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## Goal / topic / scale of the initiative

### Topic

- 1) Switzerland's IC for the period 2021-2024. Is the program expected to show linkages to all of them or a focus on one or two is acceptable?

The project is not required to show linkages to all of Switzerland's IC' strategic objectives.

- 2) "TRANSFORM will support research and innovation initiatives already ongoing or starting in 2020 ..." (p.3): Would TRANSFORM support the extension costs of non-SDC existing projects (to go deeper into a problem and an implementation, test more cases, apply in another place/country)?

Yes.

- 3) Is it possible to submit a more generic proposal around a main topic that would allow for more flexibility between the research partners in defining concrete project(s)?

Your pre-proposal will be evaluated according to the evaluation criteria in chapter 5.2 of the call document. Please mind that more concrete proposals are easier to evaluate.

- 4) Can a consortium addressing sub or regional issues such as climate change, locusts, Fall Army worm, migration and job creation for youth be eligible under this call?

Yes, this Call does not set specific thematic orientations. We are not commenting on project ideas.

- 5) Did I understand well that any project tackling a theme that is covered by one of SDC's five global programmes will not be considered? More specific, a project in the theme of water and sanitation is beyond the scope of TRANSFORM?

Projects tackling a theme covered by one of SDC's five global programmes (e.g. Water) are eligible. TRANSFORM will not provide additional support to specific projects already (co)-financed by SDC.

- 6) Please clarify what is meant by the statement "... and refer to policy frameworks at national/regional/global level in the paragraph below: "This Call intends to support research initiatives, which directly respond to the needs and interests of implementation partners". "The initiatives should address concrete development challenges as identified by implementation partners from any sector (government, civil society, private sector) and refer to policy frameworks at national/regional/global level".

We are not giving additional information than the one provided in the call document.

- 7) Do you rather expect research topics that are systemic (socio-economic-ecological topics) or rather specific topics such as sustainable forestry and green energy production and provision?

This Call intends to support research initiatives, which directly respond to the needs and interests of implementation partners. It does not set specific thematic orientations.

- 8) Just to make sure, the project that could be supported not necessary be an ongoing SDC funded project. It should at least contribute to Swiss international cooperation 2021-2024.

The initiative cannot be an ongoing SDC funded project (see Chapter 1: TRANSFORM will therefore not provide additional support to specific projects already (co)-financed by SDC."). The project should contribute to the objectives defined in Switzerland's international cooperation strategy 2021-24 (see [Flyer in English](#)).

### Innovative initiative

- 9) What characteristics define a new innovative initiative that would qualify for 70% of SDC funding?

SDC in principle can cover up to 50% of an initiative's budget through a contribution. Should the initiative give relevant good argument why it needs more than that, SDC could indeed cover up to 70% of the total budget (e.g. an innovative initiative still at its beginning; or partners with limited own resources might need a 70% contribution from SDC in the first years; and then 50%). Please refer to chapters 2.1 and 5.2. We are not commenting on project ideas.

- 10) "SDC in principle finances up to 50% of the total budget, but can cover up to 70% of the total budget if the type of initiative requires (e.g. new innovative initiative)" Can SDC please specify in more detail under which conditions an initiative is considered for a 70/30 split? And, should the applicant suggest that split already in the Pre-Proposal? SDC in principle can cover up to 50% of an initiative's budget through a contribution. Should the initiative give relevant good argument why it needs more than that, SDC could indeed cover up to 70% of the total budget

(e.g. an innovative initiative still at its beginning; or partners with limited own resources might need a 70% contribution from SDC in the first years; and then 50%). Yes, the foreseen budget must be presented already in the pre-proposals

## Geographical Focus

- 11) For this call, given your geographic focus, will SDC be distributing funds across regions/ countries or duplicating in one region/ countries more than one?

The new geographic focus of SDC's "bilateral cooperation" does not apply to TRANSFORM. TRANSFORM does not set geographic priorities and geographic focus is not part of the eligibility/selection criteria. SDC will select the best pre-proposals according to the evaluation criteria (see 5.2), and the intention to have a balanced research portfolio including a mix of partners (including different types of Swiss universities) and topics. Please check the eligibility of partner country/countries applying to research partners from the global South/East (see DAC List of ODA Recipients).

- 12) Concerning the scale of the projects - is there any preference from SDC regarding the spatial scale of the projects (country, regional or global). For example, is it OK if a project spans across several countries, in a regional approach?

Yes, it is ok if a project spans across several countries as long as the eligibility criteria are met (see chapter 5.1 of the call document and DAC List of ODA Recipients). "Scaling up potential of projects" is included in the evaluation criteria (5.2; approach and methodology).

- 13) What are the criteria for the geographic focus of TRANSFORM projects? Can several countries from different continents be included in one proposal?

Yes. TRANSFORM does not set geographic priorities. Please check the eligibility of partner country/countries applying to research partners from the global South/East (see DAC List of ODA Recipients).

- 14) Do you see a possibility of sub regional and continental level organizations playing coordination and capacity building roles while implementation will be done by National level partners?

Yes, see the formal eligibility criteria in Chapter 5.1. We are not providing further comments on project ideas.

## Gender

- 15) Gender balance in terms of applicants: Is it mandatory, "good to have", or neutral?

Gender and conflicts sensitivity is part of the evaluation criteria and represents 5% of the overall grade. (see 5.2 of the call document).

## Eligibility of the consortium

### Consortium

- 1) Is "this consortium" eligible?

The applying consortium should consist of at least one Swiss public research institution, one research partner from a least developed, low or middle income country (see OECD DAC List of ODA Recipient) and one implementation partner (see chapter 5.1 of the call document). In principle, any NGO implementing development projects in developing countries is eligible to become implementation partner. The eligibility check of specific initiatives will be done after submission of the pre-proposals. Please refer to 5.1 and Annex 5. If required by the nature and objectives of the initiative, formal inclusion of further partners into the consortium is possible.

- 2) Can the consortium consist of, for example, an implementer based in the North but implementing only in the South, a Swiss research institution, and a non-profit research institute from the Global North?

Yes.

- 3) Is it acceptable to have partners with the same domain of research from different universities working together on a specific R&D goal?

Yes.

- 4) What are the expected procedures to engage with government partners?

Your procedures apply.

- 5) I have read carefully the call for proposals and it does not specify if multilateral organisations are able to apply as implementing or lead agency?

Yes, multilateral organisation are able to apply as implementing or lead agency.

- 6) Do sub regional and continental research for development organizations (coordinating research) qualify to apply for this call given the fact that the consortia should comprise at least a Swiss research institution, a research partner in the Global South/East and a non-research implementation partner of any nature (government, civil society, private sector)?

Yes. The applying consortium has to include at least a Swiss public research institution; a research institution in an ODA-Recipient country represented by a person from an ODA-Recipient country; and a non-research implementation partner of any nature. The consortium can include further partners.

### Lead organisation

- 7) What is the eligibility criteria or requirements for the lead organization?

Please consult the Chapters 3.1: Who can apply; 5.1 Eligibility Check; and 5.2 Evaluation criteria. In addition, we have attached the template contract for contribution to a partner outside Switzerland for your information.

