



**Circular
Bio-based
Europe**
Joint Undertaking

FAQ for applicants

CBE JU Call for proposals 2022

Version 2.0 | 21 June 2022

Purpose

In this document, you will find the most frequently asked questions (and answers) from potential applicants and proposal writers. The information in this document is based on the rules and conditions in the CBE JU [Annual Work Programme \(AWP\) 2022](#). This FAQ for applicants complements but does not replace the AWP; in the event of different interpretations, the information provided in the AWP always has precedence.

For additional questions, please contact info@cbe.europa.eu.

Version history

Version	Date	Main updates
1.0	03/06/2022	First version
2.0	21/06/2022	New Qs 4.1.6 (project contribution), 4.2.4 (IKOP and IKAA), and 6.2.1&2 and 6.3.1 (topic interpretation F2 and R1); update of Qs 1.1 (URL to 7 June info day recording), 2.3 (overview table of 'additional requirements'), and 3.1.4 (BIC membership).

Contents

1. Overview of information sources	4
2. CBE JU terminology	5
Q 2.1: What are the differences between CBE JU and Horizon Europe rules?	5
Q 2.2: What are TRLs (Technology Readiness Levels)?	5
Q 2.3: What are CBE JU's so-called 'additional requirements'?	5
3. Developing consortia / project ideas	7
3.1 Consortium building	7
Q 3.1.1: Where can I find organisations to build a consortium?	7
Q 3.1.2: How many partners need to be involved in the consortium?	7
Q 3.1.3: Are partners from non-EU countries excluded?	8
Q 3.1.4: Is there any legal requirement to build a consortium with BIC and/or private industrial partners?	8
Q 3.1.5: Can one organisation be involved in multiple Call 2022 proposals?	9
Q 3.1.6: What type of organisation should be the project coordinator? Are there differences per type of action?	9
3.2 From idea to proposal evaluation	10
Q 3.2.1: Can CBE JU provide more information on the interpretation of topic texts, e.g. to check if a proposal idea is in line with the topic text?	10

Q 3.2.2: Can proposal writers organise a meeting with the CBE JU programme office to discuss proposal ideas?**10**

Q 3.2.3: Since our project idea is very confidential, what measures are taken by CBE JU to ensure confidentiality?..... **10**

4. Financial / budget-related Q&A **11**

4.1 Cost eligibility..... **11**

Q 4.1.1: Which costs are eligible for CBE JU funding?..... **11**

Q 4.1.2: What are the different consortium membership types? **11**

Q 4.1.3: In general, what type of costs can be subcontracted? **11**

Q 4.1.4: Can engineering costs linked to an IA be subcontracted? **12**

Q 4.1.5: What if only one subcontractor is able to provide the tasks requested? **12**

Q 4.1.6 Do beneficiaries in CBE JU projects need to contribute to the administrative costs of the CBE JU? **12**

4.2 Project funding..... **13**

Q 4.2.1: How many proposals will be funded per topic? **13**

Q 4.2.2: Which funding rates are applicable to CBE JU projects? **13**

Q 4.2.3: Why should Innovation Action (IA) participants request less than the maximum funding rate? **13**

Q 4.2.4 How should IKOP and IKAA be taken into account when creating the project budget? **13**

5. Project timing & duration **15**

Q 5.1: What is the typical project duration of CBE JU projects?..... **15**

Q 5.2: Can a project start before the signature of the Grant Agreement (GA)? **15**

Q 5.3: Can the project duration be extended? **15**

6. Call 2022 topic-specific Q&A..... **16**

Topic interpretation: additional resources **16**

6.1 IA **16**

6.2 IA-Flagship **16**

6.3 RIAs..... **17**

6.4 CSAs **17**

1. Overview of information sources

Q 1.1: Where can I find more information about CBE JU rules and regulations?

