

OTHER CALLS

Fast Track to Innovation (FTI)

H2020-EIC-FTI-2018-2020

Who should apply to FTI, the Fast Track to Innovation?

Are you looking for partners that can help you with a fast go-to-market of an industry-driven, innovative concept that has strong potential to make your company grow and scale-up?

Do you see co-creation or open innovation as ways to advance your innovation cycle and enter the market within three years?

Are you looking for substantial funding to test, demonstrate and validate your innovation with users before full commercial roll-out, potentially via a spin-off company or a joint venture?

Then FTI is the scheme for you.

Innovation is fostered when new ideas can emerge and easily translate into socio-economic value, shaping new markets and laying the foundations of a stronger, high-tech industrial base for Europe.

Working together, partners with complementary backgrounds, knowledge and skills, in both new and established value-chains, can turn ideas into world-beating products, processes and services that tackle societal challenges.

FTI accelerates the market uptake of ground-breaking innovations by providing funding in an open, accessible scheme that nurtures ideas from consortia of innovators of all types and sizes from across Europe.

Participation by industry — defined as private-for-profit organisations — is mandatory; industry is best-placed to ensure the due commercial exploitation of the innovation developed; in addition, company growth and development in order to strengthen Europe's industrial leadership are explicitly pursued with FTI support.

Principles and funding of FTI

FTI supports actions undertaking innovation from the demonstration stage through to market uptake, including activities such as piloting, test-beds, systems validation in real-world working conditions, validation of business models, pre-normative research, and standard-setting.

The maximum EU contribution per action is €3 million (funding rate: 70% for for-profit entities; 100% for not-for-profit entities).

FTI targets relatively mature, ground-breaking new technologies, concepts, processes and business models that need final development to be able to shape a new market and achieve wider deployment.

If your proposal involves technological innovation, your consortium should declare that the technology or the technologies concerned are at least at Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 6. The intention will be to bring the TRL up to 8 for technological innovations and to an analogous level of maturity for non-technological innovations during the lifetime of the FTI action. TRLs are described in [General Annex G of the work programme](#).

FTI actions are encouraged to be interdisciplinary, cutting across different sectors and technologies. Actions supporting innovative concepts that have

the potential to disrupt or to create new markets are particularly welcome.

In your proposal, you should:

- ☐ Specify the intended outcome and describe key performance indicators and success criteria.
- ☐ Make reference to and incorporate a business plan clearly describing the market potential, business opportunities for participants, measures to enhance the probability of eventual commercial take-up, and a credible commercialisation strategy that identifies next steps and specifies other actors to be involved.
- ☐ Pay particular attention to IP protection and ownership and to the possibility of commercial exploitation (often known as 'freedom to operate').
- ☐ Specify the expected impact in terms of competitiveness and growth of the business partners in the consortium, measured in terms of turnover and job creation.
- ☐ Clearly describe the expected impact in both qualitative and quantitative terms, with factors such as time sensitivity and international competitiveness considered in the light of the technology field, innovation area and industry sectors concerned.

The time to initial market take-up should be no more than 3 years from the start of your FTI action.

In very well-justified cases linked to the specific characteristics of a particular innovation field or industry sector, the time to initial market take-up could be longer.

Possible impacts on sustainability or climate change, in particular, or on other cross-cutting objectives of Horizon 2020, must be highlighted.

Participation from industry in your consortium is mandatory. Universities and research and technology organisations can also participate. Actors with an important role in commercialisation are encouraged to take part, such as cluster organisations, end-users, industry associations, incubators, investors, and the public sector. Including start-ups with ground-breaking ideas that could create new markets is encouraged.

Conditions for the Call FTI

Type of funding: Innovation Action

Opening date, deadlines, indicative budgets

Opening date: 07 November 2017	Deadline of cut-offs <i>All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time</i>
	21 February 2018 31 May 2018 23 October 2018 ----- 21 February 2019 23 May 2019 22 October 2019 ----- 19 February 2020 09 June 2020 27 October 2020
	The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening. The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.

<i>Budget of the FTI⁵⁷</i>	€ millions		
	2018	2019	2020
Overall indicative budget	100.00	100.00	100.00
<i>divided equally between cut-off dates in each year</i>			

Who can benefit from FTI funding?

The **eligibility conditions** described in [General Annex C of the work programme](#) apply, with the following exceptions:

- Participation of three to no more than five different legal entities, independent of each other, in a consortium.
- Allocation of at least 60% of the overall budget to consortium partner(s) from industry; *or* a minimum of 2 industry partners out of a consortium of 3 or 4; *or* a minimum of 3 industry partners out of a consortium of 5.
- Requested EU contribution not more than €3 million.
- All consortium members established in EU Member States or in [countries associated to Horizon 2020](#).

What are the requirements for an FTI proposal to be admissible?

The **admissibility conditions** described in [General Annex B of the work programme](#) apply.

How long should an FTI proposal be?

The maximum length of a proposal is **30 pages** (proposal description, sections 1 to 3).

Evaluation rules for the FTI

Award criteria, scoring and threshold

The criteria, scoring and threshold described in [General Annex H of the work programme](#) apply, with the following exceptions:

- Evaluation scores are awarded for each criterion. Each criterion is scored from 0 to 5. Scores with a resolution of one decimal place may be awarded.

