OSCARS
Open Science Clusters' Action
for Research & Society

Questions	Answers
Topic: Limit of 250 000 euros	
Question about the limit of 250 000 EUR per organsiation: Is there a difference between the limit of 250 000 per project and per organisation ? Could you please explain what is defind as an organisation? and how the limit of 250 000 euros per organisation will apply.	A project can apply for a funding from 100 000€ to 250 000€ (Overheads included). The HE MGA states that a third party can only receive at best the maximum amount of funding that was set out in the call text and that's 250,000€ in our case. At the moment we are waiting for legal advice from the European Commission on how exactly to define a third party.
In the case of large organisations like CSIC, CNRS etc., does "funding per organisation" apply to the entire institution or its individual centres/institutes?	Giovanni: The large institute like CSIC will be treated differently. I think we can say that it is not just one organisation, but we will confirm that once we have the feedback from the EC. At the moment we are waiting for legal advice from the European Commission on how exactly to define a third party.
If two teams from my institute would submit separate proposals (2 projects), the funding would be in total 100-250k for the institute?	Your organisation can receive up to 250,000.00 €, yes, independently from the number of projects being funded.
In the case of 2 co-PIs, the grant money will be received by both their affiliated institutions, or by only one of them?	Only one institution can be coordinator and sign the contract. The coordinator will receive the full funding and then distribute it to the partners.
If an institution is already a partner in OSCARS, is the 250K max per organisation still applicable? Or is it only for 3rd parties?	The limit of 250,000.00 € also applies to OSCARS Partners.
If an organisations (as coordinator) received 140.000 euro in the first call, it can receive only 90.000 euro in the second. Correct?	Yes, as a partner of a project consortium you will be able to receive a maximum of 90,000.00 € in the 2nd call.
Can a single person apply as a PI in two projects within this call?	Yes, you can apply twice in two different projects as long as you are not receiving over 250,000.00 € in total.
If one applies for one project that involves two institutions, is the maximum budget still 100-250k, or twice that, as two institutions are involved?	The maximum funding per project is 250,000.00 € independently from the number of organisations involved.
How can we know if our own organisation has already been funded during the 1st open call?	You will need to ask the financial department of your institution.
In light of the organisational budget limit, will there be a list of funding amount per institute (beneficiary) attributed in the 1st call?	No. We don't have that information as the grants are awarded as a lumpsum. The total amount is transferred to the coordinator of the projects, and the distribution is decided upon by the consortium of the funded project.
Is there a maximum number of proposals that can be submitted per institute?	No, the restriction is about the amount of funding that can be received, not about the number of proposals.
Topic: Consortium	
As a PhD student, am I eligible to act as the PI for the project? If not, what are my options for leading or playing a significant role in the proposal?	There is no restriction for a Phd to be PI of a project, as long as your are linked to a legal entity.
Is there an ideal composition for the project consortium in terms of diversity, geographic representation, ...?	No, there is no ideal consortium. It should have the expertise it needs to fulfill the suggested tasks.
Can a "consortium" of different organisations (associations and non-university entities) from different countries apply together for the call?	Yes. What is important is to have one organisation as coordinator to sign the contract. The consortium can be as big as needed to implement the project. There is no restriction.
I have a board of advisors I'd like to count on for the project. Should I include them as "consortium members", or is it up to my own criteria?	You can either include their organisations as partners or just mention them and describe their tasks. The usual financial rules for HE funding apply for the related costs if there are any.
How many partners are optimal for the project?	There is no optimal number, it depends on the work you are planning to do and the expertise needed.
Is it possible to have all consortium members from a single country (different institutions)?	Yes
Does the number of participants in a research community to be reach with a project have to have a minimum?	No
A project developed by a global South university is eligible? Even if it does not involve European organizations?	Yes, there is no restriction regarding countries or type of institution that can apply.
