

Call for Expression of Interest (CEI) for the selection of new Members of the Stakeholders Group of the Clean Hydrogen Joint Undertaking

The present CEI follows a first one launched in December 2021, after the entry into force of the Single Basic Act, establishing the Joint Undertakings under Horizon Europe. The results of the CEI and the list of members selected under the previous CEI was confirmed by the Governing Board of the Clean Hydrogen JU who has subsequently appointed the [members of the Stakeholders Group](#) of the Clean Hydrogen Joint Undertaking. By decision of the Governing Board, the composition of the Stakeholders Group can be revised after one year of operation.

1. Introduction

The Clean Hydrogen Joint Undertaking (hereafter referred to as “Clean Hydrogen JU”) is an European (public-private) partnership between the European Union, represented by the European Commission and the European Hydrogen sector, represented by both Hydrogen Europe and Hydrogen Europe Research, its founding members. The Clean Hydrogen JU is established under the Single Basic Act¹ of the Joint Undertakings as the continuation of the successful Fuel Cell and Hydrogen Joint Undertakings (FCH JU and FCH 2 JU), under FP7 and Horizon 2020 (H2020) respectively.

The aim of the Clean Hydrogen JU is to support research and innovation (R&I) activities in the Union in clean hydrogen solutions and technologies, under EU’s funding programme for research and innovation, Horizon Europe, established by the Horizon Europe Regulation², and in synergy with other EU initiatives and programmes.

The Clean Hydrogen JU will contribute to the European climate neutrality goal by producing noticeable, quantifiable results towards the development and scaling up of hydrogen applications. This will help develop a number of hydrogen technologies, which are currently either not competitive or have a low technology readiness level but are expected to contribute to the 2030 energy and climate targets and most importantly make possible climate neutrality by 2050.

The focus of the research and innovation activities of the Clean Hydrogen JU will have a different scope compared to FCH 2 JU, shifting to areas related primarily to the production of clean hydrogen, as well as the distribution, storage and end use applications of low carbon hydrogen in hard to abate sectors. They will be guided to a large extent by EU’s Hydrogen Strategy and the policy developments in this context, contributing to its implementation.

In particular, the Clean Hydrogen JU will aim to accelerate the development and deployment of the European value chain for safe and sustainable clean hydrogen technologies, strengthening its competitiveness and with a view to supporting notably SMEs, accelerating the market entry of innovative competitive clean solutions. The final goal is to contribute to a sustainable, decarbonised and fully integrated EU energy system, and to the EU’s Hydrogen Strategy, playing an important role in the implementation of its roadmap towards climate neutrality.

¹ [Council Regulation](#) (EU) 2021/2085 of 19th November 2021, establishing the Joint Undertakings under Horizon Europe

² [Regulation](#) (EU) 2021/695 establishing Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation

2. General and Specific Objectives of the Clean Hydrogen Joint Undertaking

The Single Basic Act defines the following general objectives specific for the Clean Hydrogen JU, while following the principle of technological neutrality:

- a) Contribute to the objectives set out in the 2030 Climate Target Plan, the European Green Deal and the European Climate Law, by raising the Union's ambition on reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels, and climate neutrality at the latest by 2050;
- b) Contribute to the implementation of the 2020 European Commission's Hydrogen Strategy for a climate neutral Europe³;
- c) Strengthen the competitiveness of the Union clean hydrogen value chain, with a view to supporting, notably SMEs, accelerating the market entry of innovative competitive clean solutions;
- d) Stimulate research and innovation on clean hydrogen production, distribution, storage and end use applications.

These are then translated in the following specific objectives:

1. Improve through research and innovation, including activities related to lower Technology Readiness Levels (TRL), the cost-effectiveness, efficiency, reliability, quantity and quality of clean hydrogen solutions, including production, distribution, storage and end uses developed in the Union;
2. Strengthen the knowledge and capacity of scientific and industrial actors along the Union's hydrogen value chain, while supporting the uptake of industry-related skills;
3. Carry out demonstrations of clean hydrogen solutions with the view to local, regional and Union-wide deployment, aiming at involving stakeholders in all Member States and addressing renewable production, distribution, storage, and use for transport and energy-intensive industries as well as other applications;
4. Increase public and private awareness, acceptance, and uptake of clean hydrogen solutions, in particular through cooperation with other European Partnerships under Horizon Europe.

The last specific objective concerning the co-operation with other European Partnerships reflects the importance of hydrogen as a fuel, energy carrier and energy storage medium, with application in all end-use sectors. Therefore, it is deemed important that the Clean Hydrogen JU establishes a structured collaboration with many other Horizon Europe partnerships.

