



**SWEET Call 1-2021**

## **Questions and answers (Q&A)**

**Please carefully read the SWEET Call Guideline and this Q&A document.**



## 1 Questions related to the full proposal phase

### 1.1 Questions related to the letters

**Q 1.1.1:** *In the pre-proposal, we have submitted letters from the partners' institutions and from the collaboration partners. We have mentioned as requested the WP in which they will be active. Is it mandatory to ask each partner again for a letter or are the letters from the first step already enough?*

**Answer:**

We understand the difficulty of providing letters from all the cooperation partners, and for this reason, we have changed our requirement for the full proposal stage.

As stated in the addendum to the call guideline (see section 1.3), no additional letters from cooperation partners are required (only the host and applicants must submit a letter of commitment), and the host institution is responsible for securing all the necessary contributions from partners.

**Q 1.1.2:** *In the budget instructions (and actually also in the letter of commitment instructions), we see the following: «In case more than one research group/laboratory of the same institution participates in the same consortium as applicants, each applicant must provide information in the budget tables.» Can you clarify whether the «applicant» is the institution (e.g. EPFL, HEIA-FR, ETH Zurich etc) or refers to all PIs within an institution, which will lead to quite a list?*

**Answer:**

At the full proposal stage, additional information is requested: in particular, in the letters of commitment, in the table listing the applicants and in the budget workbook, the term “applicant” is broken down into each group/laboratory participating in the consortium activities, for each institution, since each group/lab provides a different role/expertise and budget contributions. A 1-page CV of one person (PI) of each of group/lab is also requested.

Regarding the letters, we suggest the following options for Call 1-2021: The commitment of each group/laboratory part of the same institution can be stated either in separate letters (signed by the head of the group/laboratory), or in one common letter of commitment signed by the head of the institution. The commitment as host institution may also be included in the same letter (see also Q 1.1.4).

**Q 1.1.3:** *According to the original call guidelines (art. 3.2.3), each applicant is a legal entity with due representation. In the addendum that we received for the full proposal stage, there is no additional clause but we find this sentence, which actually still leaves some ambiguity: “In case more than one research group/laboratory of the same institution participates in the same consortium as applicants, such letter is required from each applicant”.*

**Answer:**

As you noted, depending on the context, the applicant can be either an institution (legal entity), a department/lab or an individual, while in the subsidy contracts, the applicant will be a legal entity. Since each group/laboratory provides a different role/expertise, and human and budgetary



contributions, the break-down to that level at the full proposal stage is required to properly evaluate each proposal.

**Q 1.1.4: Do Host and Applicants have to provide new letters?**

**Answer:**

Yes. In addition to the commitment of the school board of the host institution, the commitment of the individual groups/labs within the host institution is required. These must either be individually listed in the same letter or in separate letters. Therefore, either a new letter of commitment, for the host and groups/labs commitment, must be provided, or the original letter of host institution commitment can be resubmitted with one or several additional letters for the groups/labs (see answer to question 1.1.2).

**Q 1.1.5: Do all letters of commitment have to mention "own and/or third party contributions (financial and/or in kind)" or is it sufficient to state that "own and/or third party contributions are detailed in the budget"?**

**Answer:**

The "own and/or third-party contributions (financial and/or in kind)" must be indicated in each letter of commitment.

**1.2 Questions related to P + D projects**

**Q 1.2.1: Is it correct that the financing of the P+D is not guaranteed and is subject to a separate decision process? If our understanding is correct and the statements above align with the spirit of the SWEET call and expectations, this also means that we cannot have any part of the WPs depend on the outcome or development of the P+D projects and that the WPs have to be totally independent of the P+Ds being developed or not (although the P+D projects can - and definitely will - depend on the outcomes of the WPs of course)**

**Answer:**

You are right that funding for P+D projects is not guaranteed, and is subject to separate subsequent approval by the P+D programme. You should keep in mind that SWEET research projects leading to a P+D project will be assessed by the SWEET monitoring process and receive continuous guidance and recommendations to achieve their goals. Hopefully, the guidance and recommendations will end up being incorporated into your P+D project proposal. Thus, while we cannot guarantee that P+D projects will be approved, we anticipate that the evaluation and monitoring of SWEET consortia increases the likelihood that P+D project proposals will be accepted.

In summary, dealing with the fact that funding for P+D projects is not guaranteed should not cause you to define research projects that are totally independent of P+D projects. Instead, we recommend that feedback from the evaluation and monitoring should be incorporated into P+D project proposals and these proposals should be submitted early enough that feedback from the P+D programme can be incorporated in resubmissions without delaying subsequent research projects.

