



Contracting Authority: European Commission

EU Support to Business and Investment Partnerships in Southern
Mediterranean

Guidelines
for grant applicants

BGUE-B2012-19.080101-C1-DEVCO

Reference: **EuropeAid/134349/C/ACT/Multi**

Deadline for submission of Concept note: 28th June 2013

NOTICE

Notice

This is a restricted Call for Proposals. In the first instance, only Concept Notes must be submitted for evaluation. Thereafter, applicants who have been pre-selected will be invited to submit a Full Application Form. After the evaluation of the Full Applications, an eligibility check will be performed for those which have been provisionally selected. Eligibility will be checked on the basis of the supporting documents requested by the Contracting Authority and the signed 'Declaration by the Applicant' sent together with the application.

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1. SUPPORT TO BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIPS IN THE SOUTHERN MEDITERRANEAN

1.1. BACKGROUND

The South ENPI region comprises 10 countries¹ of the South Mediterranean rim that host about 205 million inhabitants, i.e. 3% of the world population, and generates about 1.5% of the world GDP in 2010. In terms of trade, the South ENPI represents 5% of the external trade of the EU27 (EUR140bn), which makes it the 7th commercial Partner Region. The Euro-Mediterranean partnership, launched in 1995 and revamped in 2008 with the creation of the "Union for the Mediterranean", has strengthened trade relations between the EU and Southern Mediterranean countries. The key objective of the trade and investment partnership is to create a comprehensive Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area that goes beyond trade in goods and basic provisions, and aims to substantially liberalise trade between both the EU and Southern Mediterranean countries (North-South), and Southern Mediterranean countries themselves (South-South).

Sustainable growth and employment are common concerns among the partner countries of the European Neighbourhood South region. The high level of unemployment is a concern shared by all the economies of the region, where the creation of 5 million jobs per year is needed to ensure social inclusion and sustainable growth; in fact, the average unemployment rate has steadily been on the rise, reaching 12% of the work force and 18% of the youth in 2010. This issue is of particular importance for women, whose participation rate in the region is one of the lowest in the world (30%).

In South ENPI countries, micro and SME (mSME) account for more than 90% of total employment and, therefore, constitute the largest engine for employment generation. Countries have failed to harvest this potential due to insufficient efforts deployed to 1) place mSMEs at the heart of economic growth strategies; 2) adapt business administrative procedures, regulations and taxations that are responsive to the mSME needs and capacities; and 3) develop and adapt the Mediterranean business development organisations to serve the investor and to facilitate the networking of Euro-Mediterranean organisations involved in investment promotion and joint-ventures in the private sector. Furthermore, the current economic situation in the North and political uncertainties in the South have affected trade and investment in the EuroMed.

1.2. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME AND PRIORITY ISSUES

The **global objective** of this Call for Proposals is to boost the private sector in southern Mediterranean countries in order to contribute to sustainable and inclusive growth and employment generation, both regionally and sub-regionally.

The **specific objective** of this Call for Proposals is to develop business and investment Euro-Mediterranean networks, by providing adequate support, capacity building and linkage services for micro and SME, in a variety of promising sectors at regional or sub regional level.

¹ Southern ENPI Partner Countries: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria and Tunisia. At the moment of writing, EU co-operation with Syrian authorities (government entities) is suspended. In the light of future decisions, the Commission shall assess the opportunity to involve Syrian authorities in the action's implementation

The following **priorities / expected results** should be addressed under this Action:

1. Identification of regional sector strategies in a limited number of promising sectors, in addition to Culture and Creative industries, to attract new EU and intra Mediterranean trade and investment flows, and to develop further EU and intra Mediterranean SMEs linkages and business partnerships;
2. Organisation of, in the context of identified regional sector strategies, North-South and South-South networking meetings and workshops between Mediterranean sector business associations, companies, investment promotion agencies, financial intermediaries, public institutions, and other stakeholders, including counterparts in the EU and intra-Mediterranean, to promote business development, inclusive growth and foster employment creation;
3. Disseminate the best practices from each Mediterranean country in order to enhance the international image of the region for investors;
4. Develop the Mediterranean business development organisations to serve the investor and to facilitate the networking of Euro-Mediterranean organisations involved in investment promotion in the private sector;
5. Capacity building of intermediary organisations and promotion of entrepreneurship in particular for the youth, to facilitate business development and financial self-sustainability.

1.3. FINANCIAL ALLOCATION PROVIDED BY THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY

The overall indicative amount made available under this Call for Proposals is € 4,000,000. The Contracting Authority reserves the right not to award all available funds.

Size of grants:

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

- minimum amount: € 3,500,000
- maximum amount: € 4,000,000

Any grant requested under this Call for Proposals must comply with the following maximum percentage of total eligible costs of the action:

- Maximum percentage: 80% of the total eligible costs of the action (see also Section 2.1.4).

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 European Union Budget or the European Development Fund².

2 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 to contract procedures for EU external actions, which is applicable to the present call (available on the Internet at this address: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/implementation/index_en.htm).

