



User-Centred
Energy Systems



Paper 2.2 Limited Sponsorship

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Users TCP ESC

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Matters for the ExCo

The ExCo is asked to approve the proposals for limited sponsorship to increase participation in Tasks without risking TCP integrity. The proposals set out the terms under which Limited Sponsors can participate in the activities of the UsersTCP.

Background

The IEA's TCP Framework allows for Limited Sponsorship of TCP Tasks. Limited Sponsors can only be allowed to participate in one Task and for a maximum of three years. The Users TCP Implementing Agreement also makes allowance for Limited Sponsors. The Annex to this paper sets out the text in the Implementing Agreement related to Limited Sponsorship and a table clarifying the rights of Members, full Sponsors, Limited Sponsors and others in their interaction with the TCP.

At the last Users TCP ExCo meeting in October 2020:

“The ExCo agreed to allow Tasks/Annexes to propose Limited Sponsors for approval by the ExCo on a case-by-case basis. The ExCo will review proposals using the reputational risk and TCP integrity tests.”

This paper makes proposals for the terms of Limited Sponsorship and process for approval in three use cases:

- Case 1 is the most common expected use case in which an institution in an IEA member, accession or association country (the “IEA family”) wishes to join a task as a Limited Sponsor. The proposal is to insist upon a small contribution to the Users TCP Common Fund, refundable in the event that they become a full sponsor or the country in which they base becomes a member.
- Case 2 considers collaboration with institutions in countries who are not IEA members, accession or association countries, confirming that these institutions would need to be full Sponsors of the Users TCP. The proposal is to offer these institutions Sponsorship deals with the same terms as Limited Sponsors, with the added requirement of approval by the IEA.
- Case 3 makes proposals for the terms of Limited Sponsorship for institutions in existing Users TCP member countries. The terms require less commitment by the Limited Sponsor to the TCP and less oversight by the ExCo.

Case 1 – Limited Sponsor in a country that is not a TCP member

This is the case envisaged by the TCP's Implementing Agreement. An institution that is based in a country that is part of the broader IEA family, but is not a member of the TCP, would like to collaborate in one of the TCP's Tasks. For example, the institution might be based in Germany (IEA member country), Chile (IEA accession country) or Singapore (IEA association country). None of these countries are Users TCP member countries yet.

Terms

The terms of the Limited Sponsorship should balance the benefits to the TCP of widening participation and learning from international comparative analysis against the risk to the integrity of the TCP of multiple Limited Sponsors replacing full TCP member countries.

The financial risk to the Common Fund would be managed by requiring Limited Sponsors to contribute a fee of 1000 Euros to the Users TCP Common Fund, returnable in the event of the country joining the TCP during the period of the Task. This both offsets the risk of the loss to the Common Fund from countries that may otherwise have joined the TCP, while retaining an incentive for organisations as members to lobby for country level membership. The cumulative risk of multiple Limited Sponsorships would be assessed by the ExCo as part of the TCP integrity test.

The Limited Sponsorship would be limited to three years. The legal term “Limited Sponsor” would be replaced by the term “Task Sponsor” in TCP outreach activities.

The terms offered to Limited Sponsors would be:

- one Task only;
- 3-year maximum term;
- no right to sit on the ExCo;
- 1000 Euro contribution to the TCP’s common fund.

Process

- Task Approval: Acceptance of a contribution (in cash or in-kind) from Limited Sponsors at the Task level is at the discretion of Task member countries. The Task Leader proposes the Limited Sponsorship to the ExCo.
- ExCo Approval: Reputational risk from Limited Sponsors and risk to the integrity of the TCP from the addition of the Limited Sponsor is assessed by the ExCo. The TCP Secretariat would contact the IEA Secretariat

Exception

It is proposed that where the Limited Sponsor is a higher degree research student, that no Common Fund contribution be required, but that a letter confirming that the student will contribute a minimum of 100 hours of in-kind support through participating in the work of the Task is provided. The Task and ExCo approval process would still need to be followed.

Pros

On balance there is likely to be a net positive contribution to the Common Fund. The primary obstacle to participation seems to be governmental administrative inertia and the cost/staff time of participating in the ExCo. Limited Sponsorship is likely to bring more private/third sector engagement with the TCP’s work programme without having a negative effect on countries’ willingness to join the TCP as a whole.

Cons

There would need to be very clear guidelines and practices around avoiding real or perceived conflicts of interest in accepting financial contributions from for-profit organisations. While it is expected that most contributions to Tasks would be in-kind, were cash contributions offered to task-shared Tasks, managing these may add an extra layer of complexity.

Proposed mitigation

The TCP's common fund could accept funds and pay for services billed against these funds. This would provide transparency and accountability for financial flows from sponsors. Sponsors could pay for specific services, e.g. conference dinners.

Case 2: Sponsorship by an institution in a non-TCP member country and non-IEA family member

This use case covers participation by an institution that is neither in a TCP member country nor in an IEA member, accession or association country. For example, an institution in Colombia wishes to participate in the GO-P2P Task. In this case, Limited Sponsorship is not an option. Full sponsorship of the TCP by the institution would need to be pursued.

The terms of the proposal that follows are identical to those applied to limited sponsors from IEA family members, with the additional requirement for approval by the IEA through the CERT (Committee on Energy Research and Technology), which approves all full sponsorship requests.

Terms

The Sponsor would be offered terms equivalent to those offered to Limited Sponsors, i.e.

