Circular Bio-based Europe
Joint Undertaking

FAQ for applicants CBE JU 2025 call for proposals

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Bio-based Industries Consortium

EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIP

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Purpose

In this document, you will find the most frequently asked questions from potential applicants, as well as the answers to those questions.

The information in this document is based on the rules and conditions in the CBE JU Annual Work Programme (AWP) 2025 as found on https://www.cbe.europa.eu/reference-documents. 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	07/02/2025	First version
2.0	28/03/2025	New Qs 1.2 (overview 2nd amendment of AWP 2025), Q 6.2.5.a (topic interpretation IA-05); updated Qs 4.2.4 (URL for IKAA template), 6.1.4a (topic interpretation IAFlag-04)
3.0	30/04/2025	New Q 6.0.7 (min. bio-based content of end products); updated Qs 1.1 (reference to updated annotated model grant agreement – V2.0 dd. 1 April 2025) and Q 3.1.3 (addition of Egypt as provisional Associated Country).
4.0	20/06/2025	New Qs 3.1.11 (Can all types of BIC members provide IKOP?), 6.1.1 a) (IA-Flag-01: quid animal by-products?) and 6.3.2 a & b (RIA-02 topic interpretation); updated Q 1.1 (URL to applicable Horizon Europe General Annexes)
5.0	23/07/2025	New Qs 6.2.1 a, b & c (IA-03 topic interpretation), 6.3.1 a & b (RIA-01 topic interpretation), 6.3.2 c (RIA-02 topic interpretation) and 6.3.3 b & c (RIA-03 topic interpretation)
6.0	18/08/2025	New Qs 6.1.2 (IAFlag-02 topic interpretation), 6.2.1 d, 6.2.2 b, c (IA-03 and IA-05 topic interpretation) and 6.3.2 d (RIA-03 topic interpretation)
7.0	13/10/2025	Clarification on the hearings process (Q 6.0.8)

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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 before, during and after the 3 Apr 2025 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:
  - As of 3 Apr 2025: the CBE JU Call 2025 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. Should no specific CBE NCP be identified in this database, NCPs linked to bioeconomy and/or 'Cluster 6' could be useful contacts.
  - The Annotated Model Grant Agreement (cf. the *new version dd. 1 April 2025*)
  - The applicable General Annexes. For the calls under the Horizon Europe Work Programme 2023-2025 published up to and including 14 May 2025, the applicable General Annexes are wp-13-general-annexes_horizon-2023-2024_en.pdf. Therefore, this version of the general annexes is applicable to CBE JU Call 2025.
- 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.

Q 1.2 What are the main changes in the AWP amendment of March 2025?

On 26 March 2025, the CBE JU Governing Board approved the second amendment of the 2025 Annual Work programme, which was subsequently published on the CBE JU website. The main updates compared to the previous version (dd. 9 January 2025) include:

- Call closure deadline: 18 Sept 2025 17:00 Brussels time instead of 17 September;
- Update of all 13 topic texts, based on clarification requests received from applicants;
- Increased budget (€ 172 million compared to € 165 million), where each IAFlag topic now has a budget of € 20 million, each IA topic has a budget of €14 million, and each RIA topic now has a budget of € 7 million;

- Updated CBE JU-specific requirements (AWP section 2.2.3.1), specifically the description of the feedstock; the ex-ante and ex-post environmental performance assessment; the economic aspects for IA-Flagships; and the deletion of the 'recommendations to stakeholders';
- STEP seal applicable to all IA incl. Flag topics (see AWP sections 2.2.3.3 and 2.2.4).

2. CBE JU specificities

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

The Horizon Europe General Annexes apply to CBE JU Call 2025, with the exceptions introduced in section 2.2.3 of the AWP 2025. Examples of the differences include:

- 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;
- An extra, CBE JU-specific evaluation subcriterion in the 'impact' evaluation criterion of Research and Innovation Actions, Innovation Actions incl. Flagships (i.e., 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 (RIAs 5%, IAs 15% and IA-Flagship 20%)");
- The page limit of the 'Part B' part of the proposals is 70 pages for Innovation Actions (incl. flagships), and 50 pages for Research & Innovation Actions (RIAs).

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

The technological readiness level scale, defined in section B of the Horizon Europe General Annexes, will be used as reference in the CBE JU call to indicate the appropriate technological context. Specifically:

- Research & Innovation Actions (RIAs) are expected to be at the level of laboratory or simulated environments and expected to deliver mainly TRL 4-5 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 'specific requirements'?

In addition to the requirements described in each topic text, the proposals must also address specific CBE JU requirements. Rather than repeating these requirements in each topic text, they are presented in section 2.2.3.1 of the AWP 2025.

[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.