The most relevant information sources are:

- The [CBE JU website](#), where you can find:
 - [Call-specific information](#) (e.g. Annual Work Plan (incl. topic texts);
 - The [CBE JU networking platform](#) used for the 7 June 2022 info day;
 - Other [CBE JU reference documents](#) (e.g. the Council Regulation establishing CBE JU, the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA), etc.);
- The [Funding & tender opportunities Portal](#) (formerly known as the Participant Portal), where you can find:
 - The [CBE JU Call 2022 topics](#), incl. the Portal's topic-specific [partner search facility](#);
 - The 'Applying for funding' section of the [Horizon Europe online manual](#) (as CBE JU follows most of the Horizon Europe rules, this online manual is also relevant for CBE JU);
 - The list of [National Contact Points](#). The role of these NCPs is to guide potential applicants in choosing relevant topics and types of action, to provide advice on administrative procedures and contractual issues, and to assist in partner search.
- The [European IPR Helpdesk](#) offers free of charge, first-line support on IP and IPR matters to beneficiaries of EU-funded research projects and EU SMEs involved in transnational partnership agreements.
- The [BIC website](#) (Bio-based Industries Consortium, the private partner of the CBE JU), which provides additional services such as partnering opportunities with BIC members.
- The [EEN website](#) (Enterprise Europe Network), which offers networking and other business & research opportunities (mainly) for SMEs.
- [CBE JU's YouTube channel](#), where you can find the [recording of the 7 June 2022 online info day](#). By clicking on the 'more info' button, you can easily consult the different presentations.

0:00 Setting the scene - Philippe Mengal

5:26 Building on the achievements of BBI JU - Philippe Mengal

21:13 The contribution of CBE JU in achieving a circular bio-based bioeconomy - John Bell

32:17 The vision for a circular bioeconomy 2050 - Rob Beekers

39:11 The CBE JU Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda - Silvia Maltagliati and Nelo Emerencia

54:09 Priorities of the CBE JU call - Virginia Puzzolo

1:15:33 Q&A: The CBE JU 2022 Work Programme

1:46:24 Call submission & evaluation of proposals - Dieter Brigitta

2:03:54 Call management rules & conditions - Marta Campos Iturralde

2:22:26 How to write a good proposal - Pilar Llorente Ruiz de Azua

2:40:30 Q&A: Information on CBE Call 2022

2. CBE JU terminology

Q 2.1: What are the differences between CBE JU and Horizon Europe rules?

The [Horizon Europe General Annexes](#) apply to CBE JU Call 2022, with the exceptions introduced in the specific topic conditions of the [AWP 2022](#). Although the CBE JU operates under Horizon Europe rules, the main differences are:

- The threshold for the evaluation criterion 'impact' is 4/5 for *all* types of actions;
- The threshold for total score is 11/15 for *all* types of actions;
- CBE JU supports proposals with end-of project TRLs ranging mainly from 5 to 8; see also Q 2.2;
- A CBE JU-specific evaluation subcriterion (i.e. in the 'impact' evaluation criterion of Innovation Actions, evaluators will assess the “Ability to ensure the level of in-kind contribution to operational activities (IKOP)¹ defined in the call/topic as % of total projects eligible costs (IAs 15% and IA-Flagship 20%)”).

Q 2.2: What are TRLs (Technology Readiness Levels)?

The technological readiness level scale, defined in the [Horizon Europe General Annexes](#), will be used as reference in the CBE JU call to indicate the appropriate technological context as following:

- Research & Innovation Actions (RIAs) are expected to be at the level of laboratory or simulated environments and expected to deliver mainly TRL 5 at the end of the projects.
- Innovation Actions (IAs) are demonstration activities in relevant and operational environments and expected to deliver TRL 6-8 at the end of the projects. In particular, Flagship projects will need to deliver TRL 8 at the end of the projects.

The expected end TRL is specified in each RIA and IA topic.

Q 2.3: What are CBE JU’s so-called ‘additional requirements’?

In addition to the specific requirements described in each topic text, the proposals must also address additional requirements that are standard for the respective types of action (CSA, RIAs and IAs). Rather than repeating these requirements in each topic text, they are presented as of p. 56 of the [Call 2022 AWP](#), and are summarised in the table below.

