



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs

RULES OF CONTEST¹

2019 European Social Innovation Competition

301/G/GRO/RCH/19/10877

¹ Prizes are financial contributions given as rewards following the publication of a contest. Rules of Contest lay down the conditions for participation, the award criteria, the amount of the prize and the arrangements for the payment of the prize to the winners after their award.

1. THEME: 2019 European Social Innovation Competition

The European Social Innovation Competition (hereinafter referred to as 'the Competition') is organised by the European Commission (hereinafter referred to as 'the Commission') with the support of a consortium made up of Nesta, Kennisland, European Network of Living Labs, Ashoka and Scholz & Friends (hereinafter all referred to as 'the Contractor'²). The Commission department in charge of the Competition is the Directorate General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, also known as DG GROW.

The official webpage of the Competition on the Commission's website is: http://ec.europa.eu/growth/industry/innovation/policy/social/competition_en.

The Competition is funded under the European Union budget. The legal basis for this Competition is the Horizon2020FrameworkProgrammeForResearchandInnovation

(see http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/funding/reference_docs.html),

And, more particularly the 2018-2020 work programme for the societal challenge *Europe in a changing world – Inclusive, innovative and reflective societies* (see pages 44-46 in the work programme posted at <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/innovation-smes>).

The Competition is open to natural persons or legal persons established in EU Member States or Associated countries to Horizon 2020 (the list of Associated Countries is available at http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/hi/3cpart/h2020-hi-list-ac_en.pdf).

Read these rules of contest carefully before submitting an entry. By submitting an entry, you accept these rules of contest and agree to comply with them.

1.1 Objectives pursued

The objectives of the prize are:

The Competition aims at stimulating social innovation's potential to provide solutions to societal challenges and foster sustainable and inclusive growth in Europe. It will directly support some ideas best illustrating that potential. It will engage citizens, businesses (including start-ups) in a large range of sectors, as well as universities, business and engineering schools, thereby creating new connections, sources of growth and job opportunities.

Challenge statement:

The 2019 Competition, **Challenging Plastic Waste**, is looking for ideas and projects that reduce plastic waste and littering through changing and improving existing processes or through introducing brand-new products and initiatives. These innovations need to reduce the amount of plastic waste created or encourage and enable the greater re-use and recycling of plastic waste. Solutions should be scalable and target change at the systemic level: either locally, nationally or Europe wide. Further background on the theme of the Competition is available on the [Competition webpage](#).

All ideas are welcome, whether they are at the concept or early stage, or if they have begun the prototyping stage. The Competition aims to support the development of new solutions related to the annual theme, and to help them reach the stage of prototyping and implementation.

The Competition has been designed to offer more than just prize money it includes a non-financial support in the form of technical assistance and strong mentoring components that will benefit not only the winners, but all semi-finalists and finalists. The technical assistance and mentoring components aim to help contestants turn their ideas into tangible and sustainable projects, so that they deliver results and achieve maximum impact. The Competition provides other benefits such as visibility for the ideas and networking opportunities. It will allow semi-finalists and finalists to connect to a wide range of social innovation experts, organisations, investors and networks from Europe And Horizon 2020 associated countries.

² Contract award notice [2017/S 230-478667](#)

1.2 Expected results

Entries must be original ideas from contestants. They may propose new or improved ways to implement existing solutions, combine them, or adapt them to a different context or target group, but they cannot be exact copies of those. The contestants must demonstrate the novelty of their solution, in comparison with those already developed/implemented by themselves or by others in their context. The contestants are also expected to indicate how the participation in the Competition may benefit their idea (e.g. prize money, technical assistance, mentoring, networking, visibility or other related benefits).

2. PRIZE AMOUNT(S): 200.000 EUR

The Competition will support the winning solutions with cash prizes awarded in two steps:

- **in 2019**, it will award **a challenge prize of 50,000 euros** to each of the best 3 ideas, from those selected as finalists (i.e. indicatively 10);
- **in 2020**, it is expected to award **1 impact prize of 50,000 euros** to the project which has achieved the most significant social impact amongst the 2019 semi-finalists and finalists (subject to the allocation of the required budget appropriations).

3. DEADLINES, TIMELINE & ADMISSIBILITY

Deadlines	
Opening date for submissions:	28 February 2019
Closing date for submissions:	4 April 2019, at 12:00:00 (noon) CET ³
Assessment of entries	April –May 2018
Social Innovation academy for semi-finalists	16-18 July 2018 – Torino (Italy)
Submission of Development plans by semi-finalists	August 2019 (exact date to be announced at the Social Innovation academy for semi-finalists)
Assessment of entries	September 2019
Selection of finalists	September 2019
Award of challenge prizes	October 2019
Award of impact prize	October 2020 ⁴

Apart from the deadline applicable to the first phase of the Competition (4 April 2019, 12:00:00, noon, Brussels time), other timelines remain indicative at this stage and will be confirmed thereafter, with sufficient notice to allow the contestants to prepare for the next steps and organize their travels.

