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# HORIZON EUROPE

## SECURITY APPRAISAL PROCEDURE



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**13th Horizon Europe Legal and  
Financial NCPs meeting  
28 November 2025**

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# Overview:

- The Security Appraisal objectives:
  - Misuse of information
  - Identify vulnerabilities and risks
  - Unauthorised disclosure and EUCI
- Security Appraisal **before** the Grant Agreement:
  - Security self-assessment (applicants)
  - Security review (EU bodies and National Authorities)
  - Outcomes of the Security Scrutiny
- **During** and **after** the project's lifetime:
  - Mitigation measures and recommendations
  - Amendment requests and revision



## Security Scrutiny Procedure (SSP)

The **Security Scrutiny Procedure (SSP)** will be carried out in the following cases:

Only for proposals above threshold and considered for funding,

**Automatically, if the proposal has been submitted under a topic flagged as security sensitive.**

In other cases, if the **Security Screening has concluded that the proposal is very likely to raise security issues** for which mitigation measures should be proposed.

### Objectives:

**identify security concerns** in a certain proposal,

**assess if sensitive or classified information will be used or produced** by a certain project,

verify whether the **security issues have been properly addressed** by the applicant, and

**propose recommendations** to properly address the identified security issues.

Scope: **protection of EU Classified Information** (no ethics assessment, no dual-use, no restrictions).



## Before the signature of the Grant Agreement

- The Security Appraisal Procedure is a horizontal service for all the Horizon Europe programme and includes three main steps:
  - The Security **self-assessment** carried out by the applicant,
  - The Security **pre-screening** and **screening** (for non-flagged proposals),
  - The **Security Scrutiny** carried out by the European Commission with support of National Security Experts (**for proposals flagged as security sensitive** and those with positive screening)

# Self-assessment part A – Security Issues Table

1. EU Classified Information (EUCI) <sup>2</sup>		Page
Does this activity involve information and/or materials requiring protection against unauthorised disclosure (EUCI)?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
Is the activity going to use classified information as background <sup>3</sup> information?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No	
Is the activity going to generate EU classified foreground <sup>4</sup> information as result?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No	
Does this activity involve non-EU countries which need to have access to EUCI?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
Do the non-EU countries concerned have a security of information agreement with the EU?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No	
2. Misuse		Page
Does this activity have the potential for misuse of results?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
Does the activity provide knowledge, materials and technologies that could be channeled into crime and/or terrorism?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No	
Could the activity result in the development of chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) weapons and the means for their delivery?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No	
3. Other Security Issues		Page
Does this activity involve information and/or materials subject to national security restrictions? If yes, please specify: (Maximum number of characters allowed: 1000)	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No	
Are there any other security issues that should be taken into consideration? If yes, please specify: (Maximum number of characters allowed: 1000)	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No	

Security self-assessment

Please specify: (Maximum number of characters allowed: 5000)

Remaining characters 5000

<sup>2</sup>According to the Commission Decision (EU, Euratom) 2015/444 of 13 March 2015 on the security rules for protecting EU classified information, "European Union classified information (EUCI) means any information or material designated by an EU security classification, the unauthorised disclosure of which could cause varying degrees of prejudice to the interests of the European Union or of one or more of the Member States".

<sup>3</sup>Classified background information is information that is already classified by a country and/or international organisation and/or the EU and is going to be used by the project. In this case, the project must have in advance the authorisation from the originator of the classified information, which is the entity (EU institution, EU Member State, third state or international organisation) under whose authority the classified information has been generated.

- *Security Issues table in the Application form part A is mandatory for all applicants.*
- *Yes/NO questions related to EU Classified Information*
- *YES/NO questions related to misuse of research's results*
- *Other Security Issues*

# Self-assessment – dissemination level

Number	Deliverable name	Short description	Work package number	Short name of lead participant	Type	Dissemination level	Delivery date (in months)

## Dissemination level:

- *PU – public (fully open)*
- *SEN – sensitive non-classified (limited under the conditions of the Grant Agreement)*
- **Classified (EU Classified Information)** When assessing the dissemination level of deliverables the applicant should focus on sensitivity for **security reasons**.

