



Contracting Authority: European Commission

Civil Society Facility and Media Programme 2019

Strengthening policy dialogue in reform processes

Guidelines for grant applicants

Budget line(s): BGUE-B2019-22.020401-C1-NEAR DELSRB

Reference:

EuropeAid/169136/DD/ACT/RS

Deadline for submission¹ of full application:

18/09/2020 at 15:00 (Brussels date and time)

(in order to convert to local time click [here](#)²)

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.

² An example of a time converter tool available: <http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/converter.html>

NOTICE

This is an open call for proposals, where all documents are submitted together (concept note and full application). In the first instance, only the concept notes will be evaluated. Thereafter, for the lead applicants who have been pre-selected, the full applications will be evaluated. After the evaluation of the full applications, 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 full application.

Online submission via PROSPECT

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 may find more information regarding PROSPECT in the [user's manual](#) and the [e-learning videos](#). You may also contact our technical support team via the online support form in PROSPECT³.

³ If PROSPECT is unavailable, the IT support can also be reached via email: EuropeAid-IT-support@ec.europa.eu

Table of contents

1. STRENGTHENING POLICY DIALOGUE IN REFORM PROCESSES	4
1.1. Background.....	4
1.2. Objectives of the programme and priority issues.....	6
1.3. Financial allocation provided by the contracting authority.....	6
2. RULES FOR THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS	8
2.1. Eligibility criteria	8
2.1.1. Eligibility of applicants (i.e. lead applicant and co-applicant(s)).....	8
2.1.2. Affiliated entities	10
2.1.3. Associates and contractors	11
2.1.4. Eligible actions: actions for which an application may be made	12
2.1.5. Eligibility of costs: costs that can be included.....	17
2.2. How to apply and the procedures to follow	19
2.2.1. Application forms	20
2.2.2. Where and how to send applications.....	20
2.2.3. Deadline for submission of applications	21
2.2.4. Further information about applications	21
2.3. Evaluation and selection of applications	21
2.4. Submission of supporting documents for provisionally selected applications.....	28
2.5. Notification of the Contracting Authority's decision	29
2.5.1. Content of the decision.....	29
2.5.2. Indicative timetable.....	29
2.6. Conditions for implementation after the contracting authority's decision to award a grant.....	30
3. LIST OF ANNEXES	32

1. STRENGTHENING POLICY DIALOGUE IN REFORM PROCESSES

1.1. BACKGROUND

Civil Society Facility and role of civil society

The Enlargement Strategy "A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans" (Western Balkan Strategy) underlines the importance of an enabling environment for civil society organisations. The European Commission calls Governments to ensure stakeholders can actively participate in the reform and policy making process, for example by establishing inclusive structured dialogues on reform priorities with the involvement of an empowered civil society.

European Union (EU) support to Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) aims at building stronger democracies, improving accountability systems and ultimately achieving better policy and economic and social development. It seeks to empower civil society to fulfil the following key roles:

- Creating stronger links to citizens by engaging in public policy processes, reaching out to society as a whole including marginalized groups and grass-root communities and encouraging civic activism and public participation in policy-making across all areas;
- Becoming professional and reliable partners in the policy-making and reform process through evidence-based advocacy sectors and close monitoring of reforms across all sectors;
- Contributing to enhancing responsible and inclusive leadership in the political, economic and social spheres and provide early warning in case of societal change,
- Strengthening economic development and create better links with business by promoting entrepreneurship, social innovation and job creation.

An empowered civil society with the ability to contribute to policy making is a crucial component of any democratic system and should be recognised and treated as such by state institutions.

There is a strong need to leverage on the expert knowledge of civil society through their unique knowledge and experience to shape policy and strategy, and identifying and building solutions, as well as, play the role of enabler in driving change in collaboration with other stakeholders such as business community, media, social partners etc. It is important to note that participatory mechanisms require acceptance by each party of the position and role of the other and agreement to cooperate. Therefore, participation in those decisions and policies requires appropriate processes and mechanisms of communication and exchange of information and expertise, such as: interactive frameworks, creating safe processes of dialogue, develop skills, engagement and close work with media, exchange of good practices and professional knowledge.

Civil society organisations, thinktanks, research based organizations, academia, business community and media play a particularly important role. Civil society organizations, media and thinktanks are advocates of democratic values and of a society of tolerance; they encourage the government to act responsibly and effectively in the interests of those whom they serve; at the same time they bring the most relevant concerns of citizens to the attention of policy-makers.

Establishing a culture of policy dialogue, good practices and a continuous process of learning among social actors, will lead to enhancing confidence, participation and mobilizing resources; open processes around monitoring the implementation of programmes and projects stemming from public policies at local and national level.

Awareness-raising activities are of particular importance in local communities where CSOs' action and direct cooperation with local self-governments comes to the fore.

The regulatory framework and functions of civil society in various sectors

In Serbia, the regulatory framework for public consultations requires that consultations are organised early in the policy-making process, and sets detailed instructions on reporting publically on the outcome of the consultations. The scope of public consultations has improved. However, their impact and consistent

application still needs to be assessed in practice, requiring also the improvement of capacity on the side of civil society active in various sectors.

