



Contracting Authority: European Commission

Eastern Partnership Civil Society Facility 2021-2022

Strategic Partnerships for Engagement with and Capacity Development
of Civil Society Organisations in the Eastern Partnership region

Guidelines for Framework Partners and grant applicants

Budget line(s): 14 02 01 11

Reference:
EuropeAid/178230/DH/ACT/

Deadline for submission¹ of full application:
28 August 2023 at 17.00 (Brussels date and time)

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

¹ Online submission via PROSPECT is mandatory for this call for proposals (see section 2.2.2). In PROSPECT all dates and times are expressed in Brussels time. Applicants should note that the IT support is open Monday to Friday from 08:30 to 18:30 Brussels time (except during European Commission public holidays in Belgium as published in the Official Journal). Applicants should take note of the weekly maintenance hours mentioned in the PROSPECT user manual.

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

NOTICE

This is a call for proposals to establish Strategic Partnerships, understood as a long-term cooperation mechanism through Financial Framework Partnership Agreements, and for specific grants to co-finance their implementation. The establishment of a Financial Framework Partnership Agreement does not guarantee the allocation of a grant.

Within the context of the current call for proposals, the application form consists of a Framework Partnership Application Form and a Specific Grant Application Form, and this call is structured in two phases:

1. During the first phase, strategic partners will be selected on the basis of their Framework Partnership applications (part 1 of the application form), and their partnership with the EU will be formalised through a Financial Framework Partnership Agreement (FFPA). The target group for such partnerships are organisations with significant experience in providing support (including financial) to civil society organisations, either in one of the EaP countries, or across the Eastern Neighbourhood region and in the Russian Federation. This FFPA will be based on the common political objectives shared by the EU and the applicant's strategic plan, and will define the respective roles and responsibilities of the Commission and its strategic partner in implementing the partnership. Strategic Partnerships will take into account the following aspects:
 - Mutual interest and common general objectives shared by the Commission and its partners in pursuing the European Union policy on cooperation to development;
 - Relevance and impact of planned actions on challenges and citizens in the Eastern Partnership and the wider region by contributing to advancing the role of civil society as a governance actor, informing decisions, sharing best practices and engaging stakeholders.

The evaluation will be based on the criteria specified in section 2.3. Step 3 “Evaluation And Selection Of Framework Partnership Application” and included in the evaluation grid, among which the competences, experience, expertise and capacity of the organisation as well as the relevance, coherence, quality, effectiveness and potential impact of their strategic plan translating in operational terms the objectives of the organisation.

The successful applicants of the first phase of this call for proposals will establish a Financial Framework Partnership Agreement with the EU. Their Specific Grant Application Form will be evaluated in the second stage of the present call.

Signature of an FFPA does not guarantee that the beneficiary will be awarded a grant.

The financial allocations, as well as the size of grants, relate exclusively to the second phase of the selection process: the Specific Grants.

2. During the second phase, beneficiaries of a Specific Grant will be selected among the awarded partners of the first phase, on the basis of their Specific Grant applications (part 2 of the application form). Specific Grant Agreements will provide financial support to implement an action in line with the objectives and terms of the strategic partnership, instrumental to reaching political priorities and objectives which are shared between the EU and its partners. The Selection criteria for this second phase are explained in section 2.3. Step 6 “Evaluation and selection of the specific grant application”.

The scope of the established Financial Framework Partnership Agreements will go beyond the present call for proposals, and Framework Partners may benefit from future bilateral and regional EU funding for civil society support in the Eastern Partnership countries and the Russian Federation. The list of selected partners will be made available to all European Commission services and EU Delegations, who can launch calls for specific grants to those framework partners only. Funding for such specific grants can come from any programme of the European Commission, in case similar objectives as those identified under the strategic partnership and described in the FFPAs are supported. The procedure for awarding specific grants within the FFPA is specified in the Financial Framework Partnership Agreement template – Annex G.

This is an **open call for proposals**, where all documents are submitted together (Framework Partnership application forms and specific grant application). In the first instance, only the Framework Partnership applications will be evaluated. An eligibility check will be performed for each FFPA application. Eligibility will be checked on the basis of the supporting documents requested by the Contracting Authority and the signed 'Declaration by the Applicant' sent together with the application. Only Framework Partnership Applications from Applicants having passed the eligibility check will be evaluated. Thereafter, the lead applicants who have been selected will sign a Financial Framework Partnership Agreement, and their specific grant applications will be evaluated. The successful grant applications will then result in the signature of Specific Grant Agreements.

This call for proposals is published under a **suspensive clause**. Part of the envisaged allocation is prepared for adoption. In case the financing decision is not adopted or is substantially modified, the funding for this call will be reduced accordingly.

A **reserve list** may be created among selected Framework Partners to be drawn from for specific grants if/when more funds become available during the validity period of the reserve list.

Online submission via PROSPECT

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

Preparation: Information session indicatively on 4 July 2023 at 10.00 Brussels time and user manuals.

Should you be interested in this session, please send an email by 30 June 2023 to NEAR-TENDER-178230@ec.europa.eu indicating: name, surname, nationality and email address of the persons who are going to participate as well as their organisation (max. two participants per organisation). No costs incurred by the applicants for attending this information session are reimbursable.

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

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

Table of contents

1. «»	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
1.1. Background.....	5
1.2. Objectives of the programme and priority issues	6
1.3. Financial allocation provided by the contracting authority	8
2. RULES FOR THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS	10
2.1. Eligibility criteria.....	10
2.1.1. Eligibility of applicants (i.e. lead applicant and co-applicant(s)).....	10
2.1.2. Associates and contractors	13
2.1.3. Eligible actions: actions for which an application may be made.....	14
2.1.4. Eligibility of costs: costs that can be included	18
2.1.5. Ethics clauses and Code of Conduct	21
2.2. How to apply and the procedures to follow	22
2.2.1. Application forms.....	23
2.2.2. Where and how to send applications	25
2.2.3. Deadline for submission of applications	26
2.2.4. Further information about applications	26
2.3. Evaluation and selection of applications	27
2.4. Submission of supporting documents	38
2.5. Notification of the Contracting Authority's decision	38
2.5.1. Content of the decision.....	38
2.5.2. Indicative timetable	39
2.6. Conditions for implementation after the contracting authority's decision to award a grant.....	40
3. LIST OF ANNEXES	41

1. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS IN THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP REGION

1.1. BACKGROUND

The Civil Society Facility was set up in 2011 to support the role of civil society in advancing democratic reforms across the Neighbourhood. The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Facility aims to underpin existing support and ensure continuity of relevant civil society support in the wider eastern neighbourhood. To that regard, the actions proposed take into account relevant regional policies as well as country specific policies as outlined in the Country Roadmaps for EU Engagement with Civil Society.