- 8) Does the lead organisation need to be Swiss?

No

- 9) Please clarify whether the lead institution must be a Swiss-based research institution, or if it can also be a Global South-based institution, an implementation partner or an NGO?

The lead institution does not need to be a Swiss-based research institution. Any consortium partner can be the lead institution.

- 10) Can an organisation submit two different proposals as lead? Is there a limit on how many proposals an organisation can submit as lead?

Yes. There is no limit on the number of proposals an organization can submit (as lead or partner of the consortium).

- 11) Can an organization acting as lead in a proposal be partner/co-applicant in another proposal?

Yes.

- 12) Does the position 'project partner' mean principal investigator?

The principal investigator is the lead organization.

### Countries eligibility

- 13) Is "a country from the Global South/ East" eligible?

Please see DAC List of [ODA Recipients](#).

- 14) Regarding the eligible Global South and East countries, the text of the call says "any low or middle income country" would countries on the OECD DAC list of ODA Recipients listed under the "upper middle income" column also be eligible?

Yes

- 15) Is this call for proposal limited to the 35 priority countries of SDC?

No. Any country on the DAC List of ODA-Recipients is eligible (see Chapters 3.1 and 5.1 of the Call Document).

- 16) Would a private organisation from "a country" be considered for funding?

Yes but there are specific conditions for partners from the private sector (see [Chapter 5.1- Eligibility Check](#) and [Annex 5- SDC's exclusion criteria for private sector partners of the Call Document](#))

### Research Partner (General)

- 17) Does SDC accept universities as research institutions?

Yes

- 18) Can independent researchers be included as members of a consortium?

In principal, we suppose researchers are affiliated with an institution.

- 19) With respect to question 3, does 'scientific' research encompass 'social science'? We would like avoid SDC spending time reviewing our pre-proposal if science is understood more restrictively and social science research is not eligible.

Scientific research encompasses social sciences which meet the five criteria of research as defined in the Frascati manual. SDC research concept defines research as

“- Research is closely associated with the production, interpretation and use of knowledge. Here, the aim is to conduct creative, innovative studies based on scientific methods used in the fields of social and political science, economics, life science, natural and environmental sciences, earth sciences, engineering, medicine and pharmacology, mathematics or humanities; - Research is based on research questions that are used to generate hypotheses. Research covers both fundamental and applied research. Advisory services, teaching and implementation of development projects by higher education institutions are not regarded as scientific research.”

- 20) To what extent do you consider universities to be suitable partners to carry out or back up "more applied", "more needs based" research?

The university should demonstrate that it is capable to do so.

- 21) How do you define a “research” partner (be it a “Swiss research organisation”, “a research partner in the Global South/East”, or a “research partner from the global North”)?

For Switzerland: Swiss public research institution; for partner from the global South/East: The research partner from the global South/East must be a researcher from a developing country working in a research institution registered in a developing country, mainly employing researchers from developing countries (according to the DAC list of ODA-Recipients). The main activity of the research institution should be scientific research.

### **Swiss public research institution**

- 22) If I have no researcher from Switzerland, is it still possible for me to joint for SDC project proposal ?

It is mandatory for a Swiss public research institution (as well as a research institution from the Global South or East and an implementation partner) to be a member of the consortium. Please consult the KFPE Database of Research Institutions and the list of Swiss public universities.

- 23) Does the Swiss partner in the consortium be restricted to a research institution only? A non-research such as a private sector or an NGO?

The applying consortium has to include at least a Swiss public research institution; a research institution in an ODA-Recipient country represented by a person from an ODA-Recipient country; and a non-research implementation partner of any nature. The consortium can include further partners.

### **Research partner Global South or East**

- 24) A research partner in the Global South/East refers to partners in the countries in the OECD DAC List of ODA Recipients. Could you please confirm whether the word +a research partner+ in this case includes both National and Regional Level Partners?

Yes

- 25) Should the local research partner come from a government institution as well?

No. The local research partner does not need to come from a government institution.

- 26) Could you please clarify how the notion of ‘research partners’ is defined in the call? Does it include national public research institutions (e.g., institutions of higher education) as well as research NGOs and individual researchers?

Those can be included if they fulfil the standards of scientific research.

- 27) Is the XX research think tank eligible to become the research partner from the global South?

The research partner from the global South/East must be a researcher from a developing country working in a research institution registered in a developing country mainly employing researchers from developing countries (according to the DAC list of ODA-Recipients). The research institution's main activity should be scientific research.

- 28) Are international research centres eligible as the research partners from the Global South/East?

The research partner from the global South/East must be a researcher from a developing country working in a research institution registered in a developing country mainly employing researchers from developing countries (according to the DAC list of ODA-Recipients). The research institution's main activity should be scientific research.

- 29) Our permanent offices are headquartered and operated in several countries on the OECD DAC list of ODA Recipients, would those offices be considered a Global South/East organization for the purposes of this call? Would at least those registered as separate entities be considered?

The research partner from the global South/East must be a researcher from a developing country working in a research institution registered in a developing country mainly employing researchers from developing countries (according to the DAC list of ODA-Recipients). The research institution's main activity should be scientific research. It is important, that the (at least three) consortium partners are from (at least three) different institutions.

- 30) My organization is currently in discussion with several project partners to develop a pre-proposal to the newly launched TRANSFORM initiative. One question we have is regarding the eligibility of non-Swiss research partners from developing countries in the Global South and East. We want to know if this would include non-governmental research organizations or think tanks from eligible countries?

The research partner from the global South/East must be a researcher from a developing country working in a research institution registered in a developing country mainly employing researchers from developing countries (according to the DAC list of ODA-Recipients). The research institution's main activity should be scientific research.

### Implementation partner

- 31) For the implementation partner which is not a research institution, is it possible to choose for example a local Incubator/accelerator of start-up & companies?

Yes, in principle, it is possible to choose any governmental entity or entity legally registered which is not primarily a research institution as implementation partner. It is expected that the implementation partner participates in defining the research needs, is committed to the impact hypothesis and contributes to application and dissemination of results (see Chapter 2.1 of the call document: TRANSFORM's overarching goal).

- 32) Should a multilateral organisation be considered as one of the implementation partners (along with local government for instance) or external partner / facilitator ?

Yes, in principle, it is possible to choose any governmental entity or entity legally registered which is not primarily a research institution as implementation partner. It is expected that the implementation partner participates in defining the research needs, is committed to the impact hypothesis and contributes to application and dissemination of results (see Chapter 2.1 of the call document: TRANSFORM's overarching goal).

- 33) Could we, as an "NGO from the North" that is registered within our countries of operation (X countries in a continent), be eligible as the implementation partner?

Yes, in principle any implementation partner that is not a research institution is eligible as partner of a TRANSFORM consortium, see Chapter 3.1 and 5.1 of the Call document.

- 34) Is "an NGO" an eligible organization to become the implementation partner in the global South?

In principle, any NGO implementing development projects in developing countries is eligible to become implementation partner. The eligibility check of specific initiatives will be done after submission of the pre-proposals. Please refer to 5.1 and Annex 5.