3. Developing consortia / project ideas

3.1 Consortium building

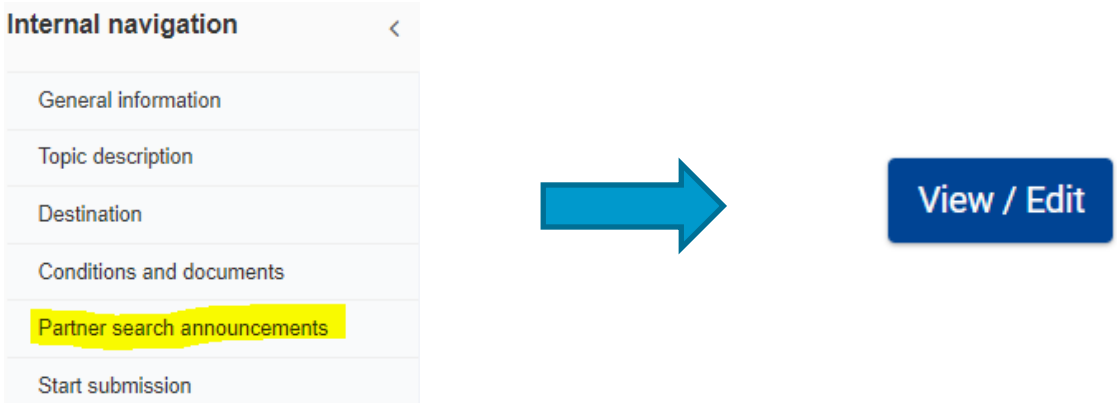
Q 3.1.1: Where can I find organisations to build a consortium?

The 3 most relevant sources are

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

Via the partner search facility of the Funding & tender opportunities Portal (available after Call publication on 4 Apr 2025), 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 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' (CSA) may be submitted by one or more legal entities, which may be established in a Member State or Associated Country.

As affiliated entities do not sign the grant agreement, they do not count towards the minimum eligibility criteria for consortium composition (if any).

No additional requirements exist regarding consortium size and resource & funding distribution.

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

CBE JU follows Horizon Europe's 'global approach', which 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, as well as the list of participating countries in Horizon Europe.

Status 10/04/2025: For **Morocco**, **Egypt**, the **Republic of Korea** and **Switzerland**, transitional arrangements are in place, meaning that entities located in these countries will be allowed to be beneficiaries in the grant (i.e. they are entitled to receive funding), IF the association agreement with these countries is signed by the time of the Grant Agreement signature deadline (for Call 2025 projects: May 2026). Otherwise, they will have to become associated *partners* (i.e. not requesting funding). In practice, this means that consortia can add organisations from these countries in a Call 2025 proposal and request funding for these entities, noting that there is a chance that, should the proposal score highly and be invited for Grant Agreement Preparation, no funding will be assigned to these entities should the association agreement be delayed.

Q 3.1.4 How to include UK entities in CBE JU Call 2025 proposals?

Since 2024, the UK is an associated country. Therefore, UK entities are automatically eligible for funding in Call 2025. For more information, please consult the list of participating countries in Horizon Europe.

Q 3.1.5 How to include Swiss entities in CBE JU Call 2025 proposals?

See Q 3.1.3 above.

Q 3.1.6: Can one organisation be involved in multiple Call 2025 proposals?

Yes. Each 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 3.1.7: 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 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 coordinators are possible, in all different types of action (CSA, RIA, IA).

Q. 3.1.8: Is there any legal requirement to build a consortium with BIC and/or private industrial partners?

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. In addition,

For RIA and IA (incl. Flagships) proposals, certificates of BIC membership should be uploaded/attached to the proposal as an Annex (one document combining all membership

certificates). These certificates should be requested to BIC via https://bic.elisca.app/membership/certificate/registration.

This means that for RIAs and IAs (incl. Flagships), if organisations want that their IKOP is counted towards the thresholds (5% for RIAs, 15% for IAs, 20% for Flagships), they should be a BIC member or become a BIC member before the call closure date of 18 September 2025, 17:00 Brussels time.

The following information concerning the above-mentioned membership has been provided by BIC[2]:

- 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/frequently-asked-questions.

Q 3.1.9: My company/department is not a BIC member but is linked to a different legal entity that is a BIC Member. Do I need a separate BIC membership certificate to provide IKOP in an IA proposal?

Yes. While BIC membership extends to all legal entities within a group of companies, the name and PIC number of the legal entity appearing in the proposal need to match the ones on the BIC membership certificate, as only contributions from BIC members can be qualified as IKOP. Hence, each legal entity appearing in a proposal and wishing to contribute IKOP must possess a unique BIC membership certificate.

Legal entities linked to current BIC industry members can request a BIC membership certificate by following the steps explained on https://biconsortium.eu/frequently-asked-questions, and by using https://bic.elisca.app/membership/certificate/registration to request the certificate.

Q 3.1.10: Both my company/department and an affiliated entity are in a RIA or IA proposal and want to provide IKOP. Do we both need to apply for BIC membership? Do we need two separate certificates?

Yes to both questions. While BIC membership extends to all legal entities within a group of companies or institution, the name and PIC number of the legal entity appearing in the proposal need to match the ones on the BIC membership certificate, as only contributions from BIC members can be qualified as IKOP. Hence, each legal entity appearing in a proposal and wishing to contribute IKOP must possess a unique BIC membership certificate.

