

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

CALL – COMPETITIVE LOW-CARBON ENERGY

GENERAL QUESTIONS

14/04/2014 Q: An applicant needs to buy some very specialized equipment to conduct the research in a Research and Innovation Action. Is the cost of this equipment eligible for funding? Can he file the cost under subcontracting? Is the 25% overhead excluded from subcontracting costs? And do any depreciation rules apply in this case?

A: Eligible costs for durable equipment:

The depreciation costs of equipment (new or second-hand) as recorded in the beneficiary's accounts are eligible, if they were written off in accordance with international accounting standards and the beneficiary's usual accounting practices.

The only portion of the costs that will be taken into account is that which corresponds to the duration of the action and rate of actual use for the purposes of the action.

Equipment costs normally do not fall under subcontracting (except special cases, where there is a "package" of a service with additional minor equipment costs). Thus 25% overhead can be claimed for these costs.

Please note that the information given above a) is not necessarily correct for other calls, as the work programme might in principle include a clause, which allows eligibility of the full costs instead of depreciation costs (the energy part of the WP does not include such a clause) and b) is only a part of the criteria which apply for the eligibility of costs. Details can be found on the Participants Portal: H2020 Grants Manual, section Annotated Model Grant Agreement.

14/04/2014 Q: At which stage of two-stage procedure is the operational capacity evaluated?

A: The operational capacity is evaluated at the second stage of two-stage procedures. The operational capacity is evaluated for each partner. If a partner lacks basic operational capacity, experts need to evaluate, at the consensus stage, the proposal without this partner and its associated activities. This must be reflected in a lower score and documented in the Evaluation Summary Report.

14/04/2014 Q: When will be the call for tenders from the section “Other actions” published?

A: Basic information on the tenders is found in the [Work Programme](#), which defines the type of procurement and the indicative timeframe for the publishing of the relevant call for tenders.

For all topics where an open public procurement procedure is indicated, the effective launch of the procedure is done through a notice published in the [Tenders Electronic Daily \(TED\)](#),

the public procurement section of the Official Journal of the European Union. A link to that notice will be also published in the relevant section of the [DG Research](#) or [DG Energy](#) sites.

All tender materials (invitation to tender, tender specifications and model contract) are published in TED. All interaction with our services following the launching of the call should be done through TED (eTendering).

The tenders will be evaluated in accordance with general public procurement rules and the EU Financial Regulation, following the principles of transparency and equal treatment. The selection and award criteria will be clearly stated in the invitation to tender.

30/01/2014 Q: Will open access be mandatory across Horizon2020 projects? Will the costs for open access publication be accepted as direct costs?

A: Open Access to peer reviewed publications is applicable to all beneficiaries in projects funded or co-funded under H2020.

There are two main routes towards open access:

- a) Self-archiving (green open access) – The published article or the final peer-reviewed manuscript is archived (deposited) by the author in an online repository.
- b) Open access publishing (gold open access) – In this model, the costs can usually be borne by the institution to which the researcher is affiliated, or by the funding agency supporting the research.

Costs relating to open access that result from research funded under H2020, incurred during the duration of an action, shall be eligible for reimbursement under the conditions of the grant agreement.

30/01/2014 Q: In case one of partners in the consortium would be in possession of or file for an (European) patent, how will this be interpreted with respect to intellectual property rights?

A: If the patent is obtained before the project the intellectual property rights (IPR) would remain with the owner of the patent. IPR generated in a project is owned by the partner(s) who generated it. IPR rules are described in the model grant agreement. The consortium agreement will regulate the cases, which are not covered by the grant agreement.

30/01/2014 Q: With respect to the verification of financial capacity of the project coordinator, when is a legal entity considered to be financially capable?

A: A tool is available at the Participant Portal:

<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/organisations/lfv.html>

for applicants to simulate their financial viability. A [guide on beneficiary registration, validation and financial viability check](#) is available on the participant portal.

30/01/2014 Q: When will the calls for the WP 2016-2017 be published?

A: The next work programme is planned to be published in July 2015.

18/03/2015 Q: I don't consider my project to contain ethics sensitive aspects, should I complete the ethics self-assessment?

