**Workshop Report on H2020 Societal Challenge 6 2016 call for proposals CULT-COOP topics
28 January 2016, FARO Priemstraat 51, 1000 Brussels**

Why this workshop?

The main objective of the workshop was to give the Flemish cultural sector an introduction to European funding through Horizon 2020 and more specific about SC6 CULT-COOP topics. The workshop also created an opportunity for the Flemish cultural and academic sector to exchange experiences about European research projects. This workshop and the report was produced in order to provide potential applicants with a few tips and tricks in the process of writing and submitting an application for SC6 CULT-COOP calls.
The workshop was organised by the Belgian NCP's Man Hei To (FWO Research Foundation Flanders) and Margot Beereboom (FWO) and in collaboration with the Flemish ministry for Culture, Youth, Sports and Media (CJSM) and the Flemish Centre for Cultural Heritage (FARO).
This workshop report was written by Man Hei To (FWO), Margot Beereboom (FWO) and Hans van der Linden (CJSM) with comprehensive contributions from Dr. Catherine Halbert (Halbert Research), Prof. Fred Truyen (KULeuven) and Dr. Mieke Bleyen (KULeuven).

Horizon2020 general

In the 7th Framework programme (FP7), which ran from 2007 till 2013, the available budget was €55 billion. In the 8th Framework programme (Horzion2020) which runs from 2014 till 2020 the available budget is approximately €79 billion. Of the first hundred H2020 Calls nearly 40% of the successful applicants were newcomers.[1] The European Commission presents the Calls in the two-yearly work programmes.

There are two things you need to take into account before applying for a Call:
- ➢ Take a good look to see if your idea fits a certain Call text. Keep in mind your proposal needs to contribute to a "better Europe" overall, i.e. must be congruent with/add to EU policy aims. Consider how you could contribute to the creation of jobs in Europe (Junckers' ten priorities).
- ➢ You need to be aware of the long term when thinking about applying for Calls under the European Framework Programmes. Preparation of the proposal can take up several months if you work on it full-time. The time it takes from submission to the publication of the evaluation results is five months. If the proposal is evaluated successfully, a granting phase - which may take up to three months - needs to be added. Projects may run for several years.

CULT-COOP Topics in Societal Challenge 6

Call Topics of Societal Challenge 6 are quite extensive and broad. Topics usually indicate the following elements: Challenge to be addressed, scope, available budget, expected impact(s) and type of action.
- ➢ Using the specific Call text, make a checklist of the topic which you would like to apply for. Highlight the main points in the text of the topic.

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[1] Horizon 2020. First Results., 2015

➢ Send the checklist to the partners in the consortium (the Call text with the elements you have highlighted). In this way it is clear for the other partners which elements you find important in drafting the proposal.

➢ The European Commission is demanding in its Calls. A lot is asked for in the Call topic and scope. Make sure all of this is in your proposal, but do put emphasis on certain elements, not on all elements.

The online submission system of the European Commission - The Participant Portal

The starting point of the submission of a proposal in Horizon2020 is the Participant Portal. You need to take five steps before you will actually submit the proposal.

- Step 1: Create an account on the Participant Portal: You need to apply for a Participant Identification Code or PIC. It will take a while before the application will be validated by the European Commission so do this well in advance. Without a PIC you cannot submit an application. The PIC will be linked to a Legal Entity Appointed Representative or LEAR in your organisation. The LEAR will get a notification when someone from the organisation submits an application. All participants in the consortium need to have a PIC.

- Step 2: Look for the right Call. You can select the appropriate Call on the Horizon2020 Participant Portal and get all information about the Call there: the Call identifier, when the Call opens, the Call deadline, the Work Programme, guidelines and a template for the submission of a proposal.

- Step 3: Create a draft proposal. The template(s) for the main proposal (called 'part B') can be downloaded from the Participant Portal, once you log in and register to submit a proposal. It is possible to adjust the proposal (and all the other steps) until the deadline of the Call. It is not possible to adjust the submitted proposal after the Call deadline. Make yourself acquainted with the ICT system well before the deadline of the Call.

- Step 4: Add partners of the consortium. The system will give a notification if you need to submit the proposal with partners or not, and what the minimum requirement is. You do not need signatures of partners, but they must inform their own organisation of their intention to participate. For some Calls Letters of Support may be required.