[2] CBE JU is not responsible or involved in the internal BIC procedures.

For more information about specific cases (e.g. what to do if one or none of the 2 entities is a BIC member?), please consult the BIC website on https://biconsortium.eu/frequently-asked-questions.

Q 3.1.11 Can all types of BIC members provide IKOP?

Yes. BIC offers different types of membership (e.g. industry/full members, associate members, even project membership – cf. Q 3.1.8 above and https://biconsortium.eu/membership). In CBE JU proposals, all types of BIC members can provide IKOP.

In Q 4.2.3-4 below, practical examples are provided how IKOP can be provided even when the standard funding % is 100%. In this case, the BIC member should manually decrease their requested funding via the proposal's budget table.

3.2 From idea to proposal evaluation

Q 3.2.1: Can CBE JU check if a proposal idea is good or 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 European Commission 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 challenge, 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 depending on the type of action 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).

However, please consult your National Contact Points to obtain idea-specific feedback. Furthermore, organisations from some so-called 'widening countries' can request an external expert to provide recommendations on how to improve their proposal's quality. For more information, please consult the relevant page of the NCP WIDERA.net portal.

Q 3.2.2: Can CBE JU provide more information on the interpretation of topic texts?

CBE JU will discuss any significant topic interpretation issues 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 2025 topic-specific Q&A), so that this information is publicly available. If you have topic *interpretation* questions, please contact info@cbe.europa.eu.

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.

Q 3.2.4: Which Annexes should be added to proposals?

The only mandatory annex is the 'part B' of the proposal (= the descriptive / narrative part of your application). In Call 2025, the following annexes should be added to your proposal (only) if applicable:

- **RIAs, IAs incl. Flagships:** one annex including all BIC membership certificate(s)
- **IAs incl. Flagships** IKAA Annex (optional and indicative Annex during submission and evaluation; see Q 4.2.4)
- **Flagships**: Business plan

All Annexes should be uploaded via the Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal. CBE JU-specific 'Part B' and other annex templates are found under each topic in the Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal but also on https://www.cbe.europa.eu/open-calls-proposals.

The BIC membership certificate should be requested directly to BIC. More info: see Qs 3.1.8-10 above.

Q 3.2.5 How are the CBE JU KPIs taken into account during the evaluation?

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are indicators to be used to monitor the progress of the CBE programme vis-à-vis its objectives. By fulfilling the requirements under the expected outcomes described in the topic text, the proposal, if selected for funding, is implicitly expected to contribute to these KPIs.

Therefore, when evaluating the impact criterion, the focus will be on how the proposal contributes to the expected outcomes listed in the topic text, not on the related KPIs referred to in the topic text; the latter will become relevant during the Grant Agreement Preparation (GAP) and the subsequent project implementation. Specifically: if a proposal is invited to the GAP, annual deliverables on KPI reporting will be included in the Grant Agreement. This way, how a project contributes to the CBE JU KPIs will be monitored in a more explicit way throughout the project's duration. More info can be found in the KPI handbook, published on https://www.cbe.europa.eu/strategic-research-and-innovation-agenda-sria.

Q 3.2.6 How should 'wider impacts' be understood and described in the proposal?'

Section 2.1 of the proposal template asks to "Describe the unique contribution your project results would make towards (1) the outcomes specified in this topic, and (2) the wider impacts, in the longer term, specified in the CBE JU annual work programme and Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) (https://www.cbe.europa.eu/reference-documents).**"**

The wider impacts are those expected to be generated by the CBE JU initiative by reaching its objectives, as set in the Council Regulation (EU) 2021/2085 of 19 November 2021 establishing the Joint Undertakings under Horizon Europe. The CBE JU generic and specific objectives are reported in the AWP 2025 in section 1.1. 'Mission statement of the CBE JU', and have been used as bases to identify the strategic priorities in the SRIA, which are clearly identified in each topic. By contributing to these strategic priorities and their related CBE JU objectives, the applicants/or selected projects are expected to contribute to wider impacts that will be generated by the CBE JU. Therefore, please refer to the CBE JU specific objectives and the link to CBE JU SRIA strategic priorities identified per topic to describe how your proposal will contribute to attain the 'wider impacts' of the CBE initiative.

Q 3.2.7 How are proposals with a similar score ranked?

CBE JU uses the same 'priority order' principles (no derogation) as described on p. 28-29 of the Horizon Europe General Annexes.

Q. 3.2.8 What if the project goes beyond the end TRL envisaged in the topic text?

The expected technological maturity at the end of each project is clearly defined in each topic text. If some of the activities described in a proposal would result in a higher (than the one(s) described in the topic text) end TRL, then it needs to be very clear from the proposal text that only a limited part (both in activities as spent resources) of the project goes beyond the topic's envisaged end TRL. This is particularly sensitive for RIAs that propose activities that go beyond TRL 5, as different funding rates and requirements are set for IA proposals. Therefore, it is essential to clearly describe the starting ***and*** envisaged end TRLs of all components of your project, so that external expert-evaluators can clearly assess if and how much of the proposal's activities fall within the topic's TRL scope.