3. Opening the Clean Hydrogen Joint Undertaking to all sectors and stakeholders

Opening Joint Undertakings in general and the Clean Hydrogen JU in particular to a wider community reflects the importance of synergies under the Multi-annual Financial Framework 2021-2027. Synergies among European funding instruments and actions to close the innovation gap in Europe are an important element to support the implementation of the European Hydrogen Strategy. Synergies

³ Some objectives by 2030: produce clean hydrogen at around €1.5-3/kg, which will require reaching the 2030 targets in efficiency improvement and lowering CAPEX costs. In addition, this also assumes the availability of renewable electricity at favourable prices, as well as allowing penetration into mass markets, and reducing distribution costs to less than €1/kg of hydrogen at scale.

are needed to pull together resources, align priorities and ultimately maximise the impact of clean hydrogen R&I investments.

The Single Basic Act underlines the impact-driven approach of European partnerships. This Regulation aims at a more effective use of institutionalised European partnerships notably by focusing on clear objectives, outcomes and impact that can be achieved by 2030, and by ensuring a clear contribution to the related Union policy priorities and policies. For this endeavour, structured cooperation between JUs, and close collaboration and synergies with other relevant initiatives at Union, national and regional level are key in achieving greater scientific, socio-economic and environmental impact and ensuring uptake of results⁴.

To achieve the scientific objectives of the Clean Hydrogen JU, all sectors concerned by the hydrogen economy should be given the possibility to get involved in preparing and implementing its Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA). Actions undertaken by the Clean Hydrogen JU should consider disruptive technological trajectories alternative to mainstream technologies. The public sector should be involved, especially regional and national authorities, the latter being responsible for setting up climate policies and measures related to market mechanisms, to fill in the gaps between ready-to-market technology development and large-scale uptake.⁵

4. The governance framework of the Clean Hydrogen Joint Undertaking

Under Horizon Europe the Clean Hydrogen JU continues to be an industry led private public partnership. The private sector is represented by the Hydrogen Europe AISBL (the 'Industry Grouping') and the Hydrogen Europe Research AISBL (the 'Research Grouping'). The European Union is represented by the Commission. Each of the Members appointed its representatives at the Governing Board of the Clean Hydrogen JU.

The **bodies** of the Clean Hydrogen JU are:

- a) the Governing Board;
- b) the Executive Director;
- c) the States' Representatives Group; and
- d) the Stakeholders Group.

The Governing Board is the highest decision-making body. It is composed of representatives from the public and private members.

The Executive Director is responsible for the day-to-day management, assisted by the Programme Office.

The States' Representatives Group and the Stakeholders Group are advisory bodies⁶.

5. Statutory role and tasks of the Stakeholders Group

Recital 34 of the Single Basic Act requires that *"With a view to ensuring that joint undertakings are aware of the positions and views of stakeholders from the entire value chain in their respective fields,*

⁴ As per Recital 14 of the Single Basic Act.

⁵ As per Recital 56 of the Single Basic Act.

⁶ Section 3 Part One of the Single Basic Act.

joint undertakings should be able to set up their respective advisory stakeholders groups, to be consulted on horizontal issues or specific questions, as per the needs of each joint undertaking”. The Stakeholders Group of the Clean Hydrogen JU “(...) shall be open to all public and private stakeholders, including organised groups, active in the field of the Joint Undertaking, international interest groups from Member States, associated countries or other countries”⁷. It “(...) shall consist of representatives of sectors which generate, distribute, store, need or use clean hydrogen across the Union, including the representatives of other relevant European partnerships, as well as representatives of the European Hydrogen Valleys Interregional Partnership and of the scientific community”⁸.

In terms of the Stakeholders Group tasks, it shall provide input on the strategic and the technological priorities to be addressed by the Clean Hydrogen JU as laid down in the Multi-Annual Work Plan, taking due account of the progress and needs in adjacent sectors; provide suggestions to enable concrete synergies to take place between the Clean Hydrogen JU and the adjacent sectors or any sector with which synergies are deemed of added value and provide input to the annual European Hydrogen Forum of the Clean Hydrogen Alliance.

It shall be regularly informed of the activities of the Clean Hydrogen JU and shall be invited to provide comments on the Clean Hydrogen JU’s planned initiatives. The meetings of the stakeholders group shall be convened by the Executive Director.

The Executive Director may advise the Governing Board to consult the Stakeholders Group on specific questions. Where such consultation takes place, a report shall be submitted to the Governing Board after the relevant discussion in the Stakeholders Group.