2.1. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

There are three sets of eligibility criteria, relating to:

(1) the actors:

- The **applicant**, i.e. the entity submitting the application form (2.1.1),
- if any, its **co-applicant(s)** (where it is not specified otherwise the applicant and its co-applicant(s) are hereinafter jointly referred as the "applicants") (2.1.1),
- and, if any, **affiliated entity(ies)** to the applicant and/or to a co-applicant(s). (2.1.2);

(2) the actions:

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

(3) the costs:

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

2.1.1. Eligibility of applicants (i.e. applicant and co-applicant(s))

Applicant:

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

- be legal persons **and**
- be non-profit-making **and**
- be specific types of organisations such as: non-governmental organisations, public sector operators, local authorities, international (inter-governmental) organisations as defined by Article 43 of the Implementing Rules to the EC Financial Regulation³. **and**
- be established in⁴ a Member State of the European Union or a country that is a beneficiary of this Regulation⁵, a country that is a beneficiary of an Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance set up by Council Regulation (EC) No 1085/2006 (IPA)⁶ or a Member State of the EEA⁷ **and**

3 International organisations are international public-sector organisations set up by intergovernmental agreements as well as specialised agencies set up by them; the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are also recognised as international organisations.

- 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

In addition to the categories referred to in section 2.1.1, the following are however also eligible: public investment promotion agencies, chambers of commerce, business representatives organisations.

- (2) The potential applicant may not participate in calls for proposals or be awarded grants if it is in any of the situations listed in Section 2.3.3 of the Practical Guide to contract procedures for EU external actions (available from the following Internet address:

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/implementation/index_en.htm);

In Part A, section 3 of the grant application form ('Declaration by the applicant'), the applicant must declare that the applicant himself, the co-applicant(s) and affiliated entity(ies) are not in any of these situations.

The applicant must act with co-applicant(s) as specified hereafter.

If awarded the Grant contract, the applicant will become the Beneficiary identified as the Coordinator in annex E3h1 (Special conditions). The Coordinator is the main interlocutor of the Contracting Authority. It represents and acts on behalf of any other co-beneficiary (if any) and coordinate the design and implementation of the Action.

Co-applicant(s):

Actions must involve a partnership with at least 6 co-applicants (in addition to the applicant) from which 3 co-applicants should be established in the EU and another 3 in 3 different ENPI South countries/ territories.

Co-applicant(s) participate in designing and implementing the action, and the costs they incur are eligible in the same way as those incurred by the applicant.

Co-applicant(s) must satisfy the eligibility criteria as applicable to the applicant himself.

Co-applicant(s) must sign the Mandate in Part B section 4 of the grant application form.

If awarded the Grant contract, the co-applicant(s) will become beneficiaries in the Action (together with the Coordinator)

2.1.2. *Affiliated entities*

4 To be determined on the basis of the organisation's statutes, which should demonstrate that it has been established by an instrument governed by the national law of the country concerned and that its head office is located in an eligible country. In this respect, any legal entity whose statutes have been established in another country cannot be considered an eligible local organisation, even if the statutes are registered locally or a 'Memorandum of Understanding' has been concluded.

⁵ Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Palestinian Authority of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Russian Federation, Syria, Tunisia, Ukraine. At the moment of writing, EU co-operation with Syrian authorities (government entities) is suspended. In the light of future decisions, the Commission shall assess the opportunity to involve Syrian authorities in the action's implementation

⁶ Croatia, Turkey, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia, Montenegro, Serbia (including Kosovo).

⁷ Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

The applicant and its co-applicant(s) may act with affiliated entity(ies)

Only the following entities may be considered as affiliated entities to the applicant and/or to co-applicant(s):

- (i) legal entities together forming one entity, including where it is specifically established for the purpose of implementing the action. In this case, the resulting entity may apply as a applicant or co-applicant whereas the other entities as its affiliated entity(ies).
- (ii) legal entities having a link with the applicants, notably a legal or capital link, which is neither limited to the action nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation on the condition that they satisfy the eligibility and non-exclusion criteria of an applicant.

If the applicants are awarded a contract, their affiliated entity(ies) will not become Beneficiary(ies) of the Action and signatory(ies) of the Contract. However, they will participate in the design and in the implementation of the Action and the costs they incur (including those incurred for Implementation Contracts and Financial Support to third parties) may be accepted as eligible costs, provided they comply with all the relevant rules already applicable to the Beneficiary(ies) under the Grant Contract.

Affiliated entity(ies) must satisfy respectively the eligibility criteria as applicable to the applicant and to the co-applicant(s).

Affiliated entity(ies) must sign the affiliated entity(ies) statement in Part B section 5 of the grant application form.

2.1.3. Associates and Contractors

The following entities are not applicant(s) nor affiliated entity(ies) and do not have to sign the "mandate" or "affiliated entities' statement":

- Associates

Other organisations 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 Part B section 6 — 'Associates of the Applicant participating in the Action' — of the Grant Application Form.

- Contractors

The grant 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.