Can a non-EU organization apply without being a consortium partner?	Yes
The projects can have supporting partners, that are not funded but support the activities/action? In such a case, a Letter of Interest is enough?	Their tasks/contributions should be described and should be mentioned that they provide support in form of in-kind contributions. A letter of interest should be added in that case.
Should the scientific impact of a project focus on European researchers? Can it address problems related to Open Science for (only) global south researchers?	There is no restriction regarding the project you would like to work on. What is important is the scientific impact and that the project meets an Open Science challenge.
Can projects be submitted by individual organisations where relevant, or is it recommended to have a consortium?	Mono-partner applications and applications by a consortium are both possible. The set up should align with the work you are planning to do and the expertise and resources needed.
Are charities and non-profit organisations elegible?	Yes
What type of eligibility criteria are being discussed with EC? This is important to know when thinking about the consortium composition.	The outstanding legal advice is around the application of the 250,000.00 € per 3rd party rule and how exactly to apply it.

Q&A from the online event "Preparation for the 2nd OSCARS Open Call for Open Science projects and services - 15 January 2025

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Questions	Answers
Topic: Budget	
What's the overall budget for this second call?	The overall budget for this second call is 3 millions EUR.
Are lower-budget projects prioritised?	No, the budget needs to align with the planned work.
Is there only 3 millions available for the budget of the second call? Does this mean that majority of money is already spent, that all you have is something less than 3M?	Yes, we only have 3 millions EUR left for the second call. The split of funding between the two calls was 80% to 20%. That was already set out in the call text for the 1st Open Call.
Given that all rejected proposals from round one are eligible to resubmit (after feedback), what, realistically, are the odds of a new submission in round 2?	Resubmissions and new proposals will be evaluated in the same way, so there is no difference between a resubmission and a new proposal when it comes to the chances for funding. The only exemption are resubmissions of unchanged proposals, they won't be re-evaluated but instead the score and evaluation report from the 1st Open Call used for the new ranking list.
Given that only 3M € is available for this call, do you expect to have more calls in the future and find more funding for Open calls, or is this the final call?	No, there won't be any more calls. OSCARS is itself a EC funded project with a defined lifetime and budget.
25 million total, but only 16 million is being distributed in cascading grants. Is there really 9 million being spent on administration of the grants?	No, the 9 millions are not dedicated to the management of the Open Calls. There is in addition a consolidation part of OSCARS, activities that are implemented directly by the consortium partners in the frame of the work of the science clusters.
Will you provide a sample budget?	No, we are not asking for a detailed budget, just the total for personnel costs, other costs (travel and similar) and the overhead costs. There is a form in the proposal that neeeds to be filled in.
Do we have to organise the implementation and budget in Work Packages or Deliverables and Milestones is enough?	It depends on the complexity of the work you are planning. You should describe the implementation of your project in a way that it's easy to understand. The only contractual deliverables are the ones set out in the call text to be delivered at the end of the project.
Do we have to include in the budget the cost to assist to Oscars Final Assessment Conference in Brussels as described in point 2.2 of the TPPA? Thank you!	Yes you should set aside travel budget to attend at least the final OSCARS Events. We expect you to engage with OSCARS and the science clusters throughout the implementation of your project though.
For the budget, can we compensate for inflation based on the last two year inflation rates of the country we are from?	The calculation of the budget is up to you. If your organisation is taking inflation into account when planning personnel costs, then you should include them into the budget. We only ask for the total costs. However, you calculate them internally, but following general EC rules and regulations. You need to follow your usual institutional practice.
Topic: Costs	
Are costs of permanent staff eligible as for other HEU projects?	Yes, they are eligible costs.
Are Hardware costs eligible cost ?	For the funding we provide, the same rules apply as for any EC research funding. That means that for investment/equipment you can't claim the full costs but only the depreciation costs per year and only the percentage of the equipment that is used for this specific project. So, yes, hardware is an eligible costs but you can not claim the full amount at the time of purchase.
