Success stories
in SSH – STEM collaboration

The contribution of Social Sciences and Humanities
to food security and sustainable agriculture research

As a cross-cutting issue of broad relevance, Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) research was not only fully integrated into each of the priorities of **Horizon 2020,** but the effective integration of Social Sciences and Humanities will also be a principle through the programme cycle in **Horizon Europe** including clusters, missions, and partnerships.

Integrating the socio-economic dimension of grand societal problems into the design, development and implementation of research itself, and of new technologies, can help find solutions to societal issues and enhance the impact of such activities for society.

SSH can provide essential contributions to **Food security and sustainable agriculture research**:
- ✓ By understanding the **economic, social, and behavioural issues** associated with the adoption of new agricultural management strategies
- ✓ By analysing the **social and economic impacts of digitisation** on agriculture and rural areas
- ✓ Through **design of new rural policies,** which translate research outcomes into tools that are understandable for policymakers and citizens
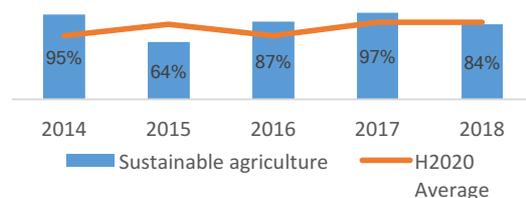
FACTS & FIGURES

Collaboration between SSH and STEM researchers in H2020 has slightly decreased in the period 2014–18: the proportion of projects funded under SSH-flagged topics with at least one SSH partner went from 95% to 84% while the budget going to SSH partners went from 27% to 17%.

In terms of SSH expertise type across the 44 projects funded under SSH-flagged topics in 2018, the most prevalent disciplines were Economic Sciences (33%) Business/Marketing (14%) and Political Science (13%).

Source: Monitoring reports (2014–18) on Integration of Social Sciences and Humanities in Horizon 2020 (EC)

Proportion of projects with SSH partners

2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
95%	64%	87%	97%	84%

■ Sustainable agriculture ── H2020 Average

SSH: Social Science and Humanities
STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

DESIRA: a success story of collaboration between SSH and STEM researchers

Why did you decide to integrate SSH in your project ?

We believe that **Social Sciences and Humanities are a key component of innovation studies**. In the field of digitisation, ethical and political issues are extremely important.
Our approach is based on a vision of **innovation as a socio-technical process**, with technology embedded in social structures and co-evolving with them.

How did the process of SSH integration go from proposal writing to project implementation?

Since the project is composed for the most part of SSH partners, we need to talk about the integration of the STEM researchers. They were involved since the beginning of the core writing team. We dedicated several meetings to understanding each other and to create a common understanding. Along with the project, ICT partners have participated in living labs together with social scientists.

What is the added value of integrating SSH in your project and what is the contribution from SSH partners?

In the consortium there are five ICT partners. The integration has been very fruitful, as they were already accustomed to interacting with SSH researchers. Being exposed to socio-economic considerations, they have developed a capacity to go beyond the specific technical aspect, looking at broader social implications.

Which are the factors that facilitate collaboration between different disciplines and which are the factors that hamper it?

We have based our collaboration on a **collaborative framework** centered on the concept of a socio-cyber physical system. This led to a project that integrates all the competences of the partners and where all partners share a common understanding and language.

What would be your main recommendation for both researchers and EC?

✓For researchers: Dedicate time and resources to conceptual framework elaboration.
✓For the European Commission: Identify appropriate evaluation tools to assess the effectiveness of integration.

Desira

The project aims to improve the capacity of society and political bodies to respond to the challenges that digitalisation generates in agriculture, forestry and rural areas
http://desira2020.eu/

www.net4society.eu