³ Central European Time = Brussels local time.

⁴ Subject to the allocation of the required budget appropriations

Applications must be submitted, in one of the official languages of the European Union, by the (lead) participant via the online entry form available at <http://eusic.challenges.org>, which is also linked through DG GROW Competition webpage.

Joint applications by a group of participants are admitted. In this case, the participants must appoint a 'lead participant' to represent them towards the Commission. The participants will be jointly responsible and must all fulfil and respect the conditions set out in these Rules of Contest.

Late entries will not be accepted. The Commission is not responsible for entries, which are lost, damaged or late due to computer, network or telecommunications failure.

Applications must be readable, accessible and printable. Incomplete applications may be considered inadmissible if essential elements are missing (see [General Annex B to the Main Work Programme](#)). http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/wp/2018-2020/annexes/h2020-wp1820-annex-ga_en.pdf

The provision of a draft plan for dissemination and exploitation is not required for this contest.

4. ELIGIBILITY

4.1 Eligibility criteria

The competition is open to any legal entity (or natural persons) or group of legal entities, except public administrations, established in EU Member States or Associated countries to Horizon 2020 (the list of Associated Countries is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/hi/3cpart/h2020-hi-list-ac_en.pdf).

Ideas and proposals from all sources, sectors and all types of organisations including for-profit, non-for-profit, or private companies are welcome. Applications involving several organisations and/or from various countries are possible.

Eligibility criteria must be complied with for the entire duration of the competition.

If the United Kingdom withdraws from the EU during the contest period without concluding an agreement with the EU ensuring in particular that British applicants continue to be eligible, you will cease to be eligible to receive EU funding (while continuing, where possible, to participate).

Please also be aware that participants that have already received an EU or Euratom prize cannot receive a second prize for the same activities.

4.2 Exclusion criteria

Participants will be excluded if they (or one of them):

- are subject to an administrative sanction (i.e. exclusion)⁵
- are in one of the situations described in article 136 of the [Financial regulation](#):

Grounds for rejection of a participant from the award procedure are set out in Article 141 of the [Financial regulation](#).

⁵ See Articles 131(4) and 106(1) Financial Regulation.

5. AWARD CRITERIA

5.1 Award criteria for the challenges prizes

The challenge prizes will be awarded in 2019 to the 3 entries that best address the following cumulative criteria:

- **Degree of Innovation:** the degree to which any new product, service or model addresses unmet needs more effectively. Critically, the idea must be new and innovative within its given socio-economic and geographical context;
- **Impact:** the potential of the proposed idea to tackle the issue outlined in the challenge statement (see section 1.1). The entrant should demonstrate a clear definition of the problem their idea solves and of their target population, feeding into a well-elaborated theory of change⁶;
- **Sustainability:** the financial and environmental sustainability of the idea, as well as the potential for adequacy and uptake stemming from the development of the idea carried out with users, from first concept, through testing, validation and business modelling
- **Scale:** the idea's growth potential and potential to scale and be replicated throughout Europe;

5.2 Award criteria for the impact prize

The impact prize will be awarded in 2020 to one of the semi-finalists (see section 8) that can prove the greatest results over the course of the previous year. For the purposes of the impact prize, results should demonstrate that the project is going in the right direction to deliver impact over time. Impact is defined as the demonstrated capacity of the proposed idea to tackle the issue outlined in the challenge statement.

6. DOCUMENTS

The mandatory supporting documents are set out in the application form available on the [Competition website](#).

Participants may be asked at a later stage for further documents (for legal entity validation, bank account validation, ethics review, declaration of honour on exclusion grounds, etc.).

7. PROCEDURE

The organisation of the Competition is supported by the Contractor, which notably includes facilitating jury meetings, facilitating the social innovation Academy and organising the Awards Ceremony.

Overview of the Selection Procedure:

Phase 1:

- All eligible submitted entries will be assessed and scored using the criteria outlined above.
- The top scoring entries will then be taken forward for further scrutiny by a selection jury appointed by, but independent from, the Commission. The judging panel will be composed of experts in social innovation, circular economy, sustainability and other topics related to the competition's topic. The jury panel is composed keeping in mind gender and geographic diversity. The jury will make informative recommendations to the Commission, which will take the final decision on the lists of semi-finalists.

