

# Questions-réponses apportées par les services de la Commission européenne au sujet des appels 2023-24 du Cluster 6

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## 1. Destination BIODIV

HORIZON-CL6-2023-BIODIV-01-3: Interdisciplinary assessment of changes affecting terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems, building on observation programmes

**Question:**

The scope of topic HORIZON-CL6-2023-BIODIV-01-3 requires the integration of monitoring and modelling products into EXISTING OBSERVATORIES. What are the observatories that the EC is referring to and what is meant by the integration step?

**Answer:**

Projects should make efforts that the “monitoring and modelling products” it aims developing, which may involve monitoring practices, as well as tools or services based on observation and/or model data, will be integrated into existing ecosystem monitoring systems, stations, platforms, or networks. Integration means that these “observatories” should be enabled to provide named products in an operational or quasi-operational way.

HORIZON-CL6-2023-BIODIV-01-7: Demonstration of marine and coastal infrastructures as hybrid blue-grey Nature-based Solutions.

**Question:**

Is there any limitation on the percentage of eligible costs for infrastructure works related to the deployment/instalment of the hybrid blue-grey NBSs? -The questions comes as in other topics, this kind of limitation appears in the Specific conditions of the topic, e.g.: HORIZON-MISS-2023-CLIMA-CITIES-01-01.

**Answer:**

This topic does not have a specific condition limiting the percentage of eligible costs for demonstration infrastructure-related works. However, all relevant dispositions on eligible costs and innovation actions as defined in the General Annexes do apply.

HORIZON-CL6-2023-BIODIV-01-16: Valorisation of ecosystem services provided by legumes crops

**Question:**

Regarding the title of topic in object, on one hand, the reference to the ecosystem services seems to presume that the main requirement of the call is to find ways to quantify the value of ecosystem services provided by legume crops and to increase such value. On the other hand, it may refer to the possibility that, since ecosystem services occur automatically with the cultivation of legumes, and therefore to the overall chain of legume crops production. Additionally, in the topic text the valorisation of ecosystem services is never specified but appears only in the title. Can you please clarify what is the main interpretation? What is expected to be valorised through the project activities?

**Answer:**

The aim of this topic is promoting the development of the leguminous crop sector in the EU and Associated Countries given the numerous environmental and economic benefits that protein crops imply to all players of the value chain (from farmers to consumers). Indeed, improving the quantification of the ecosystem services provided by legume crops is one of the main activities that the selected projects would undertake. And this quantification is expected to be expressed not only in environmental terms (e.g. improvement of soil biodiversity, water retention, climate regulation) but also in economic terms (e.g. reduction of fertilizers use, increase of competitiveness of the sector). The concrete benefits and complementarities of legumes from an

economical point of view (which are linked to their ecological/environmental benefits), are not well known to farmers as there is still a great barrier to their adoption. Quantifying and valorising these benefits can boost the adoption of more protein crops. In sum, the selected projects are expected to contribute to promoting the development of the leguminous crop sector through an improved valorisation of the environmental and economic benefits derived from their production.

#### HORIZON-CL6-2024-BIODIV-01-8: Conservation and protection of carbon-rich and biodiversity-rich forest ecosystems

**Question:**

Is it mandatory to involve European forests in the project or is it sufficient to focus exclusively on tropical forests? The expected outcomes only mention European forests whereas further in the text it is mentioned that cases should be included on European OR tropical forests. As these types of forest are demanding a different approach (and thus different consortium should be considered), we would like you to clarify.

**Answer:**

International cooperation is strongly encouraged by this topic, as explicitly stated in its scope. The scope also states that proposals will “set up case studies in European forests or tropical forests” and further specifies the targeted forest types in more detail: “forests of high ecological value, such as primary and old-growth forests, Mediterranean forests, peat swamp forests or mangroves”. Nevertheless, proposals are also expected to contribute to “EU biodiversity and climate objectives”, an “empirical analysis of the current forest management and conservation practices in European forests of high ecological value” as well as the “strict protection of primary and old-growth forest in Europe by 2030”.

#### HORIZON-CL6-2024-BIODIV-01-09: Selective breeding for organic aquaculture

**Questions:**

Could you explain what exactly is meant by "develop a breeding programme"? At one point in the topic text (scope) it says that "proposals should plan breeding programmes", whereas a bit later on it sounds more like the breeding programme should not only be planned, but also conducted, e.g. proposals should "breed juveniles under organic production conditions".