- Step 5: Upload and submit the proposals. The proposal application normally consists of a Part A and Part B. Part A are the administrative forms (including the budget) and part B is the proposal itself. You must upload and submit both Part A and Part B. Sometimes additional documents are required, for example, Ethics Supporting Documents, Letters of Support etc. It is not possible to upload any file that has not been requested by the Call (e.g. additional Annexes).

Differences between the different actions and minimum conditions

- Coordination and Support Action (CSA) and Research and Innovation Action (RIA) have a reimbursement rate of 100%

- Innovation Action (IA) has a reimbursement rate of 70% (with possibility of 100% for some participants, like academic organisations)
  The overhead or indirect costs under H2020 are calculated by one flat rate of 25% of the total direct costs (unlike the different rates in FP7)

- RIA: At least three legal entities in three different EU Member States (MS) or Associated Countries (AC)

There are three categories of countries that can participate:

1. EU Member States (MS)

2. Associated Countries (AC) – AC means a Third Country which is party to an international agreement with the European Union, they participate in Horizon 2020 under the same conditions as EU Member States. They also contribute to the budget.

3. Third Countries – they are not guaranteed EU funding, and may need to bring their own funding. You will need to justify why an organisation from a Third Country is needed for the proposed proposal. A good justification is needed; for instance that only in this country you can find this archive

- ➢ For RIA a consortium size of 12-15 partners is manageable (but it will depend on the project requirements, planned activities and available budget)
- CSA: at least one legal entity

The proposal – writing, proposal templates and finding partners

- ➢ Make a one-page proposal. This forces you to think about the core elements of the proposal.
- What is the main aim of the project?
- What is the main problem/challenge we are trying to solve?
- The following findings led us to this idea/our approach is different because…think about what is the novelty in your proposal
- Why now, and who cares? Why is it urgent, why are you enthusiastic to tackle this problem now, think of this as a sales pitch to the evaluators
- What are the specific objectives of the project? The objectives should be clearly linked to the Work Packages.
- What are the expected outcomes and who are the first users of the results: what are you producing? Are you producing recommendations for policy makers, for example, or a set of practical guidelines for museum curators?
- Justify why you propose certain partners. Conclude with a gap analysis, are all things covered, or do you need an extra partner?
  - ➢ Apply the KISS concept, do not use flowery wording, but be to the point. Explain the concept and the objectives in a clear and logical way. Ask a non-expert for feedback.
  - ➢ The introduction of the proposal must explain what the project is about. The first paragraph needs to include: what the problem is, what the solution is, why this was not done before, how this will be solved and who will be involved. Including this is essential, but do keep the length in mind: evaluators do not have days, but a few hours to read a proposal.
  - ➢ Assign writing tasks to partners, be very concrete, for example for the excellence part; divide the part into subsections, and assign writing tasks to other partners
  - ➢ Make a good plan prior to the opening of the Call and the deadline, make arrangements with the partners involved and agree a schedule with internal deadlines
  - ➢ During this process keep the Call topic text and checklist in a prominent place
  - ➢ Search for the best partners, not only considering excellence, but also in terms of making arrangements; trust is important, start searching for partners in your own network and ask existing collaborators for recommendations

The proposal templates

Part A – the administrative part
-   The abstract is the first part of the proposal that evaluators will read
-   Fill out key words: on the basis of these keywords the search for evaluators is commenced in the expert database of the European Commission
-   Re-submitted proposals: evaluators do not get to see the previous Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) during the remote evaluation phase, but evaluators can ask to have a look at it during the consensus meeting
-   Use an Excel sheet for preparation of the internal budget for the proposal, in order to cleary see how partners have calculated costs and to check if these are reasonable and fit with the proposed tasks. There are no restrictions on subcontracting, but you do need to justify it very well; for instance because it is not a core task of the project, and out-sourcing it is more efficient (e.g. conducting a survey, building a physical structure etc.)

