



Department of  
**Enterprise, Trade  
and Investment**  
[www.detini.gov.uk](http://www.detini.gov.uk)



---

# Horizon 2020

---

Northern Ireland Action Plan 2013

---

The Framework Programme for Research & Innovation

---



This page is purposefully blank

Department of Enterprise,  
Trade and Investment

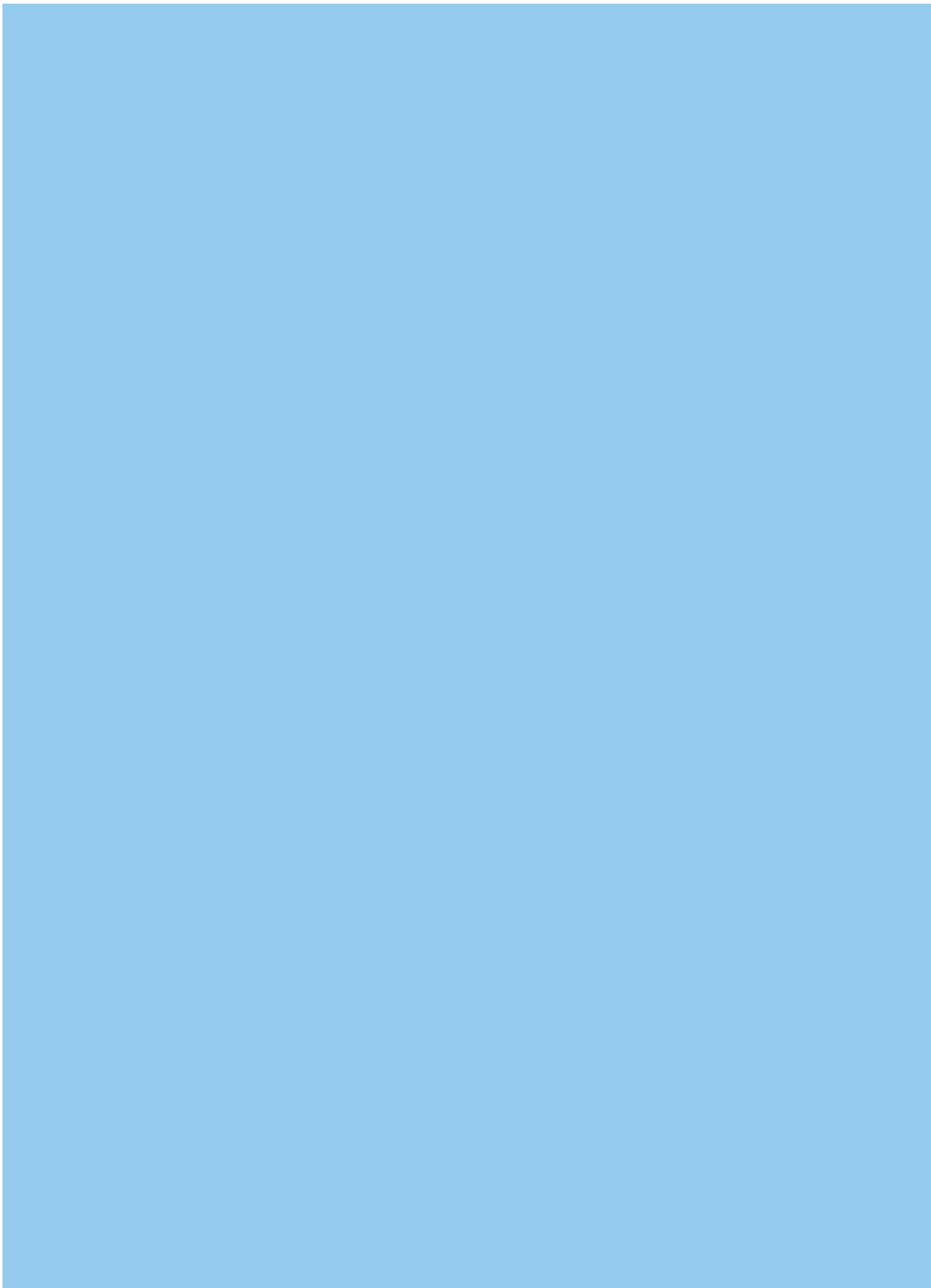
---

# Horizon 2020

---

Northern Ireland Action Plan 2013

---



# Introduction

This Action Plan details a series of key actions to be undertaken during 2013 that will ensure that NI researchers across academia, industry and the public sector have the necessary levels of support to be successful in Horizon 2020. The actions have been agreed with key stakeholders who have been involved in Framework Programme 7 (FP7) and builds on the progressive work which has already been undertaken following the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) led review of FP7 support mechanisms. This includes the appointment of a Northern Ireland Horizon 2020 Manager along with the establishment by the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) and DETI of a £1.8m EU Higher Education Support Fund and the funding of a contact point role within the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD).

The actions identified will be delivered by both the public and private sector and reflect the requirement for a more coordinated approach to Horizon 2020, so that we can align our support to the needs of all applicants in this highly competitive programme. Progress on delivery of these actions will be overseen by the NI Horizon 2020 Steering Group.

## What is Horizon 2020?

Horizon 2020 is the financial instrument implementing the Innovation Union, a Europe 2020 flagship initiative aimed at securing Europe's global competitiveness. Running from 2014 to 2020, with an estimated €80 billion budget, the EU's new programme for research and innovation is part of the drive to create new growth in Europe and is the successor to FP7. The new programme will bring together all EU Research and innovation funding into one single programme. It will therefore have a

much wider remit than FP7 incorporating a broader view of innovation.

Horizon 2020 will focus on three key priorities, as highlighted below. The figures in brackets are the indicative budget for each priority.