- one Task only;
- 3-year maximum term;
- no right to sit on the ExCo (they would have to agree to forego this right);
- 1000 Euro contribution to the TCP's common fund.

Process

- Task Approval: Acceptance of a contribution (in cash or in-kind) from Limited Sponsors at the Task level is at the discretion of Task member countries. The Task Leader proposes the Limited Sponsorship to the ExCo.
- ExCo Approval: Reputational risk from Limited Sponsors and risk to the integrity of the TCP from the addition of the Limited Sponsor is assessed by the ExCo.
- IEA Approval: CERT evaluates the sponsorship request.

The same exceptions, pros, cons and mitigations would apply as in Case 1.

Case 3 – Limited Sponsor in Users TCP member countries

This use case covers participation in a Task by an institution in a TCP member country where the contribution (in cash and in-kind) to the Task from that country is not significant enough to warrant full Task membership. For example, an institution based in a TCP member country would like to participate in a cost-share Task to which their government has not made a cost-share contribution. In this case, the other countries participating in the Task may wish to exclude the country in which the limited sponsor is based from the full benefits of participation in the Task.

This use case already exists in the TCP, for example with Sheffield Hallam University (UK)'s participation in the Hard-to-Reach Energy Users Task, without the UK being a Task member.

The Limited Sponsorship would formalise the relationship between the Limited Sponsor and the TCP with the purpose of:

- (i) potentially moving the institution towards full sponsorship in the future; and
- (ii) providing the ExCo with the chance to exclude the institution from engagement at Task level if there was a reputational risk to the TCP.

Terms

The terms of the Limited Sponsorship would be at the discretion of the countries participating in the Task. The participating countries would need to consider whether the terms of participation warranted full Task membership or Limited Sponsorship status.

If the contribution (financial or in-kind) from the Limited Sponsor was deemed to be significant enough, the country in which the institution is based could be considered to have joined the Task and benefit from full Task membership. If the contribution was deemed to be less significant, Limited Sponsorship could be proposed.

No contribution to the Common Fund would be required as there is no risk to integrity of the TCP from this form of Limited Sponsorship from institution in Users TCP Member Countries.

Process

- Task Approval: Acceptance of a contribution (in cash or in-kind) from Limited Sponsors at the Task level is at the discretion of Task member countries. The Task Leader proposes the Limited Sponsorship to the ExCo.
- ExCo Approval: Reputational risk from Limited Sponsors is assessed by the ExCo. The TCP integrity test would not apply.

Annex: Supporting information

Clarification of the role of different classes of Users TCP participation

Form of Participation	Full TCP Membership	Full Sponsorship	Limited Sponsorship	Anyone
Voting on ExCo matters	✓	X	X	X
Subject of National Status reports	✓	X	X	X
Inclusion in international indices or benchmarking	✓	X	X	X
Represented on ExCo	✓	✓	X	X
Participation in multiple Tasks and Projects	✓	✓	X	X
Vote on Tasks and Projects matters	✓	✓	X	X
Unlimited participation duration	✓	✓	X	X
Task Leader	✓	✓	✓	X
Sub-Task Leader	✓	✓	✓	X
Task meeting host	✓	✓	✓	X
Named author on reports	✓	✓	✓	X
Actively participate in Task meetings	✓	✓	✓	X
Contribute research material (literature/case-studies, etc)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Participate in surveys/interviews	✓	✓	✓	✓
Subscribe to communications lists	✓	✓	✓	✓
Receive newsletters and updates	✓	✓	✓	✓
Participate in Open Seminars preceding Task meetings [Task Days]	✓	✓	✓	✓

Legal text on Sponsors and Limited Sponsors in the TCP's Implementing Agreement

Sponsors:

(a) The Executive Committee may, acting by unanimous vote, invite an entity that is not a Designated Entity under this Implementing Agreement or a non-intergovernmental international entity to join this Implementing Agreement as a Sponsor as described in Article 2.5 of the Framework.

(b) Participation of Sponsors in this Implementing Agreement requires prior approval by the Committee on Energy Research and Technology.

(c) The Executive Committee shall establish the terms and conditions for the admission, participation and withdrawal of Sponsors in this Implementing Agreement, including their rights and obligations, provided that no Sponsor will be accorded greater rights than those permitted to Sponsors as set out in the Framework.

(d) A Sponsor's participation shall become effective on the date of its signature to this Implementing Agreement. The Signature Page shall be deposited with the IEA Office of Legal Counsel.

Limited Sponsors:

(a) The Executive Committee may, acting by unanimous vote, invite an entity of an IEA Member, Accession or Association country that is not a Designated Entity to join a Task under this Implementing Agreement as a Limited Sponsor as described in Article 2.6 of the Framework.

(b) Participation of Limited Sponsors does not require prior approval by the Committee on Energy Research and Technology provided that the Limited Sponsor:

- (i) does not have the right to appoint a representative to the Executive Committee;
- (ii) is authorised to participate in only one Task; and
- (iii) participation is limited to no more than three years.

(c) The Executive Committee shall establish the terms and conditions for the admission, participation and withdrawal of Limited Sponsors in Tasks under this Implementing Agreement, including their rights and obligations, provided that no Limited Sponsor will be accorded greater rights than those permitted to Limited Sponsors in the IEA Framework.

(d) A Limited Sponsor's participation shall become effective on the date that it submits a Notice of Sponsorship to the IEA Office of Legal Counsel signalling its intent to be bound by the terms of Limited Sponsorship established by the Executive Committee and the terms of the particular Annex.