- 35) Can the consortium also include a local implementation partner in the targeted geography?

Yes, local implementation partners are welcome.

- 36) Could you please clarify if non-research implementing partner need to be local organizations (in essence, local organizations registered in the context where the project will be implemented) or does it include also foreign NGOs active in the context in question?

It also includes foreign NGOs. In principle, it is possible to choose any governmental entity or entity legally registered which is not primarily a research institution as implementation partner. It is expected that the implementation partner participates in defining the research needs, is committed to the impact hypothesis and contributes to application and dissemination of results (see Chapter 2.1 of the call document: TRANSFORM's overarching goal).

- 37) Regarding the implementation partners: In countries currently facing economic/political challenges, would it be OK to fund a governmental instance as an implementation partner?

Yes.

- 38) Can private enterprises apply to TRANSFORM?

Yes but there are specific conditions for partners from the private sector (see **Chapter 5.1- Eligibility Check** and **Annex 5- SDC's exclusion criteria for private sector partners of the Call Document**)

- 39) Is it possible to have a private company, established and located in Switzerland (GmbH), as one of the partners in the consortium?



Yes but there are specific conditions for partners from the private sector (see [Chapter 5.1- Eligibility Check](#) and [Annex 5- SDC's exclusion criteria for private sector partners of the Call Document](#))

## Number of partners

40) What is the maximum number for collaborating institutions?  
SDC does not specify a maximum

41) Please provide some clarification with regard to the number of consortium partners you envisioned for the project proposals of the TRANSFORM call. The guidelines (Unter 5.1 Eligibility Check) mention "one Swiss public research institution and one research partner from LDC ... and one implementation partner ...".

As mentioned in 5.1, formal inclusion of further partners into the consortium is possible if required by the nature and objectives of the initiative.

42) Does this mean the consortium is limited to a total of three or may there be more partners, e.g. one research partner and implementation partner per focus region, in a multi-region/multi-country set-up?

Yes adding more partners is possible. As mentioned in 5.1, formal inclusion of further partners into the consortium is possible if required by the nature and objectives of the initiative.

43) Concerning the number of consortium partners - Annex 1 contains space for a listing of 4 partners, in addition to the lead organisation. Should they be interpreted as an upper limit to the consortium size, or can more partners be added.

No it should not be interpreted as an upper limit, further partners can be added.

44) Partners: We could involve more than 1 CH universities? We can involve also a research partner from X?

As mentioned in 5.1, formal inclusion of further partners into the consortium is possible if required by the nature and objectives of the initiative.

45) We shall be having 2 Swiss organisations – is this ok?  
Yes.

46) "Further research partners can be included from the Global North". Is this only in the case that relevant experience cannot be found in Switzerland (like the SNF does)? Is having groups from the US or the UK (also contributing financially) something evaluated positively, negatively, or neutral?

As above, you are welcome to have more partners if it is relevant for your project (see chapter 5.2 for evaluation criteria).

47) Is having such a "big" (6) consortium admissible?

Yes, but be aware that part of an evaluation criteria is "Clear strategic/governance set-up enabling shared responsibilities among partners" (see chapter 5.2 of the call document).

## Strategic partners/ other partners

48) Is it possible to be 'associate' to the project? that is, what is category that would entail a participation lower than a principal investigator (ie. project partner)?

Yes it is possible. We are open to different setups, as long as the main consortium fulfil the criteria in chapter 5.1 of the call document.

49) Should strategic partners-stakeholders be included as partners? If not, can we have a budget for them?

Strategic partners do not need to be formal partners of the consortium. You can list them in chapter 2 of your pre-proposal (see 4.2). Yes, you can have a budget for them.

50) In the required Section "Applicants Information", you do not provide a template table for such mandated local partners. Can this information be inserted as a separate table where roles and tasks, as well as the share of the consortium budget in percent, can be shown for these locally mandated partners or do you advise differently?

Those partners and their roles and responsibilities should appear in the chapter 2 of your pre-proposal (see chapter 4.2 of the call document). Their share of contribution they will receive can be presented in the budget.

51) What is the difference between stakeholders and strategic partners?

Stakeholders are actors present in the same area of work, and strategic partners are directly involved in the program.

52) Do we need letters of intent from the partners and stakeholders? Who should sign the cover  
At this point only the signatures of the consortium's members are required.

### **Balance North/South**

53) Balanced contributions between the north and the south: Should balance be kept in terms of money or in terms of working hours? I mean my salary is nominally 500 times larger than the one of my Cuban colleagues. If I am to try to keep it balanced in terms of budget, this is impossible.

We are looking at balanced partnership, role and responsibilities and budget between North and South. This means budget is not the only criteria and different settings will be appropriate for different projects.

54) Are all of the consortia partners expected to provide cash or in-kind money to some extent or is it sufficient if e.g. just one partner provides all (in-kind & cash) money for the matching funds?

See chapter 5.2 of the call document " contribution from each consortium partner according to its own capacity". We are looking at balanced partnership, role and responsibilities and budget between North and South.

55) Do the local research partners in the Global South/East need to be involved in all the activities?  
Can some activities be led only by research partners in the global North?

We are looking at balanced partnership, role and responsibilities and budget between North and South.

56) Does SDC have any specific guidelines on cost sharing?

We are looking at balanced partnership, role and responsibilities and budget between North and South.

57) Are there any norms regarding the repartition of the budget among the members of the consortium?

SDC does not specify strict norms, however, we are looking at balanced partnership, role and responsibilities and budget between North and South.

58) Are there restrictions on budget items depending on the different degrees of participation in the project?

No. The quality, plausibility and relevance of budget weighs 15% in the evaluation criteria (see Chapter 5.2 of the [Call Document](#)). We are looking at balanced partnership, role and responsibilities and budget between North and South.

59) Do all partners, such as governmental, need to provide co-funding?

See chapter 5.2 of the call document " contribution from each consortium partner according to its own capacity". We are looking at balanced partnership, role and responsibilities and budget between North and South.

### **Identifying partners**

60) We are kindly asking if you could assist us with a list of Swiss based research organisations we could contact for potential partnership in responding this very important call.

SDC Research Desk does unfortunately not have the capacity to advise each applicant for suitable partners in Switzerland. Further, as we are not always aware of the specific field of research of the applicant, it is very difficult for us to guide a specific institution on possible partners in Switzerland. Please consult the KFPE [Database of Research Institutions](#) and the [list of Swiss public universities](#).

61) While your site lists in general the Swiss organizations we could partner with. Do you have a specific list of all the institutions that we are eligible to partner with? If yes, could you please share the same with us?

Regarding the Swiss research institution: You can partner with any Swiss public research institution. Please consult the KFPE [Database of Research Institutions](#) and the [list of Swiss public universities](#) (non-exhaustive).

Regarding the research partner from the Global South/ East: SDC does not do not have a list. The research partner from the global South/East must be a researcher from a developing country working in a research institution registered in a developing country mainly employing researchers from developing countries (according to the DAC list of ODA-Recipients). The research institution's main activity should be scientific research.

