



# Horizon Europe 2025: Translating the Work Programme into Successful Proposals

A Step-by-Step Approach to Building  
Competitive HEU Applications

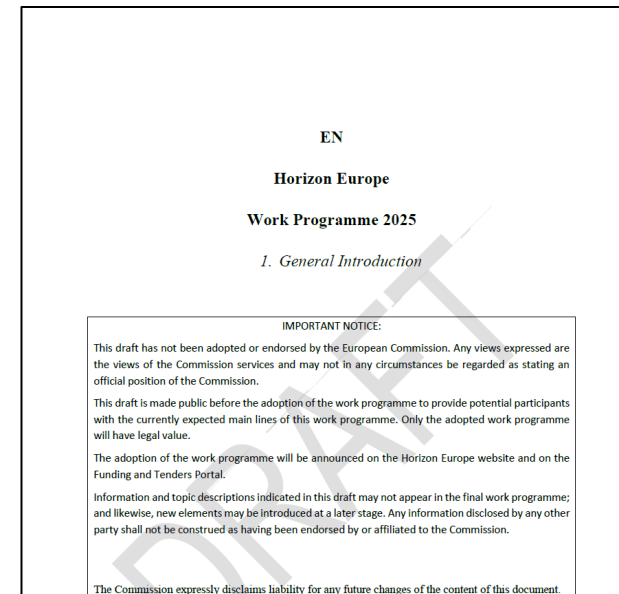


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# What's New in the HEU 2025 Work Programme?

- Fewer topics, shorter descriptions
- More open scopes → greater flexibility
- Lump sum funding >35% (goal: 50%)
- Blind evaluation: ~20% topics
- Stronger SDG/policy alignment



◆ **Blind evaluation:** Some topics require proposals to be fully anonymous – no names, acronyms, logos, or identifiable links in Part B.  
(Check topic conditions carefully—non-compliance = ineligibility)

⊘ Part B = anonymous | ✓ Part A = normal

# How to Decode a Topic Strategically

The screenshot displays the EU Funding & Tenders Portal interface. The top navigation bar includes the European Commission logo, a search bar, and links for 'Sign in' and 'EN'. The main content area is titled 'Validation of fluid-derived biomarkers for the prediction and prevention of brain disorders' with the identifier 'HORIZON-HLTH-2024-DISEASE-03-13-two-stage'. A 'Topic' button labeled 'Call for proposal' is visible. The left sidebar shows 'Internal navigation' with options like 'General information', 'Topic description', 'Topic updates', 'Destination', 'Conditions and documents', 'Budget overview', 'Start submission', and 'Topic GAs'. The 'Topic description' section is active, showing 'ExpectedOutcome:' and a list of bullet points. The 'Expected impacts:' section follows, detailing the goals of the project.

**ExpectedOutcome:**  
This topic aims at supporting activities that are enabling or contributing to one or several expected impacts of destination 3 "Tackling diseases and reducing disease burden". To that end, proposals under this topic should aim for delivering results that are directed, tailored towards and contributing to most of the following expected outcomes:

- The scientific and clinical communities make effective use of state-of-the-art information, data, technologies, tools and best practices to underpin the development of the diagnostics, and as such can also facilitate the development of effective therapeutics and/or preventive strategies.
- The scientific and clinical communities advance the field through a better understanding of mechanisms underlying brain disorders at the molecular, cellular and systemic level.
- The scientific and/or integrative principles, the
- Policymakers, are informed of detection of th
- Patients and c

**Expected impacts:**  
Proposals for topics under this destination should set out a credible pathway to contributing to tackling diseases and reducing disease burden, and more specifically to several of the following impacts:

- Health burden of diseases in the EU and worldwide is reduced through effective disease management, including through the development and integration of innovative diagnostic and therapeutic approaches, personalised medicine approaches, digital and other people-centred solutions for health care. In particular, patients are diagnosed early and accurately and receive effective, cost-efficient and affordable treatment, including patients with a rare disease, due to effective translation of research results into new diagnostic tools and therapies.
- Premature mortality from non-communicable diseases is reduced by one third (by 2030), mental health and well-being is promoted, and the voluntary targets of the WHO Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of NCDs 2013-2020 are attained (by 2025), with an immediate impact on the related disease burden (DALYs)[[ WHO Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of NCDs 2013-2020 (resolution WHA66.10).