**Excellent Science** (€24.6 billion) will support World class science by developing, retaining and attracting leading research talent.

**Industrial Leadership** (€17.9 billion) will see strategic investments into key technologies and seek to stimulate increased innovation in Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SME) to create growth and jobs.

**Societal Challenges** (€31.7 billion) will seek to address the concerns of citizens and society which form EU policy objectives, through breakthrough solutions resulting from multi-disciplinary collaborations.

## Why is it right for Northern Ireland?

The Northern Ireland Executive continues to seek to increase the level of Research, Development and Innovation (R&D&I) carried out in NI, especially by our SME's. Programmes such as Horizon 2020 have an important role to play in stimulating investment in these areas to generate the required economic growth and job creation that are their by-products. Horizon 2020 will provide opportunities and benefits far beyond funding for research. It will provide our local companies and research institutions access to EU partners that would otherwise not be possible. It will also help raise the profile of Northern Ireland research and innovation capabilities, providing access to potential new markets and customers and developing individual researcher's skill set and project management experience.

# Actions

## Summary of the Key Actions

- 1. Creation of an NI Horizon 2020 Contact Point (NICP) network**
- 2. Development of a Horizon 2020 communications strategy**
- 3. Development of an NI Horizon 2020 website**
- 4. Development of an NI specific guide to Horizon 2020**
- 5. Appointment of an NICP with specific responsibility for SMEs**
- 6. Organise at least 10 Horizon 2020 workshops**
- 7. Increase the number of Horizon 2020 evaluators from NI**
- 8. Examine the feasibility of establishing an alternative funding mechanism(s) for organisations not currently eligible for application support**
- 9. Increase NI representation on EU groups/committees**
- 10. Development of strategies to increase European Research Council (ERC) and Marie Curie funding**
- 11. Production of a report on FP7 performance to date**

### **ACTION 1: Creation of a NI Horizon 2020**

#### **Contact Point (NICP) network**

The launch in December 2012 of the £1.8m DEL/DETI Higher Education EU Support Fund (over three years from academic year 2013/14) will facilitate the establishment of a Northern Ireland Horizon 2020 Contact Point (NICP) Network. The NICP network will be a new resource available to all potential applicants from NI.

It is aimed to have the network operational by April 2013. The network will comprise of research experts employed by both Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster in key areas such as Health, ICT, Energy etc. In addition, there will be an NICP for the societal challenge 'Food security, sustainable agriculture, marine and maritime research and the bio-economy' funded by DARD and based in AFBI and an NICP for SMEs based in Invest NI.