6. Selection process of the members of the Stakeholders Group

In compliance with paragraph 3 of article 22 of the Single Basic Act, on 17 December 2021, the Governing Board of the Clean Hydrogen JU has adopted the specific criteria and selection process for the composition of the Stakeholders Group and mandated the Executive Director to launch a transparent and open Call for Expression of Interest (CEI), which specific eligibility, selection and exclusion criteria aimed at balancing representation in terms of geographical distribution, gender, sector and stakeholders’ expertise.

The selection process allowed the States’ Representatives Group to propose potential candidate groups or associations to become Members of the Stakeholders Group whilst ensuring clear and transparent criteria taken into account by the Evaluation Panel.

On 17 December 2021, the Clean Hydrogen JU launched a Call for Expression of Interest open to all candidate groups or sector representatives to join the JU’s Stakeholders Group. The Call closed on 16 January 2022, 23:59 PM (CET) with 62 expressions of interest.

On 2 February 2022, after concluding the selection process following the criteria established by the Governing Board of the Clean Hydrogen JU, the [members of the Stakeholders Group](#) were appointed for a four-year term in February 2022 and have had four meetings.

Decisions concerning the previous CEI

⁷ Article 22 of the Single Basic Act.

⁸ Articles 84 of the Single Basic Act.

The Governing Board, on its decision regarding the specific criteria and selection process for the composition of the Stakeholders Group, stipulated that *“In its final assessment and appointment, the Governing Board may try to ensure a balanced representation and competencies of all clean hydrogen stakeholders, including gender balance and geographical coverage with a special attention on Central and Eastern Europe coverage. In that respect, the composition of the Stakeholders Group may be revised after one year of operation”*.

In the decision appointing the members of the Stakeholders Group, the Governing Board has also highlighted the need to reassess the composition of the Stakeholders Group after one year of operation by including other members, taking into account gaps in the representation of sectors or stakeholders.

Considering the Governing Board decisions stated above, this CEI aims to extend the composition of the Stakeholders Group with new members that should be appointed for the remaining period of the initial four-year term.

Selection process to extend the composition of the Stakeholders Group:

1. Recital 34 of the Single Basic Act requires that *“With a view to ensuring that joint undertakings are aware of the positions and views of stakeholders from the entire value chain in their respective fields, joint undertakings should be able to set up their respective advisory stakeholders groups, to be consulted on horizontal issues or specific questions, as per the needs of each joint undertaking”*
2. In accordance with the general provisions of Article 22(2) of the Single Basic Act *“The stakeholders group shall be open to all public and private stakeholders, including organised groups, active in the field of the joint undertaking, international interest groups from Member States, associated countries or other countries”*
3. In particular for Clean Hydrogen Joint Undertaking, Article 84(1) mentions as specific provisions that *“The stakeholders group shall consist of representatives of sectors which generate, distribute, store, need or use clean hydrogen across the Union, including the representatives of other relevant European partnerships, as well as representatives of the European Hydrogen Valleys Interregional Partnership and of the scientific community”*.
4. For the purpose of selecting the new Members of the Stakeholders Group, a transparent Call for Expression of Interest (hereinafter referred to as “CEI”) is to be launched.
5. The CEI is to be launched by the Executive Director of the Clean Hydrogen Joint Undertaking. He/she must ensure that the process foreseen in this Governing Board Decision and the specific criteria required of the future Members are duly taken into account in the CEI. The Executive Director shall foresee the overall process under the authority of the Governing Board.
6. The CEI should in addition be drafted in such a way as to safeguard the principle of committing to a balanced overall representation in terms of:
 - Geographical distribution;
 - Sector representation;
 - Stakeholders’ expertise;
 - Gender;
 - Other relevant provisions as required by the Article 84 of the Single Basic Act.
7. The CEI is to be published on the website of the Clean Hydrogen JU and potentially other sector specific publications necessary to ensure the widest possible openness.

