FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

FOR INDIAN APPLICANTS

HORIZON-CL5-2026-09-D2-04: Coordinated topic with India on recycling of EV Batteries

Ministry Of Heavy Industries (MHI) – Guidelines for Indian Applicants

Q1. Is this one joint project or two separate projects?

It is one joint project with two separate funding streams. The EU and Indian consortia co-design and co-implement a single research and innovation project — with one jointly written scientific/technical proposal, one agreed work plan, the same start date, the same duration (maximum 36 months), and the same targets. However, each side is funded independently: the European Commission funds the EU consortium through Horizon Europe, and GoI funds the Indian consortium through its own grant mechanism. The two budgets are completely separate and neither government funds the other side's activities. Think of it as one scientific team with two payroll funding systems.

Q2. Can the Indian consortium submit an independent proposal without an EU partner, or can the EU consortium submit without Indian partner?

No. Independent proposals — meaning EU proposals without a matched Indian counterpart (Associated Partner), or Indian proposals without a matched EU counterpart — will be declared ineligible by the GoI. The call is explicitly a coordinated call. Both sides must co-develop the proposal together from the start, agree on common scientific objectives, and submit aligned proposals to their respective portals simultaneously. An India consortium that has not identified and coordinated with its EU counterpart on the other side should not submit.

Q3. Should the scientific proposal (Part B of the Horizon Europe proposal) be the same for both the EU and Indian submissions?

Yes. The scientific proposal — the Horizon Europe Part B — must be jointly developed and the same document submitted to both the EU Funding and Tenders Portal (by the EU Coordinator) and to GoI (by the Indian Coordinator). The Indian Coordinator submits this identical Part B to GoI, together with Indian-specific financial documents and GoI annexes. The scientific content (Part B) must not differ between the two submissions. Any inconsistency between what the EU side submits and what the Indian side submits will be flagged during eligibility checks and may lead to the Indian proposal being declared ineligible by GoI.

Q4. If the scientific proposal is the same, why do Indian partners need to submit separately to GoI?

Because GoI and the European Commission are two different funding agencies operating under different national and EU legal frameworks. The EU Coordinator submits the full proposal (Part A administrative forms + Part B scientific proposal) to the EU Funding and Tenders Portal. The Indian Coordinator separately submits the same Part B plus Indian-specific financial tables, statutory certificates, and GoI annexes to GoI by email. The submission to GoI is how Indian partners formally apply for GoI funding — without it, there is no Indian grant regardless of whether the EU side is selected.

Q5. Do Indian partners sign the EU Grant Agreement? Do European partners sign the GoI agreement?

No to both. Indian entities participate as Associated Partners in the EU consortium — they appear in the EU proposal and contribute to the work, but they do not sign the EU Grant Agreement. Their funding comes from GoI through a separate Memorandum of Understanding / grant agreement with GoI. European partners have no legal relationship with GoI and do not sign any Indian government document. Each side's funding relationship is exclusively with its own funding agency.

Consortium Composition and Eligibility

Q6. How many partners does each side need, and what is the minimum consortium size?

The minimum requirement is three independent legal entities on each side: at least three independent Indian legal entities, and at least three independent legal entities from three different EU Member States or Associated Countries on the EU side (as per Horizon Europe rules). This means the full consortium has a minimum of six entities — three Indian and three European. There is no upper limit on partners, but both funding agencies expect the consortium size to be justified by the project's scope and ambition.

Q7. Who must lead the Indian consortium?

The Indian Coordinator — the entity that signs the agreement with GoI, distributes funds to Indian partners, and takes legal responsibility for the Indian side of the project — must be a Company incorporated in India under the Companies Act 1956/2013. The Indian Coordinator must have a Net Worth of not less than Rs. 25 crore. The Indian Coordinator shall furnish a certificate from its statutory auditor specifying the Net Worth of the Indian Coordinator, as at the close of the financial year as per latest annual financials duly audited by the statutory auditor.

Q9. Do Indian entities also need to register on the EU portal?

Yes. All Indian entities appearing as Associated Partners in the EU proposal must obtain a PIC (Participant Identification Code) — a nine-digit number assigned by the EU Funding and Tenders Portal (ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders). The PIC is needed for the EU Coordinator to include Indian partners in the Part A administrative forms.

Q10. Can an Indian company registered in India but majority-owned by a foreign multinational participate?

No. GoI guidelines explicitly require the Indian coordinator to be a company with at least 51% ownership held by resident Indian citizens.

Pilot Plant

Q11. What exactly must the project deliver? Is this a laboratory research project?