62) We have troubles in finding a research partner in countries X.Y and Z.



We can suggest you to directly contact Swiss representations/ cooperation offices in the mentioned countries.

63) Can SDC share our concept to potentially interested partners?  
SDC does unfortunately not have a platform for matching. Please consult the KFPE Database of Research Institutions and the list of Swiss public universities to identify potential partners.

### **Submitting multiple proposals**

64) Can a NGO/organisation/university/etc. submit more than one application to this call for proposals?  
Yes.

## **Budget**

### **Overhead cost**

65) To what extent (percentage) will SDC pay an overhead for its funding? Should this overhead be already covered by the approx. 1 million CHF of yearly funding?  
The overhead is covered by SDC's yearly contribution (see chapter 3.4 of the call for proposals).

66) What does "reasonable overhead costs" mean in terms of maximum percentage of the overall SDC contribution?  
SDC does not define a percentage. The budget might include reasonable, plausible overhead cost. The quality, plausibility and relevance of budget weighs 15% in the evaluation criteria (see Chapter 5.2 of the [Call Document](#)).

67) About the funding, I am not sure if I understood well the sentence: "SDC only funds expenditures related to the initiative (core contribution to an organisation is excluded), which might include reasonable overhead costs." In particular, would the salaries of our organisation be partially (50%) funded by SDC, or only material expenses?  
Yes, SDC contribution can be used to cover salary costs specifically needed for the initiative.

68) We do receive SDC funds but they are completely unrelated to the project. Are we eligible to include overhead cost into the budget?  
Double financing of activities and/or double financing of activities are not allowed. Such applicants have to prove that there will be no double financing (see chapter 3.1 of the call document). Therefore, you need to be specific in which overhead costs you include and you have to document that there is no double financing.

69) Will the SDC fund the project-related overhead costs of "a university"?  
The budget might include reasonable, plausible overhead cost. The quality, plausibility and relevance of budget weighs 15% in the evaluation criteria (see Chapter 5.2 of the [Call Document](#)).

70) Can lump-sum management indemnity be included as overhead costs?  
Yes

### **In-kind/in cash financing**

71) What counts as «In-Cash» (i.e. "Partner 1 own contribution" in the budget table/Annex 2)? Could this be also projects that have been acquired through other funding organisations (e.g. SNSF research projects)?  
In-cash includes cash contributions, acquired for example through another funding organization.

72) Does the funding of activities through other existing projects funded by other donors count as cash contribution?  
Funds provided by other donors to the same initiative can be counted as cash contribution.

73) Does the SDC has a description of what is considered an eligible in-kind contribution? For example, for a university, would professor/staff salaries be considered eligible in-kind contributions? What other kinds of contributions would be considered eligible in-kind?  
In-kind contributions include all non-monetary budget contribution to the project. In-kind contribution can include staff salaries effectively dedicated to the project.

74) Does the SDC define a minimum cash contribution?

No, there is no minimum cash contribution set. The contribution from the consortium has to include cash and can include in-kind funding.

75) Is there a proportion that we should apply in the allocation of the in-kind and in-cash contributions to the matching fund?

No, SDC does not specify a percentage. The contribution from the consortium has to include in-cash and can include in-kind funding.

76) Is there a maximum share of in-kind contributions for the overall SDC financing?

No but contribution from the consortium's partners must also include in cash contribution.

77) Our consortium has asked a private company for a contribution to the project by allocating X people to the project. The company has accepted to bring an in-kind contribution by covering 50% of the salary of two people. Would SDC cover the rest 50% of the salary of those staff if the project got accepted?

Yes, this is possible. SDC total contribution should not cover more than 50%, or 70% with relevant justification, of the total budget. The contribution from the applying consortium has to include cash contribution and can also include in-kind contribution.

78) When we read in point 5.1 of the Criteria: "Requested contribution from SDC is approx. 1m/year; contribution from the consortium partners include in-kind and in-cash funding and amounts to at least 30%, resp. 50%, of the total budget." Does this mean that if we want to request 1m/year we have to bring a minimum of 300000.- in-kind and 500000.- in cash, for a total of 800000.-?

In principle, if you request CHF 1mio/year, your contribution should approximately be 1mio/year (50%). The 30% refers to chapter 3.4 of the call document: SDC in principle finances up to 50% of the total budget, but can cover up to 70% of the total budget if the type of initiative requires it (e.g. new innovative initiative). In this case, if you request CHF 1 mio/year, your contribution should be at least CHF 430'000 /year.

79) Budget: our contributions: it can be only in-kind for instance from the research institute or do you require both in cash and in-kind. As public research institute it is a little bit unclear how we can contribute in cash.

The contribution from the consortium has to include in-cash and can include in-kind funding. Research institutes can contribute to cash contributions, for example from the Swiss National Science Foundation SNSF or other funding sources.

80) It is also not clear to me what classifies as in-kind and in-cash. Would my salary count as in-kind or in-cash? Would the salary of a student of mine working on a project relevant to the proposal that I have in mind count as in-kind or in-cash?

In-kind contributions include all non-monetary budget contribution to the project. In-kind contribution can include staff salaries effectively dedicated to the project.

81) What are the conditions under which a running project counts towards in-kind? Who decides how relevant it is?

A running project can be counted as a contribution only during the requested duration of the SDC funding. Prior funding of the project is not eligible.

82) The main cost in a regular research proposal (at least in my field) is personnel salaries, use of facilities and test specimens. So, our contribution will mainly be on these fields: My own salary (i.e. the hours I will devote to the project), our students salaries (students = the ones already funded by other projects which we will pool under this initiative), and the use of our facilities (the value of which can be evaluated based on international standards). As the aim of the project is low cost construction methods, the specimens themselves will and need to be cheap. So, if in-cash is something else than salaries, facilities and specimens, I cannot understand what it would cover. In that sense I do not fully understand the distinction of monetary and non-monetary when somebody is setting up a budget. Maybe I am missing something, but in a budget everything is by definition monetary, isn't it? So, doesn't saying "I will pay (cash) an extra student to work on the project with money I got from somewhere else" count as in-cash?

To build on your example, "I will pay (cash) an extra student to work on the project with money I got from somewhere else" This is an in-kind contribution, as what you will bring to the project is a person's working time. This in-kind contribution's monetary value is the salary this person will be paid (or part of it if this person does not exclusively work on this project). What would be considered an in-cash contribution is for example a contribution from a donor of CHF 100'000, which is allocated to the project in general (as opposed to the money used to pay the student that could not be used for another purpose). The allocation to in-kind and in cash categories does not concern how you will spend the funding you receive, but concerns your contribution.

83) What financial contributions are eligible under “in-kind” contributions?  
In-kind contributions include all non-monetary budget contribution to the project.

84) Would having a majority of in-kind contributions, jeopardise the project acceptance?  
Not necessarily, it depends on the quality, plausibility and relevance of your budget. (see Chapter 5.2 of the Call Document).