As defined in the 2012 Communication “*Roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with civil society in external relations*”⁴, support to the development of capacity of CSOs, engagement in policy dialogue and promoting enabling and conducive civic space are the three areas in which the EU is committed to work. Since 2012, the EU has repeatedly reaffirmed its commitment to support civil society in the Eastern Partnership through a series of policy documents, taking stock of the achievements to date and drawing new forward-looking objectives. As reaffirmed in the 2020 “EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024”⁵, civil society remains a key partner for delivering sustainable change and to monitor and review progress. Civil society is recognised as one of the main partners to push for change under five broad political priorities⁶ set by the European Commission for 2019-2024.

The Joint Communication “Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020, reinforcing resilience – an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all”, adopted in March 2020, and the Joint Staff Working Document on the future of the Eastern Partnership, published in July 2021, acknowledge the contribution of civil society to increasing public accountability, advancing human rights, sustainable growth and local development, as well as ensuring service delivery to the whole population in the region. The EU commits to continue supporting financial sustainability and capacity of CSOs as well as promoting cooperation with a range of social partners and enhancing leadership skills of civic actors. An ambitious target was set to double the outreach to smaller local civil society and support 2 500 active CSOs and civic grassroots actors outside capitals - the new generation of civil society - serving the needs of local communities.

Despite the unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine and its impact on the entire region, the Joint Communication remains highly relevant as a basis for engagement with the Eastern Partnership countries. The Commission opinions⁷ on the application for membership of the European Union, which confirm the European perspective for Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, stress an enhancement of the involvement of civil society in decision-making processes at all levels as priority. This and the further political situation in the region underpin the need for a resilient civil society.

⁴ Roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with civil society in external relations, Communication COM(2012) 492, <https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/2012-communication-roots-of-democracy-and-sustainable-development.pdf>

⁵ Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council, EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020 – 2024

⁶ See political priorities for the [International Partnerships](#)

⁷ Communication COM (2022) 405 final of 17.06.2022 “Commission Opinion on Georgia's application for membership of the European Union”; Communication COM (2022) 406 final of 17.06.2022 “Commission Opinion on the Republic of Moldova's application for membership of the European Union” ; Communication COM (2022) 407 final of 17.06.2022 “Commission Opinion on Ukraine's application for membership of the European Union” https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_3790

As part of its new strategic approach to supporting civil society in the Eastern Partnership, DG NEAR established strategic partnerships with selected civil society organisations with recognised knowledge, local political awareness and experience in supporting civil society in December 2019. These framework partnerships together with their grants have already contributed to increased outreach and financial support to new civic actors and to grass-root communities. Framework partnerships entail increased coordination among the partners and with DG NEAR and privileged access to funding/support for the duration of its life span. As the current partnerships are coming to an end, this call will establish a new pool of framework partners to further empower civil society as a key component of a just, equitable, gender equal and democratic system than can play a critical role in policy dialogue as governance actors and engage in initiatives to further a participatory democracy.

EU's support to civil society has already contributed to an active and resilient civil society. Since the pandemic, CSOs have been playing a vital role in serving local communities and vulnerable groups and pushing for reforms when the national authorities became overwhelmed by the magnitude of crises. In Belarus and Ukraine, an unprecedented civic mobilisation has been redefining political and social activism. Further support should on the one hand build on the momentum of increased civic activism and on the other hand support organisations to re-focus on their core mandate and switch from crisis to more normal mode.

1.2. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME AND PRIORITY ISSUES

Framework partners will be selected in order to, jointly with the EU, advance the role of civil society as governance actors in the Eastern Partnership, through both, country and regional actions.

The **global objective** of this call for proposals is to contribute to inclusive, resilient and democratic societies in the Eastern Partnership region.

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

- to increase capacities of CSOs and reinforce their role in the democratisation, reform and recovery processes in Eastern Partnership countries and the Russian Federation.

Within this call for proposals the EU is aiming to select a total of up to 10 strategic partners and conclude Financial Framework Partnership Agreements with organisations that share EU's values and vision on development of resilient civil society as actors of governance and on a framework of enhanced cooperation with the EU based on mutual interests, common general objectives and EU's policies.

The Financial Framework Partnership Agreements will constitute the basis for a medium term cooperation framework (four years) between the Commission and specific beneficiaries. The Commission intends to maintain a network of Framework Partners which will enable regular communication and coordination (collectively and individually) on relevant topics of mutual interest and in line with common objectives.

Amongst the selected Framework Partners, specific grants will be awarded to a limited number of organisations in order to:

- Conduct activities to strengthen the capacities of CSOs to participate in the democratisation, reform and recovery processes in Eastern Partnership countries and the Russian Federation and become better communicators of their work;
- Provide Financial Support to Third Parties in Eastern Partnership countries and the Russian Federation, and provide step-by-step support in the implementation of project, coupled with oversight of the organisations' own development strategies and ambitions;

1.3. FINANCIAL ALLOCATION PROVIDED BY THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY

The overall indicative amount made available under this call for proposals is EUR 6 036 000. The contracting authority reserves the right not to award all available funds.

The above indicative amount is linked to two financing decisions. **EUR 1 036 000** has been allocated through the financing decision NDICI-GEO-NEAR/2021/043-010, which was adopted in 2021. **EUR**

5 000 000 is subject to the adoption of the financing decision for the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Facility 2023-2024, which is under preparation. In case this financing decision is not adopted or is substantially modified, the funding for this call will be reduced accordingly.

A reserve list may be created among selected Framework Partners to be drawn from for specific grants if/when more funds become available during the validity period of the reserve list.

Size of grants

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

- minimum amount: EUR 1 000 000
- maximum amount: EUR 1 500 000

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

- Minimum percentage: 55 % of the total eligible costs of the action.
- Maximum percentage: 90 % of the total eligible costs of the action (see also Section 2.1.4).
- Any grant requested under this call for proposals which includes in the proposed budget in-kind contributions and/or non-eligible taxes must further be limited to 20 % of the estimated total accepted costs⁸. In case during the implementation of the action progress and final reports show that the total accepted costs are equal to the total eligible costs, the percentage applicable to the total accepted costs applies to the total eligible costs to ensure the required co-financing.

Wherever in the call for proposals a reference to the percentage of eligible costs is made, the further limitation to the percentage applicable to the total accepted costs will apply. As a reminder, before sending your application please check that the requested contribution is equal to or less than the maximum percentage of the estimated total accepted costs allowed.

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 Fund⁹.