A: It is likely that at least one aspect of the ethics issues identified will concern your proposal; It is strongly advised to follow the [Ethics Self-Assessment guide](#), and provide in your proposal the page number where mitigation measures are taken, in the Ethics table at the end of the proposal (Section 4).

Please keep in mind that these issues will be scrutinised after the evaluation, for all proposals above threshold, and additional information and requirements may be asked to be provided if it is not addressed in the proposal, and this may delay the grant preparation process.

PARTICIPATION

10/12/2014 Q: What is the possibility of obtaining funding for 3rd countries partners, such as China and Mexico. The feasibility of funding partners from these countries is very important for the consortium negotiations.

A: China or Mexico are not targeted in our work-programmes. For some topics they have been mentioned as possible interested parties. Therefore the general conditions apply – i.e. EU funding for the countries in the general annex (see http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/doc/call/h2020/common/1595112-18._general_annexes_wp2014-2015_rev1_en.pdf). China and Mexico are not mentioned in the annex, so they should normally not receive EU funding. However, funding is still possible “when the Commission deems participation of the entity essential for carrying out the action funded through Horizon 2020”. This aspect is also evaluated by the experts if funding is requested in a proposal.

10/12/2014 Q: Can travel and accommodation be paid for partners who are not eligible for EU funding, such as those coming from USA or Canada?

A: Entities from Canada and the USA can be beneficiaries in the project, but in principle without funding. If duly justified, an exception could indeed be the travel and accommodation costs to cover their participation in meetings in Europe.

Another possibility would be to have these parties included in an Advisory Committee. The coordinator could then make a reservation in his budget to pay travel and subsistence for these “expert advisors” to join meetings.

14/04/2014 Q: How to deal with Swiss participation?

A: Please refer to the most up-to-date information available at the [Participants Portal](#).

30/01/2014 Q: Can non-associated countries participate in Horizon2020 projects, and under which conditions?

A: Please refer to 'A: List of countries, and applicable rules for funding' of '18. General Annexes' to the Work Programme.

30/01/2014 Q: For demonstration projects, is it advisable that the industry is project coordinator?

A: This decision has to be taken by the proposal consortium, however in view of the future successful commercialisation of the technology, it would be advisable that industry has prominent role in the consortium.

30/01/2014 Q: How can I find the right project partners?

A: If you need help to identify a potential partner with particular competences, facilities or experience, use the [partner search options](#) available in the Participants Portal.

You could also contact relevant [National Contact Point](#).

EVALUATION

10/12/2014 Q: What are the permissible changes between stage 1 and 2 in the two-stage submission process, e.g., does the budget have to be identical for stage 1 and 2? Or is the estimated budget in stage 1 more an order of magnitude, while the budget of stage 2 is based on a quite thorough evaluation? Can new partners be included in the consortium?

A: In stage 1, neither the budget nor the consortium are evaluated. The consortium is described in part B and is checked for the eligibility criteria in Stage 1. The budget is also only indicative. Between stage 1 and stage 2, both the budget and the consortium can be modified in view that the proposal needs to finalise its needs in term of resources and expertise.

10/12/2014 Q: In General Annex B it is mentioned that certain supporting documents are required. Should these be included in the proposal at stage 1, or only in stage 2? Are these supporting documents subjected to the page limitation? It is mentioned that "A list of up to five publications...", etc. should be given. Is it five per proposal, or five per partner?

A: These supporting documents have to be provided in stage 2. These are not subject to the page limitation. The list is per partner and it allows checking the operational capacity of each partner. If an applicant lacks basic operational capacity, experts need to evaluate, at the consensus stage, the proposal without this applicant and its associated activities. This must be reflected in a lower score and documented in the Evaluation Summary Report.

30/01/2014 Q: What will the "Impact" of a proposal be measured against, will any specific indicators be used?

A: The proposal will be measured against the expected impact(s) listed in the work-programme under the relevant topic. This is particularly important for stage 1 proposals of two-stage evaluation calls.

Later on, in stage 2, and in addition to the expected impact(s) listed in the work-programme, proposals will be assessed regarding enhancing innovation capacity and integration of new knowledge. This means strengthening the competitiveness and growth of companies by developing innovations that meet the needs of European and global markets; and, where relevant, by delivering such innovations to the markets. Other environmental and socially important impacts (not already covered above) should also be considered. Finally, the effectiveness of the measures proposed to exploit and disseminate the project results (including management of IPR) and to communicate the project will also be assessed.