8. In accordance with the Article 22(3), the States Representatives Group will be invited to propose potential candidates.
9. An Evaluation Panel composed of representatives of Clean Hydrogen JU members (Hydrogen Europe, Hydrogen Europe Research and the Commission) supported by the Programme Office will assess all eligible candidate groups or associations on the basis of the eligibility and selection criteria mentioned in Article 2 below and will propose a shortlist of candidates (one main and one alternate per relevant sector) considered best suited for appointment, as well as a reserve list of candidates. On the basis of the panel results, and taking also into account the candidate groups or associations proposed by the States' Representatives Group, the Executive Director will present the results of the selection process to the Governing Board, including a full record of the candidates not included in the lists mentioned above with grounding for rejection, as well as the candidates deemed ineligible.
10. The Governing Board will appoint the new Members of the Stakeholders Group from the shortlist proposed while taking into consideration the candidates proposed by the States' Representatives Group. The Governing Board will also approve the reserve list.
11. The new Members of the Stakeholders Group shall be appointed for the remaining period of the four-year term of the original Members, which may, subject to a decision of the Governing Board, be renewed for an additional period of 3 years.
12. The established reserve list shall be valid for the duration of the term, including any subsequent renewal of the appointed members of the Stakeholders Group. In case of a vacancy, the Governing Board will, subject to continuing eligibility in terms of the criteria in Article 2, select a new member from the reserve list for the rest of the duration of the term of the Stakeholders Group.
13. Each new Member of the Stakeholders Group, where applicable, shall appoint an individual that is a staff member from its secretariat as its representative, who shall perform the tasks required by the Article 84(2) on their behalf.
14. Before appointment, all new individual representatives of the Members of the Stakeholders Group shall be required to complete a declaration of confidentiality as well as a commitment to disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest according to the procedure established by the Governing Board to give effect to Articles 31 and 40 of the Single Basic Act. The names and functions/posts of the individual representatives shall be published on the Clean Hydrogen JU website.
15. Each new individual representative of the Members of the Stakeholders Group may have up to three appointed alternate(s).
16. Each Member of the Stakeholders Group may decide the term of office of its individual representatives in accordance with its internal rules. If the office of a representative falls vacant, the respective Member shall appoint a new representative for the remainder of the term of office.

Specific eligibility criteria for the selection:

Candidate groups or sector representatives, preferably associations of the Stakeholders Group of the Clean Hydrogen JU, shall meet at least one of the following eligibility criteria:

- a. Being a registered organisation⁹ in one of the sectors of the hydrogen value chain¹⁰;
- b. Being an organisation representing another relevant European partnership¹¹;
- c. Being a representative organisation of the scientific community.

Specific selection criteria for the selection:

In order to reflect the coverage across the European Union for the entire hydrogen value chain but also qualifications and skills necessary to the sector and as such to ensure effectiveness of this body, the candidate group or sector representatives, preferably association should meet the following selection criteria:

- a. Be registered in one of the Member States of the European Union or one of the Countries associated to Horizon Europe programme, in accordance with Article 16 of Regulation (EU) of the Council and of the Parliament on the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, laying down its rules for participation and dissemination;
- b. Perform current activity(ies) in synergies with the clean hydrogen sector or organisations in the hydrogen supply/value-chain for at least three years;
- c. Be an interest group or sector representatives, preferably association containing a representative number of members active in the hydrogen sector of at least either 25 members or 50% of the total members;
- d. Be a European association or an organisation representing the interest of its members from at least three Member States.

In its final assessment and appointment, the Governing Board will try to ensure a balanced representation and competencies of all clean hydrogen stakeholders, including gender balance and geographical coverage with a special attention on Central and Eastern Europe coverage.

The current composition of the Stakeholders Group will be taken into account when selecting the new members to fill the gaps in the representation of sectors and stakeholders' expertise and ensure balance of geographical distribution and gender.

Specific exclusion criteria for selection

The following exclusion criteria will to be considered:

- Any candidate group or organisation of companies with consolidated accounts and acting as a conglomerate, and therefore representing its interests only;
- Any candidate group or organisation of research centres acting under the same brand and therefore with limited representativeness beyond its direct activities;
- Any candidate group or organisation not applying with at least a main and first alternate representative candidate with suitable academic qualifications and/or relevant experience for the role, as assessed by the evaluation panel;

⁹ In a broader understanding.

¹⁰ As mentioned by the EU Hydrogen Strategy (COM(2020) 301 final) or by the EU Strategy for Energy System Integration (COM(2020) 299 final) and as per the Recital 34 of the Single Basic Act

¹¹ As defined by the Recital 58 of the Single Basic Act *"The clean hydrogen partnership should interact in particular with the zero emission road and waterborne transport, Europe's railway, clean aviation, processes for the planet and clean steel European partnerships"*

- Any candidate group or organization not applying with representative and alternative representative of different genders;
- Any international interest group not representing the interests of the European Union.