**Q 1.2.2: Where should already approved SFOE P+D projects be listed? Can these also be other P+D projects (not from SFOE, but for example funded by SIG)?**



**Answer:**

If clearly related to them (e.g. providing significant inputs, enabling strong synergies, etc.), these projects can be listed in the relevant WP description. Otherwise, they can be listed under section 5 of the template. Yes, other demonstration projects, i.e. not supported by the SFOE P+D programme, can be listed in the same way.

**Q 1.2.3: Can projects in the area of resilience (blue and green measures, heat island, etc.) also be funded through the SFOE's P+D programme (which focuses on energy)?**

**Answer:**

If you think that resilience is indeed an explicit topic of the SWEET call and such project fits into the project portfolio of the consortium, they can also be supported by the P+D programme, if they fulfil the criteria of said programme (e.g., funding rate). The important point is that the project fits in with the other projects of the consortium and that it can be related to the topic of energy. Being within the call scope is just one aspect of the evaluation of the SWEET-P+D projects.

**1.3 Questions related to the consortium**

**Q 1.3.1: I would like to ask you about the procedure when institutions or persons participate in two consortia that have both been invited to the second round of the call for proposals.**

**Specifically, this concerns the case where one person has the same role in two consortia (WP lead and co-lead respectively), whereby the WPs deal with a similar topic at the meta-level, but the work to be carried out and research steps differ from one another. Would it still be possible for this person to be involved in both consortia in the preparation of the full proposal, or would a decision have to be made for one of the consortia?**

**Answer:**

The section 3.2.3 of the Call Guideline is intended to prevent being paid twice for the same work. Provided that the work to be done and research steps are different, the same role can be taken in different consortia.

**Q 1.3.2: Are there any specific requirements for WP leaders or for the coordinator?**

**Answer:**

No, there are no specific educational or degree requirements, but experience in managing projects and consortia would of course be an advantage and would be evaluated favourably.

**1.4 Questions related to the application procedure**

**Q 1.4.1: I was wondering whether, when claiming other funded projects as in-kind contributions, we should be specific about detailing how they are contributing to the consortiums objectives (and write this into the project plan) or if we should instead simply list them as in-kind funding (to not further overload the workplan).**

**Answer:**

The purpose of section 5 is to provide an opportunity to state the potential for synergies between



SWEET projects and other projects. It should be brief, only focusing on those projects that bring the most important contributions, being financial or of some other nature.

You can choose to list everything, those other projects and the objectives or WP (research project or P+D projects) to which they relate, in section 5, or to list only those projects in section 5 and refer to them in the rest of the text, e.g. in the WP description table. If necessary and relevant, you could also include external links to information about those projects.

**Q 1.4.2: What is the difference between work packages and projects?**

**Answer:**

One work package should be dedicated to each research project and each P+D project (also one for "management & coordination" and one for "KTT & communication"). And each work package can be further structured into tasks. We also point out that the maximum page number of the WP description does not have to be reached, if not necessary, for instance if the WPs are only to be started at a later stage and therefore if their content is to be defined only later on during the operation phase of the consortium.

**Q 1.4.3: At the moment, we plan to collaborate with diverse stakeholders providing access to a large number of living labs. In the template, the description of our living labs in section 3.2 is restricted to around 2 pages. This would result in only a few rows per living lab. Considering this, does the page limit still apply? I fear that evaluators will criticize the fact that we don't provide sufficiently detailed information on our living labs.**

**Answer:**

Though a broad diversity of stakeholders and involvement of several living labs is sought by the call, the page limit indicated in the template is strict. You may want to select and include only the most significant features of the living labs, or restrict the list to include in the proposal only the living labs making the most significant contributions, and mention plans for further collaborations and project extensions in the future, if the consortium is awarded. An additional possibility is to describe the roles and contributions of the living labs in the description of the specific projects (WP description tables).

**Q 1.4.4: Can you confirm that it is OK to submit a 1-page CV from one person from each group/lab?**

**Answer:**

Yes, one person (PI) from each group/lab should submit a CV (applicants). In the case of cooperation partners, CVs only need to be submitted if a cooperation partner leads a WP.

**1.5 Questions related to the budget**

**Q 1.5.1: Is it intentional that the summation in the budget workbook template does not work everywhere?**

**Answer:**

Where lines have to be copied in tables, yes. But since it is the first time this template is used, it may still have bugs. Please report them to us.



**Q 1.5.2: Can the third party fundings be extrapolated for the late project years?**

**Answer:**

Yes. In addition, it is generally understood that the budget of those projects only starting at a later stage in the operation phase of the consortium are only estimated.