Part B – the proposal
In Societal Challenge 6 there are one-stage evaluation proposals: Part one, two and three cannot be more than seventy pages. Stick to the page limits, extra pages will not be read by the evaluators. How the maximum of pages is divided into subsections is up to the applicant.
  ➢ Excellence section
-   The objectives should be clear, the overall concept should be easy to grasp,
-   Explain the relation to the Work Programme, but customize to your project
-   Concept and methodology: stick to the bullet points in the Work Programme, all points need to be noted in the proposal
-   For the ambitious nature of the project it is important to keep in mind what has been done on the topic in the past and build upon that; secondly, stress the benefit of multidisciplinary and synergies (1+1=3)
-   You must make reference to Gender as it relates to the subject of the research as well as gender-balance in the consortium (division of the Work Packages and Work Package leaders etc.)
  ➢ Impact section
-   Expected impacts: outputs of the projects, how that fits with the call, what kind of impact it is, and on who? It is good to quantify impacts. Be concrete: in which journals you foresee publications, what conferences will you run or attend, what is innovative about your website, how will you reach the public?
-   Mention any obstacles that could minimize the impact, for instance EU legislation limiting certain things
-   When you fill out this section imagine that the project is completed!
-   Measures to maximize impact: publications, working groups, going to youth centers. In short, explain how you will bring your results to the outside world: how do you disseminate the results and outputs?
-   Impacts in the Call: personalise this to your project outputs, also other impacts unique to your project
-   Any possible barriers, plans for dissemination and exploitation of the project results, communication of project activities
  ➢ Implementation section

- There should be a link overall between the abstract, objectives, concept, work plan, packages and expected impacts. Look at the coherence of all these things. Plan in detail how you are going to do the proposed tasks, when you write this down imagine that the project is already up and running. Make realistic promises for Deliverables, and check that the timing is realistic.
- Difference between a Deliverable and Milestone? A Deliverable is usually an output of a Task. Milestones are big achievements in the project, or outputs that allow you to progress to the next stage of the project.
- Explain in the beginning (before you explain the Work Packages' in detail) in short the tasks and Work Packages – use an overview or Pert Chart = a summary of the Work Packages and how they are inter-related
- Consider requesting resources to hire a project manager, note this in the budget
- Be aware of the risks associated with the research plan or tasks, include a risk analysis and contingency plan in your proposal
- Ethics and Gender are important aspects to consider and are mandatory. The issues you need to consider are very well defined in the EC Call documents

Consortium partners and first meeting

- Consortium meeting – have a clear Agenda, make some simple rules; for example, do not allow emails being checked during the consortium meeting so everyone is focused
- Have a discussion on the call text and the concept so that everyone finally has an agreed vision
- Discuss if there are gaps in the consortium? Do extra partners need to be added?
- Make a to-do-list with arrangements. After the consortium meeting all partners need to start working on the tasks in the Work Packages, to an agreed set of deadlines

Evaluation of proposals

- After you press submit, you receive an e-mail from the European Commission with a confirmation of the submission of the proposal.
- Always respect the deadline, do not wait till the last moment to submit the proposal
- The lists with evaluators of the 2014 calls in Horizon2020 are available on the Participant Portal. In the expert database of the European Commission currently over 77,000 evaluators are registered. Over 9,000 contracts were completed with evaluators in 2014, half of them were newcomers. The EC aims to combine experienced and new evaluators for the assessment of a proposal, and achieve balance in terms of skills, experience, sector, gender etc. Evaluators sign a strict confidentiality agreement and 'no-conflict-of-interest' agreement. During the remote phase, evaluators do not know who the other evaluators are; each evaluator must judge the proposal individually, based only on what is written in the proposal. During the consensus meeting (up to one week in Brussels) a rapporteur is appointed for each group of evaluators; the role of the rapporteur is to write the consensus report based on the evaluators' consensus comments and scores. The consensus meetings are overseen by a project officer of the EC, and an independent observer may also attend. The rapporteur adds the individual reports together, then a consultation takes place and a discussion about the individually given scores and comments, and finally a consensus report is prepared. At the end of the "Brussels week" or consensus week, a panel review meeting takes

place. The Consensus Report will become the Evaluation Summary Report (ESR), once approved by the EC personnel.

