



Pilot and Demonstration Programme funds projects through the Driving Urban Transitions (DUT) Partnership

SFOE Call document

The Swiss Federal Office of Energy (SFOE) together with Innosuisse and the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) invite applicants to respond to the second call of the European Partnership [Driving Urban Transitions \(DUT\)](#), which has been launched in September 2023. DUT is a multilateral and strategic partnership of national and regional research and innovation programs in European Member States and Associated Countries. Switzerland participates in this programme as an associated country.

The Driving Urban Transitions (DUT) Partnership steps up the game to tackle urban challenges. Through research and innovation (R&I), it enables local authorities and municipalities, business, and citizens to translate global strategies into local action. DUT develops the skills and tools to make urban change happen and boosts the urgently needed urban transformation towards a sustainable future with enhanced quality of life in cities.

DUT is realised as a European partnership of more than 60 partners from 27 countries, involving national and regional policy makers, funders and urban-related policy agencies to invest in urban R&I and strengthen a European innovation eco-system for urban transitions. Building upon the JPI Urban Europe achievements, DUT aims to create a strong community around urban transitions and to establish a well-known research and innovation platform that will help cities become more sustainable, inclusive and livable. DUT is addressing urban development in its complexity, with a close link to the European mission of 100 climate-neutral and smart cities.

Our future relies on tackling complex grand challenges here and now, many of which must be addressed within cities and by urban communities. The DUT partnership therefore aims to address these challenges with an integrated approach to offer decision makers in municipalities, companies and society the means to act and enable the necessary urban transformations. In order to support cities along their specific strategies, the Partnership focuses on three critical urban sectors and their interrelationships, which are laid out in its roadmap as Transition Pathways (TP):

- The Positive Energy Districts Transition Pathway (PED);
- The 15-Minute City Transition Pathway (15minC);
- The Circular Urban Economies Transition Pathway (CUE).

SFOE support to Swiss projects accepted at the DUT level is funded through the [Pilot and Demonstration \(P+D\) program of SFOE](#). The SFOE supports pilot and demonstration projects based on Article 49, paragraphs 2 and 4, and Article 53 of the Energy Act (EnG; SR 730.0) and on Article 54 of the Energy Ordinance (EnV; SR 730.01). The stipulations of the Subvention Act (SuG; 616.1) and of the Administrative Procedure Act (VwVG; SR 172.021) also apply. For P+D projects accepted by DUT to be eligible at the Swiss level, the guidelines and criteria outlined in the [P+D directive](#) must be observed. Additional requirements are described in this document.

The DUT call is a two-stage procedure with the first stage being the evaluation of a pre proposal that may qualify for an invitation to submit a full proposal evaluated in the second stage. With the call at the SFOE level described in this document, the evaluation procedure of the P+D programme aligns with the DUT procedure meaning that also the Swiss proposals undergo a two-stage procedure and evaluation. Thus, pre- and full proposals have to be submitted to both DUT and SFOE. For the DUT proposals, the [DUT submission portal](#) has to be used, for SFOE the [specific application forms](#) for the call have to be used.



Scope and topics of the call / Transition Pathways

The focus of this call is on urban areas, in the context of achieving climate-neutral and sustainable cities. Applying consortia have to follow a transdisciplinary approach and involve relevant stakeholders, practitioners, citizens, community groups and NGOs.

Whereas Innosuisse and the SNSF support all above mentioned Transition Pathways (TP), the SFOE only supports the following TPs:

Transition Pathway	Scope	Contact person	Indicative SFOE budget
PED: Positive Energy Districts Transition Pathway	Optimisation of energy efficiency, local energy generation and energy flexibility.	andreas.eckmanns@bfe.admin.ch	€ 2'000'000
15minC: 15-minute City Transition Pathway	Sustainable urban mobility transitions by improving accessibility and connectivity. Integrated mixed-use neighbourhood	luca.castiglioni@bfe.admin.ch	€ 2'000'000

DUT further differentiates between a “research-oriented-approach” (ROA) and an “innovation-oriented-approach” (IOA). To be eligible for SFOE funding, submitted projects have to follow the innovation-oriented-approach to be in line with the scope of the SFOE [P+D programme](#).

Time schedule

1 September 2023	Call opening
30 October 2023	Questions and answers related to call (SFOE specific)
21 November 2023	Deadline for submission of pre-proposals to DUT and SFOE
March 2024	Announcement of pre-proposals invited for full proposal
30 April 2024	Deadline for submission of full proposals to DUT and SFOE
July 2024	Announcement of results to Main Applicants
1 September 2024	Earliest start of projects

Eligibility criteria

This call is addressed to organizations such as private companies, industry organizations, universities of applied sciences, universities, the ETH domain, public institutions (e.g. cities, cantons) and NGOs. To be eligible at the DUT level, applicants are referred to the [DUT call text](#). Additionally, national requirements have to be fulfilled (Art. 49 EnG and Art. 54 EnV), i.e. the proposed projects will be funded by the [P+D programme](#) and thus have to fulfill the formal criteria and content criteria specified in the Appendix IV of the [directive](#) of the [P+D programme](#). The key eligibility criteria and funding conditions are summarized here:



Eligibility at DUT level:

- DUT requires that a project must include at least three independent legal entities from at least three different countries participating in the DUT Joint Call 2023, out of which at least two must be EU member states or Horizon Europe associated countries.
- Project consortia must include one main applicant (project coordinator) who is responsible for the execution of the project. Other consortia members are partners, whereof there are two categories: Partners eligible for direct funding by their respective national funding agencies (Co-applicants) participating in DUT Call 2023; and fully self-financed partners from any country/region who bring their own secured budget (Co-operation partners). The self-financed partner cannot be the project Coordinator and do not count to fulfil the transnationality eligibility criteria.
- Each consortium must include at least one urban government authority partner, either as Main Applicant, Co-applicant or Cooperation Partner, depending on the national/regional eligibility criteria
- Projects are supposed to start between September 2023 and January 2024. The maximum project duration must not exceed 36 months.
- For both the pre- and the full proposal the [designated proposal forms of DUT](#) must be used and filled in in English.

Funding conditions at SFOE level:

- The pre- and full proposal submitted to the SFOE are identical in content and structure to the pre- and full proposal at the DUT level, but must use the respective proposal forms (see below on *Project evaluation*). At the pre-proposal stage, a general description of the project and its structure is required as well as a rough estimate of the financial requirements in accordance with the funding rules of the [P+D programme](#). The projects presented in the pre-proposal and in the full proposal must be consistent. Any significant change to the plans described in the pre-proposal should be explained and justified.
- The [P+D programme](#) can fund a maximum of 40% of the non-amortizable supplementary costs (NASC) of the project. The NASC represent the uneconomical parts of the project, which typically encompass expenditures for research, development, testing, dissemination, etc. as well as the additional cost for the planning and implementation of physical installations compared to conventional technologies, while deducting additional earnings or savings.
- The remaining minimum of 60% have to be contributed by the project partners or through third party funds (see also next point about double funding). Note that in case of DUT projects, work packages related to project management and dissemination can be funded with up to 80% if the Swiss partner act as project coordinator and if the claimed financial effort is within reasonable bounds. The overall funding rate in this exception shall not exceed 50%.
- Double funding: The cumulation of federal financial assistance to fund the proposed project is inadmissible if the legal provisions or rules of any of the concerned funding instruments are breached. In general, federal funds (e.g. SWEET, SEFRI, SNSF, Innosuisse) are not to be used to cover the 60%-portion of own funds in the P+D project budget, neither through direct cash contributions nor through «in-kind contributions» in the form of other related projects that are already under way, because the maximum funding rate of the [P+D programme](#) would be violated. To prevent inadmissible cumulations («double funding»), Swiss applicants must clearly disclose in the pre- and full proposals all sources of financing. If funding from one instrument has been secured and that assistance is sufficient for the project (or a specific portion thereof) to go ahead, applying for assistance from other instruments for the same activities would result in an inadmissible cumulation.



Please note that this is only a brief and incomplete summary. The full eligibility criteria are outlined in the and the [directive of the P+D programme](#).

Project evaluation

Both at the pre- and the full-proposal stage, the proposed projects undergo an eligibility check by the involved funding programmes. Additionally, the projects are evaluated on the national and the DUT level:

On the national level, the pre- and full proposals are also evaluated according to the criteria outlined in Appendix IV of [the P+D programme directive](#). The evaluation is done by SFOE internal experts and external SFOE programme managers. Focus is on the relevance for Switzerland.

At the level of DUT, the pre- and full proposals are forwarded to at least three independent experts and evaluated according to the three criteria excellence, impact as well as quality and efficiency of the implementation (see [Dut call text](#) for more details).

Pre-proposals contain the duly filled DUT pre-proposal application and an SFOE-specific form with additional administrative and content-based information. For pre-proposals to qualify¹ for an invitation to submit a full proposal, all formal and content-based requirements as well as a minimum score of 2 out of 4 in the following qualitative criteria have to be reached (see [P+D programme directive](#)): innovative content (Q1), energy potential (Q2) and approach (Q3).

Full proposals contain the duly filled DUT full-proposal application, an SFOE-specific form with additional information and the SFOE finance sheet with detailed information on project costs, financing and NASC ([link](#)). An invitation to submit a full proposal does not guarantee acceptance nor funding of the project at the full-proposal stage. Full proposals need to fulfill all requirements for the formal, content-based, and qualitative criteria, as stated in the programme directive, to be eligible for funding.

SFOE reserves the right to reduce its financial contribution compared to the demanded amount and stipulate binding conditions connected to the approval if the legal basis and/or the evaluation call for such a measure.

Pre-proposals to the SFOE are to be sent as pdf to pilot-demo@bfe.admin.ch (Subject: "DUT Call pre-proposal") by 21 November 2023.

Full proposals to the SFOE are to be sent as pdf (and xlsx) to pilot-demo@bfe.admin.ch (Subject: "DUT Call full proposal") by 30 April 2024.

Questions related to administration and financial structure (not project content) can be directed at pilot-demo@bfe.admin.ch until 30 October 2023.

¹ Qualifying is a necessary condition for an invitation to the second round, but not a sufficient condition.