

DRAFT – Frequently asked questions on Teaming call (WP 2021-2022)

Consortium membership		
1	If the Coordinator in Teaming Stage 1 is a national/regional authority, can it withdraw from the project for Teaming Stage 2 as this might provoke a conflict of interest?	In Horizon Europe, Teaming is being shaped as one call, <u>but in two stages</u> . The consortium and especially the coordinator needs to be fixed from the very beginning in Stage 1, and all possibilities to provoke a conflict of interest needs to be well thought through by the applicant <u>before submitting the proposal</u> . This means that if the conflict of interest can potentially arise, in particular for the coordinator, it needs to be eliminated already for the Stage 1 proposal. The Coordinator cannot change from Stage 1 to Stage 2.
2	Is it possible to add or remove partners between Teaming Stage 1 and Teaming Stage 2 proposals?	<p>A change in the consortium composition in the sense of removing partners is not eligible, except in “force majeure” cases (e.g. bankruptcy or any other reason of ineligibility occurring between the two stages) as it impacts the quality of the proposals. This change should be communicated to the Research Executive Agency (REA) as soon as possible.</p> <p>A change in the consortium composition in the sense of addition of new partners is not forbidden, but must be duly justified in the context of the proposal activities. The coordinator cannot change.</p>
3	Can the coordinating organisation in Teaming calls from the Widening country be either public or private?	According to the Work Programme, the main applicant organisation (the coordinator) will be a university or a research organisation, a national or regional authority or a research funding agency. Any of these organisations is eligible, would it be private or public.
4	Do applicants need to have a VAT number?	No, this is not a requirement under the TEAMING call.
5	Is there any limitation as to how many partners can participate from a "Widening" country or as "advanced" partners?	There is no limitation on how many partners can participate from the Widening country neither from the "advanced" partner's side. The minimum requirement is 1 Widening partner (the coordinator) and 1 "advanced" partner. However, it is crucial that the

		partnership does not become too complicated and remains operational according to the needs and specificities of the proposed project.
6	Can partners from outside the EU take part in a TEAMING project?	A Teaming project must involve at least two beneficiaries; the coordinator from a Widening country and at least one leading university or research organisation established in another Member State or Associated Country as an advanced partner. Partners from outside the EU are not excluded, but the proposal must convincingly demonstrate their contribution and added value to the project.
7	Is there any requirement to "team up" with stronger or weaker regions in terms of research innovation performance in "Widening" countries?	There is no such requirement in the Work Programme (WP).
8	Is it possible to add or remove partners when the Teaming project is running?	In principle this is possible and would require an amendment of the GA. Due to the special nature of Teaming action, amendments regarding termination and addition of partners will be analyzed in detail and dealt with on a <i>case-by-case</i> basis. It is worth mentioning that according to the model grant agreement (Article 39.1), ¹ <i>"The Agreement may be amended, unless the amendment entails changes to the Agreement which would call into question the decision awarding the grant or breach the principle of equal treatment of applicants.</i>
9	Is a consortium agreement between the beneficiaries required? What other kind of internal arrangements/partnerships/agreements need to be made between the beneficiaries themselves?	Yes, signing a consortium agreement between all the beneficiaries in the project (i.e. all entities that sign the grant agreement) is required (following standard Horizon Europe rules) (Annotated Grant agreement, art.7) ² Any other internal agreements/arrangements are voluntary and up to the participants themselves.
10	Is it mandatory to constitute the Centre of Excellence as a legal entity or can it	It is not mandatory to constitute the centre of excellence as legal entity.