Q 3.2.9 What is the difference between a business case, business model, and business plan?

We refer to Section 2.2.3.1 – 'Economic aspects' of the AWP 2025, where these concepts are explained. Please note that in Call 2025, an updated approach is used compared to Call 2024:

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. *New since 1 May 2024*: the option to use personnel unit costs.(see dedicated webinar dd. 19 June 2024 on Personnel Unit Cost – New cost method in Horizon Europe (19 June 2024) (europa.eu))
B. Subcontracting costs
C. Purchase costs (incl. Travel and Subsistence, Equipment and Other goods, works & services)
D. Other cost categories
E. Indirect costs

Q 4.1.2: What are the different types of participants in a consortium?

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');
- associated partners;
- 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. In addition, subcontracting may only cover 'a limited part of the action'. For more information, please consult the AGA, specifically the introduction (p. 10-11), 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?

In Call 2025, a budget line has been assigned *per topic,* and the Annual Work Programme (AWP) 2025 provides per topic the average EU Contribution expected per project. Therefore, depending on the budget available and the requested EU contribution of the proposal(s) 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 Research and Innovation (RIA) and Innovation Action (IA) participants request less than the maximum funding rate?

To increase their 'IKOP' contribution to the project, BIC Members participating in **IAs incl. flagships** may decide to use a lower funding rate than the maximum applicable funding rate (100% or 60%; see above). 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.

For **RIAs**, the standard funding % for all types of organisations is 100%. Therefore, in order for RIA proposals to reach the 5% IKOP threshold, BIC members should manually decrease their requested funding in the budget table.

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

'**A**dditional **A**ctivities **(IKAA)**' are described in Section 4.1 of the Call 2025 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.

'In-kind contributions to operational activities (IKOP)[3]' 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 their requested funding). IKOP has to reach 5% (RIAs), 15% (IAs) or 20% (Flagships) 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 during the evaluation of RIAs and IAs including Flagships, 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 (RIAs 5%, IAs 15% and IA-Flagship 20%)". 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. 5% (RIAs), 15% (IAs) and 20% (Flagship) are *minimum* thresholds; in this call, no higher scores will be assigned in case of higher (than 5%, 15% or 20%) IKOP contributions.

Below, 3 budget examples are provided, each with 5 project beneficiaries.

- Example 1 is an IA-Flagship proposal with 2 BIC members (beneficiaries 1 and 3), whose total IKOP (= total costs minus requested funding) is € 4.8 million. The ratio IKOP / total proposal costs is higher than the requested 20% for Flagships, meaning that this proposal will be scored positively for the IKOP evaluation subcriterion.

Example 1: IA Flagship Criterion: ≥ 20% IKOP	BIC member	Industry / Academia	Total eligible costs	Funding rate	Requested EU contribution	IKOP
Beneficiary 1 - Coordinator (**BIC member**)	Y	industry	€ 7,000,000	60%	€ 4,200,000	€ 2,800,000
Beneficiary 2	N	academia	€ 590,000	100%	€ 590,000	
Beneficiary 3 (**BIC member**)	Y	industry	€ 5,000,000	60%	€ 3,000,000	€ 2,000,000
Beneficiary 4	N	industry	€ 3,000,000	60%	€ 1,800,000	
Beneficiary 5	N	academia	€ 800,000	100%	€ 800,000	
TOTAL			**€ 16,390,000**		€ 10,390,000	**€ 4,800,000**

Percentage IKOP = $\frac{\text{€ 4,800,000}}{\text{€ 16,390,000}}$ = **29,3% > 20%**

[3] 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

- Example 2 is a non-flagship IA with 1 BIC member (beneficiary 1), whose IKOP is € 1.28 million. The ratio IKOP / total proposal costs is lower than the requested 15% for IAs, meaning that this proposal will be scored negatively for the IKOP evaluation subcriterion.

Example 2: IA Criterion: ≥ 15% IKOP	BIC member	Industry / Academia	Total eligible costs	Funding rate	Requested EU contribution	IKOP
Beneficiary 1 - Coordinator (**BIC member**)	Y	industry	€ 3,200,000	60%	€ 1,920,000	€ 1,280,000
Beneficiary 2	N	academia	€ 590,000	100%	€ 590,000	
Beneficiary 3	N	industry	€ 1,500,000	60%	€ 900,000	
Beneficiary 4	N	industry	€ 3,000,000	60%	€ 1,800,000	
Beneficiary 5	N	academia	€ 800,000	100%	€ 800,000	
TOTAL			**€ 9,090,000**		€ 6,010,000	**€ 1,280,000**

Percentage IKOP = $\frac{\text{€1,280,000}}{\text{€ 9,090,000}}$ = **14,1% < 15%** 👎

- Example 3 is a RIA with 1 BIC member (beneficiary 3), whose IKOP is € 200k. The ratio IKOP / total proposal costs is lower than the requested 5% for RIAs, meaning that this proposal will be scored negatively for the IKOP evaluation subcriterion. Please note that:
  - In order to generate IKOP, Beneficiary 3 needs to manually decrease their requested funding amount from € 700k to € 500k (as the budget will automatically assign 100% funding);
  - The 'total costs minus requested funding' for beneficiary 5 is not counted towards the IKOP, as beneficiary 5 is not a BIC member.