85) Can existing or future research projects (e.g. projects financed by the SNSF) count for the 50% of in-kind/in-cash financing?  
Consortium's partner can only include the project for which TRANSFORM's funding is directly sought. Moreover, it can be counted as a contribution only during the requested duration of the SDC funding. Prior funding of the project is not eligible.

86) Can the following contributions, and under what conditions, be considered as cash and in-kind contribution: 1) Datasets with value of 200,000 USD that were previously developed and will be provided for free-of-charge use by the project; 2) Models with value of 500,000 USD that were previously developed and will be provided for free-of-charge use by the project; 3) Extension services in large agro clusters – 200,000 USD.  
In principle, if they are directly relevant to your project, those could indeed be counted as in-kind contributions, with monetary value corresponding to the value of the intensity of their use and not to their full value. However, as underlined in chapter 6.5 of the call document, SDC strongly encourages open research. That also means that in principle we do not encourage the monetization of former results from an institution or company's past research.

87) Can test projects, implementation measures, or development projects of the practice partners count for the 50% of in-kind/in-cash financing?  
Consortium's partner can only include the project for which TRANSFORM's funding is directly sought. Moreover, it can be counted as a contribution only during the requested duration of the SDC funding. Prior funding of the project is not eligible.

#### **Minimum/Maximum project size**

88) Could teams submit a small budget for a smaller project (e.g., 100,000 CHF per year, to be matched with the SDC)? Or, does the SDC only envision supporting larger projects (e.g., 1M CHF per year)?  
SDC only envisions supporting larger projects (i.e SDC minimum contribution is CHF 800'000/year).

89) What is the maximum SDC funding for each project ?  
SDC indicative contribution is CHF 1 mio/year. There is no maximum contribution set. The quality, plausibility and relevance of budget weighs 15% in the evaluation criteria (see Chapter 5.2 of the [Call Document](#))

90) 3.4 “Funding” mentions that SDC's contribution will indicatively be around CHF 1 million per year and that up to four proposals might be funded. Is the one million SDC funding in total for all proposals or per proposal submitted?  
SDC's contribution for each initiative/proposal will indicatively be around CHF 1 million (m)/year.

91) Financial volume and expected impact is difficult to square with a social science approach making use of more qualitative methods. Could SDC consider splitting one of the four (to be selected) grants among a number of smaller, but more social science oriented proposals?  
While developing this call for proposals, we realised it might be difficult for social sciences partners to submit proposals with such budgets. That is why we adjusted the call as follows: possibility to group several projects contributing to a common overarching strategic goal within an initiative; and SDC being able to contribute up to 70% of an initiative's global budget with relevant justification from the consortium partners. TRANSFORM aims to support interdisciplinary applied research projects. The SPIRIT programme of SNSF might be more appropriate for more disciplinary basic research projects. As mentioned in the first chapter, another research promotion instrument (Pillar B) is in development, which aims to support smaller research projects on the basis of research grants.

92) Is there a minimum budget? Is there a minimum (or a suggestion) on what should be spent in Switzerland and what in the developing countries?  
SDC only envisions supporting larger projects (i.e SDC minimum contribution is CHF 800'000/year). We are looking at balanced partnership, role and responsibilities and budget between North and South.

93) Is it possible to submit proposals with an annual budget of less than CHF 2 million?

SDC only envisions supporting larger projects (i.e SDC minimum contribution is CHF 800'000/year, total CHF 1.6 mio/year)

- 94) With SDC funding approx. 1 million CHF per year and this being only 50% of the full budget: Should the total yearly budget be around 2 million CHF?

Yes.

- 95) Are even bigger project budgets than the costs covered by TRANSFORM allowed?

Yes. SDC in principle finances up to 50% of the total budget.

### Matching fund

- 96) What does SDC consider as own contribution? To what extent is in-kind contribution eligible?

The contribution from the consortium includes in-cash and in-kind financing. SDC does not specify a percentage. In-kind contributions include all non-monetary budget contribution to the project. The contribution from the consortium has to include in-cash and can include in-kind funding.

- 97) If TRANSFORM, as a research project, focused on the needs of several ongoing development projects, would the budget of the development projects then be accepted as co-funding to TRANSFORM?

A running project's budget can be counted as a contribution only during the requested duration of the SDC funding. Prior funding of the project is not eligible.

- 98) Can a multilateral organisation contribute matching funds?

Yes.

- 99) "SDC's contribution will indicatively be around CHF 1 million (m)/year (i.e. consortium partners match SDC's contribution with approx. CHF 1m/year (50% matching fund); respectively CHF 0.4 m/year (30% matching fund).» (p.4) When is the 30% matching fund acceptable? Some partners cannot afford 50% or will have difficulties to find parallel funds to cover those costs.

SDC in principle can cover up to 50% of an initiative's budget through a contribution. Should the initiative give relevant good argument why it needs more than 50% of the budget, SDC could cover up to 70% of the total budget (e.g. an innovative initiative; or partners with limited own resources might need a 70% contribution from SDC in the first years; and then 50%). contribution from each

- 100) Kindly clarify: the Call states that SDC "can cover up to 70% of the total budget if the type of initiative requires it". Our interpretation of this statement is that a project with a total cost of CHF 1.4 million/year could receive SDC financing for up to CHF 980,000 million/year. Is our interpretation correct?

Correct.

- 101) Does the co-financing apply to all partners of the research? Universities have to contribute 30-50% as well as other implementing partners?

The consortium as a whole should contribute to 50% (30% with relevant justification). Further, see chapter 5.2 of the call document "contribution from each consortium partner according to its own capacity". We are looking at balanced partnership, role and responsibilities and budget between North and South.

- 102) Can an SNSF Professorship grant be considered as part of the matching funds?

Yes (in-kind).

- 103) Is the match funding to be an exact budget line to budget line match? Or can it also be a match contribution to a wider project, where the SDC's contribution would fund a certain piece of a bigger scheme?

SDC contributes to a defined entire initiative. The budget provided by the consortium should correspond to the same initiative.

- 104) Für die Finanzierung können wir 2.4 Mio CHF an Eigenmitteln ausweisen; wenn wir diesen Betrag zu 30% einsetzen, können wir dann bei der DEZA einen Gesamtbetrag von 4 Mio CHF beantragen?

