NCP Society

How to write a good Impact section in Horizon Europe Cluster 2: Section logic, Tips & Examples

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Background: Preparing Horizon Europe

Ex-post analysis of Horizon 2020 main conclusions:

- Improve the conception of the Framework Programme
- Absence of a clear and solid intervention logic
- Too many objectives
- Overarching aims of the programme not adequately reflected in its specific objectives
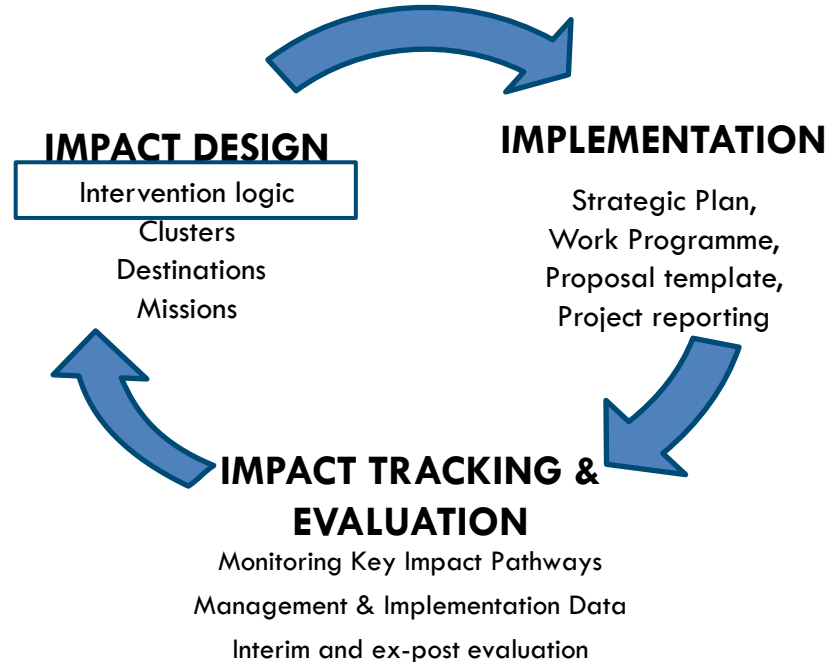
Source: European Commission 2018

*"The future programme will implement a more sophisticated approach to **impact**, tracking progress in the **short, medium and long-term**, and will **exploit and disseminate results** more effectively."*

Carlos Moedas, EU Commission for Science, Research and Innovation
(2014-2019)

Horizon Europe: An impact-oriented Programme

IMPACT DESIGN

Intervention logic

Clusters

Destinations

Missions

IMPLEMENTATION

Strategic Plan,
Work Programme,
Proposal template,
Project reporting

IMPACT TRACKING & EVALUATION

Monitoring Key Impact Pathways

Management & Implementation Data

Interim and ex-post evaluation

Source: European Commission

What is an intervention logic?

Intervention logic:

"The **reasoning or reason behind** how a body (e.g. the European Commission), **thinks about the way an "intervention"**, **such as a Programme** (e.g. the current European Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, Horizon Europe), **an action** (i.e. research project), or **a measure** will **solve the challenge** addressed, **and** how it will **deliver the expected impacts**."

Impact as desired "change"

- A particular **"theory of change"** is embedded in the logic of the Horizon Europe Programme

- This theory envisions **impact** (i.e. "change") that is **scientific, societal, and technological** in nature and takes place in European society

- Impact/change **arises from projects** funded under the Programme

- Expected impact starts with the **research results/outputs** of the **projects** funded

Horizon Europe: General Objectives

A strengthening of the scientific and technological foundations of the EU and the European Research Area (ERA)

An increase in innovativeness, better competitiveness and more employment in Europe

Science oriented towards the values and priorities of Europe and its citizens

Cluster 2 **INTERVENTION LOGIC**

SDGs

SDG 1 - no poverty
SDG 3 - good health and well-being
SDG 4 - quality education

SDG 5 - gender equality
SDG 8 - decent work and economic growth
SDG 10 - reduced inequalities

SDG 11 - sustainable cities and communities
SDG 12 - responsible consumption and production
SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions

EC PRIORITIES	EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL	EUROPE FIT FOR DIGITAL AGE	NEW PUSH FOR EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY	STRONGER IN THE WORLD	AN ECONOMY THAT WORKS FOR THE PEOPLE	PROTECT OUR EUROPEAN WAY OF LIFE

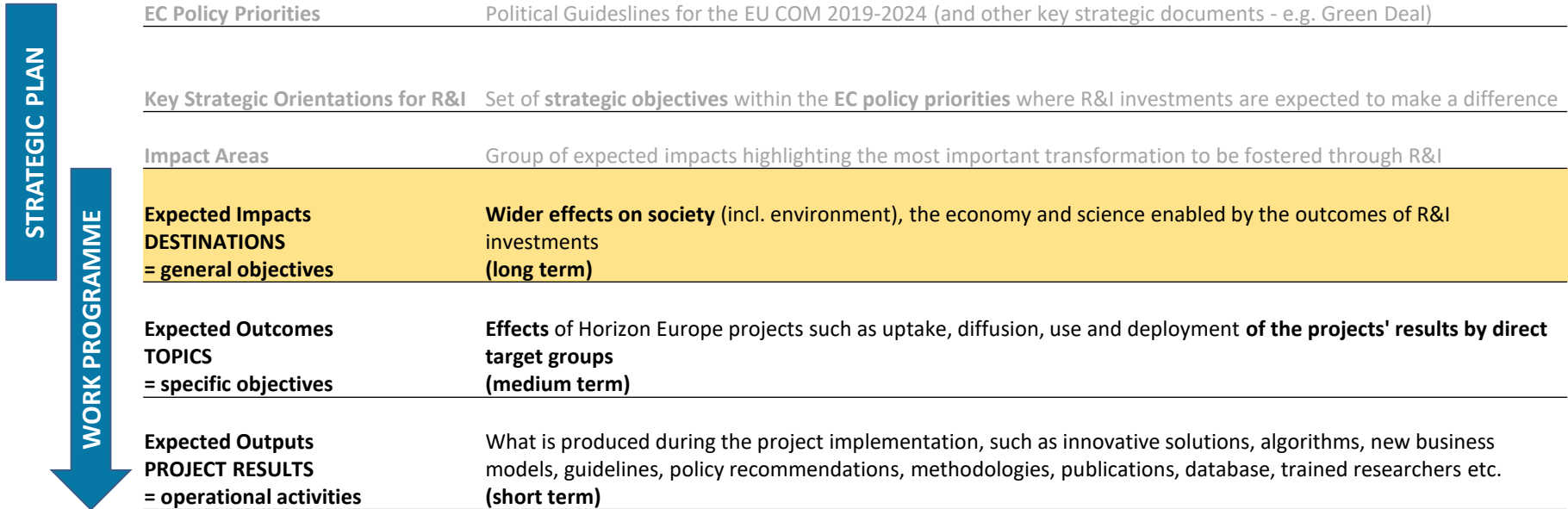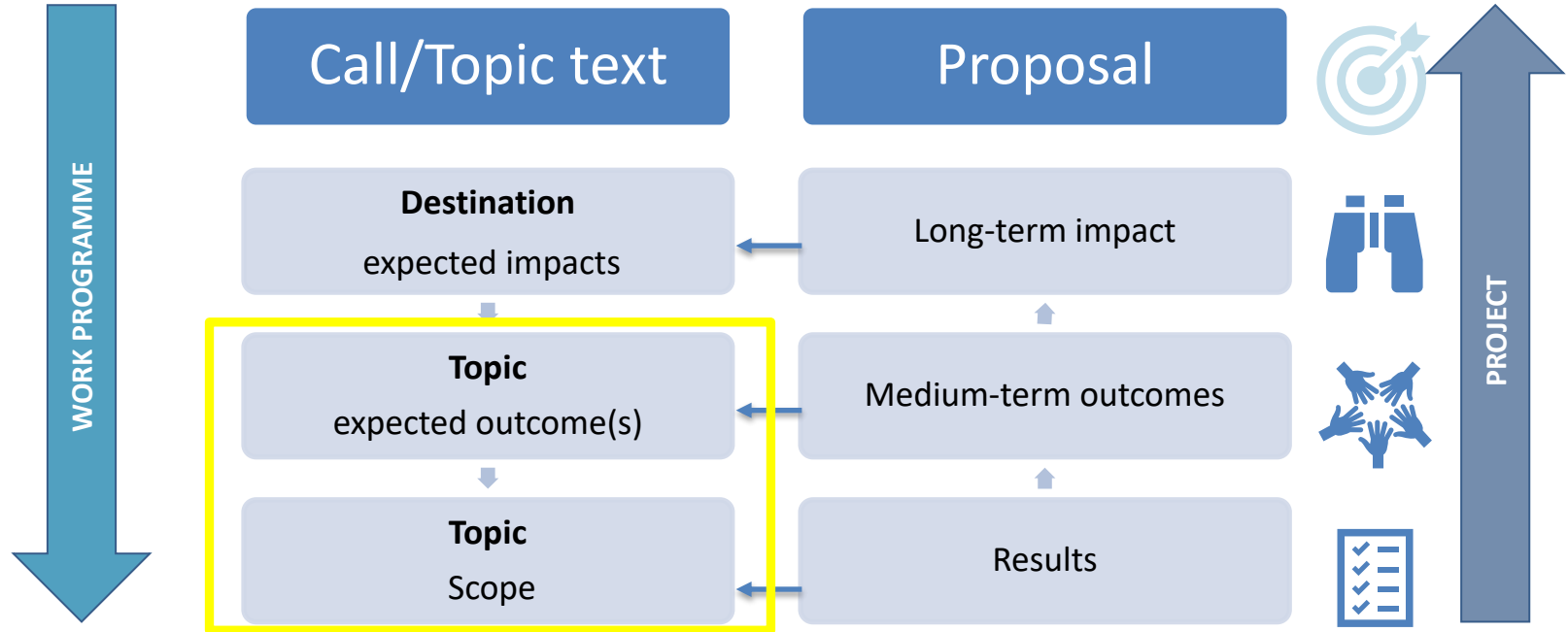| KEY STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS (KSO) FOR R&I	KSO A: Promoting an open strategic autonomy by leading the development of key digital and enabling technologies, sectors and value chains	KSO D: Creating a more resilient, inclusive and democratic European society		
IMPACT AREAS	COMPETITIVE AND SECURE DATA ECONOMY	HIGH QUALITY DIGITAL SERVICES FOR ALL	A RESILIENT EU PREPARED FOR EMERGING THREATS	A SECURE AND OPEN EU SOCIETY	INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND NEW JOB OPPORTUNITIES
MAIN CHALLENGE	• Cultural Heritage is facing huge challenges (climate change, pollution, natural or man-made disasters, looting and illicit trafficking, lack of finance or insufficient valorisation) • Europe's cultural production lacks behind in international competitiveness, despite its high quality and quantity		• Democracies are more fragile and more vulnerable than in the past • Levels of trust in the political institutions of democracy are in decline • Multilateral global governance is under historic stress	• Raising inequalities, challenges in the EU's employment, education and social, including digital, inclusion policies • Global shocks on economy and labour market • Demographic change and ageing societies • Governance of asylum, migration and integration	
R&I EXPECTED IMPACTS	8. Full potential of cultural heritage, arts and culture and creative sectors are unleashed		7. Democratic governance is reinvigorated by improving the accountability, transparency, effectiveness and trustworthiness of rule of law based institutions and policies	9. Social and economic resilience and sustainability	10. Inclusive growth through evidence-based policies for employment, education, social fairness and inequalities, including in response to the socio-economic challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic

Source: European Commission

Impact in Horizon Europe: From policy level to Work Programme

STRATEGIC PLAN	EC Policy Priorities	Political Guideslines for the EU COM 2019-2024 (and other key strategic documents - e.g. Green Deal)
	Key Strategic Orientations for R&I	Set of **strategic objectives** within the **EC policy priorities** where R&I investments are expected to make a difference
	Impact Areas	Group of expected impacts highlighting the most important transformation to be fostered through R&I
WORK PROGRAMME	**Expected Impacts** **DESTINATIONS** **= general objectives**	**Wider effects on society** (incl. environment), the economy and science enabled by the outcomes of R&I investments **(long term)**
	Expected Outcomes **TOPICS** **= specific objectives**	**Effects** of Horizon Europe projects such as uptake, diffusion, use and deployment **of the projects' results by direct target groups** **(medium term)**
	Expected Outputs **PROJECT RESULTS** **= operational activities**	What is produced during the project implementation, such as innovative solutions, algorithms, new business models, guidelines, policy recommendations, methodologies, publications, database, trained researchers etc. **(short term)**

From Work Programme to application

WORK PROGRAMME

Call/Topic text

Proposal

PROJECT

Call/Topic text	Proposal
Destination expected impacts	Long-term impact
Topic expected outcome(s)	Medium-term outcomes
Topic Scope	Results

Application template: Impact terminology defined

Pathway to impact	<u>Logical steps</u> towards the achievement of <u>**the expected impacts of the project over time**</u>**, in particular** <u>**beyond the duration of a project**</u>**. A pathway begins** with **the projects' results, to** their **dissemination, exploitation and communication, contributing to the expected outcomes in the work programme topic, and ultimately to the wider scientific, economic and societal impacts of the work programme destination.**
Results (outputs)*	What is <u>**generated during the project implementation**</u>. This **may include**, for example, **know-how, innovative solutions**, algorithms, proof of feasibility, **new business models**, **policy recommendations, guidelines**, prototypes, demonstrators, **databases and datasets**, **trained researchers**, new infrastructures, **networks**, etc. Most project results (inventions, scientific works, etc.) are 'Intellectual Property', which may, if appropriate, be protected by formal 'Intellectual Property Rights'.
Outcome	The <u>**expected effects**</u>, **over** <u>**the medium term**</u>**, of projects supported under a given topic.** The <u>**results of a**</u> <u>**project**</u> should <u>**contribute to these outcomes**</u>**, fostered** in particular **by the dissemination and exploitation measures** (including **the uptake, diffusion, deployment, and/or use of the project's results by direct target groups**). Outcomes generally occur during or shortly after the end of the project.

What are Key Impact Pathways?
Key Impact Pathways (KIPs):

- A **novelty** (new feature) in Horizon Europe

- <u>Allows</u> **policymakers & wider public gain regular insights** into the **effects and benefits** of the Programme on European science, the economy, and wider society

- <u>Helps</u> the European Commission: **monitor, capture, and communicate the difference made** in relation to 3 key impact objectives and their 9 (total) KIPs **during and <u>after</u>** Horizon Europe

- <u>Allows</u> **researchers** (scientists and other stakeholders recognized as part of HE research community) **to tell their own stories** on **how their research can make a difference** from:

> **project results → potential stakeholder uptake → potential broader, longer-term impact ("changes") in/on society that are scientific, societal, and/or technological/economic in nature**

The 9 Key Impact Pathways (KIPs)

HE Impact Category	Key Impact Pathway indicators (KIP)
Scientific Impact	• Creating high-quality new knowledge • Strengthening human capital in R&I • Fostering diffusion of knowledge and Open Science
Societal Impact	• Addressing EU policy priorities & global challenges through R&I • Delivering benefits & impact via R&I missions • Strengthening the uptake of R&I in society
Technological/ Economic Impact	• Generating innovation-based growth • Creating more and better jobs • Leveraging investments in R&I

Useful background information (publication)

- "Study to support the monitoring and evaluation of the Framework Programme for research and innovation along Key Impact Pathways: Indicator methodology and metadata handbook" (2022, Nixon)
- Describes KIPs and provides enlightening background on their use and relevance to projects funded under Horizon Europe

Source: European Commission 2022

Key Impact Pathways (KIPs): The importance of assessing the impact of R & I

Horizon Europe programme analysis
(europa.eu)

Key Impact Pathways (KIPs)—a Cluster 2 example

Pathway 8. The full potential of cultural heritage, arts and cultural and creative sectors as a driver of sustainable innovation and a European sense of belonging is realised through a continuous engagement with society, citizens and economic sectors as well as through better protection, restoration and promotion of cultural heritage

Contributes to impact category:
Technological/economic impact

Storyline for KIP 8: "Horizon Europe **generates more and better jobs**, initially in the projects themselves, and then through the exploitation of the results of their diffusion into the economy."