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

⁸ [Estimated total accepted costs = estimated total eligible costs (including volunteers' work) + in kind contributions (other than volunteers' work), non-eligible taxes, etc.]

⁹ 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, which is applicable to the present call (available on the internet at this address <https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/display/ExactExternalWiki/ePRAG>).¹⁰

2.1. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

There are three sets of eligibility criteria, relating to:

(1) the actors (2.1.1.):

- The **‘lead applicant’**, i.e. the entity submitting the application form;
- 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)’)**;
- and, if any, **affiliated entity(ies)** to the lead applicant and/or to a co-applicant(s);

(2) the strategy plans and actions (2.1.3.):

- actions for which a grant may be awarded (2.1.3);

(3) the costs (2.1.4.):

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

2.1.1. Eligibility of applicants

Lead applicant

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

- be a legal person **and**
- be non-profit-making **and**
- be a civil society organisation¹¹ **and**
- be established in¹²

¹⁰ Note that a lead applicant (i.e. a coordinator) whose pillars have been positively assessed by the European Commission and who is awarded a grant will not sign the standard grant contract published with these guidelines but a contribution agreement based on the contribution agreement template. All references in these guidelines and other documents related to this call to the standard grant contract shall in this case be understood as referring to the relevant provisions of the contribution agreement template.

¹¹ In line with the 2012 Commission Communication “The Roots of Democracy”, the EU considers CSOs to include all non-state, and non-profit making structures, non-partisan and non –violent, through which people organise to pursue shared objectives and ideals, whether political, cultural, social or economic. They include membership-based, cause-based and service-oriented CSOs. Among them, community-based organisations, non-governmental organisations, faith-based organisations, foundations, research institutions, Gender and LGBT organisations, cooperatives, professional and business associations, and the not-for-profit media. Trade unions and employers' organisations, the so-called social partners, constitute a specific category of CSOs.

¹² To be determined on the basis of the organisation’s statutes, which should demonstrate that it has been established by an instrument governed by the national law of the country concerned and that its head office is located in an eligible country. In this respect, any legal entity whose statutes have been established in another country cannot be considered

- EU Partner countries eligible for Union funding from the Eastern Neighbourhood – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, eligible for Union funding under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) instrument, and the Russian Federation or
- a Member State of the European Union and contracting parties to the Agreement on the European Economic Area,

and

- be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action with the co-applicant(s) and affiliated entity(ies), not acting as an intermediary **and**
- have recent proven experience of at least 3 years (from the submission of the application) in implementing CSO capacity building activities in at least three countries from the Eastern Partnership¹³ and/or the Russian Federation, **and**
- have recent proven experience (since 2019) in awarding and managing grants to CSOs and local initiatives, including the publication of calls for proposals, the definition of selection and award criteria, the evaluation of applications, the contracting and the monitoring of implementation.

(2) Potential applicants may not participate in calls for proposals or be awarded grants if they are in any of the situations listed in Section 2.6.10.1 of the practical guide;

Lead applicants, affiliated entities and, in case of legal entities, persons who have powers of representation, decision-making or control over the lead applicant, the co-applicants and the affiliated entities are informed that, should they be in one of the situations of early detection or exclusion according to Section 2.6.10.1 of the practical guide, personal details (name, given name if natural person, address, legal form and name and given name of the persons with powers of representation, decision-making or control, if legal person) may be registered in the early detection and exclusion system, and communicated to the persons and entities concerned in relation to the award or the execution of a grant contract. In this respect, provisionally selected lead applicants, co-applicants and affiliated entities or those placed in the reserve list are obliged to declare that they are not in one of the exclusion situations through a signed declaration on honour (PRAG Annex A14). For grants of EUR 15 000 or less, no declaration on honour is required. See section 2.4.

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

The lead applicant must act individually.

Affiliated entities

The lead applicant may act with affiliated entity(ies).

Only the following entities may be considered as affiliated entities to the lead applicant:

an eligible local organisation, even if the statutes are registered locally or a 'Memorandum of Understanding' has been concluded.

¹³ Eastern Partnership countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine

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

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

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

What is not an affiliated entity?

The following are not considered entities affiliated to an applicant:

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.1.2. Associates and contractors

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

- Associates

Other organisations or individuals may be involved in the action. Such associates play a real role in the action but may not receive funding from the grant, with the exception of per diem or travel costs. Associates do not have to meet the eligibility criteria referred to in Section 2.1.1. Associates must be mentioned in Annex A.2 Section 4 — ‘Associates participating in the action’.

- Contractors

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

2.1.3. Eligible actions: actions for which an application may be made

Definition

An action is composed of a set of activities.

Duration

The framework agreement shall be concluded for a period of four years (48 months) starting from the date of its entry into force.

The initial planned duration of an action (specific grant) may not be lower than 24 months nor exceed 40 months.

Sectors or themes

Framework Partnerships will be established to enhance cooperation and coordination of actions and initiatives, which strengthen the role of CSOs as governance actors in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood.

Specific Grants will be awarded to selected Framework Partners in order to:

- Conduct activities to strengthen the capacities of CSOs (including grassroots organisations or initiatives) to participate in the democratisation, reform and/or recovery processes in Eastern Partnership countries and the Russian Federation and become better communicators of their work;
- Provide Financial Support to Third Parties to CSOs in Eastern Partnership countries and the Russian Federation and provide step-by-step support in the implementation of projects, coupled with oversight of the organisations' own development strategies and ambitions;
- Exchange regularly with DG NEAR, the EU Delegations and among the Framework Partners on priorities to foster a strategic partnership, advance and promote EU policy and to take an active role in developing solutions to challenges in the region.

Location

Actions must take place for or in at least four countries of the Eastern Partnership and the Russian Federation; where actions cannot take place in country due to political and security circumstances, actions can take place where relevant, including in the Eastern Partnership region or the European Union. Exceptionally, some study tours, networking or other activities may be foreseen in the EU.

Types of action

The following list of actions is not exhaustive and other relevant and innovative proposals will be considered:

- Capacity building in order to strengthen local CSOs (including grassroots organisations) to participate in the democratisation, reform and/or recovery processes in Eastern Partnership countries and the Russian Federation;
- Tailored training, coaching, on-the-job trainings and mentoring programmes for local CSOs, including on financial sustainability, internal governance, well-being, outreach and engagement with citizens and communities aiming at strengthening strategic management, advocacy and communication capacities of CSOs;
- Provide Financial Support to Third Parties to support CSOs in their own outreach and engagement with citizens and communities.
- Design and test new ways (financing tools) to fund CSOs and work towards improving CSOs' financial sustainability;
- Support CSOs in activities related to potential crisis or urgencies appearing in the region.
- Cooperate with other regional and bilateral EU-funded initiatives.