Example 3: RIAs Criterion: ≥ 5% IKOP	BIC member	Industry / Academia	Total eligible costs	Funding rate	Requested EU contribution	IKOP (only for BIC members)
Beneficiary 1 - Coordinator	Y	industry	€ 2,000,000	100%	€ 2,000,000	
Beneficiary 2	N	academia	€ 590,000	100%	€ 590,000	
Beneficiary 3 (**BIC member**)	Y	industry	€ 700,000	100%	**€ 500,000**	€ 200,000
Beneficiary 4	N	industry	€ 300,000	100%	€ 300,000	
Beneficiary 5	N	academia	€ 800,000	100%	**€ 600,000**	
TOTAL			**€ 4,390,000**		€ 3,990,000	**€ 200,000**

Percentage IKOP = $\frac{\text{€ 200,000}}{\text{€ 4,390,000}}$ = **4,5% < 5%** 👎

Q 4.2.5 How should the budget table be completed in the Portal?

When completing the budget table in the Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal, the following budget columns are shown, some of which are less or not relevant to CBE JU proposals (all costs in €):

- **Personnel costs**. Please enter the personnel costs for staff working on the project. The following types of personnel costs are allowed:
  - Employees (salaries and social security contributions, taxes and other costs linked to the remuneration, if they arise from national law or the employment contract or equivalent appointing act)
  - Natural persons under direct contract other than an employment contract
  - Costs for seconded persons by a third party against payment (example: a project team member, who is employed by a third party outside the project. The third party is reimbursed by the participant, and the participant charges these costs to the project)
  - Unit costs for the work of SME owners for the action (i.e. owners of beneficiaries that are small and medium-sized enterprises not receiving a salary) or natural person beneficiaries (i.e. beneficiaries that are natural persons not receiving a salary)
- **Subcontracting costs** (i.e. costs for subcontracted action tasks).
- **Purchase costs.** 3 types of purchase costs need to be entered (if applicable) in 3 columns:
  - 'Travel and subsistence';
  - 'Equipment' (i.e. the costs for equipment, infrastructure or other assets used for the action).
  - 'Other goods, works and services'.
- **Internally invoiced goods and services** (Unit costs- usual accounting practices)
- **Indirect costs** (Flat rate of other budget categories, calculated automatically)
- **Total eligible costs** (Total of all previous costs, calculated automatically)
- **Funding rate.** The funding rate is defined in the call conditions, and should be 100%, except for 'for profit' entities in Innovation Actions (IAs) incl. flagships, whose standard funding rate is 60%. The rate is based on / linked to each legal entity's status (e.g. SME, non-profit, etc.) as found in the Participant Register. If the funding rate does not seem to be in line with an entity's legal status, please check and update the entity's data in the Participant Register. If the problem persists, please contact the IT helpdesk.
- **Maximum EU contribution to eligible costs** = the highest possible EU contribution for this legal entity (= total costs x funding rate, calculated automatically).
- **Requested EU contribution to eligible costs.** The amount that you request as EU contribution needs to be manually entered. This amount can be equal to or lower than the 'Maximum EU contribution to eligible costs'. In RIA and IA (incl. Flagships) proposals, the requested EU contribution can be reduced as to increase the IKOP (cf. Q 4.2.4 above).
- **Income generated by the action.** Please enter the expected income generated by the project (revenues), if any.
- **Financial contributions**. In CBE JU / Horizon Europe, 'Financial contributions' refer to funding given by third parties to the benefit of a beneficiary for being used specifically for the action.

Hence, a typical example could be a specific nationally funded grant/donation to a beneficiary that covers the same action (and its related costs) than the one submitted for funding under Horizon Europe / CBE JU.

- **Other sources of funding – IKOP.** Please do ***NOT*** complete this column, as it is not applicable to CBE JU, where IKOP is calculated based on the difference between total costs and total requested funding of BIC members.
- **Own resources.** 'Own resources' refer to the resources at the disposal of a beneficiary and that do not qualify as 'financial contributions' (see above) per se. Typical examples could be the financial resources that a beneficiary draws directly from its commercial activity; or resources coming from the beneficiary's annual operating allocation (like a public university receiving a general annual subsidy from its national Ministry).
- **Total estimated project income.** Calculated automatically as the sum of requested grant amount, income generated by the project, financial contributions and own resources.
- **IKAA**. Please enter the amount for expected IKAA (only for CBE JU IAs incl. Flagships, not for RIAs and CSAs; see also Q 4.2.4).