¹ Contributions by private members, constituent entities or the affiliated entities of either, by international organisations and by contributing partners, consisting of the eligible costs incurred by them in implementing indirect actions less the contribution of that joint undertaking and of the participating states of that joint undertaking to those costs

Additional requirement	Type of action	Where to include it in Part B
Complementarity and synergies with other projects	All	1.1 Objectives and ambition
Feedstock sourcing (eligibility)	RIAs and IAs, including Flagships	Structured question/declaration(Y/N) in the introduction
Feedstock: under scope, cascading and food-first	RIAs and IAs, including Flagships	1.2 Methodology
Feedstock: Environmental requirements (a,b,c,d)	RIAs and IAs, including Flagships	Structured question/declaration (Y/N) in the introduction
DNSH principle	RIAs and IAs, including Flagships	1.2. Methodology
Ex-ante assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identification of environmental issues • estimation of environmental sustainability performance, • estimation of carbon removal 	RIAs and IAs, including Flagships	1.2. Methodology
Ex-post Assessment of environmental sustainability and circularity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated task • Dedicated WP 	RIAs IAs, including Flagships	3.1 Work plan and resources
Economic viability	RIAs	2.1 Project's pathways towards impact
Business case and business model	IAs, including Flagships	2.1 Project's pathways towards impact
Business plan	Flagships	Annex (Business plan for Flagships)
Multi-actor approach	All IAs, including Flagships RIAs when specified	1.2 Methodology

3. Developing consortia / project ideas

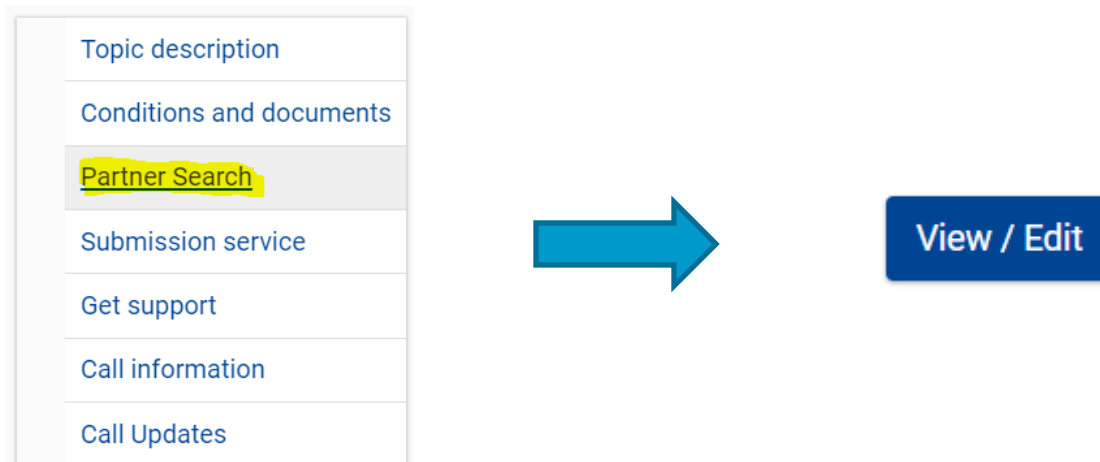
3.1 Consortium building

Q 3.1.1: Where can I find organisations to build a consortium?

The 3 most relevant information sources are the CBE JU networking platform, the (members only) BIC partnering platform, and the partner search section of the Funding & tender opportunities Portal (see below). For more information, please consult Q 1.1.

Via the new partner search facility of the Funding & tender opportunities Portal, organisations can find partners for (CBE JU and other) project ideas among the organisations registered in the Portal. This facility can be accessed via:

- A [central page](#)
- Per topic. When opening a topic page on the Portal, organisations can publish partner requests for open and forthcoming topics by logging into the Portal, going to the 'partner' search section (accessible via the menu on the left side of the screen), and clicking on the 'view/edit' button.



Q 3.1.2: How many partners need to be involved in the consortium?

CBE JU follows the same rules as described in section B of the [Horizon Europe General Annexes](#). Specifically:

- Legal entities forming a consortium are eligible to participate in actions provided that the consortium includes:
 - at least one independent legal entity established in a Member State; and
 - at least two other independent legal entities, each established in different Member States or Associated Countries.
- Applications for 'Coordination and support' actions may be submitted by one or more legal entities, which may be established in a Member State or Associated Country.

Q 3.1.3: Are partners from non-EU countries excluded?

CBE JU follows the Horizon Europe approach, and is 'open to the world'. This means that participants from all over the world, regardless of their place of establishment or residence, can *participate* in CBE JU calls. However, only participants from the EU, associated countries, and low- and middle-income countries are automatically *eligible for funding*. For more information, please consult section B of the [Horizon Europe General Annexes](#).

