

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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Sommario

General Question – Eligibility of International Agencies.....	2
SFS-01-2018-2019-2020 – [subtopic B – 2019].....	2
SFS-04-2019-2020.....	2
SFS-11-2018-2019.....	4
SFS-11-2018-2019 - [subtopic B - 2019]	4
LC-SFS-17-2019	4
CE-SFS-24-2019.....	5
SFS-30-2019-B.....	5
SFS-35-2019-2020.....	6
SFS-34-2019	8
SFS-39-2019	9
RUR-04-2018-2019	10
RUR-08-2018-2019-2020	10
RUR-10-2019.....	11

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."

Question2:

1. The call is referring to "the context of a global health approach", does it mean that the project should look at human, animal and environmental health and their interconnections (as the One Health concept) ? Or that the project should look international health security (EU and other context) ?
2. A project answering the SFS04 call should be focused on the use of PPPs for agricultural needs only? or the urban use of pesticide need to be addressed ?

Answer2:

1. The call is referring to "a global health approach" which actually covers both mentioned dimensions. Activities will deliver integrated approaches to assess the impacts on plant, human, animal and ecosystem health. The work should also make it possible to gauge the spatial dimension of impacts and map risks at regional, national, European and global levels.
2. The topic is dedicated to the assessment of the impacts of plant protection products and their metabolites. The scope asks to build on representative case studies covering different agricultural products as well as to take into account both direct and indirect exposures to PPPs with a particular focus on direct exposure of farmers and the rural population and the exposure of consumers to PPP residues in food. It is specifically asked that the proposals will identify lock-ins, develop transition paths towards a sustainable use of PPPs and should consider the needs of farmers for selecting more appropriate and sustainable products and their optimal use avoiding side effects. It is relevant to have a broad and integrated approach on risks and exposure to PPPs with a particular focus on agricultural needs and products. Hence agriculture is clearly targeted but other uses could be considered if relevant for an integrated assessment.

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.*

Question2:

There is no defined project length in the call: what it should be?

Answer2:

The length of a project should be defined by the consortium in view of the objectives it wishes to attain and the budget requested: we cannot prescribe/suggest anything in this regard.

CE-SFS-24-2019

Question:

Is it possible to provide financial support to third parties to carry out pilot projects? The process for selecting entities will be defined by project partners and citizen advisors. Financial support will be in the order of 50,000 per pilot proposal.

Answer:

For CE-SFS-24-2019 it is not possible to provide financial support to third parties to carry out pilot projects because this is not foreseen in the WP. This grant condition has to be specifically mentioned in the WP as for e.g. SFS-01-2018-2019-2020 sub-topic B.

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?

Answer2:

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.

Question3:

- 1. This call is defined as a RIA call but in the call text they are requesting to implement and test systems which seems more like demonstration activities. Could you please clarify this point.**
- 2. The requirements is involving different regions in the proposal – does the system approach need to be performed in each different region? Is it possible to advance a single pilot case for advancing intensification through dual cultures while applying the system approach.**

Answer3:

- 1. SFS-35-2019-2020 is a Research and Innovation Action (RIA) type of call, large part of the topic concentrates on research developed under the multi-actor approach concept. It is expected that the proposed research solutions will be testes in selected case studies together with farmers involved in the conceptualization.*
- 2. It is expected that each of the proposals will be focusing on one region in particular and will as much as possible analyse multiple agricultural systems. The list in the topic text is only indicative and any type of system can be proposed.*

Question4:

In the call text there is a requirement to include a task to cluster with projects financed under SFS-33-2018. What does it mean? Is it necessary to contact with the project before submitting the application? Does it require collaboration with the project's members?

Answer4:

The project funded under SFS-33-2018 - LEAP4FNSSA is creating a platform for cooperation between all projects funded under the FNSSA partnership. The requirement to have a task to cluster with this project should help to first allow the consortia funded under SFS-35 have finances to travel for meetings under the partnership. This task should also potentially allow to do some common work (either as cluster with SFS-33 but also with other SFS-35 projects in case they do cover a similar area).

There is no need to contact other project coordinators before submitting the proposal.

Cooperation with other projects members should be envisaged if a scope for joint work is possible (this can be with SFS-35 projects but also with others).

SFS-34-2019

Question:

In the "Topic and Documents" section of the call is stated that: "Due to the specific challenge of this topic, in addition to the minimum number of participants set out in the General Annexes, proposals shall include at least four participants from a specific region of Africa (as defined by African Union) and a minimum of five participants from Africa". Does this mean that the minimum number of participants from Africa is 5 and that 4 participants out of 5 should belong to a specific region? Or maybe that the minimum number of participants from Africa is 9 (4 from a specific region + 5 from Africa)?