No. This is not a laboratory research project. The project must design, build, and operationalise a jointly operated industrial-scale recycling pilot line on Indian soil, achieving Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 7–8 by the end of the 36-month project. The pilot line must process black mass from mixed lithium-ion battery chemistries, recover lithium to a purity suitable for Cathode Active Material (CAM), recover graphite or silicon-graphite, and demonstrate digitalised collection, sorting, and safe discharging systems. A Life Cycle Analysis (LCA) of the piloted processes is also required. The project furthermore must demonstrate, commercially viable operations for a minimum of 2 years after project completion.

Q12. GoI requires the land for the pilot plant to be provided free of cost. What does this mean exactly?

GoI's guidelines require that the **Indian member(s)** of the Consortium arrange and provide land for the pilot plant site at no cost to the project. Land cost is not an eligible project cost under GoI and cannot be included in the Indian budget. The land is treated as a non-financial contribution from the industry partner. It must be physically located in India. The consortium partners may bear the cost of the land, secures any necessary permissions, and makes it available for the duration of the project and post-project commercial operation.

Q13. MHI funds up to 80% of eligible costs. What exactly counts as the 20% mandatory contribution, and does it need to be deposited upfront?

GoI operates on a reimbursement model — it does not pay in advance. Indian consortium members incur eligible project expenditure from their own cash resources first, then submit reimbursement claims. GoI reimburses 80% of eligible expenditure for consortium members; the remaining 20% is not reimbursed and automatically constitutes that consortium's mandatory contribution.

Q14. GoI has a condition about 2-year sustainability of the plant post-project. What does this mean?

The call requires the pilot plant to demonstrate commercially viable operations for a minimum of 2 years after project completion. MHI will expect the Indian consortium to include in its proposal a credible commercialisation plan showing how the pilot plant will transition to a commercially self-sustaining operation after the project grant ends. Proposals that do not include a convincing post-project commercial plan are likely to score poorly on the Impact criterion during evaluation.

Q15. If the pilot plant generates revenue during the project through the sale of recovered lithium, black mass, or other products, who will retain this revenue?

The revenue from the project operations shall be retained by the Consortium based on the Consortium Agreement signed by the members. The consortium members are expected to cover the aspect for the members responsible for operations while deciding their scope division/work packages and clearly specify the same in the Consortium Agreement.

Q16. Who will own the pilot plant after project completion? Does GoI have any ownership rights because it funds up to 80% of the project? Can the assets be sold or relocated at a later stage?

Since the project is installed with support of GoI funds, the project cannot be sold or transferred after completion and should be operational for its design life. It is the responsibility of the consortium members to ensure plant operations for its design life.

Funding and Financial Questions

Q17. Can GoI funds be used to pay for equipment or services provided by European partners, or vice versa?

No. GoI funds are exclusively for eligible costs incurred by Indian consortium members for activities conducted within India. GoI funds cannot be transferred to European partners in any form — directly or indirectly, in cash or in kind. Similarly, EU Horizon Europe funds cannot be used to fund Indian activities. All cross-border costs — shipments, customs duties, installation support, international travel, training by EU experts in India — must be budgeted by the party responsible. For example, if a European expert travels to India for installation support, the cost is charged to the EU budget. If an Indian team sends samples to a European laboratory, the shipping cost is charged to the Indian budget. Both budgets must be comprehensive and self-contained.

Q18. What is the maximum grant from GoI? Is there a per-partner limit?

The maximum total GoI grant to the Indian consortium is INR 65 crore, regardless of the number of Indian partners. Within this ceiling, the funding rate is up to 80% of eligible project costs.

Evaluation and Selection

Q19. How will proposals be evaluated? Will there be separate evaluations by GoI and the European Commission?

There will be one joint evaluation, not two separate parallel evaluations. A panel consisting of EU & Indian experts— as per Horizon Europe evaluation rules and confidentiality requirements — will jointly evaluate the proposals. Individual evaluation is followed by a remote consensus meeting. GoI will not conduct any separate or independent re-ranking of proposals.

Q20. What are the evaluation criteria and thresholds?

Proposals are evaluated against three standard Horizon Europe criteria. Excellence covers scientific quality, ambition, and the soundness of the methodology and TRL progression plan — the minimum threshold is 3 out of 5. Impact covers the expected outcomes, commercialisation plan, IPR strategy, dissemination, and Life Cycle Analysis — the minimum threshold is 3 out of 5. Quality and Efficiency of Implementation covers the work plan, consortium quality, project management, and risk mitigation — the minimum threshold is 3 out of 5. The minimum total score across all three criteria is 10 out of 15. Only one project will be funded.

Q21. What happens if the EU consortium is found eligible but the Indian counterpart is found ineligible by GoI — or vice versa?

Because the EU Grant Agreement is explicitly linked to the corresponding GoI-funded Indian project, both sides must be declared eligible for the project to proceed. If either side is ineligible, the project cannot be funded on either side. This is a critical interdependency: consortia must ensure that both their EU and Indian proposals fully meet all eligibility requirements before submission.

IPR and Consortium Agreement

Q22. Who owns the intellectual property generated during the project?

