



Belgrade,

QUESTIONS and ANSWERS No.1

Civil Society Facility Information Session – for restricted Call for Proposal for Framework Partnership Agreements and associated annual operating grants

Publication reference: EuropeAid/176151/DD/FPA/RS

No.	Question	Answer
1.	Could our operational plan be covering more priorities?	Applicant's annual work program can cover different priority sectors / areas, however the application for an FPA and associated operating grant needs to be made only for one specific priority area.
2.	One priority sector might cover multiple areas. In such a case, can the grant proposal cover both areas or needs to be limited to only one?	<p>The application has to be submitted for a priority sector. The proposal can cover work in several areas. The Framework Partnership Agreements are signed with organisations with significant experience in minimum one of the specific areas defined within the relevant five priority sectors.</p> <p>Among the FPA signatories strength in a specific area (s) will help determine selection for a grant.</p>
3.	Is the competition intended only for professional organizations (which have employees), or is it possible to finance "small" organizations that do not have employees, but have activities?	Please see section "2.1.1. Eligibility of applicant" of the Guidelines for Applicants for eligibility criteria.
4.	For area of social inclusion and child protection under LOT 1, can the applications be only about social inclusion?	The applications intended for this area are expected to cover both elements. An application covering only social inclusion can, in principle, be made, however this will be reflected with the assessment of the relevance of the strategic plan in line with criteria specified in section 2.3.
5.	Assuming the percentage of 60 – 95 requirement for EU financing for operating grants, can one FPA signatory make an application for an operating grant with an	Any operating grant requested under this call and under each lot must fall between the minimum and maximum amounts indicated for each lot and the minimum and maximum percentages of total eligible costs of the

No.	Question	Answer
	Annual work program totalling EUR 250K?	<p>relevant* annual work programme of the applicant as set in section 1.3 of the Guidelines for applicants.</p> <p>*The activities foreseen in the work programme should correspond to the pursuit of the organisation's statutory objectives, which must clearly indicate (at least) one of the specific areas defined within the five priority sectors set in section 1.2.</p>
6.	If we already have 4-year strategic plan that expires in 2025, should we then adopt a new one in January 2023 covering exactly 4 years that these FPAs will cover?	The applicant needs to have a strategic plan covering the 2023 –2026 period at the time of application.
7.	If we adopted a 4 year strategic plan this summer, would that change the requirement?	The applicant needs to have a strategic plan covering the 2023 –2026 period at the time of application.
8.	Can organizations working in migration and asylum field apply for Lot1?	<p>Please see section “2.1.1. Eligibility of applicant” of the Guidelines for Applicants for eligibility criteria.</p> <p>The organisation should have significant experience in minimum one of the specific areas defined within the relevant lot. The relevance of the strategic plan to the topic of the applied lot will be evaluated according to criteria specified in section 2.3.</p>
9.	What are the benefits of signing the FPA apart from maybe being invited for putting forward our operating grant?	The establishment of Framework Partnership will contribute to a more structured cooperation between civil society and the European Union on the basis of common objectives and priorities.
10.	Is FPA signed once and lasts for 4 years (e.g. if awarded in 2023) or do the CSOs need to apply for its renewal each year (e.g. each year there is a new call for FPA)?	The framework partnership are valid for four years once signed. The operational grant is awarded for 12 months in line with the financial year of the beneficiary. A new application for an operating grant must be submitted each year.
11.	Which period should the Annual Work Program cover? i.e. considering that the signing of the Operational Grant is planned for April 2023.	The Annual Programme needs to cover the financial year, i.e. January 1 st to December 31 st of the organisation.
12.	So, only those organisations who sign the FPA now, can apply for operational grants in	Yes, that’s correct.

QUESTIONS and ANSWERS No.1

No.	Question	Answer
	the upcoming 4 years in the context of this Call?	
13.	Doesn't knowing the successful grant beneficiaries only at the end of April create a disadvantage about implementation of the Annual Program?	The contracting authority is committed to doing its best to finalise evaluations and sign the grant agreements early in the financial years. However, on the current call, the signatures for the grants are expected only by the end of April.
14.	If we are given the operating grants when can we expect to receive the first instalment?	It is similar procedure to action grants. The first instalment will be paid to the beneficiary within 30 calendar days of the signature of the grant agreement.
15.	<p>How the one CSO could differentiate: regular operational costs versus project activities' direct costs?</p> <p>For example standard monthly local transportation costs to and from work, which is a legal obligation?</p> <p>Or some other transportation costs: for example organization from Loznica does environmental advocacy, and travels to Belgrade to participate at the public event.</p> <p>CSO from Loznica has an operational grant, and at the same time has some other projects, and some of other projects has advocacy activity too.</p> <p>So, where should this trip to Belgrade be claimed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - under the direct project costs or - as operational grant costs? 	<p>Statutory objectives of the organisation determine the nature and type of activities constituting the work programme, which may be approved. Activities that are implemented on a regular basis as part of the organisation's core mission (and not as part of a project, which is limited in time), may be considered as running costs.</p> <p>In case of submission of supporting documents such as statutes, please consider that all documents must be submitted in English.</p> <p>If a beneficiary of an operating grant is also in receipt of an action grant financed from the EU, no indirect costs may be claimed on its share of incurred costs.</p>
16.	Is the organisation that signed an FPA then ineligible as lead applicant or co-applicant for other EU calls within this 4-years timeframe? If it remains eligible (for example, for projects in areas other than the one priority lot it was selected for the FPA), would the FPA/ operating grant effect overhead in these other projects that could potentially be financed by the EU?	<p>The organisation may submit only one application for this call and may be awarded only one FPA and one operating grant for the year 2023 and in subsequent years. The organisation remains eligible for other call for proposals subject to the eligible criteria set in a specific call.</p> <p>The FPA as well as the operating grant are awarded based on the work programme for a specific sector (lot), which must be in line with the statutory objectives of the organisation.</p>