**Q 1.5.3: Fund management: Do funds have to be allocated for a fixed period of eight years or can mechanisms be defined according to which funds are released periodically?**

**Answer:**

As stated in the grant agreement established between the host institution of the awarded consortia and the SFOE, SWEET funding is paid to the host institution, which must report on how it is spent and distributed. A payment schedule is also defined for the 8 years (in principle one payment per year after fulfilment of the annual monitoring requirements). The distribution of the funding from the host institution to the applicants must be established through a consortium agreement. Reallocation between members of the consortium is allowed (see section 3.3 in the Call guideline).

**Q 1.5.4: How will the 30% Reallocation of Budget be calculated?**

**Answer:**

We will check how the distribution of SWEET funding at the institution level has been modified with changes in the composition of the consortium from the pre-proposal. The 30% redistribution limit is intended to signal that the work programme and consortium's composition must not change significantly from the pre-proposal. However, changes are possible: individual applicants can be added or dropped, or the funding can be distributed a little differently. Changes must be justified in the first section of the proposal.

## **2 Questions related to the pre-proposal phase**

### **2.1 Questions related to the consortium**

**Q 2.1.1: Is it possible to change the coordinator over the years?**

**Answer:**

A consortium may vary its composition during its term, including the position of the coordinator and the role of the host institution. See sections 3.2.2 and 3.4 of the Call Guideline.

**Q 2.1.2: Does the project partner from UZH/ETHZ etc. have to be a full professor or can he/she also be a private lecturer?**

**Answer:**

The applicant (project partner) is a legal entity with due representation. If a private lecturer or senior scientist is in a position to represent their institution in a research consortium, they can



also be applicant (project partner) within a SWEET consortium. This can be confirmed by a letter of interest signed by an authorized representative of the institution.

**Q 2.1.3: I also wanted to ask you whether you already know whether there are consortia and possibly which people lead them, as I am also interested in this topic.**

**Answer:**

The SFOE does not help with the formation of consortia and does not provide a special platform for interested parties. If you are looking for a project partner or would like to exchange ideas, we recommend that you visit third-party websites such as [www.energy-connect.ch](http://www.energy-connect.ch) or contact potential research partners directly by writing to institutes that are active in energy research. The Research Centres or Energy Science Centres are possible points of contact.

## **2.2 Questions related to the budget**

**Q 2.2.1: How much money can you apply for in a consortium?**

**Answer:**

The overall budget of this call is CHF 20 Mio. Two consortia will be funded eventually and the budget is foreseen to be shared equally. It is therefore possible to apply for up to 10 million.

**Q 2.2.2: Am I correct in assuming that, as with the figures published for the last call, between 3 and 12 million in equity capital would have to be contributed for the current call?**

**Answer:**

Consortia are encouraged to undertake reasonable efforts to secure adequate own and third-party funding, but there are no guidelines or rules. However, the amount of such contributions beyond the requested SWEET funding enter the evaluation of the proposal. See sections 3.6 and 6.2 of the Call Guideline.

**Q 2.2.3: May I ask whether advisory and research institutions, outside the university world, be it Interface, INFRAS or similar institutions both as engineering and architectural firms, are also eligible for funding for SWEET?**

**Answer:**

We refer to section 3.5.4 of the Call Guideline: "SWEET funds may be allocated to Swiss private for-profit entities engaged in pre-competitive research projects if their skills and competencies are necessary for the success of such projects, including P+D projects."

**Q 2.2.4: Under what conditions exactly can co-applicants from the business community also be compensated by the Sweet Budget? If not or to a limited extent, could their working hours be indicated as further self-financing?**

**Answer:**

Given the subsidiary nature of SWEET funding, an adequate own contribution of the respective company is expected, be it in-kind or cash. Working hours can be considered as in-kind contributions.



## 2.3 Questions related to the application procedure

### Q 2.3.1: Do the Lol of the living labs have to be in English?

**Answer:**

The Letters of Interest (Lol) of the Living Labs are central for the evaluation by the our international experts. Therefore, they must be written in English.

### Q 2.3.2: An application for third-party funding from the SNF is pending until the end of September 2021 for the topic we are planning to apply for: would approval be an obstacle to submitting an application or could the amount be stated as self-financing or further third-party funding obtained?

**Answer:**

We encourage the acquisition of additional third-party funding. Applicants must take care to be transparent, indicate all kind of third-party funding, in particular from other government agencies, and must avoid double-financing. Such contributions can be stated as third-party funding.