Like other countries, Serbia has a diverse civil society ranging from active and well capacitated organisations with the ability to participate and contribute to public policy dialogue with evidence based outputs supporting policy making, to weaker organisations focused on only service provision or weak capacities in communication with government institutions, at local and national levels. The level of connection to the citizens also differs from organisation to organisation and from sector to sector. As regards monitoring capacity of civil society in different sectors, organisations working on economic themes like public procurement, finance, budget transparency, economic measures, customs, and competition appear particularly weaker compared to the ones in other sectors. Technical areas like energy and transport also form sectors where capacity of civil society organisations require support towards better contribution to policy making. Sectors like environment, although with a growing active civil society at local and national levels, appear weak in using tools to impact policy.

As regards the legal framework for participation of CSOs in decision-making process, progress was noted during 2018 and 2019 through improved obligations of the administration bodies to involve citizens and civil society in the processes of drafting regulations and public policy documents from the earliest stage of their preparation. A new legal framework introduced the obligation for the state bodies:

- to announce the start of work on a regulation or a public policy document,
- to carry out consultations throughout the whole preparation process, using different methods,
- to conduct obligatory public debates at the end of preparation process.

Recently, the government adopted guidelines on the inclusion of CSOs in working groups for drafting regulations and public policies in January 2020. The Guidelines now need to be further operationalized by developing a description of good practice in the implementation of the selection process of CSOs representatives in working groups, including defining the selection criteria and scoring system for the applications submitted within the Public Call.

The Office for Cooperation with Civil Society created a database of ‘CSO focal points’ in public institutions and local self-governments. The need for further capacity building of public administration bodies and designated contact points for cooperation with CSOs continue to remain.

Nevertheless, the legal framework is fragmented and relatively new. Hence neither the civil servants nor the civil society is duly capacitated about its details and how to execute the legal provisions. The development of guidelines, awareness-raising and training both for civil servants and for NGOs is a key success factor.

Bearing in mind that the existing legal framework regarding the participation of CSOs in the adoption of regulations and public policies is now in effective implementation, analysis of the results in terms of CSO participation in decision-making process as well as the overall legal framework regulating the work of CSOs, their implementation and recommendations for their improvement will be necessary after a period of implementation.

It is also vital to change the attitudes of all parties in favour of recognizing the value of consultations and avoiding perceiving the process as an obligation generating additional workload and unnecessary burden. This can be achieved only with persistent focus, efforts and transparency from top down.

The quality assurance is another aspect that requires attention with both formal aspects checked as well as qualitative elements analysed. Reflection of all relevant comments regarding policy proposals in a transparent manner to the policy maker is what creates value and commitment from all stakeholders.

Design of a strategic document that will prioritize the development of the environment for the civil society work and improvement of its cooperation with public authorities in Serbia remains missing. Serbia is the only country in the region (WB6) that has not yet adopted a strategic document of this type which would recognize the problem and anticipate measures to improve the general working conditions for CSOs and enhance cross-sectoral cooperation in key areas such as adopting decisions (regulations and policy

documents), financing CSO programs / projects from budgetary funds, participation in the European integration process and use of EU funds.

Apart from the absence of a strategic document, Serbia continues to be the only country in the region (WB6) that does not have an institutional mechanism for cooperation between the Government and the CSOs in the form of an advisory body within which dialogue could be conducted on key issues for the development of civil society and cross-sector cooperation. Some measures towards the formation of the Council have been taken in 2019, but considerable support would be required after its formation in the form of strengthening the capacity of Council members, support to the Council Secretariat, promoting Council activities, etc.

The on-going development of e-participation of the e-Government portal opens an wide ray of opportunities for efficient and simple consultations with CSOs as well as improvement of other mechanisms of civic participation (submission of civic initiatives, referendum initiative, submissions for membership in working groups, etc.).

The participation of CSO representatives in funding decisions by national and local level governing structures contributes to both better decision making as well as crucial transparency. Existing regulations enable involvement of CSO representatives in the work of the selection bodies. This mechanism which is very significant for the transparency, objectivity and openness of the funds allocation process is not used enough due to low level of clarity in procedures for involving CSOs in the selection bodies. In this respect, it is particularly important to establish procedures and make recommendations for the future involvement of CSOs in the work of grant committees, improve the mechanism for evaluation of the success of the CSO programs and projects supported from the budget, and continue to work on the promotion of good practices and goals achieved through CSO projects financed from the budget, in order to promote the importance of CSO work, especially at the local level.

The **specificity of this Call for Proposals** is the introduction of a strong focus on supporting CSOs in a meaningful, constructive and structured policy dialogue based on evidence from practice, including non state actors, civil society organizations, think tanks, social partners, academia and research institutes and policy oriented organizations, media organizations and individual experts, with a strong focus on policy dialogue, evidence based research and advocacy.

1.2. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME AND PRIORITY ISSUES

The **global objective** of this call for proposals is: *To strengthen policy dialogue in reform processes, facilitate engagement and dialogue between central and local state institutions and non-state actors towards improved public policy dialogue.*

The **specific objective(s)** of this call for proposals is/are:

- 1) To facilitate interaction and collaboration between state actors and institutional mechanisms and non-state actors (civil society, think tanks, social partners, media, researchers etc.) related to evidence based policy dialogue in reform processes.
- 2) To establish a capacity development platform to support non state actors in areas related to public policy formulation, policy budgeting, implementation and monitoring.
- 3) To foster and enhance communication on policy dialogue through strengthened dialogue between media community, state institutions and non-state actors and civil society, think tanks, researchers, social partners and other relevant actors.