In essence, the question is if proposals are expected:

- to come up with a plan for selective breeding programmes for the species indicated that can later on be put into practice by broodfish producers (and which both the low expected TRL and relatively small budget would suggest) OR
- to actually carry out selection and demonstrate selection response in the traits in question. This option seems to be highly challenging in light of the requirement to include at least four different species and the duration of a project of only 4 years, when a generation period for all the fish in question is at least 3 years.

In addition, could you also please specify what exactly is meant by the term "adaptive potential"?

**Answers:**

- The selected project should deliver a methodology on how to do breeding compatible with organic fish farming.
- The selected project does not necessarily have to do the breeding and see if the progeny develop the desired traits but should demonstrate that such methodology is feasible and has high probability to deliver the desired outcome.
- The adaptive potential, in this frame, means the ability of the farmed fish population to respond to selective breeding by changes in their genotype and/or phenotype.

HORIZON-CL6-2024-BIODIV-02-2-two-stage Demonstrating the potential of Nature-based Solutions and the New European Bauhaus to contribute to sustainable, inclusive and resilient living spaces and communities

**Question:**

Does the phrasing “most complementary geographical coverage” refer to the internal choice of demonstration activities (i.e. within one submitted project) or the external complementarity of the different submitted proposals?

**Answer:**

The phrasing ‘most complementary geographical coverage’ in the specific condition on the evaluation procedure of this topic refers to the complementarity of the location of the demonstration activities as foreseen by the different proposals in the ranked list of applications (i.e. external complementarity), rather than to their complementarity within a single proposal.

## 2. Destination FARM2FORK

HORIZON-CL6-2023-FARM2FORK-01-10: Eradicate micronutrient deficiencies in the EU

**Question 1:**

Is the Commission expecting new nutritional interventions in humans? Or instead, new nutritional recommendations for eradicating micronutrients?

Which quantitative marker will we use to determine that people are 'socially isolated'?

**Answer 1:**

No new nutritional interventions to be implemented are expected from the project, but rather recommendations, tools etc. for policymakers to consider to implement are expected.

“Socially isolated” is just mentioned as one example, part of the problem description. This topic is not looking for the use or implementation of any quantitative marker on this respect.

**Question 2:** Are fatty acids (i.e. Omega 3, Omega 6) considered micronutrients?

**Answer 2:** Fatty acids are not considered as micronutrients in the context of this topic (FARM2FORK-01-10).

**Question 3:** Is incorporation of micronutrients in food products fortification?

**Answer 3 :** Yes. Please consult the legislation, see the following link: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32006R1925>

**Question 4 :** Are approaches using fortification included or not?

**Answer 4 :** Yes, but fortification would not be the only strategy to follow. Any approach followed should be well justified in the proposal.

HORIZON-CL6-2023-FARM2FORK-01-16: Microbiomes fighting food waste through applicable solutions in food processing, packaging and shelf life

**Question 1:** Definition of "microbial preservatives" and "chemical preservatives".

**Answer 1:** Microbiome is a “characteristic microbial community” including their metabolic activities in a “reasonably well-defined habitat which has distinct physio-chemical properties and as their “theatre of

activity". Under this theatre of activity, range of bioactive products, metabolites and natural products can be produced. In this context, the fermentates and bacteriocins are considered as part of the microbiome activity.

**Question 2:** Are fermentates within the scope? Are bacteriocins within the scope?

**Answer 2:** Yes, the fermentates and bacteriocins are part of the microbiome as part of the metabolic activities of the microbial community.

**Question 3:** Are both categories classified as bacterial preservatives or chemical ones?

**Answer 3:** Both fermentates and bacteriocins are to be considered as bacterial preservatives.

HORIZON-CL6-2023-FARM2FORK-01-16: Microbiomes fighting food waste through applicable solutions in food processing, packaging and shelf life and HORIZON-CL6-2024-FARM2FORK-01-9: Microbiome for flavour and texture in the organoleptic dietary shift

**Question:**

The scope of the two topics specify that "In order to achieve expected outcomes international cooperation is strongly encouraged, in particular in the framework of the International Bioeconomy Forum".

Could you please let us know which link should we provide to our stakeholders in order to get more information on the International Bioeconomy Forum?