Q. 3.1.4: Is there any legal requirement to build a consortium with BIC and/or private industrial partners?

There is no legal requirement to build a consortium with a minimum number of industrial partners (BIC members or others). However, as CBE JU is an industry-driven programme, many expected impacts listed in the topic texts can only be effectively reached with some form of industrial involvement or support.

Furthermore, the level of in-kind contribution to operational activities (IKOP)² will be taken into account during the evaluation of Innovation Action project proposals (see Q 2.1). A certificate of the BIC membership has to be attached to the proposal as an Annex. This means that for Innovation Actions, if organisations want that their IKOP is counted towards the thresholds established for innovation actions, they should be a BIC member or become a BIC member before the call closure date of 22 September 2022, 17:00 Brussels time.

The following information concerning the abovementioned membership has been provided by BIC³:

- **Companies** in proposal consortia that are not yet a BIC member can become an Industry BIC 'Full' member or a BIC 'Project' member. BIC 'Project member' is a temporary status, at the earliest, from the opening of an annual call, until the results of the evaluation are known and/or the grant agreement has been signed:

- **Universities, research institutes or non-for-profit organisations** that want to contribute with IKOP and that are not yet an 'Associate member' of BIC, can become Associate members before the closure date of the annual call:

More information on how to join BIC can be found on <https://biconsortium.eu/membership/join-us> and <https://biconsortium.eu/membership/frequently-asked-questions>.

² Contributions by private members, constituent entities or the affiliated entities of either, by international organisations and by contributing partners, consisting of the eligible costs incurred by them in implementing indirect actions less the contribution of that joint undertaking and of the participating states of that joint undertaking to those costs.

³ CBE JU is not responsible or involved in the internal BIC procedures.

Q 3.1.5: Can one organisation be involved in multiple Call 2022 proposals?

Yes. Every proposal will be evaluated on its own merits, including the expertise and operational capacity of the consortium. However, if the same organisation is involved in multiple proposals that are invited to the Grant Agreement Preparation (GAP) phase, then their operational capacity will need to be reassessed. If deemed insufficient, there is a risk that the organisation will be asked to choose in which project they want to participate in.

Q 3.1.6: What type of organisation should be the project coordinator? Are there differences per type of action?

It is up to the proposal writers to convince the expert-evaluators that the coordinator (COO) has the right expertise to manage the (type and size of the) consortium, that the management structures & procedures are adequate, etc. Therefore, different types (e.g. universities, SMEs, large enterprises,...) of COOs are possible, in all different types of action (CSA, RIA, IA).

3.2 From idea to proposal evaluation

Q 3.2.1: Can CBE JU provide more information on the interpretation of topic texts, e.g. to check if a proposal idea is in line with the topic text?

No, mainly because of the following reasons:

- CBE JU Calls follow a competitive process, and the programme office cannot provide individual guidance in the interest of transparency and fairness;
- CBE JU proposals are not evaluated by CBE JU staff members, but by external experts with diverse expertise, who evaluate each proposal individually and in a panel setting. It is therefore up to each consortium to clearly describe how their proposal ticks all the boxes described in the topic text, and to convince these external experts (not CBE JU staff) that and how the proposal's objectives, concept, expected impacts and implementation measures are in line with the topic text;
- The CBE JU topic texts are the result of co-creation between the EU/EC and BIC (<http://biconsortium.eu/>), and include the feedback from CBE JU's Scientific Committee and States Representatives Group. Based on these inputs, the topic texts are written in such a way that they clearly explain the problem, yet leave a fair amount of freedom to proposal writers to come up with a suitable solution. It is up to each consortium to convince the external experts if and how the proposal's solution is appropriate to address the challenges and expected impacts described in the topic text.
- Proposal writers have 30-70 pages to develop their idea and to convince expert-evaluators. A 1-page summary of a proposal idea might at first sight be 100% relevant for a topic text, but when described in 30-70 pages, it might NOT be relevant after all (and vice versa).

Any significant topic interpretation issues will be discussed with BIC and/or the EC. If clarifications on a topic (not proposal) level are necessary, they will be added to this FAQ document under heading 6 (Call 2022 topic-specific Q&A), so that this information is publicly available.

Q 3.2.2: Can proposal writers organise a meeting with the CBE JU programme office to discuss proposal ideas?

