



**Contracting Authority:** European Commission

European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)  
Supporting Human Rights Priorities – Global Calls

EIDHR 2020 Global Call for Proposals

### **Guidelines for grant applicants**

Budget line: BGUE-B2020-21.040100-C1-DEVCO

Reference:  
EuropeAid/170197/DH/ACT/Multi

Deadline for submission<sup>1</sup> of concept notes:  
**20/11/2020 at 12:00 (Brussels date and time)**

(in order to convert to local time click [here](#)<sup>2</sup>)

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<sup>1</sup> Online submission via PROSPECT is mandatory for this call for proposals (see section 2.2.2 of these guidelines). 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](#).

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

## NOTICE

These guidelines are published in English, French and Spanish. In case of any discrepancy between the linguistic versions of this call, the English version will prevail.

This is a restricted call for proposals. In the first instance, only concept notes must be submitted for evaluation. Thereafter, lead applicants who have been pre-selected will be invited to submit a full application. 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' (see Annex A.1, section 2 and Annex A.2, section 5) sent together with the full application.

**To apply to this call for proposals organisations must register in PADOR and submit their application in PROSPECT (see section 2.2.2 of these 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 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 PROSPECT<sup>3</sup>.

A functional mailbox specifically dedicated to this call has been set up:

[EuropeAid-170197@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EuropeAid-170197@ec.europa.eu)

The functional mailbox shall be used exclusively for sending clarification requests within the deadlines set in section 2.5.2 of these guidelines; no other functional mailbox will be used. The Contracting Authority reserves the right to close this mailbox without prior notice once this call for proposals is closed and not to reply to requests, which do not fall under one of the afore-mentioned category.

In particular, neither the information regarding the indicative timetable nor the content of the decision will be given through this mailbox. In that respect, applicants are requested to follow instructions given in sections 2.5.1 and 2.5.2 of these guidelines.

**Concept notes or full applications submitted by e-mail via this mailbox or any other mailbox will not be considered.**

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<sup>3</sup> If PROSPECT is unavailable, the IT support can also be reached via email: [EuropeAid-IT-support@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EuropeAid-IT-support@ec.europa.eu)

## **IMPORTANT**

Even though the verification of eligibility is foreseen to be carried out only for the provisionally selected applicants at the end of the procedure, the Evaluation Committee may decide to verify this point at any previous step of the procedure. Consequently, any proposal found to be non-compliant with all the mandatory conditions set in these guidelines can be automatically rejected on that sole basis, at any stage of the procedure and without any prior notice or clarification request. Applicants are therefore strongly advised to scrupulously fill in the “Checklist for self-guidance” in both Annex A.1 (page 12) and Annex A.2 (page 20) to these guidelines. Any missing supporting document or any incoherence between the declarations and the supporting documents may lead to the rejection of the proposal on that sole basis.

**Please note that all information encoded in PROSPECT must be exhaustive and in line with the content of the concept note/full application. The administrative check will be performed taking into account only the information available in PROSPECT in sections: 1 – Contact; 2 – Project; 3 - Co-applicants; 4 - Documents. Please make sure that there are no inconsistencies between the information in PROSPECT and the content of the concept note/full application.**

Complaints about administrative rejection related to this kind of inconsistencies will not be considered and will not lead to a modification of the decision.

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# 1. EIDHR 2020 GLOBAL CALL FOR PROPOSALS

## 1.1. BACKGROUND

The European Union (EU) is founded on the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law. Human Rights and democracy are important areas of EU co-operation, and activities in this sector are supported through a number of instruments.

The European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) is one of these instruments and was established by Regulation (EU) No.235/2014 adopted by the European Parliament and the Council on 11 March 2014 for the period 2014-2020, establishing a financing instrument for democracy and human rights worldwide<sup>4</sup> through support to civil society initiatives.

This instrument is designed to support civil society to become an effective force for political reform and defence of human rights. In doing this, it complements both geographical programmes that focus on public institution-building as well as other thematic programmes, such as the CSO-LA programme. The EIDHR is also global in scope, operating at national, regional and international levels and supports actions carried out in third countries outside the European Union, throughout the world. The EIDHR offers independence of action, which is a critical feature of cooperation with civil society organisations at national level, especially in the sensitive areas of democracy and human rights. It offers great flexibility and increased capacity to respond to changing circumstances or to support innovation.

The EIDHR Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) 2018-2020 underlined that space for civic and democratic action in societies around the world has been facing an unprecedented crackdown, commonly labelled the “shrinking space”. Under its first objective – Human rights and their defenders where they are most at risk – EIDHR Global Calls for Proposals would seek to address the issue of closing civic, democratic and civil society spaces with a lens of fundamental freedoms.<sup>5</sup>

The other two objectives of EIDHR complement the first with respect to this global call: EIDHR Objective 2 – Support to other human rights priorities – recalls that although the space for civil society is closing, the role of CSOs has shifted from being mere implementing partners for eradication of poverty to being recognised actors of governance. Under its third priority – Support to Democracy – Global Call objectives would support peaceful pro-democracy actors, capacitating civil society to innovate with modern means of communication and organisation, and to resist shrinking space (see Annex 3 to EIDHR MAAP 2018-2020<sup>6</sup>).

Currently, civil society is considered to be under serious attack in 153 out of 195 countries (CIVICUS global alliance 2020)<sup>7</sup>. As this call is issued, measures responding to the COVID-19 pandemic have, in most countries of the world, limited the freedom of assembly for reasons of public health<sup>8</sup>. In numerous countries,

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<sup>4</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2014:077:0085:0094:EN:PDF>

<sup>5</sup> “The EIDHR action under objective 1 is twofold: i) supporting Human Rights Defenders in situations where they are most at risk, and ii) addressing shrinking democratic, civic and civil society space.” Annex 1 to the 2014 EIDHR regulation also states that, for Objective 1: “The EIDHR [...] will also provide medium and long-term support that will enable HRDs and civil society to carry out their work. The actions will take into account the current worrying trend of the shrinking space for civil society.” (REGULATION (EU) No 235/2014 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 11 March 2014 establishing a financing instrument for democracy and human rights worldwide).

<sup>6</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/eidhr-maap-implementing-decision-summary\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/eidhr-maap-implementing-decision-summary_en.pdf): Annex 3 is accessible at [https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/documents-library\\_fr?keyword=global%20calls](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/documents-library_fr?keyword=global%20calls)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.civicus.org/index.php/state-of-civil-society-report-2020> as at 11 June 2020

<sup>8</sup> See Declaration by the High Representative Josep Borrell, on behalf of the European Union, on human rights in the times of the coronavirus pandemic, 5 May 2020: “*In emergency circumstances, international human rights law allows states to limit certain human rights provided that the measures are necessary, proportionate, temporary in nature, and non-discriminatory. The coronavirus pandemic should not be used as a pretext to limit democratic and civic space, the respect of the rule of law and of international commitments, nor to curtail freedom of expression, freedom of the press and access to information online and offline. The measures should not be used to restrict the work of human rights defenders, journalists, media workers and civil society organisations.*”

disproportionate restrictions have been placed on the freedoms of association, assembly and expression; governmental power balances have been disrupted and the rule of law suspended; socio-economic challenges have risen dramatically, bringing light to inequalities and putting a strain on overall stability. The medium and long-term effects of the pandemic on human rights and democratic governance can be understood as additional to the pre-existing challenges to civic, democratic and civil society space described above and must be fully taken into account to provide an effective EIDHR response.