# Additional security section – part B

## SECURITY ASPECTS LETTER

This security aspects letter (SAL) is an integral part of the classified grant agreement and describes grant agreement specific security requirements. Failure to meet these requirements may constitute sufficient grounds for the grant agreement to be terminated.

The beneficiaries must comply with the minimum standards as laid down in the Commission Decision (EU, Euratom) 2015/444 of 13 March 2015 (hereinafter 'Decision 2015/444') on the security rules for protecting EU classified information, and with its implementing rules.

Without prejudice to Decision 2015/444 and its implementing rules, the beneficiaries should follow the latest version of the Horizon Europe Programme Security Instruction and carry out their responsibilities according to this document.

[If applicable:]

The beneficiaries must also comply with [...]

[If relevant, insert one or more of the following Security of Information Agreements with non-EU Countries and/or international organisations]

- The Agreement between Australia and the European Union on the security of classified information signed on 13 January 2010 as attached to the Council Decision 2010/53/CFSP of 30 November 2009, as well as its implementing arrangements.

- The Agreement between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Union on security procedures for the exchange of classified information, signed on 05 October 2004, as attached to the Council Decision 2004/731/EC of 26 July 2004, as well as its implementing arrangements.

- The Agreement between the Republic of Iceland and the European Union on security procedures for the exchange of classified information, signed on 12 June 2006, as attached to the Council Decision 2006/467/CFSP of 21 November 2005, as well as its implementing arrangements.

*For topics **flagged as security sensitive** in the Work Programme (the applicant will also have to complete a **mandatory Security Section with more information on specific security issues**). **These proposals will go directly to the Security Scrutiny.***

- **Security Aspects Letter (SAL)**
  - Security of information agreement with non-EU countries
  - Facility Security Clearance (FSC)
  - Personal Security Clearance (PSC)
- **Security classification guide (SCG) – background / foreground EUCI**
- **Security Staff (Security Advisory Board, Project Security Officer)**

Security classification guide (SCG)			
Use of classified <b>background</b> information			
Reference and name of document	Classification level	Originator (EU institution, EU Member State, non-EU country or IO under whose authority the information was created and classified)	Reference number of originator for use

Sensitive information with security recommendation			
Number and name of the deliverable	Name of lead participant	Date of production	Name of entity authorised for access

Production of EU classified <b>foreground</b> information					
Number and name of deliverable	Classification level (R-UE/EU-R, C-UE/EU-C, S-UE/EU-S)	Beneficiaries involved in production / entities authorised for access			
		Name	Responsibility (security manager/main contributor, blind contributor, reader only)	Date of production	Comments (need-to-know, purpose of access and planned use for 'Reader only' role)

## Classified deliverables (EUCI)



Restreint UE/EU  
Restricted



Confidentiel UE/EU  
Confidential



Secret UE/EU Secret



Tres secret UE/EU Top  
secret\*

\* It is too sensitive to be funded  
under HE

- Protection and management of EUCI (role of policy DG and Agency)




