



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR ENERGY  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR COMMUNICATIONS NETWORKS, CONTENT AND  
TECHNOLOGY

## **FAQ - Frequently Asked Questions WP 2016 for Horizon2020 call SCC 1 – 2016**

**Smart Cities and Communities –  
solutions integrating energy, transport, ICT sectors through lighthouse (large scale  
demonstration - first of the kind) projects**

<https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/topics/4082-scc-1-2016-2017.html>.

The general link to H2020 updated documents is:  
<https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/home.html>

**Version: 21.12.2015**

### **1. Can proprietary ICT platforms be used in this call?**

The objective of this call is to deploy interoperable solutions, to this end platforms, irrespective of their ownership model, must be based on open specifications, including the data structures and APIs. Moreover platforms are to be TRL 7 or more. There are many of such platforms. For more information please see "Urban Platforms for EU cities" initiative at <https://eu-smartcities.eu/urban-platforms>

### **2. Can proprietary closed ICT solutions be used in this call?**

Since the interest of the project outcome is a collective learning and the creation of a smart local ecosystem, proprietary closed ICT solutions cannot be included in proposals. Interoperability of solutions is a corner stone and the involved industry partners should be committed to business models that avoid locked-in customers. Open specifications for data structures and APIs are mandatory for Urban ICT platforms. So that data can be reused by different applications, also those created by third parties not involved in the project so that smart local ecosystems can flourish.

### **3. Is there a city size threshold?**

No, there is no such threshold. What counts is that the geographical and population size of the district where the solution will be deployed and the ambition of the proposal can guarantee a

substantial impact and European relevance in terms of demonstrating replicable solutions. This district should be a clearly delineated geographical zone so that the measurements of in and out can easily be compared before and after the project (including the costs, the return on investment, and other KPIs that are clearly described in the proposal)

#### **4. Can suburban cities be follower cities of their central city?**

This call is for cities and communities and a metropolitan area or an agglomeration will be considered as one city and community. Similarly one neighbourhood in a city cannot be the follower of another neighbourhood in the same city.

#### **5. Are cities involved as follower cities in the selected projects of the 2014 Call excluded?**

Follower cities involved in selected projects of the 2014/2015 Call will not be formally excluded from the 2016 Call. However, the additional impact, the additional integrated innovation and the European added value of being part in several projects have to be substantiated in the proposal.

#### **6. Can a follower city of one of the 2014/2015 SCC1 supported projects apply as lighthouse city in the 2016 SCC1 call?**

There are no rules of H2020 excluding entities/consortia from submitting a proposal were a current follower city applies as lighthouse city but the call text states: "Follower cities are defined as cities that have not yet acquired the full technical competence to become a lighthouse city"

#### **7. Can entities from outside the EU participate?**

Each project shall be realised 3 "lighthouse cities or communities". And each project shall involve minimum 3 "follower cities" as beneficiaries.

The above-mentioned 3 "lighthouse cities" and minimum 3 "follower cities" must be legal entities established in a different EU Member state or associated country.

Besides the above-mentioned "lighthouse cities or communities" and "follower cities", other eligible legal entities can be beneficiaries in the project (e.g. SMEs, industries, other cities and communities...). See also fact sheet: [International Participation in Horizon 2020 and FP7](#)

#### **8. Are follower cities eligible for funding?**

Yes, follower cities are eligible for funding of those activities that are specified in the call text. Their budget should be clearly justified with a coherent work programme and deliverables. Their contribution to the project will be part of the evaluation.

**9. Are follower cities allowed to carry out direct deployment of a set of selected measures within its local context (e.g. energy retrofitting + ICT + mobility) and within the project timeline?**

Follower cities need to commit to supporting the project definition in lighthouse cities early on from the point of view of replication potentials and commit to replication at the end after the successful demonstration in lead cities. In addition, follower cities can undertake activities that complement and expand related project activities and these could be done in the same timeline but would be out of the scope of the project and therefore not funded.

**10. How should the follower cities confirm/show the replication of solutions at the end of the project – what is expected?**

Follower cities should be fully involved already from the planning phase of the proposal and work together with the leading cities on solutions that have strong potential to be also replicated in their own cities as well. The lighthouse projects should develop and implement bankable and well working innovative solutions but it will be up to the follower cities to replicate the implementation in their cities for their own benefit. As there is no funding directly linked to the implementation/replication in the follower cities there is no hard legal obligation for them, but it should be in their own interest that the consortium develops solutions that will be of added value also for their own city.