Capacity building should be adopted as a concept that goes beyond the conventional perception of training and supply of equipment. It should be carried out as a continuous exercise and linked to the concept of learning organisations. The learning concept involves constant changes and experiments by using feedback of processes and results, transforming individual and organisational practices and values and adjustment of structures to cope with changes. Therefore, the capacity building actions to be proposed should show the added value or cumulative effect of the action to be undertaken. They should be based on knowledge sharing of partner organisations through mentoring, coaching and on-the-job training, including across country border and the Eastern neighbourhood where relevant. The capacity building actions need to be results oriented and sustainable, and aimed at strengthening organisational ability to make more effective decisions, become more active players and to take full responsibility for the consequences of decisions. Capacity building should include aspects of well-being for organisations to remain resilient against the background of adverse, stressful or hostile environments. Where appropriate, capacity building may also address confidence building aspects in a conflict sensitive manner.

Actions must ensure complementarity with other (regional and bilateral) programmes implemented by the EU in the Eastern Partnership and the Russian Federation, and responding to country-specific and regional needs and contexts.

Actions must integrate **cross-cutting principles** of human rights, gender equality, social inclusion social inclusion in particular of vulnerable groups and environmental sustainability.

Actions should embed one or more of the key **indicators** of the Global Europe Results Framework¹⁴.

The following types of action are ineligible:

¹⁴ [Results Framework | Capacity4dev \(europa.eu\)](#)

- 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 that may be contradictory with the interest of the EU;
- actions that would be against EU fundamental values;
- actions which include proselytising activities;
- one-off conferences: in principle, conferences can only be funded if they form part of a wider range of activities to be implemented in the life-time of the action. For these purposes, preparatory activities for a conference and the publication of the proceedings of the conference do not, in themselves, constitute such “wider activities”;
- actions supporting directly political parties.

Types of activity

The activities covered by the specific grant should be directly linked to the Action Plan foreseen in the FFPA, and should be coherent with the objectives of this plan. The following list of activities (including those to be supported through financial support to third parties) is not exhaustive and other relevant and innovative types of activities may be proposed:

- Capacity assessments and capacity building activities, training, coaching and on-the-job-training activities aimed at strengthening CSO’s (including grassroots organisations’) technical, advocacy and managerial capacities (i.e. organising events such as seminars and consultations, workshops, awareness raising initiatives, conferences, dialogue facilitation, training and mentoring of personnel and organisations, etc.);
- Policy research, analysis and engagement in policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and impact analysis processes, including engagement around national development programmes and strategies;
- Identifying constituency interests, needs and concerns and framing of issues around these and communication to government at different levels; development and presentation of collective voices and engagement in constructive dialogue with different stakeholders, by also using media in a constructive and efficient manner;
- Monitoring and (shadow) reporting on policy and decision making processes, implementation of legislation, management of public resources, including in the different reform and/or integration and recovery processes;
- Advancing of regional and thematic policy dialogue between civil society and relevant stakeholders;
- Promotion of (regional) networks, coordination fora, platforms, etc., and development of skills and systems to facilitate institutional processes (incl. networking systems), undertake joint sector analysis and formulate action plans and networks with other CSOs in the municipality or region;
- Facilitation of experience and knowledge sharing among CSOs at multiple levels (between CSOs from the EU, partner countries and beyond, considering the different needs), including possibly through the development of information and communication tools and materials - including social media related tools, exchanges of experience and dissemination of good practices, mentoring and/or coaching, peer-learning seminars, twinning between CSOs, development and delivery of trainings;
- Appropriate coordination with DG NEAR, EU Delegations, other Framework Partners, implementers and relevant donors on the implementation and monitoring of the action;

Financial support to third parties¹⁵

Applicants shall propose financial support to third parties **in an amount of at least 30% of the total amount of the overall eligible costs.**

To strengthen the capacities of CSOs (including grassroots organisations) to participate in the democratisation, reform and recover processes in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and the Russian Federation, and support CSOs in their own outreach and engagement with citizens and communities, applicants shall propose financial support to third parties in order to help achieving the objectives of the action¹⁶.

This financial support can entail both project-based and operational support to third parties.

To implement financial support to third parties, calls for applications should be published in local languages, and applicants for financial support to third parties should be able to submit applications in local languages. The application forms and procedures should be tailor-made to the technical and managerial capacities of local organisations of the respective countries. They should foresee an evaluation and selection based on high quality and/or innovative ideas and initiatives, and a review process during which the quality of the intervention logic, the impact and sustainability of the activities can be improved and further developed.

Coaching and on-the-job training should be foreseen to support beneficiaries of financial support in the implementation of their activities, as well as in the management of the financial support (i.e. related to financial and narrative reporting, budget execution and revisions, etc.).

Under this call, financial support to third parties is considered essential to achieve the objective of the action.

The maximum amount of financial support per third party is EUR 60 000 except where achieving the objectives of the actions would otherwise be impossible or overly difficult, in which case this threshold can be exceeded. A threshold below EUR 60 000 can be set if appropriate.

In compliance with the present guidelines and notably of any conditions or restrictions in this Section, the lead applicant should define mandatorily in Section 2.1.1 of Annex A.2 (Grant application form – Full application):

- (i) the overall objectives, the specific objective(s) and the outputs¹⁷ (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, and
- (vi) the maximum amount which may be given.

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

¹⁵ These third parties are neither affiliated entity(ies) nor associates nor contractors.

¹⁶ While Belarus actors should not be included in FSTP schemes due to other support provided, they should be included in regional activities.

¹⁷ As per OECD DAC definition, the term ‘results’ includes: ‘impact’ (overall objective), ‘outcome(s)’ (specific objective(s) and ‘output(s)’.

Visibility

The applicants must take all necessary steps to publicise the fact that the European Union has financed or co-financed the action. Unless the European Commission agrees otherwise, actions that are wholly or partially funded by the European Union must ensure the visibility of EU financing by displaying the EU emblem in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Operational guidelines for recipients of EU funding, published by the European Commission. If applicable, communication activities may be undertaken to raise the awareness of specific or general audiences of the reasons for the action and the EU support for the action in the country or region concerned, as well as the results and the impact of this support.

All measures and activities relating to visibility and, if applicable, communication, must comply with the latest Communication and Visibility Requirements for EU-funded external action, laid down and published by the European Commission [Communication and Visibility Requirements for EU External Actions | International Partnerships \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/visibility-requirements).

Number of applications and grants per applicants / affiliated entities

The lead applicant may not submit more than 1 application under this call for proposals.

The lead applicant may not be awarded more than 1 grant under this call for proposals.

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

An affiliated entity may not be the affiliated entity in more than one application under this call for proposals.