7. Selection and appointment procedure

Based on the applications received, the Executive Director of the Clean Hydrogen JU will prepare (with the support of the Programme Office of the JU) a list of all candidates eligible to become members of the Stakeholders Group on the basis of the essential eligibility and exclusion criteria listed under the above section 6. An Evaluation Panel will be appointed ahead of the deadline for submission of applications, i.e. before 31st January 2024. It shall be composed of representatives of Clean Hydrogen JU members (Hydrogen Europe, Hydrogen Europe Research and the Commission) supported by the Programme Office and the current chair and vice-chair of the Stakeholders Group, representing the current members. The Evaluation Panel will assess all eligible candidate groups or organisations, preferably associations on the basis of the eligibility, selection and exclusion criteria listed above. It will propose a shortlist of candidates (at least one main and one alternate per sector) considered best suited for appointment, as well as a reserve list of candidates. On the basis of the panel results, taking also into account the candidate groups or organisations, preferably associations proposed by the States' Representatives Group, the Executive Director will present the results of the selection process to the Governing Board, including a full record of the candidates not included in the lists mentioned above with grounding for rejection, as well as the candidates deemed ineligible. The Chair of the Governing Board (in cooperation with the Executive Director) will present the results of the Evaluation Panel's selection process to the Governing Board in the form of a draft short-list of selected candidates, a draft reserve list and a full record of candidates not included in the lists as well as candidates deemed ineligible.

Based on the lists established by the Evaluation Panel, the Governing Board will appoint the new Members of the Stakeholders Group and approve the reserve list. Before the first meeting of the Stakeholders Group after the appointment, all individual representatives of the new Members of the Stakeholders Group shall be required to complete a declaration of confidentiality as well as a commitment to disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest according to the procedure established by the Governing Board to give effect to Articles 31 and 40 of the Single Basic Act.

The names and functions/posts of the new individual representatives shall be published on the Clean Hydrogen JU website, together with the current Members.

The appointed Stakeholders Group Members shall demonstrate appropriate ethical conduct, absence of conflict of interest and shall respect the confidentiality of the information and documents to which they will have access. The appointed new Members as well shall be subject to the obligation of professional secrecy which, by virtue of the Treaties and the rules implementing them, applies to all members of the institutions and their staff, as well as to the Commission's rules on security regarding the protection of sensitive nonclassified and Union classified information, laid down in Commission Decisions (EU, Euratom) 2015/44331 and 2015/44432 respectively.

Specific clauses to this effect will be included in and/or annexed to the declaration of confidentiality.

Each new Stakeholders Group Member shall also sign an individual nondisclosure agreement prior to the start of his/her activities. In order to ensure the independence of the Stakeholders Group in performing its mandate, before appointment, all members of the Stakeholders Group shall be

required to complete and sign a declaration of conflict of interest as well as a commitment to disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest that may prejudice the independency and impartiality of their duties when acting as Stakeholders Group Member.

The Specific rules on the prevention, avoidance and management of conflict of interest are detailed in the rules of procedures of the Stakeholders Group already adopted and in the rules and procedure of the Governing Board to give effect to Articles 42 of the Single Basic Act. Applicants shall notify in written any direct or indirect involvement in any of the Members other than the Union and other stakeholders participating in the Clean Hydrogen JU in order for the Executive Director to determine any recourse to mitigate any potential conflict of interest in their duties for the Stakeholders Group.

8. Application procedure

Applicants should carefully review their suitability and potential candidacy including the eligibility, selection and exclusion criteria stated above. Applicants are requested to submit an online application via the dedicated EU-Survey created by the Clean Hydrogen JU and available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/SgCleanHydrogenJu_CoEI21.

Applicants should note that applications will only be received via the online EU-Survey mentioned above.

9. Deadline for submission of applications

The initial deadline (23h59 CET of 31st January 2024) was extended. Applications must be received by the Clean Hydrogen JU via the dedicated EU-Survey by **23h59 CET 15th February 2024**.

10. Other information

No correspondence will be exchanged on the status of the applications except in the case of a positive or negative final decision, or in the case of any necessary documentary evidence the Executive Director or the Evaluation Panel may deem necessary for the establishment of eligibility and assessment of the selection criteria as set out in section 6 of this call.

Applicants are therefore formally requested not to enquire about the progress of their application neither by email, telephone or fax, nor by letter.

11. Start of assignment

Conclusion of the evaluation process and appointment decision of the new Members of the Stakeholders Group by the Governing Board of the Clean Hydrogen JU is expected to take place before the first SG meeting of 2024, scheduled for the end of May.

12. Protection of personal data

The Clean Hydrogen JU will ensure that candidates' personal data are processed as required by EU Regulation No 2018/1725 /2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions and bodies.

Please refer to the Privacy Statement published on the Clean Hydrogen JU's website:
https://www.clean-hydrogen.europa.eu/privacy-statement-data-collected-linesubscriptions_en