The grant beneficiaries may award financial support to third entities. These entities are neither affiliated entity(ies) nor associates nor contractors. However, they are subject to the nationality and origin rules set out in Annex IV to the standard grant contract.

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

Definition:

An action is composed of a set of activities.

Duration:

The initial planned duration of an action may not be lower than 30 months nor exceed 36 months.

Sectors or themes:

Promotion of business and investment partnerships. Development of quality Euro-Mediterranean networks providing adequate support and linkage services for micro and SMEs, in a variety of promising sectors at regional and sub-regional level.

Location:

Actions may take place in one or more of the following countries: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia, and the EU Member States.

Types of action

The applicant will propose an intervention strategy and methodology that is adequate and efficient in relation to the implementation of the objectives and priorities referred in section 1.2. The types of action are expected to contribute to:

1. ***Sector-based strategies, workshops and studies***, including preparation of best practices and sustainability aspects. Activities in this area will aim to study how to enhance trade and investment opportunities in promising targeted sectors – in addition to cultural and creative industries that should in any case be part of the Action – and corresponding development strategies and best-practices, to welcome in the region new business and potential investors. Thematic and sectoral regional and sub-regional workshops and conferences involving relevant stakeholders will deliver best practices including sustainability aspects.
2. ***Organisation of sectoral business matchmaking meetings and related events at regional and sub-regional level***. The objective will be to develop long-term relations and partnerships between companies/SMEs of both sides of the Mediterranean, inter alia aiming for business agreements, licenses, joint-venture, technology transfer, etc. These events could take place in the framework of international or regional fairs. The meetings will have to be focused on one or few of the selected sectors of the intervening strategy. Euro-Med sector-based meetings will be organised grouping participants from EU and Mediterranean partner countries and territories. South-South sector-based meetings will be organised grouping participants from South Mediterranean partner countries and territories, including the organisation of specific business meetings for stakeholders of the Agadir Agreement.
3. ***Capacity building, training and short term technical assistance***. Activities in this area will aim to develop entrepreneurship and adapt the South Mediterranean business development organisations and relevant public agencies to attain financial sustainability and to efficiently serve in the investment promotion and facilitate joint ventures in the private sector. In particular, targeted support and training activities will be provided to young entrepreneurs with talent and ideas to liaise with relevant businesses in the Euro-Mediterranean region.
4. ***Networking among business development and investment promotion organisations***. In particular the linking with the Mediterranean Creative Industries Alliance (MCIA) clusters will be established building upon synergies with the European Creative Industries Alliance. Efficient interfaces with the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) will be developed in order to maximise business linkages.
5. ***Annual conferences***. Annual conferences, inviting a wide-range of relevant stakeholders from both EU and Mediterranean private and public sectors. The annual conferences will aim to strengthen the networking and collaboration between the various stakeholders involved in the project.
6. ***Information and results dissemination activities***.

Types of activity

Activities at regional and sub-regional level will encompass the organisation of workshops and conferences, facilitation of the participation of delegates, studies, including sector-based development strategies and best practices, technical/financial assistance, training, creation of a web-site, information and dissemination activities.

Financial support to third parties

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

The maximum amount of financial support per third party is € 60 000, except where financial support to third parties is the main purpose of the action in which case no thresholds apply.

Under this Call, financial support to third parties may not be the main purpose of the action.

In compliance with the present guidelines and notably of any conditions or restrictions set above, applicants should define mandatorily in section 2.1.1. of the grant application form:

- (i) the objectives and results to be obtained with the financial support
- (ii) the different types of activities eligible for financial support, on the basis of a fixed list
- (iii) the types of persons or categories of persons which may receive financial support
- (iv) the criteria for selecting these entities and giving the financial support
- (v) the criteria for determining the exact amount of financial support for each third entity, and
- (vi) the maximum amount which may be given.

Visibility

Applicants must comply with the objectives and priorities and guarantee the visibility of the EU financing (see the Communication and Visibility Manual for EU external actions specified and published by the European Commission at http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/visibility/index_en.htm).

The following types of action are ineligible:

- actions concerned only or mainly with individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences and congresses;
- actions concerned only or mainly with individual scholarships for studies or training courses;
- actions concerned only or mainly with the creation/establishment of media outlets;
- one-off conferences: 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 political parties;
- actions including proselytism;
- actions concerned only or mainly with academic research (whereas applied research activities, demonstrative or pilot actions aiming to establish an effective cooperation among academic and governmental institutions (or local authorities) may be foreseen as part of the action);

- actions with a commercial purpose such as development of printing companies, building of exhibition spaces or others similar activities.

Number of applications and grants per applicant

The applicant may not submit more than 1 application under this Call for Proposals.

The applicant may not be awarded more than 1 grant under this Call for Proposals.

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

A co-applicant may not submit more than 1 application under this Call for Proposals.

A co-applicant may be an affiliated entity in another application at the same time.

The affiliated entity(ies) may take part in more than one application.

