



# Transforming our online communication

## User survey on "Research and Innovation"

Following on from the EC-wide top tasks poll carried out in 2014<sup>1</sup>, on 22-29 October 2015 people visiting specifically targeted Commission websites and web pages<sup>2</sup> were polled to find out what is most important to them in connection with "Research and Innovation". The class "Research and Innovation" covers 1 user task<sup>3</sup>:

2. Research and Innovation (top task)

### Polling: How was the survey organised?

To prepare the poll, the digital transformation team compiled a **comprehensive list of 1112 potential tasks** in the field of "Research and Innovation" from the following sources:

- Research and innovation related tasks incorporated in the 2014 poll
- Input from a targeted user survey<sup>4</sup> asking people what information they needed and why, in relation to research and innovation.
- Input from a similar survey sent to specific DGs<sup>5</sup>.

The team reduced this list to 123 tasks by removing duplicates and overlaps and merging main and subtasks. Seven workshops were then held with DGs and agencies to further reduce the list to a length that could be polled. The result was a final list of 58 tasks.

Once the shortlist of potential tasks was agreed, it was time to get people worldwide to vote. The DGs were closely involved in identifying the key audiences. Their help was also vital in getting enough users to respond to the poll. The poll was launched in 24 languages on 22 October 2015 for 1 week. The poll was advertised extensively on Commission websites.

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<sup>1</sup> Factsheet on the 2014 top tasks poll: [http://www.cc.cec/home/europa-info/documents/digital\\_transformation/factsheet\\_digital\\_transformation\\_user\\_survey\\_final.pdf](http://www.cc.cec/home/europa-info/documents/digital_transformation/factsheet_digital_transformation_user_survey_final.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> The sites and pages were selected (by DGs and agencies) for their relevance to the scope of the poll.

<sup>3</sup> These tasks were identified for the 2014 poll. The numbers by the tasks indicate their ranking by number of votes received in the poll.

<sup>4</sup> Respondents to the 2014 poll who selected the task as most important to them were invited to take the survey; 1000 for the top task.

<sup>5</sup> 16 DGs and agencies participated: AGRI, CLIMA, CNECT, DEVCO, EAC, ECHO, ENER, ENV, GROW, JRC, MOVE, OP, REA, REGIO, RTD & SANTE

## Key results

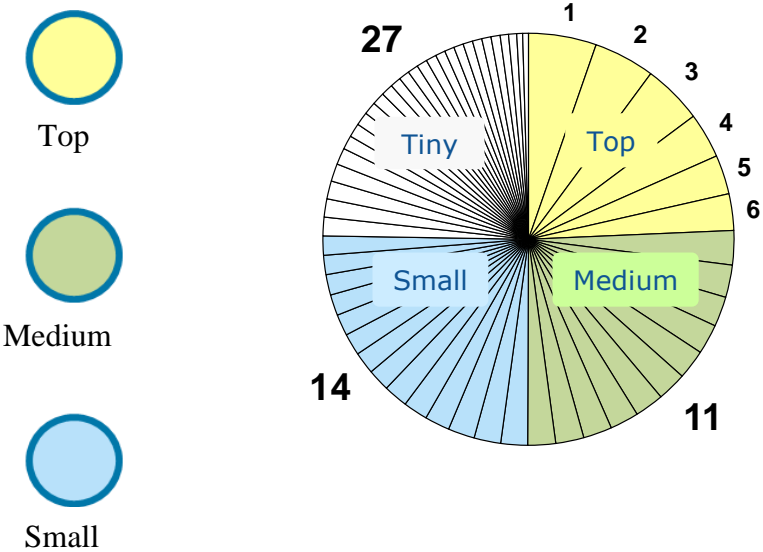
**10270 valid responses** were collected for the survey in 24 languages. More than **5000 people volunteered** to help with future tests and research. **84%** of the participants were from **EU countries**.

## Audience for "Research and Innovation"

- 85% of respondents are employed or self-employed and 7% are students
- 43% of the employed and self-employed respondents are from the public sector, 10% from NGOs and 39% from the private sector.

## Top tasks

Concerning the tasks, **six areas** stood out as being the most important for respondents, irrespective of where they work and live:



### 6 Top tasks

1. Open calls, current opportunities for funding, grants
2. Upcoming calls, opportunities for funding, grants
3. Apply for funding (submit an application)
4. Funding programmes, instruments, schemes for research and innovation
5. How to apply for funding
6. Networking, opportunities for collaboration, knowledge-sharing

The complete list of 58 ranked tasks Research and Innovation is in the annexe.

