



Contracting Authority: European Commission

Climate for Cities (C4C) in the Southern Neighbourhood

Guidelines for grant applicants

Budget line: 22.04.01.02

European Neighbourhood Instrument

Reference:

EuropeAid/170901/DH/ACT/

Deadline for submission¹ of concept notes:

31/03/2021 at 12:00 (Brussels date and time)

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

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

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

NOTICE

This is a restricted call for proposals. In the first instance, only concept notes (Annex A.1) must be submitted for evaluation. Thereafter, lead applicants who have been pre-selected will be invited to submit a full application. After the evaluation of the full applications, an eligibility check will be performed for those which have been provisionally selected. Eligibility will be checked on the basis of the supporting documents requested by the contracting authority and the signed 'declaration by the lead applicant' sent together with the full application.

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

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

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

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1. CLIMATE FOR CITIES (C4C)

1.1. BACKGROUND

The Mediterranean region is a hotspot for climate change. The region has been warming up 20% faster than global average since the 1980s. In 2050, it is expected that two thirds of the worldwide population will live in cities. Around the Mediterranean, in 2018, 60% of the population already lived in urban areas where, given the population density, climate change will carry severe consequences in particular for water and food availability, and overall human health.

In line with the **European Green Deal agenda** and the **Paris Agreement**, the EU aims at supporting Southern Neighbourhood cities in their energy and climate transition, in particular through the implementation of their Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAPs). This objective is in line with EU Covenant of Mayors' initiative, as well as policy developments at the Global Covenant of Mayors' level. Since 2011, the regional EU-funded **CES-MED**⁴ and **Clima-MED**⁵ projects actively support these endeavours in particular by providing dedicated technical assistance to cities in drafting their Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAPs). The Clima-MED project, labelled by the Union for the Mediterranean, has additionally supported the translation of some SECAPs into bankable dossiers in order to better attract climate finance investments. Many mayors in the region have expressed interest in receiving such technical support, and are now eager to move ahead into the implementation of their SECAP, provided they can access funding for it. As of today, a few cities have already been able to implement a limited part of their SECAP on their own budget. However, no SECAP has been implemented in its entirety, which justifies the need for additional efforts. This **Climate for Cities' Call for Proposals** builds directly on the achievements of CES-MED and Clima-MED projects, by supporting and accelerating the funding of SECAPs and similar initiatives aimed at increasing climate resilience and sustainable use of natural resources at local level.

This initiative is relevant for the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It contributes primarily to the progressive achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets 13 on "Climate action" and 11 "Sustainable cities and communities", while also contributing to 5 "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" and 7 on "Affordable and clean energy".

1.2. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME AND PRIORITY ISSUES

The **global objective** of this call for proposals is to contribute to sustainable human development by promoting a transition towards greener and climate-resilient cities in the Southern Neighbourhood, in line with countries' commitments under the Paris Agreement, and making optimum use of climate finance instruments.

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

- To improve citizen's quality of life through the implementation of resource-efficient and low carbon initiatives, with multiplier effects at local level and good replicability potential
- To improve national and local authorities' capacity to design innovative frameworks and partnerships for the development, implementation and financing of successful climate action at local level (that are both scalable and replicable).

The general priorities of this call for proposals are:

- 1) Implementation of Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (either partially or in full) at local level

⁴ <http://www.ces-med.eu/>

⁵ <https://www.climamed.eu/>

- 2) Where SECAPs have not been developed, implementation of alternative already developed plans⁶ focussed on sustainable and integrated climate mitigation and/or adaptation measures at local level, in line with existing national and local plans and countries' international climate change commitments (such as Nationally Determined Contributions)
- 3) Implementation of soft measures to complement and maximise the local level impact of 1) and 2). More details on soft measures below.

Proposals need to cover either priorities 1) and 3) OR priorities 2) and 3).

This call for proposals aims at fostering local integrated approaches that ultimately improve societal cohesion locally, by building partnerships between local authorities, private companies, local investors, NGO's and the civil society. Municipalities/local authorities, in association with local and/or international NGO's, and local and/or international private companies/financing institutions, are requested to propose projects based on a secured bankable financing plan, which identifies investors and financial partners whose firm involvement in the project is documented at project's submission.

Proposals need to demonstrate that the EU contribution will trigger additional funding for actions with a climatic objective that include mitigation and/or adaptation measures. Therefore, depending on the content of the cities' SECAP (or alternative already developed plan), this call addresses different domains of intervention, and an integrated (multi-sector) approach is being favoured. Finally, proposals should clearly express how local authorities intend to implement actions, if selected, in an inclusive and participatory manner, taking into account gender considerations.

In addition, and consistently with the way SECAPs are designed, the proposals' applicants are strongly encouraged to:

- take into account any national mechanism/institution supporting municipal development (when these exist), by involving relevant public institutional actors in the preparation and implementation of the action (see more details here under);
- involve local schools, and/or NGOs in a collective effort to raise awareness and foster behavioural change among citizens/consumers which complement infrastructure measures financed throughout the project;
- involve local universities/research institutes in the proposed project, to foster synergies between technological innovation and the private sector, possibly leading to specific training curricula and opportunities for jobs creation.

More detail is provided in the sections below.

