



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR ENERGY
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR COMMUNICATIONS NETWORKS, CONTENT AND
TECHNOLOGY

FAQ - Frequently Asked Questions WP 2017 for Horizon2020 call SCC 1 – 2017

**Smart Cities and Communities –
solutions integrating energy, transport, ICT sectors through lighthouse (large scale
demonstration - first of the kind) projects**

<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/topics/scc-1-2016-2017.html>

The general link to H2020 updated documents is:
<https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/home.html>

Version: 12.01.2017

1. Can proprietary ICT platforms be used in this call?

The objective of this call is to deploy interoperable solutions. To this end platforms, irrespective of their ownership model, must be based on open specifications, including the data structures and APIs. It should be noted that the end goal is to have interoperability and portability of services among cities in Europe and beyond and any platform development should be compliant to the latest releases in relevant standardisation and should be upgradeable with minor effort to a European (Global) standardised platform at the moment that such a standard is available. For more information please see "Urban Platforms for EU cities" initiative at <https://eu-smartcities.eu/urban-platforms> Moreover platforms are to be TRL 7 or more.

2. Can proprietary closed ICT solutions be used in this call?

Since the interest of the project outcome is a collective learning and the creation of a smart local ecosystem, proprietary closed ICT solutions cannot be included in proposals. Interoperability of solutions is a corner stone and the involved industry partners should be committed to business models that avoid locked-in customers. Open specifications for data structures and APIs are mandatory for Urban ICT platforms, so that data can be reused by different applications, also those created by third parties not involved in the project, so that smart local ecosystems can flourish. The ICT solutions should be compliant to any existing European (or Global in case these are inspired and adopted by the European SDOs and stakeholders) standards or as close as possible to a working draft in case the standardisation is not yet finalised.

3. Is there a city size threshold?

No, there is no such threshold. What counts is that the geographical and population size of the district where the solution will be deployed and the ambition of the proposal can guarantee a substantial impact and European relevance in terms of demonstrating replicable solutions. This district should be a clearly delineated geographical zone so that the measurements of in and out can easily be compared before and after the project (including the costs, the return on investment, and other KPIs that are clearly described in the proposal)

4. Can suburban cities be follower cities of their central city?

This call is for cities and communities and a metropolitan area or an agglomeration will be considered as one city and community. Similarly one neighbourhood in a city cannot be the follower of another neighbourhood in the same city.

5. Are cities involved as follower cities in the selected projects of the previous SCC1 calls excluded?

Follower cities involved in selected projects of the 2014/2015/2016 Call will not be formally excluded from the 2017 Call. However, the additional impact, the additional integrated innovation and the European added value of being part in several projects have to be substantiated in the proposal.

6. Can a follower city of one of the 2014/2015/2016 SCC1 supported projects apply as lighthouse city in the 2017 SCC1 call?

There are no rules of H2020 excluding entities/consortia from submitting a proposal were a current follower city applies as lighthouse city but the call text states: " Follower cities are cities that have yet to acquire the technical competence to become a lighthouse city. "

7. Can entities from outside the EU participate?

Each project shall be realised 3 "lighthouse cities or communities". And each project shall involve minimum 3 "follower cities" as beneficiaries.

The above-mentioned 3 "lighthouse cities" and minimum 3 "follower cities" must be legal entities established in a different EU Member state or associated country.

Besides the above-mentioned "lighthouse cities or communities" and "follower cities", other eligible legal entities can be beneficiaries in the project (e.g. SMEs, industries, other cities and communities...). See also [fact sheet: International Participation in Horizon 2020 and FP7](#)

8. Are follower cities eligible for funding?

Yes, follower cities are eligible for funding of certain activities (e.g. develop a convincing replication and investment plan; be part of work package for cooperation with other selected projects on main project issues including business models and legal, regulatory and other market barriers (foresee about 2 % to 3% of the [project's] requested funds for inter-project cooperation)) Their budget should be clearly justified with a coherent work programme and deliverables. Their contribution to the project will be part of the evaluation.

9. Are follower cities allowed to carry out direct deployment of a set of selected measures within its local context (e.g. energy retrofitting + ICT + mobility) and within the project time?

Follower cities need to commit to supporting the project definition early on from the point of view of replication potentials. They commit to replication (carried out with other funding sources than those of the project itself) after the successful demonstration in lighthouse cities and if opportune even already during the project funding period.

10. How should the follower cities confirm/show the replication of solutions at the end of the project – what is expected?

Follower cities should be fully involved already from the planning phase of the proposal and work together with the leading cities on solutions that have strong potential to be also replicated in their own cities. The lighthouse projects should develop, test and implement bankable and well working innovative solutions in the lighthouse cities, but with the scope of paving the way for the follower cities to replicate the solutions later on in their cities for their own benefit. As there is no funding directly linked to the implementation/replication in the follower cities there is no hard legal obligation for them, but it should be in their own interest that the consortium develops solutions that will be of added value also for their own city.

