FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

CIVIL SOCIETY FACILITY AND MEDIA PROGRAMME 2016-2017

Publication reference: EuropeAid/154831/DD/ACT/RS

| **No.** | **Question** | **Answer** |
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|  | Where can I find the Practical Guide for IPA CIVIL SOCIETY FACILITY AND MEDIA PROGRAMME 2016-2017? On the 8th page of Guidelines for applicants it is written that in this Guide is listed in which situations applicants may not participate in this call for proposals. | The Guidelines for applicants, on page 8 state the following: "*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*."  The Practical Guide referred here is PRAG – Practical Guide 2016, and the full guide can be found on the following link:  <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/prag/?header_description=DEVCO+Prag+to+financial+and+contractual+procedures+applicable+to+external+actions+financed+from+the+general+budget+of+the+EU+and+from+the+11th+EDF&header_keywords=ePrag%2C+europa> |
|  | I would like to ask a clarification regarding the requirements for the eligibility of the lead applicant. Can a European media NGO apply together with a civil society organization established in Serbia? | In line with the Guidelines for applicants, for *LOT 1 – Support to Media*, among other mandatory eligibility criteria, the following is stated (section 2.1.1(1) page 7-8) for the lead applicant:   * *in case the lead applicant is print/audio-visual/on-line media, news agencies, media production houses and/or media associations not established in Serbia, it must act with at least one co-applicant that is established in Serbia.*   Further to that, please also note the relevant provisions related to the co-applicants for LOT 1 – Support to Media:  *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.(1) above for the lead applicant under this lot, the following are however also eligible:*   * *Civil society organisations;* * *Cultural and educational institutions.* |
|  | On behalf of the XXX organisation which is currently participating in implementation of the project within CSF programme, as a co-applicant with another organisation, I would like to ask if it is possible for us to apply for a grant in a call CSF and Media Programme Ref. No. EuropeAid/154831/DD/ACT/RS:  a) as a co-applicant organization  b) as a lead organization | Please note that in line with the Guidelines for Applicants, section 2.2.4., p. 20, “*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*.”  The Contracting Authority cannot prejudice the eligibility of the applicants or asses the merits/details of the specific proposal at this stage, i.e. decisions are taken only upon assessment of complete information provided by the specific applicant and/or application in the course of particular evaluation procedure.  The requirements for the eligibility of applicants is described under the *section* *2.1.1 Eligibility of applicants (i.e. lead applicant and co-applicant(s))* of the Guidelines for applicants pages 7-9.  In addition, please note that "*actions which are already funded by other Community programmes and undertaken before the date of contract signature"* are listed as ineligible types of action under this Call for proposals. |
|  | Does the negative financial report for the previous year necessarily makes the applicant disqualified or are there any exceptions to this situation? | Please note that in line with the Guidelines for Applicants, section 2.2.4., p. 20, “*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*.”  In line with the Guidelines for applicants, page (20 and 21), "*A copy of the lead applicant’s accounts of the latest financial year (the profit and loss account and the balance sheet for the last financial year for which the accounts have been closed) must be uploaded in PADOR by the full application deadline. A copy of the latest account is neither required from (if any) the co-applicant(s) nor from (if any) affiliated entity(ies))*.  The financial and operational capacity is evaluated in line with the Evaluation grid as published in the Guidelines for applicants (page 27), *section 1 Financial and operational capacity (from 1.1 to 1.4)* with a maximum score of 20 points, where specifically criterion 1.4 evaluates the following: "*Does the lead applicant have stable and sufficient sources of finance?"*  It is to be noted that "*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 a media association acts as a lead applicant for Lot 1, is this same media association eligible as a co-applicant for Lot 2 under the same Call for proposals? | The provisions related to the "*Number of applications and grants per applicants / affiliated entities*" (page 14 of the GfA) are the following:  The lead applicant **may not** submit more than 1 application per lot under this call for proposals.  The lead applicant **may not** be awarded more than 1 grant per lot under this call for proposals.  The lead applicant **may not** be a co-applicant or an affiliated entity in another application of the same lot at the same time.  A co-applicant/affiliated entity **may not** submit more than 1 application per lot under this call for proposals.  A co-applicant/affiliated entity **may not** be awarded more than 1 grant per lot under this call for proposals.  In addition,the requirements for the eligibility of applicants is described under the *section* *2.1.1 Eligibility of applicants (i.e. lead applicant and co-applicant(s))* of the Guidelines for applicants pages 7-9. |
|  | What kind of documents is submitted as evidence proving the membership of media association members? | As in line with the Guidelines for applicants, section 2.4 page 30, among other listed the following need to be submitted:  Supporting documents must be provided through PADOR.  The statutes or articles of association of the lead applicant, (if any) of each co-applicant and (if any) of each affiliated entity[[1]](#footnote-2). 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[[2]](#footnote-3). This obligation does not apply to international organisations which have signed a framework agreement with the European Commission. |
|  | Could we be the lead applicant in the Lot 1. (Support to Media), and co-applicant in the Lot 2. (Support to Civil Society) | Please see answer to Question No.5. |
|  | Are the eligible costs of printing and paper with or without VAT? Can put these costs in the category of Other costs in the Budget? | Among other costs, the following costs are ineligible:  • taxes, including VAT, duties and charges; |
|  | Do we need Tender for the publishing companies even if we have our supplier for such costs? | All secondary procurement under this call must be done in line with Annex IV: contract award rules, published for this Call for Proposals under "Documents for Information". |