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. Unless the topic text states otherwise, typical – but not mandatory – durations for types of actions are:

- For Coordination & Support Actions (CSAs): 2-3 years
- For Research and Innovation actions (RIAs): 3-4 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 2025 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 (6.0), terminology-related questions that affect more than 1 topic are discussed.

6.0 Elements relevant for multiple topics

Q 6.0.1 Where can I find more information regarding CBE JU 's terminology?

The ***Annual Work Programme (AWP) 2025*** provides the following clarifications about terminology:

- In the introduction (p. 5-6), a list of acronyms, definitions and abbreviations is provided;
- A glossary (incl. references) is provided in section 4.2, and includes the explanation of topic-specific terminology.

Q 6.0.2 Where can I find more information regarding CBE JU 's scope, acceptable feedstock, and output requirements?

The ***SRIA*** (https://www.cbe.europa.eu/system/files/2022-06/cbeju-sria.pdf) provides the CBE JU framework:

- Inputs: Annex V provides a non-exhaustive list of potential feedstocks;
- Outputs. *"The bio-based solutions and innovations that fall within the scope of CBE should focus on the production of bio-based chemicals, materials, food and feed ingredients and soil nutrients. Biofuels, bioenergy, food and feed, pharmaceuticals and medical devices are not within the remit of the partnership. The activities to be funded by the CBE JU will follow the principles of cascading use of sustainably-sourced biological feedstock (including bio-based waste, residues and side-streams), as well as delivering innovative solutions with improved climate and environmental performance".*

Regarding the feedstock, the ***AWP's section 2.2.3.1*** defines some specific requirements such as the feedstock type, sourcing, sustainability requirements, environmental performance, etc.

Each **topic text** can then further specify the envisaged inputs and/or outputs.

Q 6.0.3 In topics where the EC's safe-and-sustainable-by-design (SSbD) framework is mentioned in the scope: how should the testing phase of this SSbD framework be taken into account?'

Topics including the implementation and testing of the SSbD framework should align the safety and sustainability assessment with the Commission Recommendation (EU/2022/2510) establishing a European assessment framework for 'safe and sustainable by design' chemicals and materials".

JRC has made available a Methodological Guidance that provides practical suggestions on the most commonly encountered issues when applying the framework, and the Partnership for the Assessment of Risks from Chemicals (PARC) has developed a toolbox that provides an overview of existing tools for each step of the framework.

Q 6.0.4 Can peat be used as a feedstock?

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"). Furthermore, under the same DNSH principle, the EU Taxonomy Regulation establishes, covering 'transition to circular economy', that peat extraction should be minimised. Therefore: if the topic text provides a broad choice of biomass and if you would consider peat as biomass, you should clearly justify the adherence to the DNSH principle and overall environmental considerations. Furthermore, even if side or waste streams of peat-related bioprocesses would be considered, applicants would not only need to demonstrate they are improving the resource efficiency when using these side or waste streams, but also that the primary process (e.g. burning of peat as fuel) from which these side or waste streams come is also aligned with these sustainability criteria, taxonomy regulation, DNSH ambition, etc.

(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.)

Q 6.0.5 How should the feedstock sourcing eligibility condition be interpreted for associated countries?

Section 2.2.3.1 of the AWP 2025 describes the feedstock sourcing eligibility condition as follows: *"Proposals shall confirm in Part B that:*

- *if the bio-based feedstock is processed in EU/EEA/EFTA countries, the bio-based feedstock comes from such countries or from neighbouring Associated Countries;*
- *if the feedstock is processed in an Associated Country, the bio-based feedstock comes from the same country or from neighbouring EU/EEA/EFTA countries, or neighbouring Associated Countries.*

For limited samples of bio-based feedstock for the purpose of testing processes or technologies this eligibility condition does not apply."

For demonstrating and upscaling value chains however, the feedstock sourcing eligibility condition shall apply, and this value chain needs to be considered when presenting a qualitative business case (for RIAs), and the business case, model (IAs incl. Flagships) and plan (Flagships).

Q 6.0.6 Is more information available about the so-called 'cascading use of biomass?

The cascading use of biomass entails maximising the resource-use efficiency by prioritising the processing steps by value creation (cf. definition on p. 21 of the SRIA). In the context of CBE topics, this means: while maximising the value creation and resource efficiency for the biomass conversion route(s) in scope of the topic, it also addresses valorisation of any fraction(s) of the biomass feedstock not converted by the main conversion route(s) and/or of residual streams in order to maximise the valorisation of the biomass feedstock and minimise waste.

Please also consider the “Guidance on cascading use of biomass, with selected good practice examples on woody biomass” (https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/9b823034-ebad-11e8-b690-01aa75ed71a1) and especially the 5 guiding principles.

1) **Resource efficiency**
2) **Sustainability** (‘Any cascading solution to promote the highest economic added value must consider its impact on the other two pillars of sustainability: the social and environmental aspects’)
3) **Circularity in every stream and at every step**
4) **New products and new markets** (‘Stimulate uses of biomass with high added value by making new products and new markets’)
5) **Subsidiarity** (‘Cascading should respect not only national contexts but also regional and local ones in assessing the most economically viable use of biomass’)

Q 6.0.7 What is the required bio-based content of the end products?

