

Questions & Answers

EU-China Co-funding Mechanism for Research and Innovation Cooperation

Q: What is the Co-funding Mechanism?

A: The Co-funding Mechanism (CFM) is a joint initiative launched by the Chinese Government and the EU to support joint research and innovation projects between European and Chinese universities, research institutions and companies in strategic areas of common interest under the framework of Horizon 2020.

It was first agreed at the 2nd EU-China Innovation Cooperation Dialogue, endorsed by the 17th EU-China Summit of June 2015, and announced in September 2015 at the occasion of the visit of European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation Carlos Moedas to China. Based on the results of the first calls, it was agreed at the 3rd EU-China Innovation Cooperation Dialogue, endorsed by the 19th EU-China Summit of June 2017, to extend the CFM under the Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2018-2020.

Through CFM, funds are provided by the Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) for European and Chinese participants based in China involved in Horizon 2020 research and innovation projects.

Q: What is the scale of funding foreseen under CFM?

A: Building on the EU's Horizon 2020 and relevant research and innovation funding programmes on the Chinese side, CFM has been mobilising over 500 million Euros from the EU and 1 billion RMB from China during the period from 2016 to 2020.

Up to 200 million RMB, or nearly 26 million Euros, will be made available annually by MOST on the Chinese side for the benefit of entities based in China that will participate in joint projects under Horizon 2020, while the EC has committed to spend about 100 million Euros per year for the benefit of other entities eligible for funding in these joint projects.

Q: When was the last CFM call published?

A: The most recent CFM call was published on 30 September 2019. The call was issued as part of the call for the Inter-governmental Science and Technology Innovation (STI) Cooperation Special Programme under China's National Key R&D Programme (NKP) which covers a number of countries and regions including the EU. This call seeks applications by European and Chinese participants based in China involved in Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2019. This call is the eighth of its kind since its publication for CFM in December 2015 (the first call with two deadlines, two distinct calls for 2017, 2018 and 2019 respectively).

Relevant Horizon 2020 calls are published in the [Horizon 2020 Participant Portal](#), with the most recent Work Programme 2018/2020 published in October 2018.

Q: Will the CFM target specific priority areas?

The call covers nine priority areas: new generation information network; intelligent and green manufacturing; safe, clean and efficient energy; advanced, effective, safe and convenient health technologies; marine equipment; space; new materials; large research infrastructures; and public security.

The corresponding Horizon 2020 calls for proposals for the above nine priority areas can be referred at: <https://cloud.189.cn/t/RJVzEbNfgeie> (Note: only for reference for the Chinese application, not mandatory).

Q: What is the main difference between this CFM call and the previous CFM call?

A: The main difference with the first CFM call for year 2019 published by MOST is that this call does not cover joint flagship initiatives but targets at nine broad priority areas identified by MOST.

Q: How many projects will be funded, for which amount and for which duration?

A: CNY60 million will be allocated to support around 20 projects for the nine priority areas.

The project duration should normally be up to 3 years, with possibility for extension, when duly justified.

One specific condition is that the amount of funding applied to MOST from the Chinese applicants shall not exceed the budget indicated by the Chinese partner in the corresponding Horizon 2020 proposals.

Q: Who can apply for funding under this CFM call?

A: A key requirement of the CFM call is that applicants should have submitted a joint proposal with their European partners under the EU's Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2019. Projects under other Horizon 2020 annual Work Programmes are not covered by this call for proposals. Chinese partners in such Horizon 2020 proposals can apply to this CFM call irrespectively of whether their Horizon 2020 proposal has been submitted for a stage 1, stage 2, or single stage deadline, or whether the Horizon 2020 proposal is still to be evaluated.

Eligible applicants are research institutes, universities and enterprises registered with independent legal person status in China (mainland) before 30 September 2018. Applicants should also have strong R&D capacities with experience in international cooperation. Requirements for Principal Investigators are given in terms of their academic levels, time to be dedicated in proposed projects, limit of project number undertaken, age, etc. Scientists of foreign nationalities recruited by Chinese mainland entities can be Principal Investigators. Principal Investigators already receiving a MOST funding grant may not be eligible for co-funding.

