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With support from the Mayor’s Office of London, the event was held at City Hall in London on 29-30 October and organised by Vision2020: The Horizon Network members, including Imperial College London, King’s College London, University College London (UCL), KU Leuven and MedCity.

The first day focused on H2020 successes, with panel one entitled ‘Horizon 2020 Impact on European Research’ and panel two entitled ‘Horizon 2020 Opportunities’. The second day was dedicated to thematic discussions and networking around H2020 calls.

One of the key goals of Health Tech 2020 was to act as a hub to bring together experts from high-ranking universities and innovative companies to discuss H2020 opportunities for collaboration.

As a media partner, International Innovation spotlights Health Tech 2020, a networking and matchmaking event hosted by Vision2020 in response to the near €2 billion of health and ICT innovation-based funding pledged by the European Commission.

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VISION2020: THE HORIZON NETWORK

208 MEMBERS
134 SMES
52 RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS
22 EXPERTS, CORPORATE AND ASSOCIATE PARTNERS
34 COUNTRIES
485 ONLINE COMMUNITY PARTICIPANTS
900+ TWITTER FOLLOWERS
800 NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIBERS
H2020 is the biggest EU Research and Innovation programme ever, with nearly €80 billion of funding available for projects around the world. Aiming to secure Europe’s global competitiveness, H2020 was created to drive breakthroughs and take inspired ideas from the lab to the end user as quickly and effectively as possible.

H2020’s emphasis is placed on an impact-orientated approach through excellence in science, industrial leadership and addressing societal challenges.

**KEY FEATURES:**

- Is open to any organisation anywhere in the world
- Joins research and innovation for marketable solutions
- Has apportioned at least €8.6 billion in funding to SMEs
- Focuses on tackling existing world problems (e.g., health, clean energy and transport)
- Offers simplified access for companies, universities and research organisations

One of the biggest differences between the EU’s Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) and H2020 is the latter’s increased focus on impact. “If we look at many of the collaborative projects funded under FP7, they failed to deliver on impact and innovation,” explains Michael Browne, Head of European Research and Innovation at UCL, and speaker at Health Tech 2020. “The starting point for many of these projects were early stage technology readiness levels (TRLs), which meant that, although they had progressed to more advance TRLs by the end point, they were not ready for commercialisation.”

This led much of the research conducted for these projects to lay dormant in institutions. Moreover, many of the projects funded under FP7 were universities. “Under H2020 there are still many universities more typically interested in early-stage research and publications than commercialisation,” says Browne.

Horizon 2020, however, has moved the starting point of funded projects to more advanced TRLs (5 and 6), so that the end point is nearing or at TRL 9 (commercialisation). Therefore, universities and research institutes are having to think differently about how they engage with the actors that enable the translation of this work. “This means researchers need to connect more with businesses, particularly SMEs, and organisations that are able to deliver in terms of impact,” Browne elaborates. “This is where the concept of innovation management – the process from research to impact – is particularly important. This needs to be demonstrated by applicants in a clear, professional way.”

Those are the main areas of change. And at the policy level, the Commission is expecting there to be more impact, more return on investment and more focus on innovation. “The misconception does exist, however, that invention equals innovation, but it doesn’t; innovation is what you do with your invention, whether it is knowledge-based, a tool, product or service,” emphasises Browne. H2020 supports this understanding.
A FUSION OF EXPERTISE

**Abdul Rahim**, Director of Vision2020, provides an inside look into the talking points and aims of Health Tech 2020

**What were the core themes discussed during the first panel, ’Horizon 2020 Impact on European Research’?**

The core themes in the first session were low success rates and how H2020 scoring is far more focused on impact than basic science. We also spoke about how this funding programme is enabling the best ideas across Europe to get funded. Michael Browne mentioned how researchers had to learn – very quickly – the difference between FP7 and H2020, and how much the latter has contributed to improved success rates for truly innovative proposals.

**Can you provide some insight into how Health Tech 2020 has aligned itself with the opportunities brought about by H2020?**

In October, the Commission launched ~€2 billion worth of funding – ~€1 billion for health and ~€1 billion for technology. The event was organised to coincide with the funding announcement and the publishing of the calls, and to ensure that researchers had sufficient time to identify potential partners, develop relationships and conduct their due diligence so that a successful consortia could be built.