For EU partners, IP ownership is governed by the Horizon Europe Grant Agreement and the DESCA model Consortium Agreement. For Indian partners, the ownership of IP generated – from the financial assistance by GoI to Indian Members of Consortium - during the development of the technology under this Call shall vest jointly with the Indian Members of Consortium and GoI. The IP/ technology developed shall not be transferred to any third party from date of completion of technology development for the period of three years, the technology shall be exclusively used by the Indian Members of Consortium for commercialisation and further technological upgradation. The Indian Members of Consortium may use the technical know-how for research purposes, however, the Indian Members of Consortium shall not share the technical know- how, details and design of the technology so developed with any third party within the lock-in period. Indian Members of Consortium and GoI shall retain perpetual right and royalty free, non-exclusive license of the IP to use throughout the project after the lock-in period as mentioned in the CA or till the expiry of IP rights as per law. IP generated by joint activities of India-EU members shall be governed by the Consortium Agreement consistent with both regimes.

Q23. Can Indian partners freely commercialise the technology developed in the project?

The IP/ technology developed shall not be transferred to any third party from date of completion of technology development for the period of three years, the technology shall be exclusively used by the Indian Members of Consortium for commercialisation and further technological upgradation. The Indian Members of Consortium may use the technical know-how for research purposes, however, the Indian Members of Consortium shall not share the technical know- how, details and design of the technology so developed with any third party within the lock-in period. Indian Members of Consortium and GoI shall retain perpetual right and royalty free, non-exclusive license of the IP to use throughout the project after the lock-in period as mentioned in the CA or till the expiry of IP rights as per law.

Q24. Is a Consortium Agreement (CA) required? Which template should we use?

Yes, a Consortium Agreement signed by all partners — Indian and European — is required. It must be in place before the project starts or within six months of project commencement. The recommended template for the EU side is the DESCA model Consortium Agreement, which is widely used in Horizon Europe projects including those with third-country Associated Partners. GoI accepts the consortium agreement developed by the consortium members. The CA must cover IP ownership and access rights, working arrangements, governance and decision-making, data management, confidentiality, and dispute resolution.

Practical Steps

Q25. How do I find a European partner?

The EURAXESS India partner search platform is the primary matchmaking tool. Register your profile and expression of interest at euraxess.ec.europa.eu/worldwide/india. You can also search for potential partners through the EU Funding and Tenders Portal partner search function, and through the BATT4EU network, which connects battery research organisations across Europe. EU-India Information and Networking Hybrid Events - all presentations and event recordings are available on the EURAXESS India website, and the EU National Contact Point (NCP) network in the EU country may also be able to assist.

Q26. What is the submission deadline, and are there any important sequencing rules?

The submission deadline for both portals is 15 September 2026. For the EU side, the deadline is 17:00 Brussels time on that date. For the Indian side, the GoI submission must be made by 15 September 2026, 23:00 IST. Importantly, the EU Coordinator must submit to the EU Funding and Tenders Portal first and obtain the HE Proposal Code before the Indian Coordinator submits to GoI. The HE Proposal Code must be quoted in the subject line of the GoI email submission. It is strongly recommended not to leave this to the final hours —

allow at least one full working day between the EU submission and the Indian submission to ensure the Proposal Code is received and included.

Q27. Where do I send the Indian submission, and what should the email contain?

The Indian Coordinator must send a single consolidated PDF to HoI at proposal-indiaeuttc@gov.in. GoI designated contact (vikas.anand@gov.in, singh.sid@gov.in). The email subject line must include the HE Proposal Code. The PDF must contain: the Joint Part B (identical to the version submitted to the EU portal); the Indian budget tables in INR (Annexes 1 and 2); GoI Funding Specifications (Annex 3); Terms & Conditions Governing the GoI Grant (Annex 4); Certificates from Indian Coordinator and Head of Indian Coordinator Organisation (Proforma-I, II, III); and PFMS registration confirmation for all funded Indian partners. Do not include MHI financial documents in the EU submission.

Q28. Are there events, webinars, or further information sessions planned?

The series of three hybrid information and networking events held in Manesar (26 May), Pune (28 May), and Bengaluru (29 May) 2026 has been completed. All presentations and event recordings are available on the EURAXESS India website. Queries submitted by email queries-indiaeuttc@gov.in till 30.08.02026 will be responded to on a rolling basis.

Q29. Is it possible for a single entity to submit multiple proposals with different consortia?

The proposal has to be submitted by a consortium of 3 independent legal Indian entities. Accordingly, a single entity cannot submit a proposal under the call. However, a single entity can be a member of multiple consortium members - with the knowledge and consent of all consortiums - and submit multiple proposals with different consortiums. Further one entity should not take on a primary coordinating role (Indian Coordinator) for more than one proposal submitted to MHI under the call.