Complementarity is a key feature of the EIDHR global calls. In view of the 2012 Communication on civil society<sup>9</sup> and its 2017 review<sup>10</sup>, the European Consensus on Development (2017), the Rights-based Approach to development (2014)<sup>11</sup>, the 2030 Agenda, the 2019 Council Conclusions on Democracy<sup>12</sup> and most recently the EU proposed Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2020)<sup>13</sup>, this Global Call seeks to add value to today's EU Toolbox to promote and uphold human rights, including diplomacy and political dialogues. Complementarity with the CSO thematic programme's objective to reinforce the enabling environment for a pluralistic and vibrant civil society in partner countries in their role as independent actors of governance and sustainable development is of particular importance. Geographical programmes also support initiatives to build the capacity of local civil society and foster partnerships between the authorities and CSOs on public policy priorities. However, geographical programmes depend on governments' consent and might not be renewed when the government starts taking a more adverse stance against civil society, reducing the public space for CSO participation in national development and democratic debate. As for other mechanisms of the thematic EIDHR instrument, the Human Rights Crises Facility and Human Rights Defenders mechanisms come into play when closed space has already made human rights work very risky. Shortcomings in the international community's efforts to prevent or pre-empt the closure of space in a timely manner have inspired this call.

This Global Call seeks to innovate by testing different ways that CSO-led initiatives at proximity to countries at risk might contribute to the more effective prevention of shrinking space. Beyond their impact in the countries concerned, the resulting projects will add experience towards a coherent EU approach to support civil society, other civic actors, and the enjoyment of fundamental freedoms by all citizens.

## 1.2. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME AND PRIORITY ISSUES

### Geographical lots

In order to invite pilot actions in different parts of the world whilst maintaining geographical focus and maximum impact at country levels, this call for proposals has **four geographical lots**:

- **Lot 1 – Africa**
- **Lot 2 – Asia and the Pacific**
- **Lot 3 – Latin America and the Caribbean**

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<sup>9</sup> The Roots of Democracy and Sustainable Development: Europe's Engagement with Civil Society in external relations (COM 2012) 492 final.

<sup>10</sup> Also the 2017 Council Conclusions on EU engagement with civil society in external relations available at <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/06/19/civil-society-in-external-relations/>.

<sup>11</sup> Rights Based Approach Encompassing All Human Rights for EU Development Cooperation, see <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/t-and-m-series/documents/rights-based-approach-encompassing-all-human-rights-eu-development-cooperation>

<sup>12</sup> Notably these cite as a challenge “a shrinking democratic space for civil society, including human rights defenders and democracy activists as well as free and independent media online and offline through violence, persecution and intimidation, restrictive legislation, limits on registration and financing, and reprisals” and call “To strengthen and support international and local civil society and its enabling environment, as an essential pillar of a pluralist and inclusive democracy” and “To be able to act quickly in response to sharp deteriorations or improvements in the democratic situation of countries, both politically and through appropriate allocations of funds.” Council Conclusions on Democracy of 14 October 2019 (12836/19) available at <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-12836-2019-INIT/en/pdf>

<sup>13</sup> See [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_20\\_492](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_492)

- **Lot 4 – Enlargement and Neighbourhood countries**

See **Annex L** to these guidelines for a detailed list of eligible countries as action location (target countries) per each lot and region.

### **Objectives**

The **global objective** of this call for proposals is to support and empower civil society in protecting and promoting democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms worldwide.

All four lots share the same thematic focus:

### **SHRINKING CIVIC, DEMOCRATIC AND CIVIL SOCIETY SPACE**

The freedoms of association, peaceful assembly and expression are fundamental universal civil and political rights that underpin the respect for other human rights and democracy. Civic space (the legal and practical framework for the exercise of these freedoms) and democratic space (transparency and the possibility of civic and political participation, holding government to account, critique, dissent and contestation), are essential to the functioning of any democracy, to the effectiveness of human and economic development, and to the achievement of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs).

Preventing and reversing shrinkage of civic, democratic and civil society space, and further opening and defending such space where there are opportunities to do so, are priorities in the EU's strategic interest, reflecting its mandate to promote human rights and democratic values within the EU and in the world (Art 2, 21 TEU).

The **specific objective** of this call for proposals is to pilot a multi-country resource hub<sup>14</sup>, focused on addressing the dynamics (shrinking, opening) of civic, democratic and civil society space. It should support civil society working on human rights and democracy and other actors to steer change towards greater respect for fundamental freedoms, civic engagement and democratic governance and to elicit a more effective development process at the national level.

Dynamics in the shape and scope of civic, democratic and civil society space may include closing or repression, opening, and shifting, as well as irregular patterns with concentrations in certain sectors or segments of civic actors, or alternations of restrictions and openness. Signs of change may include legislative changes, official or de facto policies, patterns of incidents, and evidence of perceived changes in public attitudes, having an impact on the exercise of freedom of association, peaceful assembly or expression, or on civic activism, protest, dissent or political contestation.

The **priorities** of this call for proposals are:

- Engage long- and medium-term **drivers of civic space dynamics** according to **specific country contexts**;
- **Offer** programmes of **capacity building, networking and exchange** for human rights defenders and related civil society (including with other stakeholders as appropriate) at a national level and/or with a multi-country or regional dimension;
- **Counter the criminalisation and defamation** of civic actors and civil society;
- **Develop and pilot multi-stakeholder response protocols** for early action; **maintain contacts/networks** with national and international actors to assess opportunities for meaningful action; **coordinate or mobilise measures** at different levels as appropriate;

<sup>14</sup> The form of the resource hub, as a platform, centre, system or otherwise, is to be proposed on the initiative of applicants based on their experience, assessments of needs and feasibility, innovation and intervention logic.

- **Provide direct support** (services and/or financial assistance) in case of sudden-onset changes or significant signals of change;
- **Analyse trends and assess the dynamics** of civic, democratic and civil society space.

Actions must focus on all of the following themes:

- Respect for civil society and civic space in **national legislation** and its enforcement in practice; as appropriate **reclaiming liberties** lost or compromised during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- **Elevating or broadening the understanding of civic space** as a basic element in achieving sustainable development within a stable political environment; recovering reputational damage to civic actors and active citizenship; raising the profile of shrinking space as a matter of political concern at national, regional and global levels;
- **Resilience** of civil society and civic actors to new and modern challenges, including but not limited to digital security, political polarisation, and emergency measures linked to counter-terrorism, public health and other issues (also arising from COVID-19); **diversification of financial resources** available to civic actors and civil society in situations of closing space; **digitalisation of civic space** and the online enjoyment of fundamental freedoms;
- Building bridges: **encouraging coalition-building** across sectors of civil society (between human rights and development sectors, social services), between “traditional” civil society and other forms of civic and social movements including **youth activists**, and between highly connected and more remote civil society, civic and community-based actors and human rights defenders, giving attention to the exceptional shrinking of space related to **discrimination against certain groups** or actors, exacerbating marginalisation and inequality. Cooperation could also be supported between civil society and **stakeholders beyond civil society** including business, public services, national and regional entities (including National Human Rights Institutions); and between civil society and other socially minded professionals (artists, designers, journalists, IT experts, etc.) to strengthen and professionalise activities, including civic tech.

This aspect will be evaluated in point 1.1 of the concept note evaluation grid (section 2.3 of these guidelines).