The overall recommendation is that CBE projects strive towards fully bio-based solutions. Nonetheless, we recognise that minor (%) parts of inorganic components and/or fossil-based carbon may be justified for functionality, safety and sustainability and therefore are allowed. Moreover, the non-bio-based carbon and/or inorganic content must not affect the safety, sustainability and circularity of the product. The exact % may vary depending on the end application. Also to add that we aspire for higher % bio-based composition, the higher the end TRL (as we go from RIA, to IA to FLAG). For the bio-based content, please refer to available standards which cover the measurement of bio-based carbon content. Proposals must describe, quantify and justify the minor non-bio-based content. Please also check topic-specific requirements (if any).

Q 6.0.8 How does the process of the hearings look like and what is expected from the applicants? What is the timeline for the hearings?

As part of the panel review, CBE JU will organise hearings with applicants of all Flagships proposals. Hearings are a part of the evaluation process, they are held during the consensus weeks (i.e., normally during the month of November).

Each hearing consists of a presentation by proposal representatives only focussed on clarifying aspects of the business plan, as defined in the “CBE JU specific requirements” section of the Annual Work Programme, followed by a Q&A with the panel of expert-evaluators.

The scope of the hearings is to assess the quality and robustness of the business plan of the submitted proposals.

6.1 IA-Flagship

Q 6.1.1 topic IAFlag-01 'Urban-industrial symbiosis for bio-waste valorisation'

a) ***Can animal-based by-products be used as an input?***

The topic refers to the Waste Framework Directive (WFD), and its article 2(2)(b) includes the following: *"This Directive shall not apply to animal by-products, including processed products, covered by Regulation (EC) No 1069/2009."* This means that animal by-products, such as bones, fat etc, fall under a different regulatory framework:

- Regulation (EC) No 1069/2009 governs animal by-products and their disposal or use (e.g. for pet food, fertilizers, biodiesel).
- As long as these materials are handled according to the ABP Regulation, they are not considered waste under the WFD.

Therefore, animal-based by-products can only be considered as an additional / complementary waste stream; biowaste, as qualified under the WFD, should be primarily addressed.

Q 6.1.2 topic IAFlag02 'Bio-based drop-ins/smart drop-in platform chemicals, via cost-effective, sustainable and resource-efficient conversion of biomass'

a) ***What production volume is required to be considered a flagship?***

There is no minimum threshold prescribed by the topic. However, it is up to the applicants to convince the expert-evaluators that the processes demonstrated align with the expected end of TRL 8 as well as all other requirements described in the topic text. Moreover, the business plan presented must be clear, compelling and credible.

Q 6.1.3 topic IAFlag-04 'Retrofitting of industrial plants towards higher-value bio-based products'

a) ***Are food and feed ingredients included in the scope?***

Applicants are always allowed to have co-production, but food and feed ingredients per se are not the scope of this topic. This clarification was added in the second amendment of the AWP 2025 (cf. Q 1.2).

6.2 IA

Q 6.2.1 topic IA-03 Scaling-up nutritional proteins from alternative source

a) ***The topic indicates that pure proteins, protein-rich mixtures and protein-enriched ingredients are in scope. Can you clarify the meaning of the reference, which specifies that at least 50% in weight protein content is expected?***

50% protein content is referred to the dry form and a "wet" product is eligible as long as its dry form meets the 50% threshold requirement stated under the scope.

b) ***Is the production of culture medium / nutrient solution from fermentation of bio-based feedstock in scope?***

It is in scope if all process steps use bio-based feedstock and the primary purpose of the fermentation is to produce proteins.

c) ***Is the production of green amino acids and hydrolysed protein from plant biomass in scope?***

Amino acids and hydrolysed proteins fall within the scope of the topic, provided that their role as nutritional protein sources is substantiated. Despite their smaller molecular size, their metabolic and nutritional functions align with the topic's objectives. Emphasis should be placed on demonstrating nutritional efficacy and sustainable production from biomass.

d) ***What are the target consumers that CBE JU envisages? Can the focus be on general consumers, or elderly, or do for example young consumers also need to be included?***

In the context of the topic, 'early stage' does not refer to 'young consumers', but rather to the consumer's involvement early in the project. Whether the focus is on any particular age group, is a decision of the applicant, but is not prescribed in the topic.

Q 6.2.2 topic IA-05 SSbD bio-based polymers/copolymers unlocking new market applications

a) ***Can multiple polymers be blended?***

The topic's main focus is not on polymer blends but on polymers and/or co-polymers; the latter combining different monomers and not simply blending 2 polymers together. If there is the justified need for an additive to attain certain properties, this is not excluded.

b) ***When referring to (bio)-catalyst recycling, is this referred to the recycling of catalyst during the polymerization process or is it referred to recyclability of catalyst during the recycling process?***

The catalyst recycling refers to recycling within the production/polymerization stage. The focus of the topic is on enhancing the industrial process, recovering and reusing catalysts in-line, thereby reducing costs, minimising waste, and improving sustainability of the production step(s).

c) The topic states that composite end-products are out of scope. Typically unsaturated polyester resins are used in composite end products. Does this mean that unsaturated polyester resins are out of scope?

