

BUREAUCRATIC JARGON CRIB SHEET

Actions	
✗ Example	"The first Horizon 2020 call includes several opportunities to support multinational demand-driven innovation actions in agriculture." – eip-agri
☠ Why not?	Vague. Often redundant.
✓ Alternatives	'Activities,' 'measures' or 'initiatives.' Or be more specific. Which 'actions'?

Actors	
✗ Example	"All non-profit non-state actors and local authorities originating in the EU and partner countries are potentially eligible." – European Commission
☠ Why not?	Actors appear on stage or in movies, not in discussion documents.
✓ Alternatives	Be more specific. EG: replace 'actors' with 'NGOs' or 'business groups'. Often 'participants' will do. 'Bodies' is OK.

Capacity-building	
✗ Example	"The project focuses on capacity-building and training of maritime administration staff, officials and coast guards from the region." – European External Action Service
☠ Why not?	Vague and bureaucratic
✓ Alternatives	Be specific. What capacity are you building? EG: making administration more efficient. 'Development of' often works.

Citizens	
✗ Example	"The main objective of this Charter is to bring together your European citizens' rights..." – Citizen House
☠ Why not?	Turns people into political objects
✓ Alternatives	'People.' Or name people. EG: 'Belgians' or 'Europeans.'

Civil Society	
✗ Example	"Recent pressure on civil society groups and curbs on the media suggests that it intends to follow a similar path in its second term." – Human Rights Watch
☠ Why not?	As opposed to what? Uncivil society? Term only used by policy-makers.
✓ Alternatives	Be specific. Which groups? Trade unions and NGOs?

Cross-cutting	
✗ Example	"Cross-cutting policy analysis can also cover issues that are themselves cross-cutting in nature." – Milieu NGO
☠ Why not?	Ugly. Usually redundant.
✓ Alternatives	Widespread, across the board




Deliverables	
✗ Example	"The Commission may be assisted by external experts in the analysis and evaluation of the reports and deliverables." – European Commission (Research and Innovation)
☠ Why not?	Vague, unintelligible, bureaucratic
✓ Alternatives	Describe 'deliverables' – which are usually 'benefits' or 'outcomes'




Driver	
✗ Example	"Trade is an important driver for economic growth and job creation." – European Commission (Trade)
☠ Why not?	Over-used business jargon. Drivers hold steering wheels.
✓ Alternatives	Turn noun back to verb. EG. "Trade drives growth." Or: advances, pushes, source of, catalyst for...




Framework	
✗ Example	"Unlike in the current framework, the EU target would not be translated into national targets via EU legislation." – European Commission (climate and energy)
☠ Why not?	Sounds engineered. Vague and clunky.
✓ Alternatives	'Setup' or 'structure.' Or be more specific: plan, law, legislation, proposal.




Holistic	
✗ Example	"We support a holistic approach to cities that integrates many aspects ..." – United Nations (Sustainable Development)
☠ Why not?	Sounds esoteric and usually meaningless.
✓ Alternatives	Avoid. Or use 'all encompassing', 'rounded,' or 'coherent.' Or list the qualities of your approach.




Inclusive	
✗ Example	"'Inclusive governance' must be human rights-based, participatory, transparent, equitable and accountable." – EU Development Days
☠ Why not?	Throw-away term – like 'sustainability.' Who would argue for the opposite?
✓ Alternatives	Delete. Or describe what it means. EG: 'Taking into account opinions of voters.' Or 'good governance.'




Level playing field	
 Example	"EU should create a level playing field for all low-carbon technologies through one single 2030 GHG target." - FORATOM
 Why not?	Sounds engineered. Vague and clunky.
 Alternatives	Be more specific. EG: Plan, legislation

Mainstreaming	
 Example	" Mainstreaming climate concerns into other policies will continue to be the most effective way to spend the main bulk of the climate finance needed." – European Commission
 Why not?	Ugly, bureaucratic
 Alternatives	'Integrating' or 'including.' Or change sentence. EG: " Making sure climate concerns are at the heart of other policy areas. "

Mission	
 Example	"Unfortunately, the Director General cannot attend the conference because he will be on mission. "
 Why not?	"Holy people and superheroes go on missions. The rest of us just travel" (H/T @GreggSvingen)
 Alternatives	Business trip, travel

Roadmap	
 Example	"The implementation of the actions included in this roadmap will be assessed in the framework of joint annual forums..." – EU-Africa Summit 2014
 Why not?	Over-used, often road to nowhere
 Alternatives	Action plan, timetable

Social Exclusion	
 Example	"More than one child in four in the European Union (EU) is at risk of poverty and social exclusion. " – European Parliamentary Research Service
 Why not?	Term only used by bureaucrats and NGOs
 Alternatives	Say what social exclusion is. Usually poverty, lack of access to decent schooling, health, housing.

Stakeholder	
 Example	"Each year, the forum brings together thousands of stakeholders for discussions." – EU Development Days
 Why not?	Should only be used by vampire-slayers
 Alternatives	People with an interest in (insert topic), interest groups. Or 'we are holding a public dialogue on...'

Sustainable

✗ Example	"Similarly, farming practices have become more and more sustainable in the EU since 2005, as illustrated by the increase in the share of organic farming." - Eurostat
☠ Why not?	So over-used it is almost meaningless. Like 'green' anything.
✓ Alternatives	'Environmentally-friendly.' Or be more specific. Use less water? Emit less CO ₂ ?

Toolkit

✗ Example	"By doing so, the toolkit will further contribute to reinforcing and supporting the EU's human rights policy in general." – Council of the European Union
☠ Why not?	Over-used
✓ Alternatives	'Set of actions,' 'plan' or 'measures.' Or be more specific about actions being proposed.

Transparency

✗ Example	"A banking union in Europe needs to include requirements for greater supervisory transparency ." - Bruegel
☠ Why not?	Unnecessarily complicated
✓ Alternatives	'Openness' or 'clarity.'

Valorise

✗ Example	"How could the results of the agency be best valorized for both the public and private sectors?"
☠ Why not?	Ugly
✓ Alternatives	Increase the value of, enhance, make the most of

Win-win

✗ Example	"But, even more importantly, Chinese outbound FDI is a win-win game for both sides." – European Policy Centre
☠ Why not?	Cliché
✓ Alternatives	'Mutually beneficial,' 'both sides are winners' or 'can benefit both sides'