30/01/2014 Q: In a two-stage call, how much time will the successful participants in the first stage be given to prepare so that they meet the deadline for the second stage?

A: The minimum time that consortia will have is three months.

30/01/2014 Q: Who will perform the selection and evaluation process?

A: The evaluation process is explained in the [Grants Manual - IV. From evaluation to grant signature](#).

QUESTIONS APPLYING TO MORE THAN ONE TOPIC

30/01/2014 Q: Do proposals have to provide evidence that the technology is at a specific TRL level. Do simulations or conceptual descriptions/calculation count as experimental evidence?

A: The proposal will need to provide the evidence that the technology is at a specific TRL level. Simulations or conceptual descriptions/calculation are not experimental evidence. For example, a patent based only a conceptual description cannot serve as a proof of a given TRL level.

Some further clarifications on the TRL levels mentioned in the call:

At TRL 2, the technology concept, its application and its implementation have been formulated. The development roadmap is outlined. Studies and small experiments provide a "proof of concept" for the technology concepts.

TRL 3 means that the first laboratory experiments have been completed. The concept and the processes have been proven at laboratory scale, table-top experiments.

At TRL 4 a small scale prototype development unit has been built in a laboratory and controlled environment. Operations have provided data to identify potential up scaling and operational issues. Measurements validate analytical predictions of the separate elements of the technology. Simulation of the processes has been validated.

At TRL 5 the technology, a large scale prototype development unit, has been qualified through testing in intended environment, simulated or actual. The new hardware is ready for first use. Process modelling (technical and economic) is refined. LCA and economy assessment models have been validated. Where it is relevant for further up scaling the following issues have been identified: health & safety, environmental constraints, regulation, and resources availability.

At TRL 6, the components and the process, the prototype system, have been up scaled to prove the industrial potential and its integration within the energy system. Hardware has been modified and up scaled. Most of the issues identified earlier have been resolved. Full commercial scale system has been identified and modelled. LCA and economic assessments have been refined.

At TRL 7, the technology has been proven to work and operate a pre-commercial scale – a demonstration system. Final operational and manufacturing issues have been identified. Minor technology issues have been solved. LCA and economic assessments have been refined.

At TRL 8, the technology has been proven to work at a commercial level through a full scale application. All operational and manufacturing issues have been solved.

TRL 9 means that the technology has been fully developed and is commercially available for any consumers.

30/01/2014 Q: Are proposals expected to have activities or work package on manufacturing?

A: No, the proposals are not required to do so. However, they need to consider the current Manufacturing Readiness Level (MRL) and the activities needed to keep the MRL aligned with the future advances in the TRL of the proposed technology solution in order to ensure the potential for exploitation.

30/01/2014 Q: In some topics, there are different technology-specific challenges for 2014 and for 2015, however in others, the text is the same. When the text is the same, is it anticipated that the text will remain the same or is it anticipated that the text will be updated in an amendment of the work programme? If it will remain the same, then is there nevertheless an expectation that there will be a difference between proposals received in 2014 and 2015 – for example in terms of higher TRLs or another aspect? If there is no difference, will there not be several (many) unfunded proposals from the 2014 call being simply upgraded according to the evaluation and re-submitted in the 2015 call?

A: No substantial changes are expected to be made to the texts of the work programme for 2015 in a possible amendment. Therefore, where the technology-specific challenges are repeated in 2014 and in 2015, there is indeed a possibility that a proposal not succeeding in the 2014 call is resubmitted in the 2015 call.

30/01/2014 Q: What is the expected project duration?

A: There are no explicit indications in the work programme, because the optimal time depends on each project proposal. The duration of proposed projects should be commensurate with the proposed activities. The consortium should consider when deciding on the duration of the project that the length of time foreseen is enough to achieve the objectives of the project in the most efficient way taking into account the potential risks. Deliverables and milestones should be defined to guarantee a successful completion of the project. Mid-point objectives would be expected.

LCE2, LCE 3

30/01/2014 Q: Which are the global challenges mentioned in the specific challenge section of topic LCE 2 and LCE 3?