Yes. With specific justifications from the consortium, SDC can fund up to 70% of the budget (see Chapter 3.4 of the Call for Proposals). Please note that in the frame of this call, SDC only funds larger initiative: the minimal contribution from SDC is CHF 800,000/year

- 105) It is my understanding that TRANSFORM has been specifically designed to finance research & innovation initiatives, so I am correct to understand that SDC maximal contribution to successful TRANSFORM applications is set at 70%?  
SDC in principle can cover up to 50% of an initiative's budget through a contribution. Should the initiative give relevant good argument why it needs more than that, SDC could indeed cover up to 70% of the total budget (e.g. an innovative initiative still at its beginning; or partners with limited own resources might need a 70% contribution from SDC in the first years; and then 50%).  
Please note that in the frame of this call, SDC only funds larger initiative: the minimal contribution from SDC is CHF 800,000/year. The contribution from the consortium has to include cash and can include in-kind funding.
- 106) We understand the consortium should provide in-cash and in-kind financing for at least half the duration of the initiative.  
The consortium should prove that in-cash and in-kind financing is secured for at least half of the duration of the initiative and explain how further funds will be raised (see chapter 3.4).
- 107) We are thinking of collaborating with groups from "a country from the Global South". If their working hours count as contribution to the project, how are they going to be budgeted? Their social system is different and their net salary is \$30 per month, but this is essentially pocket money, as they get for free many stuff for which in Switzerland we have to pay.  
Those partners have the responsibility to explain their financial contribution (in-kind and in-cash) and which aspects have to be taken into account.
- 108) In case of invitation for full submission, to what degree are changes to budget in the full submission still possible?  
We understand that some adjustment might be needed when developing the full proposal.
- 109) I understand that our own salaries could be part of our contribution. Is there an upper limit on how much of our work time percentage can be devoted to the project?  
SDC does not define a limit. The quality, plausibility and relevance of budget weighs 15% in the evaluation criteria (see Chapter 5.2 of the Call Document).
- 110) What kind of support documents for our in-kind and cash contribution commitment do we have to provide at this stage?  
At the stage of the pre-proposal, we do not ask for support document.
- 111) Does the cost share include management plus activity cost?  
Yes.
- 112) We are looking to produce a proposal in which we contribute to already existing initiatives. Let's assume there are several such existing initiatives for which we try to create synergies and the first one is a development project (DP-A) funded by X, and implemented by several consortium partners. DP-A has a project volume of let's say 10 mio CHF over the next eight years.  
-> Since with our TRANSFORM project we closely link with DP-A, would we declare the entire project volume of DP-A under "Contribution external Donor X"? Or would we need to bring in one implementation partner of DP-A into our consortium? Would we then be able to declare the part of the budget that this partner has for DP-A as "in-kind contribution", provided that there are considerable synergies between the on-going activities and the ones planned for the initiative at hand? Or would this rather go under "Partner X own contribution", into our consortium?  
Consortium's partner can only include the project for which TRANSFORM's funding is directly sought. Moreover, it can be counted as a contribution only during the requested duration of the SDC funding. Prior funding of the project is not eligible.
- 113) I am intending to apply to the SNF Spirit with a proposal on the same line of thought. Would this count as a plan to raise further funds?  
The consortium should prove that in-cash and in-kind financing is secured for at least half of the duration of the initiative and explain how further funds will be raised. Further funds should be raised for your TRANSFORM project and not another one.  
SDC makes a distinction between engagement and contract. We will not exclude partners presenting initiatives which do not yet have a budget for their entire duration. The formal contract covers in principle only the duration of the project for which a budget is secured and may be renewed afterwards.
- 114) Can SDC clarify its proposed funding and the calculation of the 50% and 30% matching fund in the call for proposals document? "SDC contribution will indicatively be around CHF 1



*million (m)/year (i.e. consortium partners match SDC contribution with approx. CHF 1m/year (50% matching fund); respectively CHF 0.4 m/year (30% matching fund)".*

*In principle, SDC covers up to 50% of the total budget, i.e for an initiative with a foreseen total budget of CHF 2 mio/year, SDC can cover up to 1 mio/year (50% rule). With good argument, SDC can cover 70% of the total budget, i.e for an initiative with a total budget of CHF 1.43 mio/year, SDC can cover CHF 1 mio/year (70%). In this case, the consortium would bring at least CHF 0.43 mio /year.*

115) In Universities we can raise money from:

- a) Core funding
- b) Funding agencies research projects (SNF, ERC, etc)
- c) Internal structures that launch competitive research calls (ETH Research office)
- d) The industry
- e) Rich people that want to fund research because they have a lot of money and they think that they will go to paradise when they die, if they give to the University some money.

For (a), either you already have it and you know that you will have it for the duration of the project, or you don't have it and you will not have it. So it is not a matter of raising it in the future. For (b-e) there is always a risk: Your proposal not being accepted (b-d), or the rich guy simply dumping your idea because he does not feel like funding you.

So, if I understand correctly from your answer, in the category "money that I WILL raise", I cannot put (b-d), and I can only put (e). Will I be evaluated based on how likely it is looks like to get this extra funding from (e)?

*Funding needs to be secured for at least half of the duration of the initiative, this funding can come from any of the sources you mentioned. Moreover, your consortium should not consist only of a university. This funding should have already been raised at the moment of your application. For the following years, you should explain how further funds will be raised.*

*SDC makes a distinction between engagement and contract. We will not exclude partners presenting initiatives which do not yet have a budget for their entire duration. The formal contract covers in principle only the duration of the project for which a budget is secured and may be renewed afterwards.*

*The quality, plausibility and relevance of budget weighs 15% in the evaluation criteria (see Chapter 5.2 of the Call Document).*

116) Could you please clarify the notion of 50% matching funds? To what extent can consortium partners include funds from other ongoing projects implemented in the relevant context and which are related in content to the project submitted to SDC TRANSFORM as proof of in-kind and in-finance contribution?

*Consortium's partner can only include the project for which TRANSFORM's funding is directly sought. Moreover, it can be counted as a contribution only during the requested duration of the SDC funding. Prior funding of the project is not eligible.*

### **Pooling research projects**

117) As I read from the Call for Proposal document, it is allowed to pool several existing (research) projects under a comprehensive proposal. In this case, would the secured project funding from existing projects be considered as co-financing source?

*Yes.*

118) „It is allowed to pool several existing (research) projects under a single initiative..." (p.3)  
Is it also allowed to pool new projects?

*Yes, but funding has to be secured.*

### **Own contribution from other sources of funding/ On-going projects**

119) Could you please clarify the notion of 50% matching funds? To what extent can consortium partners include funds from other ongoing projects implemented in the relevant context and which are related in content to the project submitted to SDC TRANSFORM as proof of in-kind and in-finance contribution?

*Consortium's partner can only include the project for which TRANSFORM's funding is directly sought. Moreover, it can be counted as a contribution only during the requested duration of the SDC funding. Prior funding of the project is not eligible.*

120) Are SECO or other Swiss government funded projects eligible for co-funding by SDC TRANSFORM?

*Yes.*



- 121) "A research institution" has the lead in a research project that is financed by the r4d program. Can part of the money of this project (planned for research personnel and research implementation) be declared as in-kind matching funds for a completely new project that we want to realize by using funds of the TRANSFORM funding tool?

No.

- 122) We have already collaborated with SDC on a number of projects including direct mandates and contributions, some of which are ongoing. Can we apply the same rates as we always use with past and existing SDC Projects as possible partners in a future TRANSFORM consortium?

TRANSFORM is not a tender (mandate from SDC) but a contribution from SDC to a project owned by an external partner/consortium. In principle, the partners have/define their own (financial) rules. The quality, plausibility and relevance of budget weighs 15% in the evaluation criteria of this call (see Chapter 5.2 of the [Call Document](#)). Please also note that "TRANSFORM will not provide additional support to specific projects already (co)-financed by SDC" (Chapter 1).

- 123) Can ongoing projects financed by SNSF which are not cofinanced by SDC - by financed by Transform?