**Answer:**

Information on the International Bioeconomy Forum can be retrieved on the EC webpage on global partnerships for research and innovation:

[https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/research-area/environment/bioeconomy/global-partnerships\\_en](https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/research-area/environment/bioeconomy/global-partnerships_en)

HORIZON-CL6-2024-FARM2FORK-01-02: New healthy and sustainable food products and processes

**Question1:**

The topic is very much focused on "plant-based food, such as fruits, vegetables, wholegrain cereals, legume and nuts". Could the seaweeds/macroalgae be considered as "plant-based foods"?

**Answer 1:**

Seaweed is plant-based food and it can be an interesting supplement in the diets. It can be rich in proteins and fibres and low in fats, but these are of good quality. It seems appropriate to consider that it helps shifting towards more healthy and sustainable diets. However, it should indeed be consumed with care, also taking into account the possible presence of contaminants. Also, often seaweed is very high in substances such as iodine, where there is a public health concern of too low intakes in many EU MS, but where overconsumption could lead to health issues. Therefore, seaweed is fine to include under the scope of a research proposal, but not as the only food category.

**Question 2:**

The topic mentions that food products should be "minimally processed". There are different definitions for minimally processed foods. Would the NOVA classification, accepted by the FAO, be the reference for the definition of the minimally processed foods?

**Answer 2:**

The NOVA classification is widely used and accepted and could be used even if it is not included in any EU food legislation for the time being.

## HORIZON-CL6-2024-FARM2FORK-01-07 - Impact of the development of novel foods based on alternative sources of proteins

### **Question:**

The main objective of this topic is the development of novel foods starting from the processing of specific alternative proteins such as: insect protein, micro and macro algae-based products, microbial proteins, food/aquaculture by-products.

What type of novel food is considered eligible within topic's scope?

- is the development of novel foods limited to the alternative proteins mentioned within the topic text?
- can a type of project that involves the development of novel foods starting from the processing of sunflower seed protein considered eligible?

### **Answer:**

There are a lot of sources of alternative proteins, but the knowledge base for some is more developed than for others. There is a need for more research on insect protein, micro and macro algae-based products, microbial proteins, food/aquaculture by-products. That is the reason why these sources of alternative proteins have been specifically mentioned in the topic. Therefore, the applicants are expected to focus mainly on these. However, the applicants are free to develop activities on other sources as well, but those mentioned in the topic call should be prioritised.

## HORIZON-CL6-2024-FARM2FORK-01-8: Preventing and reducing food waste to reduce environmental impacts and to help reach 2030 climate targets

### **Question:**

Is the technological experimentation for some pathways of food waste prevention/reduction/transformation interventions considered as an eligible activity under this topic?

### **Answer:**

The means via which the objectives of the [Food 2030 Pathways](#) will be ultimately achieved is up to the applicants, and these may include technological experimentation if this is fit for purpose. In all cases, it is expected that the outcomes will deliver or build on relevant EC policies. In terms of scope, it is important to remind that the focus of the Food Waste and Resource Efficiency Pathway of Food 2030 R&I policy, is "on prevention and reduction, followed by redistribution, rather than valorisation of food waste into new bio-based products". Proposals under this topic are expected to focus on waste prevention and reduction.

## 3. Destination CIRCBIO

## HORIZON-CL6-2023-CircBio-01-4: Land-based bioprospecting and production of the bioactive compounds and functional materials for multiple bio-based value chains

### **Question 1:**

The theme of our project is looking at "unlocking" or "breaking down" biomass to generate bioactive compounds. However, after reading the activities that must be addressed for HORIZON-CL6-2023-CircBio-01-4 we deduced that the bioactive compounds must be present in the biomass.

Could you confirm for us if this statement is true, that the bioactive compounds must be present in the biomass rather than "mined" from it? Would our project concept fit into this call?

### **Answer 1:**

The topic text does not prescribe or indicate how the precise structural biomass organisation shall reflect the bioprospecting of bioactivity of interest; thus this is left to the applicants and their proposals. Please consider also the specific aspects listed under scope (and its section 'activities should address') for further guidance.

**Question 2:**

Under topic HORIZON-CL6-2022-CIRCBIO-01-04, is it mandatory to involve the forest-based sector in the proposal?

**Answer 2:**

According to the eligibility conditions, proposals must use the multi-actor approach.

Please note that due to a clerical error in the formulation, the part of the text in the eligibility conditions that reads: "and ensure adequate involvement of the forest-based sector" should be disregarded by applicants.

Evaluators will be instructed accordingly.

### HORIZON-CL6-2023-CircBio-01-5: Broadening the spectrum of robust enzymes and microbial hosts in industrial biotechnology

**Question:**

Should synthetic biology be used for optimising a microbial host for higher enzyme production or a microbial host that will be used in a certain bioprocess?