**11. What should be the minimum size of the implementation sites, as districts is not a very accurate unit and these are extremely variable even within the same country?**

There is no minimum size. What counts is the geographical and population size of the district where the solution will be deployed and the ambition of the proposal to guarantee a substantial impact and European relevance in terms of demonstrating replicable solutions. The size shall allow deployment of solutions in a relatively concentrated area which will also allow will make possible to better study interaction between the different parts.

**12. Can conglomerations or groups of smaller neighbouring municipalities participate as one (joint) lighthouse partner?**

Yes, if i) they group under one city name and ii) these conglomerations are not putting additional administrative burden on the project and iii) the motivation to include these conglomerations and the added value of this cooperation is convincingly described in the proposal.

### **13. Does a proposal have to cover all three aspects (low energy buildings, integrated infrastructure and sustainable urban mobility)?**

Yes, all deployments in the lighthouse cities have to cover the three areas simultaneously. The call is on deploying solutions combining the three areas.

### **14. Does each lighthouse city need to be 'leading' in each technology area (i.e. transport, energy or ICT) and/or can some lighthouse cities be leading in one technology area and 'following' in another technology area?**

Each lighthouse city has to be committed to lead the implementation of large-scale solutions that address all areas and intelligently combine rather mature technologies. "Fully integrated projects" are being called for; e.g. it must not be that the transport part is deployed in one city and the energy part in another. However, it is acceptable that one city demonstrates greater knowledge and innovation capacity on energy and the other greater knowledge and innovation capacity on transport, for example, as long as it can be demonstrated that all cities implement the integrated approach. In this case, cities shall demonstrate the added value and mutual benefits of their cooperation.

### **15. What are ineligible costs?**

Ineligible costs' are:

- costs that do not comply with the conditions for eligible costs as indicated in the call text;
- costs related to return on capital;
- debt and debt service charges;
- provisions for future losses or debts;
- interest owed;
- doubtful debts;
- currency exchange losses;
- bank costs charged by the beneficiary's bank for transfers from the Commission/Agency;
- excessive or reckless expenditure;
- deductible VAT;
- costs incurred during suspension of the implementation of the action.

As general principle, Actions cannot generate profit to any participant, and do not alleviate the valid procurement rules of public authorities.

### **16. How should private entities be involved in the development process?**

Private entities should be involved in the project. The majority of project action should be implemented by the companies in the consortium and only certain aspects of project

development should be implemented through external public procurement, where relevant and appropriate. This option should be reserved for minor aspects and only if the expertise cannot be found in the consortium.

**17. Which methodological framework should be used to calculate the estimated CO2 savings obtained through the solutions deployed in the project, as required by the TEST table?**

The TEST table stipulates that the estimation of CO2 savings should follow on the basis of CO2 intensity of the European electricity grid of 430 g/kwh, and need to take into account the size of the entire vehicle fleet powered by alternative energy carriers that will be deployed in the project, i.e. the sum of emissions from fuel and electricity. Further information can be obtained from the following reference report: JEC, 2014, Well-to-Wheels Report (Version 4.a) JEC Well-t-Wheels analysis, JRC technical reports, European Commission.

**18. What is the minimum duration of performance monitoring?**

Two years of monitoring is considered the minimum (one year for dry out and optimisation; one winter and one summer season). Performance monitoring involving longer term commitments (e.g. 3 to 5 years) will give an added value to the proposal. This is valid for the buildings, the grid and the vehicle fleets.

**19. How important is performance monitoring? Can performance monitoring deliverables be of restricted access?**

The main objective of lighthouse cities and projects is collective learning and the replication of viable solutions. Therefore, data from the validation phase of lighthouse projects have to be made publicly available and cannot be restricted. Data will be collected and publicly made available also through the Smart City Information System which aggregates feedback and knowledge of EU funded projects (starting with CONCERTO data from 2004 onwards and expanding) and linked resources should already be indicated in the proposal.

