

H2020 Work Programme 2018-20:

Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation

Call:WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19: Teaming Phase 2

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

IMPORTANT NOTICE: This document is the result of a compilation of questions received by potential applications prior the deadline and answers provided by the European Commission. Its intention is to help potential applicants. It does not however replace the call text as elaborated in the Horizon 2020 Work Programme, which is also the legal basis.

Category A: General

1. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19 what is the minimum, typical and maximum duration of a Teaming Phase 2 project?

- A Teaming Phase 2 project can last from 5 (minimum) to 7 years (maximum) as specified in the Work Programme. It is noted that since this is a specific eligibility condition, proposals with proposed project duration outside this range will be deemed ineligible.
- There is no typical or preferred duration within the 5-7 years' timeframe. This should be decided by the proposer based on the objectives and specificities of each individual project.

2. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19 is there any geographical or thematic restriction on Teaming Phase 2 proposals selected for funding?

- No. All proposals are competing against each other on their own merit. The only criterion is the quality of the proposal and there is no country or thematic restrictions, as long as the coordinator comes from a [Widening country](#).
- Nevertheless, as specified in the evaluation procedure section of the work programme, in the case of ex-aequo proposals with the same score in each of the 3 evaluation criteria, priority will be given to proposals with coordinators from widening countries not otherwise covered by more highly ranked proposals.

3. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19 when are successful Teaming Phase 2 projects expected to start?

- In autumn 2019.

4. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19 can a proposal request an EU contribution from H2020 above € 15 million?

- No. It is specified in the eligibility and admissibility conditions for this call that "the requested EU contribution shall not exceed a maximum of €15 million", thus proposals requesting more than €15 million from H2020 will be deemed ineligible and will not be evaluated.

5. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19 can a proposal request an EU contribution from H2020 below € 15 million?

- Yes, this is possible.

6. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19 what about the partnership and long-term sustainability of Teaming projects?

- It should be made clear to applicants that a Teaming project should foresee a long term horizon of cooperation between the relevant partners from both the "advanced" and "widening" sides.
- It must be emphasised that despite the fact that Horizon 2020 funding for the Centre of Excellence will stop after about 5-7 years, there is an expectation that a lot of effort will need to be placed by the partners to sustain the Centre of Excellence well beyond that period.
- Moreover, it is expected that the new Centre will be able to achieve the maximum degree of self-sustainability in the long run especially in financial terms since the Horizon 2020 funding will finish after 7 years. Concrete measures of how this (financial) self-sustainability of the Centre will be ensured needs to be convincingly elaborated in the proposal.

7. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19, should project proposals focus also on innovation and not purely on research excellence?

- Horizon 2020 is the first framework programme that aims to bring research and innovation tightly together, hence Teaming focuses on innovation as well and not purely on scientific excellence. The link with the [Smart Specialisation Strategies](#) (this was evaluated in the proposals to award Teaming Phase 1 projects) aims also to bring Widening countries on a sustainable growth path hence the link with innovation.
- The Widening part of the work programme, and Teaming in particular aim to achieve excellence that is able to spur innovation and growth.

Category B: Financial

For general information and clarifications on cost eligibility in H2020, applicants can check the Annotated Model Grant Agreement (AGA) that can be found on the participant portal in the link below: http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/amga/h2020-amga_en.pdf

8. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19 Teaming Phase 2, 25% of indirect costs imply a very high amount (up to € 3 million for a €15 million project). Is this amount not subject to justification?

- No, since the standard 25% flat rate of the total direct eligible costs¹, applies.

9. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19 what is the pre-financing for a granted Teaming Phase 2 project?

- The exact percentage of pre-financing for Teaming Phase 2 projects is expected to be between 32%-53%, depending on the number of reporting periods.

10. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19 what are eligible/ineligible costs from Horizon 2020 for a Teaming project during Phase 2?

- For the first steps of implementation of the Centre of Excellence (Phase 2 of Teaming projects) up to €15 million are expected to be made available from Horizon 2020. The reimbursement rates for Phase 2 will be 100% of the eligible direct costs (and 25% of direct eligible costs² as a flat rate for indirect costs) in line with the standard rules of Horizon 2020. Eligible costs for reimbursement from Horizon 2020 will include administrative and operational expenses including salaries of employees (researchers, managers etc.) of the Centre of Excellence.
- The Horizon 2020 contribution in Phase 2 should not be used for funding particular research projects since the funding instrument that will be used is in fact a Coordination and Support Action (CSA). However, a minor part (**up to 5% is recommended**) of the total H2020 contribution can support equipment and consumables if deemed necessary to fulfil the action's scope and objectives. It is emphasised that under H2020, when claiming costs for equipment, the depreciation rule applies.
- Infrastructure costs are ineligible.
- More information regarding cost eligibility can be found in article 6 of the [H2020 Annotated Model Grant Agreement \(AGA\)](#).