### **Overarching and working principles**

This call for proposal will finance projects that respect the **rights-based approach (RBA) methodology**. The European Consensus on Development commits the EU and its Member States to implementing a rights-based approach (RBA) to development cooperation, encompassing all human rights. It thereby reinforces the EU's commitment to an RBA as outlined in the 2012 EU Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy, the 2014 Tool-box "A Rights-Based Approach, Encompassing All Human Rights, for EU Development Cooperation"<sup>15</sup>, and the respective Council Conclusions. In addition, the EIDHR Regulation<sup>16</sup> stipulates that in its implementation, the EU shall apply a Rights-Based Approach (RBA) encompassing all human rights, whether civil, political, economic, social or cultural. Therefore, all proposals under all lots of this call for proposals shall be designed according to a Rights-Based Approach. Please note that this aspect will be assessed at both concept note (point 2.5 of concept note evaluation grid – section 2.3 of these guidelines) and full application phases (point 2.4 of full application evaluation grid - section 2.3 of these guidelines).

The RBA is a working methodology based on internationally recognised human rights and is directed to promoting and protecting human rights in practice. A RBA integrates the norms, standards and principles of international human rights law into the plans, policies and processes of development programmes and

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sectors/rights-based-approach-development-cooperation\\_en](http://www.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sectors/rights-based-approach-development-cooperation_en)

<sup>16</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32014R0235>



projects and applies to all sectors, all modalities, and each step of the project cycle – identification, formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

The RBA implies that target groups are considered as ‘rights-holders’ with legal entitlements, and government institutions are not mere service providers but ‘duty-bearers’, who are under an obligation to deliver on people’s human rights. In line with a Rights-Based Approach, development cooperation should contribute to the development of the capacities of ‘rights-holders’ to claim their rights and ‘duty-bearers’ to meet their obligations. Programmes and projects therefore need to assess the capacities of rights-holders and duty-bearers and develop the appropriate strategies to build these capacities. At the heart of the RBA is the recognition that unequal power relations and social exclusion deny people their human rights and often keep them in poverty. The approach therefore puts strong emphasis on marginalised, disadvantaged, and excluded groups.

The RBA methodology also reminds us that development projects can have unintended negative impact in terms of human rights such as disadvantaging certain groups, interfering with participation rights and labour rights or contributing to forced displacement. It is therefore important to abide by the 'do no harm' principle and carry out the required analysis and mitigation. In the specific context of shrinking civic, democratic and civil society space, it is important to take into account the risk that cooperation with the EU and others in the international community is framed as foreign interference (including in legislation), and can be used as a pretext for harassment and to undermine legitimacy.

Moreover, the RBA working methodology recognises that pursuing desired human rights outcomes is not, in itself, enough. The way these outcomes are achieved is equally important. Programmes therefore monitor and evaluate both outcomes and processes.

**The five working principles, i.e. applying all rights, participation and access to decision-making, non-discrimination and equal access, accountability and access to rule of law and transparency and access to information, should be implemented as appropriate in relation to any proposed project.**

### *Cross-cutting elements*

Gender equality is an integral part of the RBA, encompassing the promotion, protection and fulfilment of all human rights. Gender equality constitutes a fundamental human rights principle and a common value of the European Union (EU Treaties, EU Gender Action Plan 2016-2020). Each selected proposal will have to report against relevant "SMART" sex-disaggregated indicators mentioned in the mandatory EU Gender Action Plan 2016-2020<sup>17</sup> and be gender-sensitive or gender-responsive.

Moreover, proposals should, whenever relevant:

- Include conflict sensitivity and environmental issues;
- Take into account the needs and challenges faced by targeted groups (in particular grassroots organisations of civil society) and rights-holders living outside the capitals and in remote areas;
- Encourage the constitution and capacity-building of networks of local organisations and implementing actors, including at regional level;
- Reinforce synergies among donors, governments, local authorities, foundations, private actors and other stakeholders.

Furthermore, it is important that any organisation or group that works with children or young people has a clear set of guidelines about how they will keep children safe and to respond to child protection concerns. Therefore, applicants and co-applicants working directly with or for children should demonstrate in their

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<sup>17</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/staff-working-document-gender-2016-2020-20150922\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/staff-working-document-gender-2016-2020-20150922_en.pdf)

proposals that a child protection policy is in place for any project activity that involves interactions with children<sup>18</sup>.

**These cross-cutting elements should be reflected both in the concept note and in the full application.** This aspect will be evaluated in point 2.5 of the concept note evaluation grid and point 2.4 of the full application evaluation grid (see section 2.3 of these guidelines).

### **1.3. FINANCIAL ALLOCATION PROVIDED BY THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY**

The overall indicative amount made available under this call for proposals is **EUR 10,000,000**. The contracting authority reserves the right not to award all available funds. Equally, this amount could be increased should more funds become available.

#### **Indicative allocation of funds by lot**

- Lot 1 – Africa: EUR 2,500,000
- Lot 2 – Asia and the Pacific: EUR 2,500,000
- Lot 3 – Latin America and the Caribbean: EUR 2,500,000
- Lot 4 – Enlargement and Neighbourhood countries: EUR 2,500,000

If the allocation indicated for a specific lot cannot be used due to insufficient quality or number of proposals received, the contracting authority reserves the right to reallocate the remaining funds to (an)other lot(s).

#### **Size of grants**

Any requested EU contribution (grant) under this call for proposals must fall between the following minimum and maximum amounts:

##### Lot 1 – Africa:

- Minimum amount: **EUR 2,500,000**
- Maximum amount: **EUR 2,500,000**

##### Lot 2 – Asia and the Pacific:

- Minimum amount: **EUR 2,500,000**
- Maximum amount: **EUR 2,500,000**

##### Lot 3 – Latin America and the Caribbean:

- Minimum amount: **EUR 2,500,000**
- Maximum amount: **EUR 2,500,000**

##### Lot 4 – Enlargement and Neighbourhood countries:

- Minimum amount: **EUR 2,500,000**
- Maximum amount: **EUR 2,500,000**

Any requested EU contribution (grant) under this call for proposals must fall between the following minimum and maximum percentages of total eligible costs of the action:

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<sup>18</sup> In line with the principles of the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).

- Minimum percentage: **51 %** of the total eligible costs of the action;
- Maximum percentage: **95 %** of the total eligible costs of the action (see also section 2.1.5 of these guidelines).

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 or the European Development Fund<sup>19</sup>.

The grant may cover the entire eligible costs of the action (100%) 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 (grant application form - full application). 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. If the evaluation committee considers that the justification is not valid, only the maximum percentage allowed (95%) will be accepted.

Please note that the lead applicant can either ask for a maximum percentage of 95% or exceptionally 100%, under the conditions described above. A percentage between 95.01% and 99.99% is not allowed and it will lead to the rejection of the application.

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<sup>19</sup> Where a grant is financed by the European Development Fund, any mention of European Union financing must be understood as referring to European Development Fund financing.

## 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 (PRAG 2020), which is applicable to the present call (available on the internet at this address <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/prag/document.do?locale=en>).

### 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 (see section 2.1.1 of these guidelines),
- 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)')** (see section 2.1.1 of these guidelines),
- and, if any, **affiliated entity(ies)** to the lead applicant and/or to a co-applicant(s) (see section 2.1.2 of these guidelines);

(2) the actions:

Actions for which a grant may be awarded (see section 2.1.4 of these guidelines);

(3) the costs:

Types of cost that may be taken into account in setting the amount of the grant (see section 2.1.5 of these guidelines).