**20. We are planning to involve additional observer cities outside Europe. Can we allocate any funding for this effort or, are there any guidelines on what we need these external cities to commit to so they can be called observers?**

Cities outside Europe (i.e. located neither in a Members state nor an associated country) can be part of a consortium. If they are allowed under the rules for participation under Horizon2020 to receive funding, they can do so also under this specific call. The European added value for such inclusion has to be clearly described in the proposal and is part of the evaluation.

**21. Will cities need to use the Covenant of Mayors (CoM) Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) template and under what conditions mitigation plans can be considered as "similar to CoM SEAPs" and therefore examined by the Joint Research Centre (JRC)?**

Only cities applying as lighthouse city will need an approved Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) and the Joint Research Centre (JRC) will only examine plans, which strictly follow the SEAP format (CoM signatories use the online interface, non-signatories the .xls template). Transforming existing plans into the SEAP format is considered being a minor effort compared to preparing a proposal.

The SEAPs will be used for the comparative evaluation, in the same way as the Building Energy Specification (BEST) tables. This guarantees the most fair and comparative evaluation. SEAPs will be a useful guide for cities to focus on the most important points (following the same rational as the BEST tables).

**22. Is a Covenant of Mayors Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) baseline emission inventory sufficient, or do cities need to submit a mitigation plan?**

A Baseline Emissions Inventory (BEI) only gives a snapshot of the emissions of the municipality. But it is needed to establish the SEAP like mitigation plan. We consider the SEAPs as essential since they reflect the commitment and ambition of the municipality towards emissions reduction.

**23. Do Covenant of Mayors Sustainable Energy Action Plans (SEAP) actually need to be approved by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) before the submission of the proposal, or is it enough if plans have just been submitted?**

All plans need to be approved by the JRC before submission of the proposal, regardless, whether the city is a Covenant of Mayors signatory or not. An approval after the call deadline will not be possible since any further piece of information submitted after that deadline won't be eligible. The fast-track review will make sure that "SEAPs" submitted in this context at least 1 month before the call closure are processed in time and against the exact same criteria as the "original" SEAPs and the same guidelines for transparency and impartiality as all review and evaluation processes conducted by the European Commission.

If you are a CoM signatory : Compile the SEAP template on the CoM web interface at least 1 month before call closure and inform the JRC with a mail to the email address below.

Else :Send the duly filled SEAP template available for download at "additional documents" under the topic description at least 1 month before call closure to the email address below.

[JRC-COM-TECHNICAL-HELPDESK@ec.europa.eu](mailto:JRC-COM-TECHNICAL-HELPDESK@ec.europa.eu)

Subject: **Fast Track SEAP H2020-SCC-2016**

## **24. Can commercial platforms and city platforms based on FIWARE be used in this call?**

Specifications of FIWARE architecture, components and APIs are public and royalty-free. Commercial platforms and city platforms based on FIWARE are therefore open and fulfil the call requirements for interoperability and portability of services and for avoiding vendor lock-in.

## **25. Can FIWARE reference implementation be used in this call?**

The FIWARE Catalogue contains a rich library of components with reference implementations that allow developers to put into effect functionalities that make programming much easier. All of them are public, royalty-free and open source. Stakeholders interested in experimenting with FIWARE can find more information at <http://www.oascities.org/open-and-agile-smart-cities/> and may find funding in LEIT ICT. Only platforms with a readiness level of 7 or more are eligible for this call.

## **26. What should be the timeframe for the Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP)? What if my existing climate and energy plan has a timeframe which is not aligned on the SEAP template? Can we have other than 2020 or 2030 target years?**

The SEAP shall consider 2020 as a target for emissions reduction, as the assessment procedure in Joint Research Centre (JRC) is still based on the 2020 timeframe. If the city has plans for reductions till 2030, the intermediate targets for 2020 shall be filled in the SEAP template.

## **27. How can I submit the Sustainable Energy Action Plan - SEAP?**

If you are a Covenant of Mayors (CoM) signatory : Compile the SEAP template on the CoM web interface at least 1 month before call closure and inform the JRC with a mail to the email address (and with the Subject) below.

Else :Send the duly filled SEAP template available for download at "additional documents" under the topic description at least 1 month before call closure to the email address below.

[JRC-COM-TECHNICAL-HELPDESK@ec.europa.eu](mailto:JRC-COM-TECHNICAL-HELPDESK@ec.europa.eu)

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