



Frequently Asked Questions

Implementing Arrangement between the European Commission and the Government of the United States of America on Cooperation with Horizon 2020 project consortia/participants

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How does this implementing arrangement establish an additional pathway for collaborative activities?

The purpose of the Implementing Arrangement is to facilitate cooperation between US organisations and Horizon 2020 participants in cases where the US organisations are funded by the US and do not receive funding from the Horizon 2020 programme. In such cases, researchers will be able to organise their cooperation outside the Horizon 2020 Grant Agreement as 'research partners'. As the US organisation does not carry out any work under the Horizon 2020 Grant Agreement, it does not need to sign the Grant Agreement.

In the case of such alternative arrangements each research partner works according to the respective rules of his/her funding organization. Those are the bases upon which the cooperation will be developed. The arrangements cannot be in conflict with the provisions of the Horizon 2020 Grant Agreement, nor with the rules of the US funder.

How is this cooperation organized?

The research partners from both sides are encouraged, where appropriate, to reach a common understanding in respect of intellectual property rights, data access, and data dissemination and other matters considered essential to collaboration and to lay that understanding down in a Memorandum of Understanding or other type of cooperation/coordination agreement among themselves. The Horizon 2020 participants must ensure that any understanding reached is compatible with their obligations under the Horizon 2020 project and the US partners should likewise ensure it is compatible with their obligations under their funding mechanism.

How can the EU participants in a Horizon 2020 project incorporate the common “cooperative research activities” with a US institution in the initial proposal?

If a Horizon 2020 project intends to carry out cooperative research activities with a US institution, the Horizon 2020 proposal may describe the way and the means by which the intended cooperation will take place outside the Horizon 2020 Grant Agreement. These cooperative activities will not be assessed as part of the H2020 evaluation process but will complement and expand the scope of the research funded under the Horizon 2020 Grant Agreement.

Since the cooperative research activities will take place outside the Grant Agreement, no tasks may be assigned to the US partner in the Grant Agreement.

Can a US entity become a research partner AFTER a H2020 project has started?

Yes. Since the collaboration with the US partner is not evaluated in the EU proposal evaluation process and since the collaboration does not have budgetary implications on the EU side, the H2020 project can decide at any time to collaborate with a US research partner under the IA.

Do US entities intending to use the IA have to apply through the participant portal as if they were 'participants'?

No. The US research partners do not have to apply through the participant portal. They will not be 'participants' in the H2020 project and they will not have to sign the grant agreement.

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How can “cooperative research and relevant activities” with US institutions be described and included in the report of the Horizon 2020 project?

Cooperative activities which are not part of the Horizon 2020 Grant Agreement do not generate a reporting obligation for the Horizon 2020 participants. The latter are only expected to complete reporting requirements of Horizon 2020. Likewise, the US partners must respect the reporting requirements only of their own funder. However, the Research Partners are encouraged to report on the cooperative activities in the form they deem appropriate.

Would a US participant utilizing the Implementing Arrangement reduce the competitiveness of a collaborative project in the EU evaluation process?

No. Although the U.S. partner’s contribution may be acknowledged in the proposal, the Horizon 2020 evaluation process focuses only on the European partners’ contribution. Therefore researchers will not see the competitiveness of their proposals reduced if the implementing arrangement is invoked.

Other forms of EU-US cooperation - Beside the Implementing Arrangement and its new pathway for cooperation are there other possible forms of EU-US cooperation connecting US institutions to Horizon 2020 projects?

Yes. Taking part in a Horizon 2020 collaborative project as a participant remains the most common way of cooperation under the EU Framework Programme for Research & Innovation.

All participants in Horizon 2020 projects sign the Horizon 2020 Grant Agreement that sets the legal framework for the cooperation. By signing the Grant Agreement, each participant accepts the Horizon 2020 rules, and is subject to the rights and obligations described therein.

Other means of cooperation are through:

- Twinning of individual projects
- Alignment of funding opportunities/calls
- Coordinated calls
- Joint calls

Does the Implementing Arrangement impact existing opportunities for individual researchers?

No, this Implementing Arrangement does not impact the Marie-Sklodowska Curie Actions (MSCA) or the European Research Council Grants.

- US researchers can apply for [MSCA Fellowships](#) to work anywhere in Europe (or in a country Associated to Horizon 2020) for up to two years, and European (or Associated country) researchers can apply for MSCA Fellowships to work in the US (or anywhere in the world) for up to two years, with a 1 year return phase.

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- US researchers can apply for [European Research Council Grants](#) to establish a research group in Europe (or in an Associated country). They may also be able to avail of the specific [National Science Foundation-ERC arrangement](#) for an extended research visit in an ERC funded group in Europe.

Would a US participant requesting funding reduce the competitiveness of a collaborative project in the EU evaluation process?

No. However, as a rule, unless otherwise specified in the EU Work Programme (e.g. US participants are eligible for EU funding in certain Health related topics), EU funding is not available to participants from industrialized third countries such as the US. Any request for exceptional EU funding of a US entity in a project proposal can only be granted if the US participant is deemed essential for carrying out the action by the Commission, for example because it provides:

- Particular outstanding competence/expertise or
- Access to particular research infrastructure
- Access to particular geographical environments
- Access to particular data

In any case where EU funding is provided for participation in a H2020 project, the US entity must sign the grant agreement.