Type of activities⁷:

Proposals should include a coherent package of activities that encompasses a combination of environmentally sound infrastructure component(s) and "soft" measures including capacity building, trainings, outreach and awareness raising activities that complement and maximise the efficiency and sustainability of the infrastructure measures. A gender-balanced approach needs to be consistently applied in the measures accompanying the infrastructure investment (for example, awareness raising campaigns, trainings and other interventions must be gender-responsive). Initiatives must also be inclusive and consider the needs of the various population groups (including those in most vulnerable situations).

⁶ Such as EBRD Green Cities Action Plans, for example.

⁷ Please note this list represents the type of eligible activities and is not meant to be exhaustive.

➤ Infrastructure component:

- Implementation of the infrastructure components of a SECAP. These may include for instance, and not exclusively: energy efficiency in public buildings, renewable energy solutions, water efficiency measures, energy efficient street lighting, sustainable and smart mobility, wastewater treatment infrastructure, solid waste management, as long as they can demonstrate contributing to climate action objectives.
- Implementation of inclusive climate mitigation and/or climate adaptation projects (including for example disaster preparedness and risk reduction interventions) based on already developed plans in line with the country's national plans and commitments (such as Nationally Determined Contributions or National Adaptation Plans) and existing sustainable local development plans.

➤ “Soft” measures:

- Inclusive hands-on awareness raising campaigns at municipal level (reaching out to households, schools, private companies, etc.)
- Training workshops for city/local administration representatives in the efficient management of natural resources and sustainable urban governance methods and principles.
- Technical support to academics and research centres in developing new educational or training programs fostering eco-innovation and green technology deployment.
- Capacity building for local commercial banks or other financial actors in identifying new lending sectors with high and positive climate impact, and developing appropriate innovative financing mechanisms for wider replication.
- Capacity building for local media to enhance their understanding and promotion of natural resource efficiency and climate resilience.
- Developing inclusive disaster preparedness and risks reduction plans, and delivering corresponding trainings to relevant users, as part of broader interventions, which may have an infrastructure component. Proposals should ensure complementarity and avoid duplication with other relevant national or local level initiatives. In particular:
 - in countries where ministries/public entities supporting municipalities exist, the proposal's applicants should inform and consult the latter in the proposal's design.
 - in countries where no dedicated public entity supporting municipalities exists or where funding is not available to municipalities, the proposal's applicants should clearly determine adequate reporting channels towards the most relevant line Ministry in its country.

In both cases, the National Coordination Groups and the SECAP Support Mechanism already established in each country by the EU-funded Clima-MED project could possibly be invited to partake in the implementation of this Action.

Proposals should also ensure complementarity and possibly create synergies with relevant similar schemes implemented by other stakeholders (such as for example the Global Environment Facility, Green Climate Fund and the EBRD Green Cities Program).

The proposals will need to demonstrate a significant and measurable impact, in terms of emissions reduction (mitigation), and/or quantifiable benefits in terms of increased resilience to climate change (adaptation).

Every application has to fully address all of the following methodological elements:

- Proposals need to feature effective and coherent partnerships between a local authority and relevant local actors (including NGOs, local private companies/private investors, civil society organisations,

financing institutions and possibly other municipalities) with a view to cooperating on an integrated project at local level. More details on the required partnerships in section 2.1.

- Proposals need to be based on secure and robust bankable financing plans that clearly identify investors and financial partners, and demonstrate the firm commitment of such partners towards long-term project's sustainability.
- Proposals need to demonstrate their potential for replicability and/or upscaling and their potential for leveraging additional sources of funding for local climate adaptation and/or mitigation projects.
- Proposals need to meaningfully streamline gender aspects and promote the active participation of women in project activities.
- Proposals need to include an infrastructure component accompanied by relevant and complementary 'soft' measures. These measures may aim at increasing municipalities' technical and financial capacities for effective management of the SECAP implementation and/or climate mitigation/adaptation measures. Soft measures (technical assistance, training and capacity building, etc.) may also be directed towards other local actors such as NGOs, financing institutions, local media or academic and research centres. Soft measures must be inclusive and consider the needs of all citizens (including those in most vulnerable situations).
- Proposals must include a communication and awareness raising/outreach component aimed at a) raising the visibility of successful project results (and encouraging additional cities to join the Global Covenant of Mayors on Climate and Energy) and b) promoting the awareness, engagement and behavioural change of the local population, leading to more sustainable use of natural resources and increased climate resilience at local level.
- Proposals must provide an estimation of their contribution to reducing greenhouse emissions and/or improved resilience to climate change, compared to a business-as-usual scenario.
- Proposals must demonstrate the full engagement and means of the local authority acting as lead applicant or co-applicant (as defined in section 2.1 here after) to integrate the action into the municipality development plans and to assign experienced human resources to lead and follow up on the action's implementation.
- Proposals must clearly demonstrate how the action will ensure its sustainability beyond the life of the project.

Proposals must demonstrate how the EU contribution is intended to be used as leverage to attract additional funding for the action. Note that in the evaluation, special attention will be paid in assessing the quality and robustness of the financing plan, the proposal's climate impact and the degree of leverage of the EU contribution.