QUESTIONS and ANSWERS No.1

No.	Question	Answer
17.	<p>There is the regulation that operational grant must fall between 50000 to 80000 EUR (Lot 1) and another one that the operational grant must be minimum 60% and max 95% of "of the total eligible costs of the annual work programme".</p> <p>Following those two regulations it seems that this Call is searching for organizations with Annual work programs budgets between cca 52500 EUR (this is option of 50000 EUR with 95%) to 133000 EUR (this is option of 80000 EUR with 60%).</p> <p>Does this mean that organizations with Annual budgets outside of this range cannot apply? According to those regulations it seems that such organizations can not comply with those two regulations because it is not possible to create Annual work programs budget and respect both rules.</p>	<p>Ad 1.): Any operating grant request must fall between the minimum and maximum amounts indicated for the specific lot in section 1.3. of the guidelines. Any grant request (EU contribution) must fall between 60% and 95% of the total eligible costs of the relevant* annual work programme of the applicant submitted for evaluation purposes under this Call.</p> <p>*The activities foreseen in the work programme should correspond to the pursuit of the organisation's statutory objectives, which must clearly indicate (at least) one of the specific areas defined within the five priority sectors set in section 1.2.</p>
18.	<p>Another issue of my concern is that yesterday at the info session was said that operational grant may be used exclusively for the human resources, capacity building, office costs, monitoring and evaluation and planning and that it can NOT be used for the financing of the program activities (for that is the action grants that organizations have). Now, if we follow this rule and rule of 60-95% it is not logical to have Annual work plan with such ratio of operational costs/grant and program activities costs. It is more common to have more funds for the activities in overall budget than for the operational costs. For example according to the rules it is possible to have Annual working plan budget of total 53000 EUR where operational grant is 50000 EUR, so operational costs are 95% and just 5% for the activities/program and be fully eligible.</p> <p>Question: I am not sure if I understood this correctly and I do not know how to formulate this question but some clarification on this issue would be helpful.</p> <p>At the end, following what has been said on the info session on purpose of operational grant (human resources, capacity building, office costs, monitoring and evaluation and planning) and that it can not be used for the</p>	<p>An operating grant can't support "Project activities" which are usually financed under an "action grant". The purpose of an operating grant is to cover the running costs of the beneficiary based on an approved work programme, including its general administrative costs. Eligible costs relate to the functioning and general activities of the beneficiary. They are structural and support costs of an administrative, technical and logistical nature that are cross cutting for the operation of the beneficiary body's various activities.</p> <p>Examples: costs connected with infrastructure and the general operation of the beneficiary at main office level and costs such as administrative and financial management, training, legal advice, documentation, IT, maintenance of buildings, water, gas, electricity, insurance, office supplies, human resources, accounting fees, depreciation, telephone bills, travel and other utilities costs.</p> <p>Activities which can be covered by the operating grant must be in pursuit of the statutory objectives of the organisation, which must be in line with EU policies, and directly linked to the strategic plan. Please see a non-exhaustive list of type of activities in section</p>

No.	Question	Answer
	<p>program activities – in the Guidelines it is a bit different. At page 17 Guideline mention that “following activities may be financed under this call: monitoring sectors, institutions, policies as well as international commitments in the context of the European Union perspective of Serbia; activities for strengthening of existing and creating civil society platforms, networks and coalitions, including systems for information sharing and transfer of know-how mechanisms; capacity building for sector lobbying with particular attention to wider outreach of CSOs, including small and grass-root CSOs; provision of sector/policy related reports, studies, needs assessments and researches; research, analysis and advocacy work and recommendations for the enforcement/revision/adoption of legislation and policies; preparation and delivery of action plans - joint activities with public institutions; dialogue initiatives with groups of parliamentarians or other legislative bodies; awareness raising events, advocacy campaigns, public communication activities; facilitating dialogue, consultation and discussion between civil society and other different stakeholders, involving decision makers, political actors, business community, etc.</p> <p>Those listed activities seems more like program activities rather than operational.</p> <p>Question: Can we get more clear clarification for what purpose this operational grant can be used?</p>	<p>2.1.3 of the Guidelines.</p>
19.	<p>1) In the Guidelines and in the Informative session we were notified that, if we are chosen to sign FPA, we should submit a budget for a period of 12 months, starting January 1st - December, 31st 2023. Considering that a potential operating grant will start in April 2023 the question of financing is raising as well the uncertainty of funds.</p> <p>2) If we are chosen to sign FPA and are not awarded a grant for any year, do we have an obligation to submit a report on achieved results according to the logical framework in that year?</p>	<p>Ad 1.): The operating grant agreement needs to be signed within four months of the start of the beneficiary’s financial year. Costs incurred during the duration of the work programme are eligible. Costs incurred before the start of the beneficiary’s financial year will not be eligible for financing.</p> <p>Ad 2.):As an FPA partner, you are required to follow the conditions stipulated within the FPA agreement as regards to reporting.</p>