¹ Excluding direct eligible costs for subcontracting and the costs of resources made available by third parties which are not used on the premises of the beneficiary, as well as financial support to third parties.

² Excluding direct eligible costs for subcontracting and the costs of resources made available by third parties which are not used on the premises of the beneficiary, as well as financial support to third parties.

11. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19 what about personnel costs (i.e. salaries) of researchers? Can they be covered from the H2020 funding since research activities are not allowed?

Personnel costs (i.e. salaries) are eligible as follows:

- for personnel of all beneficiaries (from Widening or non-Widening countries),
- regardless of their function (researchers, administration, management),
- regardless of their status at the organizations (permanent or temporary or newly recruited),
- provided that these personnel costs are directly attributed to the eligible activities (non-research) indicated in the Work Programme text and
- subject to the cost eligibility conditions in Article 6 of the [H2020 Annotated Model Grant Agreement \(AGA\)](#).

12. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19 what about eligible costs and possible financial contributions of the "advanced" partner?

- Eligible expenses that can be claimed by the "advanced" partner are identical with those of the partner(s) from the Widening Country.
- Regarding possible financial contributions from the "advanced" partner, it is up to the partnership to decide if needed and how it would be elaborated in the proposal. As far as such a contribution would reinforce the long-term financial aspect of the partnership, applicants could elaborate it in the proposal.

13. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19 what is the ideal ratio of budget allocated to the advanced institution(s) compared to the coordinator (and partners) from the Widening Country?

- There is no ideal ratio regarding the allocation of funding between the advanced institution(s) and the coordinator (and partners) in the Widening country.
- Nevertheless, it has to be kept in mind that the objectives of Teaming are mainly focused on the partners in the Widening country, especially in advancing the region/country where the Centre of Excellence is/will be established.

14. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19 is subcontracting allowed in Teaming Phase 2 projects?

- The general rule applicable to H2020 projects is that beneficiaries must have the appropriate resources to implement the action (Article 8 AGA). However if necessary to implement the action, subcontracting is allowed according to the general Horizon 2020 rules outlined in [Article 23 \(3\) and \(4\) of the Rules for Participation](#) and Article 13 of the AGA, subcontracting may cover only a limited part of the action. There is no fixed percentage or amount, however

subcontracting should be an exception to the general rule above. The phrase "limited part of the action" is not pre-defined, but core activities of the project should not be subcontracted. Please note that the flat rate for indirect costs does not apply to direct costs for subcontracting.

15. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19 are publishing and patenting costs eligible under Teaming Phase 2?

- Publishing and patenting costs are in general considered as eligible costs and participants can claim such costs (under 'Other Direct Costs'), provided that they comply with the conditions of the [H2020 Annotated Model Grant Agreement \(AGA\)](#) for eligibility, i.e. incurred during the action duration, necessary, linked to the action, etc. in any particular case the specific nature of the action must be considered.

Category C: Complementary funding (from other sources different than H2020)

16. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19, how should the financial commitment regarding complementary funding from other sources to the project be demonstrated?

As explained in the Work Programme a letter(s) of commitment for complementary funding from the interested national/regional authorities or other private sources to commit financial resources (e.g. resources coming from the European Structural and Investment Funds or Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II) funds as appropriate) for implementing the future Centre, in particular regarding investment in infrastructure and equipment must be included.

This letter(s) of Commitment for complementary funding (based on the template given) **must be included under section 3.5 of the proposal template (and not as an annex)** and should clearly explain:

- the nature of the commitment,
- the legal form of the commitment (what kind of legal scheme supports the financial commitment),
- the specific amount of the commitment and its expected impact on the establishment of the centre (the total amount of the complementary funding must be at least at the same level or more than the total Horizon 2020 funding requested),
- the level of certainty that the relevant funds would be indeed available to that specific Centre.

How the complementary funding will be spent during the project has to be explained in detail in the proposal, with a clear and detailed cost breakdown of the activities funded (in particular in the Tables under section 3.4 in Part B).

17. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19 what kind of costs should be covered from complementary funding (e.g. national/ESIF/IPA/private)?

