****

**Contracting Authority: European Commission**

IPA II Annual Multi-Country Action Programme 2017

*Regional Training and Support Programme to improve Quality and Professionalism in Journalism*

Guidelines for grant applicants

Budget line: BGUE-B2017-22.020401

Reference:
EuropeAid/160680/DH/ACT/Multi

Deadline for submission[[1]](#footnote-2) of conceptnote and full application:

02/10/2018 at 20:00 (Brussels date and time)

(in order to convert to local time click [here](http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/converter.html)[[2]](#footnote-3))

NOTICE

This is an open call for proposals, where all documents are submitted together (concept note – Annex A.1 – and full application form – Annex A.2). In the first instance, only the concept notes will be evaluated. Thereafter, for the applicants who have been pre-selected, the full proposal will be evaluated. After the evaluation of the full proposals, an eligibility check will be performed for those which have been provisionally selected. Eligibility will be checked on the basis of the supporting documents requested by the Contracting Authority and the signed ‘declaration by the lead applicant’ sent together with the application.

**To apply to this call for proposals organisations must register in PADOR and submit their application in PROSPECT (see section 2.2.2 of the guidelines).** The aim of PROSPECT is to increase the efficiency of the management of the call for proposals and to offer a better service to civil society organisations through a new panel of functionalities such as the on-line submission and the possibility to follow up online the status of their application.

All organisations can find the e-learning (Annex L) and the PROSPECT users' manual (Annex M) and the FAQ published together with the documents of this call. You may also contact our technical support team via the online support form in PROSPECT[[3]](#footnote-4).

Table of contents

[1 Regional Training and Support Programme to improve Quality and Professionalism in Journalism 4](#_Toc519692891)

[1.1 Background 4](#_Toc519692892)

[1.2 Objectives of the programme and priority issues 4](#_Toc519692893)

[1.3 Financial allocation provided by the contracting authority 6](#_Toc519692894)

[2 Rules FOR thIS call for proposalS 8](#_Toc519692895)

[2.1 Eligibility criteria 8](#_Toc519692896)

[2.1.1 Eligibility of applicants (i.e. lead applicant and co-applicant(s)) 8](#_Toc519692897)

[2.1.2 Affiliated entities 9](#_Toc519692898)

[2.1.3 Associates and Contractors 11](#_Toc519692899)

[2.1.4 Eligible actions: actions for which an application may be made 11](#_Toc519692900)

[2.1.5 Eligibility of costs: costs that can be included 14](#_Toc519692901)

[2.2 How to apply and the procedures to follow 16](#_Toc519692902)

[2.2.1 Application forms 16](#_Toc519692903)

[2.2.2 Where and how to send applications 16](#_Toc519692904)

[2.2.3 Deadline for submission of applications 17](#_Toc519692905)

[2.2.4 Further information about applications 18](#_Toc519692906)

[2.3 Evaluation and selection of applications 18](#_Toc519692907)

[2.4 Submission of supporting documents for provisionally selected applications 25](#_Toc519692908)

[2.5 Notification of the Contracting Authority’s decision 26](#_Toc519692909)

[2.5.1 Content of the decision 26](#_Toc519692910)

[2.5.2 Indicative timetable 27](#_Toc519692911)

[2.6 Conditions for implementation after the Contracting Authority’s decision to award a grant 27](#_Toc519692912)

[2.7 Early detection and exclusion system (edes) 28](#_Toc519692913)

[3 LIST OF annexes 29](#_Toc519692914)

1. Regional Training and Support Programme to improve Quality and Professionalism in Journalism
	1. Background

The recent Strategy for the Western Balkans renewed the engagement of the EU to safeguard freedom of expression and independence of media as a pillar of democracy[[4]](#footnote-5).

Over the last years, the European Commission - DG NEAR has developed a comprehensive approach for the IPA assistance to freedom of expression and media freedom in the area covered by the EU enlargement policy. Beyond addressing media related problems as human rights issues (e.g. violence against journalists), the scope of action has been expanded to other aspects relevant to media freedom (judiciary, self-regulation, media literacy, capacity building of media professional organisations, sector regulation, etc.).

In order to deliver assistance in a systematic manner and to achieve sustainable results, the "Guidelines for EU support to media freedom and media integrity in enlargement countries, 2014-2020" were developed in a process of consultations with relevant stakeholders (i.e. through the “Speak up!” Conferences and the “Media Days”). In line with these guidelines, the EU has put in place several initiatives to support media freedom and integrity[[5]](#footnote-6).

Support to quality independent journalism is one of the main priorities addressed with grants schemes and the establishment of the regional *EU Investigative Journalism Awards in the Western Balkans and Turkey*[[6]](#footnote-7). However, many problems and challenges still persist in the Western Balkans and Turkey (e.g. poor professional skills of journalists; limited training capacity; lack of human and financial resources; editorial reluctance to publish quality news and investigative stories in mainstream and Public Service Media). To address these issues, based on the outcomes of a feasibility study conducted between September and December 2016, DG NEAR approved a regional programme committing the IPA funds for this call for proposals[[7]](#footnote-8).

* 1. Objectives of the programme and priority issues

The **global objective** of this call for proposals is to contribute to the promotion of free and professional media in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

The **specific objective(s)** of this call for proposals is to enhance quality and trustworthiness of news and journalism available to citizens.

The call for proposals will support actions focusing on building new generations of young and mid-career journalists trained in quality journalism techniques and, as a direct outcome of this, enhanced publishing of quality news and investigative stories in mainstream and Public Service Media. A regional network will support the development of quality journalism by involving media, EU and Western Balkans training providers as well as academic institutions. Existing capacities for journalism training will be enhanced and the existing EU Award for Investigative Journalism will be continued as an integrated part of the action.

The selected applicant is requested to achieve the following results and priority issues:

Result 1: New generations of young and mid-career journalists trained in quality news and investigative journalism

The selected applicant will implement a training programme combining national and regional training schemes. Training will have to be delivered in each of the six Western Balkan countries.

The applicant would ideally be a partnership between local providers of professional training for journalists (e.g. journalism schools, universities, media institutes, etc.) and other key stakeholders (media outlets, media CSOs, journalist professional associations, etc.). The selected applicant will be responsible for all the organisational, logistical and administrative requirements to establish and implement:

1. *Training schemes at national level* in basic and advanced skills for quality news and investigative reporting. This training will be organised in the six Western Balkans countries in the local language and involve preferably experienced trainers from the region. The training at national level is designed to bring the participants to an agreed entry level for the regional training.

The national training schemes should include at least the following topics: news criteria and news triangle, structure of news stories; knowing your target group; basic interview techniques; sources and checking facts; writing for the web; news and social media; reporting by smart phone; story telling; ethics; techniques and methodologies for interaction with audiences and tailor made, differentiated media productions

1. A *regional training scheme* will complement the schemes at national level focusing on advanced and specialised skills. The regional training will make use of distance learning platforms and other online tools – including social media – to promote a regional community of practice. The training on a regional level will be carried out by senior media professionals and top trainers from the region as well as from EU Members States. The quality of the international partnership will be assessed in the evaluation of the proposals.

The regional training scheme should include advanced skills building on the national training. It should contain at least the following elements: how to write a synopsis; advanced interview techniques; how to make a research plan; investigative reporting; computer assisted reporting; big data; fact checking; social media; media convergence

The final contents of the national and regional training schemes will be defined based on demands from the region (e.g. the applicant can suggest improvements and additional topics) and has to be approved by the project steering committee.

Result 2: Enhanced production and publishing of quality news and investigative stories in mainstream and Public Service Media

After the conclusion of the training, the trainees will research and produce quality news and investigative stories. The selected applicant will provide financial support to cover the expenses for researching and producing the stories and to appoint coach/ mentors for the trainees.

