

Meeting notes IGLO Implementation Working Group: update on the latest developments

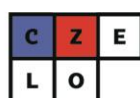
Date:	29.1.2026
Place of the event:	NorCore, Rue du Trone 98, Brussels
Minutes taken by:	Michaela Hnízdilová, Senior Consultant for Research

Lump sum funding (current state of play)

- Lump sum funding is no longer considered a novelty. After its pilot phase under Horizon 2020, it is now fully embedded in Horizon Europe implementation.
- As of 1 October 2025, approximately 21 000 proposals had been submitted under lump sum schemes, with around 2 700 grants signed. A total of 4.8 billion EUR has been committed and 0.5 billion EUR paid so far. At that stage, 960 lump sum projects had already been completed.
- The European Commission had an objective to reach a 50% share of lump sum funding in the final year of Horizon Europe, a target that has already been achieved. Despite this, the Commission continues to sometimes hear criticism that there is insufficient experience with lump sum funding, including in the context of discussions on FP10 (*the Commission considers this criticism unfounded, given the growing evidence base*).
- From 2028 onwards, lump sums are expected to become the default funding model, with exceptions remaining possible (*subject to political agreement*).
- Several improvements have been introduced to facilitate lump sum implementation. A major change concerns the lump sum budget table: the Excel template will be phased out. Integration into the online submission system is nearly complete, with a pilot planned for December 2025 and a full roll-out in 2026 (*this change is expected to address many recurring issues associated with the Excel template, such as double data entry, inconsistencies between proposal sections, and technical problems*).
- The corporate guidance on managing lump sum grants was updated in 2025. The revised guidance provides further clarification on:
 - Requirements for the proper implementation and acceptance of work packages;
 - Budget flexibility and grant amendments;
 - The conduct of ex-post technical reviews.

Ex-post technical reviews:

- The first batch of ex-post technical reviews was launched following a request from the European Court of Auditors.
- For Horizon 2020, three projects were reviewed, with no findings identified. These reviews had no impact on the error rate.
- Under Horizon Europe, 30 projects were selected for review, including ERC Proof of Concept projects. Almost all reviews have now been completed. In 28 cases, no findings were identified. Two projects showed findings related to technical implementation (these cases are still being finalised).
- The reviews were carried out by external experts, following an established methodology similar to that used for financial audits. Experts were given full access to reports and deliverables and requested additional supporting evidence from beneficiaries, such as laboratory records, registers of major equipment, or other documentation demonstrating that the reported work had been carried out as described. This type of evidence is usually requested after project completion.



- The overall conclusion is that the error rate is very low. Reviews are conducted annually, and the Commission expressed confidence that results will remain positive as the sample size increases.
- In response to a question on expert selection, it was clarified that experts are drawn from existing databases, following standard procedures already used for other types of reviews.

Beneficiary feedback on lump sums

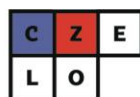
- Survey results from 2024 and 2025 indicate strong support for lump sum funding. More than 70% of respondents agreed that lump sums reduce administrative burden and shift the focus to project content. SMEs and newcomers were particularly positive, with over 75% expressing favourable views. Universities and research organisations also showed a generally positive attitude, though to a slightly lesser extent.
- The 2025 survey further demonstrated that beneficiaries with direct experience of lump sum grants are significantly more positive than those without such experience. The Commission concluded that acceptance increases once organisations become familiar with the funding model.
- A comment was made that smaller entities and newcomers tend to be more supportive of lump sums than large institutions. It was noted that the European Parliament remains sceptical, arguing that experience with lump sums is still insufficient and opposing their use as the default funding model. Reference was made to the influence of larger institutional lobbies in this debate.
- A dedicated lump sum page is available on the Funding & Tenders Portal, providing access to guidance and supporting materials for applicants and beneficiaries.

2

Mandatory Two-Factor Authentication (2FA)

- The European Commission is introducing mandatory two-factor authentication for users of the Funding & Tenders Portal. Simple password-based access will no longer be sufficient.
- The roll-out started in December 2025 with a pilot phase covering LEARs and Account Administrators of the 1 000 most frequent beneficiaries, as well as 50 evaluation experts. These users can no longer access the system without 2FA. The Commission noted that user reaction was calmer than expected.
- In January 2026, the roll-out will extend to 2 000 experts (*e.g. evaluators*), followed by approximately 50,000 users with project roles in February 2026. Full deployment to all concerned users is planned for the first quarter of 2026.
- 2FA will apply to users with access to sensitive non-classified information, including legal and financial signatories, coordinators, participants, audit contacts, task managers, team members, and experts. Users will be notified individually ahead of activation.
- Available options for the second authentication factor include the EU Login mobile app, national eID, USB security keys or trusted platforms, and passkeys on mobile devices or computers.

Novelties in the Horizon Europe application process (Work Programme 2026–2027)



- Several changes will apply to calls under the 2026–2027 Work Programme only. Calls launched under the 2025 Work Programme, even if published in 2026, will continue to use the existing templates and page limits.
- The overall time to grant for two-stage calls will be reduced from 17 to 14 months. It was noted that the reduction mainly affects timelines for applicants and stakeholders rather than internal Commission processes.

Economic Security Considerations

- For Research and Innovation Actions, legal entities established in China will be eligible only for a limited set of destinations in Clusters 2, 5, and 6, as well as Missions, Widening actions, and the New European Bauhaus Facility, or where explicitly allowed in call documents. Participation of entities controlled by China is also restricted under Article 22(5) for Innovation Actions in critical technology areas.

Newly associated countries:

- Republic of Korea: associated to Pillar II from the 2025 budget;
- Switzerland: associated to the entire programme from the 2025 budget;
- Egypt: associated to the entire programme under a transitional agreement from the 2025 budget;
- Japan: association applicable to Pillar II, including institutionalised European partnerships, from the 2026 budget.

More details are available in the recording of the [Horizon Implementation Day – Novelties in the 2026–2027 Horizon Europe Work Programme](#) webinar.

