



Public & Science, VA, responds to Horizon 2020 consultation on SwafS work programme 2016–2017

Before presenting new political initiatives or new legislative proposals, the EU Commission often holds an open consultation where citizens and organisations are invited to submit their views on a particular matter. The consultation on the Horizon 2020 Science with and for Society Work Programme 2016–2017 aims at obtaining “views and contributions from a broad constituency on the potential priorities for the ‘Science with and for Society’ work programme part covering the period 2016–2017”. The consultation is structured around eight questions. Below is VA’s answer to these questions.

1. What should be the main priorities needed to shape the next “Horizon 2020” Work Programme 2016–2017 to build an effective cooperation between science and society?

An increased focus on **creating dialogue between various stakeholders** in society through the creation of new platforms, meeting places and entry points where different actors can connect. Scientific dialogues/citizen consultations, would empower **citizens** to be involved in formulating research questions.

Informed citizens, able to take part in public discourse both on a national and European level, are needed. **Scientific literacy** must be developed in citizens of all ages. All H2020 societal challenges affect the individual citizen at some point and could be addressed from their **perspective**.

Particular attention should be paid to **underserved audiences**. Specific calls are needed to involve actors and citizens that rarely come across science-related activities and information, and increase their appetite for science-based knowledge.

The EU should work actively to involve **all types of actors** in Horizon2020. Calls should explicitly target CSOs.

The current **STEM focus must be broadened**, e.g. research careers in the humanities and social sciences should be encouraged and stimulated – interdisciplinary approaches are needed to address the Grand Challenges.

2. Which are the main barriers preventing effective cooperation between science and society?

Despite overall positive attitudes towards cooperation, one crucial element is a **lack of meeting places** and arenas where new collaborations can develop. We also encounter a lack of understanding of the **mutual benefits** of collaboration and of the necessity for a dialogical approach.

One of the main barriers to effective cooperation between researchers and societal actors occurs at an institutional level. Criteria for research funding and academic career progression to a large extent **disregard public engagement achievements**. Therefore more explicit incentives, such as earmarking a part of the research grant for dissemination, public engagement and science communication, should be introduced.

3. Which topics could be supported by the next "Horizon 2020" Work Programme 2016–2017 with regard to "Science with and for Society"?

Transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches could be encouraged by emphasising **"themes" instead of subjects**. The H2020 societal challenges are developed using a challenge-based approach, and the SwafS work programme could benefit from a thematic approach.

We would welcome a number of **specific calls**:

- A specific call to develop methods aimed at accomplishing RRI through the early and systematic involvement of citizens and different stakeholders in research and innovation processes.
- A specific call for public involvement in science/citizen science projects.
- A specific call addressing the need to investigate public attitudes towards RRI, science communication and public engagement in Europe.

4. What would you like to see as outcomes from the projects funded through the "Science with and for Society" calls for proposals 2016–2017?

We would welcome **innovative and interactive forms for dialogue**, as well as tools for developing more sustainable and long-term dialogical approaches.

Developed **tools should be freely available** for anyone wanting to run activities targeting different stakeholders and the public at large.

Also, projects should demonstrate an inclusive research process, which, in the long term, would contribute to the development of **scientifically literate citizens**.

We are convinced that a more inclusive research process would help to develop **excellent research** (evidence shows that research performed in collaboration is more widely cited).

5. How do you see international cooperation (beyond EU borders) being addressed in "Science with and for Society"?

We would welcome **increased international cooperation**, both in terms of broad consortia including non-EU members and in encouraging international comparisons, reviews and perspectives in the projects.

6. *In which priorities of "Horizon 2020" and how should science and society issues be integrated (e.g. in Excellent Science, in Industrial Leadership, in Societal Challenges)?*

We believe that science in society issues could – and should – be **addressed in all priorities**, although the level and scope of integration could vary. As a result, all proposals in H2020 should **elaborate on the intrinsic relationship** between science and society, in a way that is relevant to the specific type of action. The proposals need to be **evaluated** accordingly.

Where applicable, **wide consortia** with a range of stakeholders should be encouraged.

7. *Do you have further comments?*

European citizens should feel more included and be **explicitly invited** to have a say on research priorities and how research is conducted. This could be achieved through online consultations that explicitly take views and comments into consideration.

The present consultation is one way of including Europeans in the development of new work programmes. Similar **consultations should be undertaken regularly**. Furthermore, the EU could try other means of reaching a broad range of stakeholders – including researchers and the public at large – such as **social media, polls, or citizen deliberation processes**.