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

FAQ - Frequently Asked Questions
Work Programme (WP) 2018 for Horizon2020

Smart Cities and Communities – Lighthouse projects

Topic identifier: LC-SC3-SCC-1-2018-2019-2020

http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/topics/lc-sc3-scc-1-2018-2019-2020.html

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1. Does a city need a validated energy action plan to be an eligible 'Lighthouse City'?

Yes.

By the call deadline, each city applying to be a Lighthouse City has to have a:

i) Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP); or
ii) Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP); or
iii) a similar plan, that is at least equally ambitious.

This plan has to have been approved by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) before the call deadline. The fact that a city is a signatory to the Covenant of Mayors does not change this. Proposals containing lighthouse cities that do not have an approved plan will not be admitted to the evaluation.

The JRC will only examine energy action plans, which are presented in the SEAP or SECAP format, i.e. the .xls template available for download in the "additional documents" section of the call has to be completed. Only the mitigation part of the SECAP is taken into account here.

To learn more about SEAPs and SECAPs see also:
http://www.covenantofmayors.eu/actions/sustainable-energy-action-plans_en.html

2. How can it be guaranteed that an energy action plan is evaluated in time?

The fast-track review will make sure that "SEAP/SECAP or similar" submitted at least 1 month before the call closure (earlier submission is preferred) are processed in time.

Please send the duly filled SEAP or SECAP (only mitigation part will be taken into consideration) .xls 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

with the following Subject:

Fast Track SEAP/SECAP H2020-SCC-2018

Please note that submission to this fast-track is not sufficient for the project proposal to be eligible. The JRC has to have given their approval before the call deadline. If they have not, for whatever reason, the proposal will not meet the eligibility requirements and will not be evaluated. It is therefore in the interests of all those involved in a project proposal to ensure that all Lighthouse Cities have obtained the JRC's approval for the Lighthouse Cities prior to proposal submission.

3. What is the level of detail of the replication plans?

The topic description states that "Lighthouse Cities will closely collaborate with the Follower Cities and should act as exemplars helping to plan and initiate the replication of the deployed solutions".

The full development of replication plans 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 address the requirements of the topic. The outlines of the replication plans shall be part of the core proposal (not as annexes).

Replication plans should aim at integrated solutions.

4. The call foresees about 5 % of the requested funds for a work package for cooperation with other selected projects. Which kind of projects does this include?

This is principally targeting the Horizon 2020 SCC1 Lighthouse Projects and SCC Coordination and Support Actions as well as to the European Innovation Partnership on Smart Cities and Communities (active involvement in action clusters/initiatives) and smart city related projects of FP7. Other cooperation is not excluded; however, its impact would need to be justified in the proposal and add value to the project.

5. Is there a city size threshold?

No. The most important is that the solutions that are demonstrated have a wide replication potential in other cities – and hence potentially a very substantial impact beyond the project.

6. How is a district defined?

The district borders are defined by the projects and should be a clearly delineated geographical zone so that the measurement of energy flows 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).

7. Can a city be funded a 2nd time as Lighthouse City if the proposing commune/borough/city sub-entity is a different one?

No. Once a city has been named as a Lighthouse City in a H2020-funded SCC1 project the whole city (and its sub-entities) is excluded from being funded a 2nd time as a Lighthouse City.

8. Can a follower city in one of the 2014/2015/2016/2017 SCC1 supported projects apply as a Lighthouse City in the 2018 SCC1 call?

Yes. Follower Cities can apply to be Lighthouse Cities; however, the additional impact, the additional integrated innovation and European added-value of being in more than one project would have to be very well substantiated for the proposal to be credible.

9. Can one part of a city (e.g. the suburbs) be Follower Cities of another part of the same city?

No. 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.

10. Are follower cities eligible for funding?

Yes. Certain activities in Follower Cities are eligible for funding (e.g. developing a replication and investment plan; developing a bold city-vision for 2050); cooperation work package for cooperation with other selected projects on main project issues including replication, communication, public relation and business models. Their budget should be clearly justified with a coherent work programme and deliverables. Their contribution to the project will be part of the evaluation.