#### **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 or an entity without legal personality<sup>20</sup> or a natural person; **and**
- be non-profit-making<sup>21</sup>; **and**
- Be a non-governmental civil society organisation<sup>22</sup> active in human rights and/or democracy work (please note that the Evaluation Committee will take into consideration the different legal

<sup>20</sup> Grant applications may be eligible if submitted by entities which do not have legal personality under the applicable national law, on the condition that the representatives of that applicant can prove that they have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on behalf of the applicant, and that they offer financial and operational guarantees equivalent to those provided by legal persons.

<sup>21</sup> **For-profit organisations** may also be eligible in exceptional and duly justified cases. Indeed, in situations where registration or receipt of foreign funding as non-profit organisation is made very difficult or might put the entity in danger, civil society organisations may be obliged to register as for-profit organisations to continue operating in the field of human rights. **The validity of the justification will be examined by the Evaluation Committee.**

<sup>22</sup> The EU considers CSOs to include all non-State, not-for-profit structures, non-partisan and non-violent, through which people organise to pursue shared objectives and ideals, whether political, cultural, social or economic. Operating from the local to the national, regional and international levels, they comprise urban and rural, formal and informal organisations. They include membership-based, cause-based and service-oriented CSOs. Among them, non-governmental organisations, organisations representing indigenous peoples, community – based organisations, advocacy organisations, organisations representing national and/or ethnic minorities, diaspora organisations, migrants'

forms of registration in the respective countries, for which the applicant should attach a justification<sup>23</sup>;

- be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action with the co-applicants and affiliated entity(ies), not acting as an intermediary;

No nationality restriction applies to applicants and, if any, to co-applicants and affiliated entities<sup>24,25</sup>.

Please note that international organisations are not eligible under this call for proposals<sup>26</sup>.

- (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 PRAG (including art. 135 and 136 of the EU Financial Regulation)<sup>27</sup>;

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 PRAG, 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, provisionally selected 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 (Annex H) together with the full application.

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organisations in partner countries, local traders' associations and citizens' groups, cooperatives, employers' associations and trade unions (social partners), organisations representing economic and social interests, organisations representing person with disabilities, organisations fighting corruption and fraud and promoting good governance, civil rights organisations and organisations combating discrimination, local organisations (including networks) involved in decentralised regional cooperation and integration, consumer organisations, women's and youth organisations environmental, teaching, cultural, research and scientific organisations, universities, education institutions, churches and religious associations and communities, the media and any non-governmental associations and independent foundations, including independent political foundations.

<sup>23</sup> Examples of different legal forms are: Trust, Trust with limited liability, Company with limited liability, Private company limited by share, Association, Charitable organisations, Society, Non-profit corporation, Non-profit ecclesiastic legal personality, Institute of research, etc.

<sup>24</sup> With regard to **Israeli entities**, please follow the guidelines on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards (OJC 205, 19.7.2013, p.9).

<sup>25</sup> In case of a project proposal including **India** as a target country and/or having one or more **(co)applicants based in India**:

- if the lead applicant (coordinator) is an Indian Local Organisation, for the purpose of transfer of funds it will not be possible to have a European or non-Indian co-applicant, except if the costs of this entity can be covered by their own co-funding (no transfer of funds required);
- lead applicants and co-applicants established in India are asked at the moment of submission of the Concept Note to include a valid FCRA (*Foreign Contribution Regulation Act*) registration certificate and a self-declaration stating that they are aware of the provisions of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act 2010, Foreign Exchange and Management Act for the transfer of funds;
- lead applicants that are EU entities are asked at the moment of submission of the Concept Note to include a self-declaration to ensure that it is not in any legal situation in India, where it cannot transfer funds to Indian co-applicants.

<sup>26</sup> International (inter-governmental) organisation as defined by Article 156 of the EU Financial Regulation: International organisations are international public-sector organisations set up by intergovernmental agreements as well as specialised agencies set up by them; the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are also recognised as international organisations.

<sup>27</sup> Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012.

In section 2 of Annex A.1 and section 5 of Annex A.2 ('declaration(s) by the lead applicant'), the lead applicant must declare that the lead applicant himself, the co-applicants and affiliated entity(ies) are not in any of these situations.

- (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 contract<sup>28</sup>.

If awarded the grant contract, the **lead applicant will become the beneficiary identified as the coordinator in Annex G to these guidelines - Standard Grant Contract**. The coordinator (lead applicant) is the main interlocutor with the contracting authority. It represents and acts on behalf of any other co-beneficiary (co-applicants) and coordinates the design and implementation of the action.

### **Co-applicant(s)**

**The lead applicant must act with at least one co-applicant** as specified hereafter.

To be eligible, an action must include **at least two local organisations** as lead applicant or co-applicant(s).

A local organisation (with or without legal personality) must be understood as established in one of the countries where the action is taking place (see section 2.1.4 of these guidelines). An organisation is considered "local" when its charter demonstrates that the organisation has been established by an instrument governed by the national law of the country concerned (only for entities with legal personality) and that its head office is located in that country.

When the project's activities are taking place in a country in which local organisations cannot operate, a **justification** must be provided in Annex A.1, section 1.2 and Annex A.2, section 2.1. The validity of the justification provided will be examined during the evaluation procedure. Should the justification not be deemed valid, the proposal may be rejected on that sole basis.

In situations where registration in the concerned country is made impossible or might put the lead applicant or co-applicant in danger, the local lead applicant or co-applicant may be registered in another country. In this case, a **justification** must be provided in Annex A.1, section 1.2 and Annex A.2, section 2.1. In addition, the lead applicant or co-applicant must prove in its statutes or through other supporting documents that the objectives and activities of the said organisation are for the benefit of the targeted country. In the absence of any justification, the proposal will be rejected. The validity of the justification provided will be examined during the evaluation procedure. Should the justification not be deemed valid, the proposal may be rejected on that sole basis.

Partnerships including at least one local organisation (as lead applicant or co-applicant(s)) **per each of the country(ies) where the action is taking place** (see section 2.1.4 of these guidelines), will be considered as an **added value**, evaluated in point 1.4 of the concept note evaluation grid and point 2.4 of the full application evaluation grid (see section 2.3 of these guidelines).

Please note that there is **no upper limit on the number of members in a partnership**.

The choice of co-applicants must be justified in the proposal as part of the project design and will be taken into account in point 2.1 of the concept note evaluation grid as well as in point 1.4 (see section 2.3 of these guidelines). The composition of the partnership will be evaluated in point 4.3 and 2.4 of the full application evaluation grid (see section 2.3 of these guidelines).

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<sup>28</sup> The updated lists of sanctions are available at [www.sanctionsmap.eu](http://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.

Each member of a partnership must have a precise and clearly identified role in the implementation of the project. A partnership should be composed in such a way as to allow the achievement of the project objectives in the most effective and cost-efficient manner.

The role of each member of the partnership (lead and co-applicants) must be clearly explained in the proposal (description of the action). It is strongly recommended that the lead applicant and its co-applicants draw up an agreement defining their partnership as well as their respective technical and financial roles and obligations. A clear allocation of responsibilities and costs will contribute to the partnership's success.