The priority of this call for proposals is: to horizontally empower civil society, particularly in sectors with lower civil society capacity and activities, aiming to strengthen the policy dialogue in reform processes.

1.3. FINANCIAL ALLOCATION PROVIDED BY THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY

The overall indicative amount made available under this call for proposals is EUR 1,500,000. 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 1,350,000.
- maximum amount: EUR 1,500,000.

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 general budget of the Union.

The grant may cover the entire eligible costs of the action if this is deemed essential to carry it out. If that is the case, the lead applicant must justify full financing in Section 2.1 of Annex A.2. The validity of the justification provided will be examined during the evaluation procedure. The absence of any justification may lead to the rejection of the application.

2. 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 on the internet at this address <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/prag/document.do?locale=en>).⁴

2.1. 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);

(2) the actions:

Actions for which a grant may be awarded (2.1.4);

(3) the costs:

- types of cost that may be taken into account in setting the amount of the grant (2.1.5).

2.1.1. 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 directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action with the co-applicant(s) and affiliated entity(ies), not acting as an intermediary, **and**
- be a competent Government Department or relevant mandated body of a Government Department or public body authority of a European Union Member State⁵ working in the fields related to this action, **or**

⁴ Note that a lead applicant (i.e. a coordinator) whose pillars have been positively assessed by the European Commission and who is awarded a grant will not sign the standard grant contract published with these guidelines but a contribution agreement based on the contribution agreement template. All references in these guidelines and other documents related to this call to the standard grant contract shall in this case be understood as referring to the relevant provisions of the contribution agreement template.

⁵ For UK applicants: Please be aware that following the entry into force of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement* on 1 February 2020 and in particular Articles 127(6), 137 and 138, the references to natural or legal persons residing or established in a Member State of the European Union and to goods originating from an eligible country, as defined under Regulation (EU) No 236/2014** and Annex IV of the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement***, are to be understood as including natural or legal persons residing or established in, and to goods originating from, the United Kingdom****. Those persons and goods are therefore eligible under this call.

* Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community.

- be a civil society organisation established in⁶ Serbia or a Member State of the European Union.⁷

If the lead applicant is established in Serbia, then at least one co-applicant should be established in an EU Member State and vice versa.

- (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 2.6.10.1 of the practical guide;

Lead applicants, co-applicants, affiliated entities and, in case of legal entities, persons who have powers of representation, decision-making or control over the lead applicant, the co-applicants and the affiliated entities are informed that, should they be in one of the situations of early detection or exclusion according to Section 2.6.10.1 of the practical guide, 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 early detection and exclusion system, and communicated to the persons and entities concerned in relation to the award or the execution of a grant contract. In this respect, lead applicants, co-applicants and affiliated entities are obliged to declare that they are not in one of the exclusion situations through a signed declaration on honour (PRAG Annex A14). For grants of EUR 60 000 or less, no declaration on honour is required.

In Annex A.2 Section 5 ('declaration(s) 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 G (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 coordinate the design and implementation of the action.

** Regulation (EU) No 236/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 laying down common rules and procedures for the implementation of the Union's instruments for financing external action.

*** Annex IV to the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement, as revised by Decision 1/2014 of the ACP-EU Council of Ministers (OJ L196/40, 3.7.2014)

**** including the Overseas Countries and Territories having special relations with the United Kingdom, as laid down in Part Four and Annex II of the TFEU

⁶ 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.

⁷ For UK applicants: Please be aware that following the entry into force of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement* on 1 February 2020 and in particular Articles 127(6), 137 and 138, the references to natural or legal persons residing or established in a Member State of the European Union and to goods originating from an eligible country, as defined under Regulation (EU) No 236/2014** and Annex IV of the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement***, are to be understood as including natural or legal persons residing or established in, and to goods originating from, the United Kingdom****. Those persons and goods are therefore eligible under this call.

* Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community.

** Regulation (EU) No 236/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 laying down common rules and procedures for the implementation of the Union's instruments for financing external action.

*** Annex IV to the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement, as revised by Decision 1/2014 of the ACP-EU Council of Ministers (OJ L196/40, 3.7.2014)

**** including the Overseas Countries and Territories having special relations with the United Kingdom, as laid down in Part Four and Annex II of the TFEU.

Co-applicant(s)

Further co-applicants established in Serbia or in a Member State of the European Union, matching the applicable eligibility criteria, may be included as found appropriate for implementing the action.

The lead applicant must act together with **at least one** co-applicant, which satisfies the eligibility criteria below:

- If the lead applicant is established in Serbia, then at least one co-applicant should be established in an EU Member State and vice versa.

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 himself.

Co-applicants must sign the mandate in Annex A.2 Section 5. If awarded the grant contract, the co-applicant(s) (if any) will become beneficiary(ies) in the action (together with the coordinator).

