



SWEET Call 1-2024

Questions and answers (Q&A)

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



1 Questions related to the full proposal phase

Q 1.1: Our consortium would like to have some clarifications on what exactly could qualify as implementation project for the full proposal. We are aware that:

- Implementation projects take approaches from a conceptual or theoretical level, a small scale, or the laboratory stage to a practical level, a representative scale, or the prototype stage.
- Technical implementation projects are characterised by TRL 5-7.
- Implementation projects must involve implementation partners (irrespective of whether they are members, collaboration partners, or stakeholders).

Nonetheless, it is unclear to us whether software and model developments can be considered as implementation projects? Or should these be related to hardware development?

Answer: In principle, implementation projects should focus on hardware, but under certain circumstances, model and software development are also possible:

Within SWEET, the SFOE interprets the overlapping terms “model development” and “software development” as follows:

- Model development:
 - a) The theoretical formulation of a model that describes some aspects of physical reality.
 - b) The selection or development of algorithms and methods needed to implement the model on a computer.
 - c) The programming of the model for execution on a computer.
 - d) The execution of the model to check its correctness and fidelity and subsequent adjustments to the model (“debugging”).
- Software development: The development of programs for execution on a computer, consisting of:
 - a) Activities (c) and (d) of model development.
 - b) Other activities that are not related to model development (such as developing graphical user interfaces, enabling connections to data bases, etc.).

With respect to software development, SWEET funding dedicated to implementation projects may not be used for activities (b). As far as model development is concerned, SWEET funding dedicated to implementation projects may be used for activities (a) to (d) if the development meets the following criteria:

- a) It is directly related to the approach that is the focus of an implementation project.
- b) It is required to take that approach to a practical level, a representative scale, or the prototype stage.
- c) It is required because there are no other models with the needed capabilities.

Q 1.2: For technical “implementation projects” the call requires a TRL of 5 or higher. During the project, it is expected that the TRL will increase. Does this requirement refer to the TRL at the beginning of the project or at the end?

Answer: The TRLs should range from 5-7, i.e. they should increase from 5 or 6 at the beginning of the implementation project to 6 or 7 at the end of the implementation project.

Q 1.3: 50% matching funds of partners for implementation projects: Do the partners have to contribute cash, or can they also count their 50% as in-kind contributions? Do these funds need to be “officially” secured prior to the submission of the full proposal?



Answer: These 50% matching funds for technical implementation projects can be in the form of cash or in-kind. The matching funds for the implementation projects, which will start in the first three years and will be described in the full proposal, must be secured at the time of the full proposal. This should be done via letters of commitment from the implementation partners. For technical implementation projects that start later, commitments for matching funds must be produced in the form of letters of commitment when the proposal for the project is submitted.

Q 1.4: Could you please clarify the application process for implementation projects starting after 3 years? We understand that for these, we can define generic WPs. But from your answer for Q1.3, it seems that we then need to submit additional proposals for such projects. How would the process work? Would the budget for implementation projects starting after 3 years be covered by the total budget dedicated to implementation projects, i.e., 4.895 MCHF?

Answer: If the share of the core budget that is reserved for implementation projects (at least 4.895 Mio. CHF) is not used up by the projects that start in the first three years, you can reserve the remainder for later implementation projects. For planning purposes, you can assign numbers to these prospective implementation WPs and list them in the budget file, but you must not describe these WPs in the full proposal.

Once a consortium has fleshed out a prospective implementation project that may start in, say, year 4, the consortium will need to submit a separate proposal with sufficient lead time to allow for the usual review/revision cycle between the monitoring panel and the consortium. (The detailed process for these proposals, for which there will be a separate template, will be based on the process that consortia can follow to apply for the supplementary budget.).

Q 1.5: Section 0.1 of the full proposal: as we understand, we need to answer to the general comments of Section 2 of the evaluation feedback and ONLY to the blue-highlighted comments of Section 3 of the evaluation feedback. Do we understand correctly?