11. What should be the minimum size of the implementation sites, as districts is not a very accurate unit and these are extremely variable even within the same country?

There is no minimum size. What counts is the geographical and population size of the district where the solution will be deployed and the ambition of the proposal to guarantee a substantial impact and European relevance in terms of demonstrating replicable solutions. The size shall allow deployment of solutions in a relatively concentrated area which will also allow will make possible to better study interaction between the different parts.

12. Can conglomerations or groups of smaller neighbouring municipalities participate as one (joint) lighthouse partner?

Yes, if i) they group under one city name and ii) these conglomerations are not putting additional administrative burden on the project and iii) the motivation to include these

conglomerations and the added value of this cooperation is convincingly described in the proposal.

13. Does a proposal have to cover all three aspects (low energy buildings, integrated infrastructure and sustainable urban mobility)?

Yes, all deployments in the lighthouse cities have to cover the three areas simultaneously. The call is about deploying solutions combining the three areas.

14. Does each leading city need to be 'leading' in each technology area (i.e. transport, energy or ICT) and/or can some cities be leading in one technology area and 'following' in another technology area?

Each leading city has to be committed to lead the implementation of large-scale solutions that address all areas and intelligently combine rather mature technologies. "Fully integrated projects" are being called for; e.g. it must not be that the transport part is deployed in one city and the energy part in another. However, it is acceptable that one city demonstrates greater knowledge and innovation capacity on energy and the other greater knowledge and innovation capacity on transport, for example, as long as it can be demonstrated that all cities implement the integrated approach. In this case, cities shall demonstrate the added value and mutual benefits of their cooperation. Indicators to assess the replicability of solutions are available in the set of smart city indicators delivered by the CITYKeys project (<http://citykeys-project.eu/>).

15. What are ineligible costs?

Ineligible costs' are:

- costs that do not comply with the conditions for eligible costs as indicated in the call text;
- costs related to return on capital;
- debt and debt service charges;
- provisions for future losses or debts;
- interest owed;
- doubtful debts;
- currency exchange losses;
- bank costs charged by the beneficiary's bank for transfers from the
- Commission/Agency;
- excessive or reckless expenditure;
- deductible VAT;
- costs incurred during suspension of the implementation of the action.

As general principle, Actions cannot generate profit to any participant, and do not alleviate the valid procurement rules of public authorities.

16. How should private entities be involved in the development process?

Private entities should be involved in the project. The majority of project action should be implemented by the companies in the consortium and only certain aspects of project development should be implemented through external public procurement, where relevant and appropriate. This option should be reserved for minor aspects and only if the expertise cannot be found in the consortium.

17. Which methodological framework should be used to calculate the estimated CO2 savings obtained through the solutions deployed in the project, as required by the TEST table?

The TEST table stipulates that the estimation of CO2 savings should follow on the basis of CO2 intensity of the European electricity grid of 443 g/kwh, and need to take into account the size of the entire vehicle fleet powered by alternative energy carriers that will be deployed in the project, i.e. the sum of emissions from fuel and electricity. Further information can be obtained from the following reference report and its 2016 updates: JEC, 2014, Well-to-Wheels Report (Version 4.a) JEC Well-t-Wheels analysis, JRC technical reports, European Commission.

18. What is the minimum duration of performance monitoring?

Two years of monitoring is considered the minimum (one year for dry out and optimisation; one winter and one summer season). Performance monitoring involving longer term commitments (e.g. 3 to 5 years) will give an added value to the proposal. This is valid for the buildings, the grid and the vehicle fleets.

19. How important is performance monitoring? Can performance monitoring deliverables be of restricted access?

The main objective of lighthouse cities and projects is collective learning and the replication of viable solutions. Therefore, data from the validation phase of lighthouse projects have to be made publicly available and cannot be restricted. Data will be collected and publicly made available also through the Smart City Information System which aggregates feedback and knowledge of EU funded projects (starting with CONCERTO data from 2004 onwards and expanding) and linked resources should already be indicated in the proposal. Complementary to SCIS the CITYKeys (<http://citykeys-project.eu/>) indicators could also be considered.

20. We are planning to involve additional observer cities outside Europe. Can we allocate any funding for this effort or, are there any guidelines on what we need these external cities to commit to so they can be called observers?

Cities outside Europe (i.e. located neither in a Members state nor an associated country) can be part of a consortium. If they are allowed under the rules for participation under Horizon2020 to receive funding, they can do so also under this specific call. The European added value for such inclusion has to be clearly described in the proposal and is part of the evaluation.

21. Will cities need to use the Covenant of Mayors (CoM) Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) or Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP) template and under what conditions mitigation plans can be considered as "similar to CoM SEAPs/SECAPs" and therefore examined by the Joint Research Centre (JRC)?