- (3) Applicants included in the lists of EU restrictive measures (see Section 2.4. of the PRAG) at the moment of the award decision cannot be awarded the contract⁸.

2.1.2. 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 an applicant may hence be:

- 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;
- 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).

⁸ The updated lists of sanctions are available at www.sanctionsmap.eu.

Please note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The source of the sanctions stems from legal acts published in the Official Journal (OJ). In case of discrepancy between the published legal acts and the updates on the website it is the OJ version that prevails.

- (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 the 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.

2.1.3. 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 4 — '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.

2.1.4. 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 42 months.

Sectors or themes

The call is focused in all public policy or reform areas in Serbia, e.g.

- Rule of law, fundamental rights and democracy:
 - Human Rights
 - Gender Equality
 - Elections
 - Consumer's rights,
 - Media
- Good governance, acquis alignment, good neighbourly relations and strategic communication:
 - Public Administration Reform and good governance including Public Finance reform Management (public procurement, budget expenditure and execution (local and national level), and, decentralisation and local government reform,
 - Access and quality of public services related to implementation of existing strategies in areas of: Education, Health, Social Protection, Social Inclusion and specific related plans for vulnerable/ excluded groups),
 - Fight against corruption,
 - Foreign Policy and Defence (CFSDP),
- Green agenda and sustainable connectivity:
 - Environment and climate change,
 - Waste management,
 - Transport and water management,
- Competitiveness and inclusive growth:
 - Jobs and Skills strategy (focused on indicators of the national strategy on Jobs and Skills),
 - Tourism Development and Economic development,
 - Rural development, food safety, fishery,

- Urban Development,
- Territorial and cross-border cooperation:
- Migration,

Location

Actions must take place in Serbia.

Should the activities described in the project proposal involve activities that take place in EU Member States, the expenses incurred in this way shall be considered eligible if such activities are duly justified in the description of the action, are deemed necessary for the overall achievement of the action and in any case are maximum up to 20% of the total eligible costs of the action. These reasons will be examined during the evaluation process.

Types of action

Note: The list of actions is not exhaustive, but only illustrative and appropriate activities that are not mentioned below will also be considered for support.

The applicant is expected to ensure that all three specific objectives are addressed through the proposal.

Types of actions which may be financed under this call:

Under Specific Objective #1

To facilitate interaction and collaboration between state actors and institutional mechanisms and non-state actors (civil society, think tanks, social partners, media, researchers etc.) related to evidence based policy dialogue in reform processes.

- Actions to facilitate different forums on policy dialogue between the national and local government and civil society, media, think tanks.
- Actions on building awareness and understanding of different stakeholder groups on reform processes, promoting good models and practices of policy dialogue in practice to influence decisions.
- Actions to support dialogue on monitoring, transparency and inclusiveness in the decision-making process in public bodies at local and national level.
- Actions promoting high standards and effective implementation of legal framework for various policies and strategies at local and national level.
- Actions to support preparation of policy papers, evidence based research, monitoring and evaluation reports, information sheets related to specific policies, strategies and reforms.
- Actions to support statistical analysis of indicators of strategies, policies and reforms with the main goal of identifying gaps, challenges and good practices.
- Actions related to conduct evidence based monitoring of social inclusion policies, anti-discrimination, gender equality, human rights and other related policies.

Under Specific Objective #2

To establish a capacity development platform to support non state actors and civil society capacities in areas related to evidence based public policy.

- Support establishing a policy network lab or policy think tank resource hub that will provide mentoring, coaching, nurturing of skills and capacities in the area of policy dialogue.

- Actions for improved capacities of CSOs to conduct quality thematic research and perform evidence based monitoring on public policies (such as public administration work, good governance, anti-corruption, public finance etc.).
- Actions promoting efficient cooperation between the national and local governments and other stakeholders and citizens, in processes of policy development, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and impact assessment;

Under Specific Objective #3

To foster and enhance communication on policy dialogue through strengthened dialogue between media community, state institutions and non-state actors and civil society, think tanks, researchers, social partners and other relevant actors.

- Actions to stimulate media engagement in reporting with transparency and accountability on policy reform processes.
- Actions to promote the right to public consultation, right to information and transparency, stimulate culture of pluralism, transparency, values of good governance and critical thinking.
- Actions to stimulate usage of social media as a tool in enhancing communication and visibility.
- Actions to support innovative citizen- led initiatives to improve governance, increase transparency, efficiency and service orientation of public administration with special focus on public funds;
- Actions to support creative and innovative social media platforms which stimulates collaboration between citizens, media, civil society, state institutions on various policies at local and national level.
- Actions to support collaboration between media and civil society, think tanks to promote free speech and opinion, diversity and public debates on policy processes.
- Actions for enhanced access to information on public administration services, budgeting processes, decision making, and local government functions etc.
- Actions to support public awareness-raising campaign to present new opportunities for involvement of citizens, CSOs and interested public in consultations on new public policies.
- Actions to enhance dialogue, exchange of good practices, and learning from the success stories and challenges.