The NI Horizon 2020 Manager will coordinate this network to ensure effective alignment of delivery of actions.

#### **ACTION 2: Development of a Horizon 2020 communications strategy**

A communications strategy will be developed to ensure there is a coordinated and consistent message from all organisations engaged in Horizon 2020 support. There is a need to promote the opportunities under Horizon 2020 beyond the traditional R&D contacts in NI given the focus on R&D&I across a wide spectrum of thematic areas. The strategy will be developed by the NI Horizon 2020 Manager with input from the various interested bodies. The key areas to be covered include:

- Consistent message on the NI Horizon 2020 strategy
- Opportunities in Horizon 2020
- Organisation of events and workshops

- Developing a brand for the new NI Horizon 2020 Contact Point Network
- Production of a quarterly newsletter

#### **ACTION 3: Development of a NI Horizon 2020 website**

A specific NI website will be developed to provide a single point of information for Horizon 2020.

The website will include:

- contact details for NICP Network members
- links to the UK Horizon 2020 website and other relevant websites
- a calendar of events
- thematic updates from the NICPs
- case studies from successful applicants
- further details deemed appropriate to applicants

Discussions are on-going in relation to the positioning of this site. Content will be updated by both the NICP network and the NI Horizon 2020 Manager

#### **ACTION 4: Development of a NI specific guide to Horizon 2020**

A guide will be developed in a further effort to simplify issues around Horizon 2020. This will explain the process of registering and being validated with the European Commission's online system, identifying the optimal route for support, accessing web resources and knowing where to begin in the process of submitting an application. The guide will take the form of an easy-to-follow booklet and will be aimed primarily at all those new to EU R&D funding programmes.

#### **ACTION 5: Appointment of a NICP with specific responsibility for SMEs**

In light of the increased SME focus within Horizon 2020 and related budget commitments, an NICP

for SMEs role will be established. Invest NI will assume this role and will be charged with ensuring that NI companies, with a specific focus on SMEs, are kept informed of opportunities in their area and supported in developing applications. This will include SME activity across Horizon 2020, such as Leadership in Enabling and Industrial Technologies (LEIT), innovation in SMEs, as well as working closely with the NICP network across all the key research themes.

#### **ACTION 6: Organise at least 10 Horizon 2020 workshops**

During 2013 it is expected that details will be released relating to the Horizon 2020 opportunities for applicants in 2014. A series of workshops will therefore be organised to ensure potential applicants are kept fully informed of forthcoming opportunities, have the opportunity to identify partners and increase their knowledge of the application process and implementation of projects. In addition, the Republic of Ireland Presidency of the European Commission, during the first 6 months of 2013, will provide further opportunities for NI companies and researchers to engage with the EC and significantly companies and research organisations from other Member States. Given the focus on Ireland during this period, activities such as potential parallel, or follow-on, events highlighting North/South working will be investigated and taken forward in collaboration with the all-island FP7 steering group coordinated by InterTradeIreland (ITI).

#### **ACTION 7: Increase the number of Horizon 2020 evaluators from NI**

As part of the process to expand and enhance the current level of experience and expertise in the EU R&D funding area, there is a need to increase

the number of NI evaluators of EU R&D programmes. Evaluation allows access to the decision making process within the Commission and insights into perceived strengths and weaknesses of applications from an alternative perspective. An aspect of the action is to ensure that more are registered to be evaluators and to follow on that they are being put forward and promoted to the Commission to be called to evaluate. To increase the number of NI evaluators it will be necessary to:

- continue current activities in this area, such as the condition from INI on Mentoring Support
- follow through on the commitment from both universities to increase their registrations
- use the opportunities provided at the workshops to encourage registration
- ensure full details are contained within the NI Horizon 2020 Guide

#### **ACTION 8: Examine the feasibility of establishing an alternative funding mechanism(s) for organisations not currently eligible for application support**

Whilst advice and guidance to participate in EU R&D programmes is available to all, there is an acknowledged gap in financial support assisting application development for certain groups, e.g. charities or public sector organisations. The challenges that are faced in terms of time and resource are the same as for all applicants, as are the benefits to NI in terms of drawdown of EU funds, access to research excellence etc. There is a need therefore to examine the feasibility of establishing an alternative funding mechanism(s) for such organisations.



