

DISCLAIMER

These questions and answers are provided for clarification purposes and are not intended to constitute a corrigendum to the call for proposals or the concept note template.

Please note that in the interest of equal treatment of applicants, the fund operator cannot give a prior opinion on eligibility, partnership composition and/or project description.

ELIGIBILITY AND PARTNERSHIP

1. Can a lead partner be a beneficiary partner in another project consortium?

Eligible consortia may submit a maximum of one concept note and consortium members may not participate in other project consortia under this call (cf the call for proposals). An eligible entity can be a member in only one consortium regardless of whether this entity participates as lead, beneficiary or expertise partner.

2. What will happen if an entity which is a beneficiary partner in one consortium at the same time submits a concept note as a member of another consortium?

A consortium member may not participate in other project consortia under this call (cf the call for proposals). Please check this issue with the proposed partners in the consortium before submitting the concept note. If an entity has participated in more than one concept note, all concept notes will be rejected.

3. What does it mean that target groups or other stakeholders in the countries of the expertise partners cannot benefit directly from the Fund? Where should we describe the target group/stakeholders in the country of the expertise partner in the concept note?

The EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Youth Employment shall benefit the target groups in the 15 Beneficiary States as well as Ireland, Italy and Spain. Expertise partners may support projects implemented in these countries by sharing know-how, competence and expertise. When describing the target group (cf section 3.2. Project relevance) the project consortium should focus on target groups in countries eligible for the Fund. It is possible to implement some project activities in the expertise partner country (e.g. study visits) however target groups cannot be recruited from the expertise partner's country.

4. How should we interpret the information (page 11) that the project partners work together in a multinational partnership?

The consortium must consist of at least two entities that come from two different eligible countries, cf the call for proposals, 'Definitions': the partners (members of consortium) form the transnational project consortium. At the concept note stage it is not required to provide any official documents confirming the formation of a consortium. The partners are required to be listed in section 2 – Partners of the concept note.

5. Is there a template for partnership agreements to be given by the fund operator or shall we create such an agreement by ourselves?

No partnership agreement should be entered into at the concept note phase. The template will be made available on the Fund's webpage when the full proposal phase is opened.

6. Is the FO or FMO planning to help/assist applicants in finding a beneficiary partner and building a proper consortium?

Yes, the fund operator will create a simple partner search tool that will be made available for applicants.

7. How is the term 'international organisation' to be understood? Are there any special conditions to be fulfilled by such organisations in order to be eligible as expertise partners?

International organisations are entities established by formal political agreements between their members that have the status of international treaties; their existence is recognised by law in their member countries; they are not treated as resident institutional units of the countries in which they are located (definition by the OECD).

There are no specific requirements that an international organisation needs to fulfil in order to become an eligible expertise partner. However, its role and involvement in the project must be justified in the concept note.

8. Is it possible to include a sole proprietorship as a consortium member?

Sole proprietorships and natural persons are not eligible as project partners, cf the call for proposals.

9. Is it correct to understand that an expertise partner can be an entity established only in a non-eligible EU Member State, Donor State or an international organisation? Does it mean that the expertise or good practise acquired in one of the Beneficiary States cannot be transferred to another Beneficiary State within this project (e.g. good practise in Hungary adapted and transferred to e.g. Poland or Estonia)?

It is correct that an expertise partner can only be an international organisation or an eligible entity established in a Donor State or in a non-eligible EU Member State. Transfer of know-how and good practice does not require the presence of an expertise partner. In the example cited, the Hungarian organisation may be a beneficiary or lead partner in the project.

10. Would it be possible to transfer/exchange examples of good practice from Macedonia or Serbia to the Beneficiary States within a project under the Fund?

Good practice or ideas may originate in any country or territory. However, entities in Serbia and Macedonia are not eligible as partner countries under this Fund.

11. What is the definition of a non-eligible EU Member State?

The non-eligible EU Member States are those EU Member States which are not Beneficiary States of the EEA and Norway Grants. These are: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Sweden and United Kingdom.

