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PLAN FOR EUROPEAN UNION FUNDING 2022–2027

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1. Description

This plan describes the activities Umeå University conducts to increase the scope of European Union research funding and strengthen the University's position within the EU. In addition to the EU's key funding programme for research and innovation, Horizon Europe, the plan also covers initiatives such as the EU4Health programme and the LIFE Programme, the EU's funding instrument for the environment and climate action. It does not cover the European Structural and Investment Funds, as these are administered by other Swedish government agencies.

The plan includes a summary of the work that each responsible organisational level should be conducting in order to achieve the plan's objectives, as well as the time horizon for each activity.

2. Background

Umeå University's vision is to have a strong position internationally, nationally and regionally. This presupposes that the University is a stakeholder of high standing in the European arena and that its researchers are able to obtain a high level of funding from European financiers. This is a long-term plan intended to increase research funding to the University from the EU. Its purpose is to identify and propose activities that can help us to achieve this objective. The plan describes work over time that will be regularly reviewed with a view to making incremental changes.

Internationalisation, collaboration, gender equality and sustainability perspectives have been integrated into this policy. Due to the content and nature of this document, the student and accessibility perspectives have not been integrated.

3. Current situation and objectives

3.1. Current situation

Horizon Europe has superseded Horizon 2020 (H2020) as the EU's main funding programme for research and innovation for the period 2021–2027. Like its predecessor, the programme funds mobility, cutting-edge research and collaboration to identify solutions to prioritised societal challenges and boost industrial innovation capacity, competitiveness and sustainable growth.

Umeå University submitted 70 to 80 grant applications to Horizon 2020 each year. On average, 11 applications were successful. This places Umeå University in eleventh place among Swedish higher education institutions in terms of grants awarded. To put this in context, Umeå University is Sweden's seventh largest higher education institution measured by economic turnover. The Swedish higher education institution that received most EU funds was Karolinska Institutet (see Appendix 1 section 5.2).

Umeå University is a comprehensive university covering research and education in medicine, science and technology, social sciences, arts and humanities, and educational sciences. We conduct research into many of the EU's prioritised global challenges: health; climate, energy and mobility; food, bioeconomy, natural resources, agriculture and environment; civil security for society; and



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culture, creativity and inclusive societies. Umeå University should therefore have excellent conditions for increasing the number of grants we are awarded by the EU.

3.2. Objectives

The short-term objective is to increase the volume of grants awarded by the EU, so that in the long term Umeå University can take its place among the seven highest ranked Swedish higher education institutions in terms of EU research funding.

To achieve this objective, the quantity and quality of applications from the University's researchers must be increased. Umeå University's representation among leaders of EU cluster consortia should also be increased.

3.3. Interim objectives for faculties and Umeå School of Education

It is recommended that faculties and Umeå School of Education identify specific targets for EU research funding that they can work towards in operational plans. The purpose of defining individual, measurable targets – such as the number of applications submitted and granted each year – for each faculty and school is that opportunities for funding within Horizon Europe differ from one disciplinary research domain to the next.

If necessary, the Research Support and Collaboration Office (FOS) will be happy to assist in preparing parts of operational plans of relevance to EU funding. Targets should be followed up in both dialogue with University Management and through the faculties' and Umeå School of Education's own follow-up of operational plans. FOS will also prepare an annual report on targets and activities related to EU funding and compile data on the number of applications, grants awarded, etc. This report will be submitted to the University Management, the management of Umeå School of Education and the faculty management.

3.4. Challenges and obstacles

There are a number of challenges and obstacles to be overcome in order to achieve the stated objectives. Here are the four most commonly highlighted by researchers at Umeå University:

- The need for cofinancing in EU applications. Requirements for cofinancing vary significantly depending on which EU funds one is applying for, and may be needed to cover direct costs, premises and some joint costs.
- Time and willingness to participate in advocacy for future calls.
- The perception that EU projects are time-consuming and difficult to administer.
- Difficulties in finding current calls.

In addition to the above, there is a need for active efforts on the part of University Management, faculties and the Umeå School of Education to highlight successful projects to promote more applications and thereby more grant awards from the EU.