**Collabor8 comprised four thematic groups dedicated to discussing the upcoming H2020 calls. What were some of the key talking points?**

As the main event was quite large, we decided that it would be more effective to break into smaller groups on day two of Health Tech 2020 so that people could collaborate more effectively. We tried to ensure that no more than 20-25 people were in each group, and each partner university was asked to lead a session based on specific upcoming H2020 calls.

There were representatives from 18 different countries at the Collabor8 sessions – mostly Vision2020 members. The outcome of at least one group, the one being led by Imperial College London, is the likelihood of them forming three consortia to submit proposals for three projects. And that was just at the end of the Collabor8 session. It’s likely that more will develop over time. The session ran successfully and we received positive feedback.

**Could you briefly summarise your welcome session presentation on Vision2020?**

My session was about working with the best researchers around; I mentioned that H2020 is very competitive with success rates around 5-12 per cent. I spoke of how Vision2020 members had higher success rates than average. One of the reasons for this was that we helped build consortia that were very high quality with regard to submissions and the experience of members – especially university members across Europe – in securing grant funding. The Commission uses the analogy of H2020 as the Champions League, and how only the best can compete and win. My presentation proposed that to play at that level, you need to assemble a team of the very best players from the beginning.

**What were some of the most exciting aspects of the event?**

An important one was the fact that people were willing to travel internationally to participate and engage with the right kind of partners across Europe at the event.

Another was that all the speakers who discussed the success of H2020 mentioned two key points: one was the impact that their research will have, and the second was the time and effort they took to build their team, as well as how much consideration they gave the impact section of the proposal. A large amount of pre-submission work is undertaken by successful organisations, whereas a lot of organisations I come across just want to assemble a partnership and submit a proposal – and these mostly fail.

[Link to Vision2020 website: WWW.2020VISIONNETWORK.EU/HORIZON2020]
PERSONALISED HEALTH METRICS AND 3D ORGANS

In his presentation, Ian Owen, Fujitsu Health and Education, talked about how ‘data is the lifeblood of healthcare’ and how the Internet of Things (IoT) is revolutionising data capture for monitoring health metrics.

Already available are wearable accelerometers that measure movement and orientation, while others track blood pressure data, which are then sent to central servers in real time. Remarkably, data are analysed with no perceptible delay and a message is sent either to the wearer or doctor if action should be taken.

In collaboration with the University of Tokyo, Fujitsu is using their Fujitsu K supercomputer to model simulated hearts to such a degree of accuracy that surgeons can rehearse an operation based on a patient’s actual data. 3D printing is also taking the world by storm. The aim is to eventually provide viable alternatives for traditional joint replacements and even organs – enabling clinics to fabricate parts when and where they are needed, and patients to receive more personalised solutions.

With regard to data security, one technology Fujitsu has developed is called PalmSecure, which uses unique palm vein patterns for highly secure authentication to grant access to medicines and sensitive medical data.

Ambient sensors are also valuable monitors of wellbeing, such as those in the home to track abnormal patterns of movement associated with a fall or other type of injury for the elderly.

THE IMPACT OF SCIENCE COMMUNICATION

Research Media’s Commercial Director Caroline Herbert spoke at Health Tech 2020 about the shifting policy landscape and the need for research to have impact beyond academia.

Following a survey of the public’s attitudes towards science, the Economic and Social Research Council reported that 40 per cent of participants considered researchers to be poor communicators – which directly correlates with impact. An influential factor is likely to be the complex language in which science is often communicated, and the perception that academics write for other academics.

Research can be explained in myriad ways, whether through a summarised article in easily understandable terms, an infographic, a report or even an animation. With the advent of Horizon 2020 comes a far greater understanding of and focus on the multifaceted meaning of the word ‘impact’ – and the relevance of research to society, industry, policy and the economy.

COLLABOR8

The delegates participated in one of four thematic groups to discuss and network around upcoming H2020 calls:

- Mental Health (led by King’s College London)
- Medical Device Technology (led by University College London)
- Pharma Innovation (led by KU Leuven)
- Robotics in Health/Big Data in Health and Personal Care (led by Imperial College London)