Developing the resin and testing it in other application areas can be in scope. However, as stated in the topic text, developing a composite with the resin is out of scope.

6.3 RIA

Q 6.3.1 topic RIA-01 'Valorisation of untapped forest biomass'

a) ***Is a biomass power plant to produce energy through burning of forest biomass in scope?***

Energy production is not eligible as primary application under CBE JU (see also Q 6.0.2).

b) ***The topic scope prescribes to test the local value chain by optimising logistics, improving cost efficiency, and collaborating with central hubs for further processing and refining. Do "hubs" refer to existing initiatives at local level, for example pilot initiatives in which forest owners, managers and other operators are already developing new forest-based value chains?***

The term "central hub" refers to processing facilities that are receiving the pre-processed biomass (or, if relevant, an intermediate product) from forest managers. They can be existing or new facilities.

Q 6.3.2 topic RIA-02 'Bio-based and biodegradable delivery systems for fertilising products to reduce microplastics pollution & promote soil health'

a) ***Does "applied in natural soil conditions" require testing under real outdoor field conditions, or would laboratory or greenhouse experiments using natural soil be sufficient?***

The topic text includes **i)** "Validate the delivery system(s) for fertilising products (lab-scale and/or small-scale field trials), ensuring agronomic efficiency, safety, scalability and sustainability with similar or improved properties compared to conventional systems", and **ii)** "Assess the long-term effect and biodegradability of delivery system(s) when applied in natural soil conditions, applying standard tests, methods and protocols. Biodegradability-related aspects should also be monitored and assessed in fresh, estuarine or marine water (considering the risk of dispersion in water)". Therefore, the main point is "in natural conditions"; if lab-scale or similar trials can simulate the long-term effect of an application in natural soil conditions, it should be in scope.

b) ***Are fertiliser-based delivery systems that are not authorised for use in EU organic farming out of scope? For example mineral fertilizers that are not allowed to be used in organic farming.***

Mineral fertilisers are still in scope for conventional farming systems, but not for the organic farming systems. Organic farming should be included (mandatory) as one of the farming systems to be considered. In practice, the applicant should foresee at least an action on one delivery system that can be used in organic farming and can decide themselves about the other farming systems.

c) ***Would the use and testing of bio-based delivery systems in fertilising products that include biostimulants in their composition be considered within the scope of this call?***

As biostimulants are considered fertiliser products under current EU regulation, delivering systems addressing biostimuants are considered in scope.

d) ***In relation to fertilising products, the regulation refers to the components listed in Annex II of Regulation (EU) 2019/1009. Could you clarify whether: The scope of the topic refers to the core fertilising material being delivered (e.g. compost, digestate, organic fertilisers) is also one of the materials listed in Annex II — and not just the carrier or coating (i.e., the delivery system)?***

The topic calls for the development of the delivery system, not of the fertiliser itself. Nonetheless, the fertiliser formulation can be adapted to explore synergies with the delivery system, if relevant.

Q 6.3.3 topic RIA-03 'Alternative biomanufacturing routes for natural and synthetic rubber'

a) ***Should natural rubber be targeted: which plant species are in scope?***

Although the topic text does not provide a list of acceptable plant species, all biomass should respect the CBE JU specific requirements, especially those related to feedstock sourcing and feedstock environmental sustainability (incl. ILUC). For more information, please consult section 2.2.3.1 of the AWP 2025.

Should the feedstock sourcing criterion not be met (e.g. because the envisaged feedstock is cultivated in a non-eligible country): as the scope of the topic also allows synthetic rubber routes, it would be allowed to use biochemistry/biotechnology approaches in more closed systems based on the feedstock, so that only a limited amount, if any, of biomass would need to be imported.

b) ***Are polymers with a rubber component in scope with the topic?***

Polymers that incorporate rubber components, such as TPOs (thermoplastic olefins), ABS (acrylonitrile butadiene styrene), and HIPS (high impact polystyrene), may be considered within the scope only if the rubber phase they contain (e.g., polybutadiene in ABS or HIPS) is derived from natural or synthetic rubber and if the proposal clearly addresses the biomanufacturing of that specific rubber component.

c) ***Does the scope of this topic include elastomeric fibres (e.g., elastane-like materials) as part of the broader category of rubber or rubber-like materials, when used in industrial applications such as textiles?***

Elastomeric fibres (e.g. elastane-like materials) can fall within the scope of the topic, provided that they are derived from or based on rubber or rubber-like polymers and the proposal clearly aligns with the call's goals—such as reducing fossil-based inputs, enhancing recyclability, and supporting European bio-based production. While tire and high-performance applications are key targets, other industrial uses (including textiles) are also eligible if they contribute to sustainable, bio-based rubber value chain(s).

6.4 CSA