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 itself.**

Co-applicants must sign the mandate in section 5.2 of Annex A.2 (grant application form – full application).

If awarded the grant contract, the co-applicant(s) will become beneficiary(ies) in the action (together with the coordinator/lead applicant) as identified in Annex G to these guidelines - Standard Grant Contract.

### **2.1.2. Affiliated entities**

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-applicants:**

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).

- (ii) Membership, i.e. the applicant is legally defined as an 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, etc.) 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 section 5.3 of Annex A.2 (grant application form – full application).

#### **Number of applications and grants per applicant**

For all lots:

**An organisation may not submit more than one application as lead applicant under this call for proposals.** Should this be the case, the Evaluation Committee will only consider the first proposal arrived (based on the date and hour of submission) and any other additional proposal will be rejected.

A co-applicant/affiliated entity **may** be co-applicant or affiliated entity in more than one application under this call for proposals.

A lead applicant **may** be a co-applicant or an affiliated entity in another application.

#### ***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 of these guidelines. Associates must be



mentioned in section 4 — ‘Associates participating in the action’ — of Annex A.2 (grant application form – full application).

Local authorities, judicial entities, media outlets and national human rights institutions are examples of entities that may take part in the action as associates if appropriate. This added value may be taken into account in the evaluation stage (point 1.4 of concept note evaluation grid and point 2.4 of full application evaluation grid under section 2.3 of these guidelines).

- **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 (Annex G to these guidelines).

#### **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 36 months**.

##### Location

**For lots 1, 2 and 3**, the action **must** take place in a **minimum of two (2) and a maximum of five (5) countries** within the same region.

**For lot 4**, the action **must** take place in a **minimum of two (2) and a maximum of six (6) countries** within the same region.

See **Annex L** to these guidelines for a detailed list of eligible countries as action location (target countries) per each lot and region.

Activities may take place in the target countries and other countries of the region if justified by the project design.

**Please note that only the action location countries (or target countries) must be encoded in PROSPECT (minimum 2 and maximum 5 for lots 1, 2 and 3; minimum 2 and maximum 6 for lot 4).**

The regional focus of the action does not preclude activities for dialogue, advocacy and coalition building at international and global level.

Punctual activities (e.g. international or regional institutional processes, a seminar or conference, a specific exhibition or other similar events) may, if duly justified in the description of the action, take place in EU countries or third countries (notably seats of the UN or regional human rights institutions) when they are directly related to the situation arising in, or for the benefit of, the targeted region or countries to facilitate international networking and support, or to safeguard the security of the participants.

Geographical balance will be taken into account by the evaluation committee at any stage of the evaluation process.

##### Types of action

Actions which pilot a proximity service (facility, hub, etc.) to counter the civic, democratic and civil society space challenges of the target countries and/or wider sub-region or region may be financed under this call. Actions should provide services (examples under “Types of Activity” below) within the target countries and/or in nearby countries. Actions should add value through regional and multi-country approaches and through geographic and cultural proximity as appropriate.

The following types of action are ineligible:

- actions concerned only or mainly with individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences and congresses;
- actions concerned only or mainly with individual scholarships for studies or training courses;
- actions concerned only or mainly with directly delivering social services to target groups;
- actions supporting political parties or proselytism and/or supporting violence;
- actions concerned only or mainly with procurement of equipment.

### Types of activity

Indicative and non-exhaustive list of activities:

- **Analysing, assessing and updating information on** civic, democratic and civil society space in-country, using or adapting existing methodology, producing regular reports as well as alerts concerning changes or particular geographical or thematic trouble-spots.
  - Does NOT include the development of new monitoring tools;
  - DOES include the monitoring of online and offline respect for freedoms of association, peaceful assembly and expression in emergency situations, including but not limited to COVID-19-related measures, and the restoration of freedoms when emergency measures are lifted.
- **Networking** and **peer exchange** among civic space actors;
- Intersectional **coalition-building** in-country, as well as in regions and at international level where appropriate;
- **Training**, on human rights and democracy related subjects or others including but not limited to:
  - organisational development;
  - leadership;
  - international human rights standards and national legislation;
  - security and privacy;
  - digital security, data protection, surveillance technology;
  - digital literacy;
  - financial literacy;
  - communication and public campaigning;
  - advocacy.
- **Legal assistance**, including but not limited to:
  - advisory services on rights (e.g. in advance of public assemblies, in preparation for possible arrests, etc.);
  - direct legal services;
  - strategic litigation;
  - national and international advocacy (including negotiating impact of legislative measures with governments);
  - support to registration, statutes and other administrative formalities;
- **Hotlines or helpdesks** for civic actors;
- Funding schemes (e.g. micro-grants) for **experimentation and learning**, including funding for innovation and experimentation on democratic citizen engagement and participation practices;
- Emergency funding schemes for **surge support and backstopping** in case of crackdowns, including the possibility of core support as needed;

- Support (including funding/grantmaking/loans) to **public campaigns**, petitions, citizens' initiatives, public deliberation, crowdfunding initiatives, etc.;
- Recruitment and deployment of **emergency resource teams**;
- Capacity building or other support to **community leadership**, including especially women and youth leaders, those of interest groups, marginalised groups or communities;
- **Coordination and other cooperation** with representatives of the international community and third countries in target countries, including embassies, agencies, media, businesses and other politically influential actors (also at regional and global level.), in addition to domestic stakeholders beyond civil society in the target countries;
- **Communication campaigns** aimed at reframing narratives about activism, countering disinformation, promoting the concept of human rights and democracy, etc.

#### Financial support to third parties<sup>29</sup>

**Applicants shall mandatorily propose financial support to third parties** (sub-granting) in order to help achieve the objectives of the action. This must be clearly indicated in Annex A.1 (Concept note, description of the action).

The total amount devoted to financial support to third parties under this call must be clearly indicated at the full application step in the budget of the action (Annex B) under item 4.

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 of the grant application form (Annex A.2 - full application):

- (i) the overall objectives, the specific objective(s) and the outputs<sup>30</sup> (i.e. the results) to be achieved 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;
- (vi) the maximum amount which may be given per third party,
- (vii) the set-up of the control system for verifying the eligibility of costs.

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

#### 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

<sup>29</sup> These third parties are neither affiliated entity(ies) nor associates nor contractors (see also Article 10 of the General Conditions – Annex II to Annex G).

<sup>30</sup> As per OECD DAC definition, the term 'results' includes: 'impact' (overall objective), 'outcome(s)' (specific objective(s) and 'output(s)'.

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.

Exceptions for contexts in which EU visibility would bring risks to the achievement of project objectives or the safety and security of beneficiaries, project staff and/or participants must be duly justified.

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

### **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 shall be based on the following form:

- actual costs incurred by the beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies).

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

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

#### 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 II to Annex G to these 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 II to Annex G to these guidelines) will be carried out by any external body authorised by the European Commission.

#### 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<sup>31</sup>. 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.

**The contracting authority may accept co-financing in kind in the form of volunteers' work, valued on the basis of unit costs, if considered necessary or appropriate. In such cases, the value of such contributions must not exceed the unit cost per volunteer per day, defined and authorised by the contracting authority for a maximum of 50% of the co-financing.**

#### 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 (Annex II to Annex G to these guidelines), at the latest at the end of the action;
- currency exchange losses;
- credit to third parties;
- salary costs of the personnel of national administrations.