**Answer:**

Firstly, the last part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> bullet point of the scope does not say that enzymes and microbial hosts should be optimized via Synthetic Biology methodologies. This is given as an example and the methodologies of optimization are open to the proposal as long as they deliver to the scope. Secondly, the optimization rather refers towards achieving improved performance and robustness of the industrial microbial hosts themselves and/or enzymes against variable bio-based process conditions (i.e., those are explained as physical and/or chemical stressors within the same bullet points). This type of optimization is key as the industrial microbial hosts and/or enzymes will have to be integrated and tested in actual processes (see 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> bullet points of the scope as well). Please also consider the 1st bullet point of the expected outcomes referring to '*successful projects will contribute to a paradigm shift from enzymes and industrial microbial hosts processes to evolved microbial hosts and enzymes, for improved (bio-based) process/production robustness and flexibility.*' This will also further explain what is the end purpose of optimization in this topic.

### HORIZON-CL6-2023-CircBio-01-7: Symbiosis in the bio-based industrial ecosystems.

**Question:**

The scope of the topic indicates that proposals should, inter alia, "Individuate high-potential regions/areas, or specific industrial hubs for the demonstration of the developed symbiotic approach. Criteria for the individuation of such sites should focus on process level, symbiosis process implementation, commitment level of the local authorities and communities, regional specificities (business/industrial policy and strategies), additional funding, potential private investors, etc., also taking stock from the EU Hubs for Circularity (H4C) experiences." Considering it's a CSA, should actions demonstrate the developed symbiotic approach in the individuated high-potential regions/areas during the project execution?

**Answer:**

No, one task of the CSA is to individuate sites where the developed symbiotic approach may be demonstrated (i.e., the developed symbiotic approach does not need to be already applied).

### HORIZON-CL6-2023-CircBio-01-10: Supporting the fair and just transition from GHG-intensive economies facing challenges towards circular bioeconomy model regions

**Question 1:**

What does "logistic support" under the 4<sup>th</sup> bullet in the scope of the topic mean?

What does this entail in practical terms?



**Answer 1:**

Logistical support to be provided to the project funded under *HORIZON-CL6-2024-CircBio01-07: Demonstrating the fair and just transition from GHG-intensive economies facing challenges towards circular bioeconomy model regions* refers e.g., to:

- establishing a communication channel with the demonstration regions;
- functioning as knowledge broker between relevant projects, including outside of Horizon Europe (e.g. national and regional projects);
- supporting demonstration action in building up a network of interested regions facing the same issues;
- organising meetings and events.

**Question 2:**

Why do the expected outcomes for HORIZON-CL6-2023-CIRCBIO-01-10 make a reference to Destination 7 ('Innovative governance, environmental observations and digital solutions in support of the Green Deal')?

**Answer 2:**

This is due to a clerical error in the initial topic description. Successful proposals are NOT expected to contribute to the expected impacts of Destination 7 ('Innovative governance, environmental observations and digital solutions in support of the Green Deal'). This reference is outdated and derives from a previous version of the text. Instead, successful proposals should aim to contribute to the expected impacts of the Destination 3 ('Circular economy and biobased sectors').

### HORIZON-CL6-2023-CircBio-01-11: Novel culturing of aquatic organisms for blue biotechnology applications

**Question 1:**

Is it possible to get to know a bit more about the background for the call text?

Are there certain research environments that work in biological systems that this call is intended for?

**Answer 1:**

The scope of the topic covers several options in relation to the development of novel culturing methods of marine organisms: mixed cultures, culture of invertebrate/vertebrate cell lines and culture methods based on co-metabolism between community members. It is for the applicants to select among these options and justify the choice or choices.

The scope of the topic covers also the development of bio-engineering tools and the optimisation of the culturing conditions. The applicants should decide to which degree the proposal is to cover each of these aspects. In case that the proposed concept requires no or little focus in some of these aspects, this should be clearly justified in the proposal.

The topic does not pre-empt the use of any specific research environment or biological system. This is for the applicants to decide upon.

**Question 2:**

The query relates to one of the bullets in the scope, namely: "Develop bio-engineering tools for the use of marine and other aquatic model organisms to improve the availability of metabolites for industrial applications" and entailed two specific questions:

- 1) Do "bio-engineering tools" refer only to genetic engineering tools?
- 2) Do "model organisms" refer to the same organisms developed in other areas of the proposal? Or could bio-engineering tools be applied to existing model organisms not developed in the proposal?