4. Activities

Information and support to make EU projects more attractive to researchers is fundamental to achieving the objective of increased EU funding. Researchers must be encouraged to join



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international networks and helped to identify suitable partners in an EU context. The University also needs to actively seek to influence the formulation and specialisations of calls. This demands that **the work of increasing EU funding must permeate the entire university organisation**, with activities over and above researchers' writing applications that promote applications and thus opportunities to be awarded EU grants.

During the period 2021–2025, Umeå University will invest SEK 315 million in research and education. Within the framework of this investment, the University Board has decided that from 2022 financial resources equivalent to SEK 1.8 million will be allocated annually to supporting and stimulating EU grant applications and projects. This support corresponds to two full-time equivalents (FTEs).

While there are no central funds available to researchers and teachers for EU applications and EU projects, there is nothing to prevent faculties or Umeå School of Education from providing funds should they choose to do so.

Listed below are the challenges that Umeå University should be addressing and the activities we should be undertaking in order to achieve the stated objectives:

Objective	Description	Activities and responsibilities
Identify researchers with the potential to obtain EU excellence grants.	There is currently no overview of which researchers are potential recipients of ERC funding or should participate in applications for Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions (MSCA) funding.	With the help of FOS, faculties and the Umeå School of Education are responsible for identifying excellent researchers who may qualify for ERC funding. FOS offers information meetings on ERC funding and informs potential supervisors about the Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions Postdoctoral Fellowship (MSCA-PF) and Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions Doctoral Network (MSCA-DN).
Identify interesting calls.	While there are a great number of calls available, most researchers consider the EU's funding system overcomplicated.	FOS is responsible for assisting researchers in finding appropriate calls. To this end, the office offers both group seminars and individual help.



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Objective	Description	Activities and responsibilities
Increased support during the application phase.	As things stand, all of our researchers have insufficient knowledge of how to write an EU grant application. They place too much emphasis on certain parts of the application and misjudge the needs/importance of others. A poorly formulated application may rob a perfectly a good idea of the chance to be realised.	FOS offers various types of support based on the specific needs of the researcher/teacher, such as advice on writing applications and budgets. FOS also supports researchers by informing them at an early stage about what they should include in their particular application and the purpose of each section. FOS may be able to provide earlier successful applications as examples.
Increase the number of coordinators.	At present, researchers may be reluctant to take on the role of coordinator due to the expense and lack of support.	Based on the needs of the researcher/teacher, FOS offers various types of support during both the application and project phase. This includes assistance with writing, budgeting and reporting, help with project structuring and regulations, registration in the EU Funding and Tenders Portal, reporting, etc. The Legal Affairs Office can assist with drawing up consortium agreements and other contractual issues.
Make EU projects more attractive.	EU funding is less attractive than national funding, meaning that to a certain extent researchers lack incentive to apply for EU grants.	University Management and the management of faculties and Umeå School of Education are responsible for increasing the prestige of



Objective	Description	Activities and responsibilities
		<p>EU funding, making clear the need to submit more applications and highlighting projects that are awarded EU grants.</p> <p>FOS is responsible for raising the level of knowledge about EU funding among researchers by holding seminars and providing better information on internal websites. FOS also contributes to raising the profile of successful EU projects by presenting a yearly report on EU funding granted to staff at Umeå University.</p>
<p>Increase the level of ambition among researchers to apply for EU grants.</p>	<p>At present, researchers may be reluctant to participate in EU projects due to the amount of work and expense involved.</p>	<p>The threshold for willingness to apply for EU grants must be lowered. The University's researchers need to be convinced both that EU projects can fund and facilitate a great deal of good research, and that their participation will provide a useful qualification and open many doors to future activities. This insight should be conveyed at all levels – via FOS, faculties, Umeå School of Education and departments.</p>
<p>Increased support to projects that are awarded grants.</p>	<p>Many researchers and departmental administrators regard EU projects as difficult and burdensome.</p>	<p>FOS offers university-wide support such as templates, guides,</p>