Phase 2:

- After the Social Innovation Academy, the semi-finalists will be scrutinized again in a second selection jury, consisting of the same judges from the first selection jury. The judges will review the semi-finalists based on their Development Plans. The jury will make informative recommendations to the Commission, which will take the final decision on the lists of finalists and winners of the Competition.

⁶ A template to help semi-finalists describe their theory of change is part of the Development plan that semi-finalists will receive from the Competition organisers and will be requested to submit for the final evaluation of their entries (see section 7.3).

Impact Prize:

- Semi-finalists and Finalists will be asked to complete an application form relating to the Impact Prize.
- A selection jury, consisting of the same judges from the first and second selection juries, will review the applications and make informative recommendations to the Commission, which will take the final decision on the winner.

7.1 First phase (April-May 2019)

For the **first phase of the Competition**, all eligible entries which have been received by the deadline will be assessed in order to select the most promising ideas which will qualify for the second phase of the Competition.

The pre-selection jury (**first phase**) will evaluate each application against the **4 award criteria** and score them as follows (half marks are possible decimals are not):

Criterion	Threshold	Maximum points
1. Innovation	20	40
2. Impact	10	20
3. Sustainability	12,5	25
4. Scale	7,5	15
Total	50	100

For applications with the same score, the assessment will determine a priority order according to the following approach: The score for the criterion No 1 will be given a weight of 2 and the score for criterion No 2 will be given a weight of 1.5.

The final decision in this regard will be taken and made public by the Commission, upon recommendation from the jury. The entries with the highest scores (30 entries) will be selected for the second phase and be **designated as semi-finalists**. The Commission reserves the right to establish a reserve list of indicatively 5 entries, in case any contestants stopped meeting the eligibility criteria and had to be excluded from participation before the Academy takes place. They will be informed immediately about that decision.

The other contestants will be informed that their entry has not passed the first phase.

Given the large number of entries which are expected over the first phase of Competition, the Commission will not be in a position to provide individual and customized feedback to unsuccessful contestants at that stage.

7.2 Social Innovation Academy (16-18/07/2019)

The semi-finalists will be invited to attend the social innovation Academy and will be paired with a coach who will offer them 20 hours one-to-one guidance. From the announcement of semi-finalists until the end of the Academy, the Competition process will pause. The Academy will consist of a series of workshops and expert technical sessions covering social innovation and relevant content related to the 2019 theme where semi-finalists will receive training and coaching by international business and communications professionals,, social entrepreneurs, as well as potentially advice from other subject matter experts, for example finance professionals, representatives of public sector organisations, topic-specific experts, etc.

The travel and accommodation costs for semi-finalists' participation in the Academy will be covered by the Commission (two participants per entry, with exceptions to be considered by the Commission on a case-by-case basis in case of special needs). Being unable to participate in the Academy will not prevent semi-finalists from competing for the second phase. Their participation is however highly recommended due to the high added

value it offers in terms of training, peer learning and networking.

Invitation with detailed information will be sent to the semi-finalists as soon as they are informed of their selection in May 2019.

All semi-finalists might be contacted at any point in time during the competition by either the Commission or the Contractor for interviews or requests of information for communication purposes.

7.3 Second phase (July - September 2019)

From the day following the Academy's end until the end of September 2019 (indicatively), the Competition will enter its second phase.

Once this **second phase** has begun and with the view of ensuring equal treatment between contestants, no contact will be allowed between, on the one hand, the semi-finalists and, on the other hand, the Commission or the jury members.

The contractor organizing the competition may contact contestants only for the following purposes: a) Pre-scheduled mentoring and coaching sessions; b) Interviews / gathering of information for communication purposes;

On the basis of the inputs received during the academy and of the coaching sessions, the semi-finalists will be asked to develop their idea and **to submit a 'Development plan'**.

Practical modalities will be further specified and communicated to them. **Detailed plans are expected to be submitted at the end of August 2019. The exact deadline will be communicated in due time to semi-finalists.**

The selection jury will evaluate the Development plans submitted by the semi-finalists against the **4 award criteria** and score them as follows (only full or half marks are possible):

Criterion	Threshold	Maximum points
1. Innovation	12,5	25
2. Impact	12,5	25
3. Sustainability	12,5	25
4. Scale	12,5	25
Total	50	100

For applications with the same score, the selection jury will determine a priority order according to the following approach: The score for the criterion No 1 will be given a weight of 2 and the score for criterion No 2 will be given a weight of 1.5.