The selected applicant shall put in place mechanisms to ensure the timely publishing of quality news and stories produced in the framework of the training schemes. Stories will be published, where possible, in local languages in order to improve their dissemination and accessibility for the general public.

The Action Document suggests the following arrangements to achieve this result:

1. In case mainstream and Public Service Media have agreed to join, they might have exclusive rights to the stories (e.g. agreements between training providers and media outlets can be established at national level);
2. In order to mitigate the risk that produced stories are not published, the applicant should provide alternatives (e.g. agreements with alternative platforms or existing national and regional portals).
3. In addition, the programme can foresee a sub-granting component to finance quality journalism outputs: existing and new platforms will have the possibility to apply for grants for journalist projects (e.g. series of articles, TV-programme, Web-TV, etc.) on the condition that they include training and coaching activities for involved journalists.

The applicant should explore the feasibility of the above arrangements and suggest the best action or mix of action to achieve the expected result.

The selected applicant will have to ensure coordination with the regional project “Technical Assistance to Public Service Media in the Western Balkans” which is supporting coproduction of investigative stories among the six Public Service Media of the beneficiary countries.

Result 3: Enhanced local capacity for training providers in quality news and investigative journalism

National and regional providers of professional training for journalists will improve their capacities thanks to their participation in this programme. The training providers will be upgraded to be able to offer more advanced training at national and regional level.

In a long-term perspective, the systemic collaboration between training providers and other media stakeholders should prepare the ground for the institutionalisation and future sustainability of the training capacities (e.g. in local Universities/ journalism schools).

Result 4: Standards of quality journalism consolidated through a regional EU award scheme for quality news and investigative journalism

The applicant will propose a feasible and effective arrangement to continue the successful regional scheme *EU Investigative Journalism Award in the Western Balkans and Turkey*. The award scheme aims at celebrating and promoting outstanding achievements of journalists as well as improving the visibility of quality journalism in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

The selected applicant will be the regional facilitator/administrator of the award scheme over a 36 months period. The selected applicant will organise in each of the Western Balkans countries and Turkey (i.e. seven contests per year):

* An annual award ceremony to be prepared in liaison with the local EU Delegation
* Delivery of the prizes to 1-3 journalists/ country in 2019, 2020 and 2021 The value for individual prizes to be awarded will be proposed by the applicant. The minimum allocation for prizes is EUR 210.000 (i.e. at least EUR 10.000 per country per year)
* Appointment and facilitation of the work of an award jury. The applicant will propose the criteria for the selection and composition of the juries. The jury should incorporate local and external members and the procedures shall ensure trustworthiness, independency and local ownership
* Promotion and awareness raising campaigns to inform the media and general public about the award, ceremonies and awarded journalists

The activities shall, as much as possible, follow the formats already implemented during the first cycle of the award scheme. The improvements will regard mainly a stronger focus on the training needs of journalists, which are at the core of the present action. The selected applicant will ensure synergies between the training component (result 1) and the award scheme (result 4).

**N.B: This is the only component of the present action for which Turkey is eligible.**

**The overall amount to be used for prizes is minimum EUR 210.000.**

* 1. Financial allocation provided by the contracting authority

The overall indicative amount made available under this call for proposals is EUR 2.000.000 The Contracting Authority reserves the right not to award all available funds.

**Size of grants**

Any grant requested under this Call for Proposals must fall between the following minimum and maximum amounts:

* minimum amount: EUR 1.700.000,00 (at least EUR 210.000 for award prizes)
* maximum amount: EUR 2.000.000,00 (at least EUR 210.000 for award prizes)

Any grant requested under this Call for Proposals must fall between the following minimum and maximum percentages of total eligible costs of the action:

* Minimum percentage: 70 % of the total eligible costs of the action.
* Maximum percentage: 90 % of the total eligible costs of the action (see also Section 2.1.5).

The balance (i.e. the difference between the total cost of the action and the amount requested from the Contracting Authority) must be financed from sources other than the European Union Budget or the European Development Fund[[8]](#footnote-9).

1. Rules FOR thIS call for proposalS

These guidelines set out the rules for the submission, selection and implementation of the actions financed under this call, in conformity with the Practical Guide, which is applicable to the present call (available at <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/prag/document.do?locale=en>).

* 1. Eligibility criteria

There are three sets of eligibility criteria, relating to:

1. the actors:
* The **lead applicant**, i.e. the entity submitting the application form (2.1.1),
* if any, its **co-applicant(s)** (**where it is not specified otherwise the lead applicant and its co-applicant(s) are hereinafter jointly referred as "*applicant(s)***") (2.1.1),
* and, if any, **affiliated entity(ies)** to the lead applicant and/or to a co-applicant(s). (2.1.2);
1. the actions:
* Actions for which a grant may be awarded (2.1.4);
1. the costs:
* types of cost that may be taken into account in setting the amount of the grant (2.1.5).
	+ 1. Eligibility of applicants (i.e. lead applicant and co-applicant(s))

**Lead applicant**

(1) In order to be eligible for a grant, **the lead** **applicant** **must**:

* be a legal person **and**
* be non-profit-making **and**
* be a civil society organisation[[9]](#footnote-10) (CSO) or an academic organisation or a media organisation or a representative network[[10]](#footnote-11) of academia, media and CSOs working on a theme of relevance to this Call for Proposals. For the purpose of the present call for proposals, the following types of organisations are eligible: training providers, journalism schools, universities, media institutes, non-commercial media outlets, media CSOs, journalist professional associations, journalist trade unions **and**
* be established[[11]](#footnote-12) in a Beneficiary under the Instrument of Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) **and**
* be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action with their co-applicant(s) and affiliated entity(ies), not acting as an intermediary

 (2) Potential applicants may not participate in calls for proposals or be awarded grants if they are in any of the situations listed in section 2.3.3 of the Practical Guide;

In Annex A.2, section 5 (‘declaration by the lead applicant’), the lead applicant must declare that the lead applicant himself, the co-applicant(s) and affiliated entity(ies) are not in any of these situations.

The lead applicant must act with co-applicant(s) as specified hereafter.

If awarded the grant contract, the lead applicant will become the beneficiary identified as the Coordinator in Annex E3h1 (Special Conditions). The Coordinator is the main interlocutor of the Contracting Authority. It represents and acts on behalf of any other co-beneficiary (if any) and coordinates the design and implementation of the action.

**Co-applicant(s)**

**Mandatory co-applicants:**

Civil society, academic and media organisations or representative networks of CSOs, media and academia from a minimum of 4 different IPA Beneficiaries. Applicants and Co-applicants must thus as a minimum represent civil society, academic and media organisations from at least five (5) different IPA Beneficiaries in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

**Optional co-applicants:**

Civil society, academic and media organisations or representative networks of CSOs, media and academia established in an EU Member State.

For British co-applicants: Please be aware that eligibility criteria must be complied with for the entire duration of the grant. If the United Kingdom withdraws from the EU during the grant period without concluding an agreement with the EU ensuring in particular that British applicants continue to be eligible, you will cease to receive EU funding (while continuing, where possible to participate) or be required to leave the project on the basis of Article 12.2 of the General Conditions1 to the grant agreement

Co-applicants participate in designing and implementing the action, and the costs they incur are eligible in the same way as those incurred by the lead applicant.

Co-applicants must satisfy the eligibility criteria as applicable to the lead applicant. In addition to the categories referred to in section 2.1.1, the following are however also eligible: Civil society, academic and media organisations or representative networks of CSOs, media and academia established in an EU Member State.