¹ [general-mga_horizon-euratom_en.pdf\(europa.eu\)](#)

² [aga_en.pdf\(europa.eu\)](#)

	operate under the legal framework of an umbrella organisation, as long as the new Centre of Excellence can demonstrate autonomy in the strategic evolution of the Centre and all decision-making processes?	
Human resources strategy		
11	What is expected as a robust human resources strategy under the Teaming call?	<p>The Commission expects that the Centres of Excellence to be created (or significantly upgraded/modernised) through the Teaming projects will become drivers for change in the Widening countries. That is why it is indispensable that the Centres have the highest degree of autonomy possible in every aspect of decision-making, including recruitment. Therefore, it is crucial – as specified under the Special Conditions – Procedure of the Call Topic – that the Centres ensure that all recruitments follow a transparent, merit based and open recruitment procedure for all staff, including management positions.</p> <p>As mentioned in the Work Programme, a robust human resource strategy needs also to address gender equality (in line with the research institutions respective gender equality plans, mandatory for all proposals submitted as of 2022) and international component, ensuring appropriate management capacities for the effective and efficient running of the Centre of Excellence.</p>
Budget, costs		
12	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, the main reasoning for the budget needs to correspond to the objectives of Teaming that are mainly focused on the partner(s) in the Widening country, especially in advancing the region/country where the Centre of Excellence is/will be established or is/will be upgraded/modernised.
13	Research costs – what this would entail?	As specified in the Work Programme, <i>‘a minor research component can be accepted not exceeding 10% of the total Horizon Europe grant that may include a preparatory research</i>

		<p><i>project. Such small research project embedded in the Teaming action should be aligned with the objectives of the project and e.g. serve the purpose of developing and testing new methodologies and instruments and/or the integration of new scientific personnel’.</i></p> <p>The minor research component may include necessary consumables, small equipment and personnel costs for a preparatory research project.</p>
14	<p>What about eligible costs and possible financial contributions of the 'advanced' partner?</p>	<p>Eligible expenses that can be claimed by the 'advanced' partner are identical to those of the partner(s) from the Widening Country.</p> <p>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.</p>
15	<p>What about recruitment costs (i.e. salaries) of researchers? Can they be covered with Horizon Europe grant? Under which part of the grant – research or other eligible activities?</p>	<p>As mentioned in the Work Programme, <i>‘the grant awarded from the Horizon Europe budget should provide substantial support for the start-up and implementation phase of the future Centre of Excellence including the recruitment of the managerial, technical and scientific personnel. It should also cover expenses related to team members of the future Centre of Excellence (e.g. their salaries, recruitment costs³, management costs, travel and subsistence costs)’.</i></p> <p>Recruitment costs (i.e. salaries) are eligible as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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). <p>These recruitment costs can be directly attributed to the category of ‘other direct costs’ in relation to activities (non-research) indicated in the Work Programme text and subject to the cost eligibility conditions in Article 6 of the HE (AGA⁴).</p>

³ This can be considered under the category of ‘other direct costs’

⁴ [aga_en.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

		<p>If recruitment costs, as noted in the WP text, are related to the preparatory research project within the Teaming action (<i>'and/or the integration of new scientific personnel'</i>), that is not exceeding 10% of the total Horizon Europe grant, these costs can then be claimed under that research component.</p>
16	<p>How should the financial commitment for the complementary funding to the project be demonstrated?</p>	<p>As explained in the Work Programme, <i>'proposals invited to the second stage must include an investment plan for the full project including a binding commitment for the necessary complementary funding.'</i></p> <p>This commitment should be demonstrated by <i>'the letter(s) of commitment for complementary funding from the competent national/regional authorities or private sources to commit financial resources (e.g. resources coming from programmes co-financed by the ERDF or other sources) for implementing the future Centre, in particular regarding investment in infrastructure and equipment. The letter(s) of commitment for complementary funding of the project will be an integral part of the evaluation of the proposal.'</i></p> <p>It is advisable that the letter of commitment would contain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - some background information: i.e. the role, if any, of the committing entity during the project, identity of the committing entity (i.e. national ministry, regional/local authority, funding agency, private sector, ESIF⁵ Managing Authority etc.) and relationship, if any, with recipient entity; - specific details on the nature, amounts and timeline of the funding sources and concrete assurances for the long term availability of funding.
17	<p>Is there a monitoring process on the EU level for the complementary funding from the national/regional public authority?</p>	<p>There will be a monitoring process for complementary funding coming from any financial source and it will follow the entire duration of the project. This is particularly important in order to ensure that the action is carried out properly and the ultimate goal/objective of the project will be achieved. Complementary funding being an integral</p>

