

Actual Cost vs Lump Sum: Mastering Horizon Europe Finances from Budgeting to Audit

16-17 April 2026
Budapest, Hungary

AGENDA

DAY 1

08:45 – 09:00

Arrival and registration

09:00 – 09:30

Event opening and introduction to the course

09:30 – 10:15

Understanding the Financial Logic: Actual Cost vs Lump Sum Models

Krisztina Toth, Managing Director, Europa Media Training Ltd.

- Principles and legal background to understand why the Commission uses both models and when each makes sense.
- What changes between models — and what does not
- Financial risks for coordinators and beneficiaries
- Key myths & misconceptions
- Case examples from Horizon Europe proposals

(10:15 – 10:30 Coffee break)

10:30 – 11:30

Building Compliant & Realistic Budgets - The eligibility rules

Gabor Kitley, CEO, Europa Media Group Plc.

- Basic financial principles in theory and practice
- Form of Grants, Forms of Costs
- Eligible and non-eligible costs with comparison and all exceptions
- Direct and indirect costs
- Introducing the cost categories
- Personnel costs categories
- Subcontracting, purchase costs, travel, equipment

(11:30 – 11:45 Break)

11:45 – 13:00

Strategic Differences in Planning: Actual Cost vs Lump Sum

Krisztina Toth, Managing Director, Europa Media Training Ltd.

- Organising budget planning with partners
- Cost-effectiveness and internal allocation strategies
- Common budgeting mistakes & pitfalls
- Budget under Lump Sum: what matters if no reporting of actuals?
- Balancing risk in Lump Sum (WPs, distribution, payment triggers)
- How to design a lump-sum Work Package structure that works
- Detailed introduction to the Detailed Budget table
- Examples of well-structured vs problematic budgets

(13:00 – 14:00 Lunch break)

14:00 – 15:30

Budgeting Workshop: Actual Cost & Lump Sum

Participants are divided into small groups will:

- Build a detailed budget for a sample Horizon Europe project
- Prepare both an Actual Cost and Lump Sum version
- Identify cost risks, missing information, and compliance issues
- Break down a Work Package for a Lump Sum proposal

(15:30-15:45 Coffee break)

15:45 – 16.45

Workshop Assessment

Krisztina Toth and Gabor Kitley

Each group presents:

- Key choices they made
- Challenges encountered
- Differences between AC and LS versions
- Trainer feedback and group discussion

16:45

Wrap-up and end of first day

AGENDA

DAY 2

09:00 – 09:45

How Evaluators Assess Budgets in Horizon Europe: Actual Cost vs Lump Sum Proposals

Krisztina Toth, Managing Director, Europa Media Training Ltd.

- What parts of the budget evaluators review (and how deeply)
- How evaluation differs between Actual Cost and Lump Sum proposals
- What budget issues trigger concern, lower scores, or requests for justification
- What mistakes evaluators regularly see — and how to avoid them
- Extracts from Evaluation Summary Reports (ESRs)

(09:45 – 10:00 Coffee break)

10:00 – 11:30

Financial Reporting rules in Horizon Europe

Gabor Kitley, CEO, Europa Media Group Plc.

- Reporting eligible costs
- Introduction to personnel cost calculations
- Justifications, documentation, and common errors
- Step-by-step guide on how to report costs, deal with deviations, and
- Handling the EC requests for clarification, suspension of payments and other issues with hands-on approach

(11:30 – 11:45 Break)

11:45 – 12:30

Lump sum project management and reporting

Krisztina Toth, Managing Director, Europa Media Training Ltd.

- Payment schedule – Partial payments
- How to amend your lump sum grant
- How to report your lump sum project: Periodic reporting
- How to deal with partially completed work packages.
- How to report deviations in your lump sum projects
- Showcasing a lump sum performance monitoring system
- Keeping records – what to actually keep

(12:30 – 13:30 Lunch break)

13:30 – 15:00

Financial reporting workshop – Reporting vs Budgeting

In this hands-on exercise, participants will work with a full set of financial documents from a fictional Horizon Europe project, including: Timesheets, Salary slips, Employment contracts (summary), Invoices & purchase documents, Travel reimbursement forms etc. Participants will be required to:

- Calculate eligible Actual Costs based on the Horizon Europe rules.
- Prepare a mock financial statement for a partner.
- Identify deviations between: the budget they created on Day 1, and the actual eligible costs derived from the documentation.
- Flag risks, cost items that cannot be claimed.
- Make a short written justification for deviations or unclaimed costs.

(15:00 – 15:15 Break)

15:15 – 16:00

Workshop Assessment: What Reporting Reveals About Budgeting Mistakes

Krisztina Toth and Gabor Kitley

Each group will present: Their calculated eligible costs; The deviations between their Day 1 planned budget and actual reported costs; The cost items they excluded and why; Documentation gaps or compliance issues spotted; Their justification for unforeseen costs.

The trainers will then analyse the results and highlight:

Typical budgeting mistakes that become visible only during reporting

- Overestimated personnel effort vs realistic timesheets
- Wrong assumptions about daily/monthly rates
- Under-budgeting travel or purchase costs
- Over-optimistic subcontracting estimates
- Partner allocations that do not match real work distribution
- Costs that were “forgotten” in the budget
- Unrealistic WP timing impacting eligibility

How these mistakes affect: financial reporting, audit exposure, project cash flow, and credibility during review meetings.

(16:00 – 16:15 Break)

16:15 – 17:00

Audit-Readiness: How to Survive EC Audits

Krisztina Toth and Gabor Kitley

- Differences between financial audits of actual cost grants and the technical audits of lump sum projects.
- Documentation you must have (and what you don't need)
- Internal audit file setup: templates & practical examples
- Case studies from real audits
- Risk-based selection of beneficiaries

17:00

Wrap-up and end of course