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 essentially focused on construction activities, purchase of equipment, purchase and/or renovation of building or offices;
- actions aiming predominantly at charitable donations and profit making activities;
- actions supporting political parties or candidates elections;
- retroactive financing for projects already in implementation or completed;
- projects for the exclusive benefit of individuals or exclusively restricted groups of individuals;

Types of activity

Note: The list of activities is not exhaustive, but only illustrative and appropriate activities that are not mentioned below will also be considered for support.

The following types of indicative activities may be financed under this call:

- Forums between different stakeholders in policy and reform design and implementation;
- Awareness raising of different stakeholder groups on reform processes;
- Technical support and mentoring to CSOs and relevant parties for monitoring activities;
- Preparation of policy papers, evidence based research, information factsheets, monitoring and evaluation reports.
- Providing mentoring, coaching, nurturing of skills and capacities in the area of policy dialogue;
- Training, exchanges, workshops and networking activities increasing the capacities of participants;
- Innovative activities related to citizen- led initiatives to improve governance, increase transparency, efficiency and service orientation.
- Activities to support creative and innovative social media platforms stimulating collaboration among different stakeholders at local and national level;
- Public awareness-raising campaign to present new opportunities for involvement of citizens, CSOs and interested public in consultations on new public policies;
- Activities to stimulate usage of social media as a tool in enhancing communication and visibility.

Financial support to third parties⁹

Applicants shall propose financial support to third parties in order to help achieving the objectives of the action.

The lead applicant shall use:

Minimum: 50 % of the total budget and

Maximum: 75 % of the total budget of the action as financial support to third parties.

The maximum amount of financial support per third party is EUR 60 000. The maximum amount of financial support per third party per award is EUR 25 000.

Under this call, financial support to third parties is considered essential to achieve the objective 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:

- (i) the overall objectives, the specific objective(s) and the outputs¹⁰ (i.e. the results) to be achieved with the financial support

⁹ These third parties are neither affiliated entity(ies) nor associates nor contractors.

¹⁰ As per OECD DAC definition, the term 'results' includes: 'impact' (overall objective), 'outcome(s)' (specific objective(s) and 'output(s)'.

- (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.

Financial support to third parties is allowed under specific conditions applicable to this call for proposals.

Financial support to third parties can be provided to CSOs established in Serbia or to natural persons (for example activists, researchers, university professors, post-graduate students) active in the fields related to the call and with a track record.

The applicant is encouraged to support local expertise in the area of policy dialogue.

Note: These persons should not be part of the national public administration / officials and/or public servants.

Indicative types of activities eligible for financial support:

- Development of policy papers, monitoring reports, public opinion surveys, legislation revision, and budget analysis including manuals on best practices related to the priority themes.
- Statistical analysis, focus group discussions, questionnaires to specific groups to build evidence based work, opinion polls, and other tools related to public policies analysis.
- Travel costs, organisation and participation to public debates, seminars, workshops.
- Field work to collect information, opinions, and suggestions for policy improvement.
- Communication and visibility activities related to dissemination of findings, suggestions, and recommendations, through channels of social media, television, radio and other innovative communication channels.

The modalities through which the financial support is granted (e.g. following a call for proposals or expression of interest) must also be specified and clearly linked to support the achievement of the specific objectives defined in the Guidelines.

The financial support to third parties must be awarded in accordance with the general principles for contracting in the context of European Union external actions:

- (a) ensuring sufficient transparency, fair competition and adequate ex-ante publicity;
- (b) ensuring equal treatment, proportionality and non-discrimination;
- (c) avoiding conflicts of interests throughout the entire procurement procedure.

The financial support must be clearly identifiable in the Budget under heading 6 "Other".

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 http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/funding/communication-and-visibility-manual-eu-external-actions_en).

Number of applications and grants per applicants / affiliated entities

The lead applicant may not submit more than **one** application under this call for proposals.

The lead applicant may not be awarded more than **one** grant under this call for proposals.

The lead applicant may not be a co-applicant or an affiliated entity in another application at the same time.

A co-applicant/affiliated entity may not be the co-applicant or affiliated entity in more than **one** application under this call for proposals.

A co-applicant/affiliated entity may not be awarded more than **one** grant under this call for proposals.

Reporting and Governance of the project

The project coordinator is expected to report narratively on the progress as well as the upcoming work plans semi-annually in addition to the annual reporting requirements as detailed in the General Conditions of the contract.

The project coordinator is also expected to suggest a Stakeholders Advisory Board and a Steering Committee, and agree the structure of these committees with the contracting authority within the first 6 months of the implementation of the project..

2.1.5. 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:

- financing not linked to costs of the relevant operations based on:
 - (i) either the fulfilment of conditions set out in sector specific legislation or Commission Decisions;or
 - (ii) the achievement of results measured by reference to the previously set milestones or through performance indicators;
- actual costs incurred by the beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies);

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).

The applicants (and where applicable their affiliated entities) agree that the expenditure verification(s) referred to in Article 15.7 of the general conditions to the standard grant contract (see Annex G of the guidelines) will be carried out by the contracting authority or any external body authorised by the contracting authority.

Visibility costs: as the grant beneficiaries will have to respect obligation of visibility and as visibility can be instrumental in the success of action, the Contracting Authority strongly recommends that the beneficiaries foresee an amount of minimum 4% of the total eligible costs for communication and visibility costs.

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 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 normally not eligible costs.