The computed person/month per member of the research team (including IPs) is an eligible cost?	Yes, it is an eligible cost. Person months are not the number of months for any specific person, but it's a measurement of time. What you need to do is estimate the total time you will need to implement the suggested tasks, no matter who is going to do the work. If you start from hours, the standard would be 8 hours per day, 18.33 days per month or 220 working days per year (see also HE AGA). Once you have the total time, you would then need to decide who is going to work how much on the project and use their specific salary costs to calculate the total of personnel costs, but we are not interested in that calculation, we only need the total costs and the time per partner per task, not per person.
Do you know at this point the amount of the indirect costs for this call?	The total available budget is 3 Mio €, that includes all costs, also the indirect costs. When calculating your budget you will need to take into account your organisationsl indirect costs to calculate the total costs. The 250,000.00 € limit includes the indirect costs. They are not coming on top.
Is there a maximum percentage of external costs?	If you mean, with external costs, payments to 3rd parties outside of your organisation or the consortium of your project, the usual HE funding rules apply. Please check the HE MGA.
Could the indirect costs vary between partners? There is a max of 25%. Could one apply 15% and other 25%?	Yes, that is possible, you will need to simply include the total indirect costs in the budget table. Indirect costs should follow the usual practice in each organisation. It doesn't need to be the 25% flatrate the EC is paying if that is not your internal practice.
Can the overhead costs be higher than 25 %?	We do not have the limit of 25% for indirect cost, but you need to include it in the total amount of funding you will ask for and that can not exceed 250,000.00 € and it needs to be in line with your usual organisational practice.
Is it possible to include pilot applications or case studies in the Budget?	Yes you can, there is no restriction regarding the type of project you would like to

Questions	Answers
Topic: Evaluation Criteria	
Are the eligibility criteria for the 2nd call different from the 1st call?	The Evaluation Crietria are the same as the first call, you can find them here: https://oscars-project.eu/open-calls#evaluationcriteria
You explained how you score the proposals, but you didn't clarify how the final selection of funded projects is made. Could you explain how it works?	Evaluators will score the proposal and a separate ranking list will be drawn up based on the score given for 7 different categories (5 clusters, cross-cluster and other domains). In addition, diversity of domains, subjects, challenges, (kind of) organisations, etc., will be also taken into account for the final selection.
Is re-submission encouraged? If so, is the evaluation redone? Will the reviewers be the same?	Resubmission is possible, yes. If you resubmit your proposal, you should try to improve the proposal taking into account the evaluators' comments / advice and we will appoint new evaluators. If you resubmit a proposal without any change, we won't re-evaluate it.
How is the organisation issue implemented in evaluation?	All proposals will first be checked for their eligibility against formal criteria including the upper limit of funding for 3rd parties.
In the evaluation procedure, do the reviewer give the score for each criteria, or is the score evaluated from the worded answers by a third person?	The evaluator gives a score per criteria and writes his remarks/comments/recommendations. There are two evaluators per proposal, and there is a panel that has an overview of all proposals. The evaluation will take place according to the rules that are usually applied in EC calls and are part of, and agreed upon, in the Grant Agreement that was signed between the coordinator of OSCARS and the European Commission. In summary, we are going to have independent reviews by more than one reviewer per proposal. A ranking list will be produced based on the evaluation reports from the external evaluators, and based on the list the funding decision will be confirmed by the members of the Science Cluster Board (SCB). Projects will be funded on the basis of the proposed budget.
How many proposals were rejected from the first round, and are all of these institutions eligible to resubmit?	We received 264 proposal and we funded 58 project (264-58). 206 proposal were not funded. The proposals were not rejected but they were not funded based on their
What was the cutoff score for funded proposals in the last call?	There was no general cutoff score, the scores were different in different scientific domains.
We don't have the grades of funded project selected in phase 1. What was the lowest grade (%)? Do you have some project evaluation grade statistics to share?	See above.