12. Why is Denmark not a part of this call?

Denmark is not included in the Beneficiary States of the EEA and Norway Grants, nevertheless relevant entities from Denmark may participate as expertise partners since Denmark is an EU Member State.

13. Do you have any contact person in Kosovo in order to have more information? May organisations from Albania apply for this call as partners?

Entities from Kosovo and Albania are not eligible under this call.

14. We are an Italian entity member of a consortium led by a Greek entity, are activities implemented in Italy considered as eligible?

Yes, Italy, together with Ireland and Spain are considered beneficiary countries, cf. the call for proposals, therefore activities implemented in these three countries as well as in the 15 Beneficiary States are eligible.

15. Our consortium consists of three project partners. Do we have to sign one multilateral partnership agreement that shall include all three parties or it is allowed that we, as the lead partner, sign two separate partnership agreements?

The project consortium will be required in principle to sign one partnership agreement if the project is awarded a grant, and only after the project contract is signed. In the concept note phase we do not require any agreement document between the members of the consortium.

16. If an international organisation (based or registered outside of Europe) is an expertise partner, does the requirement of "creation and implementation of the relationship between the lead partner and the beneficiary partner and/or any expertise partner shall comply with the applicable European Union law on public procurement" still apply?

Yes. The provision aims to clarify that the partners are not service providers but contribute to the implementation of the project sharing a common goal with the other consortium members.

- 17. We have similar entities in several countries, ready to create an international consortium and apply for funding. Each of these entities will do similar activities, having local partners to implement the project. Can we consider as main applicant one body that will include main applicants from each of these countries? They will be responsible for the same procedures, doing the same activities and be leaders for their own target groups BUT work together through one concept.**

The consortium must include entities from at least two eligible countries of which the lead partner must come from a beneficiary state (cf the call for proposals). The role and work activities of the lead partner and each beneficiary partner should be made clear in the concept note. No prior opinion on eligibility or design/composition of a consortium can be given in this Q&A, however the added value of the transnational consortium will be assessed.

- 18. The call for proposals states that each entity may be part of only one consortium regardless of the role assumed (lead/beneficiary/expertise partner). How will affiliated entities (entities belonging to a holding or one business group) be treated? For example, we as organisation are established in one of the Beneficiary States with full legal personality in accordance with said State's laws; however, we are affiliated with an entity having branches in other Beneficiary States via founder. What happens if any of the affiliated entities applies in the same call? Shall this be treated as reason for rejection of the applications?**

No prior opinion on eligibility or design/composition of a consortium can be given in this Q&A.

As a general indication, entities belonging to the same organisation (therefore considered affiliated) can ONLY participate in one concept note.

CONCEPT NOTE SUBMISSION

- 1. If we decide to combine all three support areas in our concept note, should we choose and indicate which one is the 'main one' and if yes, where and how should we give such information in the concept note?**

The applicants may combine all three support areas in their concept note. The applicants may also choose only one or combine any two of the given areas supported in this call for proposals. If one of the areas is considered by the applicant as the main one, this should be indicated in point 1.2 Project summary.

- 2. Where should we describe our expertise partner's relevant work achievements in the concept note as required on page 11 of the call for proposals?**

The place in the concept note to describe relevant work achievements of the expertise partner and why they are considered necessary to reach the objectives of the project is under a. Role in the project of expertise partner and b. Experience of expertise partner with transnational or regional programmes and/or EEA/ Norway Grants.

- 3. Can we ask for a face to face meeting with the FO's experts in one of the Information Units?**

At the concept note phase, the FO does not provide the applicants with individual consultations. Questions related to this call for proposals may be sent electronically by e-mail to eeagrants@ecorys.com and answers will be published on the webpage of the Fund, <http://eeagrants.org/fundforyouthemployment>. Applicants may also call one of the three Hub Information Units, where basic information on the call for proposals is provided.

- 4. Is it possible to obtain answers on our questions via skype? If yes, what is the procedure?**

At the concept note phase, the FO does not provide the applicants with individual consultations via skype.

- 5. Who is responsible for all the answers: the Fund Operator or the Financial Mechanism Office?**

All answers published on the Fund's website (<http://eeagrants.org/fundforyouthemployment>) are prepared jointly by the fund operator and the Financial Mechanism Office.

