

# **HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-01**

**and**

# **HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-02**

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **[1. Under the topic HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-01 Twinning Bottom-Up can a proposal outline several defined areas of research or is it necessary to outline one defined area of research in one proposal?](#)**

A Twinning Bottom-Up proposal must outline one defined area of research that can be multidisciplinary. There is no restriction on the choice of the area of research.

### **[2. Under the topic HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-02 Twinning Green Deal, what are the areas of research to be funded?](#)**

With regard to the Twinning Green Deal, climate change is the biggest challenge and the European Green Deal considers it an opportunity to build a new economic model. The Twinning Green Deal will therefore focus on a defined area of research / innovation directly linked to at least one of the actions listed in the European Green Deal strategy notably:· Climate research;· Green technologies;· Renewable energy;· Sustainable mobility;· Biodiversity research;· Sustainable use of natural resources (land, water, air).

### **[3. Under the topics HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-01 and HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-02 which countries are eligible for hosting the co-ordinator?](#)**

The countries eligible to host the coordinator are:·The Widening countries, namely: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia.·The Associated Countries with characteristics in terms of R&I performance equivalent to the Widening countries, namely Albania, Armenia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Georgia, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, Morocco.·The Outermost Regions: Five French overseas departments – Martinique, Mayotte, Guadeloupe, French Guiana and Réunion; One French overseas community – Saint Martin; Two Portuguese autonomous regions Madeira and the Azores; One Spanish autonomous community – the Canary Islands.

### **[4. Under the topics HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-01 and HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-02, can the same proposal be submitted to both topics?](#)**

No, applicants should choose only one of the two topics.

### **[5. Under the topics HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-01 and HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-02, concerning the participating institutions, can there be more than one partner from a Widening Country? If yes, what should be the ratio?](#)**

There are no conditions or ideal ratio with respect to the balance of partners from Widening vi-à-vis non-Widening Countries. The number and characteristics of the beneficiaries described in the proposal

are instrumental to the achievement of the proposal's objectives and impact. The minimum requirements relative to the participating organizations must be respected and these are described in the Work Programme and in the General Annexes.

**6. Under the topics HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-01 and HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-02, can the internationally leading institutions be established in a widening country, in particular, in the same country as the coordinator?**

Nothing legally prevents a partner located in a widening country to be an advanced partner in a Twinning call. However, 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 are established in a country different to the coordinator Member State or Associated Country. Therefore, 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. Besides, the minimum requirements relative to the participating organizations must be respected. These are described in the Work Programme and in the General Annexes.

**7. Under the topics HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-01 and HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-02, is there an added value for the consortium in having internationally-leading partners from non-Widening Countries rather than from Widening Countries?**

The added-value depends on the quality of the partner organisation and its contribution to the achievement of the project objectives rather than on its location. Therefore, an internationally-leading partner can be established in a widening country. The qualities of this internationally leading partner should be elaborated upon and demonstrated in the proposal.

**8. Under the topics HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-01 and HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-02, can an institution from a Widening country participate in more than one proposal, as a coordinator in one and as an advanced institution in another one?**

Yes this is possible. However, it may compromise the credibility of an organisation if it is acting both as a leading institution as well as a coordinator (unless of course the two proposals address different fields of science). Normally, 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 not considered leading institutions, unless a proper justification is provided for in the proposal.

**9. Under the topics HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-01 and HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-02, is there any specific requirement on the legal entity of the organisations acting as coordinator, internationally-leading (advanced) partners or other beneficiaries?**

Although there is no legal requirement on the criteria that a legal entity must fulfil to participate in the Twinning actions, it is important to highlight that Widening actions are focussed on actors of the R&I system. The best positioned to maximize the expected impact, as described in the Work Programme, as coordinators or internationally-leading partners, are public or private research universities or public or private non-profit research organisations. The proposal will need to outline how and why the beneficiaries are the best choice to maximize the expected impact as described in the Work Programme .

**10. Under the topics HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-01 and HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-02 can enterprises (incl. research-intensive companies and SMEs) participate in a Twinning proposal?**

Yes, this is allowed, provided that the minimum requirements relative to the participating organisations are respected. These are described in the Work Programme and in the General Annexes.