### **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.

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<sup>31</sup> Please refer to tables 1 and 2 of the Annex M to these guidelines - List of unit costs for declaring personnel costs for the work carried out by volunteers under an action or a work programme

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, abuse and harassment:**

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**

This Call for Proposals relies on the European Commission's **PADOR** (Potential Applicant Data Online Registration) and **PROSPECT** (online applications platform) systems.

PADOR is an on-line database in which organisations register and update information concerning their entity.

PROSPECT is the European Commission's online application system developed for the submission of applications for call for proposals in the field of external action. 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 allowing them to submit their proposals online and to follow up online the status of their application. Applicants also receive automatic notifications when new documents (Clarifications, Corrigendum, etc.) are published for their call.

PADOR and PROSPECT are accessible via the website: [https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/funding/looking-for-funding\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/funding/looking-for-funding_en).

Please note that individual users need to set up an EU Login account (ECAS) in order to access PADOR and PROSPECT<sup>32</sup>.

Before starting using PADOR and PROSPECT, please read the manuals for applicants available on the website:

- <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfi/wikis/display/ExactExternalWiki/Manual+for+Applicants+-+e-Calls+PADOR>
- <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfi/wikis/display/ExactExternalWiki/Manual+for+Applicants+-+e-Calls+PROSPECT>

All technical questions related the use of these systems should be addressed to the IT helpdesk at [EuropeAid-IT-support@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EuropeAid-IT-support@ec.europa.eu) or via the online support form in PROSPECT.

**To apply for this call for proposals the lead applicants must:**

- I. Provide information about the organisations involved in the action. Please note that the registration of this data in PADOR is obligatory<sup>33</sup> for this call for proposals. Organisations registered in PADOR get a unique ID (EuropeAid ID) which they must mention in their application.
  - **Concept note (step 1):** Registration in PADOR is obligatory only for lead applicants;
  - **Full application (step 2):** Registration is obligatory for co-applicants and affiliated entity(ies). Lead applicants must make sure that their PADOR profile is up to date.

**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. Please note that once the EU Login (ECAS account) is created, the synchronisation/validation may take up to 24 hours before PADOR/PROSPECT recognize the user's ID and allow the access.**

If it is impossible to register online in PADOR for technical reasons, the applicants and/or affiliated entity(ies) must complete the “**PADOR off-line form**” (Annex F to these guidelines)<sup>34</sup>. This form must be sent **together with the application (Concept Note and Full Application)** by the submission deadline (see section 2.2.2 and 2.2.5 of these guidelines).

- II. Provide information about the action in the documents listed under sections 2.2.2 (Concept Note) and 2.2.5 (Full Application) of these guidelines. Please note that online submission via PROSPECT is obligatory for this call.

### **2.2.1. Concept note content**

Applications must be submitted in accordance with the concept note instructions in the grant application form – concept note (Annex A.1, page 9) annexed to these guidelines.

<sup>32</sup> Please note that once the ECAS account (EU login) is created, the synchronisation/validation may take up to 24 hours before PADOR/PROSPECT recognize the user's ID and allow the access.

<sup>33</sup> Natural persons who apply for a grant (if so allowed in the guidelines for applicants) do not have to register in PADOR. In this case, the information included in PROSPECT and the grant application form is sufficient.

<sup>34</sup> Which corresponds to sections 3 and 4 of the full application form – Annex A.2.

Applicants must apply in English, French or Spanish.

Please note that:

1. All information encoded in PROSPECT must be exhaustive and in line with the content of the concept note. The administrative check will be performed **taking into consideration only the information available in PROSPECT** in sections: 1 - Contact; 2 - Project; 3 - Co- applicants; 4 - Documents. Please make sure that there are no inconsistencies between the information in PROSPECT and the content of the concept note;
2. In the concept note, lead applicants must **only provide an estimate of the requested EU contribution** as well as an **indicative percentage of that contribution** in relation to the eligible costs of the action. A detailed budget is to be submitted only by the lead applicants invited to submit a full application in the second phase;
3. **The elements outlined in the concept note may not be modified in the full application:**
  - The EU contribution may not vary from the initial estimate by more than 20%. Lead applicants are free to adapt the percentage of co-financing required within the minimum and maximum amount and percentages of co-financing, as laid down in these guidelines in section 1.3;
  - The lead applicant **replace** a co-applicant or an affiliated entity only in duly justified cases (e.g. bankruptcy of initial co-applicant or affiliated entity). In this case, the new co-applicant/affiliated entity must be of a similar nature as the initial one;
  - The lead applicant may adjust the duration of the action if unforeseen circumstances outside the scope of the applicants have taken place following the submission of the concept note and require such adaptation (risk of action not being carried out). In such cases, the duration must remain within the limits imposed by the guidelines for applicants.

**An explanation/justification of the relevant replacement/adjustment shall be included in an accompanying letter or email (or included in section 2.1.1 of the full application form - Annex A.2). The validity of the justification provided will be examined during the evaluation procedure. Should the justification not be deemed valid, the proposal may be rejected on that sole basis.**

Own contributions by the applicants can be replaced by other donors' contributions at any time;

4. **Only the concept note form will be evaluated.** It is therefore of utmost importance that this document contains ALL relevant information concerning the action.

**No additional annexes should be sent.**

Any error related to the concept note instructions (page 9 of Annex A.1) or any major discrepancy related to the points listed in the checklist (page 12 of Annex A.1) may lead to the rejection of the concept note.

Clarifications will only be requested when information provided is not sufficient/unclear and thus prevents the contracting authority from conducting an objective assessment.

Hand-written concept notes will not be accepted.

### **2.2.2. Where and how to send concept notes**

The concept note (Annex A.1) together with the signed declaration by the lead applicant (Annex A.1, section 2) **must be submitted online via PROSPECT** (<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/prospect>) following the instructions given in the PROSPECT [users' manual](#).

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



If it is impossible for lead applicants to submit their concept note online via PROSPECT for technical reasons, they must send their proposal in a sealed envelope and attach the concept note (Annex A.1) together with the declaration by the lead applicant (Annex A.1, section 2). In particular, the lead applicant must send, in a sealed envelope as described below the following items:

- a. One original of the concept note (Annex A.1). The signed declaration by the lead applicant (Annex A.1, section 2) must be printed and stapled separately and enclosed in the envelope;
- b. An electronic version (pen drive of the items under point (a)). The electronic file must contain **exactly the same** application as the paper version enclosed;
- c. PADOR offline form (Annex F to these guidelines).

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

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

Concept notes must be submitted in a sealed envelope by registered mail, private courier service or by hand-delivery with delivery confirmation (a signed and dated certificate of receipt will be given to the deliverer) to the address below:

Postal address & Address for hand delivery or by private courier service:

European Commission  
Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development  
Unit DEVCO B6 - Finance and Contracts  
Attn. Head of Unit L-41 03/110  
Avenue du Bourget, 1  
B-1140 Brussels  
BELGIUM

Tel: +32 2 2997916

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

Hand-written concept notes will not be accepted.

**Please note that incomplete concept notes may be rejected.** Lead applicants are advised to verify that their concept note is complete by using the checklist for self-guidance (page 12 of Annex A.1).

### ***2.2.3. Deadline for submission of concept notes***

The deadline for the submission of concept notes is **20/11/2020 at 12:00 (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 at <http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/converter.html>). **The lead applicant is strongly advised not to wait until the last day to submit** its concept note, since heavy internet traffic or a fault with the internet connection (including electricity failure, etc.) could lead to difficulties in submission. The Contracting Authority cannot be held responsible for any delay due to such aforementioned difficulties.

