CEPI Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations

Call for proposals on platform technologies: Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

Submitted by 12 February 2018

Overview

Below you will find answers to general questions that the CEPI Secretariat received by 12 February 2018 with regards to the call for vaccine platform technologies (CfP2). One set of responses to all questions will be emailed to those who submitted questions. All responses to the round of questions will be published here. Please note that these responses are in addition to the previously published application guidelines on the CEPI Website.

Budget and financial questions

1. Are fringe benefits eligible for reimbursement?

Fringe benefits are eligible for reimbursement. It should be kept in mind that such benefits should be reasonable. If the application is short-listed, all parts of the budget will be subject to a thorough cost challenge.

2. Are applicants allowed to change the budget as a result of adhering to reviewer feedback?

While the budget should closely follow the initial proposed budget from the step 1 submission, changes are expected where the scope of work is altered as a result of the feedback received in step 1. In this case, we would ask you to adjust the budget according to the changes to the scope of work. Changes to the budget should be clarified in the budget narrative document.

3. Due to national legal directions, it might not be possible to share individual salaries of each employee. Instead, is it possible to share function-specific FTE costs, based on an average of salary per position?

The suggestion to use function-specific FTE costs by average position based salary is an acceptable approach under CEPI's requirements, given the national legal restrictions.

Contractual and procedural questions

4. Is CEPI interested in developing the well-characterized pathogen to a product, or only focused on the WHO pathogen?

For the purpose of this call, CEPI's focus is on characterizing the platform and not on developing specific products. The scope of this call is through the end of Phase I, and at this time CEPI cannot

commit to supporting the further development of these products. To be clear, the applicant is welcome to choose whichever two products they want to test in Phase I; the choice need not include the WHO pathogen.

5. Is there any part of the proposal which will not be treated as confidential (i.e. open to the public) after submission of the grant proposal step 2?

The only part of the proposal that will not be treated as confidential is the RCN summary; this will be published. We therefore reserve the right to publish the 1 page summary from your application. All other submission content will be restricted to the CEPI Secretariat, Scientific Advisory Committee, Board and CEPI-contracted external reviewers, for evaluation and internal use only.

6. A contract partner has an indirect cost rate in excess of the 15% limit that CEPI sets, due to operational/ tax/ other reasons. Is this limit flexible?

As part of a competitive scientific and financial application process, CEPI remains firm with regard to the maximum rate allowable for indirect costs for both prime awardees and their sub-awardees/sub-contractors. As stated in our cost guidance document, the 15% limit applies to all primary awardees, sub-awardees and sub-contractors that are funded by CEPI.

Where this threshold cannot be adapted for the purposes of reporting, CEPI invites the applicant to submit while adhering to CEPI policies as far as reasonably possible. However, please be advised that the budget submissions will be subject to a cost challenge and further negotiations should they be short-listed for funding. In light of this situation, CEPI encourages the applicant to provide transparency across all the components of its and its partners' budgets, including on indirect costs, which allows CEPI to review the main cost drivers of an applicant's budget.

Scientific questions

7. In the milestone template animal toxicology falls within the category of clinical development. What is the reasoning for this?

In this context we include it in the clinical development category simply because the toxicology studies are linked only to the two vaccine candidates that are taken into the Phase I studies. For the third candidate, we are only looking for proof of concept as a way to demonstrate the versatility of your platform. You should therefore not include toxicology studies for your third vaccine candidate in this proposal.

8. If a vaccine is already available in the market for the selected well-characterized pathogen, is benchmarking (pre-clinical and/or clinical) required?

Comparability of the proposed product with existing products is welcomed wherever possible in preclinical and clinical stages, and benchmarking with existing products would strengthen your application; however, this is not is not a requirement for your Step 2 proposal.

Application and templates questions

9. Is filling out detailed separate budget templates for each sub-awardee necessary?

Yes, we need a separate budget template and narrative for each sub-awardee. We understand that this might be time consuming, but it is important for CEPI to understand the main cost drivers among the sub-awards. Therefore, if there are sub-awards, you are required to submit separate sub-award

budgets and budget narratives in the CEPI template. If the sub-awardee and/or amounts are not known at the time you develop the budget, please provide the estimated cost and rationale for each sub-award, and try to break down the costs (FTEs, lab equipment, indirect costs etc.). For more information about sub-awards budgets, please see our budget template instructions, point 2.3.8.

10. Can applicants use their own WBS templates? What is the level of detail required for the WBS?

Applicants are encouraged to use their own WBS templates, or to modify the illustrated template as appropriate if they choose to do so. Please ensure that the level of detail provided should summarize your project, and make it understandable to a first-time reader.

11. Under section 2.7 the application form asks for listing of current and prior grant /contracts >1 million USD. The list of current and previous funding can be exhaustive. Any advice as to how to rationalize?

What we are asking for is funding related to the project that is to be submitted. That is, any prior or current funding that is economically supporting the step 2 proposal.

12. What is to be captured by the evidence template?

The evidence template is intended to capture evidence for all vaccine candidates, including your candidates in your cfp2 proposal and all others in your company's portfolio based upon the same platform.

13. Could CEPI please clarify what is referred to in section 6. Product Profile when you say in the table to indicate "Variations from CEPI outbreak profile"?

The column in the table named "Variations from CEPI outbreak profile" was mistakenly inserted. You can ignore this column, and only fill out the two first columns.