2.1.5. Eligibility of costs: costs that can be included

Only 'eligible costs' can be covered by a grant. The categories of costs that are eligible and non-eligible are indicated below. The budget is both a cost estimate and a ceiling for 'eligible costs'.

The reimbursement of eligible costs may be based on any or a combination of the following forms:

- actual costs incurred by the Beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies)
- one or more simplified cost options.

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.

The amounts or rates have to be based on estimates using objective data such as statistical data or any other objective means or with reference to certified or auditable historical data of the applicants or the affiliated entity(ies). The methods used to determine the amounts or rates of unit costs, lump sums or flat-rates must comply with the criteria established in Annex K, and especially ensure that the costs correspond fairly to the actual costs incurred by the Grant Beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies), are in line with their accounting practices, no profit is made and the costs are not already covered by other sources of funding (no double funding). Refer to Annex K for directions and a checklist of controls to assess the minimum necessary conditions that provide reasonable assurance for the acceptance of the proposed amounts.

The applicant 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 RATE" (per month/flight etc), "LUMPSUM" or "FLAT RATE" 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 the applicant must:

- describe the information and methods used to establish the amounts of unit costs, lump sums and/or flat-rates, to which costs they refer, etc.
- clearly explain the formulas for calculation of the final eligible amount⁸
- identify the beneficiary who will use the simplified cost option (in case of affiliated entity, specify first the beneficiary), in order to verify the maximum amount per each beneficiary (which includes if applicable simplified cost options of its affiliated entity(ies))

At contracting phase, the Contracting Authority decides whether to accept the proposed amounts or rates on the basis of the provisional budget submitted by the applicant, by analysing factual data of grants carried out by the applicant or of similar actions and by performing checks established by Annex K.

The total amount of financing on the basis of simplified cost options that can be authorised by the Contracting Authority for any of the applicants individually (including simplified cost options proposed by their own affiliated entities) cannot exceed EUR 60 000 (the indirect costs are not taken into account).

Recommendations to award a grant are always subject to the condition that the checks preceding the signing of the 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 applicant's interest to provide a **realistic and cost-effective budget**.

Eligible direct costs

To be eligible under the 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 applicant may be asked to justify the percentage requested before the contract is signed. However, once the flat rate has been fixed in the special conditions of the standard 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

⁸ Examples:- for staff costs: number of hours or days of work * hourly or daily rate pre-set according to the category of personnel concerned;- for travel expenses: distance in km * pre-set cost of transport per km; number of days * daily allowance pre-set according to the country;- for specific costs arising from the organization of an event: number of participants at the event * pre-set total cost per participant etc.

Contributions in kind mean the provision of goods or services to a Beneficiary(ies) or affiliated entity(ies) free of charge by a third party. As contributions in kind do not involve any expenditure for a Beneficiary(ies) or affiliated entity(ies), they are not eligible costs.

Contributions in kind may not be treated as co-financing

However, if the description of the action as proposed includes contributions in kind, the contributions have to be made.

Ineligible costs

The following costs are not eligible:

- debts and debt service charges (interest);
- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- costs declared by the Beneficiary(ies) and financed by another action or work programme receiving a 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 to the final beneficiaries and/or local Beneficiary(ies), at the latest at the end of the action;
- currency exchange losses;
- credit to third parties.

2.2. HOW TO APPLY AND THE PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW

Prior registration in PADOR for this Call for Proposals is obligatory

- **Phase 1, concept note:** Registration in PADOR is obligatory
Registration is optional but recommended for their affiliated entity(ies).
- **Phase 2, full proposal:** Registration in PADOR is obligatory for all pre-selected applicants and all their affiliated entity(ies).

PADOR is an on-line database in which organisations register and update their data regularly, through the EuropeAid website: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/onlineservices/pador/index_en.htm

Before starting to register your organisation in PADOR, please read the 'Quick guide' on the website. It explains the registration process.

It is strongly recommended to register in PADOR when you start drafting your proposal and not to wait until just before the deadline of submission.

On the paper version of the proposal you must give your EuropeAid ID (EID). To get this ID, your organisation must enter PADOR to register, save and 'sign' certain obligatory data (the fields shown in orange on each screen) and the related documents (see section 2.4).

However, if it is impossible for the organisation to register in PADOR, it must submit a justification proving that this impossibility is general and beyond the control of the applicants and/or its affiliated entity(ies). In

such cases, the applicants and/or affiliated entity(ies).concerned must complete the ‘PADOR off-line form’⁹ attached to these Guidelines and send it by the submission deadline, together with the application, to the address indicated in sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.6. The registration in PADOR will then be carried out by the European Commission service in charge of the CfP. If, at a later stage, the organisation wishes to update its data itself, it will have to send an access request to the PADOR helpdesk.

All questions related to registration in PADOR should be addressed to the PADOR helpdesk at: Europeaid-pador@ec.europa.eu.

2.2.1. Concept Note content

Applications must be submitted in accordance with the Concept Note instructions in the Grant Application Form annexed to these Guidelines (Annex A).

Applicants must apply in English.