QUESTIONS and ANSWERS No.1

No.	Question	Answer
	<p>3) Considering the fact that there are a lot of unknowns relating to the financial part and budgeting (minimum and maximum percentage of annual work programme, lack of instructions for budgeting - percentage of salaries and other costs) we are kindly asking you for detailed instructions.</p> <p>4) Also, there is a problem with defining programme and project activities and activities related to operating grants due to the fact that we are mainly financed by projects.</p> <p>We will highly appreciate it if you can organize additional informative session where we can discuss more about the important issues.</p>	<p>Ad 3.): please see reply to question 1 of this document “Questions and Answers no1”.</p> <p>Ad 4.): please see reply to question 1 of this document “Questions and Answers no1”.</p> <p>The establishment of an FPA and related operating grants is an opportunity for CSOs to differentiate part of the project content and build their AWP based on regular activities.</p> <p>In addition, statutory objectives of the organisation determine the nature and type of activities constituting the work programme.</p> <p>If a beneficiary of an operating grant is also in receipt of an action grant financed from the EU, no indirect costs may be claimed on its share of incurred costs.</p> <p>No additional info session will be held.</p>
20.	<p>Since we are aware of the submission deadline which was clearly stated until 23/01/23, we hope that you can provide some link of the session recording or at least some guidelines (follow up notes). We are eager to apply for this programme for next year.</p>	<p>Please read the questions and provided answers. The deadline to submit questions is 02.01.2023.</p> <p>No publishing of further material is foreseen.</p>
21.	<p>1.Regarding the fact that our organisation (ESN Serbia) is an alliance of three sections (which are legally registered as organisations) bearing the same name (ESN Novi Sad, ESN BelUpgrad and ESN Niš), but with a separate national board, we were wondering if the no associates rule applies to them as well, since some of the operational costs of our organization are directly related to them and the volunteers within the organisations.</p> <p>2.If we do obtain an operational grant, would the money be given to us all at once or over time? Also, would it be on the basis of reimbursements or would the costs be covered beforehand?</p>	<p>Ad 1.): Affiliated entities are entities having a structural link with the applicant, in particular a legal or capital link.</p> <p>This structural link encompasses mainly two notions:</p> <p>(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:</p> <p>Entities affiliated to an applicant may hence be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Entities directly or indirectly controlled by the applicant (daughter companies or first-tier subsidiaries). They may also be entities controlled by an entity controlled by the applicant (granddaughter companies or second-tier subsidiaries) and the same applies to further tiers of control;

No.	Question	Answer
	<p>3. Would we need to open a specific account for this grant or would we be using our own?</p> <p>4. Would one of the eligible costs be the cost of a book-keeper or would we need to do it ourselves?</p> <p>5. Would we have someone who we can contact for some guidance regarding what exactly are the applicable cost for operational grant?</p>	<p>- Entities directly or indirectly controlling the applicant (parent companies). Likewise, they may be entities controlling an entity controlling the applicant;</p> <p>- Entities under the same direct or indirect control as the applicant (sister companies).</p> <p>(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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The nature of the operating grant does NOT allow for co-applicants, affiliated entities and associates to benefit from this call.</p> <p>Ad 2.): The first instalment will be paid to the beneficiary within 30 calendar days of the signature of the grant agreement. Payment procedure will be in line with provisions of article 15 of the general conditions. Please see standard document for grant contract published under “documents for information”.</p> <p>Ad 3.): Although not mandatory we encourage you to open a specific bank account for the operating grant in order to ensure transparency of financial flows.</p> <p>Ad 4.):Section 2.1.3 specifies that the annual work programme should also foresee costs for human resources.</p> <p>Ad 5.): Please see reply to questions 17 and 18 of this document “Questions and Answers no1”.</p>

QUESTIONS and ANSWERS No.1



Electronically signed on 2021-09-23 10:05:05 with IP address 193.50.137.101. Call ID: 2021/2121

**Civil Society Facility Information Session for restricted Call for Proposal for
Framework Partnership Agreements and associated annual operating grants**

Publication reference: EuropeAid/176151/DD/FPA/RS