7.4 Award stage & Award ceremony (October 2019)

Upon recommendation from the selection jury, the Commission will select the best entries which will be called **'finalists' and will compete for the three challenge prizes**. Indicatively 10 ideas are expected to be selected as 'finalists' for the **Awards Ceremony**.

The Awards Ceremony will be preceded with a final technical assistance component for all semi-finalists and finalists. This will focus on learning about the funding landscape, both in terms of fundraising and capital raising. It will provide tailored networking opportunities and advisory support from funding experts across sectors and across Europe. Projects will be matched with experts based on need and alignment, and will hear

firsthand about the experts' own experiences in raising funds for their own initiatives. In addition, projects will have the opportunity to make relevant contacts that could help them as they complete the main part of the Competition and move towards implementation and scaling of their ideas.

The Competition winners will be announced during the Awards Ceremony. The award of three (3) challenge prizes must be considered an indicative maximum number.

Unsuccessful semi-finalists will receive comments about the strengths and weaknesses of their proposal after the Award Ceremony. Such an assessment will also be provided to finalists and winners, once the Awards Ceremony has taken place.

The travel and accommodation costs for their participation of the "finalists" in the Ceremony will be covered by the Commission (two participants per entry, with exceptions to be considered by the Commission on a case-by-case basis in case of special needs). Unsuccessful semi-finalists are invited too and encouraged to join the Ceremony considering the unique networking and exposure opportunities that the Ceremony provides. The same reimbursement rules will apply to them.

All semi-finalists in the Competition are eligible to become part of the Alumni Network of the European Social Innovation Competition.

7.5 Third phase

Once the competition for the three challenge prizes is over, **the third phase** of the Competition is expected to open with a view of awarding the Impact Prize in 2020. **This third phase will be restricted to the 2019 semi-finalists** and finalists, and will aim to facilitate continued implementation of their ideas beyond the core Competition time frame as well as to emphasize the importance of sustained social impact from the projects. This Impact Prize may be awarded to a winner of a challenge prize or to a non-winning semi-finalist. The Impact Prize is expected to be awarded during the Awards Ceremony of the 2020 edition, together with the next group of challenge prizes.

The Commission intends to award the Impact Prize against the sole criterion of *impact* as described above but no longer for the potential of the idea. The Impact Prize will be awarded to the project having achieved the most significant social impact. The social impact needs to be evidenced and, to the extent possible, quantified against smart indicators.

Subject to budget availability, the Commission intends to launch the competition for the Impact Prize in early 2020. The deadline, for the 2019 semi-finalists and finalists to report back on their results, will be communicated to them at that time, as well as the evidence expected from them.

8. OTHER CONDITIONS

8.1 Payment arrangements

The Challenge and Impact prize money (EUR 50.000 for each) will be paid to the winners via bank transfer in one single instalment within 60 days after all the requested administrative and financial documents have been submitted.

Winners are responsible for payment of taxes where applicable on the prize money.

The applicant bears the sole liability in the event of a claim relating to the activities carried out in the framework of the contest.

The winners accept the obligations referred to in Article 129 of the Regulation No 2018/1046⁷ and the publicity obligations as specified in the rules of the contest.

8.2 Publicity — Promoting the prize — Visibility of EU funding

8.2.1 Publicity by the winner(s)

Both finalist(s) and winner(s) must promote the prize and its results, by providing targeted information to multiple audiences (including the media and the public) in a strategic and effective manner.

Unless the Commission requests or agrees otherwise or unless it is impossible, any communication activity related to the action (including in electronic form, via social media, etc.) must:

- (a) display the EU emblem and
- (b) include the following text:

“This action/activity/person was finalist for/winner of the 2019 EU Social Innovation Competition from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme”.

When displayed together with another logo, the EU emblem must have appropriate prominence.

For the purposes of their obligations, the finalist(s) and winner(s) may use the EU emblem without first obtaining approval from the Commission. This does not, however, give it the right to exclusive use. Moreover, they may not appropriate the EU emblem or any similar trademark or logo, either by registration or by any other means.

8.2.2 Publicity by the Commission

The Commission may use, for its communication and publicising activities, information relating to the action, documents notably summaries for publication as well as any other material, such as pictures or audio-visual material that it receives from the participants (including in electronic form).

The Commission will publish the name of both the finalist(s) and the winner(s), their origin, the amount of the prize and its nature and purpose — unless they have requested to waive this publication (because disclosure risks threatening its security and safety or harm its commercial interest).

8.3 Dissemination and exploitation of results

The winner(s) must comply with the obligations set out in Title III of the Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation Regulation No 1290/2013⁸

⁷ [Regulation \(EU, Euratom\) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union.](#)

⁸ Regulation (EU) No 1290/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 laying down the rules for participation and dissemination in “Horizon 2020 - the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020)” (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013 p.81).