Co-applicants must sign the mandate in Annex A.2., section 4.

If awarded the Grant contract, the co-applicant(s) (if any) will become beneficiaries in the Action (together with the Coordinator)

* + 1. Affiliated entities

**Affiliated entity(ies)**

The lead applicant and its co-applicant(s) may act with affiliated entity(ies).

**Only the following entities may be considered as affiliated entities to the lead applicant and/or to co-applicant(s):**

Only entities having a structural link with the applicants (i.e. the lead applicant or a co-applicant), in particular a legal or capital link.

This structural link encompasses mainly two notions:

(i) Control, as defined in Directive 2013/34/EU on the annual financial statements, consolidated financial statements and related reports of certain types of undertakings:

Entities affiliated to applicant may hence be:

* Entities directly or indirectly controlled by an applicant (daughter companies or first-tier subsidiaries). They may also be entities controlled by an entity controlled by an applicant (granddaughter companies or second-tier subsidiaries) and the same applies to further tiers of control;
* Entities directly or indirectly controlling the applicant (parent companies). Likewise, they may be entities controlling an entity controlling the applicant;
* Entities under the same direct or indirect control as the applicant (sister companies).

(ii) Membership, i.e. the applicant is legally defined as a e.g. network, federation, association in which the proposed affiliated entities also participate or the applicant participates in the same entity (e.g. network, federation, association) as the proposed affiliated entities.

The structural link shall as a general rule be neither limited to the action nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation. This means that the link would exist independently of the award of the grant; it should exist before the call for proposals and remain valid after the end of the action.

By way of exception, an entity may be considered as affiliated to an applicant even if it has a structural link specifically established for the sole purpose of the implementation of the action in the case of so-called “sole applicants” or “sole beneficiaries”. A sole applicant or a sole beneficiary is a legal entity formed by several entities (a group of entities) which together comply with the criteria for being awarded the grant. For example, an association is formed by its members.

##### What is not an affiliated entity?

The following are not considered entities affiliated to an applicant:

* Entities that have entered into a (procurement) contract or subcontract with an applicant, act as concessionaires or delegates for public services for an applicant,
* Entities that receive financial support from an applicant,
* Entities that cooperate on a regular basis with an applicant on the basis of a memorandum of understanding or share some assets,
* Entities that have signed a consortium agreement under the grant contract (unless this consortium agreement leads to the creation of a "sole applicant" as described above).

How to verify the existence of the required link with an applicant?

The affiliation resulting from control may in particular be proved on the basis of the consolidated accounts of the group of entities the applicant and its proposed affiliates belong to.

The affiliation resulting from membership may in particular be proved on the basis of the statutes or equivalent act establishing the entity (network, federation, association) which the applicant constitutes or in which the applicant participates.

If the applicants are awarded a grant contract, their affiliated entity(ies) will not become beneficiary(ies) of the action and signatory(ies) of the grant contract. However, they will participate in the design and in the implementation of the action and the costs they incur (including those incurred for implementation contracts and financial support to third parties) may be accepted as eligible costs, provided they comply with all the relevant rules already applicable to the beneficiary(ies) under the grant contract.

Affiliated entity(ies) must satisfy the same eligibility criteria as the lead applicant and the co-applicant(s). They must sign the affiliated entity(ies) statement in Annex A.2., section 5.

* + 1. Associates and Contractors

The following entities are not applicants nor affiliated entities and do not have to sign the "mandate for co-applicant(s)" or "affiliated entities' statement":

* Associates

Other organisations or individuals may be involved in the action. Such associates play a real role in the action but may not receive funding from the grant, with the exception of per diem or travel costs. Associates do not have to meet the eligibility criteria referred to in section 2.1.1. Associates must be mentioned in Annex A.2., section 6 — ‘Associates participating in the action’.

* Contractors

The beneficiaries and their affiliated entities are permitted to award contracts. Associates or affiliated entity(ies) cannot be also contractors in the project. Contractors are subject to the procurement rules set out in Annex IV to the standard grant contract.

* + 1. Eligible actions: actions for which an application may be made

Definition

An action is composed of a set of activities.

Duration

The initial planned duration of an action may **not be lower than 30 months nor exceed 36 months**. The duration of the action could **in no case be extended beyond 31/12/2021**.

Sectors or themes

This Call for Proposals seeks to establish partnerships with CSOs, media and academia and networks of CSOs, media and academia working in one or more of the following themes:

* Freedom of expression, media freedom and media integrity
* Education and training in journalism, media, communication
* Media and information literacy, digital media, social media

Location

Actions must take place in the Western Balkans and Turkey. A limited number of activities could take place in EU Member States.

Types of action

Types of action which may be financed under this call comply with the objectives and priorities described in point 1.2 of these Guidelines and relate to one or more of the themes listed above in this same Section 2.1.4.

The following types of actions and/or a combination of them may qualify for financing (non-exhaustive list):

* Education and training on quality journalism and investigative journalism, including organisational and administrative arrangements for training delivery
* Media and news production
* Support to media news editing, distribution and publishing on different platforms (TV, radio, digital and social media, news agencies, “24h news cycles”, blogs, etc.)
* Facilitation and administration of an award scheme to promote quality and investigative journalism
* Cooperation among media stakeholders to enhance media freedom, standards and accountability
* Capacity building actions for training providers on the thematic areas concerned by this Call
* Raising public awareness on the importance of media freedom and pluralism

The following types of action are ineligible:

* actions concerned only or mainly with individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences and congresses;
* actions concerned only or mainly with individual scholarships for studies or training courses;
* actions concerned only or mainly with “one-off” conferences, and similar events;
* actions concerned only or mainly with academic research and/or feasibility studies;
* actions concerned only or mainly with infrastructure investments and/or the procurement of equipment;
* actions linked to political parties or of political/partisan nature;
* actions dealing with emergency relief or charitable donations;
* actions that fall within the general activities of competent state institutions or state administration services, including local government;
* actions in relation to: the tobacco industry (CAEN code 16), production of alcoholic distilled beverages (CAEN code 1591), arms and munitions (CAEN code 296).

Types of activity

Types of activity which may be financed under this call (the list is not exhaustive):

* Desk research (research cannot be the main purpose of the action), baseline studies
* Training, seminars, workshops for journalists and media professionals
* Conferences, public events
* Mentorship, coaching, and internships
* Support to regional network
* Recruitment process for finding journalists Editor/ Trainer/ Translators
* News production
* Radio and TV programme production
* Translation
* Maintenance of journalistic websites
* Media evaluation
* Capacity building for training providers
* Facilitation of contacts, consultations and discussions between different stakeholders
* Communication and information activities
* Publication of leaflets, manuals on best practice
* Testing of innovative approaches
* Actions aimed at ensuring outreach towards the media community and the general public
* Communication, visibility and relations with the media (events, press events and articles)

**Financial support to third parties[[12]](#footnote-13)**

Applicants are encouraged to propose financial support to third parties in order to help achieving the objectives of the action. This will take the form of:

1) Prizes or awards aiming at celebrating and promoting outstanding achievements of journalists as well as improving the visibility of quality journalism in the Western Balkans and Turkey as per Result 4 (see 1.2). The total allocation for the prizes cannot be less than EUR 210.000 (i.e. EUR 10.000 per country per year in 2019, 2020 and 2021).

2) Sub-granting to finance the production, editing and publication of quality journalism outputs of the training schemes and to mitigate the risks that stories produced in the framework of the training schemes are not published, as per Result 2 (See 1.2). The maximum amount for sub-granting cannot be more than 10% of the EU contribution.