During their implementation (i.e. only after the EU grant contracts have been signed with selected projects' lead applicants), the projects awarded under this call for proposals will benefit from a dedicated technical assistance **established under the EU-funded Clima-MED project**. This includes assistance in project and financial management, procurement, monitoring and reporting, communication and dissemination of project results, technical advice and guidance where necessary and assistance in liaising with the European Commission services (EU Delegations and Headquarters). This support mechanism will also provide a platform for continuous sharing and exchange of experience amongst grantees.

1.3. FINANCIAL ALLOCATION PROVIDED BY THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY

The overall indicative amount made available under this call for proposals is EUR 19,000,000. The contracting authority reserves the right not to award all available funds.

Should additional funds be available, they may be added to the existing budget.

Size of grants

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

- minimum amount: EUR 2,500,000
- maximum amount: EUR 3,500,000

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: 5 % of the total eligible costs of the action
- Maximum percentage: 50% of the total eligible costs of the action (see also Section 2.1.5).

Furthermore, please note that:

- The EU contribution can never cover more than 30% of the infrastructure component of the project. The table here under illustrates this criterion:

Nota: To fill in this table, applicants are invited to determine, per order: (a), (s), (t), (e), (b) and finally (d).

Total project costs	Maximum EU Total contribution	Infrastructure component of the proposal			Soft measures entailed in the proposal		
		Total eligible costs	Maximum EU contribution	Grantee's co-financing	Total eligible costs	Maximum EU contribution	Grantee's co-financing
<i>with minimum and maximum values determined here above</i>							

(t)

(e)

(a)

(b)

(s)

(d)

= (a)+(s)

$0,03 \times (t) < (e) < 0,5 \times (t)$

= $0,3 \times (a)$

= (a) – (b)

= (e) – (b)

= (s) – (d)

Please note that in case of different maximum co-financing rate for local and non-local organisations, international organisations are not entitled to claim the maximum co-financing rate as they may never be considered as a local organisation even though they have local offices or headquarters established in the country.

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 Fund⁸.

2. RULES FOR THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS

⁸ 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.

These guidelines set out the rules for the submission, selection and implementation of the actions financed under this call, in conformity with the practical guide, which is applicable to the present call (available on the internet at this address <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/rag/document.do?locale=en>).⁹

2.1. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

There are three sets of eligibility criteria, relating to:

(1) the actors:

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

(2) the actions:

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

(3) the costs:

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

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

Lead applicant

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

- be a legal person **and**
- be non-profit-making **and**

be a specific type of organisation namely: a non-governmental organisation, a local authority or a local public education, academic or research organisation **and**

- a) In the case of local authorities and local public education, academic or research organisation: be established in¹⁰ one of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) South partner countries (Algeria, Egypt, Israel¹¹, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine¹², Syria¹³ and Tunisia.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ With regard to Israeli entities, please follow Guidelines on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards (OJ C 205, 19.7.2013, p. 9).

- b) In the case of non-governmental organisations: be established in any of the countries listed under a) or be established in a Member State of the European Union¹⁴
- be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action with the co-applicants and affiliated entity(ies), not acting as an intermediary **and**

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

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

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

The lead applicant must act with co-applicants and associates, as specified hereafter.

If awarded the grant contract, the lead applicant will become the beneficiary identified as the coordinator in Annex G (special conditions). The coordinator is the main interlocutor of the contracting authority. It represents and acts on behalf of any other co-beneficiary (if any) and coordinate the design and implementation of the action.

Co-applicant(s)

¹² This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

¹³ At the time this document was prepared, EU cooperation with Syria (government entities) was suspended due to the political situation in the country. In the light of future decisions, the Commission shall assess the opportunity to involve Syrian authorities in the action's implementation.

¹⁴ For UK applicants: Please be aware that following the entry into force of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement* on 1 February 2020 and in particular Articles 127(6), 137 and 138, the references to natural or legal persons residing or established in a Member State of the European Union and to goods originating from an eligible country, as defined under Regulation (EU) No 236/2014** and Annex IV of the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement***, are to be understood as including natural or legal persons residing or established in, and to goods originating from, the United Kingdom****. Those persons and goods are therefore eligible under this call.

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

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

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

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

Lead applicants **must** act with a **minimum of two** co-applicants and a **maximum of three** co-applicants.

If the lead applicant is a local authority, the co-applicants must include at least:

- **Co-applicant 1:** a local or EU based non-governmental organisation (please refer to geographical criteria listed under 2.1.1)
- **Co-applicant 2:** a local authority from the same country as the lead applicant or a local public education, academic or research organisation (for example a school, university or research institute) also from the same country as the lead applicant. If the lead applicant is a non-governmental organisation, the co-applicants must include at least
 - **Co-applicant 1:** a local authority (please refer to geographical criteria listed under 2.1.1)
 - **Co-applicant 2:** another local authority from the same country as co-applicant 1, or a local public education, academic or research organisation also from the same country as co-applicant 1 (for example a school, university or research institute).

