

QI4CE Fund

First call for proposals – Q&A

Purpose

The document seeks to resolve the main questions shared by the different actors interested in the first call of the QI4CE Fund.

Please note that this is a guide, it is an additional document and does not replace the Terms of Reference (ToR).

Main Q&A

1. Will the Fund consider different sectors of the Circular Economy (other than the national CABUREK projects supported by PTB)?

Yes, the Fund will. The purpose of the first call is to support *additional* Quality Infrastructure initiatives and sectors for the Circular Economy. In this case, proposals can be from *any* value cycle (*not* limited to agrifood, plastics and construction).

Nevertheless, if proponents intend to work in a regional initiative (i.e. at least two QI actors from different countries) in the same value cycle as their national CABUREK projects, they must ensure that the activities in the Fund-proposal are feasible and relevant for all members of the joint proposal.

Activities that apply only for a single country and are part of their national CABUREK project need to be implemented at the national level with own resources and can not be supported through the regional QI4CE Fund.

2. What does the role of coordinator in a regional project imply?

According to the Project Proposal Template the institutions that take part in a joint proposal to the Fund differ in their role: there need to be one coordinator and at least one more implementing partner (from a different country).

The regional project coordinator will be in charge of harmonizing of the activities related to all the institutions involved in the project, monitoring compliance with the operational plan and dates presented to the Fund.

The coordinator will also be in charge of the organization and operational processes for the project implementation in close collaboration with the PTB (e.g. submission of quotations, identification of experts and suppliers, development of ToRs, etc.).

Keep in mind that the coordinator does *not* have direct access to the Fund's resources, these will be managed directly by the PTB, as executor of the Fund.

3. Is it possible for an IQ institution to participate in more than one regional project?

There are not restrictions for QI entities to participate in more than one regional project in the call. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the proposal must be submitted for at least two applicants from two different countries (Please read the Terms of Reference in the section *Who is eligible for financing?*).

Please note that the proposal must ensure that the activities benefit all members of the project, such as QI regional partners. The establishment of individual activities to be implemented separately will not be financed by the QI4CE Fund (see Question 1).

In addition, although there is no limit for the number of projects to be presented per QI entity, in the role of coordinator, it is not considered feasible that a single QI institution (or a at least the same person) coordinates more than one regional project. Therefore, it is recommended that the different countries evaluate the cases in which the institution could participate in the role of coordinator or implementing partner.

In case that in a country one institution is responsible for different QI components, the role of the coordinator refers to the respective personnel in charge of the implementation and articulation with the project team, once the proposal has been approved. It is possible, that within one institution different Departments (e.g. for Accreditation, Metrology or Standardization) participate in different project proposals, as coordinator and/or implementing partner.

4. Regarding the CE stakeholders to be considered in the proposal, what kind of activities could be financed in the project? Do they have the same financing conditions as QI entities?

According to the ToR, “the participation of organisations and companies working on circular economy approaches is explicitly desired and should be mentioned in the funding applications” (p.2).

Thus, the activities to be finance for these actors must be aligned with the type of eligible items explained in the call (p.2):

soft measures (consulting, training, and information dissemination, travel expenses, proficiency tests) and only to a small extent (less than 10% of the funding volume) to acquire e.g. reference materials.

It is important to be clear in the proposal and explain the link between the CE actor and QI and, to the extent possible, how the CE actor will be involved in the project.

5. Do all QI components need to be involved in the proposal?
Is it feasible to group only actors from the same QI component?

For example: Could standardization bodies from different countries submit a proposal, without metrology or accreditation?

It is possible to consider QI actors from different countries for the same Quality component in the proposal. For instance, standardization bodies from different countries. The same applies of course for metrology and accreditation.

Nevertheless, it is desirable to consider working as a team with actors from other QI components, trying to identify potentials for interdisciplinary collaboration. These approaches or considerations should be stated clearly in the project proposal. Please note also the section *How are funding projects selected?*, especially criterion 4 related to QI components.

6. Regarding the costs of the proposal, there are maximum prices for the activities to be financed (e.g. expert fees, travel expenses, among others)?

It is important to point out that the financing resources follow the conditions of the German Cooperation for Development and the German regulations for the hiring of international experts, e.g. for trainings or consultancy activities. Therefore, there are certain limitations regarding expert fees and allowances for travel expenses.

The applicable daily rates and regulations for travel expenses need to be agreed with the responsible PTB Project Coordinator and require approval of the Administration of PTB.

In addition, the consulting experts must guarantee the payment of the corresponding social security for the requesting country.

7. Is the percentage considered to finance inputs and material flexible? (maximum of 10% of the funding volume)

No. This condition is not flexible. See also the ToR section *What can be funded*.

It is recommended to focus more on the use of resources to plan *soft activities* (such as consulting, training, and information dissemination, travel expenses, proficiency tests) than purchasing material and equipment.

Only up to 10% of the financing volume will be considered to finance supplies.

Activities such as conformity assessment, audits, accreditations, intercomparisons might be considered. However, it will be necessary to identify the benefit for all members of the project, as well as, the added value regarding the Circular Economy.

8. Due to COVID-19, is it possible to plan face-to-face activities?

The PTB is aware of the consequences of the Coronavirus, the pandemic being a situation that affected the way of implementing activities and daily life. Thus, the PTB encourages the planning of activities considering the use of virtual formats.

Even though the COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted in some countries, it is the PTB's policy not to encourage the increase of infections, so it is requested to plan activities, if possible, to be implemented in virtual mode considering online tools and different formats. In this case, you could find several examples to implement virtual activities applied to QI. Some examples are available at the following link:

<https://www.covid19.ptb.de/capacity-development-online/web-based-training>.

Especially in the *Capacity development online navigator*, applicants can find a wide portfolio of formats to consider in the proposal: <https://www.cdo.ptb.de/>

The implementation of activities that include travels and in-person meetings are not excluded per se. However, it is important to duly consider the current situation regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, applicable restrictions, vaccination requirements and safety protocols for national and international travels and meetings.

Whether in-person-meetings and travels are feasible needs to be evaluated by the coordinating organization of the proposed project and the responsible PTB Project Coordinator.