Chinese applicants should also meet other relevant conditions. Please refer to the [MOST website](#) for the specific requirements on eligibility.

Europe-based entities will apply for Horizon 2020 funding, following the rules and procedures of Horizon 2020, including for budget allocation for their partners based in China. Applicants based in China, submitting requests for funding in the CFM calls, have to follow the rules and procedures of the Chinese co-funding entity (MOST).

Q: Will there be other CFM calls in the future?

It is expected that MOST will regularly publish CFM calls in the future during the 2019-2020 period. However, the exact timing, terms and conditions of future calls is not determined yet.

It is therefore highly recommended that Chinese partners in all Horizon 2020 Work programme 2019 proposals already submitted to the Commission and/or its Agencies in the thematic areas covered by this call apply to the CFM call by the deadline of 27 November 2019.

Q: How to apply for funding under CFM?

A: Proposals will be submitted in two stages, i.e. pre-application, and, if selected after administrative checks and first round expert review, formal application, both online in template application forms via the National Science and Technology Information System. The portal will be open for online pre-application submission from 28 October 2019 to 27 November 2019. Timing for full proposal formal applications will be notified separately after the first round review.

The pre-application is given the word limit of around 3000 characters to indicate the objectives and indicators, brief description on innovative ideas, technology roadmaps and research foundations. Three to four times the number of projects to be funded will be selected in the first-stage review for the second stage. Please refer to the website of China's National Science and Technology Information System for the required documents and online submission (<http://service.most.gov.cn/>)

The same project title should be used for proposals submitted both under the Horizon 2020 and MOST CFM calls to help the European Commission and MOST to compare the list of proposals presented on both sides.

Q: How is the evaluation organised and what are the evaluation criteria?

A: MOST and its executive agency CSTECC will evaluate and select the proposals for funding according to relevant rules. Evaluation will be based on a number of criteria defined by MOST. MOST and the EC are trying to synchronise as much as possible their evaluation processes and will exchange information on a regular basis.

Q: How would I know if my application for CFM funding is selected or not?

A: The results of the pre-application will be communicated to applicants by CSTECC, with the timing and specific requirements on formal applications notified separately after the first round review. Please visit [MOST website](#) for the details of the procedures for submitting applications.

Q: Do other Chinese funding institutions provide co-funding for joint projects with Europe?

A: In the context of the EU-China flagship initiatives on biotechnologies for environment, the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC) published its calls on "New Biotechnologies for Environmental Remediation" (2018) and "Microorganism communities for plastics biodegradation" (2019), and as regards aviation the Chinese Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) announced its call for EU-China research proposals on "aviation operations impact on climate change".

Q: Where do I find information on the conditions for the co-funding calls by NSFC and MIIT?

NSFC: For the three topics listed below NSFC runs calls in parallel with Horizon 2020 and provide funding to the selected Chinese projects and their Chinese partner organisations.

Environmental Biotechnology:

- I. New biotechnologies for environmental remediation (2018)
- II. Microorganism communities for plastics biodegradation (2019)
- III. New biotechnologies for remediation of harmful contaminants (2020)

MIIT: MIIT will provide co-funding for the topic "LC-MG-1-6-2019: Aviation operations impact on climate change". On 17 January 2018, MIIT published the notice announcing the call for proposals on

the following specific research topics. Participants in joint projects under Horizon 2020 have applied to MIIT for co-funding in line with the content provided in the guidelines- covering two topics (each with description of key research areas):

- I. Safer and More Efficient Certification of Green Aviation Alternative Fuel (AAF)
- II. 4D Trajectory Based Greener Air Traffic Operations

Useful link: Q&A on the call for the Inter-governmental Science and Technology Innovation (STI) Collaboration Special Programme under China's National Key R&D Programme (NKP): http://service.most.gov.cn/2015ztzg_all/20180410/2574.html

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