In the Concept Note, applicants must only provide an estimate of the amount of contribution requested from the Contracting Authority and an indicative percentage of that contribution in relation to the total amount of the Action. Only the applicant invited to submit a full application in the second phase will be required to present a detailed budget. The elements outlined in the Concept Note may not be modified by the applicant in the full application form. The EU contribution may not vary from the initial estimate by more than 20%. Applicants are free to adapt the percentage of co-financing required within the minimum and maximum amount and percentages of co-financing, as laid down in these Guidelines in section 1.3. Own contributions by the applicants can be replaced by other donors' contributions at any time.

Any error or major discrepancy related to the points listed in the Concept Note instructions may lead to the rejection of the Concept Note.

Clarifications will only be requested when information provided is unclear and thus prevents the Contracting Authority from conducting an objective assessment.

Hand-written Concept Notes will not be accepted.

Please note that only the Concept Note form will be evaluated. It is therefore of utmost importance that this document contain ALL relevant information concerning the action. No additional annexes should be sent.

2.2.2. Where and how to send Concept Notes

The Concept Note together with the Checklist for the Concept Note (Part A section 2 of the grant application form) and the Declaration by the applicant for the Concept Note (Part A section 3 of the grant application form) must be submitted in one original and three copies in A4 size, each bound.

An electronic version of the Concept Note must also be submitted. A CD-Rom with the Concept Note in electronic format will be included, along with the paper version, in a sealed envelope as described below. The electronic file must contain **exactly the same** application as the paper version enclosed.

Where applicants send several different Concept Notes (if allowed to do so by the Guidelines of the Call), each one must be sent separately.

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

⁹ Which corresponds to Sections 3 and 4 of Part B of the application form.

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

Postal address

European Commission, Directorate General for Development and Cooperation –
EuropeAid, Finance, Contracts and Audit Unit F5,
EuropeAid/134169/C/ACT/Multi,
Office J-54 03/231,
1, avenue du Bourget,
1049 Brussels,
BELGIUM

Address for hand delivery and by private courier service

European Commission, Directorate General for Development and Cooperation –
EuropeAid, Finance, Contracts and Audit Unit F5,
EuropeAid/134169/C/ACT/Multi,
Office J-54 03/231,
1, avenue du Bourget,
1049 Brussels,
BELGIUM

Opening hours: 9:00–17:00, CET, Monday–Thursday; 9:00–16:00, CET, Friday. Closed on Saturdays, Sundays and Commission holidays

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

Applicants must verify that their Concept Note is complete using the Checklist for Concept Note (Part A section 2 of the grant application form). Incomplete concept notes may be rejected.

2.2.3. *Deadline for submission of Concept Notes*

The deadline for the submission of Concept Notes is **28th JUNE 2013** as evidenced by the date of dispatch, the postmark or the date of the deposit slip. In the case of hand-deliveries, the deadline for receipt is at 16h00 hour local time as evidenced by the signed and dated receipt. Any Concept Note submitted after the deadline will be rejected.

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

2.2.4. *Further information about Concept Notes*

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

E-mail address: EuropeAid-BUSINESS-PARTNERSHIP@ec.europa.eu

The Contracting Authority has no obligation to provide clarifications to questions received after this date.

Replies will be given no later than 11 days before the deadline for submission of Concept Notes.

To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the Contracting Authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of applicants, or affiliated entity(ies), an action or specific activities.

Questions that may be relevant to other applicants, together with answers and other important notices in the course of the evaluation procedure, will be published on the EuropeAid website <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome> , as the need arises. It is therefore advisable to consult the abovementioned website regularly in order to be informed of the questions and answers published.

All questions related to PADOR registration should be addressed to the PADOR help desk:

Europeaid-pador@ec.europa.eu

2.2.5. Full Application forms

An applicant invited to submit a full application form following pre-selection of their Concept Note must do so using Part B of the application form annexed to these Guidelines (Annex A). Applicants should then keep strictly to the format of the application form and fill in the paragraphs and pages in order.

The elements outlined in the Concept Note cannot be modified by the applicant in the full application form. The EU contribution may not vary from the initial estimate by more than 20%, although applicants are free to adapt the percentage of co-financing required within the minimum and maximum amount and percentages of co-financing, as laid down in these Guidelines under section 1.3.

Applicants must submit their applications in the same language as their Concept Note.

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

Any error related to the points listed in the Checklist (Part B, Section 7 of the Grant Application form) or any major inconsistency in the full application form (e.g. if the amounts in the budget worksheets are inconsistent) may lead to the rejection of the application.

Clarifications will only be requested when information provided is unclear and thus prevents the Contracting Authority from conducting an objective assessment.

Hand-written applications will not be accepted.

