" you if you do not convince with your answers during the Q&A.

## THE TEAM

- ▶ Most recommended is a pitch team of **3 team members** (thus showing seriousness and commitment). The dynamics, synchronicity and interaction between the team members and their individual roles in the success of the project will be observed.

- ▶ The team members included in the pitch team should have **diverse experience** and roles (such as CEO, CFO or CTO). All team members should contribute their specific expertise. There should be more than one presenter.

- ▶ The jury will check **team cohesion, commitment** of all members and management skills of the CEO. If you have **key opinion leaders** on your advisory board, you can mention them (as they raise credibility and trust in your project and in this team to carry it out).

- ▶ The team should prove that it has the **capacity to execute the project** and make a successful, profitable business from your innovation, thanks to its qualifications, skills and experience. Mention relevant experience in the business sector (such as being a serial entrepreneur, leading other similar companies to successful marketing).

- ▶ If there are skills that the SME lacks, you should have a solution prepared, recruit the right person and ensure that this is solved to ensure smooth commercialisation.

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## THE JURY

▶ The jury members have **different professional backgrounds**, mostly business or investment oriented, but are not necessarily experts in the field of the company. You can find the list of all jury members here

▶ The mandate of the jury is to find the closest match between the most innovative companies and the next **unicorns** in Europe.

▶ The jury will want to verify the enthusiasm and motivation of the team – i.e. your "**skin in the game**": that you have invested a lot of time and money in your project, and that you are also taking a risk with it because you believe in it, that you are in control of the company.

▶ They will also seek to invest the public money in areas in which there are **market failures** or a changing sector.

▶ They will want to know about the **risks** and how the company is going to deal with them. But remember that they are looking for a **fundable company** (yet one that is, for now, 'non-bankable'); they want to see if there is a solid business model, a financial plan and a clear **commercialisation strategy**. Know your market and your costumers ("costumer intimacy").

▶ Since the jury does not have pre-defined questions, they can choose to ask for more details about any aspect of your project that seems unclear to them or on any issue of the written proposal that is hard to assess. Be ready for hard questions – "the devil is in the details". For example:

→ What will happen if you do not receive the **EIC funding**? Does the company have other investors? Why do you perceive yourself as 'non-bankable'?

→ Is there a solid business model, a financial plan and a clear commercialisation strategy? How can the business model be further developed?

→ What is the decision-making process in your company?

→ What is your **IP strategy** and protection? What regulatory issues are you dealing with?

→ Do you see any other application areas for your **technology**? Why have you decided not to address them now?

→ How do you stand out from the **competition**?

→ What are your long-term goals? How would you like to **globalise** the technology?

→ EU **added value** (for example: will the manufacturing be in Europe? What positive effect will it have on the European economy? Will the IP be kept in Europe?)

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# Access2EIC

National Contact Points for Innovation

## Access2EIC

**ACCESS2EIC** is a 16-months coordination and support action aimed to empower and facilitate transnational cooperation within the network of National Contact Points – NCPs focused on the Horizon 2020 European Innovation Council – EIC Pilot and the specific objective Access to Risk Finance – ARF. It involves a consortium made of formally appointed NCPs under 'Future and Emerging Technologies – FET', 'Innovation in SMEs – SME' and 'Access to Risk Finance – ARF' areas of Horizon 2020.

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