- **Destination** = the policy goal your project should serve
- **Expected Outcomes & Impacts** = what the Commission wants to achieve during and after the project
- **Type of Action & TRLs** = define project scope, maturity level, and scale
- **Look for hidden signals in the scope:** who should be involved, what kind of change is expected
- **Cross-cutting flags:** gender, SSH, open science, lump sum, blind evaluation

👉 *Treat the topic as your strategic map – not just a prompt*

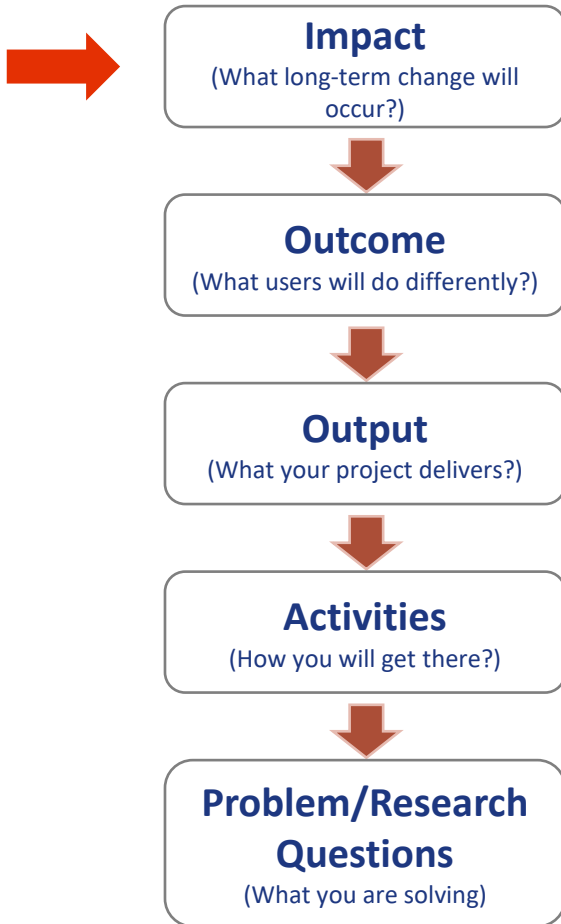
# Understanding Impact



- Go beyond publications – show **real-world change** (social, economic, environmental)
- Align with **long-term** policy goals (e.g., SDGs, Green Deal)
- Show **who** uses your results and **how**
- Use **KPIs** and outcomes pathways to track **change beyond** the project