As an exception, contributions in kind may include personnel costs for the work carried out by volunteers under an action or work programme (which are eligible costs).

Volunteers' work may comprise up to 50 % of the co-financing. For the purposes of calculating this percentage, contributions in kind in the form of volunteers' work must be based on the unit cost provided by the contracting authority. This type of costs must be presented separately from other eligible costs in the estimated budget. The value of the volunteer's work must always be excluded from the calculation of indirect costs.

When the estimated costs include volunteers' work, the grant shall not exceed the estimated eligible costs other than the costs for volunteers' work.

Other co-financing shall be based on estimates provided by the applicant.

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

Ethics clauses and Code of Conduct

a) Absence of conflict of interest

The applicant must not be affected by any conflict of interest and must have no equivalent relation in that respect with other applicants or parties involved in the actions. Any attempt by an applicant to obtain confidential information, enter into unlawful agreements with competitors or influence the evaluation committee or the contracting authority during the process of examining, clarifying, evaluating and comparing applications will lead to the rejection of its application and may result in administrative penalties according to the Financial Regulation in force.

b) Respect for human rights as well as environmental legislation and core labour standards

The applicant and its staff must comply with human rights. In particular and in accordance with the applicable act, applicants who have been awarded contracts must comply with the environmental legislation including multilateral environmental agreements, and with the core labour standards as applicable and as defined in the relevant International Labour Organisation conventions (such as the conventions on freedom of association and collective bargaining; elimination of forced and compulsory labour; abolition of child labour).

Zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and sexual abuse:

The European Commission applies a policy of 'zero tolerance' in relation to all wrongful conduct which has an impact on the professional credibility of the applicant.

Physical abuse or punishment, or threats of physical abuse, sexual abuse or exploitation, harassment and verbal abuse, as well as other forms of intimidation shall be prohibited.

c) Anti-corruption and anti-bribery

The applicant shall comply with all applicable laws and regulations and codes relating to anti-bribery and anti-corruption. The European Commission reserves the right to suspend or cancel project financing if corrupt practices of any kind are discovered at any stage of the award process or during the execution of a contract and if the contracting authority fails to take all appropriate measures to remedy the situation. For the purposes of this provision, 'corrupt practices' are the offer of a bribe, gift, gratuity or commission to any person as an inducement or reward for performing or refraining from any act relating to the award of a contract or execution of a contract already concluded with the contracting authority.

d) Unusual commercial expenses

Applications will be rejected or contracts terminated if it emerges that the award or execution of a contract has given rise to unusual commercial expenses. Such unusual commercial expenses are commissions not mentioned in the main contract or not stemming from a properly concluded contract referring to the main contract, commissions not paid in return for any actual and legitimate service, commissions remitted to a tax haven, commissions paid to a payee who is not clearly identified or commissions paid to a company which has every appearance of being a front company.

Grant beneficiaries found to have paid unusual commercial expenses on projects funded by the European Union are liable, depending on the seriousness of the facts observed, to have their contracts terminated or to be permanently excluded from receiving EU/EDF funds.

e) Breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud

The contracting authority reserves the right to suspend or cancel the procedure, where the award procedure proves to have been subject to substantial breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud. If substantial breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud are discovered after the award of the contract, the contracting authority may refrain from concluding the contract.

2.2. HOW TO APPLY AND THE PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW

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

- I. Provide information about the organisations involved in the action. Please note that the registration of this data in **PADOR is obligatory**¹¹ for all lead applicants, co-applicant(s) and affiliated entity(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.

- II. Provide information about the action in the documents listed under section 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 for the organisation to register online in PADOR for technical reasons, applicants and/or affiliated entity(ies) must complete the 'PADOR off-line form'¹² attached to these guidelines. This form must be sent **together with the application**, by the submission deadline (see section 2.2.2.).

Before starting using PADOR and PROSPECT, please read the user guides available on the website. All technical questions related to 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.

2.2.1. Application forms

Applicants must apply in English.

Any error or major discrepancy related to the points listed in the instructions on the concept note or any major inconsistency in the application 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 unclear and thus prevents the Contracting Authority from conducting an objective assessment.

Hand-written applications will not be accepted.

Please note that only the grant application form and the published annexes which have to be filled in (budget, logical framework) will be evaluated. It is therefore of utmost importance that these documents contain ALL the relevant information concerning the action.

No additional annexes should be sent.

2.2.2. 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.

¹¹ Natural persons who apply for a grant (if so allowed in the guidelines) do not have to register in PADOR. In this case, the information included in PROSPECT and in the concept note is sufficient.

¹² Which corresponds to sections 3 and 4 of Annex A.2.

Applications sent by any other means (e.g. by fax or by e-mail) or delivered to other addresses will be rejected.

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).

2.2.3. Deadline for submission of applications

The deadline for the submission of applications is 18/09/2020 at 15:00 (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 time zones and winter/summer time changes (example available [here](#))¹³. **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 aforementioned difficulties.

Any application submitted after the deadline will be rejected.

2.2.4. 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 below address(es), indicating clearly the reference of the call for proposals:

E-mail address: **DELEGATION-SERBIA-FCS@eeas.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 the 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 website of DG International Cooperation and Development: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome&nbPubliList=15&orderby=upd&orderbyad=Desc&searchtype=RS&aofr=168079> as the need arises. 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.