|  | The Centre for xxxx was established by the Government of the Republic of xxxx for the specific purpose of meeting needs in the general interest (non-profit purpose), i.e. providing assistance in the accession process to the countries with European Perspective. The centre is governed by the Executive Board, Supervisory Board and Executive Director. The Executive and Supervisory board members are appointed by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and the Executive Director is appointed by the Executive Board. Pursuant to the Foundations Act, the centre is Private Law legal entity with the public mission.  Please clarify if the nature of our institution enables us to participate in the call. | Please see answer to Question No.3. |
|  | Could you explain the ‘simplified cost option,’ what’s the difference between the budget that we’re somehow used to give and the simplified one? Does it refer to salaries, daily allowances or other expenses already determined by an organization’s statute? | Please refer to the detailed explanation, the definition and the use of the simplified cost option that can be found in the Guidelines for applicants, on pages 15-16, as well as in Annex K - *Guidelines and Checklist for assessing Budget and Simplified cost options (in Documents for Information).*  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.  Please note that 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). |
|  | Could you clarify what are the operating grants in which case you cannot apply for indirect costs in this Call for Proposals? | Grants are direct financial contributions, by way of donation, from the budget in order to  finance any of the following:  (a) an action intended to help achieve a Union policy objective;  (b) the functioning of a body which pursues an aim of general Union interest or has an objective forming part of, and supporting, a Union policy (‘operating grants’).  In line with the Guidelines for applicants page 17, Eligible indirect costs "*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"*. |
|  | If we plan to have a training are we obliged to give grants to the local media, or is this optional? | The training component is mandatory only in case when the applicant is applying for the action under Lot 1- Support to Media, which focuses on "*Analytical and investigative journalism trainings for local media that include support to third parties covering specific sector/themes relevant to this Call for Proposals*" |
|  | Third parties are defined as the local media – is it understood that these have to be legal entities or we could also include individual journalists as well? This also refers to the question of whether training recipients have to be legal entities, i.e. the local media. | Third parties have to be registered (legal person) local media in Serbia for Lot 1 and civil society organisation in Serbia for Lot 2. Individual support to journalists could be subject of an action, but this could not be considered as support to third parties. |
|  | When choosing the media to participate in the training or to receive the grants, is it necessary to have an open competition or can we just pick those we will train? | In compliance with the Guidelines for applicants, the lead applicant should define mandatorily in section 2.1.1 of the grant application form the following:  (i) the objectives and results to be obtained with the financial support  (ii) the different types of activities eligible for financial support, on the basis of a fixed list  (iii) the types of persons or categories of persons which may receive financial support  (iv) the criteria for selecting these entities and giving the financial support  (v) the criteria for determining the exact amount of financial support for each third entity, and  (vi) the maximum amount which may be given.  In all events, the mandatory conditions set above for giving financial support (points (i) to (vi)) have to be strictly defined in the grant contract as to avoid any exercise of discretion. |
|  | I understand that we cannot apply with two projects at the same time, but what does that mean in terms of our distinct [Serbian] legislation, [in which] three media outlets are a single legal entity, although each one of them is registered separately in the Register of Media. Is what counts the legal entity or individual media outlets? | In line with eligibility criteria for the Call, the lead applicant for Lot 1- Support to Media must, among other mandatory criteria listed under section 2.1.1(1), be a legal person and be print/electronic/on-line media, news agencies, media production houses and/or media associations.  Regarding the number of applications to be submitted, please see answer to question No 5. |
|  | The question deals with the filling out of the legal status form and the financial form; I presume that with them you have to submit the founding documents, i.e. all that is requested; now, the question is should they be translated into English or should we submit the original documents, as they are? | In line with the Guidelines for applicants, 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 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. |
|  | Could you please clarify the method of payment for the project of duration of three years? | In line with the General Conditions Article 15, for *Option 2: Actions with an implementation period of more than 12 months and grant of more than EUR 100 000* the following method of payment will apply :  (i) an initial pre-financing payment of 100 % of the part of the estimated budget financed by the Contracting Authority for the first reporting period (excluding contingencies). The part of the budget financed by the Contracting Authority is calculated by applying the percentage set out in Article 3.2 of the Special Conditions;  (ii) further pre-financing payments of 100 % of the part of the estimated budget financed by the Contracting Authority for the following reporting period (excluding not authorised contingencies):   * the reporting period is intended as a twelve-month period unless otherwise provided for in the Special Conditions. When the remaining period to the end of the Action is up to 18 months, the reporting period shall cover it entirely; * within 60 days following the end of the reporting period, the Coordinator shall present an interim report or, if unable to do so, it shall inform the Contracting Authority of the reasons and provide a summary of progress of the Action; * if at the end of the reporting period the part of the expenditure actually incurred which is financed by the Contracting Authority is less than 70 % of the previous payment (and 100 % of any previous payments), the further pre-financing payment shall be reduced by the amount corresponding to the difference between the 70 % of the previous pre-financing payment and the part of the expenditure actually incurred which is financed by the Contracting Authority; * the Coordinator may submit a request for further pre-financing payment before the end of the reporting period, when the part of the expenditure actually incurred which is financed by the Contracting Authority is more than 70 % of the previous payment (and 100 % of any previous payments). In this case, the following reporting period starts anew from the end date of the period covered by this payment request; * the total sum of pre-financing payments may not exceed 90 % of the amount referred to in Article 3.2 of the Special Conditions, excluding not authorised contingencies;   (iii) the balance of the final amount of the grant. |