Only cities applying as lighthouse city will need an approved Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) or Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP). The Joint Research Centre (JRC) will only examine mitigation plans (SECAP adaptation plans are not taken into account here), which strictly follow the SEAP or SECAP format (guaranteed through data input in the standard SEAP or SECAP template). Transforming existing plans into the SEAP/SECAP format is considered being a minor effort compared to preparing a proposal. The SEAP/SECAP will be used for the comparative evaluation, in the same way as the Building Energy Specification (BEST) tables. This guarantees the most fair and comparative evaluation. SEAP/SECAP will be a useful guide for cities to focus on the most important points (following the same rational as the BEST tables).

22. Is a Covenant of Mayors Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) baseline emission inventory sufficient, or do cities need to submit a mitigation plan?

A Baseline Emissions Inventory (BEI) only gives a snapshot of the emissions of the municipality. But it is needed to establish the SEAP like mitigation plan. We consider the SEAPs as essential since they reflect the commitment and ambition of the municipality towards emissions reduction.

For the SECAPs only the mitigation part will be subject to assessment while the SECAP adaptation tabs will not be considered for this evaluation.

23. Do Covenant of Mayors Sustainable Energy Action Plans (SEAP) or Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP) actually need to be approved by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) before the submission of the proposal, or is it enough if plans have just been submitted?

All plans need to be approved by the JRC before submission of the proposal, regardless, whether the city is a Covenant of Mayors signatory or not. An approval after the call deadline will not be possible since any further piece of information submitted after that deadline won't be eligible. The fast-track review will make sure that "SEAP/SECAP" submitted in this context at least 1 month before the call closure are processed in time and against the exact same criteria as the "original" SEAP/SECAP and the same guidelines for transparency and impartiality as all review and evaluation processes conducted by the European Commission.

For the SECAPs only the mitigation part will be subject to assessment while the SECAP adaptation tabs will not be considered for this evaluation.

Please send the duly filled SEAP or SECAP template available for download at "additional documents" under the topic description at least 1 month before call closure to

JRC-COM-TECHNICAL-HELPDESK@ec.europa.eu

Subject: Fast Track SEAP/SECAP H2020-SCC-2017

24. Can commercial/city-developed platforms resulting from European research initiatives (such as FIWARE) be used in this call?

Platforms developed in European research initiatives that correspond to the requirements of the call can be used. Specifications of many such platforms (for example FIWARE - <https://www.fiware.org/>) are public. Commercial and city-developed platforms based on such platforms are therefore open and fulfil at this stage the call requirements for interoperability and portability of services and for avoiding vendor lock-in. It should be noted that the end goal is to have interoperability and portability of services among cities in Europe and beyond and any implementation based on any platform (including FIWARE and similar) should be compliant to the latest releases in standardisation (including advanced drafts in case not yet finalised) and should be upgradeable with minor effort to a European (Global) standardised platform at the moment that such a standard is available. For more information please see "Urban Platforms for EU cities" initiative at <https://eu-smartcities.eu/urban-platforms> Please note that only platforms with a readiness level of 7 or more are eligible for this call.

25. What should be the timeframe for the Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) or Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP)? What if my existing climate and energy plan has a timeframe which is not aligned on the SEAP template? Can we have other than 2020 or 2030 target years?

The SEAP shall consider 2020 as a target for emissions reduction, as the assessment procedure in Joint Research Centre (JRC) is still based on the 2020 timeframe. If the city has a SECAP with reductions targets till 2030 this is also acceptable.

26. What is the level of detail of the replication plans? Are replication plans part of the proposal or rather they could be included in the annexes?

The topic description mentions that "The initial investment plans (to be refined during the execution of the project) shall show that after successful demonstration private capital can take over further investments at low technical and financial risks so that the economically weakest regions and cities of all sizes become attractive for investors".

The full development of replications plan is to be done during the project. Proposals are expected to provide outlines of replication plans for the solutions deployed in the lighthouse cities that credibly addresses the requirements of the topic.

The outlines of the replication plans shall be part of the core proposal and not as annexes.

27. The call foresees about 2 % to 3% of the requested funds for inter-project cooperation. Which kind of projects does this include?

This refers foremost specifically to the other SCC1 Lighthouse projects and relevant SCCx coordination and support actions (such as the SCC03 ESPRESSO project) under H2020 and the European Innovation Partnership on Smart Cities and Communities (active involvement in action clusters/initiatives) as well as to smart city related projects of FP7. However, this can to a lesser extent also stretch further if impact of proposed additional cooperation is duly justified and of added value to the project.

28. Can a 100% publicly-owned agency of a city, together with a statement of political commitment be formally acceptable as representation of the follower city as consortium partner?

Yes.