Answer: You need to respond only to the blue-highlighted recommendations in Section 3 of the evaluation report; these blue-highlighted recommendations relate to the points summarized in the General assessment in Section 2.

Q 1.6: Do you expect us to describe the projects within 6 pages, or should we outline the work packages (i.e. a series of projects) within the same 6-page limit?

Answer: The page limits in the full-proposal template apply per work package (WP). One WP must be dedicated to each research project and each implementation project. As stated in the description of the section entitled "Approach", WPs are structured into tasks.

Q 1.7: Is the supplementary budget included in the overall project budget, or is it an additional allocation?

Answer: Although the amounts have changed, the principle behind the core and supplementary budgets is still as described in the Call Guideline: The potential financial award as specified in the subsidy contract is referred to as the core budget (see Section 3.2.1 in the Call Guideline, now a maximum of 19.582 Mio. CHF instead of 18.4 Mio. CHF as stated in the Call Guideline). The supplementary budget, on the other hand, is still additional funding (see Section 3.4.2 in the Call Guideline) and at the beginning of a consortium not part of the overall project budget.



Q 1.8: How should we forecast the budget for the implementation project after three first years, given that they are not part of the full proposal? Should they be financed using the supplementary budget? We have reviewed the response to Q1.4 in the Q&A but would like clarification on whether we can allocate the supplementary budget for this purpose.

Answer: How you distribute the funding for the implementation projects over the duration of your consortium is up to you, as long as it amounts to at least 25% of the core budget, i.e., 4.895 Mio. CHF. The supplementary budget can be used for implementation projects, but keep in mind that the uses of the supplementary budget are not restricted to implementation projects and that any applications for the supplementary budget (by you or the SWEET Office) are subject to approval by the SFOE.

Q 1.9: We have a question related to implementation partners taking part in implementation WPs, who do not receive any SWEET funding but commit with own contributions and have substantial activities in these WPs: Shall we add them as members or is it better to keep them as collaboration partners? We do not want to inflate the member list but feel that partners who commit with a LoC (to be able to count their contributions to the 50% implementation partner share for the technical implementation WP) are actually rather members and not collaboration partners. Could you please advise us how to proceed?

Answer: The term member is restricted to partners receiving SWEET funding. Implementation partners are a category of your collaboration partners.

Q 1.10: Budget file: We are not sure about the meaning of cost entity.

Answer: The following applies: cost entity = member entity.

Q 1.11: Is it correct that we should complete only annual contribution (SWEET Funding, own and third party) and the annual costs “internal and external” will be completed once the consortia is awarded?

Answer: No, both the annual contributions (relate to funding) and the annual costs (relate to spending) must be completed at this point, and the sum of the contributions is equal to the sum of the costs. The description of the external costs >CHF 10,000 and the sources of third-party contributions must only be completed by awarded consortia.

Q 1.12: We have a question regarding the LCA appendices in the proposal. Since P+D projects are no longer part of the proposal, could you please clarify what we should include in these appendices and any differences to what we have already provided in the pre-proposal?

Answer: The appendix in the full proposal must include preliminary LCAs for each of the processes you plan to investigate or develop in your work programme in the full proposal, irrespective of whether this will be done in research projects or what are now called implementation projects. If you are no longer looking at a particular process because it was part of a P+D-project that will not continue in the form of an implementation project, the corresponding table in the appendix may be deleted.

Q 1.13: Would it be problematic if the numbering of the WPs does not follow a strictly linear sequence in the section 7.5, 7.6 and 7.7?



Answer: No, it is not a problem if the numbering of the WPs in sections 7.5, 7.6 and 7.7 of the full proposal template does not follow a strictly linear sequence.

Q 1.14: In the past, joint letters of commitment covering multiple member entities were accepted. Is this still acceptable, or is a separate letter required for each member entity?

Answer: Each member entity must submit a separate letter with the mandatory sections from Appendix A (see Call Guideline). In addition, there must be a separate LoC from the host institution (see Call Guideline, section 4.3.2).