If the lead applicant is a local public education, academic or research organisation, the co-applicants must include at least:

- **Co-applicant 1:** a local authority from the same country as the lead applicant.
- **Co-applicant 2:** a local or EU based non-governmental organisation (please refer to geographical criteria listed under 2.1.1)

Noting that the involvement of other local authority/ies as co-applicant(s) may be especially relevant in order to fulfil the budgetary requirements specified in section 1.3 “Size of grants”. **If the lead applicant chooses to implement the action with another local authority as co-applicant, they should ensure that their project’s proposal entails sector/thematic objectives/outcomes that are similar.**

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

Co-applicants must satisfy the eligibility criteria as applicable to the lead applicant himself.

Co-applicants must sign the mandate in Annex A.2 Section 5.

If awarded the grant contract, the co-applicants will become beneficiaries in the action (together with the coordinator).

(3) Applicants included in the lists of EU restrictive measures (see Section 2.4. of the PRAG) at the moment of the award decision cannot be awarded the contract¹⁵.

2.1.2. Affiliated entities

Affiliated entity(ies)

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

¹⁵ The updated lists of sanctions are available at www.sanctionsmap.eu.

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

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

Only entities having a structural link with the applicants (i.e. the lead applicant or a co-applicant), in particular a legal or capital link.

This structural link encompasses mainly two notions:

- (i) Control, as defined in Directive 2013/34/EU on the annual financial statements, consolidated financial statements and related reports of certain types of undertakings:

Entities affiliated to an applicant may hence be:

- Entities directly or indirectly controlled by the applicant (daughter companies or first-tier subsidiaries). They may also be entities controlled by an entity controlled by the applicant (granddaughter companies or second-tier subsidiaries) and the same applies to further tiers of control;
 - Entities directly or indirectly controlling the applicant (parent companies). Likewise, they may be entities controlling an entity controlling the applicant;
 - Entities under the same direct or indirect control as the applicant (sister companies).
- (ii) Membership, i.e. the applicant is legally defined as a e.g. network, federation, association in which the proposed affiliated entities also participate or the applicant participates in the same entity (e.g. network, federation, association,...) as the proposed affiliated entities.

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

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

What is not an affiliated entity?

The following are not considered entities affiliated to an applicant:

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.1.3. Associates and contractors

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

- Associates

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

Lead applicants must act with at least one associate from

- a) the private sector (for example, a private company, a private investor, and/or a local/national financing institution)
and/or
- b) an International or European Financing Institution
and/or
- c) a dedicated national bank supporting cities’ development (where they exist)

Proposals should include, at best, public-private partnerships aiming at implementing the action.

Associates may provide co-financing for the action.

Where relevant, twinned European cities could also be involved as associates in the projects proposed by the Southern Neighbourhood local authorities.

- Contractors

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

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

Definition:

An action is composed of a set of activities.

Duration

The initial planned duration of an action may not be lower than 36 months nor exceed 48 months.

Sectors or themes

The actions will focus on the implementation of one or more components of a Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP), or (if a SECAP does not exist) on one or more component of an alternative already developed plan (such as, for example, the EBRD Green City Action Plan) focussing on sustainable and integrated climate mitigation and/or adaptation measures at local level, in line with existing national plans and international climate change commitments.

Location

Actions must take place in one the following countries: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Palestine¹⁶, Israel¹⁷, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria¹⁸.

Types of action

Integrated participatory actions contributing to improving the sustainable use of natural resources, transition towards a low carbon economy and increased climate resilience at local level.

Each action must address the general priorities listed in section 1.2 of these Guidelines (either general priority 1 and 3 or general priority 2 and 3) and must address all of the methodological elements listed in section 1.2 of these Guidelines.

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 with payment of fees and salaries
- actions concerned only with infrastructure developments (without accompanying soft measures)
- Actions which include any activity inciting publicly to violence or hatred as per the definition of the EU Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008 Article 1.1 (a to d) and 1.3

Types of activity

Activities listed under section 1.2 may be financed under this call.

Eligible activities could also include:

- Development of communication materials for the dissemination of project results and to promote replication at local or national level.
- Hiring technical expertise for the implementation of the project
- Procurement, delivery and supervision of supplies, works, services, exclusively for the achievement of the project's main objectives
- Organisation of workshops, seminars, courses in relation to the project objectives

¹⁶ The designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

¹⁷ With regard to activities in Israel, please follow Guidelines on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards (OJ C 205, 19.7.2013, p. 9).

¹⁸ The EU has suspended direct cooperation with the Syrian authorities since 2011, until further notice.

However, please note that none of these activities should be the main or only type of activity in the action.

Financial support to third parties¹⁹

Applicants shall not propose financial support to third parties.

Visibility

The applicants must take all necessary steps to publicise the fact that the European Union has financed or co-financed the action. As far as possible, actions that are wholly or partially funded by the European Union must incorporate information and communication activities designed to raise the awareness of specific or general audiences of the reasons for the action and the EU support for the action in the country or region concerned, as well as the results and the impact of this support.

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

Number of applications and grants per applicants / affiliated entities

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

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

A co-applicant/affiliated entity may be the co-applicant or affiliated entity in more than 1 application under this call for proposals.

A co-applicant/affiliated entity may be awarded more than 1 grant under this call for proposals.

2.1.5. Eligibility of costs: costs that can be included

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

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

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

¹⁹ These third parties are neither affiliated entity(ies) nor associates nor contractors.

- **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) are divided in two categories:

1/ "output or result based SCOs": this category includes 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, unit costs or flat rates 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 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.