- Infrastructure costs as well as the majority of equipment costs and consumables, and research projects (since this is a CSA) cannot be funded from Horizon 2020. Therefore a considerable amount of funding needs to come from other sources.
- This could come from a relevant Operational Programme (OP) of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)³ (be it sectorial, national or regional). In this case, a national 'matching' contribution needs to be foreseen.
- It is noted that when ESIF/IPA (Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance) or any other type of EU funding sources are used, the principle of avoiding double funding from the EU budget applies, according to Article 129 of the Financial Regulation, meaning that costs that would be reimbursed from these other EU sources shall be different from costs supported under Horizon 2020.
- Alternatively, other sources of funding may be used (public or private) without any ESIF/IPA involvement.

18. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19 is there an ideal ratio between the EU contribution coming from H2020 and complementary funding coming from other sources to cover other costs not covered from H2020?

- Yes. As stated in the work programme, complementary funding coming from other sources (e.g. national/ European Structural and Investment Funds/Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance/private) is expected to be at least at the same level as the EU contribution requested from H2020.

19. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19 does the complementary funding from other non-H2020 sources need to cover the whole duration of the H2020 project (5-7 years) or can the amount be frontloaded/back loaded accordingly to the needs of the project?

- There are no limitations that forbid the full amount of the complementary funding (from other sources) to be frontloaded/back loaded at the start or towards the end of the H2020 project.
- Nevertheless, should the complementary funding be frontloaded/back loaded for a shorter period of time (i.e. during the first/last 3 years of the project) this should be properly explained and justified especially vis a vis the long term sustainability requirements for Teaming projects.

³ Or IPA (Instrument for Pre-Accession) funds in Associated Countries.

20. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19 is there a limitation in the form which a financial commitment can take? (e.g. can it be a long term unconstrained bank loan, or a commitment from commercial partners to buy services from the Centre in the future)?

- It is in the applicants' best interest to have the most robust form of financial commitment possible.
- The nature of the commitment, its legal form, amount and its impact to the objective and ultimate results of the action will be an integral part of the evaluation.

21 Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19, can in-kind contributions count towards the complementary investment in infrastructure that is required from other sources than H2020 funding?

- In principle, it is at the discretion of the consortium, according to their own specificities and requirements, to recommend in the project proposal the use of in-kind contributions as part of the complementary investment outside the H2020 funding to cover the infrastructure costs (e.g. buildings) associated with the Centre of Excellence.
- Nevertheless, such in-kind contributions must be clearly explained and expressed in a monetary value within the proposal and the letter(s) of commitment.

22. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19 is the complementary funding for Phase 2 from national sources subject to State Aid rules? What about the complementary funding from European Structural Investment Funds and State Aid rules?

- Funding granted by a Member State as part of complementary funding for Horizon 2020 projects must comply with the state aid rules,⁴ if the aid given fulfils all the criteria laid down in Article 107(1) TFEU. An analysis is needed by the actors involved to determine if those criteria are fulfilled when giving aid to a particular Teaming action.
- If ESIF funding is used, such funding must comply both with the applicable ESIF rules and, where applicable, the state aid rules.

23. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19, how will the financial commitments regarding complementary funding made through the letter(s) of commitment by national/ ESIF/IPA/private sources be ensured/monitored for the duration of the H2020 project?

⁴ Relevant state aid rules include the General Block Exemption Regulation (Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 - http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.L_.2014.187.01.0001.01.ENG), the Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation (see footnote 2) and the application of *de minimis* aid (Commission Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013 - <http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:352:0001:0008:en:PDF>).

- The commitment concerning the complementary funding must be elaborated with a clear cost breakdown as part of the proposal that will later be translated into the grant agreement in case the proposal is successful. These activities covered by the complementary funding will be checked by the Commission/Agency as part of the reporting requirements during project implementation.
- It is expected that the financial commitments for the complementary funding are respected for the whole duration of the Teaming projects. In case these commitments are not respected, Article 50.3 of the Horizon 2020 Grant Agreement gives the right to the Commission/Agency to suspend the implementation of the grant and to terminate the grant agreement.

Category D: Business Plan

24. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19 what is the difference between the Business Plan (deliverable Phase 1) and the proposal for Phase 2?

- The Business Plan is the deliverable of Phase 1 and will be checked as a deliverable by the Research Executive Agency as part of the reporting obligations for the Teaming Phase 1 project.
- For Phase 2, as explained in the Work Programme, applicants have to submit a proposal, based on the proposal template provided through the submission tool. Even though it is not necessary to re-do everything, the main work done as part of the Business Plan must be structured and fit into the proposal template.
- It is emphasised that the **deliverable of Phase 1 will not be made available to evaluators.**

25. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19 is there a page limit for the Business Plan (deliverable Phase 1)? Is there a page limit in the proposal (template) for Phase 2?