**ACTION 9: Increase NI representation on EU groups/committees**

Access to early information, key networks/partners and the ability to disseminate these details to parties within NI is critical to the ambition of increasing NI's innovation performance. As a result NI engagement in key UK and EU groups and committees can assist in delivering on this ambition and raise the level of NI visibility to the European Commission, key UK networks and potential partners. Working in partnership with the Barroso Task Force (BTF) we will seek to ensure that Northern Ireland secures access to specific Commission working groups

**ACTION 10: Development of strategies to increase European Research Council (ERC) and Marie Curie funding**

ERC is accepted as a benchmark of excellent research for any institution and will be playing a more significant role within Horizon 2020 than in FP7. The world class research that is funded will have obvious follow-on benefits for NI and also serves to attract leading researchers. It is important, therefore, that our universities and research organisations are strategically planning to engage with the ERC and support staff seeking to apply, as well as aiming to attract leading researchers from across the EU.

Similarly, under Horizon 2020, the Marie Curie programme is expected to have an increased budget. The programme aims to develop the experience and expertise of researchers, bring together key networks and also engage industry with academia. These are aims that align well with the drive to increase NI's innovation performance. Therefore to ensure we maximise NI success our universities and research

organisations need to adopt a strategic approach to their involvement.

Both ERC and Marie Curie cut across all thematic areas and as a result a joined-up approach is required across the support network.



**ACTION 11: Production of a report on FP7 performance to date**

A report on NI performance in FP7 to date will be prepared to help inform future priority areas for action. This analysis will report on issues such as funding by thematic area and sector, partner matching, success rates etc. The report will feed in to the review of existing and potential future supports, ensuring that these are targeted towards areas which represent the greatest opportunity for NI and where enhanced support is necessary.

# Timetable

The following depicts the expected timescales involved in each of the actions listed above and on occasion these are not time-bound but rather continuous activities which will develop through into 2014 and beyond

Key Actions	2013				Lead Organisation
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
1. Creation of an NI Horizon 2020 Contact Point (NICP) network	Fixed Timescale				DETI/DEL/QUB/ UU/AFBI/INI
2. Development of a Horizon 2020 communications strategy	Fixed Timescale				DETI
3. Development of an NI Horizon 2020 website	Fixed Timescale				DETI
4. Development of an NI specific guide to Horizon 2020	Fixed Timescale				DETI
5. Appointment of an NICP with specific responsibility for SMEs	Fixed Timescale				INI
6. Organise at least 10 Horizon 2020 workshops	Fixed Timescale				DETI
7. Increase the number of Horizon 2020 evaluators from NI	Continuous over the period and beyond				DETI
8. Examine the feasibility of establishing an alternative funding mechanism(s) for organisations not currently eligible for application support	Fixed Timescale				DETI
9. Increase NI representation on EU groups/committees	Continuous over the period and beyond				DETI/BTF
10. Development of strategies to increase European Research Council (ERC) and Marie Curie funding	Fixed Timescale				QUB/UU/AFBI
11. Production of a report on FP7 performance to date	Fixed Timescale				DETI

 Fixed Timescale  
 Continuous over the period and beyond



Department of

**Enterprise, Trade  
and Investment**

[www.detini.gov.uk](http://www.detini.gov.uk)

**Innovation Policy Unit**  
Department of Enterprise,  
Trade and Investment  
Netherleigh, Massey Avenue  
BELFAST BT4 2JP

**E:** [EPDAdmin@detini.gov.uk](mailto:EPDAdmin@detini.gov.uk)  
**T:** 028 9052 9413  
**F:** 028 9052 9533  
**Textphone:** 028 9052 9304  
**[www.detini.gov.uk](http://www.detini.gov.uk)**

This document is also  
available in an accessible  
format if required i.e. Braille,  
large print, audio cassette or  
in a minority ethnic language