2/ "other SCOs". This second category, which is only applicable to pillar assessed entities, entails simplified cost options embedded in the cost accounting practices of the beneficiary, for which an ex-ante assessment is deemed necessary, considering the need of a consistent application of the conditions required. In order to enable the use of these SCOs, the beneficiary's cost accounting practices need to have been positively assessed by an audit firm based on standard ToRs provided by the Commission. To obtain reimbursement of this category of SCOs, the beneficiary shall make reference to the previously obtained ex-ante assessment in the budget justification sheet (annex B).

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). Determining SCO is possible also through 'expert judgement' provided by internally available experts or procured in accordance with the applicable rules. Experts must be either commissioned auditors or chartered accountants, or staff of the Commission but cannot be staff of the beneficiary. 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 beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies), are in line with their cost 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 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' (per month/flight etc.), 'LUMPSUM', '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 applicants 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 for output or result based SCO.
- clearly explain the formulas for calculation of the final eligible amount for output or result based SCO²⁰
- make reference to the previously obtained ex-ante assessment for other/recurrent SCOs.

²⁰ 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.

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. Other/recurrent SCOs can be declared only if previously successfully ex-ante assessed.

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 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.

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.

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).

As foreseen in the Financing Decision entailing this Call for Proposals, eligible costs include (in a retroactive manner) the feasibility studies (i.e technical, financial, economic and environmental studies) necessary for writing down SECAP actions into a bankable dossier (including detailed tendering files) under the following conditions:

- the share of feasibility studies' costs being eligible is up to a maximum of 10% of the total infrastructure/investment costs, and
- these feasibility studies' costs were incurred at the latest 6 (six) months before the date of official launching of this Call for Proposals.

Applicants should prove that these feasibility studies were necessary to design their proposal being submitted under this Call for Proposals.

Contingency reserve

The budget may include a contingency reserve not exceeding 5 % of the estimated direct eligible costs. It can only be used with the **prior written authorisation** of the contracting authority.

Eligible indirect costs

The indirect costs incurred in carrying out the action may be eligible for flat-rate funding, but the total must not exceed 7 % of the estimated total eligible direct costs. Indirect costs are eligible provided that they do not include costs assigned to another budget heading in the standard grant contract. The lead applicant may be asked to justify the percentage requested before the grant contract is signed. However, once the flat rate has been fixed in the special conditions of the grant contract, no supporting documents need to be provided.

If any of the applicants or affiliated entity(ies) is in receipt of an operating grant financed by the EU, it may not claim indirect costs on its incurred costs within the proposed budget for the action.

Contributions in kind

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

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

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

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

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

Contributions in kind may not be treated as co-financing.

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

Ineligible costs

The following costs are not eligible:

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

- salary costs of the personnel of national administrations

Ethics clauses and Code of Conduct

a) Absence of conflict of interest

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

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

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

Zero tolerance for sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment:

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

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

c) Anti-corruption and anti-bribery

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

d) Unusual commercial expenses

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

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

e) Breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud

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

2.2. HOW TO APPLY AND THE PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW

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

- I. Provide information about the organisations involved in the action. Please note that the registration of this data in **PADOR is obligatory**²¹ for this call for proposals:

Concept note step: Registration is obligatory for lead applicants applying for EU contributions of more than EUR 60 000.

Full application step: Registration is obligatory for co-applicant(s) and affiliated entity(ies). Lead applicants must make sure that their PADOR profile is up to date.

- II. Provide information about the action in the documents listed under sections 2.2.2 (concept note) and 2.2.5 (full application). Please note that online submission via **PROSPECT is obligatory** for this call,

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

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

If it is impossible to register online in PADOR for technical reasons, the applicants and/or affiliated entity(ies) must complete the 'PADOR off-line form'²² attached to these guidelines. This form must be sent **together with the application**, by the submission deadline (see sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.5).

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

2.2.1. 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 or French. Applicants must apply in the language most commonly used by the target population in the country in which the action takes place.

Please note that:

1. In the concept note, lead applicants must only provide an estimate of the requested EU contribution as well as an indicative percentage of that contribution in relation to the eligible costs of the action. A detailed budget is to be submitted only by the lead applicants invited to submit a full application in the second phase.
2. The elements outlined in the concept note may not be modified in the full application. The EU contribution may not vary from the initial estimate by more than 20%. Lead applicants are free to

²¹ Natural persons who apply for a grant (if so allowed in the guidelines for applicants) do not have to register in PADOR. In this case, the information included in PROSPECT and the grant application form is sufficient.

²² Which corresponds to sections 3 and 4 of the full application form – Annex A.2.

adapt the percentage of co-financing required within the minimum and maximum amount and percentages of co-financing, as laid down in these guidelines in Section 1.3. The lead applicant may replace a co-applicant or an affiliated entity only in duly justified cases (e.g. bankruptcy of initial co-applicant or affiliated entity). In this case the new co-applicant/affiliated entity must be of a similar nature as the initial one. The lead applicant may adjust the duration of the action if unforeseen circumstances outside the scope of the applicants have taken place following the submission of the concept note and require such adaptation (risk of action not being carried out). In such cases the duration must remain within the limits imposed by the guidelines for applicants. An explanation/justification of the relevant replacement/adjustment shall be included in an accompanying letter or email.