- There is no page limit for the Business Plan as a deliverable of Phase 1.
- Yes, there is page limit of **75 pages** for the proposal (template) for Phase 2. To be noted that the 75 page limit, is conditional of an amendment to the Work Programme that is expected to be adopted in July 2018.

Category E: Centre of Excellence

26. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19 is there a preference with respect to the legal form of the (future) Centre of Excellence? Should it be a for-profit or a non-profit organisation, a foundation or a society?

- There is no preference on its legal form. It should serve the needs and specificities of the project.

27. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19 how can it be shown that the (future) Centre of Excellence will be autonomous in decision making?

- The work programme states that proposals have to demonstrate how the newly established/upgraded Centre will have full autonomy in decision making, with respect to taking its own decisions, being in legal, administrative, operational, personnel (incl. paying competitive salaries) and academic matters. This will have to be convincingly explained in the proposals.

28. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19 is it obligatory to establish a new legal entity for the new Centre?

- It is possible but not obligatory to establish a new legal entity for the new Centre. The Centre can well stay under an existing parent structure (e.g. under a university). Nevertheless, in any case, it has to be clearly justified and explained how it will be able to be autonomous in taking its own decisions as prescribed in the Work Programme.

29. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19 the call asks for the creation of or upgrading of Centres of Excellence. How is a Centre of Excellence defined in terms of this call?

- A definition for a Centre of Excellence (CoE) has not been included in the Work Programme text thus allowing a reasonably flexible approach for applicants.
- Nevertheless, in order to help applicants in the context of this call, a broad definition of a CoE (which is by no way limiting nor exhaustive) could be: "A Centre of Excellence is a structure where R&I of world standard is performed, in terms of measurable scientific production (including training) and/or technological innovation". Some key features of this concept could include:
 - a "critical mass" of high level scientists and/or technology developers;
 - a well-identified structure having its own research/innovation agenda;
 - being capable of integrating connected fields and to associate complementary skills;
 - being capable of maintaining a high rate of exchange of qualified human resources;
 - have a dynamic role in the surrounding innovation system (adding value to knowledge);
 - display high levels of international visibility and scientific and/or industrial connectivity;
 - maintain a reasonable stability of funding and operating conditions over time (the basis for investing in people and building partnerships);
 - benefit from sources of finance which are not too dependent over time on public funding.

30. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19 what is expected as a robust human resources strategy under Teaming Phase 2?

- The Commission expects that the Centres of Excellence that will be created (or significantly upgraded) through the Teaming projects will be drivers for change in Widening countries. That is why it is indispensable that the Centres have the maximum degree of autonomy possible in every aspect of decision making, including recruitment. Therefore, it is crucial that the Centres propose and follow an open and transparent recruitment process for staff, including management positions.

Category F: Consortium and consortium changes

31. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19 what happens if a TEAMING Phase 2 proposal has an advanced partner from the United Kingdom (UK)?

- As specified in the [Participant Portal](#): "Until the UK leaves the EU, EU law continues to apply to and within the UK, when it comes to rights and obligations; this includes the eligibility of UK legal entities to fully participate and receive funding in Horizon 2020 actions. Please be aware however that the eligibility criteria must be complied with for the entire duration of the grant. If the United Kingdom withdraws from the EU during the grant period without concluding an agreement with the EU ensuring in particular that British applicants continue to be eligible, you will cease to be eligible to receive EU funding (while continuing, where possible, to participate) or be required to leave the project on the basis of Article 50 of the grant agreement."

32. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19 should the organisation from the Widening country that will eventually be foreseen to implement/manage the Centre (in Phase 2) be the same as the one(s) that submitted and were successful in Phase 1?

- Not necessarily. This will depend on the objectives and specificities of the individual projects.
- However, as stated in the work programme any changes of partners from the widening country will only be allowed in clear-cut cases and is now an eligibility condition. To be sure that a change can be permitted and your proposal will not be deemed ineligible, it is advised to contact the Research Executive Agency well before the call deadline to check whether the desired change can be permitted.
- It is nevertheless reminded that Teaming is all about strong sustainable partnerships. That is why applicants are discouraged to introduce substantial changes when moving from Phase 1 to Phase 2.

33. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19 is it possible to add or remove partners during Teaming Phase 1?