6. Are there compulsory work-packages? (for example: management, dissemination, etc.). Is there a minimum or maximum number of activities / work-packages?

Please consult the guidelines. A manual for filling in the Concept Note is available for entities registered in the EGREG system, see <https://www.egregsystem.info/fundforyouthemployment/>

7. Is it possible to outsource some part of the project coordination?

The coordination is expected to be carried out by the lead partner. Please see "Role and provisions for project consortia" in section 2 of the call guidelines. This does not prevent the sub-contracting of specific tasks, however all project partners will be responsible for fulfilling their obligations to the consortium and all contact with the fund operator shall be through the lead partner.

8. How often will the Q&As be published?

Q&As will be published on the fund's webpage regularly dependent on the number and nature of questions received by the fund operator. In addition, all entities registered in EGREG will receive an info message immediately after the web publication (until 20 July 2017).

PROJECT IDEA

1. What is the maximum allowed project duration?

There is no maximum project duration foreseen in the call for proposals. Expenditures incurred by the project partners shall be eligible as of the date on which the Financial Mechanism Committee decides to award the project grant, while the final date for eligibility of expenditures for projects is 30 April 2024 at the latest.

2. Providing that we will be awarded a grant shall we be obliged to have indicator such as: employment of x% of participants of the project during implementation of the project/after project completion?

There are no obligatory indicators at the concept note phase. The applicant is required to choose indicators proper for the project type and scope.

3. Where in the concept note should we include information that the project is consistent with sustainable development, long-term economic growth, social cohesion and environmental protection?

Such an information can be included in section 3.1 Project objectives and expected results or in the project summary (section 1.2)

4. We have a project idea where the unemployed people are cooperating somehow with companies in order to give the job to those who are looking for it. Our goal is to charge companies for using that "product" and never to charge the unemployed. We want to start charging companies after the project is finished in order to maintain our project and to strengthen long-lasting effects of the product. The product will not have the purpose of producing a profit, because all the incomes and costs can balance, so our foundation will not generate any profit.

In the Call for Proposal it is written that the project must follow the no-profit principle:

The grant may not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit within the context of the project. Any net revenue generated as a direct consequence of the project must be deducted from the amount of total eligible expenditure of the project.

Is my foundation allowed to charge the private entities for using the product (the effect of the project in the frame of that program) after the project is finished?

As indicated in the disclaimer, no prior opinion might be given at this stage related to eligibility, thus including costs eligibility. Revenues generated by the project will be monitored throughout the project lifetime. Should the applicants expect the projects to be revenue-generating, these are expected to be indicated in the full application form stage.

BUDGET DEVELOPMENT

1. Are there any limits regarding the budget per project partner, including expertise partners?

There is no limit set per project partner. The budget should be justified, reflect the amount of tasks the partner is involved in and consist of costs proportionate and necessary for the project implementation.

2. Can any member of the consortium (lead partner/beneficiary partner/expertise partner) provide co-financing in a form of in-kind contribution as long as said partner has a status of a non-governmental organisation?

Yes. Any project partner registered as a non-governmental organisation may provide co-financing in the form of in-kind contribution, provided that this in-kind contribution consists of voluntary work.

3. Are any other forms of in-kind contribution (apart from voluntary work) allowed?

The in-kind contribution shall be accepted as eligible only in the form of voluntary work – no other forms of the in-kind contribution are allowed under this Fund.

4. What are the situations in which the FMC may approve the in-kind contribution of more than 50% (even up to 100%) of the required co-financing? Should we apply for this? And if yes, when? At the concept note or later – during application form?

Such situations are exceptional. They will depend on the project partner's status and its involvement in the project implementation. Exceptional cases are to be duly explained and justified in the full application form.

5. Where in the concept note should we indicate the form of co-financing?

The concept note does not require information concerning the form of co-financing. The form of co-financing (in-kind contribution vs financial resources) will have to be indicated at the full application form stage.