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

3. Only the concept note form will be evaluated. It is therefore of utmost importance that this document contains ALL relevant information concerning the action. No additional annexes should be sent.

Any error or major discrepancy related to the concept note instructions may lead to the rejection of the concept note.

Clarifications will only be requested when information provided is not sufficient to conduct an objective assessment.

Hand-written concept notes will not be accepted.

2.2.2. Where and how to send concept notes

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

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

Please note that incomplete concept notes may be rejected. Lead applicants are advised to verify that their concept note is complete by using the checklist for concept note (Annex A.1, Instructions).

2.2.3. Deadline for submission of concept notes

The deadline for the submission of concept notes is **31/03/2021 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 **The lead applicant is strongly advised not to wait until the last day to submit** its concept note, since heavy Internet traffic or a fault with the Internet connection (including electricity failure, etc.) could lead to difficulties in submission. The Contacting Authority cannot be held responsible for any delay due to such afore-mentioned difficulties.

Any concept note submitted after the deadline will be rejected.

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:

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

E-mail address: **NEAR-ENI-SOUTH-TENDERS@ec.europa.eu**

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

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

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

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

All questions related to registration in PADOR or the online submission via PROSPECT should be addressed to the IT helpdesk at EuropeAid-IT-support@ec.europa.eu **via the online support form in PROSPECT**: Please note that the working languages of the IT support are: English French and Spanish. Therefore users are invited to send their questions in English, French or Spanish should they wish to benefit from an optimum response time.

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

2.2.5. Full applications

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

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

Lead applicants must submit their full applications in the same language as their concept notes. A copy of the lead applicant's accounts of the latest financial year (the profit and loss account and the balance sheet for the last financial year for which the accounts have been closed) must be uploaded in PADOR by the full application deadline. A copy of the latest account is neither required from (if any) the co-applicant(s) nor from (if any) affiliated entity(ies)).

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 (Annex A.2, Instructions) or any major inconsistency in the full application (e.g. if the amounts in the budget worksheets are inconsistent) may lead to the rejection of the application.

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

Hand-written applications will not be accepted.

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

With the full application the lead applicant also has to submit the completed PADORform (Annex F) for the lead applicant, each (if any) co-applicants and each (if any) affiliated entities²⁴.

A financing plan, which clearly identifies investors and financial partners involved in the proposed project, demonstrates their commitment to the action and clearly demonstrates the project's robustness and bankability needs to be annexed to the full application.

No further additional annexes should be sent.

2.2.6. Where and how to send full applications

Full application forms together with the budget, the logical framework and the declaration by the lead applicant must be submitted online via PROSPECT <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/prospect> following the instructions given in the users' manual.

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

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

2.2.7. Deadline for submission of full applications

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

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

Any application submitted after the deadline will be rejected.

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

2.2.8. Further information about full applications

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

E-mail address: **NEAR-ENI-SOUTH-TENDERS@ec.europa.eu**

²⁴ Natural persons who apply for a grant (if so allowed in the guidelines for applicants) do not have to provide an organisation data form. In this case, the information included in the grant application form is sufficient.

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

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

To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the contracting authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of lead applicants, co-applicants, affiliated 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 of DG International Cooperation and Development: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome> as the need arises. It is therefore advisable to consult the abovementioned website regularly in order to be informed of the questions and answers published.

All questions related to registration in PADOR or the online submission via PROSPECT should be addressed to the IT helpdesk at EuropeAid-IT-support@ec.europa.eu **via the online support form in PROSPECT**. Please note that the working languages of the IT support are: English French and Spanish. Therefore users are invited to send their questions in English, French or Spanish should they wish to benefit from an optimum response time.

2.3. EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF APPLICATIONS

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

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

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

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

- If the deadline has been met. Otherwise, the application will be automatically rejected.
- If the concept note satisfies all the criteria specified in the checklist in Annex A.1, Instructions of the Grant 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.

The concept notes that pass this check will be evaluated on the relevance and design of the proposed action.

The concept notes will receive an overall score out of 50 using the breakdown in the evaluation grid below. The evaluation will also check on compliance with the instructions on how to complete the concept note, which can be found in Annex A.1.

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

Evaluation Grid

Section	Maximum Score
1. Relevance of the action	20
1.1. How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the call for proposals and to the specific themes/sectors/areas or any other specific requirement stated in the guidelines for applicants? Are the expected results of the action aligned with the priorities defined in the guidelines for applicants (section 1.2)?	5
1.2. How relevant is the proposal to the particular needs and constraints of the target country(ies), region(s) and/or relevant sectors (including synergy with other development initiatives and avoidance of duplication)?	5
1.3. How clearly defined and strategically chosen are those involved (final beneficiaries, target groups)? Have their needs (as rights holders and/or duty bearers) and constraints been clearly defined and does the proposal address them appropriately?	5
1.4. Does the proposal contain particular added-value elements (e.g. innovation, best practices) ? [and the other additional elements indicated under 1.2. of the guidelines for applicants]	5
2. Design of the action	30
2.1. How coherent is the overall design of the action? Does the proposal indicate the expected results to be achieved by the action? Does the intervention logic explain the rationale to achieve the expected results?	5x2**
2.2. Does the design reflect a robust analysis of the problems involved, and the capacities of the relevant stakeholders?	5
2.3. Does the design take into account external factors (risks and assumptions)?	5
2.4. Are the activities feasible and consistent in relation to the expected results (including timeframe)? Are results (output, outcome and impact) realistic?	5

2.5. To which extent does the proposal integrate relevant cross-cutting elements such as environmental/climate change issues, promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities, needs of disabled people, rights of minorities and rights of indigenous peoples, youth, combating HIV/AIDS (if there is a strong prevalence in the target country/region)?	5
Maximum total score	50

****:** this scores 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 concept notes have been assessed, a list will be drawn up with the proposed actions ranked according to their total score.