2.3. 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.

¹³ For example: <http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/converter.html>.

(1) STEP 1: OPENING & ADMINISTRATIVE CHECKS AND CONCEPT NOTE EVALUATION

During the opening and administrative check the following will be assessed:

- If the deadline has been met. Otherwise, the application will be automatically rejected.
- If the application satisfies all the criteria specified in the checklist in Annex A.2, Instructions. 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 using the breakdown in the evaluation grid below. The evaluation will also check on compliance with the instructions on how to complete the concept note, which can be found in AnnexA.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	20
1.1. How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the call for proposals and to the specific themes/sectors/areas or any other specific requirement stated in the guidelines for applicants? Are the expected results of the action aligned with the priorities defined in the guidelines for applicants (section 1.2)?	5
1.2. How relevant is the proposal to the particular needs and constraints of the target country(ies), region(s) and/or relevant sectors (including synergy with other development initiatives and avoidance of duplication)?	5
1.3. How clearly defined and strategically chosen are those involved (final beneficiaries, target groups)? Have their needs (as rights holders and/or duty bearers) and constraints been clearly defined and does the proposal address them appropriately?	5
1.4. Does the proposal contain particular added-value elements (e.g. innovation, best practices)?	5
2. Design of the action	30
2.1. How coherent is the overall design of the action? Does the proposal indicate the expected results to be achieved by the action? Does the intervention logic explain the rationale to achieve the expected results?	5x2**
2.2. Does the design reflect a robust analysis of the problems involved, and the capacities of the relevant stakeholders?	5
2.3. Does the design take into account external factors (risks and assumptions)?	5
2.4. Are the activities feasible and consistent in relation to the expected results (including timeframe)? Are results (output, outcome and impact) realistic?	5
2.5. To which extent does the proposal integrate relevant cross-cutting elements such as	5

environmental/climate change issues, promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities, needs of disabled people, rights of minorities and rights of indigenous peoples, youth, combating HIV/AIDS (if there is a strong prevalence in the target country/region)?	
Maximum total score	50

****:** this scores is multiplied by 2 because of its importance

Once all concept notes have been assessed, a list will be drawn up with the proposed actions ranked according to their total score.

Firstly, only the concept notes with a score of at least 30 will be considered for pre-selection.

Secondly, the number of concept notes will be reduced, taking account of the ranking, to the number of concept notes whose total aggregate amount of requested contributions is equal to 200% of the available budget for this call for proposals. The amount of requested contributions of each concept note will be based on the indicative financial envelopes for each lot, where relevant.

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.

(2) STEP 2: EVALUATION OF THE FULL APPLICATION

Firstly, the following will be assessed:

- If the full application satisfies all the criteria specified in the checklist (Annex A.2, Instructions). 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 full applications that pass this check will be further evaluated on their quality, including the proposed budget and capacity of the applicants and affiliated entity(ies). They will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria 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 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.

Scoring:

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

Section	Maximum Score
1. Financial and operational capacity	20
1.1. Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient in-house experience of project management?	5
1.2. Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient technical in-house 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 in-house 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	20
2.1. How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the call for proposals and to the specific themes/sectors/areas or any other specific requirement stated in the guidelines for applicants? Are the expected results of the action aligned with the priorities defined in the guidelines for applicants (section 1.2)?	5
2.2. How relevant is the proposal to the particular needs and constraints of the target country(ies), region(s) and/or relevant sectors (including synergy with other development initiatives and avoidance of duplication)?	5
2.3. How clearly defined and strategically chosen are those involved (final beneficiaries, target groups)? Have their needs (as rights holders and/or duty bearers) and constraints been clearly defined and does the proposal address them appropriately?	5
2.4. Does the proposal contain particular added-value elements (e.g. innovation, best practices)?	5
3. Design of the action	15
3.1. How coherent is the design of the action? Does the proposal indicate the expected results to be achieved by the action? Does the intervention logic explain the rationale to achieve the expected results? Are the activities proposed appropriate, practical, and consistent with the envisaged outputs and outcome(s)?	5
3.2. Does the proposal/Logical Framework include credible baseline, targets and sources of verification? If not, is a baseline study foreseen (and is the study budgeted appropriately in the proposal)?	5
3.3. Does the design reflect a robust analysis of the problems involved, and the capacities of the relevant stakeholders?	5
4. Implementation approach	15
4.1. Is the action plan for implementing the action clear and feasible? Is the timeline realistic?	5
4.2. Does the proposal include an effective and efficient monitoring system? Is there an evaluation planned (previous, during or/and at the end of the implementation)?	5

4.3. Is the co-applicant(s)'s and affiliated entity(ies)'s level of involvement and participation in the action satisfactory?	5
5. Sustainability of the action	15
5.1. Is the action likely to have a tangible impact on its target groups?	5
5.2. Is the action likely to have multiplier effects, including scope for replication, extension capitalisation on experience and knowledge sharing?	5
5.3. Are the expected results of the proposed action sustainable? - Financially (e.g. financing of follow-up activities, sources of revenue for covering all future operating and maintenance costs)- Institutionally (will structures allow the results of the action to be sustained at the end of the action? Will there be local 'ownership' of the results of the action?)- At policy level (where applicable) (what will be the structural impact of the action — e.g. improved legislation, codes of conduct, methods) - Environmentally (if applicable) (will the action have a negative/positive environmental impact?)	5
6. Budget and cost-effectiveness of the action	15
6.1. Are the activities appropriately reflected in the budget?	5
6.2. Is the ratio between the estimated costs and the expected results satisfactory?	5x2**
Maximum total score	100

****:** this scores is multiplied by 2 because of its importance

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 4.3 shall be 5 unless the involvement of co-applicants or affiliated entities is mandatory according to these guidelines for applicants.