No, mainly because of the reasons described in Q 3.2.1, but also to ensure equal treatment of all proposals and consortia (as not all proposal writers / consortia have the resources to organise a meeting with CBE JU). However, please consult your National Contact Points to obtain idea-specific feedback.

Q 3.2.3: Since our project idea is very confidential, what measures are taken by CBE JU to ensure confidentiality?

Expert-evaluators and CBE JU staff are bound by a confidentiality agreement and will incur serious sanctions in case of violations. Furthermore, CBE JU services will verify that no conflicts of interest could occur before a proposal is allocated to expert-evaluators.

4. Financial / budget-related Q&A

4.1 Cost eligibility

Q 4.1.1: Which costs are eligible for CBE JU funding?

All types of eligible costs for CBE JU funding are described in the article 6 of the Grant Agreement (GA). The [Horizon Europe Annotated model GA \(AGA\)](#) provides more concrete examples. Ineligible costs are detailed under Article 6.3.

As a basic rule, to be eligible, costs must be:

- Actual and incurred by the beneficiary
- Incurred during the project duration (except for costs of the final report)
- Indicated in the estimated budget in Annex 2 (budget of the action)
- Incurred in connection with the action as described in Annex 1 (proposal description)
- Identifiable and verifiable, in particular recorded in the beneficiary's accounts (according to accounting standards of the beneficiary's country and to usual cost accounting practices)
- Compliant with the applicable national law on taxes, labour and social security
- Reasonable and justified, and compliant with the principle of sound financial management

Five cost categories are considered:

- A. Personnel costs
- B. Subcontracting costs
- C. Purchase costs (incl. equipment and other goods & services)
- D. Other cost categories
- E. Indirect costs

Q 4.1.2: What are the different consortium membership types?

The [Horizon Europe Annotated model GA \(AGA\)](#) provides an overview of the different types in its introduction (heading "General > How to set up your project — Consortium composition and roles and responsibilities"), and in art. 8 and 9. In these AGA parts, more information, definitions and examples are provided about:

- the role of the coordinator compared to other beneficiaries;
- the difference between beneficiaries and 'affiliated entities' (in previous programmes often called 'linked third parties');
- subcontractors vs suppliers of goods, works and services;
- subcontractors and purchases vs affiliated entities.

Q 4.1.3: In general, what type of costs can be subcontracted?

As a general rule, work can be subcontracted in line with the 'best-value-for-money' principle, and provided that conflicts of interest are avoided. However, subcontracting may only cover 'a limited part of the action'. For more information, please consult the [AGA](#), specifically the introduction (p. 7-8), art. 6.2B, and art. 9.3.

Q 4.1.4: Can engineering costs linked to an IA be subcontracted?

If the purpose of the action is to carry out the demonstration of a process and test different e.g. fermentation conditions (the innovation lays in the micro-organism and conditions), then the engineering of the demo plant could be considered as 'non-core' activities and carried out under a subcontract. However, if the purpose of the action is to design a specific (e.g. a purification) process and improve it at a big(ger)scale, then the plant engineering would be a core activity and should be carried out by a beneficiary.

In industry practice, the plant engineering and equipment purchase is often done through a subcontractor. Those are usually included in CAPEX (capital expenditure) and depreciated. In this case, engineering costs would be charged to the CBE JU project as depreciation costs of equipment, infrastructure and assets.

Q 4.1.5: What if only one subcontractor is able to provide the tasks requested?

Article 6.2 of the [AGA](#) indicates that subcontractors must be identified according to best value for money rule and absence of conflict of interests. To do so, beneficiaries must follow their internal rules for awarding contracts and be able to demonstrate that the choice of subcontractor follows these rules. There are specific national laws and requirements on public procurement for public bodies and contracting authorities.

If an adequate procedure has been followed to select subcontractors, it might be acceptable that only one company is able to respond to the quality requirements. In such a case, the contractor should make sure that costs charged by the subcontractor are 'reasonable, justified and comply with the principle of sound financial management'.

Q 4.1.6 Do beneficiaries in CBE JU projects need to contribute to the administrative costs of the CBE JU?

As per Council Regulation (EU) No 2021/0048 of 19 November 2021 establishing the Horizon Europe joint undertakings and, in particular, the CBE Joint Undertaking, the CBE Programme Office is to be financed equally by the Commission and BIC. BIC has established a 'project contribution' for its members. This project contribution is solely managed by BIC (not by CBE JU). For more information, please consult <https://biconsortium.eu/membership/frequently-asked-questions>.