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

Secondly, the number of concept notes will be reduced, taking account of the ranking, to the number of concept notes whose total aggregate amount of requested contributions is equal to 300% of the available budget for this call for proposals. The amount of requested contributions of each concept note will be based on the indicative financial envelopes for each lot, where relevant.

Lead applicants will receive a letter indicating the reference number of their application and the respective results. This letter will automatically appear online in the PROSPECT profile of the lead applicant. Lead applicants who, in exceptional cases (see section 2.2), had to submit their application by post or hand-delivery will receive the letter by email or by post if no e-mail address was provided.

The pre-selected lead applicants will subsequently be invited to submit full applications.

(2) STEP 2: EVALUATION OF THE FULL APPLICATION

Firstly, the following will be assessed:

- If the submission deadline has been met. Otherwise, the application will automatically be rejected.
- If the full application satisfies all the criteria specified in the checklist (Annex A.2, Instructions). This includes also an assessment of the eligibility of the action. If any of the requested information is missing or is incorrect, the application may be rejected on that **sole** basis and the application will not be evaluated further.

The full applications that pass this check will be further evaluated on their quality, including the proposed budget and capacity of the applicants and affiliated entity(ies). They will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria in the evaluation grid below. There are two types of evaluation criteria: selection and award criteria.

The selection criteria help to evaluate the applicant(s)'s and affiliated entity(ies)'s operational capacity and the lead applicant's financial capacity and are used to verify that they:

- have stable and sufficient sources of finance to maintain their activity throughout the proposed action and, where appropriate, to participate in its funding (this only applies to lead applicants);
- have the management capacity, professional competencies and qualifications required to successfully complete the proposed action. This applies to applicants and any affiliated entity(ies).

For the purpose of the evaluation of the financial capacity, lead applicants must ensure that the relevant information and documents (i.e. accounts of the latest financial year and external audit report, where applicable) in their PADOR profile are up to date. If the information and documents in PADOR are outdated and do not allow for a proper evaluation of the financial capacity, the application may be rejected.

The award criteria help to evaluate the quality of the applications in relation to the objectives and priorities set forth in the guidelines, and to award grants to projects which maximise the overall effectiveness of the call for proposals. They help to select applications which the contracting authority can be confident will comply with its objectives and priorities. They cover the relevance of the action, its consistency with the objectives of the call for proposals, quality, expected impact, sustainability and cost-effectiveness.

Scoring:

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

Evaluation grid

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

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

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

If the total score for Section 1 (financial and operational capacity) is less than 12 points, the application will be rejected. If the score for at least one of the subsections under Section 1 is 1, the application will also be rejected.

If the lead applicant applies without co-applicants or affiliated entities the score for point 4.3 shall be 5 unless the involvement of co-applicants or affiliated entities is mandatory according to these guidelines for applicants.

Provisional selection

After the evaluation, a table will be drawn up listing the applications ranked according to their score. The highest scoring applications will be provisionally selected until the available budget for this call for proposals is reached. In addition, a reserve list will be drawn up following the same criteria. This list will be used if more funds become available during the validity period of the reserve list.

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

The eligibility verification will be performed on the basis of the supporting documents requested by the contracting authority (see Section 2.4). It will by default only be performed for the applications that have been provisionally selected according to their score and within the available budget for this call for proposals.

- The declaration by the lead applicant (Section 5 of Annex A.2) will be cross-checked with the supporting documents provided by the lead applicant. Any missing supporting document or any incoherence between the declaration by the lead applicant and the supporting documents may lead to the rejection of the application on that sole basis.
- The eligibility of applicants and the affiliated entity(ies) will be verified according to the criteria set out in Sections 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and 2.1.3.

Any rejected application will be replaced by the next best placed application on the reserve list that falls within the available budget for this call for proposals.

2.4. SUBMISSION OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS FOR PROVISIONALLY SELECTED APPLICATIONS

A lead applicant whose application has been provisionally selected or placed on the reserve list will be informed in writing by the contracting authority. It will be requested to supply the following documents in order to allow the contracting authority to verify the eligibility of the lead applicant, (if any) of the co-applicant(s) and (if any) of their affiliated entity(ies)²⁵:

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

1. The statutes or articles of association of the lead applicant, (if any) of each co-applicant and (if any) of each affiliated entity²⁶. 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 meantime²⁷. This obligation does not apply to international organisations which have signed a framework agreement with the European Commission.
2. For action grants exceeding EUR 750 000 and for operating grants above EUR 100 000, the lead applicant must provide an audit report produced by an approved external auditor where it is available, and always in cases where a statutory audit is required by EU or national law. That report shall certify the accounts for up to the last 3 financial years available. In all other cases, the applicant shall provide a self-declaration signed by its authorised representative certifying the validity of its accounts for up to the last 3 financial years available.