Q 1.15: Can a collaboration partner (i.e., not receiving SWEET funding) be a WP leader?

Answer: Yes, collaboration partners can also be WP leaders. In this case, a CV must be submitted for this collaboration partner (see Section 4.3.4 in the Call Guideline).

Q 1.16: In specific implementation projects, organizations have already secured (matching) funds from other organizations in a bilateral setup. In one such case, Organization A (a 'member') directly receives funding from Organization B (a 'collaboration partner'). We would appreciate your guidance on the following points:

1. Should this funding be reported as an 'own contribution' from the collaboration partner (Org B), or – what we believe is more accurate – as a 'third-party contribution' received by the member (Org A)?
2. If it is considered a 'third-party contribution' received by the member (Org A), can Org B still be classified as a 'collaboration partner' (given its substantial involvement)?
3. If so, can/should Org B reference this contribution in their Letter of Commitment – neither as their 'own contribution' nor 'third-party contribution', but rather by acknowledging it as a third-party contribution to Org A, which is then specified in the Letter of Commitment of Org A?

Answer: To answer your questions, we would like to check our understanding of your situation, which is that member A has received funds C from collaboration partner B for a specific implementation project. From our perspective, the key question is: Does B participate in the work programme of ACHIEVE and finance that participation through own contributions (cash or in-kind)?

- If the answer is 'no', then
 - B is not a collaboration partner (as they do not participate in the work programme, see Section 3.2.3 in the Call Guideline).
 - B does not need to submit a letter of commitment.
 - A should list C as a third-party contribution by B.
- If the answer is 'yes', then footnote 44 in the Call Guideline applies: *Contributions from collaboration partners should be declared by them as own contributions and not by members as third-party contributions*, and
 - B is a collaboration partner (and needs to submit a letter of commitment).
 - B should list C as own contributions.
 - A should not list C under third-party funds (to avoid double counting).



Q 1.17: Is the budgeting in the corresponding SWEET budget template done by project year or calendar year and what does the “Year_Name” refer to?

Answer: The budget is established according to the calendar year. In the Excel budget file, ‘Year_Name’ therefore refers to the calendar years in which the consortium is active. If the consortium starts its activities in 2025, then Year 1 is 2025, Year 2 is 2026, etc., whereas if the consortium starts in 2026, Year 1 is 2026, Year 2 is 2027, etc.

It is acceptable that only a small amount is budgeted for Year 1 due to a late start in the year (e.g., in November or December).

2 Questions related to the pre-proposal phase

Q 2.1: Can wastewater treatment plants also take part in this call for proposals? Or are only industry, waste incineration plants and agriculture eligible?

Answer: Of course, a wastewater treatment plant can also become part of the consortium. Please note that in addition to industry and the private sector, universities or institutes of the ETH domain as well as universities of applied sciences must also be part of the consortium (see Section 3.3 of the Call Guideline).

Q 2.2: Could you possibly connect us to possible consortia?

Answer: The SFOE does not get involved in the formation of consortia. After 8 May, the SWEET Office will publish the names of the coordinators of those consortia that have submitted a notification of intent to submit a pre-proposal (see Section 4.1 of the Call Guideline) and that have agreed to the publication of their names.

Q 2.3: Would a project on improving the climate impact of the Swiss food system, i.e., from regenerative farming practices, to improved food supply/value chains, to consumers’ behavioral changes, qualify as part of the consortium’s portfolio of projects?

Answer: Yes, such a project would be within the scope of research challenge 1.

Q 2.4: Is industry eligible to receive funding in the SWEET scheme?

Answer: Yes, industry is eligible for SWEET funding as a private for-profit institution (see Table 3-1 in the Call Guideline).

Q 2.5: Can a senior scientist, with proved experience in integration and/or KTT, be appointed as “integration expert” or “KTT expert”?

Answer: Yes, a senior scientist can become an integration expert or KTT expert if they have the necessary experience. For example, the KTT expert is expected to have at least 2 years of experience with KTT (see Section 3.2.4 in the Call Guideline).