**Answer 2:**

- 1) "bio-engineering tools" are not restricted to genetic engineering tools. It is up to the applicants to decide what would work best in the context of their proposal.

- 2) Model organisms refer to a species that is extensively studied to understand particular biological phenomena, with the expectation that discoveries made in the model organism will provide insight into the workings of other organisms. Applicants should develop bioengineering tools for the use of any model organism that would be suitable in the context of the topic.

**Question 3:**

Applicant wants to develop culturing methods for seaweed, is that within the scope of the topic call?

**Answer 3:**

We would like to inform you that it is up to the applicants to decide the content of their proposals. Moreover, for a matter of transparency, we cannot give this kind of assessment, as it is the responsibility of the evaluators to assess whether a given concept is in scope of the topic. A proposal will be assessed positively as long as it responds to the scope description in the topic call text, including with regard to the first bullet "Develop culturing methods (including for mixed cultures) for vertebrate and invertebrate cell lines for the production of active compounds particularly based on co-metabolism between community members that represent a radical change from the conventional "isolate and enrich" approach to cell culture".

[HORIZON-CL6-2023-CircBio-02-1-two-stage: Circular Cities and Regions Initiative \(CCRI\)'s circular systemic solutions](#)

**Question 1:**

In the scope of the topic there is the following sentence: "Proposals are expected to implement and demonstrate at large scale circular systemic solutions for the deployment of the circular economy (including the circular bioeconomy) in cities and regions or their groupings". Is there any definition or criteria for what is considered as "large scale" in the context of this topic?

**Answer 1:**

'Large scale' refers to the demonstration of systemic solutions at the level of cities, regions or their groupings, involving all relevant actors in them and potentially more than one level of government and governance, and addressing ideally more than one key product value chain.

**Question 2:**

If the names of the cities are mentioned, some of the actors can be inferred (e.g., municipalities). How can these be presented in the context of the blind evaluation? As it is a rather important element of the proposal, should a rough description of each city/municipality/region be given? We also assume that it's important for the evaluation if the pilot is in a city of central Europe or in a village in the north Europe. Can the demonstrators be named and some characteristics for them be given?

**Answer 2:**

The name of the city and its characteristics can be mentioned, provided that there is no explicit indication in the proposal, that any of the applicants are from this location (even if this would be in reality the case). Otherwise, if the participant wants to mention that one of the project partners is coming from/ is closely connected with the given city, then the city name should not be mentioned and the city should be only vaguely described by its characteristics, which would not allow for its identification.

**Question 3:**

In the case that the proposal is a continuation of past projects combining several partners of these consortia, can these past project names (not the organisations) be mentioned?

**Answer 3:**

Yes, the names of past projects can be mentioned, but it cannot be explicitly indicated that the proposal is a continuation of these projects or that the partners from the past projects overlap with project partners of the current proposal.

**Question 4:**

In the template of the proposal it is requested to mention ... Any national or international research and innovation activities whose results will feed into the project, and how that link will be established. Although the mention will be very brief, specific projects will be named (not organisations). However, if we name X projects, it is common logic that the consortium will have partners originating from these X projects (although we will not state that, we will just mention the projects). Is that reason for flagging the proposal inadmissible?

**Answer 4:**

No - if it will not be explicitly mentioned in the proposal, that the consortium includes partners who participated in the mentioned past projects, the proposal will not be declared inadmissible for this reason.

HORIZON-CL6-2023-CircBio-02-3-two-stage: Non-plant biomass feedstock for industrial applications: technologies and processes to convert non-lignocellulosic biomass and waste into bio-based chemicals, materials and products, improving the cascading valorisation of biomass

**Question 1:**

Is brewers spent grain / bagasse, a vegetable by-product of beer production, excluded from the topic (such as non-lignocellulosic (NLBM), non-plant biomass & NLBM waste)? Or, on the contrary, it could be addressed since it is an Agri-food residues and waste (incl. food waste) that is in the scope.

**Answer 1:**

To our knowledge, brewers' spent grain (BSG) is a purely lignocellulosic material and it does not appear to be in the main scope of the topic, which indeed is focusing on non-lignocellulosic (NLBM), non-plant biomass & NLBM waste. Inside the work programme, there is a footnote stating 'note 1: for waste or mixed feedstock (e.g. food waste) where lignocellulose can be a minor/small fraction', this can be in scope – but it does not seem to be the case for the application provided in your question.