⁵ European Structural and Investment Funds.

		part of the proposal, requires any change concerning it to be assessed against the impact it may have on the action overall execution and the expected results.
18	For smaller countries it is more difficult to get complementary funding to cover infrastructure costs from other sources. Is this taken into account?	<p>As specified in the Work Programme, the total amount of the complementary funding must be at least equal to the total requested Horizon Europe contribution. This feature is very specific to Teaming calls; therefore, Teaming is called a synergy grant. <i>'Whatever the source of the required complementary funding, a Teaming project, as a notable flagship in its host country, exemplifies not only the achievements in R&I, capacity building or competitiveness, but also sets and facilitates synergies in practice.'</i></p> <p>The source for the complementary funding can be very diverse (e.g. national and/or regional funding, European funding, such as from Cohesion policy programmes, or private sources) with no obligation for any particular source to be used. Several of them can be adding to the requested amount. It is very clearly acknowledged that 'one size fits all' principle cannot be applied, but the country size does not matter.</p>
19	Can in-kind contributions be considered as complementary funding?	No, in kind contributions are not considered complementary funding.
20	What kind of costs can be covered from complementary funding?	<p>Infrastructure costs as well as the majority of equipment costs and consumables <u>cannot be funded from Horizon Europe grant</u>. Therefore, a considerable amount for these costs needs to come from other sources.</p> <p>A clear description of the project part supported by a complementary funding must be included in the proposal, where relevant including the eligible category of research and development, technical specifications of infrastructure, preliminary planning for building and installations, cost-benefit analysis, etc.</p>

		Whatever the funding source, the principle of avoiding <u>double funding</u> ⁶ applies, meaning that cost items that would be reimbursed from other sources shall be different from cost items supported under Horizon Europe.
21	Is subcontracting allowed in Teaming projects?	The general rule applicable to Horizon Europe (HE) projects is that beneficiaries must have the appropriate resources to implement the action . However, if necessary to implement the action, subcontracting is allowed according to the general HE rules outlined in Article 6.2.B of the AGA ⁷ . Subcontracting may cover only a limited part of the action. The phrase "limited part of the action" is not pre-defined, but core activities of the project should not be subcontracted.
22	What are ineligible costs for Teaming actions?	The general rules for Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements are described in General Annex G to the Work Programme. To be noted in particular that infrastructure costs <u>are not eligible under the Horizon Europe grant</u> . Such costs are expected to be supported by other types of funding, if applicable.
23	What costs are eligible for Teaming project?	As mentioned in the Work Programme, <i>'the grant awarded from the Horizon Europe budget should provide substantial support for the start-up and implementation phase of the future Centre of Excellence including the recruitment of the managerial, technical and scientific personnel. It should also cover expenses related to team members of the future Centre of Excellence (e.g. their salaries, recruitment costs, management costs, travel and subsistence costs). A minor research component can be accepted not exceeding 10% of the total Horizon Europe grant that may include a preparatory research project.'</i>
24	What is the pre-financing for a granted Teaming project?	The pre-financing for a granted Teaming project is at the level of 40%.
25	What is the reimbursement rate for a Teaming project?	The standard cost reimbursement model (100%/25%) of Horizon Europe applies for Teaming actions.

⁶ As mentioned in General Annexes HE Work Programme 2021-2022, "No double funding—There is strict prohibition of double funding from the EU budget. Any given action may receive only ONE grant from the EU budget(except for EU Synergy grants)and costs may under NO circumstances be declared to two different EU actions" and as specified in **article 130** of the **Financial Regulation 966/2012** (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32018R1046&from=EN>)