5 of 5 presentations by men. Is it a message for women who might consider participating?	There is no distinction, no hidden messages and we do not do postive discrimination. Maybe we neglect the sensitivity of all of you, we just wanted to show the diversity of the funded project by introducing one projet per cluster. The final selection is not done under gender criteria and the presenters were selected by the funded projects.
Have you funded any projects with women as the PI? We are only hearing from men on this call, which is pretty weird.	We did not ask for gender in the webform for application, but you can find all the funded projects here: https://oscars-project.eu/projects
Topic: Submission of proposal	
Will the participation form also allow you to attach diagrams, graphs and other things to describe your project?	Yes you can upload additional documents in the grants platform to complete your proposal.
Is the deadline still March 15th?	The deadline will be postponed, you will have two months from the Opening date to submit your proposal.
Will the format of the application form be made available before the call opens so that we can prepare the necessary information in advance?	Please find the information about the proposal template on our webpage here: https://oscars-project.eu/open-calls#proposalsstructure

Questions	Answers
Topic: Communication	
By taking part in this webinar, are we automatically on the newsletter mailing list for further information or do we need to sign up for that separately?	If, by the time you registered to the webinar, you gave your consent to receive our newsletter, you will automatically receive the future issues of the OSCARS newsletter. Otherwise, you can subrscribe now from this link: https://oscars-project.eu/#newsletter As registered participant to the webinar, you will anyway receive all updates specifically related to the event (you should have already received the email with the video recordings few days after the event). Then, to ensure you get all OSCARS (Open Call and more) updates, please monitor our website at https://www.oscars-project.eu/ and follow us on Linkedin at https://www.linkedin.com/company/oscars-project/ The video recordings of the event are available on our website at https://www.oscars-project.eu/news/video-recordings-now-online-event-preparation-2nd-oscars-open-call-open-science-projects , and on our youtube channel > Subscribe at https://www.youtube.com/@OSCARS-project-EU
Many slides show figures of the number of countries and institutes. Is there a compiled list of these institutes and countries?	No, there is no public list, but the information about the projects on the dedicated webpages includes information about the projects' consortia.
Could you please also inform participants of this webinar when the call for applications will be launched?	We will pusblish this information on our Website and our other channels (youtube, Linkedin). We will also send a notice to all registered participants to the webinar.
Will the powerpoint slides (with URLs in them) be made available?	All presentations from the webinar are available here: https://www.oscars-project.eu/news/video-recordings-now-online-event-preparation-2nd-oscars-open-call-open-science-projects

Questions	Answers
Topic: Cluster & RI	
How do we get involved in the clusters? I've found no direct method to connect with people from the clusters, nor a list of contact people.	You can have a look at science-clusters.eu for further information on the Science Clusters. Contact details per Cluster are linked from there via individual Science Clusters' webpages. You can also find the contact details here: https://www.oscars-project.eu/contact-us
What if a call overlaps two clusters, eg. SSHOC and environmental? Shall we choose one?	You will be able to choose more than one Science Cluster when you prepare your proposal. Cross-cluster proposals are very welcome, especially if the Science Clusters involved are represented by partners in the consortium.
Is it compulsory to contact either a Science Cluster or a RI?	No, but it might be useful, especially when it comes to sustaining your project results after the end of the funding, to know what the Science Cluster and RIs in your area are offering already and how your results are fitting into the landscape. We also expect all funded projects to engage with the OSCARS community for mutual benefit.
I've tried contacting the Science Clusters for endorsement and cross-cluster collaboration, but no response. How essential is endorsement for the application?	The Endorsment letter is not essential, it will not impact the evaluation if you do not have one. The Science Clusters themselves have decided not to issue any endorsement letters to avoid any conflict of interests. Individual RIs might issue endorsement letters.
How to contact the Science Clusters?	You can contact the Science Clusters via the contacts set out on our webpage: https://www.oscars-project.eu/contact-us . You can find additional information in the Science Clusters' website: https://science-clusters.eu/
I have written to the SSHOC contact point offered on the call webpage, but nobody has responded. What do you suggest for getting in touch?	We are very sorry that you didn't receive an answer and will look into that!