Please note that only the full application form and the published annexes which have to be filled in (budget, logical framework) will be transmitted to the evaluators (and assessors, if used). It is therefore of utmost importance that these documents contain ALL the relevant information concerning the action. **No supplementary annexes should be sent.**

2.2.6. Where and how to send Full Application forms

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

Postal address

European Commission, Directorate General for Development and Cooperation –

EuropeAid, Finance, Contracts and Audit Unit F5,
EuropeAid/134169/ C/ACT/Multi,
Office J-54 03/231,
1, avenue du Bourget,
1049 Brussels,
BELGIUM

Address for hand delivery and by private courier service

European Commission, Directorate General for Development and Cooperation –
EuropeAid, Finance, Contracts and Audit Unit F5,
EuropeAid/134169/C/ACT/Multi,
Office J-54 03/231,
1, avenue du Bourget,
1049 Brussels,
BELGIUM

Opening hours: 9:00–17:00, CET, Monday–Thursday; 9:00–16:00, CET, Friday. Closed on Saturdays, Sundays and Commission holidays

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

Applications must be submitted in one original and 3 copies in A4 size, each bound. The full application form, budget and logical framework must also be supplied in electronic format (CD-Rom) in a separate and single file (i.e. the full application form must not be split into several different files). The electronic file must contain **exactly the same** application as the paper version.

The Checklist (Section 7 of Part B of the grant application form) and the Declaration by the applicant (Section 8 of Part B of the grant application form) must be stapled separately and enclosed in the envelope

Where applicants send several different applications (if allowed to do so by the Guidelines of the Call), each one must be sent separately.

The outer envelope must bear the **reference number and the title of the Call for Proposals**, the full name and address of the applicant, and the words ‘Not to be opened before the opening session’.

Applicants must verify that their application is complete using the checklist (Section 7 of Part B of the grant application form). Incomplete applications may be rejected.

2.2.7. *Deadline for submission of Full Application forms*

The deadline for the submission of applications will be indicated in the letter sent to the applicants whose application has been pre-selected.

However, for reasons of administrative efficiency, the Contracting Authority may reject any application sent in due time but received after the date of approval of evaluation report for full applications (see indicative calendar under Section 2.5.2)

2.2.8. *Further information about Full Application forms*

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

E-mail address: EuropeAid-BUSINESS-PARTNERSHIP@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 applicants, affiliated entity(ies), or an action.

No individual replies will be given to questions. All questions and answers as well as other important notices to applicants during the course of the evaluation procedure, will be published on the website <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome>. It is therefore advisable to consult the abovementioned website regularly in order to be informed of the questions and answers published.

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 actions submitted by applicants 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 paragraph 2.1.3, the application will be rejected on this sole basis.

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

The following will be assessed:

- Compliance with the submission deadline. If the deadline has not been met, the application will automatically be rejected.
- The Concept Note satisfies all the criteria specified in points 1-5 of the Checklist Section 2 of Part A of the grant application form). If any of the requested information is missing or is incorrect, the application may be rejected on that sole basis and the application will not be evaluated further.

The Concept Notes that pass the first administrative check will be evaluated on the relevance and design of the proposed action.

The Concept Note will receive an overall score out of 50 using the breakdown in the evaluation grid below. The evaluation will also check on compliance with the instructions on the Concept Note, which can be found in Part A of the Application Form.

The evaluation criteria are divided into headings and subheadings. Each subheading will be given a score between 1 and 5 as follows: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.

Scores

		Scores
1. Relevance of the action	Sub-score	30
1.1 How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the Call for Proposals?*	5x2**	

1.2 How relevant to the particular needs and constraints of the target country(ies) or region(s) is the proposal (including synergy with other EU initiatives and avoidance of duplication)?	5x2*	
1.3 How clearly defined and strategically chosen are those involved (final beneficiaries, target groups)? Have their needs been clearly defined and does the proposal address them appropriately?	5	
1.4 Does the proposal contain specific added-value elements, such as environmental issues, promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities, needs of disabled people, rights of minorities and rights of indigenous peoples, or innovation and best practices?	5	
2. Design of the action	Sub-score	20
2.1 How coherent is the overall design of the action? In particular, does it reflect the analysis of the problems involved, take into account external factors and relevant stakeholders?	5x2**	
2.2 Is the action feasible and consistent in relation to the objectives and expected results?	5x2**	

TOTAL SCORE

50

**these scores are multiplied by 2 because of their importance

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

First, only the Concept Notes with a score of at least 30 will be considered for pre-selection.

Secondly, the number of Concept Notes will be reduced, taking account of the ranking, to the number of Concept Notes whose total aggregate amount of requested contributions is equal to 300% of the available budget for this Call for Proposals.

After the evaluation of Concept Notes, the Contracting Authority will send letters to all applicants, indicating whether their application was submitted by the deadline, informing them of the reference number they have been allocated, whether the Concept Note was evaluated and the results of that evaluation. The pre-selected applicants will subsequently be invited to submit full applications.

(2) STEP 2: EVALUATION OF THE FULL APPLICATION

First, the following will be assessed:

- Compliance with the submission deadline. If the deadline has not been met, the application will automatically be rejected.
- The full application form satisfies all the criteria specified in points 1-9 of the Checklist (Section 7 of Part B of the grant application form). If any of the requested information is missing or is incorrect, the application may be rejected on that sole basis and the application will not be evaluated further.