These project contributions are not eligible costs because they are not incurred in connection with the project (action) as described in the Grant Agreement, and are not necessary for its implementation. Furthermore, these contributions may not be deducted from any amounts received by the coordinator as pre-financing.

4.2 Project funding

Q 4.2.1: How many proposals will be funded per topic?

It depends on the quality and quantity of submitted proposals per topic, and on the budget assigned per topic.

In Call 2022, a budget line has been assigned *per topic* (which is different from BBI JU, when a ‘budget line’ was often assigned *per type of action*, which often included multiple topics). The [Annual Work Programme](#) provide the budget per topic indicating the average EU Contribution expected per project. Therefore, depending on the budget available and the requested EU contribution of the proposal retained for funding, more than one project could be funded per topic.

Q 4.2.2: Which funding rates are applicable to CBE JU projects?

CBE JU uses the same funding rates as Horizon Europe, with one exception: the standard funding rate for Innovation Actions (IAs) is 60% of the eligible costs (except for non-profit legal entities, where the funding rate is up to 100% of the total eligible costs).

Q 4.2.3: Why should Innovation Action (IA) participants request less than the maximum funding rate?

BIC Members, or the constituent entities, participating in IAs may decide to use a lower funding rate than the maximum applicable funding rate (100% or 60%; see above), in order to increase their ‘IKOP’ contribution to the project. A reason for using this lower funding rate could be to fulfil the IA evaluation subcriterion ‘Ability to ensure the level of in-kind contribution to operational activities (IKOP) defined in the call/topic as % of total projects eligible costs (IAs 15% and IA-Flagship 20%)’. To reach this threshold, only the IKOP from BIC consortium members can be taken into account.

Q 4.2.4 How should IKOP and ICAA be taken into account when creating the project budget?

‘In-kind contributions to operational activities (IKOP)⁴ can be deduced from the proposal budget and the list of project participants that are BIC members (IKOP= the difference between BIC participants total eligible costs and requested funding). It has to reach 15% (IAs) or 20% (Flagship) of the total eligible costs in the budget to be positively evaluated. These amounts are reflected directly in the proposal’s budget.

IKOP will (only) be taken into consideration in the evaluation of Innovation Actions, via the CBE JU-specific evaluation subcriterion “Ability to ensure the level of in-kind contribution to operational activities (IKOP) defined in the call/topic as % of total projects eligible costs (IAs 15% and IA-Flagship 20%)”.

⁴ Contributions by private members, constituent entities or the affiliated entities of either, by international organisations and by contributing partners, consisting of the eligible costs incurred by them in implementing indirect actions less the contribution of that joint undertaking and of the participating states of that joint undertaking to those costs

This means that you need to identify the BIC members in your consortium, because only their IKOP will be taken into account for the established thresholds.

'Additional Activities (IKAA)' are described in Section 4.1 of the Call 2022 Annual Work Programme (as found on <https://www.cbe.europa.eu/reference-documents>). If your proposal (only for Innovation Actions) is expected to generate IKAA in line with this definition, you are requested to include a table as an annex to your proposal. A template of this table is provided [here](#) and in the 'part B' template. This annex is optional and indicative, and will not be taken into account during proposal evaluation. Should your proposal be invited for Grant Agreement Preparation (GAP), an update of your IKAA contribution will be requested, and the table will need to be created or updated.

5. Project timing & duration

Q 5.1: What is the typical project duration of CBE JU projects?

The project duration is defined by the consortium in the proposal and must be in line with the project objectives. Typical – but not mandatory - durations for types of actions are:

- For Coordination & Support Actions (CSAs): 2-3 years
- For Research and Innovation actions (RIAs): up to 4 years
- For Innovation Actions (IAs), including Flagships: 4-5 years

Q 5.2: Can a project start before the signature of the Grant Agreement (GA)?

As a general rule, the project starts on the first day of the month following the date when the GA enters into force. The GA enters into force when the last party (i.e. CBE JU) signs it.

If a fixed start date is requested, the start date of the project can never be set before the date of proposal submission. If a fixed date prior to the GA signature is requested, any cost incurred before the GA signature is incurred at the own risk of the consortium member(s). Costs incurred before the official start date of the project are NOT eligible.