⁷ [aga_en.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

26	Can a proposal request an EU contribution from Horizon Europe below €15 million?	Yes, this is possible. As mentioned in the Work Programme, The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of between EUR 8.00 and 15.00 million would allow the outcomes of the action to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
27	What does the term 'competitive salaries' mean? How should the applicant approach this condition?	With the term 'Competitive salaries' the EC intends to underline that applicants while looking for the best quality personnel to be employed in the CoE, need to give an appropriate attention to the salaries paid for their future employees. 'Competitive' in this context means that the salary needs to have a certain competitive advantage compared to a chosen bar, which can be an average salary in that country, or a particular value for a certain position or scientific domain or grade. The actual financial expression of a salary and both level and element of competitiveness is up to the applicant to decide. The EC cannot prescribe any values here, since levels of competitiveness vary very much in different countries.
28	If the TEAMING project is renting the premises in which the centre is/will be installed, can this be an eligible cost in the project and if so, under which category should it be recorded?	No this cost is not eligible as it is considered as an 'infrastructural cost', which is explicitly excluded in the WP.
29	Does own funding count as complementary funding? Can the umbrella organisation commit with their own funds and can this be eligible to match the requested European funding?	No, this will not be accounted complementary funding
Long term sustainability, RIS3		
30	What about the partnership and long-term sustainability of Teaming projects?	A Teaming project should foresee a long term horizon of cooperation between the relevant partners from both the 'advanced' and 'widening' sides. Despite the fact that Horizon Europe funding for the Centre of Excellence will stop after about 6 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.

		<p>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 after the Horizon Europe grant will be over. Concrete measures of how this (financial) self-sustainability of the Centre will be ensured needs to be convincingly elaborated in the proposal.</p>
31	<p>What about the long-term sustainability of the Teaming partnership?</p>	<p>A Teaming project should be the result of a joint venture with a long term horizon of cooperation between the relevant partners from both the advanced and widening sides.</p> <p>It is stressed that despite the fact that Horizon Europe funding for the Centre of Excellence will stop after about 6 years, there is an expectation that a lot of effort will need to be placed by the partners in this joint venture, to continue supporting the new Centre in view of achieving sustainability in the long run and hopefully eventual financial autonomy after the grant termination with an ability to further develop the partnership and eventually to also successfully compete for European and international funding.</p>
32	<p>Is an alignment with the national/regional Research and Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation Strategy (RIS3) required? How will this be evaluated?</p>	<p>As specified in the Work Programme, coordinating applicants in the Widening country must demonstrate how the proposed project is relevant to the Smart Specialisation Strategy of the country or the region in which it is/will be established (or upgraded/modernised). It is important not only when Cohesion policy funding is mobilized with respect to enabling conditions on governance of smart specialisation introduced under cohesion policy programmes, but also in more general terms: <i>'The implementation of Teaming action is expected to become an influential and meaningful bridge particularly between smart specialisation strategies and excellence in R&I with the aim of strengthening the European Research Area and contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals.'</i></p> <p>In case of Associated countries or Outermost regions, the notion of the Smart specialization strategy can be replaced by an equivalent national or regional R&I strategy.</p> <p>This aspect will be evaluated as a sub-criterion under the Excellence criterion.</p>
<p>Advanced partners</p>		

33	What are the benefits for the "advanced" partner in participating in Teaming projects?	<p>A non-exhaustive list includes access to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - world-class research infrastructures (most often) that are frequently to be found in the Widening countries (often supported and built through the European Structural and Investment Funds). - talent, as the Widening countries' institutions have a large pool of unexploited talented scientists. - future markets, as the Widening countries' institutions are emerging leaders in their respective fields. - bigger opportunities to future quality research and innovation partnerships.
34	What is the key role and expected activity of the leading institution ("advanced" partner)?	<p>The key role of the 'advanced' partner organisation will be to contribute to the nurturing and development of the research and innovation potential of the widening partner through sharing its own accumulated expertise, reputation, access to international networks, and its experience in management and administration in a specific area of research and innovation. This role will be exercised through the direct partnering and involvement in the setting up of a new Centre of Excellence in the Widening country.</p> <p>It is essentially up to the project partnership to propose diverse activities and ways of involvement of the "advanced" partner, which will meet the objectives mentioned above.</p>
Conditions of the call, eligibility		
35	Is there any limitation on the number of Teaming proposals submitted by each country?	There are no restrictions on the number of Teaming proposals by country, as long as the coordinator is located in a Widening country (definition of Widening country is given in Horizon Europe regulation Art. 2 (17)).
36	Is there any geographical or thematic restriction for Teaming proposals?	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.
37	How many proposals are expected to be funded under the first Teaming call?	Based on available budget and depending on the requested funding, it is expected that about 12 can be selected for funding under the first Teaming call.