**The maximum amount of financial support per third party is up to EUR 60 000**.

The third parties shall be selected for receiving financial support through public contests in the local language AND in English. Third parties shall apply for financial support in the local language. The application procedure should be easily accessible by individuals and organisations with limited managerial and administrative capacities. The entire procedure should comply with the principles of transparency, equal treatment and fair competition, and adequate measures should be foreseen to prevent any situation which could give rise to conflict of interests.

The lead applicant should present internal project monitoring arrangements to follow up the implementation of the activities of third parties financed with EU funds.

The lead applicant should coordinate to the best possible extent the activities implemented by third parties in order to ensure synergies with other actions/events managed by the EU and with any other relevant projects in the region.

Under this call, financial support to third parties may not be the main purpose of the action.

In compliance with the present guidelines and notably of any conditions or restrictions in this section, the lead applicant should define mandatorily in section 2.1.1 of the grant application form:

1. the objectives and results to be obtained with the financial support (i.e. both prizes and sub-grants)
2. the different types of activities eligible for financial support, on the basis of a fixed list
3. the types of persons or categories of persons which may receive financial support
4. the maximum duration of the activities implemented by third parties
5. the criteria for selecting these entities and giving the financial support
6. the evaluation and award procedure (frequency of Calls/ contest, duration of the evaluation procedure etc. )
7. the criteria for determining the exact amount of financial support for each third entity,
8. the maximum amount which may be given. The applicant can decide to specify the minimum and the maximum amount available for each of the foreseen calls for Applications/ contests, the effective support should be consistent with the actual financial and management capacities of the recipient organization and should not exceed 60,000 EUR per third entity per call
9. the communication modalities by which the applicant will ensure outreach to other organisations

In all events, the mandatory conditions set above for giving financial support (points (i) to (ix)) have to be strictly defined in the grant contract as to avoid any exercise of discretion.

In the context of the Financial Support, the Beneficiary(ies) of the grant contracts may be asked by the European Commission to provide a summary of the applications received in English.

Visibility

The applicants must take all necessary steps to publicise the fact that the European Union has financed or co-financed the action. As far as possible, actions that are wholly or partially funded by the European Union must incorporate information and communication activities designed to raise the awareness of specific or general audiences of the reasons for the action and the EU support for the action in the country or region concerned, as well as the results and the impact of this support.

Applicants must comply with the objectives and priorities and guarantee the visibility of the EU financing (see the Communication and Visibility Manual for EU external actions specified and published by the European Commission at <https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/communication-and-visibility-manual-eu-external-actions_en>).

Applicants (applicant + co-applicants) are requested to pay a special attention to communication, visibility and relations with the media by dedicating funds to contract media visibility actions online and offline to a communication expert or to a specialised press and media agency/service provider.

The above provisions apply also to third parties receiving financial support in the framework of the grant awarded under this Call for proposals.

Number of applications and grants per applicants / affiliated entities

The lead applicant may not submit more than 1 application under this Call for Proposals

The lead applicant may not be co-applicant or affiliated entity in another application.

A co-applicant/affiliated entity cannot be involved in more than 1 application under this Call for Proposals.

* + 1. Eligibility of costs: costs that can be included

Only ‘eligible costs’ can be covered by a grant. The categories of costs that are eligible and non-eligible are indicated below. The budget is both a cost estimate and an overall ceiling for ‘eligible costs’.

The reimbursement of eligible costs may be based on any or a combination of the following forms:

* actual costs incurred by the beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies)
* one or more simplified cost options.

Simplified cost options may take the form of:

* **unit costs:** covering all or certain specific categories of eligible costs which are clearly identified in advance by reference to an amount per unit.
* **lump sums:** covering in global terms all or certain specific categories of eligible costs which are clearly identified in advance.
* **flat-rate financing:** covering specific categories of eligible costs which are clearly identified in advance by applying a percentage fixed ex ante.

The amounts or rates have to be based on estimates using objective data such as statistical data or any other objective means or with reference to certified or auditable historical data of the applicants or the affiliated entity(ies). The methods used to determine the amounts or rates of unit costs, lump sums or flat-rates must comply with the criteria established in Annex K, and especially ensure that the costs correspond fairly to the actual costs incurred by the beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies), are in line with their accounting practices, no profit is made and the costs are not already covered by other sources of funding (no double funding). Refer to Annex K for directions and a checklist of controls to assess the minimum necessary conditions that provide reasonable assurance for the acceptance of the proposed amounts.

Applicants proposing this form of reimbursement, must clearly indicate in worksheet no.1 of Annex B, each heading/item of eligible costs concerned by this type of financing, i.e. add the reference in capital letters to "UNIT COST" (per month/flight etc), "LUMPSUM" or "FLAT RATE" in the Unit column. (see example in Annex K)

Additionally in Annex B, in the second column of worksheet no.2, "Justification of the estimated costs" per each of the corresponding budget item or heading applicants must:

* describe the information and methods used to establish the amounts of unit costs, lump sums and/or flat-rates, to which costs they refer, etc.
* clearly explain the formulas for calculation of the final eligible amount[[13]](#footnote-14)
* identify the beneficiary who will use the simplified cost option (in case of affiliated entity, specify first the beneficiary), in order to verify the maximum amount per each beneficiary (which includes if applicable simplified cost options of its affiliated entity(ies))

At contracting phase, the Contracting Authority decides whether to accept the proposed amounts or rates on the basis of the provisional budget submitted by the applicants, by analysing factual data of grants carried out by the applicants or of similar actions and by performing checks established by Annex K.

The total amount of financing on the basis of simplified cost options that can be authorised by the Contracting Authority for any of the applicants individually (including simplified cost options proposed by their own affiliated entities) cannot exceed EUR 60 000 (the indirect costs are not taken into account).

Recommendations to award a grant are always subject to the condition that the checks preceding the signing of the grant contract do not reveal problems requiring changes to the budget (such as arithmetical errors, inaccuracies, unrealistic costs and ineligible costs). The checks may give rise to requests for clarification and may lead the Contracting Authority to impose modifications or reductions to address such mistakes or inaccuracies. It is not possible to increase the grant or the percentage of EU co-financing as a result of these corrections.

It is therefore in the applicants' interest to provide a **realistic and cost-effective budget.**

The simplified cost option may also take the form of an apportionment of Field Office's costs.

Field Office means a local infrastructure set up in one of the countries where the action is implemented or a nearby country. (Where the action is implemented in several third countries there can be more than one Field Office). That may consist of costs for local office as well as human resources.

A Field Office may be exclusively dedicated to the action financed (or co-financed) by the EU or may be used for other projects implemented in the partner country. When the Field Office is used for other projects, only the portion of capitalised and operating costs which corresponds to the duration of the action and the rate of actual use of the field office for the purpose of the action may be declared as eligible direct costs.

The portion of costs attributable to the action can be declared as actual costs or determined by the beneficiary(ies) on the basis of a simplified allocation method (apportionment).

The method of allocation has to be:

1. Compliant with the beneficiary's usual accounting and management practices and applied in a consistent manner regardless of the source of funding and

2. Based on an objective, fair and reliable allocation keys. (Please refer to Annex K to have examples of acceptable allocation keys).

A description prepared by the entity of the allocation method used to determine Field Office's costs in accordance with the entity's usual cost accounting and management practices and explaining how the method satisfy condition 1 and 2 indicated above, has to be presented in a separate sheet and annexed to the Budget.

The method will be assessed and accepted by the evaluation committee and the Contracting Authority at contracting phase. The applicant is invited to submit (where relevant) the list of contracts to which the methodology proposed had been already applied and for which proper application was confirmed by an expenditure verification.

At the time of carrying out the expenditure verifications, the auditors will check if the costs reported are compliant with the method described by the beneficiary(ies) and accepted by the Contracting Authority.