Q 5.3: Can the project duration be extended?

The project proposal has to take into account possible causes of delays in the project and plan sufficient time to carry out the action ('risk management').

(Only) if unscheduled and exceptional circumstances arise during the project, the consortium has the option to request a duly justified project extension.

6. Call 2022 topic-specific Q&A

In this part, topic-specific Q&A (if any) are addressed per 'type of action': Coordination & Support Actions (CSAs), Research & Innovation Actions (RIAs), Innovation Actions (IAs) including Flagship projects. In an introductory section, terminology-related questions that affect more than 1 topic are discussed

Topic interpretation: additional resources

The [Annual Work Programme \(AWP\) 2022](#) provides the following additional resources regarding topic interpretation:

- In the [introduction](#) (p. 5), a list of acronyms, definitions and abbreviations is provided;
- A [topics glossary](#) (incl. references) is provided in section 4.2, and includes the explanation of topic-specific terminology.

6.1 IA

6.2 IA-Flagship

Q 6.2.1: In topic 'IAFlag-02 Alternative sources for high added value food and/or feed ingredients': can animal residues be used as an input?

The topic text states that “The scope of this topic is to deploy the production of improved nutritious, healthy, and environmentally sustainable food and feed ingredients from alternative *non-animal* sources”. However, ‘non-animal sources’ needs to be understood as such that using animal sources as the *primary* source for feed and/or food ingredients is NOT allowed. So breeding animals to use as a source of food and/or feed ingredients is not allowed; using side and waste streams of animal processing can however be considered as an acceptable source, (only) IF all other topic and additional requirements are met.”

Q 6.2.2: In topic 'IAFlag-02 Alternative sources for high added value food and/or feed ingredients': can peat be used as an input?

According to the EU Taxonomy Regulation, the technical screening criteria for the ‘Do-No-Significant Harm’ (DNSH) ambition include the exclusion of any activity involving the degradation of land with high carbon stock, which means wetlands, including *peatland*, and continuously forested areas within the meaning of Article 29(4)(a), (b) and (c) of Directive (EU) 2018/2001. This condition is confirmed in the CBE JU SRIA (“Feedstock should be sourced in order to contribute to operations respecting local ecological limits and protection and enhancement of biodiversity and ecosystems services”). The same condition (“successful proposals will support the large-scale production of high value food and or feed

ingredients from alternative sustainable sources (excluding animal sources), without impacting or regenerating local biodiversity and ecosystems”) is stressed in the F2 topic itself. Note also the F2 first element of scope: “Validate at large scale the processing and production of food ingredients from sustainable alternative sources, demonstrating their clear-cut environmental sustainability gains, and reduced environmental footprint, compared to existing alternatives, as based on peer-reviewed life-cycle analysis. “). Also, F2 topic specifies these sources as “These sources may include e.g., novel crops, plant-based resources, fungi, algae (micro and macro), microorganisms (bacteria, yeast, etc.), biomass side streams or food waste.”, but does not include inorganic (non-bio-based) examples. Furthermore, under the same DNSH principle, the EU Taxonomy Regulation establishes, covering ‘transition to circular economy’, that peat extraction should be minimised.

In the light of the above, while peat is not specifically excluded from the scope of the F2 topic, care should be taken to justify its adherence to the DNSH principle and overall environmental considerations, and also to the scope of the F2 topic itself.

Background: Peatlands are ecosystems with a peat soil. Peat consists of at least 30 % dead, partially decomposed plant remains that have accumulated in situ under waterlogged and often acidic conditions. Resolution XIII.12 Guidance on identifying peatlands as Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites) for global climate change regulation as an additional argument to existing Ramsar criteria, Ramsar convention adopted on 21- 29 October 2018.

6.3 RIAs

Q 6.3.1 In topic “R-01 High performance bio-based polymers for market applications with stringent requirements”: how should ‘stringent’ be understood?

‘Stringent’ is used as a synonym of specific, strict, demanding, precise, etc. requirements or operating conditions that need to be fulfilled by the to be developed high-performing polymers. A non-exhaustive list of market sectors that typically require stringent conditions is included in the topic text. It is up to the applicants to define the requirements for the specific application and justify what ‘stringent conditions’ mean in practice for that specific application (and why you need to develop innovative products to fulfil them).

6.4 CSAs