**11. Under the topics HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-01 and HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-02, how are the different legal entities, participating in a proposal, defined (i.e. research organisations, universities, etc.)?**

The definition of the legal entities that can participate in Horizon Europe can be found in the [Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment](#).

**12. Under the topics HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-01 and HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-02, can an internationally leading (advanced) institution from a third country (e.g. USA) participate as an additional partner?**

In order to be eligible for funding, entities must be established in certain countries. These countries are listed in the [General Annexes](#). Legal entities which are established in countries not listed in the General Annexes can be eligible for funding if their participation is considered essential for implementing the proposed project. This means that they should possess characteristics that institutions in the listed countries do not have such as:

- outstanding specialised competence/expertise
- access to special research infrastructure
- access to particular geographical environments
- access to specific data

Legal entities which are established in countries not listed in the General Annexes can participate without funding. In any case, the minimum requirements relative to the participating organisations must be respected. These are described in the [Work Programme](#) and in the [General Annexes](#).

**13. The topics HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-01 and HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-02, are lump sum funding schemes. What does this mean?**

Horizon Europe uses lump sum funding to reduce administration and financial errors, removing the need to report actual costs. Lump sums grants are defined up-front: at proposal stage the beneficiaries will have to present detailed description of the project costs per each work package. As the lump sum must be an approximation of the costs actually incurred, the costs included in this detailed budget table must comply with the basic eligibility conditions for EU actual cost grants. If the budget table contains ineligible costs, the grants may be reduced (even later on during implementation of the project or after they end).

After evaluation and grant agreement preparation, the lump sums are fixed in the grant agreement and will be paid according to the level of completion of each work package, at the end of each reporting period. Twinning actions have one reporting period at the end of the project.

More information about the lump sums can be found in the [lump sum page](#) and in the [lump sum model grant agreement](#).

**14. Under the topics HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-01 and HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-02, is it possible to allocate part of the budget to research activities despite being a CSA? How should this research component be justified?**

In case the proposal contains a research component, applicants should explain in detail those requirements in the work package dedicated to the research part of the proposal: Technical description (Part B), Table 3.1b “Work package description”. Additionally they need to fill in table Table 3.1k: “Research Component”

**15. Under the topics HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-01 and HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-02, is it possible to recruit PhD students?**

Twinning should not be used as a vehicle for increasing the population of PhD students. Twinning does not aim to fund PhD programmes. However, PhD students’ participation to Twinning is possible. Costs of students that work for the beneficiary can be accepted, if the agreement is work-oriented (not training-oriented, i.e. not aimed at helping the student to acquire professional skills). PhD agreements will be considered work-oriented. However, time for training, if any, may NOT be charged to the action. Fellowships/scholarships/stipends can be charged to the action (as personnel costs), if they fulfil the conditions set out in Article 6 of the AGA, and in particular if:

- the remuneration complies with the applicable national laws on taxes, labour and social security;
- the assignment of tasks respects the laws in force in the country of the beneficiary;
- the students have the necessary qualifications to carry out the tasks allocated to them under the action.

**16. Under the topics HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-01 and HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-02, is it possible to include persons (who are not employees) as collaborators in the Twinning programme?**

Yes, it is possible. It is expected that the consortium possesses the operational capacity to carry out the activities described in the proposal. However, there is the possibility of inviting other professionals to carry out some of the activities described in the proposal. This could take the form of e.g. subcontracting, seconded personnel, a service or an in-kind contribution. Therefore, the reason why this expertise cannot be provided by the internationally-leading (advanced) partners should be justified in the proposal.

**17. Under the topics HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-01 and HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-02, can staff be recruited for the Twinning action?**

Twinning is not aimed at hiring new researchers of any category, solely for the duration of the project, as one of the Twinning’s main objectives is to focus on raising the research profile of the **existing staff** of the coordinating institution from the widening country. Coordinating institutes should consider the benefits to the their institute beyond the duration of the project.