# Use of impact-backward planning

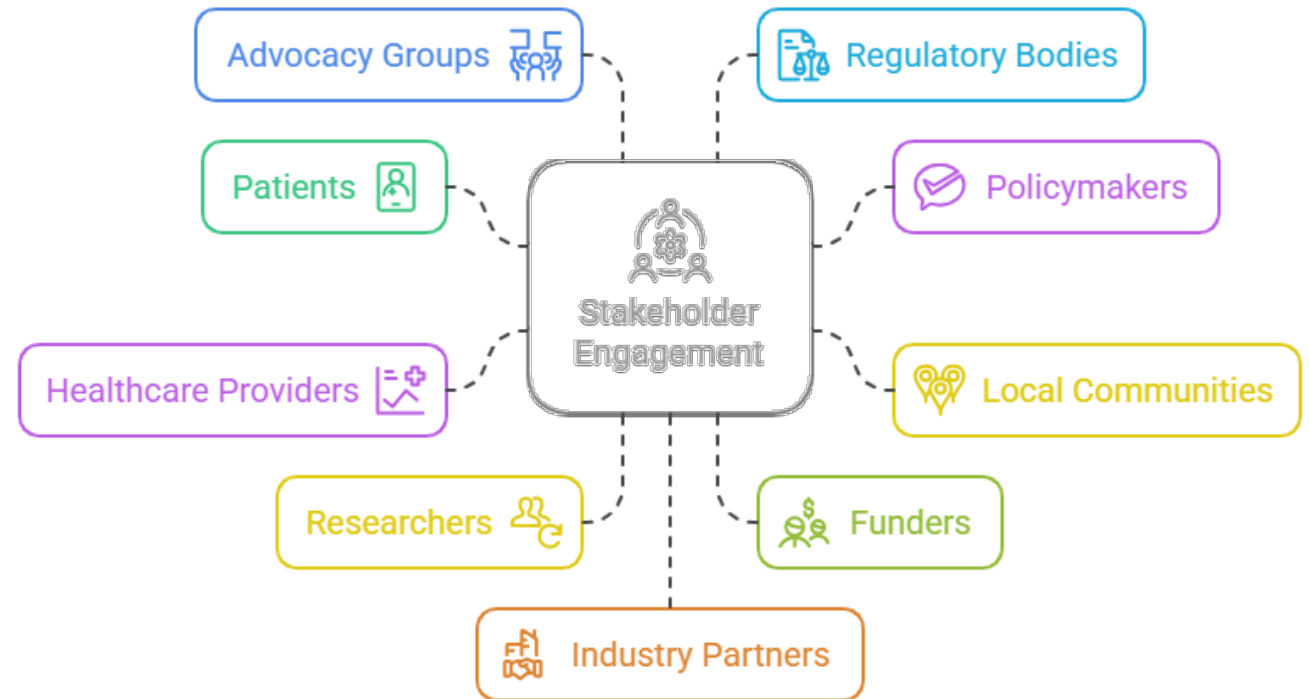
*Your project  
(planning)  
starts here!*



- 🧠 Start with the change you want to achieve – then work backward to define outcomes, outputs, and activities.
- 🔍 Use this structure to clarify your objectives, and build a focused work plan
- 🧩 This reverse logic also helps identify what kind of expertise, data, or environments your project will need

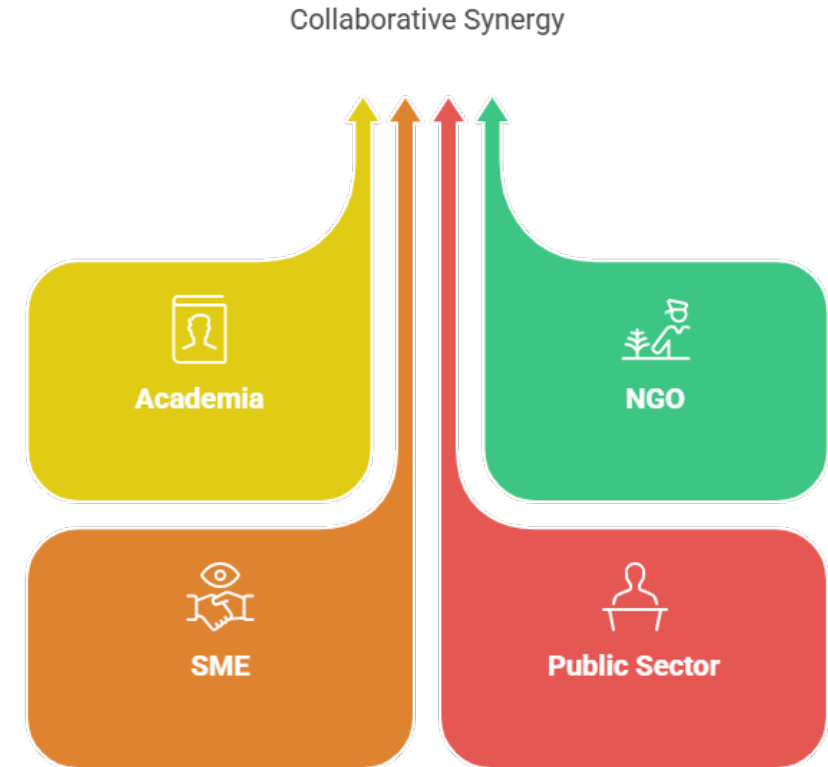
# Stakeholders Engagement

- Involve stakeholders **early** – design with, not for: users, patients, policymakers, SMEs
- **Use structured methods** – co-creation workshops, advisory boards, living labs
- **Define roles** – what can they influence? What input shapes your solution?
- **Align with outcomes** – engagement should drive adoption, not just visibility