Q 2.6: Is the consortium supposed to address the 4 research questions, or can a subset be selected?

Answer: Consortia are required to address all four research challenges.



Q 2.7: According to SWEET rules, federal offices are not eligible for SWEET funding. I'm not sure whether Agroscope, which is affiliated to the FOEN, falls under this rule or whether they are allowed to apply for funding?

Answer: Agroscope is affiliated with the Federal Office for Agriculture, see the Organigramme available [here](#). Therefore, referring to Table 3-1 in the Call Guideline, Agroscope falls under "Federal department and its administrative units" and is not eligible for SWEET funding.

Q 2.8: Several existing and planned federal instruments (e.g., FOEN's impact of environmental technology promotion (UTF) programme, SFOE's Pilot + Demonstration (P+D) programme, the future SFOE's instrument associated with the Climate and Innovation Law) can support measures or projects in the CCS/NET domains relevant to the SWEET Call. Is it possible to benefit from the support of the instrument of the Climate and Innovation Law, for example, to co-finance a project included in the proposed SWEET portfolio?

Answer: As described in the Call Guideline, Section 3.4.4, the cumulation of federal financial assistance to fund a project is inadmissible if the legal provisions or rules of any of the concerned funding instruments are breached. For instance, if funding from one instrument has been secured and that assistance is sufficient for the project to go ahead, applying for assistance from other instruments for the same project or part of it would result in an inadmissible cumulation (double funding) (Article 6 letter c and Article 7 letters c and d of the Federal Subsidies Act (SR 616.1)). Similarly, an inadmissible cumulation would occur if the maximum funding rate of one instrument is violated by the assistance from other instruments. In the specific case of the Climate and Innovation Law, Article 6 letter 4 precludes any cumulation of support.

To prevent inadmissible cumulations, members of SWEET consortia that seek simultaneously financial assistance from several federal instruments must clearly disclose all sources of financing in the pre- and full proposal (see Section 8 of the pre-proposal template) and inform all concerned authorities (Article 12 of the Federal Subsidies Act (SR 616.1)).

Q 2.9: We could potentially submit a proposal on Enhanced Rock Weathering and its application to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with Swiss agricultural production. It seems like Enhanced Rock Weathering could address your first research challenge. Could you please tell us if you think this would be suitable within the context of your call?

Answer: Yes, this would be within the scope of research challenge 1.

Q 2.10: If several professors (PIs) from the same research institute take part into the same consortium, does each of them count as a consortium member? Is subcontracting within the same institute allowed?

Answer: If several professors belong to the same institute, but these professors run their own laboratories or groups, then each professor would count as a member.

Subcontracting within the same institute is allowed. However, subcontracting should not be used as a mechanism to circumvent the link between the core budget and the number of members (see Section 3.4.1 of the Call Guideline). In SWEET, the SFOE expects a subcontractor's contributions to the work programme to be clearly defined, limited in scope, and clearly lie outside the fields of expertise of consortium members and collaboration partners. Dedicating a considerable portion of SWEET funding to subcontracting broader tasks over longer durations would not be consistent with this expectation. Accordingly, pre-proposals and full proposals must explain why a subcontractor's contributions cannot be provided by consortium members and collaboration partners. The SFOE will closely scrutinize the pre-proposal and full proposal as well



as the consortium's scientific and financial reporting to ensure that subcontracting is not used to circumvent the link between the core budget and the consortium members.

Q 2.11: Should each proposal address all four research questions of the call? If so, should each of these questions receive an equal allocation of resources within the proposal?

Answer: Consortia are required to address all four research challenges (see also the answer to Q 2.6). It is up to consortia to decide how to allocate resources. Note that you will be required to describe your overall approach to answering the four research challenges in Section 6 of the pre-proposal template, including how you will meet the requirements attached to the research challenges.

Q 2.12: In case of demonstrators that will be applied for separately with the SFOE P+D Program (but that will be proposed within the SWEET scheme), must the research partners for these demonstrators all be included in the 17 research partners of the SWEET consortium? Or can the “P+D consortium” be extended to other researchers/partners?