**Question 2:**

We intend to use as feedstock 3 types of wastes (mixed altogether): agri-food residues, municipal solid waste (organic fraction) and paper industry sludge. Since the latter has a high content of cellulose, would this kind of waste (paper industry sludge) be within the scope of the topic?

**Answer 2:**

From the question, it is understood there will be one waste stream combining all of the 3 streams mentioned above, and that those will be present always and at more or less stable ratio. This could be in scope, provided that the predominant and most significant stream in the mix is municipal solid waste (i.e., organic fraction), which is one of the main examples in the scope of the topic.

HORIZON-CL6-2024-CircBio-01-3: Innovative circular solutions for furniture

**Question:**

We have received a request of clarification concerning minor formatting issues in the text of topic HORIZON-CL6-2024-CircBio-01-3: Innovative circular solutions for furniture.

**Answer:**

1. Bullet points n. 2 and 3 under the expected outcome should be read together ('Emergence of new value chains using upcycled, recycled and/or biobased resources, e.g. through industrial symbiosis, with particular attention to SMEs').
2. The '**analyses** conducted in the framework of luxury furniture' showing that 'the involvement of furniture companies in CE practices (...) still marginal (...) and the 'the **findings** of an EU funded project' according to which 'furniture waste in the EU accounts for more than 4% of the total municipal solid waste stream', both at p. 279, refer respectively to:
  - o Silvius, G.; Ismayilova, A.; Sales-Vivó, V.; Costi, M. Exploring Barriers for Circularity in the EU Furniture Industry. Sustainability 2021, 13, 11072. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su131911072>.
  - o Project 2017-1-BE01-KA202-024752.

## 4. Destination ZERO POLLUTION

HORIZON-CL6-2023-ZEROPOLLUTION-02-2-two-stage: Safe-and-sustainable-by-design bio-based platform chemicals, additives, materials or products as alternatives

### Question 1:

We would like to know if the Biorefinery aspect and/or notion is present and/or expected for this topic. Because this is not clearly stated nor denied.

### Answer 1:

In addition to the scoping exercise, the topic is also addressing the actual pilot-level development of SSbD bio-based chemicals (including additives) and bio-based materials. The development includes both design aspects (see especially 3rd and 4th bullet point of the scope) but also the production processes (see 2nd bullet point of the scope). More specifically, the 2<sup>nd</sup> scope bullet point addresses: process design, process development and testing of these processes to produce the 'under testing' SSbD bio-based chemicals or materials (end TRL=5). Bio-based chemicals and materials are biorefinery processes' outputs; hence the involvement and relevance of biorefineries in future projects is in a way implied and relevant.

### Question 2:

This Topic is clearly oriented towards the substitution of Substances of Very High Concern (SVHC). A first possibility is to answer this Topic by identifying and substituting some SVHC. Another one is to identify materials, which contain these SVHC, and then substitute these materials with bio-based and safe alternatives, e.g.: when substituting plastic such as PE and/or PP, all SVCH present inside are de facto substituted. I would be pleased when you confirm or infirm if the second approach is in line or not with the Topic.

### Answer 2:

The topic has a focus on SVHC but not only, substances of concern are also in the scope. A scoping exercise needs to be performed first to propose and justify priority areas where bio-based solutions (chemicals but also materials) could offer safer and sustainable substitutes. One can indeed start either from SVHCs and SOCs and analyse where bio-based solutions can be developed or one can start at applications (material/product) level and list the relevant SVHCs and possibly also SOCs. The solution(s) is/are not limited to chemical by chemical substitution, the future projects can also work on materials innovation which could lead to avoid the use of hazardous chemicals. That is why the second bullet point of the scope refers to working on chosen chemicals/group of chemicals/materials/products, developing and testing the bio-based alternative at TRL 4-5 but also assess safety and sustainability via the ssbd framework. The second approach is possible as explained before, but to avoid regrettable substitution, any novel chemical or material-level solution will still need to be assessed for its safety and sustainability.

HORIZON-CL6-2024-ZEROPOLLUTION-01-2: best available techniques to recover or recycle fertilising products from secondary raw materials

### Question 1:

Must proposals address all the indicated flows of secondary raw materials (urban and industrial waste water and sewage sludge, bio-waste, digestate, treated manure, others..) or may they be dedicated only to one or two of the reported flows?

