

<https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/content/online-consultation-mathematics-excellence-science-horizon2020>

Online consultation on mathematics for H2020 next work organised by the European Commission from January to May 2016

Post of Tim Gowers, 13 February 2016

The size of grants

I feel that your question has not been framed as well as it might. You restrict yourself to asking for recommendations of areas of mathematics that deserve special attention. But far more important, in my view, is the whole way that funding is allocated. The model is one where a few people get very large grants for projects that involve many people. This is a good model for many sciences, but it does not properly reflect the way that many mathematicians work -- in intense but small-scale collaborations. It would have a hugely beneficial effect if the money available to mathematicians were distributed to many more people in smaller amounts. For example, it would be great if one could apply for support for a single postdoc for three years. More generally, instead of forcing mathematicians to fit their projects artificially into a larger whole, you should trust us to judge for ourselves what we need and support that. (Of course, it goes without saying that proposals would still be peer reviewed and not all would be accepted.)