An affiliated entity may not be awarded more than one grant under this call for proposals.

2.1.4. Eligibility of costs: costs that can be included

Union contributions under this call for proposals take the following form(s):

Reimbursement of eligible costs that may be based on any or a combination of the following forms:

- (i) actual costs incurred by the beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies);
- (ii) one or more simplified cost options (see below).

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'.

Simplified cost options may take the form of:

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

Simplified costs options (SCOs) which can be proposed are the following:

"output or result based SCOs": they include costs linked to outputs, results, activities, deliverables in the framework of a specific project (for example the determination of a lump sum for the organization of a

conference, or for the realisation of a determined output/activity). Where possible and appropriate, lump sums or unit costs shall be determined in such a way to allow their payment upon achievement of concrete outputs and/or results. This type of SCO can be proposed by the beneficiary (no threshold is applicable) at proposal's stage (in Annex A.2 – Grant application form – Full application). In case the evaluation committee and the contracting authority are not satisfied with the quality of the justification provided reimbursement on the basis of actually incurred costs is always possible.

Please refer to Annex K for the details of the procedure to be followed depending on the type and amount of the costs to be declared as SCO. Applicants proposing this form of reimbursement, must clearly indicate in worksheet no.1 of Annex B, each heading/item of eligible costs concerned by this type of financing, i.e. add the reference in capital letters to 'UNIT COST', 'LUMPSUM' in the Unit column (see example in Annex K).

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

- describe the information and methods used to establish the amounts of unit costs and/or lump sums, to which costs they refer, for output or result based SCO;
- clearly explain the formulas for calculation of the final eligible amount for output or result based SCO..

In case of output or result based SCOs the evaluation committee and the contracting authority decide whether to accept the proposed amounts or rates on the basis of the provisional budget submitted by the applicants, by analysing factual data of grants carried out by the applicants or of similar actions. In case the evaluation committee and the contracting authority are not satisfied with the quality of the justification provided reimbursement on the basis of actually incurred costs is always possible.

No threshold is set ex-ante for the total amount of financing that can be authorised by the contracting authority on the basis of simplified cost options.

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

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

The responsible authorising officer may consider that the usual cost accounting practices of the beneficiary are compliant with the conditions applicable to simplified cost options, if they are accepted by national authorities under comparable funding schemes. In this case the grant beneficiary shall demonstrate that the national authority accepted the cost accounting practices and will have to specify in which context this acceptance is given.

The evaluation committee and the contracting authority will assess if the funding scheme is comparable and in case of positive outcome will consider these practices as if they were ex-ante assessed by an external auditor.

The grant may take the form of a single lump-sum covering the entire eligible costs of an action or a work programme.

Single lump sums may be determined on the basis of the estimated budget, which should comply with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Compliance with these principles shall be verified ex ante at the time of evaluation of the grant application.

When authorising single lump sums the authorising officer responsible shall comply with the conditions

applicable to output or result based SCOs.

When using this form of financing, the description of the action shall include detailed information on the essential conditions triggering the payment, including, where applicable, the achievement of outputs and/or results.

Eligible direct costs

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

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 not eligible costs (except for personnel costs for the work carried out by volunteers under an action or an operating grant if so authorised).

The contracting authority may accept co-financing in kind in the form of volunteers' work. 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 per volunteer per day as defined and authorised by the European Commission at the following address: <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/?fuseaction=list&coteId=3&year=2019&number=2646&version=ALL&language=en>. This type of costs must be presented separately from other eligible costs in the estimated budget, in the dedicated budget line 10.2 of the budget template (Annex B). 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.]

The contracting authority may accept co-financing in kind, if considered necessary or appropriate. In such cases, the value of such contributions must not exceed:

- a) either the costs actually borne and duly supported by accounting documents;
- b) or the costs generally accepted on the concerned market of reference,
- c) or, for volunteers' work, the unit cost per volunteer per day, defined and authorised by the European Commission at the following address: <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/?fuseaction=list&coteId=3&year=2019&number=2646&version=ALL&language=en> for a maximum of 50% of the co-financing. This type of costs must be presented separately from other eligible costs in the estimated budget, in the dedicated budget line

10.2 of the budget template (Annex B). 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.

Contributions involving real estate must be excluded from the calculation of the amount of co-financing. In-kind contributions must comply with national tax and social security rules.

If co-financing in kind is proposed, it must be included in Annex B (Worksheet 3) to the guidelines for applicants on the expected sources of funding for the action. The same amount must be indicated in the budget (worksheet 1).

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

Ineligible costs

The following costs are not eligible:

- debts and debt service charges (interest);
- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- costs declared by the beneficiary(ies) and financed by another action or work programme receiving a European Union (including through EDF) grant;
- purchases of land or buildings, except where necessary for the direct implementation of the action, in which case ownership must be transferred in accordance with Article 7.5 of the general conditions of the standard grant contract, at the latest at the end of the action;
- currency exchange losses;
- in kind contributions (except for volunteers' work);
- bonuses included in costs of staff;
- negative interest charged by banks or other financial institutions;
- credit to third parties;
- salary costs of the personnel of national administrations.

2.1.5. Ethics clauses and Code of Conduct

a) Absence of conflict of interest

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

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

The applicant and its staff must comply with human rights. In particular and in accordance with the applicable act, applicants who have been awarded contracts must comply with the environmental legislation including multilateral environmental agreements, and with the core labour standards as applicable and as defined in the relevant International Labour Organisation conventions (such as the

conventions on freedom of association and collective bargaining; elimination of forced and compulsory labour; abolition of child labour).

Zero tolerance for sexual exploitation, 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.

Applicants, (and affiliated entities) other than (i) natural persons (ii) pillar-assessed entities and (iii) governments and other public bodies whose application has been provisionally selected or placed in a reserve list shall assess their internal policy against sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEA-H) through a self-evaluation questionnaire (Annex L). For grants of EUR 60 000 or less no self-evaluation is required. Such self-evaluation questionnaire is not part of the evaluation of the application by the contracting authority, but is an administrative requirement. See section 2.5.6 of the PRAG.

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

d) Unusual commercial expenses

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

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

e) Breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud

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

2.2. HOW TO APPLY AND THE PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW

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

- I. Provide information about the organisations involved in the action. To this end, lead applicants, co-applicants and affiliated entities should register in PADOR¹⁸ and the lead applicants must make sure that their PADOR profile is up to date. Please note that the registration of this data in **PADOR is obligatory**.

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

If it is impossible to register online in PADOR for technical reasons, lead applicants, co-applicants and/or affiliated entity(ies) must complete the ‘PADOR registration form’¹⁹ attached to these guidelines. This form must be sent **together with the application**, by the submission deadline (see section 2.2.2.).