**No security concern** - No security issues were identified in the proposal.

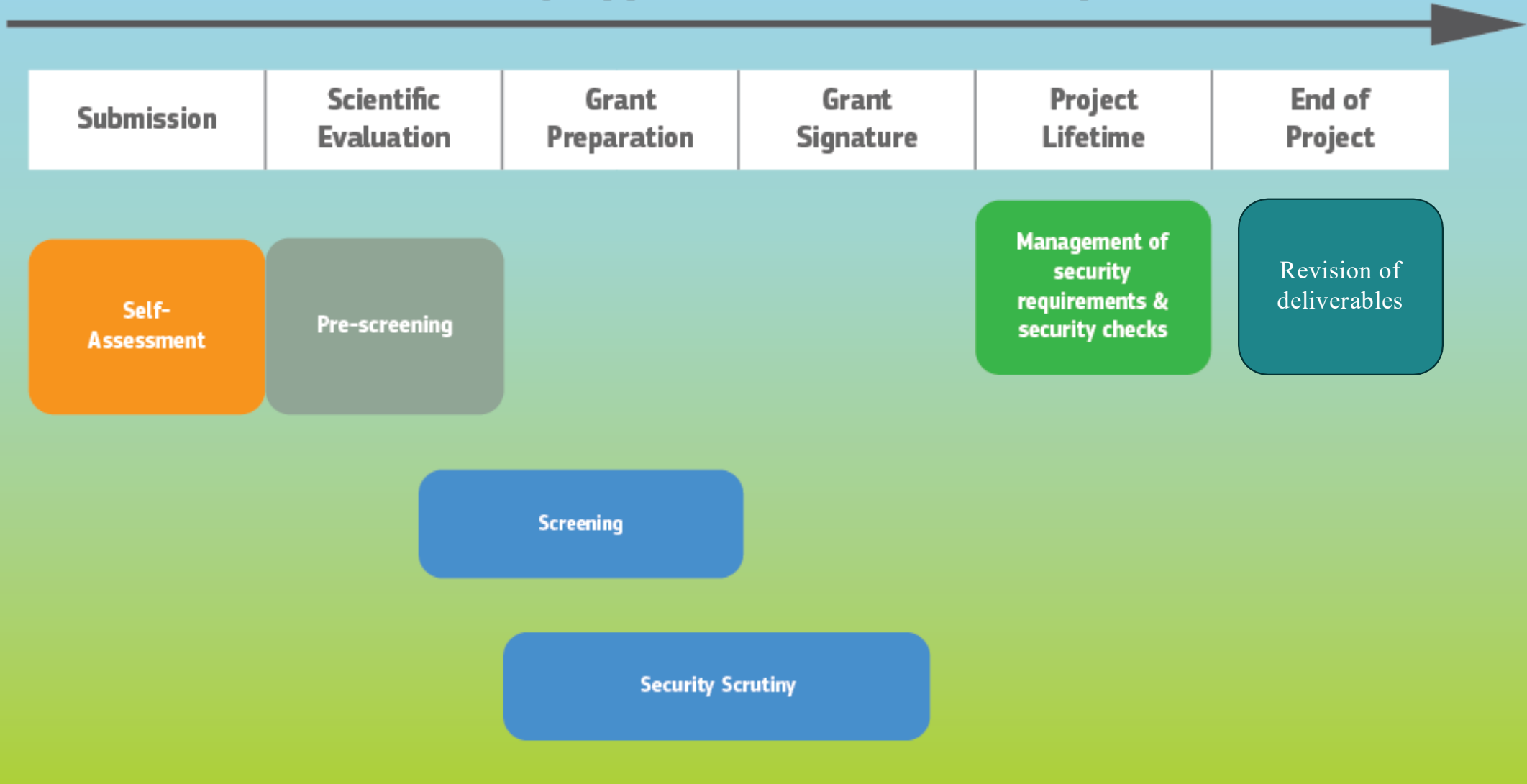
**Security recommendations and/or security classification** - The Security Scrutiny Summary Report (SecScrSR) will list one or more security requirements that may include:

- security recommendation to **limit the dissemination level** of certain deliverables for security reasons,
- **classification** of certain deliverables at a certain level,
- appointment of a **Project Security Officer (PSO)** in case of classification,
- establishment of a **Security Advisory Board (SAB)**,

**Proposal too sensitive to be funded** - The Security Scrutiny may reveal that the information to be used or generated by the project is too sensitive, or that the applicants lack the right experience, skills or authorisations to handle classified information at the appropriate level. In such cases, funding is refused and the proposal is rejected.