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Objective	Description	Activities and responsibilities
		<p>reporting aids and advice based on specific needs.</p> <p>The Legal Affairs Office can assist with drawing up consortium agreements and other contractual issues.</p>
Financial support for EU projects.	According to researchers themselves, the single greatest obstacle to increasing the number of applications is requirements for cofinancing of, for example, premises and joint costs.	<p>University Management will review the possibility of providing financial support for ERC and MSCA projects.</p> <p>The Planning Office has conducted a review of regulations for cofinancing joint costs. A proposal has been made that would see the so-called <i>million limit</i> removed for all EU projects. A decision by the Vice-Chancellor is expected on 1 July 2022.</p>
Join a European university alliance.	If we are to offer our students and staff better opportunities for exchanges with other European higher education institutions, we need to join a university alliance.	<p>Responsibility for deciding which higher education institutions we should ally ourselves with rests with the University Management.</p> <p>Faculties and Umeå School of Education are responsible for supporting this decision, while the International Office and FOS are responsible for assisting University Management in driving this work forwards, both internally and externally with potential partners.</p>



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Objective	Description	Activities and responsibilities
<p>Increase the University's activities in various EU arenas.</p>	<p>To better equip ourselves for future collaborations with other European parties, we must increase the University's presence in various EU arenas and platforms, with clear objectives for what Umeå University/researchers/research groups wish to achieve.</p>	<p>University Management, faculties and Umeå School of Education are responsible for stimulating dialogue within various membership organisations/advocacy platforms, as well as for raising awareness of the need to build networks.</p> <p>FOS and International Office are responsible for actively working to increase participation in the networks that exist within programmes such as Horizon Europe and Erasmus+.</p>
<p>Intelligence gathering regarding the EU.</p>	<p>We need information about current events in EU arenas.</p>	<p>FOS is responsible for continuously gathering intelligence and regularly compiling and disseminating up-to-date information to University Management and the management of faculties and Umeå School of Education directly and in newsletters.</p>



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5. Appendix 1

5.1 Background

European Union funding sources can be divided into three groups: 1) framework programmes, 2) other European programmes, and 3) national and regional cooperation programmes. While Umeå University applies for funding from all three groups, most applications are submitted to the current framework programme for research and innovation, Horizon Europe. Given the breadth of research conducted at Umeå University and applicable regulations at the University and financiers, the University's researchers will continue to apply for grants from all three groups. The extent to which this proves to be the case depends in part on the University's priorities and investments.

5.1.2 Horizon Europe

Horizon Europe is a development of the previous framework programme, Horizon 2020 (H2020). Grant applications to the framework programme can be divided into two types: 1) applications from a single or group of applicants, and 2) consortium applications (three or more parties). The type of application depends on which of the three pillars of Horizon Europe the application relates to: I) Excellent Science, II) Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness, or III) Innovative Europe. Applications to calls within Pillar II Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness, and Pillar III Innovative Europe must be submitted by a consortium, as these require collaboration. Applications to calls within Pillar I Excellent Science – especially to the ERC and Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions (MSCA) – may be submitted by a single or group of researchers.

The three pillars support the programme and it is here that most calls and investments will be implemented. Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness covers the majority of partnership programmes and EU missions. Missions are research and innovation investments specifically designed to bring resources to bear on a handful of selected societal challenges that demand innovative solutions.

Applications to the framework programme are assessed on three criteria: *excellence*, *impact* and *efficiency of implementation*. Factors that affect an application's chances of success include:

- how well the application responds to the call;
- the quality of the application (as a partner, it is not always possible to influence this);
- the constellation of the consortium behind an application (quality); and
- the ability to describe potential stakeholders and anticipated societal impact and how this is to be achieved.

There is no uniform answer as to why some of the University's applications are rejected. Presumably, fierce competition and high demands are one reason.

Broad support is available to researchers and teachers intending to apply for EU funding within Horizon Europe. During H2020, Umeå University's efforts to enhance the quality of applications in terms of how they were written and budgeted was largely adapted to and aimed at supporting ERC and MSCA applications (unlike other applications, ERC applications require a letter of support from the university). While the University will continue to work on enhancing the quality of ERC



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and MSCA applications during the Horizon Europe period, support will also be strengthened for coordinators and consortium applications.

5.1.3 Directorates-General: Various European centres and initiatives

The European Commission is organised into policy departments, known as Directorates-General (DGs), which are responsible for different policy areas. There are a number of research and innovation programmes linked to these areas that offer funding opportunities outside the framework of Horizon Europe in the form of grants, contracts and tenders. This funding can be sought for anything from education and research to inquiries. The form of this funding varies a great deal in terms of whether it covers all direct and indirect costs or just some.

5.1.4 European Territorial Cooperation

National and regional cooperation programmes such as European Structural and Investment Funds are not included in the Plan for European Union Funding, as these are administered by other Swedish government agencies. They are only addressed here in the interests of describing an overall picture.