Adequate record and documentation must be kept by the beneficiary(ies) to prove the compliance of the simplified allocation method used with the conditions set out above. Upon request of the beneficiary(ies), this compliance can be assessed and approved ex-ante by an independent external auditor. In such a case, the simplified allocation method will be automatically accepted by the evaluation committee and it will not be challenged ex post.

When costs are declared on the basis of such allocation method the amount charged to the action is to be indicated in the column "TOTAL COSTS" and the mention "APPORTIONMENT" is to be indicated in the column "units" (under budget heading 1 (Human resources) and 4 (Local Office) of the Budget).

It has to be noted that the EUR 60.000 limit, otherwise applicable to costs declared on the basis of simplified cost options, is not relevant for costs declared following apportionment of Field Offices.

Eligible direct costs

To be eligible under this call for proposals, costs must comply with the provisions of Article 14 of the General Conditions to the standard grant contract (see Annex G of the guidelines).

Salary costs of the personnel of national administrations may be eligible to the extent that they relate to the cost of activities which the relevant public authority would not carry out if the Action were not undertaken.

Contingency reserve

The budget may include a contingency reserve not exceeding 5 % of the estimated direct eligible costs. It can only be used with the **prior written** **authorisation** of the Contracting Authority.

Eligible indirect costs

The indirect costs incurred in carrying out the action may be eligible for flat-rate funding, but the total must not exceed 7 % of the estimated total eligible direct costs. Indirect costs are eligible provided that they do not include costs assigned to another budget heading in the standard grant contract. The lead applicant may be asked to justify the percentage requested before the grant contract is signed. However, once the flat rate has been fixed in the Special Conditions of the grant contract, no supporting documents need to be provided.

If any of the applicants or affiliated entity(ies) is in receipt of an operating grant financed by the EU, it may not claim indirect costs on its incurred costs within the proposed budget for the action.

Contributions in kind

Contributions in kind mean the provision of goods or services to a beneficiaries or affiliated entities free of charge by a third party. As contributions in kind do not involve any expenditure for beneficiaries or affiliated entities, they are not eligible costs.

Contributions in kind may not be treated as co-financing.

However, if the description of the action as proposed includes contributions in kind, the contributions have to be made.

Ineligible costs

The following costs are not eligible:

* debts and debt service charges (interest);
* provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
* costs declared by the beneficiary(ies) and financed by another action or work programme receiving a European Union (including through EDF) grant;
* purchases of land or buildings, except where necessary for the direct implementation of the action, in which case ownership must be transferred, in accordance with Article 7.5 of the General Conditions of the standard grant contract, at the latest at the end of the action;
* currency exchange losses;
* credit to third parties.
* salary costs of the personnel of national administrations
	1. How to apply and the procedures to follow

To apply for this call for proposals the lead applicants need to:

1. Provide information about the organisations involved in the action. Please note that the registration of this data in **PADOR is obligatory[[14]](#footnote-15)** for all lead applicants, co-applicant(s) and affiliated entitiy(ies).

PADOR is an on-line database in which organisations register and update information concerning their entity. Organisations registered in PADOR get a unique ID (EuropeAid ID) which they **must mention** in their application. PADOR is accessible via the website: <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/pador_en>

1. Provide information about the action in the documents listed under sections 2.2.2. Online submission via **PROSPECT is obligatory** for this call,

**It is strongly recommended to register in PADOR well in advance and not to wait until the last minute before the deadline** **to submit your application in PROSPECT.**

If it is impossible to register online in PADOR for technical reasons, the applicants and/or affiliated entity(ies) must complete the ‘PADOR off-line form[[15]](#footnote-16) attached to these guidelines. This form must be sent **together with the application,** by the submission deadline (see sections 2.2.2).

Before starting using PADOR and PROSPECT, please read the user guides available on the website. All technical questions related the use of these systems should be addressed to the IT helpdesk at EuropeAid-IT-support@ec.europa.eu **via the online support form in PROSPECT.**

* + 1. Application forms

Applications must be submitted in accordance with the instructions on the grant application form[[16]](#footnote-17) annexed to these guidelines (Annex A.1 and A.2). Applicants must apply in English.

Any error or major discrepancy related to the concept note or any major inconsistency in the application form (e.g. if the amounts in the budget worksheets are inconsistent) may lead to the rejection of the application.

Clarifications will only be requested when the information provided is not sufficient to conduct an objective assessment.

* + 1. Where and how to send applications

**Online submission:**

Applications **must be submitted online** via PROSPECT <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/prospect> following the instructions given in the PROSPECT user manual.

Upon submission of the application online, the lead applicant will receive an automatic confirmation of receipt in its PROSPECT profile.

If it is impossible for the organisation to submit its application online via PROSPECT for technical reasons, the applicant must send their proposal in a sealed envelope (Annex A.1: concept note and Annex A.2.: full application form), budget and logical framework. In particular, the lead applicant must send, in a sealed envelope as described below the following items:

 a. One original signed copy of the complete application form (Annex A.1: concept note and Annex A.2: full application form), the budget and logical framework. The declaration by the lead applicant (Annex A.2., section 8 of the full form) must be stapled separately and enclosed in the envelope

b. 3 additional copies in A4 size, each bound.

c. An electronic version (e.g: CD-Rom) of the items under point (a). The electronic file must contain **exactly the same** application as the paper version enclosed.

The outer envelope must bear the **reference number and the title of the call for proposals**, together with the full name and address of the lead applicant, and the words **‘Not to be opened before the opening session’.**

To reduce expense and waste, we strongly recommend that you do not use plastic folders or dividers. Please also use double-sided printing if possible.

Applications must be submitted in a sealed envelope by registered mail, private courier service or by hand-delivery (a signed and dated certificate of receipt will be given to the deliverer) at the address below. Where a lead applicant sends several different applications (if allowed to do so by the guidelines of the call), each one has to be sent separately:

Postal address

European Commission

 Directorate-General Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations – DG NEAR

 Contracts & Finance IPA, Office L15-06/047

 Central Mail Department (DAVI)-Avenue du Bourget 1 B-1049 Brussels, Belgium

Address for hand delivery or by private courier service

 European Commission

 Directorate-General Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations – DG NEAR

 Contracts & Finance IPA, Office L15-06/047

 Central Mail Department (DAVI)-Avenue du Bourget 1 B-1049 Brussels, Belgium

Applications sent by any other means (e.g. by fax or by e-mail) or delivered to other addresses will be rejected. Hand-written applications will not be accepted

**Please note that incomplete applications may be rejected. Lead applicants are advised to verify that their application is complete using the checklist (Annexes A.1 and A.2, Instructions).**

* + 1. Deadline for submission of applications

The deadline for the submission of applications is 02/10/2018 at 20:00 (Brussels date and time). In order to convert this deadline to local time you can use any online time converter tool that takes into account timezones and winter/summer time changes (example available **here)[[17]](#footnote-18) Lead applicants are strongly advised not to wait until the last day to submit their applications**, since heavy Internet traffic or a fault with the Internet connection (including electricity failure, etc.) could lead to difficulties in submission. The Contacting Authority cannot be held responsible for any delay due to such afore-mentioned difficulties.

In the exceptional case of submission by post or by hand delivery (see section 2.2.2), the date of submission is evidenced by the date of dispatch, the postmark or the date of the deposit slip. In the case of hand-deliveries, the deadline for receipt is at 02/10/2018 at 16:00 (Brussels date and time) as evidenced by the signed and dated receipt.

Any application submitted after the deadline will be rejected.

However, for reasons of administrative efficiency, the Contracting Authority may also reject any application note sent in due time but received after the effective date of approval of the proposal evaluation (see indicative calendar under section 2.5.2).

