

# Towards a more business friendly

## HORIZON 2020

### Recommendations for the European Commission

#### **Increase the budget for research and innovation**

There should be a shift in the MFF towards increased funding for innovation and research, without raising the overall budget.

#### **Lower administrative burdens**

For businesses, and in particular SMEs, the files for the project proposals still represent a significant burden and can be a deterrent for applying.

#### **More user friendly project applications**

Despite reducing the burdens on SMEs, it is a concern that only by applying through consultants can SMEs hope to be successful; EU funds intended for research and innovation are instead spent on consultants' fees.

#### **Auditing on the basis of trust**

The error rate of H2020 audits is very low. Controls and auditing should be based on trust.

National auditing and accountancy systems should be recognised by the EU in order to avoid parallel systems and thus reducing administrative complexity.

#### **A stricter selection in the 2-step evaluation**

The success rate of H2020 is very low. Due to oversubscription and national cuts in research budgets.

Too many projects are allowed to write a full proposal after the first evaluation. This leads to frustration and demotivation to participate in EU programmes.

## **A mix of open and more descriptive calls.**

Open calls encourage a very wide group of candidates to apply for funding, triggering out of the box ideas (for example fast track to innovation) but lead to huge oversubscription. Specific calls look for solutions for a select a number of big but specific challenges.

## **More substantive feedback from the project assessment**

Sometimes applicants only get a few lines in their project evaluation. This is not a good basis to make the necessary changes for a new application.

Evaluators/experts should have more time to read the proposals and write a substantive report.

## **The possibility for evaluators to discuss their evaluation with other evaluators**

We currently see very different evaluations of the same project.  
Sometimes misunderstandings lead to the wrong evaluation.

## **A better valorisation of project results**

There should be a better connection between fundamental research and innovation.  
Companies and universities should decide early on, on how they will use the project results.

## **Better valorisation of the Seal of excellence at national level**

Although the Seal of Excellence is a good quality label, it is often hard to fund projects due to state-aid rules.

SME projects in H2020 often have multiple partners, with the Seal of Excellence it is harder to fund consortia through instruments such as the structural funds. Different governments, different priorities,...