In order to promote the harmonic economic, social and territorial development of the European Union as a whole, the European Commission supports a number of national, cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation programmes. These programmes are developed by individual Member States and/or regions and financed through either the European Regional Development Fund or the Cohesion Fund.

The programmes address issues such as innovation, trade and industry, digitisation, climate, health and transport. Their purposes vary from developing new products for export to improving the state of the marine environment. Work may be conducted nationally or across borders to develop affected regions; however, what all projects have in common is that they require a large share of cofinancing, often over 50%.

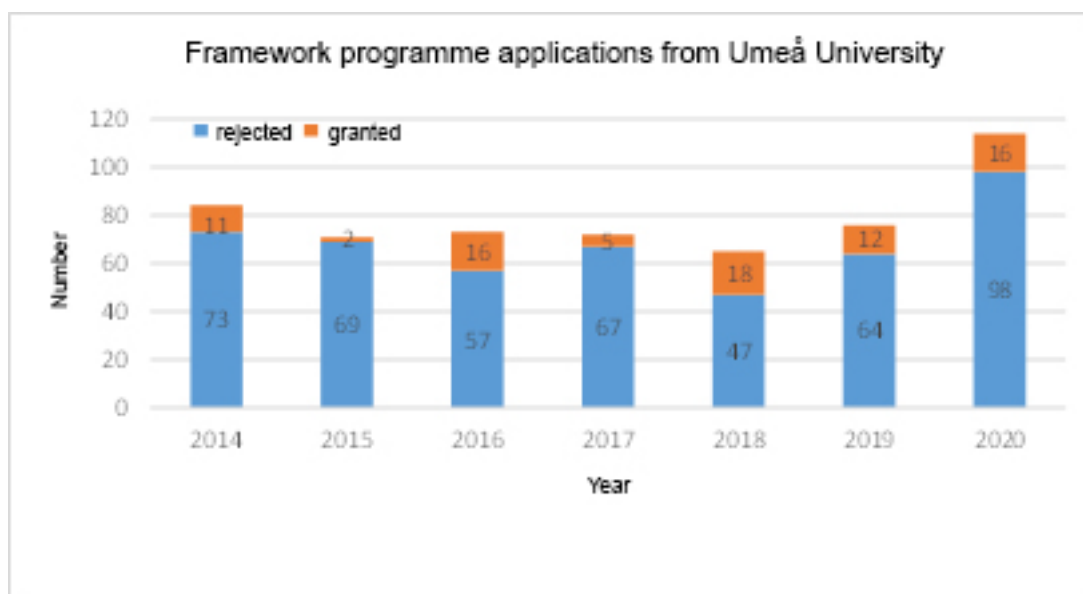
There are a handful of programmes from which funds can be sought, but this requires constant vigilance for calls. Thus far, central support for applications has been limited to budget reviews and help with various certificates. In order to increase knowledge of these funds, FOS arranges seminars attended by representatives of financiers.



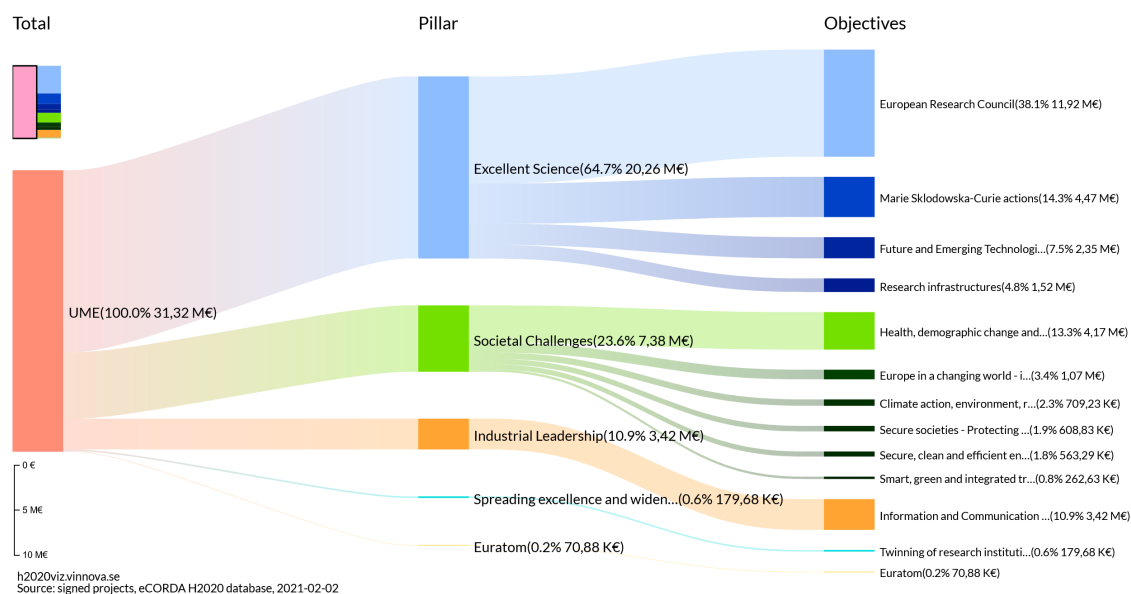
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5.2 Funds obtained from the framework programme by Umeå University since 2014