A: The global challenges are outlined in the introduction to the Renewable electricity and heating/cooling section. Namely:

- a) Technology performance needs to increase further and cost of equipment to decrease resulting in a decrease of the overall cost of renewable energy production in order for renewable energy to be attractive in the market and cover a large part of the final energy consumption by 2050.
- b) Resource efficiency and environmental impacts need to be addressed taking a life-cycle perspective.

- c) In order to increase the performance of the energy system as a whole, the particular renewable energy conversion device or renewable energy system will have to address a number of enhancements in delivering energy to the increasingly smarter grid.
- d) Renewable energy technology supply chains and manufacturing processes able to compete globally need to be developed and consolidated.

30/01/2014 Q: It appears that the call only focuses on offshore wind energy. Will proposals focusing on on-shore wind energy be eligible?

A: Proposals in 2014 under LCE 2 and LCE3 can be focused challenges for on-shore wind. In particular, the following technology specific challenges could be addressed with both on-shore and offshore perspective:

LCE 2, 2014: i) control strategies and systems for new and/or large rotors and wind farms (on- and offshore);

LCE 3, 2014: demonstrating and testing of new nacelle and rotor prototypes - there is a need for demonstration and testing of new nacelle and rotor prototypes with a significant lower mass and material intensity and applicable to several types of large-scale wind turbines.

In 2015, the wind technology specific challenges in LCE 2 and LCE 3 are indeed only for offshore wind.

LCE 2 – 2014/2015: Developing the next generation technologies of renewable electricity and heating/cooling

2014 technology-specific challenge LCE2-g-ii 'Improving efficiency of biomass CHP systems while widening the feedstock base'

14/04/2014 Q: What do you mean by 'input power'? Is this fuel input, power output or heat output?

A: The CHP scale is defined as input power (meaning fuel input) since thermal and electric power ratio varies depending on the application. Even if this term is not commonly used, it avoids targeting a specific ratio for the output between heat and power.

14/04/2014 Q: Is work on the biomass supply within the scope of this call?

A: No, biomass supply is not in the scope of this technology-specific challenge.

30/01/2014 Q: Will there be specific requirements to projects, which are considered contributing to the objectives of the SPIRE PPP?

A: No. However, these projects may be asked to present their results or participate in events organised by the SPIRE PPP.

2015 LCE2-g-ii technology-specific challenge 'Improving efficiency of low emission biomass CHP systems while widening the feedstock base'

10/12/2014 Q: How do you define residential-scale?

A: Residential is to do with the use of the building, so the meaning is that the boilers are for use in single family, apartment blocks or even districts, i.e. not for offices, commercial, industrial, hospitals etc.

In other words: Residential means where people are living, not commercial, industrial

We have not specified power limits because proposals have to respond to challenges and we do not want to limit solutions to the challenges by artificially introducing formal limits.

30/01/2014 Q: Whereas the header of the technology-specific challenge refers for CHP systems, the text calls for work on residential-scale boilers for heat applications. Are proposals expected to develop CHP systems or heating applications?

A: The technology specific challenge in 2015 is to develop new flexible and robust residential-scale boilers for *heat* applications.

LCE 11 – 2014/2015: Developing next generation technologies for biofuels and sustainable alternative fuels

10/12/2014 Q: If hydrogen is produced only as an element of an overall process, will small tasks related to the hydrogen production be eligible in the proposal?

A: This will be eligible as long as the focus remains on the development of either a next generation biofuel or a sustainable alternative fuel; the latter should use new, renewable and sustainable resources from non-biomass non fossil sources.

Furthermore, the proposal should address the sub-challenges, in particular c) and the other requirements of the topic.

14/04/2014 Q: Are there any restrictions to focus the proposals only in the development of biofuels for aviation, maritime and heavy duty road engines, or, the proposal can be also directed to the development of other type of next generation biofuels for other engines (like light duty road)?

A: There are no restrictions on the end use of biofuels in transport.

14/04/2014 Q: In the sentence: "Proposals focusing on the long-term perspective should aim at developing the next wave of alternative and sustainable fuels by moving technologies from TRL 3-4 or to TRL 4-5 " is the "or to" correct?