Answer: Partners that do not receive SWEET funding – irrespective of whether they intend to apply for P+D funding or not – are not members and therefore do not count toward the number of members in Section 3.4.1 of the Call Guideline.

Q 2.13: Could you please advise if a simple email is sufficient to express our interest by the May 8th deadline or if there are additional formalities or channels through which we should communicate this?

Answer: The notification must be made by the host institution using the corresponding template, which can be found on our website [Current SWEET call for proposals: Net-Zero \(admin.ch\)](#) (see also Section 4.1 of the Call Guideline).

Q 2.14: We would appreciate clarification on whether medium-sized companies can participate independently or if collaboration with a research institute or university is necessary?

Answer: The SWEET call is not open to applications by individual participants, but only to consortia. A consortium must be led by a host institution, which must be a Swiss institution of higher education (see Section 3.2.1 of the Call Guideline). The consortium itself must consist of at least 5 different member institutions (see Section 3.3 of the Call Guideline for a detailed list of consortium requirements). There is no restriction regarding the size of companies that can participate.

Q 2.15: We are working on the topic of electrical treatment of weed for sustainable farming. This technology leads to reduction of CO₂ emission from the soil, comparing to other weed treatment methods. Would this topic be in the scope of Challenge 1?

Answer: Yes, this approach is within the scope of research challenge 1.

Q 2.16: In the ‘Call Guidelines’ it states that you are not involved in the formation of consortia. Would it still be possible to join the consortia once their names are known after 08.05.23?

Answer: The SFOE does not restrict changes in the consortia after 8 May. Whether a given consortium is willing to accept you as a member is their choice and will depend on whether they are already at the limit of the consortium size and whether your approach fits within their work programme.



Q 2.17: We are aware that foreign members are subject to SFOE approval and should be declared in the preproposal notification form. Should we also declare in this notification form foreign collaboration partners that do not receive SWEET funding? And what about foreign subcontractors?

Answer: No, foreign collaboration partners do not require approval and therefore do not need to be specified in the notification.

Foreign subcontractors receive (indirect) funding and must therefore be specified in the notification in exactly the same way as members. We have not yet considered this possibility, so it has not yet been included in the template and the Call Guideline. However, this option will be implemented immediately. Please use the new template version attached if you have foreign subcontractors. The new template will also be available on the website with immediate effect and will be requested (retrospectively) from all consortia that register.

Q 2.18: Should the KTT and Integration experts already be known at the pre-proposal stage? Do these people count each as single consortium members (e.g., this leaves only 14 members for research)?

Answer: Yes, these experts must already be known with the pre-proposal stage, as the CVs must be submitted with the pre-proposal (see Section 4.2 of the Call Guideline).

If the two experts are in the same lab/group (= in the same member entity), then only one counts as a member.

Q 2.19: Does a private non-profit foundation fall into category 3.c of the required consortium members (section 3.3 in the Call Guideline): "2 member institutions from Swiss industry and/or the Swiss private sector"?

Answer: Yes, a private non-profit foundation counts as an institution from the private sector in the context of this SWEET call for proposals.

Q 2.20: Could a consortium member be at the same time collaboration partner in another consortium? What would be the rules/limitations then?

Answer: Yes, it is possible for a member of one consortium to be a collaboration partner of another consortium. There are no additional rules except that the member/collaboration partner must inform the coordinators of all affected consortia.

Q 2.21: It is not clear to us whether the entities participating in SWEET P+Ds are entitled to receive P+D funding based on the distinction between members and collaboration partners done for the SWEET call. In other words, can entities that are not members of the SWEET consortium (e.g., collaboration partners) receive funding through the SWEET P+D? Or is the P+D funding reserved exclusively for the consortium members too?

Answer: The distinction between members and collaboration partners is based solely on whether they apply for SWEET funding, see Sections 3.2.2 and 3.2.3 in the Call Guideline. Since the P+D projects in the project portfolio are not financed through SWEET, but through the P+D programme, collaboration partners may apply for funding from that programme.