The diagram below shows the total number of applications by and grants awarded to Umeå University during H2020 (2014–2020). There is also a table showing grants awarded to the 20 foremost higher education institutions in Sweden.



The diagram below shows the H2020 programmes Umeå University researchers/teachers obtained funding from during the period 2014–2020.





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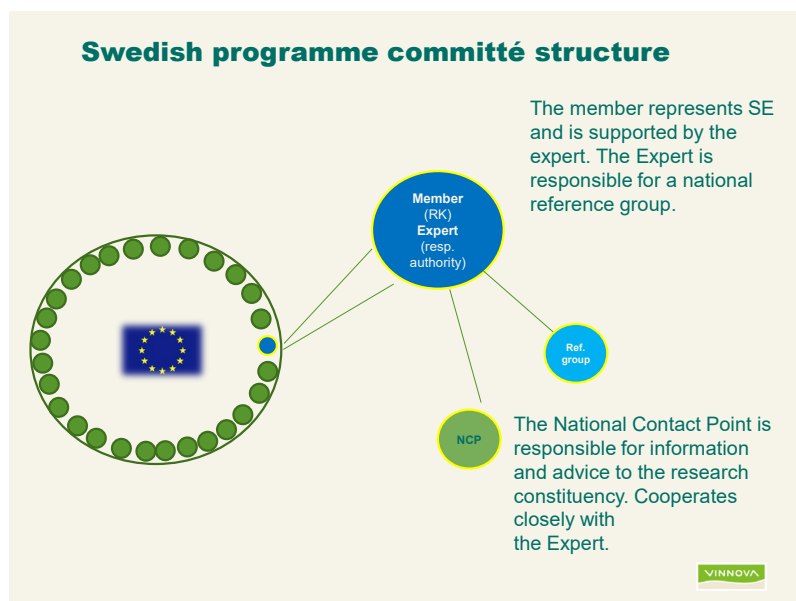
The table below ranks Swedish higher education institutions by the amount of funding in euros obtained from H2020.

Ranking	Institution	Value of H2020 grants awarded (€)
1	Karolinska Institutet	188,423,388
2	Lund University	173,153,160
3	Uppsala University	151,854,598
4	KTH Royal Institute of Technology	150,624,804
5	Chalmers University of Technology	148,504,091
6	Stockholm University	92,152,361
7	University of Gothenburg	73,674,012
8	Linköping University	48,993,602
9	Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences	40,337,415
10	Luleå University of Technology	35,905,790
11	Umeå University	31,317,214
12	Örebro University	13,868,078
13	Linnaeus University	8,829,149
14	Mälardalen University	8,558,800
15	Karlstad University	6,350,364
16	Malmö University	5,213,881
17	University of Borås	4,342,710
18	Halmstad University	2,717,906
19	Mid Sweden University	2,669,923
20	Blekinge Institute of Technology	2,402,609

5.3 Description of Swedish influence over Horizon Europe

Swedish participation on Horizon Europe **programme committees** is governed by the Government Offices of Sweden. The term *comitology* refers to a set of procedures by which the European Commission must consult specially appointed representative committees when implementing EU law, including framework programmes.

The most important task of Horizon Europe programme committees is to offer opinions on individual work programmes. The European Commission must obtain the opinion of a programme committee on any proposals before deciding on a work programme. Through delegates and experts on committees, the Commission can hold a dialogue with administrations in Member States before reaching a decision.



