



HORIZON 2020



The Seal of Excellence

Carmen Madrid Gonzalez
RTD B5



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The Seal of Excellence is the high-quality label awarded to projects submitted to Horizon 2020 which were deemed to deserve funding but did not receive it due to budget limits. It recognises the value of the proposal and supports the search for alternative funding

LAUNCHED in 2015 – by Commissioners Moedas and Cretu

BASED ON *Declaration on Seal of excellence 2013/C 373/02 - 20.12.2013*

FOLLOWING POLITICAL MANDATE BY JUNCKER in 2014: Maximise **synergies!**

OBJECTIVE: **maximise quality, quantity & impact of every € spent on R&I, valorising good projects unfortunately unfunded to the benefit of possibly interested alternative funding sources, primarily MS/ regions**

CURRENTLY AWARDED TO SME INSTRUMENT, MSCA, TEAMING
(ERC PoC in preparation)

2021-2027: SEAL MENTIONED IN MFF REGULATION, Horizon Europe, Digital Europe, Single Market Programme, LIFE, Creative Europe, Space Programme, Defence Fund, CEF2, Rights & Values Programme, Euratom



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Commission's Support to the Seals of Excellence initiative for until now

Aim of the initiative: not only the number of Seals funded, but rather the mobilisation of **Managing Authorities recognising the value of the seal** and **better aware** of what Horizon is and how it works (translated in Seal support schemes)

TOOLS/ACTIONS to support and lead initiative to success

- Set up the **Community of Practice** to support setting up schemes
- **Explanatory note (SWD (2017)11) on State Aid / GBER & Seal for Smel**
- **Aggregated region-based information for MA provided on request**
- **Collecting** regularly **feedback** from MS/regions on set-up support schemes
- Promotion of the Seal to other **EU funding initiatives** i.e. EIPP, Access4 SMEs..
- **Seal Website** with info latest developments and Helpline
(<https://ec.europa.eu/research/soe/index.cfm>; #sealofexcellence)

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- High mobilisation around the initiative + increased awareness of MA on R&I FP

BUT

Unexploited full potential due mainly to:

- **Different funding conditions** and applicable rules
- **Administrative burden** for both the public administration and the beneficiary
- **SWD** on the procedures to apply **felt lacking legal certainty** – fear of audits
- **No contact details** on the SEAL holders **available to funding bodies** (aggregated data only)
- **Not obligatory feedback** to COM on local/ regional/national seal schemes
- **Expectation management**



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HORIZON EUROPE: THE SEAL OF EXCELLENCE AND OTHER FORMS OF SYNERGIES





DEFINITION AND SCOPE of the Seal:

- ✓ A **clear definition of the seal** is provided (art 2(19)HE Regulation)
- ✓ **Calls awarding the seal** will be specified in the HE Work programme (art 20.5 Regulation)

➤ PROCEDURE AND APPLICABLE RULES FOR ALTERNATIVE FUNDING :

- ERDF (CPR, ESF+...) specifically indicated in HE as a possible source of alternative funding (see art 11 HE)
- Providing alternative funding remains a **voluntary** process (see art 11 HE)
- Intervention to be in line **with the objectives of the programme**. The **rules of the Fund providing support shall apply** (art 11 HE Regulation)
- **ART 11 HE Regulation** makes reference **to art 67.5 CPR** -> MA may decide to grant support from ERDF to seals **DIRECTLY** (...). **CO-FINANCING rate** of the instrument providing the seal shall apply" – details in following slides



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EIC specific

- ✓ Seal follows previous practice as SME instrument: only to SMEs, no mid-caps and only for innovation actions-like activities (no TRL9) (art 43.6)
- ✓ SoE funded projects may benefit from Horizon EIC business acceleration services (Annex I to Horizon Europe Decision, pillar III - 1.1.3.)

EASIER ACCESS TO INFORMATION:

- ✓ ERDF managing authorities may receive directly information on SoE recipients subject to the conclusion of confidentiality agreements and prior authorisation from the applicant (Art 20(5) Horizon Europe Regulation)



SYNERGIES IN GENERAL IN HORIZON EUROPE

- For the first time, specific programme-by-programme provisions on synergies are included in the legal proposal (*Annex IV of the proposal for the Horizon Europe Framework Programme*).
- Horizon Europe mirrors with this the legal proposals for other post-2020 EU programmes, including cohesion policy.
- This follows intensive preparatory work between Commission services at the design stage, with novel features enabling practical measures

Main points for Horizon Europe – ERDF synergies

- Novelties for synergies:
 1. Horizon Europe is designed to be implemented in synergy with other EU programmes (RECITAL 15)
 2. Alternative funding: Seal of Excellence: definition, scope (indication in WP), funding rules, access to info, relation to EIC **Art 11, 20(5), 43(6) HE Regulation**
 3. Receipt of transfers from directly / indirectly managed EU funds - **Art 9(8) HE Regulation**
 4. Cumulative funding: Joint funding for projects on pro rata basis - **Art 23 HE Regulation**
 5. Simplified Audit rules – **Art 48 HE Regulation**

In particular....

- **Receipt of Transfer of ERDF and other CPR funds** (Article 9(8) HE Regulation): Member States may request to transfer of its programme resources to any other EU fund, including HE
 - The rules of the receiving fund apply
 - Investments must be for the benefit of the transferring Member State
- **Co-funds (art 8(1)b HE Regulation)** may receive support from the ERDF
- **Cumulative funding** from different EU funds (Article 23 HE Regulation) in the same operation is permitted, with the rules of each EU programme applying to its respective contribution.



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The new programming period is the chance to open up all possibilities and make them easily implementable

Let's not miss this opportunity

THANK YOU!