- In principle this is possible and this would require an amendment of the Grant Agreement during the running of Phase 1 (i.e. 1/9/2017-31/8/2018).
- The Research Executive Agency will assess the justification for the amendment provided and its potential impact, reserving the right to approve or reject the request while observing the general principles set out in Rules of Application, Article 180 (4), namely, amendments shall not have the purpose or the effect of making such changes to agreements as it would call into question the grant award decision or be contrary to the equal treatment of applicants.
- In general, it is not recommended to propose changes to the consortium during Teaming Phase 1 (with the exception of force majeure cases) since the existing consortium was successfully evaluated and awarded the grant to produce a business plan for a Centre of Excellence with its current structure.
- Please note that this is not possible for successful applicants under topic WIDESPREAD-1-2014 that are submitting again a proposal under this call, WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19, Teaming Phase 2. The reason is that their Teaming Phase 1 project finished in 2016.

34. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19 is it possible to add or remove partners after the end of the Teaming Phase 1 project as part of the Teaming Phase 2 proposal?

- In principle, this is possible only for partners from the widening country (in clear cut cases).
- No internationally leading ("advanced") institution(s) partners can be added or removed as stated in the work programme in order not to put in doubt the initial evaluation.
- As the above is now an eligibility condition, proposals that do not meet these requirements will be deemed ineligible and will not be evaluated by independent experts.
- Therefore in case addition/removal of partners from the widening country is deemed necessary by the applicants, and to try and avoid a situation of non-eligibility after the submission deadline of 15 November 2018, this should be communicated as soon as possible with the appropriate justifications. In view of having the necessary timeframe to check the proposed changes before the call deadline, it is recommended to inform the Research Executive Agency (REA), **not later than 31 August 2018**.
- The REA will then check on a case by case basis the proposed changes and justifications provided and will inform applicants in advance whether the desired change in the consortium can be accepted.
- In the case the reply from the REA is positive, the applicant is then advised to submit the Teaming Phase 2 proposal with the proposed consortium change (as validated before by the REA), with the necessary justification for the change also elaborated in the proposal.

35. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19 is it possible to add or remove partners when the Teaming Phase 2 project is running?

- In principle this is possible and this would require an amendment of the Grant Agreement of the Teaming Phase 2 project.
- Nevertheless, it should not go against the eligibility conditions regarding the addition/removal of partners as written in the Work Programme.
- The Research Executive Agency will assess the justification for the amendment provided, and the potential impact, reserving the right to approve or reject the request while observing the general principles set out in Rules of Application, Article 180 (4), namely, amendments shall not have the purpose or the effect of making such changes to agreements as would call into question the grant award decision or be contrary to the equal treatment of applicants.

36. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19 if the Coordinator in Teaming Phase 1 is a national/regional authority can it withdraw from the project for Teaming Phase 2 as this might provoke a conflict of interest?

- As explained in the Work Programme this is one of the clear cut cases mentioned that could justify a change in the consortium regarding the partners from the Widening country.
- Such intended changes in the consortium should be communicated to the Research Executive Agency (REA) well before the call deadline (recommended by 31/8/2018 at the latest) with a clear justification and if the answer is positive the applicant can submit the Teaming Phase 2 proposal with the proposed consortium change (as validated before by the REA), with the necessary justification for the change also elaborated in the proposal.

37. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19, in case a new legal entity is created to take over as coordinator of the project for the project for Teaming Phase 2 does it have to go through a financial viability check?

- Indeed, as stated in Article 15 of the [H2020 Rules for Participation \(RfP\)](#) coordinators are subject to financial viability checks from the Commission/Agency.
- However, public bodies⁵ are exempted from financial viability checks. In addition, in accordance with paragraphs (10) and (11) of [Article 15 of the RfP](#): "The financial capacity shall not be verified either in respect of legal entities whose viability is guaranteed by a Member State or an associated country or in respect of higher and secondary education establishments. Financial capacity may be guaranteed by any other legal entity, whose financial capacity shall in turn be verified in accordance with paragraph 9."
- More information on Financial Viability Checks can be found in section III.4.3 of the ["Guide on beneficiary registration, validation and financial viability check"](#) that can be found on the participant portal.

⁵ 'Public body' is understood as any legal entity established as public body by national law or an international organisation.

38. Under topic WIDESPREAD-01-2018-19 in case there is firm commitment from the partners and from the country/region, is it possible to initiate already the creation process and start with some activities of the new centre of excellence still within Phase 1?

- Yes this is possible. It is however noted that these proposals will not be treated in a more or less favourably way than the rest of the proposals.