Security Recommendations and/or Classification:  
outcome of the SSP becomes the Security Section of  
Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement (**contractual and legal  
obligation**)  European  
Commission

# Security Appraisal in Horizon Europe



## During and after the project's lifetime



- **Security Advisory Board (SAB)** – following the project in order to assess potential security implications and propose mitigation measures
- **Project Security Officer (PSO)** – ensuring the proper handling of EUCI
- **Amendment requests** – assessment by DG HOME and involvement of the Project Officers, and the Security Advisory Board.
  - The role of the originator of EUCI
  - Granting access to deliverables
  - Changes in classification level of deliverables
  - Revision of deliverables of ended projects

## Misuse of research results and/or unauthorised disclosure



- *Legal entities participating in an action shall ensure the protection against unauthorised disclosure of classified information used or generated by the action.*
- *Actions that do not comply with the security rules under the art. 20 – Regulation (EU) 2021/695 of the European Parliament and the Council of 28 April 2021 may be rejected or terminated at any time.*
- *Security checks and/or a breach– the investigations carried out by HR.DS (cooperation with MS).*
- *The cooperation on legal and security matters between the EU Agencies, European Commission (HOME, HR.DS, RTD).*

# Further information

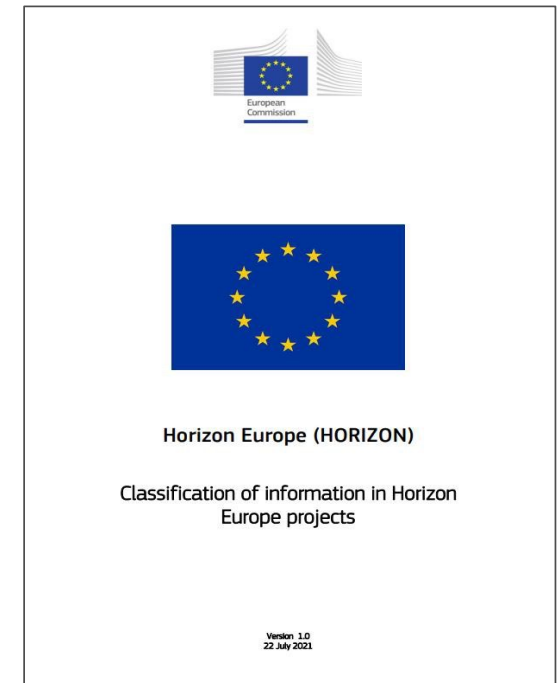


[How to handle security sensitive projects](#)



Watch the **full video** on:

- [Innovation and security research webpage](#)
- [DG Migration and Home affairs Youtube channel](#)



[Classification of information  
in Horizon Europe projects](#)

## Guidance documents available in the EU funds Portal

- [How To Handle Security-Sensitive Projects Guide](#)
- [Guidelines on the Classification of Information in Horizon Europe Projects](#)
- [Horizon Europe Programme Guide](#)
- [Horizon Europe Programme Security Instruction \(PSI\)](#)
- [Guidance note on potential misuse of research](#)
- [Application Form \(Part B Security\)](#)

## Legal documents

- [Regulation establishing Horizon Europe \(2021/695\)](#): Security (Art. 20)
- [HE Model Grant Agreement](#): Confidentiality and security (Art. 13 and Annex 5)
- [Commission Decision 444/2015](#) on the security rules for protecting EU classified information
- [Commission Decision 2021/259](#) laying down implementing rules on industrial security with regard to classified grants
- [Commission Decision 2019/1961](#) on implementing rules for handling CONFIDENTIEL UE/EU CONFIDENTIAL and SECRET UE/EU SECRET information
- [Commission Decision 2019/1962](#) on implementing rules for handling RESTREINT UE/EU RESTRICTED information

# Thank you for your attention

In case of questions, please contact [HOME-SECURITY-APPRAISAL@ec.europa.eu](mailto:HOME-SECURITY-APPRAISAL@ec.europa.eu)



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