In the exceptional case of submission by post or by hand delivery (see section 2.2.2 of these guidelines), the date of submission is evidenced by the date of dispatch, the postmark or the date of the deposit slip. In the case of hand-deliveries, the deadline for receipt is at 12:00<sup>35</sup> as evidenced by the signed and dated receipt.

Any concept note submitted after the deadline will be rejected.

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

#### **2.2.4. Further information about concept notes**

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

E-mail address: [EuropeAid-170197@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EuropeAid-170197@ec.europa.eu)

The contracting authority has no obligation to provide clarifications to questions received after this date.

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

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 alongside the other application documents on the DG International Cooperation and Development's dedicated webpage: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome> 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](mailto:EuropeAid-IT-support@ec.europa.eu) or 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.

Please note that the contracting authority may decide to cancel the call for proposals procedure at any stage according to the conditions set out in section 6.5.9 of the PRAG.

#### **2.2.5. Full applications**

Lead applicants invited to submit a full application following pre-selection of their concept note must do so using the grant application form annexed to these guidelines (Annex A.2). Lead applicants should then keep strictly to the format of the grant application form and fill in the paragraphs and pages in order.

Please note that:

1. All information encoded in PROSPECT must be exhaustive and in line with the content of the full application. The administrative check will be performed taking into consideration only the information available in PROSPECT in sections: 1 - Contact; 2 - Project; 3 - Co- applicants; 4 - Documents. Please make sure that there are no inconsistencies between the information in PROSPECT and the content of the full application;

<sup>35</sup> Please use an online time converter tool, such as the one presented in the footnote above.

2. **The elements outlined in the concept note cannot be modified by the lead applicant in the full application:**

- The EU contribution may not vary from the initial estimate by more than 20 %, although lead applicants are free to adapt the percentage of co-financing required within the minimum and maximum amount and percentages of co-financing, as laid down in these guidelines under section 1.3;
- The lead applicant may **replace** a co-applicant or an affiliated entity only in duly justified cases (e.g. bankruptcy of initial co-applicant or affiliated entity). In this case the new co-applicant/affiliated entity must be of a similar nature as the initial one;
- The lead applicant may adjust the duration of the action if unforeseen circumstances outside the scope of the applicants have taken place following the submission of the concept note and require such adaptation (risk of action not being carried out). In such cases, the duration must remain within the limits imposed by the guidelines for applicants.

**An explanation/justification of the relevant replacement/adjustment shall be included in an accompanying letter or email (or included in section 2.1.1 of the full application form - Annex A.2). The validity of the justification provided will be examined during the evaluation procedure. Should the justification not be deemed valid, the proposal may be rejected on that sole basis.**

3. Lead applicants must submit their full applications **in the same language** as their concept notes.
4. 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) and of the external audit report must be uploaded in PADOR by the full application deadline. A copy of the latest account is neither required from the co-applicants nor from (if any) affiliated entity(ies).

**No additional annexes should be sent.**

Please complete the full application form carefully and as clearly as possible so that it can be assessed properly.

Any error related to the full application instructions (page 16 of Annex A.2) and to the points listed in the checklist (page 20 of Annex A.2) or any major inconsistency in the full 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 information provided is not sufficient/unclear and thus prevents the contracting authority from conducting an objective assessment.

Hand-written applications will not be accepted.

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

**With the full application the lead applicant, each co-applicant(s) and each (if any) affiliated entities have to be registered in PADOR (or, if impossible for technical reasons, submit the completed PADOR form - Annex F to these guidelines)<sup>36</sup>.**

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<sup>36</sup> Natural persons who apply for a grant (if so allowed in the guidelines for applicants) do not have to provide an organisation data form. In this case, the information included in the grant application form is sufficient.

## **2.2.6. Where and how to send full applications**

Full application forms (Annex A.2) together with the budget (Annex B), the logical framework (Annex C) and the signed declaration by the lead applicant (Annex A.2, section 5) must be submitted online via PROSPECT (<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/prospect>) following the instructions given in the [users' manual](#).

Upon submission of the full application online, the lead applicants will receive an automatic confirmation of receipt in their PROSPECT profile.

(a) If the lead applicant submitted the concept note by post / hand delivery (see section 2.2.3 of these guidelines) it must send the full application by the same means (by post or hand delivery).

(b) If the lead applicant submitted the concept note online via PROSPECT but it is technically impossible for the organisation to submit the full application online:

In the above two cases the lead applicant must send by post the application, i.e the full application form (Annex A.2), the budget (Annex B), the logical framework (Annex C) and the signed declaration by the lead applicant (Annex A.2, section 5). The lead applicant must send, in a sealed envelope as described below, the following items:

- a. One original signed copy of the full application form (Annex A.2), the budget (Annex B) and the logical framework (Annex C). The declaration by the lead applicant (Annex A.2, section 5) must be printed, signed and stapled separately and enclosed in the envelope;
- b. An electronic version (pen drive of the items under point (a)). The electronic file must contain exactly the same application as the paper version enclosed;
- c. PADOR offline form (Annex F to these guidelines).

To reduce expense and waste, we strongly recommend that you use only paper for your file (no plastic folders or dividers). Please also use double-sided printing if possible.

Applications must be submitted in a sealed envelope by registered mail, private courier service or by hand-delivery (a signed and dated certificate of receipt will be given to the deliverer) to the address below.

### Postal address & address for hand delivery or by private courier service

European Commission  
Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development  
Unit DEVCO B6 - Finance and Contracts  
Attn. Head of Unit L-41 03/110  
Avenue du Bourget, 1  
B-1140 Brussels  
BELGIUM

Tel: +32 2 2997916

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

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

Hand-written applications will not be accepted.

**Please note that incomplete applications may be rejected.** Lead applicants are advised to verify that their application is complete using the checklist for self-guidance (Annex A.2, page 20).

### **2.2.7. *Deadline for submission of full applications***

The deadline for the submission of full applications will be indicated in the letter sent to the lead applicants whose application has been pre-selected. This letter will appear online automatically in the PROSPECT profile of the lead applicant.

Lead applicants who, in exceptional cases (see section 2.2.6 of these guidelines) 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.

**Lead applicants are strongly advised not to wait until the last day to submit their full applications,** since heavy Internet traffic or a fault with the Internet connection (including electricity failure, etc.) could lead to difficulties in submission. The Contracting Authority cannot be held responsible for any delay due to such aforementioned difficulties.

In the case of submission by post (see section 2.2.6 of these guidelines), the date of submission is evidenced by the date of dispatch, the postmark or the date of the deposit slip. In the case of hand-deliveries, the deadline for receipt is at 12:00 Brussels time<sup>37</sup> as evidenced by the signed and dated receipt.

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ny application submitted after the deadline will be rejected.

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

### **2.2.8. *Further information about full applications***

Questions may be sent by e-mail no later than **21 days before the deadline** for the submission of full applications to the addresses listed below, indicating clearly the reference of the call for proposals:

E-mail address: [EuropeAid-170197@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EuropeAid-170197@ec.europa.eu)

The contracting authority has no obligation to provide clarifications to questions received after this date.

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

To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the contracting authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of lead applicants, co-applicants, affiliated entities, or an action.