For more information and best practice, see Articles 23a-31 of the [H2020 AGA — Annotated grant agreement](#).

8.4 Processing of personal data

8.4.1 Processing of personal data by the Commission

Any personal data will be processed by the Commission under Regulation No 2018/1725
The data protection notice applicable is available at https://ec.europa.eu/info/data-protection-public-procurement-procedures_en.

All semi-finalist(s), finalist(s) and winner(s) consent that the Commission publishes the following information:

- name
- Member State of establishment (address or NUTS 2 region)
- their activities in relation to the award of the prize (via the summary for publication they provide)
- prize amount (where applicable)

in whatever form and medium

8.4.2. Processing of personal data by the participants

The participants must process personal data in compliance with applicable EU and national law on data protection (including authorisations or notification requirements, if any).

8.5 Ethics

The activities must be carried out in compliance with:

- (a) ethical principles (including the highest standards of research integrity) and
- (b) applicable international, EU and national law.

No prize will be awarded for activities carried out outside the EU, if they are prohibited in all Member States.

The participants must ensure that the activities have an exclusive focus on civil applications.

The participants must ensure that the activities do not:

- (a) aim at human cloning for reproductive purposes
- (b) intend to modify the genetic heritage of human beings which could make such changes heritable (with the exception of research relating to cancer treatment of the gonads) or
- (c) intend to create human embryos solely for the purpose of research or for the purpose of stem cell procurement, including by means of somatic cell nuclear transfer.

Research activities involving human embryonic stem cells (hESC) are moreover subject to the conditions set out in the [Statement of the Commission related to research activities involving human embryonic stem cells](#).

The participants must respect the highest standards of research integrity — as set out, for instance, in the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity⁷.

For more information and best practice, see the [Participant Portal Online Manual](#), the [Guidance — How to complete your ethics self-assessment](#) and the [Guidance note — Research focusing exclusively on civil applications](#).

8.6 Security

The activities must be carried out in compliance with Commission Decision [2015/444](#), i.e. security-sensitive information must be **EU-classified**, if its unauthorised disclosure could adversely impact the interests of the EU or of one (or more) of its Member States. Applications that are too security-sensitive cannot be awarded a prize.

For more information and best practice, see the [Guidance — Guidelines for the classification of information in research projects](#), the [Guidance — Guidelines for the handling of classified information in EU research projects](#), the [Guidance note — Potential misuse of research results](#) and the [Guidance note — Research involving dual use items](#).

8.7 Conflict of interests

The participants must take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective award of the prize is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest ('conflict of interests').

They must inform the Commission without delay of any situation constituting or likely to lead to a conflict of interests and immediately take all the necessary steps to rectify this situation.

The Commission may verify that the measures taken are appropriate and may require additional measures to be taken by a specified deadline.

8.8 Liability for damages

The Commission cannot be held liable for any damage caused to the participants or to third parties as a consequence of the prize, including for gross negligence.

The Commission cannot be held liable for any damage caused by any of the participants in the context of the prize.

8.9 Checks, audits and investigations

The Commission, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and the European Court of Auditors may carry out checks, audits and investigations in relation to the prize.

8.10 Withdrawal of the prize — Recovery of undue amounts

The Commission may withdraw the prize after its award and recover all payments made, if it finds out that:

- (a) false information, fraud or corruption was used to obtain it
- (b) a winner was not eligible or should have been excluded
- (c) a winner is in serious breach of its obligations under these Rules of Contest.

8.11 Administrative sanctions

If a participant has committed irregularities or fraud or has made false declarations, the Commission may also:

- (a) exclude the participant from all future contracts, grants and contests financed from the EU or

Euratom budget for a maximum of five years (or 10 years in case of repetition) and/or

- (b) impose a financial penalty between 2% and 10% of the value of the prize (or between 4% and 20% in case of repetition).

8.12 Cancellation of the contest

The Commission may cancel the contest or decide not to award the prize — without any obligation to compensate participants —, if:

- (a) no applications are received
- (b) the jury does not find a winner
- (c) the winner is not eligible or must be excluded
- (d) the objective of the contest has already been achieved.
- (e) the objectives of the contest cannot be fulfilled.

8.13 Complaints

Complaints against decisions negatively affecting the rights of a participant or winner can be brought before the General Court — or, on appeal, the Court of Justice of the European Union — under Article 263 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU).

9. CONTACT

For more information, please see the prize website: <http://eusic.challenges.org/>

For any questions, please contact info@socialinnovationprize.eu