Provisional selection

After the evaluation, a table will be drawn up listing the applications 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 by default 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.

2.4. 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)¹⁴:

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

1. The statutes or articles of association of the lead applicant, (if any) of each co-applicant and (if any) of each affiliated entity¹⁵. 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 meantime¹⁶. This obligation does not apply to international organisations which have signed a framework agreement with the European Commission.
2. For action grants exceeding EUR 750 000 and for operating grants above EUR 100 000, the lead applicant must provide an audit report produced by an approved external auditor where it is available, and always in cases where a statutory audit is required by EU or national law. That report shall certify the accounts for up to the last 3 financial years available. In all other cases, the applicant shall provide a self-declaration signed by its authorised representative certifying the validity of its accounts for up to the last 3 financial years available.

This requirement shall apply only to the first application made by a beneficiary to an authorising officer responsible in any one financial year.

The external audit report is not required from (if any) the co-applicant(s) or affiliated entities.

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.

3. A copy of the lead applicant's latest accounts (the profit and loss account and the balance sheet for the last financial year for which the accounts have been closed)¹⁷. A copy of the latest account is neither required from (if any) the co-applicant(s) nor from (if any) affiliated entity(ies).
4. 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.
5. A financial identification form of the lead applicant (not from co-applicant(s)) conforming to the model attached as 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

¹⁴ No supporting document will be requested for applications for a grant not exceeding EUR 60 000.

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ To be inserted only where the eligibility conditions have not changed from one call for proposals to the other.

¹⁷ This obligation does not apply to natural persons who have received a scholarship or that are in most need in receipt of direct support, nor to public bodies and to international organisations. It does not apply either when the accounts are in practice the same documents as the external audit report already provided pursuant to Section 2.4.2.

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.

6. The lead applicant as well as all co-applicants and affiliated entities shall fill in and sign the declaration on honour certifying that they are not in one of the exclusion situations (see Section 2.6.10.1 of the PRAG).

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.

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 or in the language of the country where the action is implemented, 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 applicant's 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.

2.5. NOTIFICATION OF THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY'S DECISION

2.5.1. 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 e-mail 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.

2.5.2. Indicative timetable

	DATE	TIME
1. Information meeting (if any)	N/A	N/A
2. Deadline for requesting any clarifications from the contracting authority	28 August 2020	15:00h
3. Last date on which clarifications are issued by the contracting authority	07 September 2020	-
4. Deadline for submission of applications	18 September 2020	15:00h
5. Information to lead applicants on opening, administrative checks and concept note evaluation (Step 1)	October 2020	-
6. Information to lead applicants on the evaluation of the full applications (Step 2)	October 2020	-
7. Notification of award (after the eligibility check) (Step 3)	November 2020	-
8. Contract signature	December 2020	-

All times are in the time zone of the country of the contracting authority.

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 web site of DG International Cooperation and Development: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome> .

2.6. 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 A 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 contribution agreement based on the contribution agreement 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 contribution 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.

In this context, a distinction should be made between awarding implementation contracts and subcontracting parts of the action described in the proposal, i.e. the description of the action annexed to the grant contract , such subcontracting being subject to additional restrictions (see the general terms and conditions in the model grant contract).

Awarding implementation contracts: implementation contracts relate to the acquisition by beneficiaries of routine services and/or necessary goods and equipment as part of their project management; they do not

cover any outsourcing of tasks forming part of the action that are described in the proposal, i.e. in the description of the action annexed to the grant contract .

Subcontracting: Subcontracting is the implementation, by a third party with which one or more beneficiaries have concluded a procurement contract, of specific tasks forming part of the action as described in annex to the grant contract (see also the general terms and conditions in the model grant contract).

3. LIST OF ANNEXES

DOCUMENTS TO BE COMPLETED

- Annex A: Grant application form (Word format)
Annex A.1: Concept note
Annex A2: Full application form
- Annex B: Budget (Excel format)
- Annex C: Logical framework (Excel format)
- Annex D: Legal entity sheet
- Annex E: Financial identification form
- Annex H: Declaration on Honour

DOCUMENTS FOR INFORMATION

- 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 VIII: model financial guarantee
 - Annex IX: standard template for transfer of ownership of assets

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

Useful links:

Project Cycle Management Guidelines

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/aid-delivery-methods-project-cycle-management-guidelines-vol-1_en

The implementation of grant contracts

A Users' Guide

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

Financial Toolkit

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/funding/procedures-beneficiary-countries-and-partners/financial-management-toolkit_en

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.

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