Are named domains 1-5 prioritised over '6. Other'? Why isn't 'Materials Science' included among the named? (Two highlighted projects were in Materials Science.)	Material Science is not part of one of the Clusters, this why we classified it as "Others". To ensure diversity, roughly the same budget is assigned to all 5 + 1 domains.

Questions	Answers
Topic: Other	
Is it acceptable to propose further development of an existing prototype for the OSCARS call, or is there a preference for entirely new tools?	There is no preference for working on a tool that already exists, or a new one. You should indicate the technology readiness level at the end of your project. It is up to the PI to demonstrate the impact of the tool on and for the scientific community and in a specific context.
is it necessary that newly built tool is connected with some already existing infrastructure, or it can be built later on perhaps integrated infrastructure?	It might enhance the chances for sustainability if you have from the start a plan on how and where it would fit in, but it doesn't need to be integrated from the start.
Duration 4 years from Jan 2024? So 12 mo has already gone?	Yes, the OSCARS Project started 1 January 2024 and the first call was launched in March 2024.
Will we retain full ownership of software, tools, or datasets developed during the project?	IPR regulations are subject to Article 10, the provisions of the Horizon Europe General Model Grant Agreement (HE MGA: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/agr-contr/general-mga_horizon-euratom_en.pdf) governing the ownership, use and access to Intellectual Property (background and results, access rights and rights of use, Article 16) which shall apply mutatis mutandis to the Third Parties.
Does the OSCARS program provide any support or guidance for ensuring the long-term sustainability of tools or software developed during the project?	OSCARS will provide support on mentoring especially on sustainability, but no funding is available to sustain results after the end of the grants. However, the inclusion of a plan to make your project's results sustainable beyond the duration of the project would help to demonstrate the scientific impact of your proposal.
Is the further development of existing software to support the deposit of scientific data eligible?	Yes
Will projects be eligible if they primarily address one organisation's needs, but have a high degree of replicability and sustainability?	Yes
What is a `Digital Resource`? Do you consider standards or software digital resources?	Digital resources, or digital sources, refer to "any type of information or media that is stored or transmitted in a digital format, such as on a computer or the internet. This can include text documents, images, audio and video files, and data sets. Digital resources are increasingly important in academic research, as they allow for quick and easy access to a wide range of information from various sources" (Source: https://www.studysmarter.co.uk/explanations/english/research-and-composition/digital-resources/) In the specific context of OSCARS and of research more in general, also software can be considered as digital resource, as often its open-source availability is key for the reproducibility of an experiment. Standards have a key role in enhancing interoperability (the "R" of FAIR), so it is reasonable to include a reference to them, if applicable, in the proposal's digital resources section.
In the guidelines there are 2 terms I'd like to ask that you clarified: "PIC number" (of an organisation), and "PM" (nº of PMs requested), thank you!	PM stands for Person Month. It is not the number of months for any specific person, but it's a measurement of time. What you need to do is estimate the total time you will need to implement the suggested tasks, no matter who is going to do the work. If you start from hours, the standard would be 8 hours per day, 18.33 days per month or 220 working days per year (see also here). PIC Number: The PIC number is the Participant Identification Code that you need to create for any organisation applying for European funds. IT IS NOT NEEDED FOR APPLICANTS IN THE OSCARS OPEN CALL!
Can we submit a proposal which capitalises on outputs that will be produced from the 1st open call projects?	If you are asking if you can pick up results from a funded project implemented by a different team of people, yes, that would be possible, if the timing works; the 1st round projects will at best be 1 year into their work by the time the 2nd round projects will need to start. If you think about a second project as a successor of one that was funded in the 1st round, implemented by the same consortium, no, that will not be possible for diversity reasons and the HE rule that any 3rd party can't receive more than 250,000.00 € in total from OSCARS.