6. The minimum grant amount is EUR 1 million but what is the maximum?

There is no maximum grant amount per project. In line with the requirements foreseen in the call for proposals, costs included under the indicative project budget should be proportionate and necessary as well as complying with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

7. What happens with interest earned on the transferred grant?

There will be no obligation to declare and reimburse the interest generated by the transfers of funds to the lead partner's or other project partner's bank account.

8. Who is subject to exchange rate risk in the case of the partner not from Eurozone?

Exchange rate losses are not eligible cost under the Fund (cf the call for proposals). The risk of exchange loss lies solely on the partner covering the particular cost.

9. One of the condition that we have to fulfil in order for our incurred expenditures to be eligible is as follows: they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation. What applicable tax and social legislation, that's of which country, is considered binding?

Each partner is obliged to comply with tax and social legislation applicable in the country of legal registration of the partner's entity.

10. If a partner is not from Eurozone, what date should we take into account for conversion of costs incurred in other currency into Euro?

Information on this issue will be provided to shortlisted candidates in the second application stage.

11. Can we use the funding for renovation/reparation (such as replacing the joinery work) of an existing building? Are air conditioners and radiators considered equipment?

Costs related to renovation/reparation as well as air conditioners and radiators can be considered as eligible if they comply with the requirements foreseen by the "General criteria for eligibility of expenditure" included under Chapter 4 of the call for proposals, especially with requirements under letter (b), (c) and (d), and if they do not fall within the list of not eligible expenditure included under the heading "Ineligible costs" of the said Chapter 4.

In addition to the above, costs related to air conditioners and radiators can be considered eligible equipment costs if they also comply with the requirements foreseen by the "Eligible direct expenditure" included under Chapter 4 of the call for proposals, especially with requirements under the fourth bullet point.

12. Beneficiary partners: Do they have a budget for the project? Can they participate in the co-funding? Expertise partner: Do they have a budget for the project? Can they participate in the co-funding? Are there budget limits per budget line/typology? Are there budget limits per activities / work-packages?

All partners are expected to actively participate in the project by implementing activities. The budget allocated to each partner should be proportionate and necessary for the implementation of the partner's activities and used for the sole purpose of achieving the objective(s) of the project and its expected outcome(s), in a manner consistent with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The partners decide among themselves how to provide the required co-financing for the project.

There is no limit/threshold per budget line, but the budget should be proportionate and necessary as well as complying with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

13. Are there any financial guidelines on how to calculate the workhour rates from country to country? The Financial provisions in Chapter 4 gives a very general understanding how to do it. Do you have a unique table to follow?

It is not foreseen to provide unified workhours rates for applicants. As stated in the call for proposal (Eligible direct expenditure, section 2), the cost of staff should comprise of actual salaries plus social security contributions and other statutory costs included in the remuneration provided that these costs are in line with the partner's usual policy on remuneration.

14. How will the reimbursement system be in this program? (Percentage in advance, then 4 times per year?)

The payment system and schedule will be indicated in the template project contract annexed to the full call for proposals that will be made available to the shortlisted applicants.

EVALUATION PROCEDURE

1. Does the number of support areas affect the assessment/evaluation in any way?

The number of chosen support areas does not affect the assessment. The selection criteria are described in the call for proposals.

2. What does the assessment procedure look like?

The fund operator assesses whether the applicant and the concept note meet the administrative and eligibility criteria outlined in the call for proposals. The Financial Mechanism Office is responsible for evaluation of the concept notes against the selection

criteria. The final assessment and decision on awarding a grant is the responsibility of the Financial Mechanism Committee.

3. Are there any additional points or is it preferable for the consortium if one of the members (the expertise partner) comes from one of the Donor States?

The concept note may be awarded with maximum 5 points for consortium composition, in which validity of the consortium and roles of particular partners shall be taken into account.

4. How are points awarded for the last selection criterion, "Composition of the consortium (number of countries/beneficiary partners involved, involvement of expertise partners)"? All other things being equal, are two-country consortia awarded fewer points than consortia that involve organizations from three or more eligible countries?

Scoring will be based on an assessment of the partnership composition according to the proposed project design.