

H2020 SOCIETAL CHALLENGE 2

Food security, sustainable agriculture and forestry, marine, maritime and inland water research and the bioeconomy

FAQs - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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General Question – Eligibility of International Agencies

Enquires about the eligibility of “international agencies” in H2020 calls for proposals (this is different to an international organisation of European interest (who do get automatic funding) as follows: World Health Organisation; UN FAO.

Answer

Both organisations (World Health Organisation and UN FAO) are registered as International Organisations but not of European Interest (because the majority of their members are not from EU/AC)

Therefore, as a general rule, international organisations are eligible for funding under H2020 if they fulfil one of the conditions set out in Article 10(2) of the H2020 Regulation on Rules for Participation: such international organisations would only be eligible for funding if it is considered that its participation essential for carrying out the action in question or if such a funding would be stipulated in an international agreement/arrangement between the EU and that international organisation.

SFS-01-2018-2019-2020 – [subtopic B – 2019]

Question:

“Proposals may involve financial support to third parties, particularly for supporting regional/local networks. The proposal will define the process of selecting entities for which financial support will be granted up to EUR 100.000 per party[5] over the project duration.”

Is there any further clarification available on what this means? I assume that the EUR 100,000 grants would need to come out of the project budget, rather than in addition to the EUR 8million?

Also, the scope specifically advises liaising with relevant European Research Infrastructures such as ANAEE, but when I spoke to ANAEE they hadn’t even heard of this call... I guess this means that ANAEE was a pure hypothetical example, rather than direction?

Answer:

Regarding the possibility given to the applicants to involve financial support to third parties, if foreseen in the proposals, the grants per party should come out of the project budget. This possibility is not mandatory. Where it is necessary for the implementation of the action, applicants may call upon third parties, including subcontractors, to carry out work under the action. The conditions are described under Article 23 of the Rules for Participation:

https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/legal_basis/rules_participation/h2020-rules-participation_en.pdf

SFS-04-2019-2020

Question:

In the project they want to include veterinary residues and the effects of these on plants and soils and as consequence on animals (feed) and humans. Are such residues within the scope of this topic? The definitions on biocides, if also veterinary substances are included, are not easy to understand. It seems there are several definitions on biocides.

Furthermore, they want to address associated components added to pesticides formulations to mobilise, increase the impact, etc. of these. Also the question here, are such associated components within the scope of the topic.

Answer:

"The topic SFS-04 has two scopes. The scope A in 2019 is focusing on the integration of plant protection in a global health approach and targeting the impacts of **plant protection products and their metabolites (PPPs)** on plant, human, animal and ecosystem health.

Plant protection products are 'pesticides' that protect crops or desirable or useful plants: https://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/pesticides_en

They contain at least one **active substance** and have one of the following functions:

- protect plants or plant products against pests/diseases, before or after harvest
- influence the life processes of plants (such as substances influencing their growth, excluding nutrients)
- preserve plant products
- destroy or prevent growth of undesired plants or parts of plants

They may also contain **other components including safeners and synergists**.

Veterinary residues are not within the core scope of this topic SFS-04-A. Associated components added to the active substance in plant protection products are within the scope of scope A of the topic."

SFS-11-2018-2019

Question:

SFS-11-2018-2019: Anti-microbials and animal production has an A(2018) and a B (2019) part but in the deadline table its separation was not clear for my expert as you indicated.

Does it mean that you allocate 12 million Euro for the year 2018 and it is only for subtopic A, while the 6 million Euro is allocated for 2019 is only for subtopic B with an opening date of 16 October 2018 and with a deadline of submission of proposals by 23rd January 2019 (first stage)?

Answer:

As stated in the WP, a budget of 12 million has been foreseen for scope A (2018), with a recommended grant size of 6 million. Therefore, 2 projects are expected to be funded;

For scope B (2019), instead, a budget of 6 million is foreseen, with recommended grant size of 6 million. Therefore, 1 project is expected to be funded.

Please note that 2019 topics/scopes/budget are indicative and may evolve until the publication of the call.

SFS-11-2018-2019 - [subtopic B - 2019]

Question:

The existing molecules with new activities could be developed as feed additives?

Answer:

1. The indicative topic scope is quite broad; virtually only vaccines and basic research on gut microbiome are excluded;

2. The text provides examples, mentioning '...feed additives, or novel molecules'. So, it is very open;
3. The scope requires that applicants consider guidelines, standards and legislation. Notably, it should be kept in mind that anti-microbial growth promoters are prohibited in the EU.

Please note that 2019 topics are indicative and may evolve until the publication of the call.

LC-SFS-17-2019

Question:

1. What is meant by “clean labeling approach” at the end of the Specific Challenge section? What does this entail?
2. Would a protein purified from lactic acid bacteria (GRAS) that can have both food and feed applications (containing no GMO residue) be labelled as ‘clean’?