A: This is clerical error, 'or to' should be read as 'to'. It means that the TRL should move from 3 to 4, from 3 to 5, or 4 to 5 – all are acceptable.

30/01/2014 Q: Can a proposal of algal feedstock considered eligible for LCE 11?

A: Yes, in principle, a proposal on algal feedstocks would be in scope so long as it meets all other requirements of the call.

LCE 14 – 2014/2015: Market uptake of existing and emerging sustainable bioenergy

30/01/2014 Q: What do you mean by 'other wastes' in the bullet point "Removing non-technical barriers to widespread production and use of biogas/biomethane from manure and other wastes as one of the most sustainable fuels available today for use in transport and for incorporation into the grid".

A: In this context ‘other wastes’ can be any type of organic waste, i.e., this could be agricultural residues, forestry residues, the organic fraction of municipal waste, etc.

LCE 15 – 2014/2015: Enabling decarbonisation of the fossil fuel-based power sector and energy intensive industry through CCS

14/04/2014 Q: According to the call, Australian projects are invited to work with EU partners. The call itself does not mention whether there will be any funding available for Australian partners.

A: Beneficiaries from Australia could in principle only be eligible for funding in case their participation is deemed essential for carrying out the action. In practice this means that (1) they do not receive any funding from another source; (2) without the EU funding they could not participate; and (3) that without that Australian partner, the project would not be viable. This will be judged by the evaluators on a case by case basis.

Please note that the topic encourages “collaboration activities between EU projects ... and non-EU projects” but does not mention that e.g. Australian partners have to be beneficiaries in the Grant Agreement (i.e. participants) and that these partners will be funded.

30/01/2014 Q: The topic mentions ‘Nonetheless this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts’. Is this valid for the industrial applications only or also for the storage pilots?

A: The sentence is also valid for the storage pilots.

LCE 17 – 2015: Highly flexible and efficient fossil fuel power plants

10/12/2014 Q: In general the topic is focused on fossil fuel power plants, but when the impact is described, a reference has been made to power plants using dispatchable renewable fuels. In this sense, could the proposal be focused on improving the flexibility of a biomass power plant instead of a fossil fuel power plant?

A: The focus of the proposal should be on fossil fuel power plants. This is what it says in the title as well as in the scope. The proposal can have an impact on fossil fuel plants that use biomass, and as such a proposal could address a fossil fuel power plant that uses biomass as part of its fuel – as long as the focus remains on fossil fuel power generation.

LCE 18 – 2014/2015: Supporting Joint Actions on demonstration and validation of innovative energy solutions

30/01/2014 Q: How can we submit proposals to the joint calls under these ERA-NETs?

A: This topic is restricted to the entities eligible in ERA-NET Co-fund actions, i.e. programme managers and programme owners. The joint calls are managed nationally, i.e. by the members of the consortium and not by the European Commission. Therefore, any submission to the joint calls has to be done via the national funding agencies participating in the respective ERA-NET.

LCE 21 – 2015: Modelling and analysing the energy system, its transformation and impacts

30/01/2014 Q: What sort of energy technologies may be covered?

A: Projects under this topic should contribute to better understand the options for a transition to an efficient low carbon energy system and to strengthen the knowledge base for related policy decision. Thus proposals can address all energy technologies relevant for the energy system, including renewable energy, nuclear, fossil, or any other energy technology or energy vector. However, proposals exclusively covering one or only a limited number of these will be considered as only partially in scope of the topic.

03/12/2014 Q: Would a project with a specific focus on power (considered through scenarios that address the whole energy system) be eligible for funding in this call?

A: The expected impact of the topic is to support the implementation of the SET Plan and to assess the impact on the energy system, the environment, the economy and the society. Proposers may decide where they set the focus of new proposed developments and should ensure that the conclusions will appropriately address the expected impacts.

03/12/2014 Q Does the Commission expect innovations as regards the multicriteria decision support tool?

A: This topic is open for research and innovation actions and, as a result, the Commission expects the development of innovative approaches. The focus of such innovations may be on the tools themselves, on the scenarios processed with the tools, on the data sources used for the developments, on the involvement of stakeholders or any other aspects proposers judge relevant for the purpose.