|  | My question is about the exchange rate – we used to use the National Bank of Serbia middle rate at the time of payment, for the entire year. What exchange rate is used when there is more than one payment? | In line with General conditions, article 15.9 - *Rules for currency conversion*, the "…*conversion into the currency set in the Special Conditions shall be made using the rate of exchange at which each Contracting Authority's contribution was recorded in the Beneficiary(ies)'s accounts, unless otherwise provided for in the Special Conditions"*. |
|  | Can we include audit of the project in the budget or the auditor will be appointed by the Contracting Authority? | The cost for expenditure verification is eligible cost and should be included in the budget, as the Auditor carrying out the expenditure verification will not be appointed by the Contracting Authority. |
|  | Regarding Lot 1, where media associations are listed as eligible applicants; does it mean that journalists’ associations are not in Lot 1, as they are seen as civil society organizations in the second Lot, or can perhaps media associations be understood in a wider sense and not as journalistic? | Please see answer to the question No 3. |
|  | If the co-applicant is an operating grant beneficiary, is it the lead applicant then allowed to have indirect costs? | Yes, in case the indirect cost are requested just to cover administrative costs of the action solely of the applicant. Please also note, however, that the lead applicant may be asked to justify the percentage requested before the grant contract is signed. |
|  | Is it necessary for an organization applying to have those yearly, so-called statutory, audits, as we call them in PADOR? The audit report on the operation of the entire company/organization. | In line with the Article 2.2.5 of the Guidelines for grant applicants, only a copy of the lead applicant’s accounts of the latest financial year (the profit and loss account and the balance sheet for the last financial year for which the accounts have been closed) must be uploaded in PADOR by the full application deadline. A copy of the latest account is neither required from (if any) the co-applicant(s) nor from (if any) affiliated entity(ies)).  In addition, an external audit report produced by an approved auditor, certifying the lead applicant's accounts for the last financial year available, only where the total amount of the requested EU contribution exceeds EUR 750 000. |
|  | Do we have to elaborate in the concept note on the criteria required for support to third parties or we can put the explanation in the full application like we did before? | In line with Guidelines for applicants, the lead applicant should define mandatorily in section 2.1.1 of the grant application form criteria for the support to third parties.  - Please see answer to question no. 15. |
|  | Regarding the given themes can we combine several themes, for example rule of law and ecology, or culture and something else, or we have to focus on one main theme and then incorporate other themes? | In line with Guidelines for applicants, the action can cover one or more themes of the Call for Proposals. |
|  | I didn’t see in the Guidelines distinction between the private and public media, so my question is can public broadcasting service apply to this Call? | Yes, as in line with the Guidelines for applicants in order to be eligible for a grant, the lead applicant must be print/electronic/on-line media, news agencies, media production houses and/or media associations. |
|  | I’m interested in Lot 2 actions regarding the cultural events and educational programs that promote cultural diversities and joint activities of young people from different cultures, ethnic and religious backgrounds that promote respectful cultural diversity. Now, we’re a bit specific as we promote this culture and university through ‘security culture’. Now, this culture mentioned here, does it involve security culture as well or just film, media, comics, theaters, and so on? | Please see answer to the question No 3. |
|  | Can one organization that is already active recipient of a grant from Civil Society Facility program, either as the project leader or a partner, apply for this grant as either a partner or a leader? | For both lots, in line with the Guidelines for applicants pages 12-13, only "*actions which are already funded by other Community programmes and undertaken before the date of contract signature*" are considered as ineligible actions for this Call. |
|  | We plan a follow-up to our investigative stories in the form of policy papers produced by relevant CSOs. Is the cost of production of the follow-up policy papers eligible expense? | Please note that in line with the Guidelines for Applicants, section 2.2.4., p. 20, “*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*.” |
|  | Is it possible to have as an associate an organization that is already applying for another action as a lead applicant or co-applicant? | Please see answer to the question No 3. and No.5 |
|  | We plan to train local media, after selecting them in an open call. We also plan to give them support (subgranting) so they have a full package of capacity building. It would be logical to administer the financial support (subgranting) directly to the organizations chosen in the open call. However, are we obliged to issue another open call for subgranting? (this would complicate situation as it would involve other organizations that we will not be training). | Please see answer to the question No 15. |

1. 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-2)
2. To be inserted only where the eligibility conditions have not changed from one call for proposals to the other. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)