11. Are follower cities allowed to carry out direct deployment of a set of selected measures within their local context and within the project time?

Yes. They can carry out direct deployment; however they cannot claim costs for this in the project. Follower cities should be fully involved in developing the proposal so their specific needs and challenges are well reflected thereby increasing the project's replication potential. They commit to replicating a set of solutions demonstrated in the Lighthouse Cities and they can already start replicating them during the project; however, the replication costs have to be carried out using funding sources from outside the project.

12. Can the follower cities replicate solutions in projects other than those that they are participating in?

Yes. As this is already the 5th year of the Lighthouse calls, Follower Cities can also additionally decide to replicate solutions that have been demonstrated in earlier projects of the lighthouse projects group.

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

There is no fixed where that they should do this. It is up to the Follower Cities to decide which solutions they replicate and when. Nevertheless, given that part of the proposal evaluation will be on the basis of impact, the greater their commitment to implementing integrated solutions demonstrated in the project, the greater the project's impacts are likely to be.

14. What should be the minimum size of the implementation sites, as block/district is not a very accurate unit?

A Positive Energy Block should include at least 15.000 m^2 floor area and a minimum of three large buildings (new, retro-fitted or a combination of both) with different use typologies (e.g. residential, work, commercial, recreational). However, the ambition should be to go beyond this towards district size to guarantee substantial impact and European relevance in terms of demonstrating replicable solutions. The size of the project-defined district shall allow deployment in a concentrated area that allows the interaction between the different buildings to be studied.

15. What is meant by "Positive Energy Blocks/Districts have an annual positive energy balance"?

The definition in the call text states that: "Positive Energy Blocks/Districts have an annual positive energy balance"; it does not define how this is calculated. This is because, this is done very differently depending on location. In addition specifically applied primary energy factors can diverge a lot.

The call text requires that "Integrated innovative solutions for Positive Energy Blocks/Districts will be developed and tested and performance-monitored in the Lighthouse Cities", i.e. the main focus is on innovative solutions that will enable Positive Energy Blocks/Districts.

This means that the ambition of the project is to go well beyond what is already requested in the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive. This ambition has to be shown in the proposal and specifically made clear in the BEST table that will facilitate comparison between proposals.

16. 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 significant additional administrative burden on the project. The justification for including these conglomerations and the added value of their cooperation must be convincing in the proposal.

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

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

Private entities should be in the consortium because they often hold the key to developing successful business models that are key to the wide replication of solutions developed successfully in the project. The core tasks should be implemented by the companies in the consortium and only non-core tasks in the project implementation may be procured.

19. What is the minimum duration of performance monitoring within the project?

Two years of monitoring is considered the minimum (one year for drying out and optimisation; one winter and one summer season) within the project. Performance monitoring involving longer commitments beyond the lifetime of the project will give an added value to the proposal.

20. Can performance monitoring deliverables be confidential or have their access restricted?

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 also be collected and made publicly available through the Smart City Information System SCIS (http://smartcities-infosystem.eu) which aggregates feedback and knowledge of EU-funded projects.

21. Can cities/entities from outside the EU participate?

Yes. Cities from Associated Countries can be Lighthouse or Follower Cities, as well as those from the EU

They must be legal entities established in EU Member states or associated countries.

Entities from other countries can also participate; however, the possibilities for funding depend on the country in question. See also the fact sheet: International Participation in Horizon 2020 and FP7.

22. 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 not located in a Member State or 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.

23. 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.

24. Can Cities already funded as Lighthouse Cities be Follower cities in this call?

Yes in theory; however, it would be against the logic of the call text to invert roles in this way.

25. Can ICT city platforms be used in this call?

They can be used but they are not the specific focus of this call and will not be co-funded. However, if they are used, the platforms, irrespective of their ownership model, should 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 with 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.

26. How has the budget to be split between cities/partners?

The budget has to be credible and justified in the spirit of collaborative research and innovation. Person months have to be convincingly justified against activities performed and reflect local work costs. Partners do not have to be necessarily associated to a specific city. The budget split footnote 95 in the call text is indicative and not binding.