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

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

This obligation does not apply to public bodies and international organisations provided that the international organisation in question offers the guarantees provided for in the applicable Financial Regulation, as described in Chapter 6 of the practical guide.

This obligation does not apply to secondary and higher education establishments.

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)²⁸. A copy of the latest account is neither required from (if any) the co-applicant(s) nor from (if any) affiliated entity(ies)).
5. Legal entity sheet (see Annex D of these guidelines) duly completed and signed by each of the applicants (i.e. by the lead applicant and (if any) by each co-applicant), accompanied by the justifying documents requested there. If the applicants have already signed a contract with the contracting authority, instead of the legal entity sheet and supporting documents, the legal entity number may be provided, unless a change in legal status occurred in the meantime.

²⁵ No supporting document will be requested for applications for a grant not exceeding EUR 60 000.

²⁶ Where the lead applicant and/or a co-applicant(s) and or an affiliated entity(ies) is a public body created by a law, a copy of the said law must be provided.

²⁷ To be inserted only where the eligibility conditions have not changed from one call for proposals to the other.

²⁸ 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.

6. 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.
7. 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). Please note that the declaration on honour should be uploaded in PROSPECT.

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 one of the languages of the call for proposals of the relevant parts of these documents proving the lead applicant's and, where applicable, co-applicants' and affiliated entity(ies)' eligibility, must be attached for the purpose of analysing the application.

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

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

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

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

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

2.5. NOTIFICATION OF THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY'S DECISION

2.5.1. Content of the decision

The lead applicants will be informed in writing of the Contracting Authority's decision concerning their application and, if rejected, the reasons for the negative decision. This letter will be sent by e-mail and will appear online automatically in the PROSPECT profile of the user who submitted the application. Lead applicants who, in exceptional cases (see section 2.2), had to submit their application by post or hand-delivery, will be informed by email or by post if they did not provide any e-mail address. Therefore, please check regularly your PROSPECT profile, taking into account the indicative timetable below.

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

2.5.2. Indicative timetable

	DATE	TIME
1. Information meeting (if any)	Not applicable	
2. Deadline for requesting any clarifications from the contracting authority	10/03/2021	12:00
3. Last date on which clarifications are issued by the contracting authority	19/03/2021	-
4. Deadline for submission of concept notes	31/03/2021	12:00
5. Information to lead applicants on opening, administrative checks and concept note evaluation (Step 1)	25/04/2021	-
6. Invitations to submit full applications	30/04/2021	-
7. Deadline for submission of full applications	18/06/2021	-
8. Information to lead applicants on the evaluation of the full applications (Step 2)	18/08/2021	-
9. Notification of award (after the eligibility check) (Step 3)	17/09/2021	-
10. Contract signature	18/11/2021	-

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

This indicative timetable refers to provisional dates (except for dates 2, 3, and 4) and may be updated by the contracting authority during the procedure. In such cases, the updated timetable will be published on the web site of DG International Cooperation and Development: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome>.

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

Following the decision to award a grant, the beneficiary(ies) will be offered a contract based on the standard grant contract (see Annex G 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.

Attention is drawn to the fact that the Special Conditions of the grant contract (as per the PRAG templates) to be signed will be supplemented with the following provision:

'Beneficiary(ies) and the recipients of financial support to third parties shall commit not to engage in activities as defined in Article 1.1 a) to d) and Article 1.3 of the EU Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of

28 November 2008 on "combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law". This shall be without prejudice to the respect of fundamental rights as enshrined in Article 6 of Treaty on the European Union including the right of freedom of expression and information and the right of freedom of assembly and association as contained and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms'.

Implementation contracts

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

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

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

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

3. LIST OF ANNEXES

DOCUMENTS TO BE COMPLETED

Annex A: Grant application form (Word format)

A.1 – Concept note

A.2 – Full application form (including the financing plan referred to in page 23 of these Guidelines as annex)

Annex B: Budget (Excel format)

Annex C: Logical framework (Excel format)

Annex D: Legal entity sheet²⁹

Annex E: Financial identification form

Annex F: PADOR registration form

DOCUMENTS FOR INFORMATION³⁰

Annex G: Standard grant contract

- Annex II: general conditions
- Annex IV: contract award rules
- Annex V: standard request for payment
- Annex VI: model narrative and financial report
- Annex 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:

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/funding/about-procurement-contracts/procedures-and-practical-guide-prag/diems_en

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

Annex K: Guidelines for assessing simplified cost options.

Useful links:

Project Cycle Management Guidelines

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

The implementation of grant contracts

A Users' Guide

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

Financial Toolkit

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

Please note: The toolkit is not part of the grant contract and has no legal value. It merely provides general guidance and may in some details differ from the signed grant contract. In order to ensure compliance with

²⁹ Only applicable where the European Commission will make the payments under the contracts to be signed.

³⁰ These documents should also be published by the contracting authority.

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

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