### Answer 1:

Proposals should address as many secondary raw materials as possible, at least all those mentioned in the scope of the topic, i.e. urban and industrial waste water and sewage sludge, bio-waste, digestate, treated manure.

**Question 2:** Could a proposal address only bio-waste?

**Answer 2:**

Limiting a proposal to bio-waste would be not acceptable in light of the scope of the topic, which indicates that many secondary raw materials should be included and that the goal is to collect a set of case studies as broad as possible, encompassing as many different technologies and sizes of plants (converting secondary raw materials into fertilisers) as possible.

## 5. Destination CLIMATE

HORIZON-CL6-2023-CLIMATE-01-2: Improve the reliability and effectiveness of alternative water resources supply systems and technologies

**Questions:**

What exactly is meant by the requirement that “Proposals should cover various regions with a balanced coverage reflecting the various biogeographical and climate zones in Europe in a representative way”? How many different regions (or alternative water resources?) are expected in the relatively small projects?

**Answer:**

The number of regions expected to be considered in the context of this topic to address the requirement “Proposals should cover various regions with a balanced coverage reflecting the various biogeographical and climate zones in Europe in a representative way”, depends indeed on the choice of the consortium in connection with the overall methodological approach of the project. This requirement is in relation with the following bullet point of the topic, i.e. “Develop a comprehensive framework or guidance tool for selecting specific technologies and management strategies for **different water scarcity situations...**”.

HORIZON-CL6-2024-CLIMATE-01-3 : Paludiculture: large-scale demonstrations

**Question:**

In the call text section Scope it says: “Establish large-scale paludiculture demonstration in 3 areas of at least 50 hectares each”. Is there any guidance on how paludiculture is defined here? What should the demonstration site cover: peatlands and/or wetlands?

In more detail, does this mean that the entirety of the 50 hectares or more should be converted to paludiculture? Or could this apply to the catchment area, for example smaller sites which are linked in one 50 ha catchment area and together form a demonstration site? E.g. peatland with surrounding wetlands?

**Answer:**

Neither the topic nor the relevant Work Programme provide for a specific definition of paludiculture. It is up to the applicants to explain their own understanding of the concept of paludiculture, the land uses to which it can be applied and the focus of work.

The topic asks to establish at least three demonstration sites, each having a minimum size of at least 50ha. As no further requirements are set, applicants are free to propose to work on any type of paludiculture, and (combinations) of management practices that would contribute to the objectives of the topic.

HORIZON-CL6-2024-CLIMATE-01-6: Ocean models for seasonal to decadal regional climate impacts and feedbacks

**Question:**

With regard to HORIZON-CL6-2024-CLIMATE-01-6, different timescales are referred to in the topic (seasonal, decadal, centennial). Which timescale should be addressed by the ocean models in the research proposals?

**Answer:**

The overall description describes the expected outcomes for the development of marine and climate services that support EU policies in terms of climate action and sustainable blue economy. There is a need to have

access to a continuum of marine predictions capacities at geographical scale, from global to regional to coastal scales. At a temporal scale, there is a range from daily, seasonal, decadal and up to centennial. Finally, the various components of the ocean from physics to biogeochemistry and biology should be taken into account.

Some of these capacities are already partly available at some scales, eg. with Copernicus services, but need to be enhanced in some of the dimensions.

As described in the scope of the topic, the proposal shall focus on the research and development of modelling capacities addressing in priority the decadal / multi decadal dimension and the approach to regional marine climate modelling for physics and biogeochemistry. It should not address centennial projections already provided by projects supporting the Climate Change service or by Destination Earth. The term seasonal should therefore be understood as inter-seasonal over several years (decadal to multidecadal).

## 6. Destination COMMUNITIES

HORIZON-CL6-2024-COMMUNITIES-01-3: Participation and empowerment of Arctic coastal, local, and indigenous communities in environmental decision-making

### Question 1:

Does the title of the call “Participation and empowerment of Arctic coastal, local, and indigenous communities in environmental decision-making” and the call text mean that the local AND indigenous Arctic communities need to be also coastal?

### Answer 1:

The topic refers to Arctic coastal, local and indigenous communities.

### Question 2:

Further, does “coastal” here mean only Atlantic or marine, or could Arctic communities along rivers and lakes be included?

### Answer 2:

While there is a marine coastal dimension that proposals need to take into account, they can also have in scope Arctic local and indigenous communities living by inland waters, such as rivers and lakes.

### Question 3:

Could you please clarify? Saami communities in Finland would be excluded from participating this call if “coastal” was considered as a strict requirement for the indigenous communities.