Legislation: HE Programme objectives & KIPs	Project Results ("outputs") (short-term)	Expected Outcome (medium-term)	Expected Impact (long-term)
Strategic Plan: EU Policy priorities & R & I Strategic Orientations			Full potential of cultural heritage, arts and culture and creative sectors are unleashed
Work Programme: Destination & Topics		Evidence of the role of the CCIs as drivers of innovation in other economic sectors such as industry and services.	To demonstrate the full potential of cultural heritage, arts and cultural and creative sectors as a driver of sustainable innovation.
HE project: project results, i.e. "outputs"	4 creative collaborative geographical areas are identified where the developing of cross-sectoral cultural and creative industry networks can have an impact on tourism or gaming industry	Industry networks sustained in the 4 locations beyond the time of the project and adopted in at least 3 other locations	Models of cooperation with cultural and creative industries become common for the development of sustainable innovations in other sectors

The Impact Section in Cluster 2 – Tips & Good Practice Examples

How to think about your research project

For purposes of research carried out under Horizon Europe Cluster 2, think of your project as:

1. a collaborative effort

2. a set of executed interventions (i.e. planned activities)

3. carried out over an established timeline and budget

4. intended to achieve a distinct result by resolving an associated problem

Source: USAID Project Design Guidance (2011), pg. 9

Step 1: Understand what you must respond to

1. **<u>CAREFULLY</u>** read (and re-read) the Cluster 2 Introduction (found at beginning of Work Programme) to understand research-orientations of this cluster and to learn which types of general **LONG-TERM IMPACTS** your research must contribute to
    a. **Write out** these LONG-TERM IMPACTS on a separate piece of paper/in a separate Word/Excel file
2. Repeat step 1 for the <u>respective DESTINATION introduction</u> to which your topic belongs—**write out** the **EXPECTED IMPACT** listed (EXPECTED IMPACT=GOAL OF EXPECTED OUTCOMES)
3. Write out **EXPECTED OUTCOMES** of your selected topics
4. Write out **expected relevant stakeholders/target groups** (consider all levels—local/regional/national/international, ages, etc.) for your topic
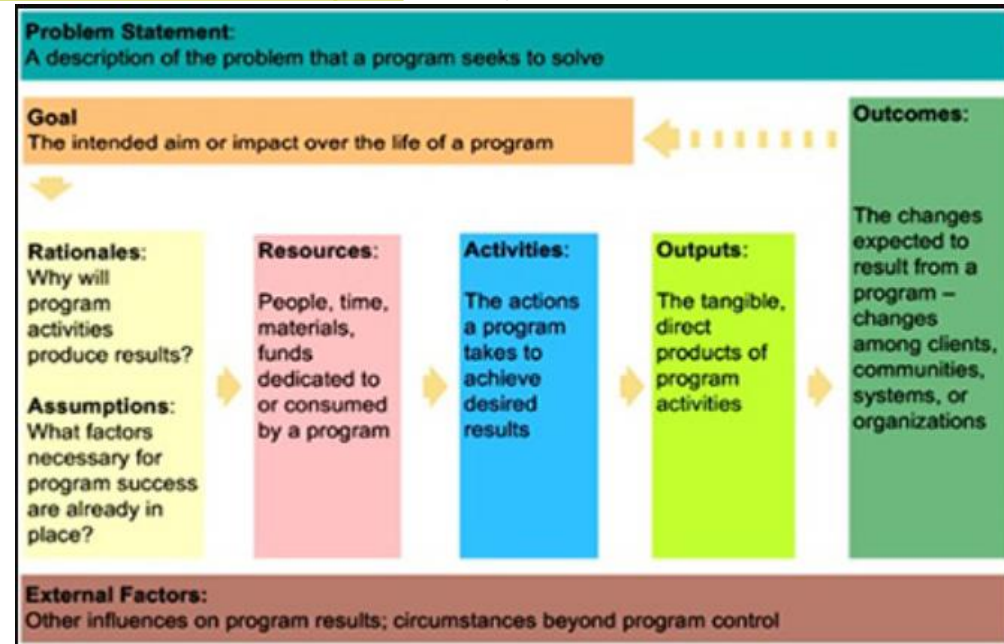
Step 2: Decide how you will respond—designing your project

