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Ultra Long Duration Energy (uLDES) Storage Briefing Event - Questions and Answers

Question: Regarding confidential information; are we told who will be UK Innovate's "experts", "external assessors" and "affinity partners" ? Regarding Innovate UK Privacy Policy para 7.6 and NDA. Who are parties to NDA and what is remedy for any loss incurred by anyone participating in the Programme? Thank you

Answered in the briefing. All external assessors are required to sign confidentiality agreements and remain anonymous; their identities are not disclosed, including under Freedom of Information requests.

Question: Can you go into how technology providers from non-UK countries (in our case, the Netherlands) can be part of this competition? Do we need to have a UK subsidiary, or can we be a technology provider to a UK project developer? Can we then still receive funding?

Answered in the briefing. Non-UK organisations can be involved as technology providers or project partners, but to receive funding under this competition you must be a UK-registered organisation. EU and other non-UK organisations can take part as non-funded partners in projects. These organisations cannot claim any funding for their work on the project and will need to cover costs from their own resources.

Question: Is total cost of ownership defined somewhere? Is it LCOS?

Answered in the briefing. Total cost of ownership should be understood as the broader lifetime cost of the technology. For the purposes of the cost benchmark expressed in \$/kWh, this will essentially be LCOS. Applicants should provide a detailed cost breakdown and clearly state the assumptions used so the technology can be assessed consistently.

Question: Our technology fits both Stream 1 and Stream 2. In phase 1 do we already have to select/mention a stream that we intend to apply for in Phase 2?

Answered in the briefing. Applicants should ideally align their Phase 1 project with the stream they expect to apply for in Phase 2, as Phase 1 should help establish the

basis for a future Phase 2 project. However, Phase 2 applications are independent of Phase 1 and will be assessed separately, so applicants are not prevented from changing streams where appropriate.

Question: Thermal-based LDES can achieve CAPEX under \$/20kWh, LCOS under \$0.05/kWh for tens of hours, up to 100hrs. Will this challenge target these technologies at any point?

Answered in the briefing. This call is focused on electrochemical ultra long duration energy storage technologies only, so thermal technologies are not eligible for this competition. There are currently no firm commitments on LDES beyond electrochemical technologies. Thermal LDES has not been considered extensively in the scoping for this activity, so interventions in this area are very unlikely at present. Any further commitments will be announced once confirmed.

Question: How are you defining \$/kWh? is this cell level?

Answered in the briefing. \$/kWh should be presented at the relevant system/project level rather than only at cell level, with a clear explanation of what is included and excluded. Applicants should provide assumptions and cost boundaries so comparisons can be assessed fairly.

Question: Is there an expected readiness of the technology prior to application (TRL and MRL)?

Answered: No specific TRL or MRL threshold was confirmed, but applicants should show credible manufacturing and supply chain readiness through the requested manufacturing and scale-up outputs in accordance with timelines detailed in the competition scope.

Question: You mentioned zero carbon fuels like hydrogen and ammonia are not eligible for this call but more details for these fuels will come out soon. Can you please elaborate on this?

Answered in the briefing. Hydrogen, ammonia and other zero-carbon fuels are not eligible for this call because the scope is limited to electrochemical ultra long duration energy storage. The briefing indicated that more information on other technology types may come later, but no further detail or timetable was confirmed.

Question: Can an applicant be a sole lead applicant or is it obliged to collaborate?

Answered in the briefing. A single eligible lead applicant can apply, but collaboration rules apply where the project is collaborative. In a collaboration, no single partner can account for more than 70% of eligible costs.

Question: If a project involves one company and one University, do I understand correctly that the company must account for exactly 70% of costs and the University must account for exactly 30% of costs?

Answer The company does not need to account for exactly 70% of project costs, nor the university exactly 30%. For collaborative projects, no single partner can account for more than 70% of the total eligible project costs. Therefore, there is no requirement for a 70/30 split between a company and a university.

Question: Can you expand on the reference to the technology being subject to a single cycle a year? Is this a target minimum or target maximum? If the technology characteristics requires more frequent cycling for technical reliability does this mean the technology is not eligible? There was an earlier reference to the technology attracting other revenues when deployed that suggests more than one cycle or partial cycle or provision of differentiated grid services. Thank you.

Answered in the briefing. The one-cycle-per-year reference is a use-case characteristic for ultra long duration storage and is not intended to exclude technologies that can cycle more frequently. If a technology requires more frequent cycling for technical reliability, that does not automatically make it ineligible, provided it meets the competition scope and objectives.

Question: Must candidate demonstration sites be named in the application?

Answered in the briefing. Candidate demonstration sites do not need to be named in the Phase 1 application.

Question: what's the main difference between phase 1 & 2 of this competition

Answered in the briefing. Phase 1 funds project development studies, including technology assessment, engineering design, cost and scale-up roadmap, market assessment, development plan for a 2030 demonstrator, and manufacturing/supply chain planning. Phase 2 is expected to launch in mid-2027 and support large-scale demonstrations, with at least £10 million in funding.

Question: Please confirm that thermal long term storage is not appropriate for this call

Answered in the briefing. Thermal long duration storage is not appropriate for this call because only electrochemical ultra long duration energy storage technologies are eligible.

Question: Is this competition completely independent of the Faraday Institution's UltraStore competition?

Answer: The competition is technically independent of the Faraday Institution's UltraStore competition, as the two are not connected programmes and are not delivered under the same programme. However, the Faraday Institution has helped shape this funding call, drawing on analysis and understanding developed through its UltraStore Transformational Challenge. UKRI will continue to engage with the Faraday Institution as Phase 2 is developed. The Faraday Institution is acting as a technical adviser and delivery partner to help shape the uLDES Challenge, including work relating to technologies with discharge durations greater than 100 hours.

Question: To what extent does involvement in phase 1 make an application for phase 2 more likely to be successful?

Answered in the briefing. Involvement in Phase 1 does not guarantee success in Phase 2 and does not disadvantage applicants. Phase 2 applications will be assessed on their own merits against the Phase 2 scope and criteria.

Question: Is there a proposed commercial framework that would ensure deployments in phase 2 can ensure profitability if successful? E.g. cap and floor mechanism?

Answered in the briefing. Applicants should explain their proposed route to commercial deployment, revenue assumptions and investment case. Any assumptions made should be clearly detailed in the application and will be factored into the assessment. Applicants should not assume that a particular future market mechanism, such as a cap and floor arrangement, will be available unless this is confirmed in official guidance.

Question: How are you preventing grant funds going to projects dependent on Chinese or other non aligned countries supply chains??

Answer Applicants are expected to provide a manufacturing and supply chain plan as part of the Phase 1 outputs. Supply chain risk, resilience, provenance and

dependency on high-risk or non-aligned supply chains should be addressed through that plan and may be considered during assessment or due diligence. Projects that can provide a credible case for UK manufacturing capability and UK-based supply chains are naturally a stronger fit with the objectives of the competition and this will be factored into assessment. Applicants should also address which manufacturing and supply chain activities could credibly and competitively be undertaken in the UK, and how this pathway supports their cost reduction assumptions.

Question: What is the maximum funding intensity for projects? And does this vary across Phase 1 and 2?

Answer: Phase 1 projects must request between £350,000 and £700,000 and last 3 to 9 months. Grants are paid quarterly in arrears and organisations funded at less than 100% must be able to cover their own contribution. Maximum funding intensity depends on organisation type, project category and the relevant subsidy and funding rules. Funding intensities for Phase 2 have not yet been determined, as Phase 2 is still being designed. Details of Phase 2 funding rates and eligibility will be confirmed when the relevant Phase 2 competition documentation is published.