* + 1. Further information about applications

Questions may be sent by e-mail no later than 21 days before the deadline for the submission of applications to the address(es) below, indicating clearly the reference of the call for proposals:

E-mail address: **NEAR-CSF-applications@ec.europa.eu**

The Contracting Authority has no obligation to provide clarifications to questions received after this date.

Replies will be given no later than 11 days before the deadline for submission of applications.

To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the contracting authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of lead applicants, co-applicants, affiliated entity(ies), an action or specific activities.

No individual replies will be given to questions. All questions and answers as well as other important notices to applicants during the course of the evaluation procedure will be published on the EuropeAid website <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome> as appropriate. It is therefore advisable to consult the abovementioned website regularly in order to be informed of the questions and answers published.

All questions related to registration in PADOR or the online submission via PROSPECT should be addressed to the IT helpdesk at EuropeAid-IT-support@ec.europa.eu **via the online support form in PROSPECT:** Please note that the working languages of the IT support are: English French and Spanish. Therefore users are invited to send their questions in English, French or Spanish should they wish to benefit from an optimum response time.

* 1. Evaluation and selection of applications

Applications will be examined and evaluated by the Contracting Authority with the possible assistance of external assessors. All applications will be assessed according to the following steps and criteria.

If the examination of the application reveals that the proposed action does not meet the eligibility criteria stated in section 2.1, the application will be rejected on this sole basis.

**STEP 1: OPENING & ADMINISTRATIVE CHECKS AND CONCEPT NOTE EVALUATION**

During the opening[[18]](#footnote-19) and administrative check (including the eligibility check of the action) the following will be assessed:

* + - If the deadline has been met. Otherwise, the application will be automatically rejected.
		- If the concept note satisfies all the criteria specified in the checklist in the instructions included in Annex A.1. This includes also an assessment of the eligibility of the action. If any of the requested information is missing or is incorrect, the application may be rejected on that **sole** basis and the application will not be evaluated further.

The concept notes that pass this check will be evaluated on the relevance and design of the proposed action.

The concept notes will receive an overall score out of 50 in line with the evaluation grid below. The evaluation will also check the compliance with the instructions on how to complete the concept note (Annex A.1).

The evaluation criteria are divided into headings and subheadings. Each subheading will be given a score between 1 and 5 as follows: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.

**Evaluation Grid**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Section** | **Maximum Score** |
| **1. Relevance of the action** | **30** |
| 1.1. How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the Call for Proposals? | 5x2\*\* |
| 1.2. How relevant to the particular needs and constraints of the target country(ies) or region(s) is the proposal (including synergy with other EU initiatives and avoidance of duplication)?\* | 5x2\*\* |
| 1.3. How clearly defined and strategically chosen are those involved (final beneficiaries, target groups)? Have their needs been clearly defined and does the proposal address them appropriately?\* | 5 |
| 1.4. Does the proposal contain specific added-value elements, such as environmental issues, promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities, needs of disabled people, rights of minorities and rights of indigenous peoples, or innovation and best practices [and the other additional elements indicated under 1.2. of these guidelines]?\* | 5 |
| **2. Design of the action** | **20** |
| 2.1. How coherent is the overall design of the action? In particular, does it reflect the analysis of the problems involved, take into account external factors and relevant stakeholders? | 5x2\*\* |
| 2.2. Is the action feasible and consistent in relation to the objectives and expected results? | 5x2\*\* |
| **Maximum total score** | **50** |

\*\*these scores are multiplied by 2 because of their importance

Concept notes with a score lower than 30 will be rejected.

Concept notes that reach the above threshold will be ranked by score. The highest scoring applications will be pre-selected until the limit of at least 250% of the available budget for this call for proposals is reached.

Lead applicants will receive a letter indicating the reference number of their application and the respective results. This letter will automatically appear online in the PROSPECT profile of the lead applicant. Lead applicants who, in exceptional cases (see section 2.2), had to submit their application by post or hand-delivery will receive the letter by email or by post if no e-mail address was provided.

The evaluation committee will then proceed with the lead applicants whose proposals have been pre-selected. **STEP 2: EVALUATION OF THE FULL APPLICATION**

Firstly, the following will be assessed:

* If the full application form satisfies all the criteria specified in the checklist in Annex A.2. If any of the requested information is missing or is incorrect, the application may be rejected on that **sole** basis and the application will not be evaluated further.

The full applications that pass this check will be further evaluated on their quality, including the proposed budget and the capacity of the applicants and affiliated entity(ies). The evaluation criteria used are presented in the evaluation grid below. There are two types of evaluation criteria: selection and award criteria.

**The selection criteria** help to evaluate the applicant(s)'s and affiliated entity(ies)'s operational capacity and the lead applicant's financial capacity and are used to verify that they:

* have stable and sufficient sources of finance to maintain their activity throughout the proposed action and, where appropriate, to participate in its funding (this only applies to lead applicants);
* have the management capacity, professional competencies and qualifications required to successfully complete the proposed action. This applies to applicants and to any affiliated entity(ies).

For the purpose of the evaluation of the financial capacity, lead applicants must ensure that the relevant information and documents (i.e. accounts of the latest financial year and external audit report, where applicable) in their PADOR profile are up to date. If the information and documents in PADOR are outdated and do not allow for a proper evaluation of the financial capacity, the application may be rejected.

**The award criteria** help to evaluate the quality of the applications in relation to the objectives and priorities set forth in the guidelines, and to award grants to projects which maximise the overall effectiveness of the call for proposals. They help to select applications which the Contracting Authority can be confident will comply with its objectives and priorities. They cover the relevance of the action, its consistency with the objectives of the call for proposals, quality, expected impact, sustainability and cost-effectiveness.

The evaluation grid is divided into sections and subsections. Each subsection will be given a score between 1 and 5 as follows: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.

**Evaluation Grid[[19]](#footnote-20)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Section** | **Maximum Score** |
| **1. Financial and operational capacity** | **20** |
| 1.1. Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient experience of project management? | 5 |
| 1.2. Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient technical expertise (especially knowledge of the issues to be addressed)? | 5 |
| 1.3. Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient management capacity (including staff, equipment and ability to handle the budget for the action)? | 5 |
| 1.4. Does the lead applicant have stable and sufficient sources of finance? | 5 |
| **2. Relevance of the action** | **30** |
| 2.1. How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the Call for Proposals? | 5x2\*\* |
| 2.2. How relevant to the particular needs and constraints of the target country(ies) or region(s) is the proposal (including synergy with other EU initiatives and avoidance of duplication)? | 5x2\*\* |
| 2.3. How clearly defined and strategically chosen are those involved (final beneficiaries, target groups)? Have their needs been clearly defined and does the proposal address them appropriately? | 5 |
| 2.4. Does the proposal contain specific added-value elements, such as environmental issues, promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities, needs of disabled people, rights of minorities and rights of indigenous peoples, or innovation and best practices and the other additional elements indicated under 1.2. of these guidelines? | 5 |
| **3. Effectiveness and feasibility of the action** | **20** |
| 3.1. Are the activities proposed appropriate, practical, and consistent with the objectives and expected results? | 5 |
| 3.2. Is the action plan clear and feasible? | 5 |
| 3.3. Does the proposal contain objectively verifiable indicators for the outcome of the action? Is any evaluation planned? | 5 |
| 3.4. Is the co-applicant(s)'s and affiliated entity(ies)'s level of involvement and participation in the action satisfactory? | 5 |
| **4. Sustainability of the action** | **15** |
| 4.1. Is the action likely to have a tangible impact on its target groups? | 5 |
| 4.2. Is the proposal likely to have multiplier effects (including scope for replication, extension and information sharing)? | 5 |
| 4.3. Are the expected results of the proposed action sustainable?:(1) financially (how will the activities be financed after the funding ends?)(2) institutionally (will structures allowing the activities to continue be in place at the end of the action? Will there be local 'ownership' of the results of the action?)(3) at policy level (where applicable) (what will be the structural impact of the action — e.g. will it lead to improved legislation, codes of conduct, methods, etc?)(4) environmentally (if applicable) (will the action have a negative/positive environmental impact?)" | 5 |
| **5. Budget and cost-effectiveness of the action** | **15** |
| 5.1. Are the activities appropriately reflected in the budget? | 5 |
| 5.2. Is the ratio between the estimated costs and the expected results satisfactory? | 10 |
| **Maximum total score** | **100** |

If the total score for section 1 (financial and operational capacity) is less than 12 points, the application will be rejected. If the score for at least one of the subsections under section 1 is 1, the application will also be rejected.

