

Enhancing Cross-Sectoral Collaboration in Cybersecurity in
Estonia, Czechia, Lithuania, Ukraine, and the Netherlands



Funded by
the European Union

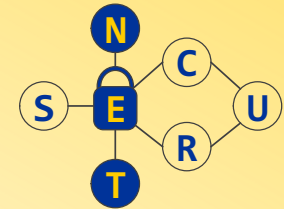
Developing Successful Grant Applications in 2026 and Beyond

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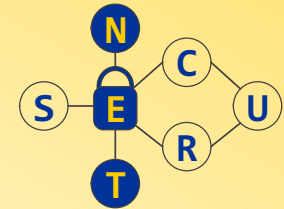
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Key Elements of Research Funding Proposals



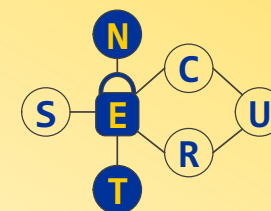
- **Excellence** – How innovative and novel is your science? How strong is your research methodology? How open and reproducible will your results be? How are you connected to (build upon) other efforts that have been undertaken previously?
- **Impact** – How specifically will the project benefit society and how sustainable are these results? What markets will it improve? Who are key audiences you will reach in academia, the public sector and industry? What societal or environmental factors might serve as barriers to achieving the desired impact? How can they be overcome?
- **Implementation** – How strong is your consortium? Are all needed skills, represented? Do you have appropriate coverage? (such as geographic, sectors, or expertise). How well thought out is your work plan in terms of timing and budget?

General Advice



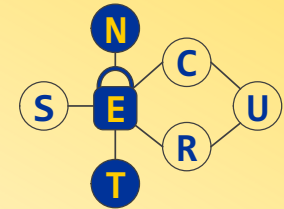
- Have a compelling “story” or “hook” that might excite a reviewer
- Don’t do the minimum, i.e. partners from 3 countries
- Be ambitious (but realistic)
- Read the call text and underlying rules and regulations very closely – consult the call text periodically to make sure you are still in line with what the funder is looking for – you should bend to fit the call, not the other way around
- Start as early as possible. Invite partners as soon as you can
- Wherever possible, build upon existing collaborations

Academic vs industry grant consulting



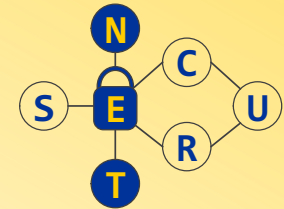
Academia	Aspect	Industry
High, grant offices, grant writing units	Amount of in-house support	Low, 1 or 2 people
Wide range covering multiple faculties	Topics addressed	Narrow, focused on company portfolio
Support PIs and research groups	Goal of funding	Develop products/services
Identification of funding opportunities, writing support, compliance, budgeting	General types of support provided	Getting invited into consortia, evaluating invitations, process coordination
Fundamental research, TRL 1-5	Research TRLs	Applied research, TRL 5-9
100% funding rate in both RIAs/IAs	Co-financing Rates	70% funding rate in IAs
# of proposals submitted, Success rate, amount of funding secured	KPIs, Evaluation of Success	Funding secured in relation to effort and required co-financing
Underlying theory, Scientific Excellence	Most important role	Provision of use cases, Impact

Grant Support Examples from the University of Tartu



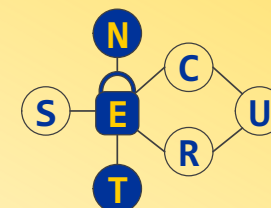
- Promotion of funding opportunities: funding newsletter; grant matching software on intranet; coordinators who can provide basic advice
- Grant Writing Unit: team of 7 consultants / 6.5 FTEs; focus on international funding schemes; services:
 - lead consulting and hourly consulting depending on the needs of researchers;
 - services are paid, except 8 hours free consulting
- ERC incentive grant / support scheme since 2021: selection of a cohort of researchers supported financially to prepare their ERC proposals
- Contemplating EIC support scheme

Grant Support Examples from Cybernetica



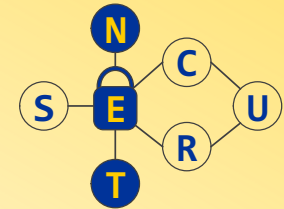
- Position of the Head of Research Partnerships established in 2025 and Sales Assistant hired in 2026 (in the Information Security Research Institute)
- Management of proposals joined and submitted (via Pipedrive)
- Focus on everything, international, domestic, grants, procurements
- Identifies promising calls, participates in matchmaking events, evaluates consortia, prepares budgets, helps identify use cases, consults with contact points

General Contributions of universities and companies to proposals (lots of overlap)



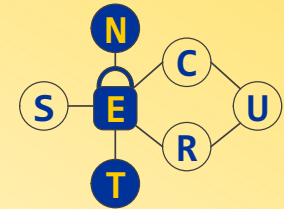
Proposal Element	Universities	Companies
Quality of Science	Scientific justification and excellence	Scientific feasibility
State of the Art	Describes leading theories and cutting-edge research	Describes alternative technology and solutions in the market
Methodology	Novelty and ambition of methodological design, research ethics	Deployment of research in “real world” use cases and validation of theory
Exploitation and Impact	Data Management, Open science, academic publications, engagement with academia, the public and contribution to policy and teaching	Engagement with industry, develops the business case and route to market, exploitation plan, IP strategy, market analysis, standardization, programming, manages pilots
Other contributions to the project	PhD/postdoc effort, methods, instruments, publication track record	Real data, pilot sites, integration environments, customers, supply chain, risk management
Typically Coordinates	Research and Innovation Actions, Marie Curie, Widening, ERC	Innovation Actions, Eurostars, EIC, EDF, other sectoral funding schemes

Beyond Horizon is another Horizon: outlook beyond 2026



- Shifting funding environment
- Both ERC and EIC budgets are proposed to increase, however more emphasis is on competitiveness
- Less money for universities?
- (Even) More need for academia-industry collaboration?
- Sovereignty, strong preference for European organizations
- Dual-use research
- Japan, Canada have joined Horizon

Impact of AI



- General system overload, and as a result a need to stand out (or introduce lotteries)
- Changing roles in proposal writing:
 - Grant writing vs grant consulting: automation of text generation and editing; more emphasis on coordination and relationship building
 - Need for checking information rather than generating text – who is responsible if AI makes a mistake?
- “Specialized” grant writing tools are quickly multiplying