- Not all of the evaluator comments can be included drafting the Consensus Report; this is why ESRs can be quite brief. The function of the ESR is not to provide recommendations for a better proposal, but to give factual feedback on the proposal that was submitted.
- Evaluators receive a reimbursement of €450 per day. Depending on the Call each evaluator may need to read three proposals per day, within a strict timeframe. The evaluator may only have four hours per proposal. To conclude, make sure the proposal is easy to evaluate!

The research project 'Art Against the Grain of "Collective Sisyphus:" The Case of Allan Sekula's Ship of Fools / The Dockers' Museum (2010-2013).' – A collaboration between the academic and cultural sector - Dr. Mieke Bleyen, KULeuven

The project receives funding from the FWO. Professor Hilde van Gelder is promotor and Dr. Mieke Bleyen is co-promotor. For this project a collaboration was established between the Faculty of Arts and cultural studies of KULeuven and MuHKA. At MuHKA one PhD with experience as curator and management is hosted.

Both institutions have a long history with Sekula's work. MuHKA decided to buy Sekula's work and the Dockers collection. In Leuven in 2005 Sekula's work was displayed throughout the city. Both institutions had a long interest in Sekula. This shared interest is important to be successful. The Dockers' Museum has over 1000 objects which Sekula has compiled, unfortunately he did not finish the job because he passed away during the project. On the basis of his ideas the Work Packages were composed.

Considerations and pitfalls:

- The KULeuven has written the proposal and drafted the budget. At MuHKA a second PhD student is hosted, which means they also have a part of the budget. Good communication is essential.
- Output has a different meaning for KULeuven than for MuHKA. For KULeuven it means a publication in an academic journal; for MuHKA it means publications in an e-flux journal.
- To conclude, it is best to have an existing collaboration in place before applying for and receiving funding. The starting point for a collaboration must not be to get subsidies, the project has to be a means/way instead of a goal in itself

Professor Fred Truyen has a lot of experience with European funded projects in FP7 and H2020 as part of big consortia (for instance Europeana Photography project; a project with nineteen partners from thirteen European countries and three associate partners and KULeuven as technical coordinator)

- Main difference between national funding and a European project: There must be a European dimension in the proposal; a problem or issue needs to be tackled at European level.
- It is not possible to be a coordinator and academic researcher in the project at same time, so you need a group of people and to form a consortium. First start by building your network, you need a group of people you trust. Have a core group of five or six partners which are the driving force behind the project, it need to be people that you trust, trust is very important when you let others do the academic work. Also this group needs to exist out of people with complementary competences. Add extra partners, to build a bigger consortium.
- Without experience in European projects a first step would be to join a consortium as partner, it is very challenging to start as coordinator if you have no experience in EU-funded projects

- The CULT-COOP calls are cultural of nature but with an application, add ICT expertise for instance
- Explain methodology, your proposal will be read by different experts (for instance an art expert, librarian and an automatician)
- Show aspects that reach your impact – The EC wants to see results!
- For the Europeana photography project 450,000 photos were put on www.Europeana.eu. The project had seven Work Packages. During the project they asked an amendment, which was granted, here one partner wanted to organise an exhibition to reach another audience. An exhibition in the neighborhood attracts other people than an online database.
- Each year you have to submit more proposals in order to get one project financed
- Successful proposals have always a clear division of Work Packages, a clear structure
- Communication is important: organise several meetings with the Work Package leaders.
- Make sure to develop good skills in programs like Basecamp, Google docs, Sharepoint; you need this during the project!

Need help? NCP services

In case you would have any question contact the European Liaison Officers (ELO) in your institution. In case there is no ELO in your organisation contact the National Contact Point (NCP). As NCP, the FWO has the objective to ensure that the Flemish research community is timely and adequately informed about upcoming calls. The FWO also supports researchers in the preparation and follow-up of their application. The main goal is to increase the participation and success rate of the Flemish researchers in Horizon 2020. NCPs assist researchers with issues related to the programme: guidance on choosing thematic priorities and instruments; advice on administrative procedures and contractual issues; training and assistance on proposal writing; distribution of documentation (forms, guidelines, manuals etc.) and assistance in partner search.

Net4Society is the NCP network for Societal Challenge 6, a website that connects NCPs and applicants:
- Partner search support
- Research directory
- Check the news section for information about upcoming brokerage events