If the lead applicant applies without co-applicants or affiliated entities the score for point 3.4 shall be 5 unless the involvement of co-applicants or affiliated entities is mandatory according to these guidelines for applicants.

After the evaluation, applications will be ranked according to their score. The highest scoring applications will be provisionally selected until the available budget for this call for proposals is reached.

In addition, a reserve list will be drawn up following the same criteria. This list will be used if more funds become available during the validity period of the reserve list.

**STEP 3: VERIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY OF THE APPLICANTS AND AFFILIATED ENTITY(IES)**

The eligibility verification will be performed on the basis of the supporting documents requested by the Contracting Authority (see section 2.4). It will only be performed for the applications that have been provisionally selected according to their score and within the available budget for this call for proposals.

* The declaration by the lead applicant (section 5 of Annex A.2) will be cross-checked with the supporting documents provided by the lead applicant. Any missing supporting document or any incoherence between the declaration by the lead applicant and the supporting documents may lead to the rejection of the application on that sole basis.
* The eligibility of applicants and the affiliated entity(ies) will be verified according to the criteria set out in sections 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and 2.1.3.

Any rejected application will be replaced by the next best placed application on the reserve list that falls within the available budget for this call for proposals.

* 1. Submission of supporting documents for provisionally selected applications

A lead applicant whose application has been provisionally selected or placed on the reserve list will be informed in writing by the Contracting Authority. It will be requested to supply the following documents in order to allow the Contracting Authority to verify the eligibility of the lead applicant, (if any) of the co-applicant(s) and (if any) of their affiliated entity(ies)[[20]](#footnote-21):

 Supporting documents must be provided through PADOR (see section 2.2)

The statutes or articles of association of the lead applicant, (if any) of each co-applicant and (if any) of each affiliated entity(ies)[[21]](#footnote-22). Where the Contracting Authority has recognised the lead applicant’s, or the co-applicant(s)’s, or their affiliated entity(ies)’s eligibility for another call for proposals under the same budget line within 2 years before the deadline for receipt of applications, it should be submitted, instead of the statutes or articles of association, a copy of the document proving their eligibility in a former call (e.g. a copy of the Special Conditions of a grant contract received during the reference period), unless a change in legal status has occurred in the meantime[[22]](#footnote-23). This obligation does not apply to international organisations which have signed a framework agreement with the European Commission.

An external audit report produced by an approved auditor, certifying the lead applicant's accounts for the last financial year available where the total amount of the requested EU contribution exceeds EUR 750 000 (EUR 100 000 for an operating grant). The external audit report is not required from (if any) the co-applicant(s) or affiliated entity(ies).

This obligation does not apply to public bodies and international organisations provided that the international organisation in question offers the guarantees provided for in the applicable Financial Regulation, as described in chapter 6 of the Practical Guide.

This obligation does not apply to secondary and higher education establishments.

Legal entity sheet (see Annex D of these guidelines) duly completed and signed by each of the applicants (i.e. by the lead applicant and (if any) by each co-applicant), accompanied by the justifying documents requested there. If the applicants have already signed a contract with the Contracting Authority, instead of the legal entity sheet and supporting documents, the legal entity number may be provided, unless a change in legal status occurred in the meantime.

1. A financial identification form of the lead applicant (not from co-applicant(s), nor from affiliated entity(ies)) conforming to the model attached at Annex E of these guidelines, certified by the bank to which the payments will be made. This bank should be located in the country where the lead applicant is established. If the lead applicant has already submitted a financial identification form in the past for a contract where the European Commission was in charge of the payments and intends to use the same bank account, a copy of the previous financial identification form may be provided instead.

The requested supporting documents (uploaded in PADOR or sent together with the PADOR offline form) must be supplied in the form of originals, photocopies or scanned versions (i.e. showing legible stamps, signatures and dates) of the said originals.

Where such documents are not in one of the official languages of the European Union, a translation into English of the relevant parts of these documents proving the lead applicant's and, where applicable, co-applicants' and affiliated entity(ies)' eligibility must be attached for the purpose of analysing the application.

Where these documents are in an official language of the European Union other than English, it is **strongly** recommended, in order to facilitate the evaluation, to provide a translation of the relevant parts of the documents, proving the lead applicants' and, where applicable, co-applicants' and affiliated entity(ies)' eligibility, into English.

Applicants have to take into consideration the time necessary to obtain official documents from national competent authorities and to translate such documents in the authorised languages while registering their data in PADOR.

If the abovementioned supporting documents are not provided before the deadline indicated in the request for supporting documents sent to the lead applicant by the Contracting Authority, the application may be rejected.

After verifying the supporting documents, the evaluation committee will make a final recommendation to the Contracting Authority, which will decide on the award of grants.

NB : In the eventuality that the Contracting Authority is not satisfied with the strength, solidity, and guarantee offered by the structural link between one of the applicants and its affiliated entity, it can require the submission of the missing documents allowing for its conversion into co-applicant. If all the missing documents for co-applicants are submitted, and provided all necessary eligibility criteria are fulfilled, the above mentioned entity becomes a co-applicant for all purposes. The lead applicant has to submit the application form revised accordingly.

* 1. Notification of the Contracting Authority’s decision
		1. Content of the decision

The lead applicants will be informed in writing of the Contracting Authority’s decision concerning their application and, if rejected, the reasons for the negative decision. This letter will be sent by e-mail and will appear online automatically in the PROSPECT profile of the user who submitted the application. Lead applicants who, in exceptional cases (see section 2.2), had to submit their application by post or hand-delivery, will be informed by email or by post if they did not provide any e-mail address. Therefore, please check regularly your PROSPECT profile, taking into account the indicative timetable below.

An applicant believing that it has been harmed by an error or irregularity during the award process may lodge a complaint. See further section 2.4.15 of the Practical Guide.

* + 1. Indicative timetable

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **DATE** | **TIME** |
| **1. Information meeting, if any** (local time) | Not applicable | Not applicable |
| **2. Deadline for requesting any clarifications from the Contracting Authority** | 12 September 2018 | 18:00 |
| **3. Last date on which clarifications are issued by the Contracting Authority** | 20 September 2018 | 18:00 |
| **4. Deadline for submission of applications**  | 2 October 2018 | 20:00 |
| **5. Information to lead applicants on opening, administrative checks and concept note evaluation (Step 1)** | 15 October 2018\* | - |
| **6. Information to lead applicants on the evaluation of the full application form (Step 2)[[23]](#footnote-24)** | 30 October 2018\* | - |
| **7. Notification of award (after the eligibility check) (Step 3)** | 15 November 2018\* | - |
| **8. Contract signature[[24]](#footnote-25)** | 30 November 2018\* |  |

\***Provisional date.** All times are in local time.