38	What is the duration of a Teaming project?	As specified in the Work Programme, the duration of the grant should be <u>up to six years</u> .
39	What is the expected content of the Teaming Stage 1 proposal?	As specified in the Work Programme, <i>'in the first stage of evaluation the R&I excellence and the conceptual approach for the Centers of Excellence will be evaluated. Applicants have to present a strategic vision on how to develop R&I excellence beyond the state of the art in the chosen domain and on how the coordinator will benefit from the partnership with a leading institution from abroad. In addition, the conceptual approach should outline how the access to complementary funding from other sources will be ensured, in the respect of national, regional and/or European strategies or policy priorities (e.g. notably smart specialisation strategies, Green Deal, Digital transformation). Proposals also should sketch out briefly how the autonomy of the envisaged center will be ensured and the necessary human resources recruited and retained.'</i>
40	What is the page limit for Teaming Stage1 and Stage 2 applications?	For Coordination and support action a general limit is 30 pages. First stage proposals: have a limit of 10 pages.
41	Is an institution from Widening country that is at the moment of application still holding a Teaming grant under Horizon 2020 as coordinator eligible to become an advanced partner under Horizon Europe Teaming call?	In principle, advanced and established partners are scientific institutions that have developed an outstanding reputation in research and innovation excellence in the chosen scientific domain and established in another than a coordinator Member State or Associated Country. Institutions that are still in the process of development or modernisation, e.g. those that are still receiving support as coordinators from widening actions under Horizon 2020, are normally not considered leading institutions, unless a proper justification is provided for in the proposal.
42	Is open science evaluated at Stage 1 of the TEAMING evaluation?	Yes, open science is one among several aspects to be evaluated under the 'Excellence' criteria of the stage 1 proposals. Applicants should describe how appropriate open science practices are implemented as an integral part of the proposed methodology. The proposal should show how the choice of practices and their implementation are adapted to the

		<p>nature of the work, in a way that will increase the chances of the project delivering on its objectives. If applicants believe that none of these practices are appropriate for their project, justification should be provided in the proposal.</p> <p>Open science is an approach based on open cooperative work and systematic sharing of knowledge and tools as early and widely as possible in the process. Open science practices include early and open sharing of research (for example through preregistration, registered reports, preprints, or crowd-sourcing); research output management; measures to ensure reproducibility of research outputs; providing open access to research outputs (such as publications, data, software, models, algorithms, and workflows); participation in open peer-review; and involving all relevant knowledge actors including citizens, civil society and end users in the co-creation of R&I agendas and contents (such as citizen science).</p> <p>For guidance on open science practices and research data management, please refer to the relevant section of the HE Programme Guide on the Funding & Tenders Portal.</p>
Complementary funding		
43	When the confirmation letter for complementary funding needs to be presented – at which stage?	<p>As mentioned in the Work Programme, the confirmation letter or letter of commitment for complementary funding is to be presented at the Stage 2 of the application. It needs to come <i>‘from the competent national/regional authorities or private sources to commit financial resources (e.g. resources coming from programmes co-financed by the ERDF or other sources) for implementing the future Centre, in particular regarding investment in infrastructure and equipment. The letter(s) of commitment for complementary funding of the project will be an integral part of the evaluation of the proposal.’</i></p> <p>At the Stage 1, the proposal should identify the envisaged source of funding. The Call Topic text reads as follows:</p>

		<i>"In addition, the conceptual approach should outline how the access to complementary funding from other sources will be ensured, in the respect of national, regional and/or European strategies or policy priorities (e.g. notably smart specialisation strategies, Green Deal, Digital transformation)".</i>
44	How is the complementary funding ensured from the first stage if a binding letter is not necessary to be included at the first stage of proposal?	If applicants do not manage to submit a binding commitment at stage 2, they will be down-scored. Therefore applicants need to carefully explore already before submitting a proposal at stage 1, if there is a realistic chance for getting the commitment.

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