# Interdisciplinary & Cross-Sector Teams

- Show how **different disciplines** work together (e.g., SSH + engineering, urban planning + climate)
- Combine academic, SME, NGO, clinical, or public-sector partners to **strengthen relevance** and **uptake**
- Highlight how interdisciplinary collaboration **strengthens your methodology**





# Understanding the Proposal Structure: Part B



**Proposal template Part B: technical description**

**TITLE OF THE PROPOSAL**

[This document is tagged. Do not delete the tags; they are needed for processing.] #APP-FORM-HERIAIA@#

**List of participants**

Participant No. *	Participant organisation name	Country
1 (Coordinator)		
2		
3		
...		

**1. Excellence** #REL-EVA-RE@#

**1.1 Objectives and ambition** #PRJ-OBJ-PO@#

Insert here text for your proposal

#PRJ-OBJ-POS@#

**1.2 Methodology** #CON-MET-CM@# #COM-PLC-CP@#

Insert here text for your proposal

#CON-MET-CM\$# #COM-PLC-CP\$# #REL-EVA-RE\$#

**2. Impact** #IMP-ACT-IA@#

**2.1 Project's pathways towards impact**

Insert here text for your proposal

**2.2 Measures to maximise impact - Dissemination, exploitation and communication** #COM-DIS-VIS-CDV@#

## SECTION 1: EXCELLENCE

→ Objectives, ambition, methodology

## SECTION 2: IMPACT

→ Outcomes, alignment, DEC strategy

## SECTION 3: IMPLEMENTATION

→ Work plan, resources, roles

- 📄 Part B = narrative section of the proposal
- 🧠 Each section matches an evaluation criterion
- ✓ Use the official template for structure and wording
- 🕒 Respect page limits—extra pages may not be reviewed
- 💡 Write clearly, with headings that follow the template



# Section 1: Excellence

## 1. Excellence

⚠️ *The following aspects will be taken into account only to the extent that the proposed work is within the scope of the work programme topic.*

### *Excellence – aspects to be taken into account.*

- Clarity and pertinence of the project's objectives, and the extent to which the proposed work is ambitious, and goes beyond the state of the art.
- Soundness of the proposed methodology, including the underlying concepts, models, assumptions, interdisciplinary approaches, appropriate consideration of the gender dimension in research and innovation content, and the quality of open science practices, including sharing and management of research outputs and engagement of citizens, civil society and end users where appropriate.

### 1.1 Objectives and ambition [e.g. 4 pages]

- Briefly describe the objectives of your proposed work. Why are they pertinent to the work programme topic? Are they measurable and verifiable? Are they realistically achievable?

**Example SMART objective:** *To reduce medication errors in elderly patients by 20% within 18 months through deployment of an AI-supported prescribing tool in three regional hospitals.*

- Set **SMART objectives** aligned with the topic's challenge and outcomes
- Show what's **ambitious** and **beyond the state of the art**—with evidence
- Structure clearly: **problem → solution → methods → outcomes**
- Justify your **methodology**, assumptions, and design logic
- Address **interdisciplinarity, gender, open science, and user engagement**
- Use the template box and bullet instructions as a **checklist**

⚠️ *Reviewers only evaluate work that fits the topic scope*

# Section 2: Impact

- Start from the **Expected Outcomes** in the topic text to define what success looks like
- Distinguish between **project outcomes** and **longer-term impact**
- Use **quantifiable targets** and define how progress will be tracked (KPI logic)
- Demonstrate your project's contribution to **EU policy goals** through outcomes, KPIs, and DEC
- Outline your **DEC strategy** to ensure uptake and long-term use