This indicative timetable refers to provisional dates (except for dates 2, 3 and 4) and may be updated by the Contracting Authority during the procedure. In such cases, the updated timetable will be published on the EuropeAid web site <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome>

* 1. Conditions for implementation after the Contracting Authority’s decision to award a grant

Following the decision to award a grant, the beneficiary(ies) will be offered a contract based on the standard grant contract (see Annex G of these guidelines). By signing the application form (Annex A1 and A.2 of these guidelines), the applicants agree, if awarded a grant, to accept the contractual conditions of the standard grant contract. Where the Coordinator is an organisation whose pillars have been positively assessed, it will sign a PA Grant Agreement based on the PAGoDA template. In this case references to provisions of the standard grant contract and its annexes shall not apply. References in these guidelines to the grant contract shall be understood as references to the relevant provisions of the PA Grant Agreement.

Implementation contracts

Where implementation of the action requires the beneficiary(ies) and its affiliated entity(ies) (if any) to award procurement contracts, those contracts must be awarded in accordance with Annex IV to the standard grant contract.

* 1. Early detection and exclusion system (edes)

The applicants and, if they are legal entities, the persons who have powers of representation, decision-making or control over them, are informed that, should they be in one of the situations mentioned in section 2.3.3.1 or 2.3.3.2 of the Practical Guide their personal details (name, given name (if natural person), address, legal form and name and given name of the persons with powers of representation, decision-making or control (if legal person)) may be registered in the EDES. For further information see section 2.3.3 and 2.3.4 of the Practical Guide.

1. LIST OF annexes

**Documents to be completed**

Annex A: Grant Application Form (Word format)

 A.1. Concept Note

 A.2. Full Application Form

Annex B: Budget (Excel format)

Annex C: Logical Framework (Word format)

Annex D: Legal Entity Sheet

Annex E: Financial identification form

Annex F: PADOR Offline Form ***(ONLY IF IMPOSSIBLE TO REGISTER IN PADOR)***

**DOCUMENTS FOR INFORMATION[[25]](#footnote-26)**

Annex G: Standard Grant Contract

- Annex II: general conditions

- Annex IV: contract award rules

- Annex V: standard request for payment

- Annex VI: model narrative and financial report

-Annex VII: model report of factual findings and terms of reference for an expenditure verification of an EU financed grant contract for external action

-Annex VIII: model financial guarantee

-Annex IX: standard template for transfer of ownership of assets

Annex H: Daily allowance rates (per diem), available at the following address:
<http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/funding/about-procurement-contracts/procedures-and-practical-guide-prag/diems_en> (as all necessary information is available via the link the publication of the annex is optional)

Annex J: Information on the tax regime applicable to grant contracts signed under the call

Annex K: Guidelines and Checklist for assessing Budget and Simplified cost options

Annex L : e-learning :

<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/prospect/external/>

Annex M : user manual for PROSPECT :

<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/prospect/external/>

**Useful links**

Project Cycle Management Guidelines

[https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/aid-delivery-methods-project-cycle-management-guidelines-vol-1\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/multimedia/publications/publications/manuals-tools/t101_en.htm)

The implementation of grant contracts - A Users' Guide

<http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/companion/document.do?nodeNumber=19>

Financial Toolkit

<http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/financial-management-toolkit-for-recipients-15112010_en.pdf>

Please note: The toolkit is not part of the grant contract and has no legal value. It merely provides general guidance and may in some details differ from the signed grant contract. In order to ensure compliance with their contractual obligations beneficiaries should not exclusively rely on the toolkit but always consult their individual contract documents.

\* \* \*

1. Online submission via PROSPECT is mandatory for this call for proposals (see Section 2.2.2). In PROSPECT all dates and times are expressed in Brussels time. Applicants should note that the IT support is open Monday to Friday from 08:30 to 18:30 Brussels time (except for public holidays). Applicants should take note of the weekly maintenance hours mentioned in the PROSPECT user manual. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. An example of a time converter tool available online: <http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/converter.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. If PROSPECT is unavailable, the IT support can also be reached via email: EuropeAid-IT-support@ec.europa.eu [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. COM(2018) 65 final, A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western

Balkans [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/policy/policy-highlights/freedom-of-expression-and-media_en> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. <http://mediaobservatory.net/news-and-events/237-nominations-received-2017-contests-eu-awards-investigative-journalism> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/ipa\_ii\_2017\_039-402.01\_mc\_investigative\_journalism.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Where a grant is financed by the European Development Fund, any mention of European Union financing must be understood as referring to European Development Fund financing. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. As defined in the REGULATION (EU) No 233/2014 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 11 March 2014 establishing a financing instrument for development cooperation for the period 2014-2020 “The EU considers CSOs as non-State, non-profit making actors operating on an independent and accountable basis. They include: non-governmental organisations, organisations representing indigenous peoples, organisations representing national and/or ethnic minorities, diaspora organisations, migrants' organisations in partner countries, local traders' associations and citizens' groups, cooperatives, employers' associations and trade unions (social partners), organisations representing economic and social interests, organisations fighting corruption and fraud and promoting good governance, civil rights organisations and organisations combating discrimination, local organisations (including networks) involved in decentralised regional cooperation and integration, consumer organisations, women's and youth organisations, environmental, teaching, cultural, research and scientific organisations, universities, churches and religious associations and communities, philosophical and non-confessional organisations, the media and any non-governmental associations and independent foundations, including independent political foundations […]". [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. A network with legal personality must submit an application under the name of the network. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. To be determined on the basis of the organisation’s statutes, which should demonstrate that it has been established by an instrument governed by the national law of the country concerned and that its head office is located in an eligible country. In this respect, any legal entity whose statutes have been established in another country cannot be considered an eligible local organisation, even if the statutes are registered locally or a ‘Memorandum of Understanding’ has been concluded. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. These third parties are neither affiliated entity(ies) nor associates nor contractors. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. Examples:- for staff costs: number of hours or days of work \* hourly or daily rate pre-set according to the category of personnel concerned;- for travel expenses: distance in km \* pre-set cost of transport per km; number of days \* daily allowance pre-set according to the country;- for specific costs arising from the organization of an event: number of participants at the event \* pre-set total cost per participant etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. Natural persons who apply for a grant (if so allowed in the guidelines for applicants) do not have to register in PADOR. In this case, the information included in PROSPECT and the grant application form is sufficient. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. Which corresponds to sections 3 and 4 of the full application form – Annex A.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. The grant application form consists of Annex A.1 – concept note and Annex A.2 – full application form. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. For example: http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/converter.html. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. Only where some applications have been submitted offline. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. Note that the relevance may be re-evaluated in the cases described in sections 6.5.7 and 6.5.8. of the Practical Guide. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. No supporting document will be requested for applications for a grant not exceeding EUR 60000. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. Where the lead applicant and/or a co-applicant(s) and or an affiliated entity(ies) is a public body created by a law, a copy of the said law must be provided. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. To be inserted only where the eligibility conditions have not changed from one call for proposals to the other. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. Note that according to the financial regulation, in direct management, lead applicants must be notified the outcome of the evaluation of their applications within 6 months following the submission deadline of the full application. This time-limit may be exceeded in exceptional cases, in particular for complex actions (including multi-beneficiary calls), large number of proposals or in case of delays attributable to the applicants. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. Note that according to the financial regulation, in direct management the grant contract must be signed within 3 months following the notification of the award decision. This time-limit may be exceeded in exceptional cases, in particular for complex actions (including multi-beneficiary calls), large number of proposals or in case of delays attributable to the applicants [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. These documents should also be published by the Contracting Authority. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)