⁵⁷ The budget amounts for the 2020 budget are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the draft budget for 2020 after the adoption of the budget 2020 by the budgetary authority or, if the budget is not adopted, as provided for in the system of provisional twelfths.

- The threshold for the criteria 'Impact' and 'Excellence' is 4. The threshold for the criterion 'Quality and efficiency of the implementation' is 3. The overall threshold, meaning the sum of the three individual scores, is 13.
- The consensus score of a proposal at the level of the three evaluation criteria is the mean (average) of the separate scores given by each evaluator. The overall consensus score is the weighted sum of these separate scores.
- The consensus report comprises the individual reports or key extracts from them, and will provide a summary of the main weaknesses of your proposal.
- The aspects to be considered for each evaluation criterion are set out below.

<i>Impact</i>
50% WEIGHTING
The objectives of the proposed action are in line with the expected impacts of the FTI, notably fast development, commercial take-up and/or wide deployment of innovative solutions, time to initial market take-up, leveraging of private investment in research and/or innovation . In addition, in line with the objectives of the European Innovation Council Pilot, proposals that can create a new market are particularly sought after.
The proposed innovation will lead to enhanced innovation capacity of the consortium partners, and in particular of the industry partners .
The proposed innovation/solution has a clear European or global dimension, in the sense that it is set to create substantial demand from European and global markets and/or can create a new market or disrupt an existing one at European or global level , which is well documented and supported with evidence on customer/user/market needs that can be translated into sales. The proposal provides a realistic and convincing analysis of the targeted market(s) and client/user base and how the innovation will meet their needs.
The way the project will strengthen the growth/ scale-up and competitiveness of the industry partners involved is well documented.
Framework conditions such as regulation and standards, market size, prospects for growth, competitive edge and intended positioning of the solution towards possible others (competitor analysis) are documented, and the outlook can be described as positive for market launch within 3 years' of time.
The commercialisation plan is realistic and convincing – containing a clear description of the new business opportunity and the way to capitalise on it. The plan includes effective measures to exploit and disseminate the action's results (including with respect to IPR management and standards). There is a broader strategy for knowledge management and protection with regards to the proposed innovation/solution, ensuring "freedom to operate" . Key stakeholders that can help with market introduction are identified, and a convincing strategy to get them on board exists. Communication, marketing and sales efforts are planned in a coordinated way, on the basis of a realistic timetable, and fit into a solid commercial strategy.
Based on the provided market analysis and the projected commercialisation strategy, the likely return on investment of the proposed innovation (for instance in the form of

projected rapid scale-up leading to job creation and/or company growth) is sufficiently attractive to justify EU funding under FTI.

The proposed innovation is expected to generate a positive **impact at the European level other than economic** (societal, environmental, scientific, etc.). Wherever appropriate, the minimisation of impacts on climate and the environment is pursued.

The proposed **financing plan** for further roll-out of the innovation is realistic and convincing and offers a sufficient guarantee and coverage to allow for further scale-up of the action and companies involved.

Excellence

25% WEIGHTING

The **objectives** of the proposal are defined **in a clear and pertinent way**, support Horizon 2020 objectives, and are directed towards fast, wide market uptake.

The proposed activities to be executed will contribute to a **credible, realistic and optimal development of the innovation** to the level of market uptake.

The underlying, jointly developed business innovation concept of the proposed innovation is sound, and has already been tested in an operational/production environment. It has a potential to **bring important progress to or revolutionise an existing industrial sector, business practice and/or societal challenge**.

The proposed innovation is ambitious and is set to **add substantial value to Europe (e.g. considerably contribute to Europe's industrial leadership or the solution of Horizon 2020 societal challenges)**, and this is well identified and elaborated in the proposal. Game-changing ideas or breakthrough innovations are particularly sought after.

A high degree of novelty comes with a high chance of either success or failure.

The proposed innovation has successfully been tested in an operational or production environment (stage of development at TRL 6 or similar for non-technological innovations) and **can move to market take-up (B2B or B2C) within maximum 36 months**.

The proposal demonstrates that **the intrinsic quality of the innovation will be significantly higher than current state-of-the-art solutions**, in terms of value for money, problems solved, new applications, sustainability, etc.

Quality and efficiency of implementation

25% WEIGHTING

The **work plan is coherent and effective**. It takes into account the project's ambition and objectives, includes a realistic and relevant time-frame, and refers to a sound and comprehensive implementation plan, in particular in relation to major deliverables. Tasks and resources are allocated in an appropriate and cost-effective way.

The proposal demonstrates that the **partners** of the consortium are **complementary**, and **together have what it takes** (personnel, facilities, skills, networks, access to markets...) **to deliver on ground-breaking innovation and fast, wide market uptake**. Implementation risks and threats are well identified; the proposal contains a **risk mitigation plan**, with detailed actions.

Both the **organisational framework/governance structure** underpinning the action and the **decision-making processes** are established in a **clear and efficient** way.

Evaluation procedure

The procedure for setting a priority order for proposals with the same score is given in [General Annex H of the work programme](#). The full evaluation procedure is described in the relevant [guide](#) published on the Funding & Tender Portal.

Consortium agreement

Members of consortium are required to conclude a consortium agreement, in principle prior to the signature of the grant agreement.

Indicative timetable for evaluation and grant agreement signature

- Information about the outcome of the evaluation: maximum 3 months after the corresponding cut-off date set out above.
- Indicative date for the signing of grant agreements: maximum 6 months from the final date for submission.