**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 alongside the application documents on the DG International Cooperation and Development's dedicated webpage: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome>, 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.**

<sup>37</sup> Please use an online time converter tool, such as <http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/converter.html>.

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](mailto:EuropeAid-IT-support@ec.europa.eu) or **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 of these guidelines, the application will be rejected on this sole basis.

## (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 concept note satisfies all the criteria specified in the checklist (Annex A.1, page 12). 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 Annex A.1 (page 9).

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
<b>1. Relevance of the action</b>	<b>20</b>
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
<b>2. Design of the action</b>	<b>30</b>
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)?	
<b>Maximum total score</b>	<b>50</b>

**\*\*:** this score is multiplied by 2 because of its importance

Note: A score of 5 (very good) on any evaluation point will only be allocated if the proposal specifically addresses the priorities and all of the themes as indicated in section 1.2 (objectives of the programme) of these guidelines.

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 at least **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 of these guidelines), 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 pre-selected lead applicants will subsequently be invited to submit full applications.



## **(2) STEP 2: EVALUATION OF THE FULL APPLICATION**

Firstly, the following will be assessed:

- If the submission deadline has been met. Otherwise, the application will automatically be rejected.
- If the full application satisfies all the criteria specified in the checklist (Annex A.2, page 20). 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
<b>1. Financial and operational capacity</b>	<b>20</b>
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
<b>2. Relevance of the action</b>	<b>20</b>
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) ? Does it address cross-cutting issues?	5
<b>3. Design of the action</b>	<b>15</b>
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
<b>4. Implementation approach</b>	<b>15</b>
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
<b>5. Sustainability of the action</b>	<b>15</b>
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
<b>6. Budget and cost-effectiveness of the action</b>	<b>15</b>
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**
<b>Maximum total score</b>	<b>100</b>

**\*\*:** 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.

### **(3) 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 of these guidelines). 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 2 of Annex A.1 and 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 of these guidelines.

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)<sup>38</sup>:

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

1. The statutes or articles of association of the lead applicant, (if any) of each co-applicant and (if any) of each affiliated entity<sup>39</sup>. 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<sup>40</sup>. This obligation does not apply to international organisations which have signed a framework agreement with the European Commission.
2. 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.

3. The external audit report is not required from (if any) the co-applicant(s) or affiliated entities.
4. 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)<sup>41</sup>. A copy of the latest account is neither required from (if any) the co-applicant(s) nor from (if any) affiliated entity(ies).
5. Legal entity sheet (Annex D to 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;
6. A financial identification form of the lead applicant (not from co-applicants) conforming to the model attached as Annex E to these guidelines, certified by the bank to which the payments will be made. This bank should be located in the country where the lead applicant is established. If the lead applicant has already submitted a financial identification form in the past for a contract where the European

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<sup>38</sup> No supporting document will be requested for applications for a grant not exceeding EUR 60,000.

<sup>39</sup> 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.

<sup>40</sup> To be inserted only where the eligibility conditions have not changed from one call for proposals to the other.

<sup>41</sup> 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 of these guidelines.

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.

7. Entities without legal personality must, to the extent possible, submit the documentation listed above. In addition, a letter must be provided by the legal representative certifying his/her capacity to undertake legal obligations on behalf of the entity.
8. The lead applicant as well as all co-applicants and affiliated entities shall fill in and sign the declaration on honour (Annex H to these guidelines) certifying that they are not in one of the exclusion situations (see section 2.1.1 of these guidelines and section 2.6.10.1 of the PRAG).

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

Where such documents are not in one of the official languages of the European Union, a translation into one of the language(s) of the call for proposals 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 one of the languages of the call for proposals, 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 one of the languages of the call for proposals.

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 of these guidelines), had to submit their application by post or hand-delivery, will be informed by email or by post if they did not provide any e-mail address. Therefore, please check regularly your PROSPECT profile, taking into account the indicative timetable below.

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

Applicants who were unsuccessful at the **Opening and Administrative Check stages** of the procedure wishing to obtain further information should send their request by letter, indicating the reference of the Call for Proposals and the reference allocated to the proposal, to:

European Commission  
Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development  
Unit B.6 - Finance and Contracts  
Attn. Head of Unit L-41 03/110  
Avenue du Bourget, 1  
B-1140 Brussels  
BELGIUM

Applicants who were unsuccessful at the **Technical evaluation stages of the procedure or at the Eligibility check stage** wishing to obtain further information should send their request, by letter indicating the reference of the Call for Proposals and the reference allocated to the proposal, to:

European Commission  
Directorate-General for International Development and Cooperation  
Unit B.1 - Gender Equality, Human Rights and Democratic Governance  
Attn. Head of Unit L-41 03/080  
Avenue du Bourget, 1  
B-1140 Brussels  
BELGIUM

### 2.5.2. Indicative timetable

	DATE	TIME
1. Deadline for requesting any clarifications from the contracting authority	30/10/2020	12:00
2. Last date on which clarifications are issued by the contracting authority	9/11/2020	-
3. Deadline for submission of concept notes	<b>20/11/2020</b>	<b>12:00</b>
4. Information to lead applicants on opening, administrative checks and concept note evaluation (Step 1)	February 2021	-
5. Invitations to submit full applications	February 2021	-
6. Deadline for submission of full applications	End March 2021	-
7. Information to lead applicants on the evaluation of the full applications (Step 2)	May 2021	-
8. Notification of award (after the eligibility check) (Step 3)	June 2021	-
9. Contract signature	August 2021	-

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 to these guidelines). By signing the application form (Annex A.1 and A.2 to 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 the procurement rules for beneficiaries set out in Annex IV to the standard grant contract (Annex G to these guidelines).

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 – Annex II to Annex G to these guidelines).

**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 – Annex II to Annex G to these guidelines).

## LIST OF ANNEXES

### DOCUMENTS TO BE COMPLETED

- Annex A.1: Grant application form - Concept note  
Annex A.2: Grant application form - Full Application  
Annex B: Budget (Excel format)  
Annex C: Logical framework (Excel format)  
Annex D: Legal entity sheet  
Annex E: Financial identification form  
Annex F: PADOR offline registration form (ONLY IF IMPOSSIBLE TO REGISTER IN PADOR)

### DOCUMENTS FOR INFORMATION<sup>42</sup>

- Annex G: Standard grant contract (Special Conditions)
- Annex II: General Conditions
  - Annex IV: Procurement rules for beneficiaries (contract award rules)
  - Annex V: Standard request for payment
  - Annex VI: Models narrative and financial report
  - Annex VII: Terms of reference for an expenditure verification of a grant contract
  - Annex VIII: Model financial guarantee
  - Annex IX: Standard template for transfer of ownership of assets
- Annex H: Declaration on Honour
- Annex I: Daily allowance rates (per diem), available at the following address:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/funding/about-procurement-contracts/procedures-and-practical-guide-prag/diems\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/funding/about-procurement-contracts/procedures-and-practical-guide-prag/diems_en)
- Annex J: Information on the tax regime applicable to grant contracts signed under the call
- Annex L: List of eligible countries as action location (target countries) per lot and region
- Annex M: List of unit costs for declaring personnel costs for the work carried out by volunteers under an action or a work programme.

### Useful links:

#### Project Cycle Management Guidelines

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

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<sup>42</sup> These documents should also be published by the contracting authority.

their contractual obligations beneficiaries should not exclusively rely on the toolkit but always consult their individual contract documents.

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