

BESTPRAC FAQs: Reporting in Horizon 2020

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This document reflects frequently asked questions on reporting in Horizon 2020 by members from Working Group 1 (WG1: Administration) of the COST Targeted Network BESTPRAC (TN 1302). The questions have been addressed and replied by BESTPRAC WG1 members at the BESTPRAC meeting in Vilnius, Lithuania on September 22, 2016. The purpose of this document is to assist participants in H2020 EU-funded projects, in particular BESTPRAC participants. This document is provided for information purposes only and its content is not intended to replace consultation of any applicable legal sources or the necessary advice of a legal expert, when appropriate. Neither the author of this document or any BESTPRAC WG1 member can be held responsible for the use made of this document.

Administrative questions

1. Are there any experiences with technical or other problems when uploading deliverables? Are you aware of consequences for delayed deliverables?

No experiences with technical or other problems when uploading deliverables have been reported. There are requests for open access but there is no deadline for this. Deliverables must be uploaded in the system according to what is written in the Grant Agreement. Deliverables might include ethics requirements.

2. In this project a meeting with the project officer took place which seems to have been focused on the scientific aspects (it is hard to get information from the coordinator). Do people have experience with these kind of meetings?

In Horizon 2020, all information should be available through the participant portal. Different experiences have been reported with project officers who want to be contacted through the portal and others who want to be reached by email only.

Personnel questions

3. I am confused with reporting parental leave. The ERC is fine with it (as far as I have understood it) but I am not sure whether this means the project will therefore be extended or not (in Scandinavia the maternity leave can be for 10 to 12 months). I know for ITNs, the project duration cannot be extended, so how to report this?

- In Marie Curie fellowships it is easy to report the parental leave. The project is suspended and extended according to the dates entered in the portal.
- In an ITN, parental leave is not covered and the spare money of the parental leave covered by the government is given back to the EC in case the expected contract duration goes beyond the end date of the project.
- ERC allows a project extension for a maximum of 1 year.
- This could also be discussed with colleagues from WG2.

4. In case of an audit, how to show in an ITN that the PhD student worked 100% on the project (without timesheet)?

Timesheets should be completed when someone works for a project. If one works 100%, timesheets are not needed but a declaration needs to be signed to confirm his/her involvement in the project.

5. If in the proposal phase we suggested 4 particular persons to be involved, and during the course of the project implementation we have to employ several more on the project (sharing the total person months allocated with the 4 persons already mentioned and not spending additional person months than envisaged) – how do we report on that? And how do we justify it?

In Horizon 2020, only the person months are included in the proposal, not the number of people. The allocation of person months per person is not included in a proposal. But for an audit it is necessary to justify and document the people involved. Paper or electronic timesheets is a good way to record who works on a project.

6. How did you deal with personnel changes, who did you inform? People who were named in the DOW were later not involved anymore, but others.

In Horizon 2020, only the person months are included in the proposal, not the people. If the list of names is required, the coordinator could prepare a list with the people working on the project, which could be sent to the project officer.

7. There are several possible ways to calculate the amount of money to be reported given in the MGA (even more in the new version published in July) – namely how to calculate the hourly rate and the productive hours. None of these methods matches the real personnel costs in our book keeping – some methods give a higher and some a lower sum, and this also depends on the individual case. Do other universities face the same problem? How have you chosen the method to use? How do you deal with the uncertainty of how much funding you will receive for personnel costs? There is no specific advice. It is a decision each institution has to make by selecting one of the 3 methods provided by the Model Grant Agreement.

Other financial questions

8. The 'Form C' does not longer exist in its previous form, correct?

Yes, that is correct. For more info on the H2020 Financial Report, please refer to the H2020 Online Manual, http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/docs/h2020-funding-guide/grants/grant-management/reports/periodic-reports_en.htm#fin.rep.

9. Are there any tips on how to deal (report, explain, justify) with shifts of resources:

- a) Between work packages
- b) Temporal shifts (more work in the beginning and less later (as planned) or vice versa

Any kind of shift shall be discussed with the Project Officer in advance. A justification is required. For more info on amendments, please refer to the H2020 Online Manual http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/docs/h2020-funding-guide/grants/grant-management/amendments_en.htm.

10. Use of resources: in the system there is only a very basic report of the use of resources. We had to send very detailed information to the coordinator however. Does anybody know whether the coordinator has to report in more detail?

Sometimes the coordinators ask for more information than is required. The partners should be prepared to share the information about their institution and who works on the project. But they can also say no to the request from the coordinator. For more info on the periodic reports, please refer to the H2020 Online Manual http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/docs/h2020-funding-guide/grants/grant-management/reports/periodic-reports_en.htm#deliverables.

11. Is adjustment still possible for previous periods or not?

Yes, this is still possible.

12. Is there any feedback on the use of art 11 'use of in kind contribution provided by third parties against payment' that was not initially planned in the DOA. It is stated that an amendment is not necessary provided a justification in the activity report is given (the project officer agreed on this but it would be interesting to have a feedback of reporting if there is any).

This is possible but there is always the risk that the costs are not accepted. Therefore, it is advisable to contact the project officer upfront.