Answer:

The proposal should have minimum 5 entities from Africa. Minimum 4 entities should be from a specific region, while additional 1 (or more) could be from other parts of Africa or from the already chosen region. Please pay attention to the definition of regions as per the African Union definition and also to the legal status of the entities. The legal status will define the country of the entity.

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.

Question2:

As there seems to be a Deadline from MOST for a pre-proposal on the 9th of December 2018, which is the first necessary step for Chinese applicants to be able to submit a full proposal, what happens if the Chinese applicants will not pass this first evaluation hurdle? Does this mean that the European Consortium Partners will therefore not fulfil the evaluation criteria set by the EC for SFS-39 or not be eligible to submit their proposal?

What if the European SFS-39 proposal is negatively evaluated, but the Chinese proposal selected for funding by MOST or the other way round?

Do the EC and MOST communicate about their decision and make sure that if one of the proposals is selected by the EC or MOST, the other party is informed and this will be taken into consideration in the evaluation? Do you have any more insights into how this entire process will look like?

Answer2:

The 2018 call of MOST is only for the H2020 calls of 2018. A dedicated MOST call for the H2020 Work Programme 2019 will be published in the next months.

The evaluation by MOST and EC is done in parallel with exchange of information and at this moment the timing of final evaluation is much closer than in the previous years. The project proposals are evaluated based on the criteria set up by MOST and EC respectively. Thus for the 2019 proposals should be submitted to both EC and MOST (in 2018 the EC deadline was in February, MOST call was closed in March).

At the end of the evaluation process the EC will grant agreement to the winning consortium and the expectation is that MOST will fund the Chinese partners. However, since there are specific rules MOST might support all, some or none of the Chinese partners. From practice, if not all partners are funded by MOST, we see that some of them are getting financial support from other funding streams (e.g. Chinese Academy of Sciences) or self-fund. Thus, indeed there is a risk that the project that will be selected under H2020 will only have funding from H2020 and the Chinese partners will not be successful. This scenario will not change the

EC decision, however this will be a risk for the consortium. In those cases EC is helping and discussing with Chinese counterpart to see if other solutions are possible.

We encourage Chinese applicants to read the MOST call in detail as they are some specific rules to whom the funding is addressed.

Question3:

1. The title of the call says High quality organic fertilisers from biogas digestate. Must the produced fertiliser be classified as an organic fertiliser? In some EU countries there would be an advantage if the fertiliser produced from digestate could be classified as a mineral fertiliser.
2. Proposals shall ensure solid collaboration between agro-food actors, technology providers, research centers, end-users and public administration. Do all these have to be partners or can they collaborate in other ways?
3. Proposals shall promote balanced research and innovation cooperation between the EU and China. What is meant by balanced? How does the Chinese co-funding mechanism work?
4. Proposals shall include a task to cluster with other projects financed under topic RUR CE-08-2018/2019/2020. What does this mean?

Answer3:

1. No option is excluded, provided that it is produced from digestate.
2. The only requirement is that there should be a "solid collaboration".
3. Balanced influence in project conception and decisions, balanced contribution to scientific work. In sum, avoid marginal or "cosmetic" collaboration. Information on the co-funding mechanism can be found here: <https://ec.europa.eu/research/iscp/index.cfm?pg=china>.
4. A task should be included in one of the work packages for this purpose, and some resources should be allocated to it.

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 means?

"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](http://www.technopolis-group.com/celac-pai/) 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.*

Question3:

The Topic CE-RUR-10-2019 focuses on a single and established agro-food system for the development of circular bio-based business models with high replication potential. We are considering to involve the utilization of camelina as an oil-rich crop that can be cultivated in marginal lands with high desertification risk in Southern European countries and following a multi-cropping strategy as a summer cover crop in Northern European countries. We would like to ask you whether we can incorporate animal farming into the agro-food system of camelina cultivation and oil extraction, as camelina cake (by-product of camelina oil extraction process) is currently employed as animal feed. Animal farming will be evaluated as a case study together with camelina cultivation and oil extraction where residues, wastes and camelina oil/cake will be used for the production of non-food bio-based products in a sustainable manner under low cost technologies and high replication potential.

Answer3:

Please note that we cannot provide advice on individual proposals, but only clarify the relevant aspects of the topic. In relation to your question, the elements of the topic that should be taken into account are the following:

- *Proposals should be based on “an established agro-food system” that “should be common in Europe and offer high replication potential”. You should assess whether this is the case of camelina cultivation and/or the modality of animal farming envisaged.*
- *The topic also establishes that such agro-food system “can be combined with (...) use of marginal lands”. You should consider whether marginal lands can be used for camelina cultivation or animal husbandry .*