- II. Provide information about the action in the documents listed under section 2.2.2. (Where and how to send applications). Please note that online submission via **PROSPECT is obligatory** for this call.

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

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

2.2.1. Application forms

Applications must be submitted in accordance with the instructions on the Framework Partnership application and the Specific Grant applications in the application form annexed to these guidelines (Annex A).

- **Framework Partnership Application (Annex A.1)**

Applicants must attach the complete strategic plan of the organisation to their application form. This plan may be an internal document of the organisation, as endorsed by its governing body. The applicant may submit this plan in its original form (following no specific template), but must clearly identify in the application for the framework partnership which parts of this strategic plan they consider to be relevant for a partnership with the European Union, which should be based on common political objectives shared with the EU as detailed in section 1.2 of these Guidelines. If the applicant is selected as a Framework Partner, the strategic plan will become part of Annex I (“Action Plan”) of the Framework Partnership Agreement.

- **Specific Grant application (Annex A.2)**

In the Specific Grant Application, applicants must provide a detailed budget for the proposed action. The budget must contain the contribution requested from the Contracting Authority and the percentage of that contribution in relation to the total amount of the grant, which must fall between the minimum and maximum amount and respect the percentages of co-financing, as laid down in these Guidelines in section 1.3. Own contributions by the applicants can be replaced by other donors' contributions at any time.

Applicants must apply in English.

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

¹⁸ Natural persons who apply for a grant (if so allowed in the guidelines) do not have to register in PADOR. In this case, the information included in PROSPECT and in the concept note is sufficient.

¹⁹ Which corresponds to Annex F – PADOR Off-line form (PRAG annex e13).

Any error or major discrepancy related to the points listed in the instructions on the Framework Partnership application or any major inconsistency in the application e.g. if the amounts in the budget worksheets are inconsistent) may lead to the rejection of the application.

Clarifications will only be requested when the information provided is unclear and thus prevents the Contracting Authority from conducting an objective assessment. Please note that only the grant application form and the published annexes which have to be filled in (budget, logical framework) will be evaluated. It is therefore of utmost importance that these documents contain ALL the relevant information concerning the action.

Hand-written applications will not be accepted.

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

If it is impossible to register online in PADOR for technical reasons, the lead applicant has to submit with the application the completed PADOR registration form (Annex F) for the lead applicant and each affiliated entity (if any).

Please note that the following documents²⁰ shall be uploaded in PADOR by the application deadline or submitted together with the PADOR registration form with the application form:

1. The statutes or articles of association of the lead applicant, (if any) of each co-applicant and (if any) of each affiliated entity. 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. This obligation does not apply to international organisations which have signed a framework agreement with the European Commission.
2. Legal entity form (see Annex D of these guidelines) duly completed and signed by each of the applicants (i.e. by the lead applicant and by each co-applicant, if any), 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.
3. A financial identification form of the lead applicant (not from co-applicant(s)) conforming to the model attached as Annex E of these guidelines, certified by the bank to which the payments will be made. This bank should be located in the country where the lead applicant is established. If the lead applicant has already submitted a financial identification form in the past for a contract where the European Commission was in charge of the payments and intends to use the same bank account, a copy of the previous financial identification form may be provided instead.

In addition, for the purpose of the evaluation of the financial capacity, the following documents should be submitted²¹:

²¹ No supporting documents will be requested for applications for a grant not exceeding EUR 60 000.

1. For action grants exceeding EUR 750 000 and for operating grants exceeding EUR 100 000, the lead applicant must provide an audit report produced by an approved external auditor where it is available, and always in cases where a statutory audit is required by EU or national law. That report shall certify the accounts for up to the last 3 financial years available.

In all other cases, the lead 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 an applicant to the contracting authority in any one financial year.

The external audit report as well as the self-declaration certifying the validity of the accounts are not required from the co-applicant(s) or affiliated entities (if any).

This obligation does not apply to pillar assessed entities.

2. 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)²². A copy of the latest account is neither required from the co-applicant(s) (if any) nor from affiliated entity(ies) (if any).

The requested supporting documents (uploaded in PADOR or sent together with the PADOR registration form) must be supplied in the form of originals, photocopies or scanned versions (i.e. showing legible stamps, signatures and dates) of the said originals. Originals should be kept on file for controls.

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

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

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

If the abovementioned supporting documents are not provided by the deadline for the submission of the application form, the application may be rejected.

No additional annexes should be sent.

2.2.2. Where and how to send applications

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

²² This obligation does not apply to natural persons who have received a scholarship or that are in most need 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 2.2.1 point 1.

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

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

2.2.3. Deadline for submission of applications

The deadline for the submission of applications is on **29 August 2023 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 timezones and winter/summer time changes (example available [here](#))²³.

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

Any application submitted after the deadline will be rejected.

2.2.4. Further information about applications

An information session on this call for proposals will be held in webinar format indicatively on 4 July at 10.00 Brussels time. Should you be interested in this session, please send an email by xxx to NEAR-TENDER-178230@ec.europa.eu, indicating: name, surname, nationality, organisation and email address of the persons who are interested to be informed about this webinar. No costs incurred by the applicants for attending this information session are reimbursable.

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

E-mail address: NEAR-TENDER-178230@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 applications.

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

No individual replies will be given to questions. All questions and answers as well as other important notices to applicants during the course of the evaluation procedure will be published on the website where the call was published: website DG International Partnerships https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/home_fr or Funding & Tender opportunities (F&T Portal) <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>. It is therefore advisable to consult the abovementioned website(s) 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 INTPA-SUPPORT-SERVICES@ec.europa.eu **via the online support form in PROSPECT**: please note that the working languages of the IT support are English, French and Spanish. Therefore, users are invited to send their questions in in English, French or Spanish should they wish to benefit from an optimum response time.

²³ For example: <http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/converter.html>.

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.

2.3. EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF APPLICATIONS

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

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

(1) STEP 1: OPENING²⁴ & ADMINISTRATIVE CHECKS

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

- If the deadline has been met. Otherwise, the application will be automatically rejected.
- If the application satisfies all the criteria specified in the checklist in the framework partnership application form. 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.

(2) STEP 2: 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 2.2.1). It will by default **only** be performed for the applications that have been provisionally selected according to their score and within the available budget for this call for proposals.

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

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.

Applicants must supply the following supporting documents in order to allow the Contracting Authority to verify the eligibility of the applicant: Supporting documents must be provided through PADOR (see section 2.2.).

1. The statutes or articles of association of the lead applicant, and (if any) of each affiliated entity²⁵.
2. An external 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.
3. The external audit report is not required from (if any) 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)²⁶. A copy of the latest account is not required from (if any) affiliated entity(ies)).