Answer:

1. Please use the definition of the clean label as provided by Asioli et al. 2017: Some production methods are perceived as less "natural" (i.e. conventional agriculture) while some food components are seen as "unhealthy" and "unfamiliar" (i.e. artificial additives). This phenomenon, often referred to as the "clean label" trend, has driven the food industry to communicate whether a certain ingredient or additive is not present or if the food has been produced using a more "natural" production method (i.e. organic agriculture).

The purpose of this indicator is to have the “acceptability” of the consumers for the new products assessed and validated.

2. The evaluators will consider various products proposed in the proposals and assess their “clean label” potential during the evaluation. The question is too specific and thus not possible to respond.

SFS-30-2019-B

Question 1:

1) In the topic description of subtopic B- Looking behind plant adaption, it says: “Proposals should foresee a task for joint activities with other projects financed under this topic.” Does this only include other projects financed under this subtopic, or does it refer to all subtopics in SFS-30 (A, B and C)? And could you kindly provide some examples of adequate joint activities, that would fulfil the requirement?

2) Furthermore the topic description of subtopic B says “...work is undertaken in particular on crop plants and take into account relevant agronomic conditions.” Does this mean that work must focus on crops with high agronomic impact and value, or does it mean that it is important to focus on a “non-model crop” as defined by the use as a “real” crop in agricultural practice?

Answer

1) In the event of financing two projects, these two projects are supposed to exploit synergies between their activities. To that end, they are requested to allocate resources and foresee joint activities. Applicants are free to propose activities which they consider appropriate to link the work and results of the parallel projects. No guidance is given on the type and extent of activities.

2) The topic text asks applicants to undertake (most of) their work in **crop plants** (while taking advantage of work in model and semi model plants), **without** giving preference to any particular crop. It is up to applicants to explain the choice of crop in relation to the objectives of the proposed work. Furthermore, the text asks to take into account relevant agronomic conditions, i.e. make sure that results of the proposed work can be applied to existing situations in Europe.

These conditions (crop plants and relevant agronomic conditions) have been set to increase the impact of proposed activities on EU agriculture.

Question 2:

The question regards the following sentence: "While taking advantage of findings from (semi) model crops, work shall focus on crop plants and relevant agronomic conditions" [scope of topic B [2019]: Looking behind plant adaptation]:

Are the proposals expected to upscale achieved knowledge on model crop species, like e.g. *A. thaliana*, who has not any particular agronomic interest and then expand it to more relevant species with agronomic interest? Or shall otherwise the proposal focus on a target model species, with already renown agronomic importance, and then bring acquired knowledge to other species?

Answer

The aim of the topic is to advance our understanding of adaptation mechanism in crop plants. This implies that work is undertaken in particular on crop plants and take into account relevant agronomic conditions. We acknowledge however, that insights on the molecular basis of adaptation mechanisms will also come from work in model plants and that some (molecular) tools which are available in model plants will have to be established in crop plants.

In this context please note that one of the expected impacts is: "Translate knowledge on the adaptive plasticity of plants and complex genotype by phenotype interactions into crop improvement and management strategies".

SFS-35-2019-2020

Question:

"The Topic text reads: "Preference will be given to proposals focusing on specific regions of Africa."

What does this mean concretely? Does the selected region have an influence on the evaluation? Could there be more than one project in a region? Will the Commission try to cover multiple regions in Africa? How can CGIAR Centers with a Headquarter in Africa (ILRI, ICRAF) be incorporated into consortia? Will they count as African regional partners, international partners or like "overarching" African partners?"

Answer (per sub-question):

_Q:

The Topic text reads: "Preference will be given to proposals focusing on specific regions of Africa."

What does this mean concretely? Does the selected region have an influence on the evaluation?

A:

The selected region does not have any influence on the evaluation.

Q:

Could there be more than one project in a region?

A:

Proposals will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria under H2020 and there is a possibility that two proposals having the same region in focus will be rank high and both might be funded.

Q:

Will the Commission try to cover multiple regions in Africa?

A:

Under the SFS-35-2019 topic the total budget is 35 million EUR, the EU contribution under the sub-topic A is up to 7,5 million EUR and up to 5 million EUR under sub-topic B. Under sub-topic A the intention is that the highest rank proposals will be having different regions in Africa as the main focus.

Q:

How can CGIAR Centers with a Headquarter in Africa (ILRI, ICRAF) be incorporated into consortia? Will they count as African regional partners, international partners or like "overarching" African partners?

A:

For this specific topic any general African organization located on the African continent will be counted towards African partners, as they have pan-African role they cannot be counted towards African regional partners.