Yes this is possible. Important is that SDC requested contribution does not cover more than 50%, max 70%, of the total budget of the initiative.

- 124) Our project is already supported by SDC – are we eligible to apply to TRANSFORM, e.g. to scale up our ongoing project/programme?

No. One aim of TRANSFORM is to identify and support new, additional initiatives in the field of research and innovation for sustainable development. This is mentioned in the Introductory Chapter: "TRANSFORM wants to avoid duplication with research and innovation already supported by SDC units, including SDC's five global programmes ([link](#)). TRANSFORM will therefore not provide additional support to specific projects already (co)-financed by SDC."

- 125) Can SDC contribution be used to be added/matched with a budget for an ongoing or new project (adding a research component to an operational project)?

Yes, TRANSFORM will support research and innovation initiatives already ongoing or starting in 2020, which contribute to TRANSFORM's goal and three specific objectives as well as to the planned objectives of Switzerland's IC for the period 2021-2024 (see Annex 4)

- 126) Is it accepted to mobilise this in-cash financing resources through cooperation with other programmes financed by other donors?

Yes, but please also note that "TRANSFORM will not provide additional support to specific projects already (co)-financed by SDC" (Chapter 1).

- 127) I find it difficult to imagine what in-cash contribution from a University be. In this case, would it be a necessity to have another funding agency or foundation contribute? Is not having such a funding agency or foundation contribution evaluated negatively?

This is possible and not evaluated negatively, but please also note that "TRANSFORM will not provide additional support to specific projects already (co)-financed by SDC" (Chapter 1).

- 128) "TRANSFORM will therefore not provide additional support to specific projects already (co)-financed by SDC." (p.2) Does this mean that a collaboration with / contributions from SDC-funded development projects are excluded? Or does this only refer to funds from SDC HQ?

Collaboration with no financial flows is allowed, but contributions are excluded. This refers to projects (co)-financed by SDC.

- 129) What about SNF funded projects?

SNF funded projects are eligible.

- 130) Can additional applied research activities be funded by TRANSFORM within the framework of an existing development project financed by SDC?

No.

- 131) Can activities that have already by funded (whether by the Swiss government or by another agency) be counted as contribution towards the research costs as long as the actual request from TRANSFORM does not include funding for those costs. In other words, since part of the research cost is the implementation of a program to be researched, would it be acceptable to count towards the cost of research the cost of doing the activity to be researched? Or can contributions counting towards the co-funding requirement ONLY come from co-funding contributions to the costs of the research itself, and not the initiative or implementation modality?

Consortium's partner can only include the project for which TRANSFORM's funding is directly sought. Moreover, it can be counted as a contribution only during the requested duration of the SDC funding. Prior funding of the project is not eligible.

132) I would like to know if it is possible to apply to the TRANSFORM call and the SNF-SPIRIT call for the same period.  
Yes, this is possible.

#### **Budget allocation/ Funding's coverage**

133) Is it allowed to have an advisory board and to cover their transportation and accommodation costs?  
Yes. The quality, plausibility and relevance of budget weighs 15% in the evaluation criteria (see Chapter 5.2 of the Call Document).

134) Is it possible for us to ask for funding to cover salaries of postdoctoral researchers and PhD students that are part of the academic group with this grant as well?  
Yes, SDC contribution in the frame of TRANSFORM can cover costs of salaries (post-doc, PhD). Important is that SDC requested contribution does not cover more than 50%, max 70%, of the total budget of the initiative.

135) If the non-research partner is a government organisation, can salaries be covered (partially) by the funds?  
Yes.

136) Do the SDC funding pay for beneficiaries' infrastructures (e.g. irrigation material)?  
Yes, if it is required for the success of your project.

137) What percentage of the budget may be allocated to Internal Control Review?  
SDC does not define a percentage. The consortium partners define for which specific activities they need a contribution from SDC.

138) Can "another funding source" be considered mainly to fund the 'research' aspects and the SDC dedicated to 'interventions' aspects?  
With TRANSFORM, SDC aims to support initiatives which include both research and innovation/implementation work. The consortium partners define for which specific activities they need a contribution from SDC.

139) Besides planning, implementation and evaluation of initiatives, can the funding also be used for joint capacity building with the implementation partners?  
Yes. The quality, plausibility and relevance of budget weighs 15% in the evaluation criteria (see Chapter 5.2 of the Call Document).

140) Which percentage of the requested SDC contribution could be dedicated to the operational testing/piloting of the solutions stemming from research?  
SDC does not specify a percentage.

141) Are there restrictions on budget items depending on the different degrees of participation in the project?  
No. The quality, plausibility and relevance of budget weighs 15% in the evaluation criteria (see Chapter 5.2 of the Call Document). We are looking at balanced partnership, role and responsibilities and budget between North and South.

142) Is it correct to assume that TRANSFORM funding is limited to research activities or can it also contribute to the activities related to the dissemination of research results? Where does SDC set the limit between research and dissemination of results (share of budget)?  
Yes, this should appear in your budget. The quality, plausibility and relevance of budget weighs 15% in the evaluation criteria (see Chapter 5.2 of the Call Document).

143) Should the SDC funding only be used for research or can it also cover implementation activities of the practice partners?  
SDC funding can also cover implementation activities.

#### **Funding duration/ start / shifts**

144) Let us know recommended duration of the research.

The maximum duration of SDC's contribution to the initiative is 60 months (5 years), we do not recommend a specific duration.

145) Is there a minimum project/SDC funding duration?  
SDC does not recommend a specific duration. The maximum duration of SDC's contribution to the initiative is 60 months (5 years).

146) Is the starting date after award Jan. 2021? over how many years can the funding be used?  
TRANSFORM will support research and innovation initiatives already ongoing or starting in 2020. The maximum duration of SDC's contribution to the initiative is 60 months (5 years), we do not recommend a specific duration. The funding should be used in the year it is allocated.

147) Is it possible to shift parts of the budget during the running of the TRANSFORM initiative (e.g. if an external project is accepted and brings in resources for ongoing measures)?  
Shifts can be requested during the project if well argued.

## Formal aspects/ requirements

### Next/ other calls

148) Does SDC aim at issuing a similar call next year, or is TRANSFORM covering the next five years?  
This Call is currently the only one planned within TRANSFORM for the next five years. Should we not receive enough proposals of good quality, we might then need to adapt our planning.

149) Cet appel d'offre, qui vise à remplacer R4D, serait-il l'unique appel envoyé cette année, ou la DDC aurait-elle l'intention d'en publier d'autres dans l'année ou dans un futur proche (plus sur la communication ou la formation, par exemple) ?  
Comme mentionné dans le premier chapitre du Call Document, la DDC envisage dans le futur de soutenir la recherche pour le développement via deux instruments. Cet appel à propositions est actuellement le seul prévu dans le cadre de TRANSFORM (premier instrument). Le deuxième instrument est encore en développement : il soutiendra des projets de recherche plus 'petits', sur la base de *grants*.

### Number of projects

150) How many projects are expected to be supported by the TRANSFORM programme?  
In the framework of this Call for proposals, SDC might choose up to four proposals for funding (see chapter 3.4 of the call document).