The quality of the applications, including the proposed budget and 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 applicant(s)'s and the co-applicant(s) 's operational capacity and the applicant's financial capacity and to ensure 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;
- have the management capacity, professional competencies and qualifications required to successfully complete the proposed action. This also applies to any affiliated entity(ies) of the applicants.

The award criteria help to evaluate the quality of the applications in relation to the objectives and priorities, 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 criteria are 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	
1. Financial and operational capacity	Yes/No
1.1 Do the applicants and, if applicable, affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient experience of project management?	
1.2 Do the applicants and, if applicable, affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient technical expertise? (especially knowledge of the issues to be addressed.)	
1.3 Do the applicants and, if applicable, affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient management capacity? (including staff, equipment and ability to handle the budget for the action)?	
1.4 Does the applicant have stable and sufficient sources of finance?	
	Maximum Score
2. Relevance of the action	30
<i>Score transferred from the Concept Note evaluation</i>	
3. Effectiveness and feasibility of the action	20
3.1 Are the activities proposed appropriate, practical, and consistent with the objectives and expected results?	5
3.2 Is the action plan clear and feasible?	5
3.3 Does the proposal contain objectively verifiable indicators for the outcome of the action?	5

Is any evaluation planned?	
3.4 Is the co-applicant(s)'s and 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 proposal likely to have multiplier effects? (Including scope for replication, extension and information sharing.)	5
4.3 Are the expected results of the proposed action sustainable?: - financially (<i>how will the activities be financed after the funding ends?</i>) - institutionally (<i>will structures allowing the activities to continue be in place at the end of the action? Will there be local 'ownership' of the results of the action?</i>) - at policy level (where applicable) (<i>what will be the structural impact of the action — e.g. will it lead to improved legislation, codes of conduct, methods, etc?</i>) - environmentally (if applicable) (<i>will the action have a negative/positive environmental impact?</i>)	5
5. Budget and cost-effectiveness of the action	15
5.1 Are the activities appropriately reflected in the budget?	5x2*
5.2 Is the ratio between the estimated costs and the expected results satisfactory?	5
Maximum total score	80

*these scores are multiplied by 2 because of their importance

Note on Section 1. Financial and operational capacity

If the answer is negative to one or more of the criteria, the application will be rejected.

Provisional selection

After the evaluation, a table will be drawn up listing the applications ranked according to their score and within the limits of the funds available. In addition, a reserve list will be drawn up following the same criteria to be used if more funds should become available during the validity period of the reserve list.

(3) STEP 3: VERIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY OF THE APPLICANTS AND AFFILIATED ENTITY(IES)

The eligibility verification, based on the supporting documents requested by the Contracting Authority (see Section 2.4) will only be performed for the applications that have been provisionally selected according to their score and within the available financial envelope.

- The Declaration by the applicant (Section 8 of Part B the grant application form) will be cross-checked with the supporting documents provided by the applicant. Any missing supporting document or any incoherence between the Declaration by the applicant and the supporting documents may lead to the rejection of the application on that sole basis.
- The eligibility of applicants, the affiliated entities(ies), and the action will be verified according to the criteria set out in Sections 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and 2.1.3.

Any rejected application will be replaced by the next best placed application in the reserve list that falls within the available financial envelope.

2.4. SUBMISSION OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS FOR PROVISIONALLY SELECTED APPLICATIONS

An applicant that has been provisionally selected or placed on the reserve list will be informed in writing by the Contracting Authority. It will be requested to supply the following documents in order to allow the Contracting Authority to verify the eligibility of the applicants and their affiliated entity(ies)¹⁰:

Supporting documents must be provided through PADOR, see Section 2.2

1. The statutes or articles of association of the applicant, (if any) of each co-applicant(s) and (if any) of each affiliated entity(ies).¹¹ Where the Contracting Authority has recognised the 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 meantime¹². This obligation does not apply to international organisations which have signed a framework agreement with the European Commission.. A list of the relevant framework agreements is available at the following address:
http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/financing/international_organisations/other_international_organisations/index_en.htm
2. An external audit report produced by an approved auditor, certifying the applicant's accounts for the last financial year available where the total amount of the grant exceeds € 750 000 (€ 100 000 for an operating grant) The external audit report is not required from (if any) the co-applicant(s),

This obligation does not apply to public bodies and international organisations provided that the international organisation in question offers the guarantees provided for in the applicable Financial Regulation, as described in Chapter 6 of the Practical Guide to contract procedures for EU external actions.

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

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

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

3. A copy of the 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)¹³. A copy of the latest account is not required from (if any) the co-applicant(s)
4. Legal entity sheet (see annex D of these Guidelines) duly completed and signed by each of the applicants, accompanied by the justifying documents requested there. If the applicants have already signed a contract with the Contracting Authority, instead of the legal entity sheet and supporting documents, the legal entity number may be provided, unless a change in legal status occurred in the meantime.
5. A financial identification form of the applicant (not from co-applicant(s)) conforming to the model attached at 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 applicant is established. If the 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.