**18. Under the topics HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-01 and HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-02, is a consortium agreement, or any other kind of internal arrangement among the beneficiaries, required?**

Yes, signing a consortium agreement between all the beneficiaries in the project (i.e. all entities that sign the grant agreement) is a requirement in the Twinning actions. Any other internal agreements/arrangements are voluntary and up to the participants themselves. Costs related to drafting the consortium agreement cannot be included in the Lump Sums because the consortium agreement should be signed before the action starts.

**19. Under the topics HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-01 and HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-02, how are gender aspects/gender equality objectives evaluated?**

If a research component has been included in the proposal and gender is relevant to the scientific topic of the research, then the gender dimension will be evaluated under the Excellence criteria. As gender aspects/gender equality objectives are closely linked to the adoption of the gender action plan of the organisation and these action plans are not part of the proposals, the evaluators are not expected to evaluate the policy equality objectives and proposals should not be penalized for the absence of these aspects. If however, a proposal contains an explanation on these gender aspects/gender equality objectives, they can be taken into account if their evaluation is positive.

**20. Under the topics HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-01 and HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-02, are ongoing ERA Chairs, Teaming 2 projects or other schemes compatible with funding under Twinning in order to cover for complementary widening activities?**

Yes, that is possible; however, double funding is not allowed. Therefore, it should be clear which costs will be covered by which project. The complementarity between the actions needs to be clearly outlined in the Twinning proposal.

**21. Under the topics HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-01 and HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-02, in the event that several beneficiaries jointly organise seminars or summer schools, is it possible to get financing for those that are involved in their organisation?**

Yes, these costs can be included in the budget table of the lump sum application template. It must be ensured that there is no double funding as the same costs cannot be financed twice by the EU budget.

**22. Under the topics HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-01 and HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-02, what is the ideal ratio of budget allocated to the advanced institutions compared to the coordinator from the Widening Country?**

The project objectives must be in line with the objectives of Twinning which are focused towards strengthening the coordinating institution and its staff in the Widening country. It would therefore be understandable if a good part of the resources would be dedicated to the widening countries. If the proposed project contains a research component, 50% of the budget dedicated to this component has to be for the coordinator.

However, there is no ideal ratio regarding the allocation of funding between the advanced institutions and the coordinator in the Widening country. The allocation of funding and other resources is instrumental to the achievement of the project objectives and must be distributed in a way that it maximises the expected impact. Also, resources should be matched and reflect the effort described in the proposal. The participating entities should ensure that the remuneration complies with the applicable national laws on taxes, labour and social security

**23. Under the topics HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-01 and HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-02, is there any limitation on the number of proposals that one institution from a Widening country can coordinate or that an internationally-leading partner can participate in?**

There is no limitation on how many Twinning proposals one institution from a Widening country can coordinate and there is no limitation for an internationally-leading partner to be involved in several Twinning proposals.

However, entities should demonstrate in the proposal that they possess the operational capacity to carry out the proposed activities.

Additionally, all partners shall ensure that the principle of no double funding is respected. This means that the same costs cannot be financed twice by the EU budget.

**24. Under the topics HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-01 and HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-02, are Gender Equality Plans an obligation?**

Under Horizon Europe, a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) is mandatory for all Twinning calls and represents an eligibility criterion. Participants that are public bodies, research organisations or higher education establishments from Members States (MS) and Associated countries (AC), must have a GEP, covering minimum process-related requirements. A self-declaration will be requested at proposal stage (for all types of participants) by ticking a box in the proposal submission tool. The self-declaration will be included in the entity validation process. This is not required at the proposal submission stage, but a GEP is required before the grant signature. Entities which fail to have a GEP in place are not eligible for funding and will need to be removed from the consortium. Support to draft the gender equality plan can be requested at: [European Institute for Gender Equality](#).

If entities are private-for-profit organisations, including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), or non-governmental organisations (NGOs), civil society organisations (CSOs), international organisations, including international (European) research organisations (IERO), organisations located in non-associated third countries and associated partners, they are NOT required to have a GEP.

**25. Under the topics HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-01 and HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-02, what is the expected duration of short-term staff exchanges and/or expert visits?**

There is no pre-defined duration for short-term staff exchanges or expert visits. They should, however, add value to the project and be instrumental to the achievement of the objectives of the Work Programme. They should last for a reasonable timeframe of a few weeks or a few months.