Programme committee **delegates** are civil servants working at ministries in each Member State. Their assignment includes making a summary assessment of subject-specific aspects and policy perspectives within the policy area in question, including their government's priorities. Swedish delegates are responsible for conveying Sweden's final position at programme committee meetings. Work on programme committees is coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Research.

Experts are civil servants working at one of the government agencies assigned to work with the framework programme. These experts represent the scientific community, public and private sectors within the area in question and should therefore offer recommendations to delegates regarding the Swedish position prior to committee meetings. This demands a broad network of contacts within higher education institutions, research institutes, trade and industry.

Experts are also expected to liaise with the responsible **national contact point (NCP)** within the area. They are also required to establish a **reference group** in consultation with the delegate. As the reference group is intended to contribute to compiling the viewpoints of the various Swedish stakeholders, its composition should reflect the breadth of interests within the field. In turn, the NCP must assist the European Commission in effectively disseminating relevant and accurate information about the framework programme to all stakeholders in Sweden. The NCP also offers advice and support to application processes. The appointment of organisations as NCPs is based on written recommendations from ministries in Member States to the European Commission. Since



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2006, Vinnova has national responsibility for promoting, evaluating, coordinating and informing about framework programmes in Sweden.

5.4 Advocacy platforms

Umeå University and its researchers are involved in a range of membership organisations/advocacy platforms with a clear goal for what Umeå University/the researcher/research group wishes to achieve. The following is a list of known advocacy platforms.

- a. Central level
 - i. North Sweden European Office is the direct link to the EU for Norrbotten, Västerbotten, Jämtland Härjedalen and Västernorrland, the four northernmost counties of Sweden. The aim of the office is to create good conditions for the region's companies, academia and public authorities to act successfully in the EU arena.
 1. Owner Council
 2. Board of Directors
 3. Dialogue Group for Research and Development
 4. Dialogue Group for Regional Development and Business
 - ii. The European University Association (EUA) represents over 800 universities and is the largest interest group for European higher education institutions. Umeå University is a long-standing member. Thanks to its collaborations with a number of other European and international organisations, the EUA guarantees that the independent voice of European universities is heard throughout the EU when decisions are made that may affect the operations of higher education institutions.
 1. First- and second-cycle studies
 2. Third-cycle studies
 3. Research
- b. Level of research
 - i. Various groupings advocate within specific policy areas.
 1. Advisory Group to the Mission on Cancer
 2. Arctic Council Culture, Economy and Geography Expert Group
 3. The Arctic Five
 4. European Artificial Intelligence Association



6. Appendix 2

6.1 Objectives linked to responsible level of the University

University-wide level
University Management
Increase the prestige of EU projects
Review cofinancing rules
Increase engagement with European advocacy groups
Faculty and Umeå School of Education
Increase the prestige of EU projects
Improve rules for cofinancing
Offer financial support to the application process
Identify researchers and disciplinary research domains with potential for obtaining EU funding
Increase support to projects that are awarded grants
Increase the establishment of young researchers and students in European networks
Increase engagement with European advocacy groups
Department
Identify researchers and disciplinary research domains with potential for obtaining EU funding
Increase support to projects that are awarded grants
Increase engagement with European advocacy groups
Increase the establishment of young researchers and students in European networks
University Administration
More information to researchers and teachers
Increase support to the application process
Increase support to projects that are awarded grants
Increase engagement with European advocacy groups
Intelligence about events in EU arenas
Review cofinancing rules



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6.2 Activities with varying time horizons

	Contribute to enhanced quality	Contribute to increasing the number of applications
Time aspect		
Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More information to teachers and researchers - Additional information to new employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raise the profile of projects that are awarded grants - Financial support to the application process
Medium term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish networks (active support for young researchers and students) - Activate researchers as evaluators of EU projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intelligence gathering - Review cofinancing rules - Identify researchers and strong research areas with potential for EU funding - Increase and encourage mobility (recruit internationally using recruitment/mobility funding) - Formulate research priorities at Umeå University - Engage with/participate in advocacy platforms/EU organisations - Activate researchers as evaluators of EU projects
Long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthen coordination support (pre and post award) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advocate with regard to Horizon Europe, simplified rules for project administration, etc. - Increase support for project administration