## Top interest areas/topics

Respondents were asked to identify, in a list of 30 interest areas/topics, which they are most interested in. They could select all that apply. The top interest areas are:

1. Research, science, technology and innovation
2. Environment

3. Education and training
4. Health and social welfare

The top tasks are consistent across interest areas.

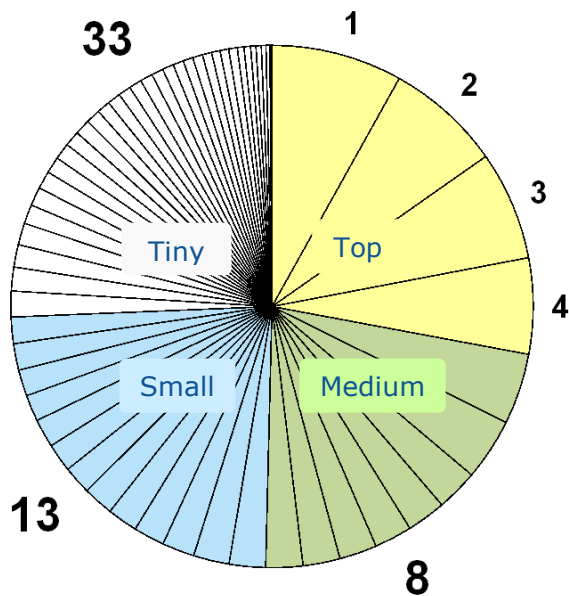
## What does Commission staff think about the user needs?

To complement the research on user needs and to understand better what our staff think about the needs of users visiting us online, we also conducted an internal survey among Commission staff. The list of tasks was put to poll, in English, French and German, with our colleagues inside the Commission, with a slightly different question: 'Select the 5 reasons (from the list below) that you think are most important TO PEOPLE when engaging with the Commission in connection with research and innovation'.

The poll ran from 20 to 27 October 2015, and 163 colleagues participated.

### Key results

Commission staff see **four areas** standing out as being the most important for the users of our digital channels in relation to research and innovation:



#### 4 Top Tasks according to staff

1. Apply for funding (submit an application)
2. How to apply for funding
3. Open calls, current opportunities for funding, grants
4. Upcoming calls, opportunities for funding, grants