Element	Example
Expected Outcome	Reduction in energy use through smart building technology
Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- 15% energy reduction in pilot buildings</li><li>- 1000 users trained via deployment platform</li></ul>
Longer-Term Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Supports Green Deal targets on energy efficiency</li><li>- Uptake by municipalities in at least 3 EU member states post-project</li></ul>

# DEC Actions in the Impact Pathway

Type	Goal	Examples
Communication	Raise awareness, build visibility	Website, media coverage, social media, branding
Dissemination	Share results with relevant audiences	Conferences, policy briefs, stakeholder events
Exploitation	Enable use & uptake of results	Licensing, clinical integration, follow-up R&D

- Plan **strategic DEC actions** early – aligned with outcomes and uptake
- Tailor activities to your **target audiences** (e.g., clinicians, policymakers, SMEs, citizens)
- Make it **concrete** (e.g., D3.x: Policy brief targeting regulators to promote outcome X)
- Time actions appropriately: **before, during, and after** the project
- Clarify **who is responsible** (e.g. partners, WPs, external experts)

💡 *DEC actions ensure your results reach the right audiences and lead to real-world use.*

# Section 3: Implementation

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- Section 3.1 – Work plan and resources
- Section 3.2 – Capacity of participants and consortium as a whole

## 3. Quality and efficiency of the implementation #@QUA-LIT-QL@# #@WRK-PLA-WP@#

### *Quality and efficiency of the implementation – aspects to be taken into account*

- *Quality and effectiveness of the work plan, assessment of risks, and appropriateness of the effort assigned to work packages, and the resources overall*
- *Capacity and role of each participant, and extent to which the consortium as a whole brings together the necessary expertise.*

# Section 3: Implementation

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- **Section 3.1 – Work plan and resources**
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💡 **Lump sum funding** = full WP must be completed to receive payment

*Example: If clinical model fails X metric at month 12 → revise model / terminate WP3"*

## Work Plan: Delivering the Project Effectively

- Build a clear plan with ~6-8 balanced WPs (incl. management + DEC)
- Use **Gantt chart** to show timing; consider a **PERT chart** for task logic
- In lump sum: use **Go/No-Go points**, and consider more **modular WPs** (e.g. split management WP)
- Include **real, project-relevant risks** with mitigation strategies
- Justify why this WP structure fits your project logic

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## Resources & Budget: Justify What's Needed

- **Match** person-months per WP to responsibilities
- Use **effort tables** to explain major allocations
- Under **lump sum**: Deliverables must match what's paid – no retroactive budget juggling possible
- Do a basic **critical path check** to align WPs
- Prepare **clear tables** for staff, costs, deliverables, risks

# Section 3: Implementation

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- Section 3.1 – Work plan and resources
- **Section 3.2 – Capacity of participants and consortium as a whole**

## Consortium & Subcontracting: Show Capacity to Deliver







- Show **complementary roles** and partner **expertise**
- **Justify** why this team is the right one
- Flag **high-value personnel** – e.g., WP leaders, senior researchers
- **Subcontracting** = external services (e.g., surveys, software modules), not core tasks
- Link subcontracted tasks clearly to WPs and budget

*Show that your **team is complete**, credible, and capable*



# Writing with the Reviewer in Mind

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-  Use Work Programme language
-  Follow the official Part B structure
-  Link content clearly to evaluation criteria
-  Support claims with KPIs and measurable targets
-  Make it easy to navigate (headings, visuals, short paragraphs)
-  Avoid vague terms – be precise and scoreable



“This tool is very innovative and promising”



“This tool advances TRL from 4 to 6 by integrating real-time AI alerts with clinical decision-making, validated in 3 hospitals”

# Checklist: Are you Proposal-Ready?

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- ☐ Identified the **Destination** and **Expected Outcomes**
- ☐ Matched your idea to the right **Type of Action** and **TRL**
- ☐ Built a clear **impact pathway** (outputs → outcomes)
- ☐ **Formed your core team** and identified key stakeholders
- ☐ Planned early (6+ months), using templates and internal reviews
- ☐ **Sought support** from NCPs, RSOs, info-days, and annotated templates
- ☐ Wrote clearly using **KPIs, visuals**, and Work Programme language





Open floor for questions



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