²⁴ To be carried out only in the exceptional case of submission by post, private courier service or by hand-delivery (see section 2.2.2).

²⁵ Where the lead applicant and/or an affiliated entity(ies) is a public body created by a law, a copy of the said law must be provided.

²⁶ 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.

5. Legal entity sheet (see Annex D of these guidelines) duly completed and signed by each of the applicants (i.e. by the lead 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 conforming to the model attached as Annex E of these guidelines, certified by the bank to which the payments will be made. This bank should be located in the country where the lead applicant is established. If the lead applicant has already submitted a financial identification form in the past for a contract where the European Commission was in charge of the payments and intends to use the same bank account, a copy of the previous financial identification form may be provided instead.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(3) STEP 3: EVALUATION OF THE FRAMEWORK PARTNERSHIP APPLICATION

The Framework Partnership Applications that pass the eligibility check will be evaluated.

The Framework Partnership Applications will receive an overall score out of 100 using the breakdown in the evaluation grid below. The evaluation will also check on compliance with the instructions on how to complete the Framework Partnership Applications, which can be found in the application form A.1.

The quality of the Framework Partnership Applications, the capacity of the applicants and affiliated entity(ies), 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 lead applicant's and affiliated entity(ies)'s operational capacity and the 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 Strategic Plan (this only applies to lead applicants);
- have the management capacity, professional competencies and qualifications required to successfully implement the proposed Strategic Plan. This also applies to any affiliated entity(ies).

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 Framework Partnership to applicants that 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 Strategic Plan, its consistency with the objectives of the call for proposals, quality, expected impact and sustainability, cost-effectiveness of the proposed partnership – as reflected in the strategic plan.

Scoring:

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

Evaluation grid

Section	Maximum Score
1. Financial and operational capacity	20
1.1. Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient in-house experience of project management?	5
1.2. Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient technical in-house expertise in building capacities of CSOs?	5
1.3. Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient management in-house capacity to manage large scale capacity development programmes for smaller CSOs including financial support to third parties (including staff, equipment, and ability to handle the budgets for the specific grants)?	5
1.4. Does the lead applicant have stable and sufficient sources of finance?	5
2. Relevance of the partnership	30
2.1. How relevant is the proposed strategic plan to the objectives and priorities of EU support towards increased capacity development of CSOs in Eastern Partnership countries and the Russian Federation? Are the expected results of the partnership aligned with the priorities defined in the guidelines for applicants (section 1.2)?	5x2**
2.2. How relevant is the proposed strategic plan to the particular needs and constraints of the target country(ies), region(s) and for capacity development of CSOs in one or more Eastern Partnership countries (including synergy with other development initiatives, avoidance of duplication with existing EU capacity development support) and capacity to reach out to most remote regions and marginalised or vulnerable groups?	5x2**
2.3. How clearly defined and strategically chosen are the targeted groups of CSOs? Have their needs and constraints been clearly defined and does the proposal address them appropriately?	5
2.4. Does the proposed partnership (as per the strategic plan) contain particular added-value elements (e.g. innovation, best practices)?	5

3. Quality of the strategic plan	50
3.1. How coherent is the overall strategic plan? Does the proposed strategic plan indicate the expected results to be achieved by the partnership? Is the alignment with EU's policies clearly explained? Is the proposed strategic plan in line with the values, work programme and ambitions of the lead applicant? Is the proposed strategic plan formulated from a gender-sensitive perspective?	5x2**
3.2. Does the strategic plan reflect a robust analysis of the problems faced by CSOs in the wider Eastern Neighbourhood, and their current capacities and ambitions?	5 x2**
3.3. Do the measures proposed take into account external factors (risks and assumptions)?	5 x2**
3.4. Are the activities feasible and consistent in relation to the expected results (including timeframe)? Are results (output, outcome and impact) realistic within the timeframe of the partnership?	5 x2**
3.5. Is the proposed strategic plan likely to achieve long term impact for a (relatively) large number of CSOs, including organisations in remote regions or representing the interests of vulnerable or marginalised groups?	5 x2**
Maximum total score	100

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

Note: A score of 5 (very good) will only be allocated if the proposal specifically addresses more than the required minimum number of priorities as indicated in Section 1.2 (objectives of the programme) of these guidelines.

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

If the total score for section 1 is less than 15 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 total score for section 2 is less than 23 points, the application will be rejected.

The number of Framework Partnership Applications will be reduced, taking account of the ranking, to up to 10.

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.

(4) STEP 4: NOTIFICATION OF THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY'S DECISION TO AWARD A FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

The lead applicants will be informed in writing of the Contracting Authority's decision concerning their Framework Partnership 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. Therefore, please check regularly your PROSPECT profile, taking into account the indicative timetable below.

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

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 2.2.2), had to submit their application by post or hand-delivery will receive the letter by e-mail or by post, if no e-mail address was provided.

(5) STEP 5: SIGNATURE OF A FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Following the decision to award a Financial Framework Partnership Agreement, the Beneficiary will be offered a contract based on the Contracting Authority's standard Financial Framework Partnership Agreement (see Annex G of these Guidelines). By signing the application form for an FFPA (Annex A of these Guidelines), the applicants agree, if awarded a Financial Framework Partnership Agreement, to accept the contractual conditions of the standard Financial Framework Partnership Agreement.

Successful applicants may be invited to Brussels for the signature of the Financial Framework Partnership Agreement.

(6) STEP 6: EVALUATION OF THE SPECIFIC GRANT APPLICATION

Firstly, the following will be assessed:

- If the specific grant application satisfies all the criteria specified in the checklist (part of Annex 2 - specific grant application form).