### Answer 3:

Therefore, ‘coastal’ refers also to inland waters, not only to seas and ocean. In addition, it should be noted that the adjective ‘local’ encompasses ‘indigenous communities’, which means that non-indigenous people living in an area in scope of a proposal can also be covered.

## 7. Contribution des disciplines SHS dans le Cluster 6

### Question:

In the WP several topics have the following sentence: “This topic should involve the effective contribution of social sciences and humanities (SSH) disciplines”. Does this mean that the effective contribution from SSH is expected? If there is no contribution, will the proposal be penalised? The question arises because in other Clusters the sentence appears with different wording: This topic requires the effective contribution of social sciences and humanities (SSH) disciplines and the involvement of SSH experts, institutions as well as the inclusion of relevant SSH expertise, in order to produce meaningful and significant effects enhancing the societal impact of the related research/innovation activities.

**Answer:**

When SSH are the **main focus of a topic**, the **standard sentence** is used, i.e. *'This topic requires the effective contribution of social sciences and humanities (SSH) disciplines and the involvement of SSH experts, institutions as well as the inclusion of relevant SSH expertise, in order to produce meaningful and significant effects enhancing the societal impact of the related research/innovation activities'*, thereby putting a **specific requirement for SSH expertise** in the consortium to be presented in section 3.2 of the implementation part of the proposal (in addition to the integration of SSH in the scientific methodology).

When in the scope of a topic it is specified that *'This topic should involve the effective contribution of social sciences and humanities (SSH) disciplines'*, an effective contribution from SSH is also expected, like any other elements preceded in the scope by the verb *"should"*. Proposals not having SSH involved, under topics with the sentence may be considered admissible but risk being penalised since **SSH will be part of the scientific methodology assessed under the 'excellence' criterion**. However the requirement is more limited, as for instance such proposals do not have to demonstrate the involvement of SSH institutions.

Please also see slide 34 of the general expert briefing: [PowerPoint Presentation \(europa.eu\)](#) and to watch the video on how to evaluate SSH in Horizon Europe: [Funding & tenders \(europa.eu\)](#)

## 8. FAQ Partenariat CBE JU

Deux Foires Aux Questions dédiées au partenariat CBE JU (Circular Bio-Based Europe – Joint Undertaking) ont été mises en ligne :

- FAQ CBE JU Appel 2023 – FAQ pour les déposants : <https://www.cbe.europa.eu/open-calls-proposals>
- FAQ CBE JU pour les coordinateurs: <https://www.cbe.europa.eu/cbe-ju-funded-projects>

## 9. Evaluation à l'aveugle

We received three questions concerning the blind evaluation procedure and we were informed about difficulties with the application form to be used for the submission of 1st stage proposals (due to a mismatch of the form between the F&T portal and the submission tool).

Please find below the Q&As and a clarification on the application form.

**Question 1:** How can all this (i.e., elements of Part B of the template on 'excellence' and 'impact') be answered in a "general" way that does not indirectly potentially reveal a certain hint to the identities?

**Answer 1:**

It is difficult to reply to this question, as it is exactly the purpose of the pilot on blind evaluation to examine whether blind evaluations are feasible given the legal and operational setting. It is certain that participants must not disclose applicants' organisation names, acronyms, logos nor names of personnel in the Part B of the application. Other situations, where the identity might be disclosed indirectly, have to be examined on a case-by-case basis. We will also take into account the intentionality of the participant behind such potential indirect exposure of the identity. In the guidance included in the 1st stage application form, you will find examples of statements resulting in inadmissible proposals.

**Question 2:** How can evaluators fully judge the credibility and excellence of the proposed work if everything is generic?

**Answer 2:**

The blind evaluation concerns only the 1st stage application of the participants. Therefore, evaluators will have the chance to assess the proposals after the second stage of the submission process. Furthermore, not exposing the identity of the participant does not necessary lead to a generic proposal.

**Question 3:** Can applicants still include literature references to their own work, or is this forbidden?

**Answer 3:**

The proposal can include references to participants' own publications if there is no emphasis that the publication is authored by one or more of the proposers. More information and examples on this can be found in the guidance in the 1st stage application form.

With regard to the 1st stage application form, we would like to inform you that this has been updated with more specific guidance on blind evaluations. The updated version of the application form is available in the F&T portal under the 'Reference documents' tab and in the submission tool. All applicants who have already started their proposals have been promptly informed.