Top 25%



26-50%



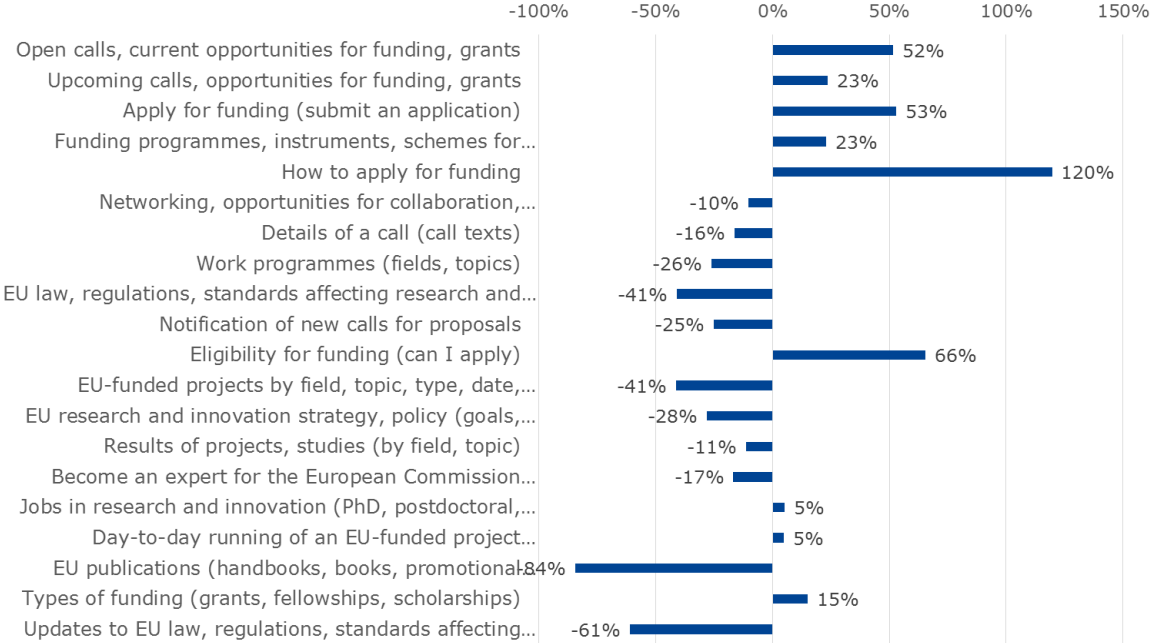
51-75%

The comparison between the assumptions of Commission staff and genuine user needs shows that staff overestimated the importance of some tasks (especially: how to apply

for funding) and underestimated the importance of many others (especially: EU law, regulations, standards affecting research and innovation; EU funded projects by field, topic, type, date).

### Research and Innovation- Empathy scale

Negative percentage: the EC underestimates the user need.  
 Positive percentage: the EC overestimates the user need



## Annexe – complete list of 58 tasks that were submitted to the vote:

	Votes	
1	Open calls, current opportunities for funding, grants	8221
2	Upcoming calls, opportunities for funding, grants	7398
3	Apply for funding (submit an application)	7208
4	Funding programmes, instruments, schemes for research and innovation	5482
5	How to apply for funding	4732
6	Networking, opportunities for collaboration, knowledge-sharing	4419
7	Details of a call (call texts)	4144
8	Work programmes (fields, topics)	3915
9	EU law, regulations, standards affecting research and innovation	3622
10	Notification of new calls for proposals	3614
11	Eligibility for funding (can I apply)	3577
12	EU-funded projects by field, topic, type, date, country, beneficiary, etc.	3536
13	EU research and innovation strategy, policy (goals, objectives, challenges)	3512
14	Become an expert for the European Commission (calls for experts)	3481
15	Results of projects, studies (by field, topic)	3481
16	Jobs in research and innovation (PhD, postdoctoral, fellowship)	3412
17	Day-to-day running of an EU-funded project (reporting, amendments, payments)	3368
18	EU publications (handbooks, books, promotional material)	3239
19	Types of funding (grants, fellowships, scholarships)	3232
20	Updates to EU law, regulations, standards affecting research and innovation	3221
21	Find project partners	3019
22	Guidance, templates, help, training on submitting proposals	2967
23	Events (conferences, workshops, seminars, information days)	2935
24	New technologies, materials, products	2676
25	Rules for participation in research and innovation funding	2667
26	Procedures, guidelines for managing projects/contracts	2635
27	EU news, announcements, press releases on research and innovation	2582
28	Publications, articles resulting from EU-funded projects	2527
29	Timeline for the funding process (submission deadlines, important dates)	2475
30	Evaluation criteria, selection process for proposals	2330
31	Bringing innovative solutions to market (implementation)	2315
32	Funding priorities	2253
33	Objectives of a call for proposals	2203
34	Relevance, impact of research and innovation on society	2177
35	New research techniques, methods, models, mechanisms, design	2131
36	Updates to procedures, guidelines for managing projects/contracts	2007

37	Science for EU policy	1669
38	Updates about EU-funded research and innovation (findings, proceedings)	1668
39	Groups, partners involved in EU-funded projects	1624
40	Impact of EU-funded projects	1532
41	Compare research and innovation across countries, regions (EU, non-EU)	1515
42	Institutes, federations, universities, facilities in Europe	1440
43	Companies, researchers working in a specific field	1306
44	Public consultations on research and innovation (contribute, results)	1295
45	Contact European Commission	1281
46	EU institutions, agencies, committees dealing with research and innovation	1274
47	National contact points/networks for an EU programme	1265
48	Research and innovation needs and obstacles in a specific field, market, product	1188
49	Decision making process for funding programmes, work programmes	1180
50	Evaluation results per call	1169
51	Research and innovation terminology and definitions	1163
52	Total amount of funding available for a programme, fund, call	1143
53	Research carried out by the European Commission in-house	1121
54	Dissemination channels for results, findings	1105
55	Statistics on EU funding for research and innovation	1011
56	Indicators on research and innovation performance in the EU	980
57	Compare legal frameworks on research and innovation in EU (tax, social)	712
58	Protecting your research, innovation (patents, intellectual property, technology transfer)	696