The specific grant 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	Max.
----------------	-------------

	Score
1. Relevance of the action	20
1.1. How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the call for proposals and to the specific themes/sectors/areas or any other specific requirement stated in the guidelines for applicants? Are the expected results of the action aligned with the priorities defined in the guidelines for applicants (section 1.2)?	5
1.2. How relevant is the proposal to the particular needs and constraints of the target country(ies), region(s) and/or relevant sectors (including synergy with other development initiatives and avoidance of duplication)?	5
1.3. How clearly defined and strategically chosen are those involved (final beneficiaries, target groups)? Have their needs (as rights holders and/or duty bearers) and constraints been clearly defined and does the proposal address them appropriately?	5
1.4. Does the proposal contain particular added-value elements (e.g. innovation, best practices)?	5
2. Design of the action	15
2.1. 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)? Is the action designed from a gender-sensitive perspective?	5
2.2. Does the proposal/Logical Framework include credible baseline, targets and sources of verification, disaggregated by sex, age and other relevant factors? If not, is a baseline study foreseen (and is the study budgeted appropriately in the proposal)?	5
2.3. Does the design reflect a robust analysis of the problems involved, and the capacities of the relevant stakeholders?	5
3. Implementation approach	15
3.1. Is the action plan for implementing the action clear and feasible? Is the timeline realistic?	5
3.2. 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
3.3. Is the affiliated entity(ies)'s level of involvement and participation in the action satisfactory?	5
4. Sustainability of the action	15
4.1. Is the action likely to have a tangible impact on its target groups?	5
4.2. Is the action likely to have multiplier effects, including scope for replication, extension capitalisation on experience and knowledge sharing?	5
4.3. 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
5. Budget and cost-effectiveness of the action	15
5.1. Are the activities appropriately reflected in the budget?	5
5.2. Is the ratio between the estimated costs and the expected results satisfactory?	5x2**
Maximum total score	80

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

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 affiliated entities the score for point 3.3 shall be 5 unless the involvement of affiliated entities is mandatory according to these guidelines for applicants.

If the score of Section 2 is less than 12, the application will be rejected.

If the score for at least one of the subsections under Section 2 is 1, the application will also be rejected.

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.

Submission of supporting documents

The lead applicant should submit the documents listed in section 2.2.1.

In addition, 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:

1. Declaration on honour: the lead applicant as well as all co-applicants and affiliated entities shall fill in and sign the declaration on honour certifying that they are not in one of the exclusion situations (see Section 2.6.10.1 of the PRAG) where the amount of the grant exceeds EUR 15 000. Please note that the declaration on honour shall be submitted via PROSPECT.

2. Self-evaluation questionnaire on SEA-H: the lead applicant as well as all co-applicants and affiliated entities shall fill in the self-evaluation questionnaire assessing the organisation's internal policy and procedure against sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEA-H) (Annex L) where the amount of grant exceeds EUR 60 000 (see Section 2.5.6 of the PRAG)²⁷. Please note that the self-evaluation questionnaire on SEA-H shall be submitted via PADOR.

3. [List any other supporting documents required]

If it is impossible for the lead applicants to supply the abovementioned documents via PROSPECT or PADOR for technical reasons, they must submit the requested supporting documents in a sealed envelope by registered mail, private courier service or by hand-delivery to the postal address described in section 2.2.2 and according to the instructions therein.

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.

2.4. NOTIFICATION OF THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY'S DECISION TO AWARD A SPECIFIC GRANT

2.4.1. Content of the decision

Following the decision to award a grant, the Beneficiary(ies) will be offered a contract based on the Contracting Authority's Specific Grant Agreement (see Annex III to Annex G of these Guidelines). By signing the application form (Annex A.1 and A.2 of these Guidelines), the applicants agree, if awarded a grant, to accept the contractual conditions of the Specific Grant Agreement.

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

²⁷ Applicants, co-applicants and affiliated entities who are (i) natural persons (ii) pillar-assessed entities and (iii) governments and other public bodies do not have to submit the self-evaluation questionnaire.

applicants who, in exceptional cases (see section 2.2), had to submit their application by post, private courier or hand-delivery will be informed by e-mail or by post if they did not provide any e-mail address. Therefore, please check regularly your PROSPECT profile, taking into account the indicative timetable below. Please note that the lead applicant is the intermediary for all communications between applicants and the contracting authority during the procedure.

An applicant believing that it has been harmed by an error or irregularity during the award process may lodge a complaint. See Section 2.12 of the practical guide.

Applicants and, if they are legal entities, persons who have powers of representation, decision-making or control over them, are informed that, should they be in one of the situations of early detection or exclusion, their personal details (name, given name if natural person, address, legal form and name and given name of the persons with powers of representation, decision-making or control, if legal person) may be registered in the 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. For more information, you may consult the privacy statement available on http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect_en.cfm.

2.4.2. Indicative timetable

	DATE	TIME
1. Information meeting (if any)	4 July 2023	10.00
2. Deadline for requesting any clarifications from the contracting authority	8 August 2023	12.00
3. Last date on which clarifications are issued by the contracting authority	18 August 2023	-
4. Deadline for submission of framework partnership and specific grant applications	29 August 2023	12.000
5. Information to applicants on [opening], administrative checks and Framework Partnership evaluation (Step 1 - 4)	End September	-
6. Signature of Financial Partnership Agreements (Step 5)	Mid October	
7. Information to applicants on the evaluation of the specific grant applications (Step 6)	End October	-
8. Notification of award (Step 7)	Mid November	-
9. Specific Grant Contract signature	End November	-

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 where the call was published: website of DG International Partnerships https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/home_fr or Funding & Tender opportunities (F&T Portal) <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>.

2.5. CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION AFTER THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY'S DECISION TO AWARD A GRANT

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

Implementation contracts

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

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

Awarding implementation contracts: implementation contracts relate to the acquisition by beneficiaries of routine services and/or necessary goods and equipment as part of their project management; they do not cover any outsourcing of tasks forming part of the action that are described in the proposal, i.e. in the description of the action annexed to the grant contract.

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

3. LIST OF ANNEXES

DOCUMENTS TO BE COMPLETED

- Annex A: Framework Partnership and Specific Grant application form (Word format)
- Annex B: Budget (Excel format)
- Annex C: Logical framework (Excel format)
- Annex D: Legal entity form
- Annex E: Financial identification form
- Annex F: PADOR registration form

DOCUMENTS FOR INFORMATION²⁸

- Annex G: Standard financial framework partnership agreement
 - Annex II: general conditions
 - Annex III Model specific grant agreement
 - Annex IV: contract award rules
 - Annex V: standard request for payment
 - Annex VI: model narrative and financial report
 - Annex VII: model report of factual findings and terms of reference for an expenditure verification of an EU financed grant contract for external action
 - [-Annex VIII: model financial guarantee]
 - Annex IX: standard template for transfer of ownership of assets
- Annex H: Declaration on Honour
- Annex I: Daily allowance rates (per diem), available at the following address: https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/funding/guidelines/managing-project/diem-rates_en (as all necessary information is available via the link the publication of the annex is optional)
- Annex J: Information on the tax regime applicable to grant contracts signed under the call.
- Annex K: Guidelines for assessing simplified cost options.
- Annex L: Self-evaluation questionnaire on SEA-H

Useful links:

Project Cycle Management Guidelines

https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/funding/managing-project_en

The implementation of grant contracts

A Users' Guide

<https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=48169235>

Financial Toolkit

https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/financial-management-toolkit_en

²⁸ These documents should also be published by the contracting authority.

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

* * *