151) The call mentions up to four consortia to be selected - what are the selection criteria?  
Please see chapter 5.2 of the call document.

152) Based on your previous experience, would you have an estimate of the success rate?  
In the recent years, no similar call has been made by SDC, making it difficult to estimate a success rate. In the framework of this Call for proposals, SDC might choose up to four proposals for funding (see chapter 3.4 of the call document).

### Publication of research results

153) Must all research results be published in a scientific publication?  
No. SDC expects the publication of learnings and findings in formats tailored to the needs of implementation partners and other stakeholders, e.g. digital content, videos, policy briefs. SDC strongly encourages researchers to publish scientific results in open access publication or database.

### Legal / Contracts

154) Will SDC sign a contract with all the consortia members or only the lead?  
SDC expects to sign a contract with the lead organisation in the name of the members of the consortium. Arrangements could be discussed.

155) Can a multilateral organization be exempted from accepting the General Terms and Conditions of SDC in a junior consortium or subcontracting role?  
At the stage of the pre-proposal, the applicants take note of the general conditions for contracts (GCC) concerning federal contributions for projects (Annex 3). When invited to submit a full proposal, it is in

principle expected that the applicants accept without reservation the GCC. Based on the applicant's propositions, we are open to discuss specific aspects of the GCC (when invited to submit a full proposal). The GCC apply if the lead organisation is Swiss. In the case of a non-Swiss lead organisation, you can have a look at the attached template, at this stage only for information.

- 156) We would like to apologize for sending another question after our initial submission, it's regarding : GENERAL CONDITIONS OF THE FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS FOR CONTRACTS CONCERNING FEDERAL CONTRIBUTIONS FOR PROJECTS (GCC): 5.1 The contribution is transferred onto the project account opened by the organization in Switzerland. Upon request of the organization, the FDFA can authorize it to administer a single bank account embracing various projects. Is this applicable to the TRANSFORM initiative also?

At the stage of the pre-proposal, the applicants take note of the general conditions for contracts (GCC) concerning federal contributions for projects (Annex 3). When invited to submit a full proposal, it is in principle expected that the applicants accept without reservation the GCC. Based on the applicant's propositions, we are open to discuss specific aspects of the GCC (when invited to submit a full proposal). Please note that the GCC apply if the lead organisation is Swiss. In the case of a non-Swiss lead organization, please have a look at the attached contract template, at this stage only for information?

- 157) While Ch. 3.4 (Funding) of the Call for proposal states "the consortium should prove that in-cash and in-kind financing is secured for at least half of the duration of the initiative and explain how further funds will be raised", Annex 3 Ch. 3.1 says that: "The FDFA transfers the contractually stipulated federal contribution only if the financing of the whole project is assured by the organization". Can you please specify whether the budget submitted for the pre-proposal falls under ch.3.4 or Annex 3 Ch.3.1?

SDC makes a distinction between engagement and contract. We will not exclude partners presenting initiatives which do not yet have a budget for their entire duration. The formal contract covers in principle only the duration of the project for which a budget is secured and may be renewed afterwards.

#### Process requirements

- 158) What conditional requirements do you expect to be in place in order to make sure that the funds arrive in the PI's bank account, given that the PI is in a "developing country"?

SDC does not specify requirements, however the consortiums must ensure the funds arrive in the right place. The contracted organisation is required to send financial reports after 6 months, then on a yearly basis and at the end of the initiative, justifying the use of the funds and covering all funds of the initiative, not only SDC funds.

#### Deadline /Coronavirus

- 159) We have not yet had the time to look for a local partner. Is there any way that we could receive an extension on the deadline for submitting pre-proposals? We did more time to find partners in the Global South or East, would it be possible to have an extension?

To be fair amongst applicants, we do not offer deadline extensions.

- 16) Given that the spread of the Corona virus causes problems in the daily activities of many organisations, including NGOs and universities, is an extension of the submission deadline for the pre-proposal envisioned?

Yes, deadline has been extended until 13 April 2020 8pm CET

#### Cover Letter / Signatures / Letter of intent

- 160) What is expected for the cover letter? What information should be included? Who should sign it from the partner organisations?

The cover letter should include a declaration of interest and a representative of each member of the consortium.

- 161) Do you need letters of support from local implementation partners, e.g. 'letter of collaboration intent' from local authorities from a low-middle income country?

At this stage, we request a joint Cover letter (declaration of interest) with signature(s) of all consortium partners (see Ch. 4.2 page 5)

- 162) Who has to firm the cover letter? Should this be the principal investigator/leader of the department of the given organizations in the consortium or the CEO of the involved organizations (e.g. university president)?

At the stage of the pre-proposal, the principal investigator/leader of the department can sign the cover letter.

#### **Format / Specification on what should be included**

163) Is there any canvas for the pre-proposal of 5 pages, for the cover letter of 1 page, the description of 3 pages and the summary of relevant experience of 1 page?  
No, there is no specific canvas available.

164) Pages limit: we can include a list of references in addition to the 5 page limits?  
No, references have to be included within the 5 pages. It is possible to use footnotes, but your submission can not exceed 5 pages.

Do we need to attach CVs for the partners? If yes, what are the requirements?  
No.

#### **Annex 1**

165) Annex 1, members of consortium. If in one organization, is each partner (e.g., Professor) a member, or is only the organization a member?  
Only the organisation.

166) Annex 1, members of consortium. "Share of the consortium budget in per cent". Is this the share of total Partner contribution or of total Partner+SDC contribution. E.g, 5 partners provide 1 MCHF each in kind or in cash and get 1 MCHF each from SDC. Is the share 10% or 20%?  
As we did not specify that you might choose either option but please indicate it.

#### **Annex 2**

167) Are there any specific rules or instructions for the budget template?  
There are no additional instructions than the template itself.

168) There is a line for "other income" (Row 38). What do you mean by this?  
This category is provided in case you have an additional income that does not fit any of the other categories.

169) How should own contributions and in-kind contributions be demonstrated and justified?  
Your contribution should be showed in the budget, in annex 2.

170) What contributions are eligible under "Contribution external Donor X"? – in-kind and cash contributions?  
We supposed contributions from external would be in-cash. However, if you have in-kind contributions from external donors you can add them, but clearly indicate them and what they are.

171) What contributions are eligible under "Contribution external Donor X"? – in-kind and cash contributions?  
We supposed contributions from external would be in-cash. However, if you have in-kind contributions from external donors you can add them, but clearly indicate them and what they are.

172) Can SDC clarify the level of details needed in the budget template for the pre-proposal? And, in case of invitation for full submission, to what degree are changes to budget in the full submission still possible?  
The budget should present the main budget lines and we understand that some adjustment might be needed when developing the full proposal.

173) Can SDC advise if the spreadsheet (annex 2) should be included in the 5-page concept document? (given that no annexes are allowed). How much narrative should be provided on the proposed financing from the consortium?  
Yes, the spreadsheet should be include in the pre-proposal but does not count in the 5-pages limit (see chapter 4.2 p. 5 of the call document)