Q 2.22: What exactly is required in Appendix A of the pre-proposal? We find it difficult to select the “processes” of the work programme that should be analysed through an LCA. Could you perhaps provide a few explanatory examples?

Answer: Any of the processes that you propose to investigate or develop in your work programme, especially in the context of answering research challenges 1 and 4, should be included in Appendix A. To take an entirely hypothetical example: You might plan to develop a novel process for capturing CO₂ in waste-to-energy plants to reduce unintentional amine emissions. However, the production of the materials required for the process might entail higher GHG emissions or further reduce the thermal output of waste-to-energy plants. The preliminary LCA in the appendix is supposed to give a first indication of such trade-offs.

Q 2.23: Does a private non-profit foundation count as one partner of the private sector regardless of which departments are involved?

Answer: It depends on the direction of the question: The consortium requirements (see Section 3.3 in the Call Guideline) distinguish between member institutions. There it does not matter how many departments are involved. For the calculation of the core budget, however, Table 1-2 of the pre-proposal is used, where a distinction is made between member entities (see Table 3-2 in the Call Guideline for the definition of member institution and member entity).

Q 2.24: How many pages can we use (in total) to describe the projects? If we use 2 pages per project and have 20 projects in total, that's 40 pages... is that too much?

Answer: As indicated in the pre-proposal template, there is a page limit of max. 2 pages per WP, regardless of the number of WPs in a consortium.

Q 2.25: Are living labs to be considered as P+D, or as research projects?

Answer: P+D in the context of SWEET means projects funded by the SFOE's P+D programme. Please note that funding for these projects must be applied for separately (see Section 3.4.3 in the Call Guideline) and that there is no guarantee of funding from the P+D programme. Whether living lab projects are considered P+D or research projects depends on what is being investigated and whether the requirements of the P+D programme are met.

Q 2.26: Regarding the answer to question Q2.22 on LCAs: What is meant by ‘novel’ process? And do we also have to submit this preliminary LCA for P+D projects?

Answer: Please note the formulation at the beginning of Appendix A: “For each of the processes to be investigated or developed in the work programme”. Thus, it does not matter whether the process you intend to investigate is novel or not and whether you intend to investigate it in a research project or a P+D project.

Q 2.27: At the pre-proposal stage, if a collaboration partner cannot give an estimate of its own contribution, how shall we proceed when filling in the budget Excel table?

Answer: If a collaboration partner cannot provide an estimate of its own or third-party contributions at the pre-proposal stage, the corresponding entry in the budget workbook is set to CHF 0.

Q 2.28: Besides personnel time, can laboratory equipment and facilities also be declared as in-kind contributions from collaboration partners?



Answer: In-kind contributions from collaboration partners may include costs related to personnel time, as well as use of equipment and facilities, and they are declared as own contributions. Depreciation is not eligible. See Section 3.4.4 and Table 3-4 in the Call Guideline for more details.

Q 2.29: Does the money contributed by the collaboration partners need to be allocated to the different work packages?

Answer: The contributions by collaboration partners must be included in columns F and H of the first table (entitled “Overview by WP”). However, at the pre-proposal stage, you do not yet have to indicate how much each collaboration partner contributes to each WP. (As a check, note that same amounts should appear in lines 42 and 125.)

Q 2.30: Aren’t (a) and (b) in point 8 of the self-declaration section of the pre-proposal contradictory? Why should we declare federal funding if federal cross-funding is forbidden (and thus not occurring)?

Answer: Point 8(a) is linked to Table 8-1 of the pre-proposal template and was intended as a kind of safeguard to ensure that information on federal financial assistance could be available. The table should be empty on account of points 7, 8(b) and 8(c) in the self-declarations.

Q 2.30: Does Horizon Europe e.g. SEFRI funding count as federal funding?

Answer: Yes, since Swiss contributions to Horizon Europe projects are currently being financed by the Federal Government, they count as federal funding.