Regarding the legal status of the organization in terms of obtaining funding the general H2020 rules apply:

- Organization set up under the local law is recognized as national organization and will be able to benefit from funding as per rules applied to that country. In other words the research centres and other public bodies (but not international organizations) which are established and registered as public bodies in a country, and for which the national law applies, will be considered as entities from this country;*
- Organization set up as international organization can be a partner in the proposal, however funding will be only granted if the participation will be essential in obtaining the results of the project. That said organization can be a cost free partner (i.e. partner that will use its own resources) to any of the project proposals.*

The General Annex A to the H2020 WP 2018-2020 clearly states that international organizations are eligible for funding:

When funding is provided for under bilateral scientific and technological arrangement or any other arrangement between the EU and the international organization;

When the EC deems participation of the entity essential for carrying out the action funded through H2020

[see http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/wp/2018-2020/annexes/h2020-wp1820-annex-ga_en.pdf]

In the particular case of ILRI and ICRAF both are national organizations as they are established under the Kenyan national law.

Question2:

In terms of the requirements for African partners, that “proposals shall include at least five participants from [specific region of Africa](#) (as defined by the African Union) and a minimum of eight participants from Africa”. Does this mean five participants from five different countries within the region, or just a total of

five partners from the region, with all potentially coming from the same country? Similarly, can all eight participants come from the same region?

Answer

It should be read: eight legal entities from any of the African countries which includes five legal entities from the same region (as defined by African Union). The legal entities can be from the same country and the eight legal entities can be from the same region. Please pay attention that not all entities which are using 'international organization' in its name are registered as international one, many of them are registered under national law of the country where they are located. At the same time many of the umbrella organizations are having multiple country registration thus only the entity registered under one of the African countries law will be counted towards the African countries limit i.e. entity working with African and having in its title 'Africa' but registered in a MS will be counted towards MS requirement.

SFS-39-2019

Question:

Is it possible to have more information about this sentence "Projects shall focus on technologies that could be deployed in a decentralised manner, at a relatively small scale."

The meaning of "relatively small scale" is not clear. Do you have some recommendations?

Answer

This requirement is linked to the fact that biogas production is very often decentralised and small-scaled. As transporting biogas digestate is costly and inefficient, the topic targets solutions adapted to the biogas production landscape by focusing on small-scale solutions, but with a certain flexibility to cover a diversity of cases.

The focus on small-scale is also linked to the expected impact of developing new business models in rural areas.

RUR-04-2018-2019

Question:

Proposals should include a task to cluster with other projects financed under the topic and with the modelling platform SUPREMA established under SFS-49-2017. Is RUR-04 open to proposals without strong link with SUPREMA?

Answer

RUR-04 is of course open to proposals that have no links with SUPREMA.

RUR-08-2018-2019-2020

Question:

What does the following sentence exactly mean?

"For sub-topics B and C, participation of partners from CELAC countries is encouraged"

Indeed, as there's no Framework agreement for H2020 with CELAC countries such as with China and Africa the precise questions are the following:

- **Why a partnership with CELAC especially? Is there some specific lobby behind this request?**
- **What are the expectations behind it? In terms of business? in terms of Partnership?**
- **Is it linked to the specific theme of "Bio-based fertilisers from animal manure"?**

Answer

The [EU-CELAC relations](#) include a joint initiative on research and innovation. In this context, a pilot action has been launched in 2018 to support a regional research mission on management and re-use of waste (<http://www.technopolis-group.com/celac-pai/>). Topic CE-RUR-08 has been identified as potentially contributing to the implementation of this pilot action.

Cooperation in this domain aims mainly at facilitating technology transfer/adaptation to the specific conditions of CELAC countries, and the development of a local market for organic-based fertilisers.

The scopes concerned are B and C. Only scope B will be open in 2019, with a focus on animal manure.

It must be highlighted that, whilst the topic encourages cooperation, this does not constitute a requirement, i.e. proposals shall not be penalised for not integrating a cooperation dimension.

RUR-10-2019

Question:

Proposals can target any combination of non-food bio-based outputs". Is feed in this context considered to be a "non-food bio-based output"

Answer

Topic CE-RUR-10-2019 requests proposals to consider a variety of non-food bio-based processes and end products that could be integrated into existing agro-food systems.

No definition of 'bio-based products' is provided or referenced, hence any bio-based product outside food can be considered, including feed.

We would like to emphasise that a variety of products need to be considered, the integrated assessment helping define the most suitable product mix and process configuration.

Question2:

1. **Is olive tree cultivation considered EU-common (as required in the topic text) or not, since it is not cultivated in the North?**
2. **Regarding the food system, we are considering to focus on olive tree production-olive waste-polyphenols. Could you please tell me if this can be considered as a single agro food system?**

Answer2:

1. *The topic indicates that agro-food systems proposed by applicants "should be common in Europe and offer high replication potential". This does not imply that the chosen agro-food systems need to be present in all Member States and Associated States, or in all agro-climatic regions. It only excludes agro-food systems that are very specific of a certain location and/or irrelevant in economic terms, which is not the case of olive tree cultivation.*

- 2. The topic defines "agro-food system" as "a characteristic combination of farming activities and first transformation or conditioning of the farming outputs". Olive tree cultivation and olive oil extraction can be considered an example of this. Specific end-products (e.g. polyphenols) are not specified in the topic, hence consortia are free to propose what they consider appropriate.*