Where the requested supporting documents are not uploaded in PADOR they must be supplied in the form of originals, photocopies or scanned versions (i.e. showing legible stamps, signatures and dates) of the said originals. However, the Legal entity sheet and the financial identification form must always be submitted in original

Where such documents are not in one of the official languages of the European Union, a translation into French or English of the relevant parts of these documents proving the applicant(s)'s eligibility, must be attached and will prevail for the purpose of analysing the application.

Where these documents are in an official language of the European Union other than French or English, it is **strongly** recommended, in order to facilitate the evaluation, to provide a translation of the relevant parts of the documents, proving the applicant's eligibility, into French or English.

If the abovementioned supporting documents are not provided before the deadline indicated in the request for supporting documents sent to the 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.

2.5. NOTIFICATION OF THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY'S DECISION

2.5.1. Content of the decision

The applicant will be informed in writing of the Contracting Authority's decision concerning their application and, if rejected, the reasons for the negative decision.

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.

¹³ 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.

2.5.2. Indicative timetable

	DATE	TIME*
Information meeting (if any)	NA	
Deadline for requesting any clarifications from the Contracting Authority	7 June 2013	
Last date on which clarifications are issued by the Contracting Authority	17 June 2013	-
Deadline for submission of Concept Notes	28 June 2013	
Information to applicants on opening, administrative checks and concept note evaluation (Step 1)	15 July 2013 *	-
Invitations to submit Full Application Form	31 July 2013 *	-
Deadline for submission of Full Application Form	20 September 2013 *	-
Information to applicants on the evaluation of the Full Application Form (Step 2) ¹⁴	31 October 2013*	-
Notification of award (after the eligibility check) (Step 3)	15 November 2013*	-
Contract signature ¹⁵	20 December 2013*	-

* **Provisional date.** All times are in the time zone of the country of the Contracting Authority.

This indicative timetable may be updated by the Contracting Authority during the procedure. In such cases, the updated timetable will be published on the EuropeAid web site

<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome>

14 Note that according to the financial regulation, notifications to the applicant on the outcome of the evaluation of their applications must take place within 6 months following the submission deadline of the full application, save in exceptional cases, in particular for complex actions, large number of proposals or where there have been delays attributable to the applicants where this limit may be exceeded. Multi-beneficiary calls can be considered as complex actions calls and therefore may benefit from an exemption to the 6 month rule. The 6 months rule only applies in case of direct centralized management.

15 Note that according to the financial regulation, the signing of a grant contract with the applicant must take place within 3 months from when it was notified the decision to award a contract. However, in exceptional circumstance, in particular for complex actions launched for large number of proposals or where there have been delays attributable to the applicants (or their applications) this limit may be exceeded. The 3 months rule only applies in case of direct centralised management.

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

Following the decision to award a grant, the Beneficiary will be offered a contract based on the Contracting Authority's standard grant contract (see Annex G of these Guidelines). By signing the application form (Annex A of these Guidelines), the applicant agrees, if awarded a grant, to accept the contractual conditions of the standard grant contract.

Implementation contracts

Where implementation of the action requires the Beneficiary(ies) and its affiliated entity(ies) (if any) to award procurement contracts, it must award the contract to the tenderer offering the best value for money, that is to say, the best price-quality ratio, in compliance with the principles of transparency and equal treatment for potential contractors, care being taken to avoid any conflict of interests. To this end, the Beneficiary must follow the procedures set out in Annex IV to the standard grant contract.

2.7. EARLY WARNING SYSTEM AND CENTRAL EXCLUSION DATABASE

The applicants and, if they are legal entities, the persons who have powers of representation, decision-making or control over them, are informed that, should they be in one of the situations mentioned in:

- Commission Decision of 16.12.2008 on the Early Warning System (EWS) for the use of authorising officers of the Commission and the executive agencies (OJ, L 344, 20.12.2008, p.125) or
- Commission Regulation of 17.12.2008 on the Central Exclusion Database (CED) (OJ L344, 20.12.2008, p.12),

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 EWS only or both in the EWS and CED, and communicated to the persons and entities listed in the above-mentioned Decision and Regulation, in relation to the award or the execution of a grant agreement or decision.

3. LIST OF ANNEXES

DOCUMENTS TO BE COMPLETED

Annex A: Grant Application Form (Word format)

Annex B: Budget (Excel format)

Annex C: Logical Framework (Excel format)

Annex D: Legal Entity Sheet

Annex E: Financial identification form

Annex F: PADOR off Line Form¹⁶

16 http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/onlineservices/pador/dispensation_en.htm.

DOCUMENTS FOR INFORMATION

Annex G: Standard Grant Contract

Annex II: General conditions applicable to European union-financed grant contracts for external actions

Annex IV: contract award procedures

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: Daily allowance rates (Per diem), available at the following address:
http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/implementation/index_en.htm

Annex K: Guidelines and Checklist for assessing Budget and Simplified cost options.

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

Project Cycle Management Guidelines

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/multimedia/publications/publications/manuals-tools/t101_en.htm