1. **USE** an **<u>analytical planning tool</u>** (e.g. Logical Framework ("LogFrame"), Logic Model, or Theory of Change; HE Summary Table 2.3) to brainstorm and identify/conceptualize:
   a. potential project objectives, outputs, indicators, and corresponding activities/interventions to help know how project will contribute to stated Horizon Europe expected outcomes and impacts
   b. <u>BE CONCRETE</u>! Include ALL POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES including communication, dissemination, and exploitation activities as they related to EACH relevant target (stakeholder) group of project
   c. List qualitative AND quantitative indicators (KPIs) the project will set and monitor during project runtime (including for communication/dissemination/exploitation)

"Logic Model" (a type of Logical Framework Analysis tool)

Helps to:

- draw together all key components of a planned activity into a **clear set of statements;** provides **a convenient overview** of a project

- sets up a **framework for monitoring and evaluation** where planned and actual results can be compared

- **anticipates** project implementation and **helps plan out** intervention ("impact") activities

Problem Statement:
A description of the problem that a program seeks to solve

Goal
The intended aim or impact over the life of a program

Outcomes:
The changes expected to result from a program – changes among clients, communities, systems, or organizations

Rationales:
Why will program activities produce results?

Assumptions:
What factors necessary for program success are already in place?

Resources:
People, time, materials, funds dedicated to or consumed by a program

Activities:
The actions a program takes to achieve desired results

Outputs:
The tangible, direct products of program activities

External Factors:
Other influences on program results; circumstances beyond program control

Source: What is a LogFrame? | American University Online

The theory of change defined

- A **methodology** for: **planning/participation/adaptive management/evaluation** used to **promote social change** (e.g. by companies, research, and **government sectors)**

- **Explains process of change** by **outlining causal links in an initiative** (i.e. programme or project)
    - **Causal linkages** = an initiative's **short-term**, **intermediate (mid-term)**, and **long(er)-term** (**expected**) **outcomes**!!!

- Identified changes = (so-called) **"outcome pathways"** of the initiative—this **mapping shows** the **logical relationship between the hoped for changes, the chronological flow** taking place between the changes, and **the way** the changes **feedback into** one another

Step 3: Follow the application template to structure your impact section

1. <u>Structure</u> your impact section **using the headings** used **in the HE application template** (e.g. "2.1 Project's pathways toward impact", "2.1.1 Contribution of project results towards the expected outcomes and wider impacts", …)—RESPOND TO ALL LISTED
   1. Make subheadings using topics listed under main sections (i.e. baselines, benchmarks, assumptions listed under "scale and significance")
2. <u>Refer</u> to expected outcomes **explicitly** (see "Helpful formulations slide) in your narrative of your project's pathways to impact
3. <u>Use</u> **illustrations** to **show logical steps** to highlight how your project will contribute to the specific mid-term outcomes & expected impacts (e.g. a table with columns listing target group, relevant project result, expected outcome, expected impact)

Formulating/wording your impact section successfully 1(1/2)

Such wording can help to convince evaluators (samples):

"XXX's four project objectives stated in Excellence section 1.1 coincide directly with the objectives of Destination 3 of the Cluster 2 Work Programme, and project results will directly contribute to the expected outcomes, by developing innovative tools

"XXX seeks to achieve longer-term impact on the overall quality of policy to combat loneliness in the EU, by making shorter-term impacts in the form of: a) researchers and policymakers having more and better access to databases containing current research on this topic; b) more networking opportunities between experts and policymakers so that they can learn from one another."

"The project will work toward these impact goals through direction contribution to the five expected outcomes listed in the topic text describing the setting-up and facilitation of a representative network of experts, stakeholders an policymakers.

[LUMP SUM] "XXX will contribute to the expected outcomes of this topic on the basis of activities planned in 12 work packages, 8 of which are thematic in nature, and 4 of which are overarching work packages."

Formulating/wording your impact section successfully (2/2)

Such wording can help to convince evaluators:

"Work package activities are designed to create targeted impacts, based on the project's identified project groups."

"We give careful consideration to the barriers to reaching members of online extremist chat groups on the assumption of…"

A mixture of qualitative and quantitative indicators will be used to help monitor the impact of the project's planned activities.

A separate set of key performance indicators have been developed for communication, dissemination and exploitation activities.

USE KEYWORDS:

- Use words and phrases like: output, outcomes, pathway, "pave the way", "pathway to X", activities design to do/meet/achieve

Questions?