



**Contracting Authority:** European Commission

Local Authorities: Partnerships for sustainable cities

**2021**

**Guidelines for grant applicants**

Budget line(s): BGUE-B2020-21.020802-C1-DEVCO

Reference:

EuropeAid/171273/DH/ACT/Multi

Deadline for submission<sup>1</sup> of concept notes:

**23/04/2021 at 16:00 (Brussels date and time)**

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

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

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

# NOTICE

**These guidelines are published in English.**

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 PROSPECT<sup>3</sup>.

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

[intpa-171273@ec.europa.eu](mailto:intpa-171273@ec.europa.eu)

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

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

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

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

## IMPORTANT

Even though the verification of eligibility is foreseen to be carried out only for the provisionally selected applicants at the end of the procedure, the Evaluation Committee may decide to verify this point at any previous step of the procedure. Consequently, any proposal found to be non-compliant with all the mandatory conditions set in these guidelines (including the two annexes on the action location and nationality of the applicants) can be automatically rejected on that sole basis, at any stage of the procedure and without any prior notice or clarification request. Applicants are therefore strongly advised to fill in scrupulously the "Check List for concept note" (Part A of the grant application form) and the "Checklist for the Full Application form" (Part B of the grant application form). Any missing supporting document or any incoherence between the declarations and the supporting documents may lead to the rejection of the proposal on that sole basis.

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

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

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# 1. LOCAL AUTHORITIES: PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE CITIES 2021

## 1.1. BACKGROUND

In 2019, the European Commission launched the programme “*Local Authorities: Partnerships for sustainable cities*” for a total amount of EUR 164,7 million. The program aims at strengthening local authorities by promoting decentralised cooperation involving European and partners countries’ local authorities.

In November 2018, a first call for proposals for a total amount of 53 million euro was launched leading to the signature of 16 partnerships. In February 2020, a second call for proposals for a total amount of 111 550 million euro was launched. Due to covid-19 pandemic and the following lockdown of local authority administrations all around the world, the number of applications submitted was lower than expected. As a consequence only 26 proposals were selected for a total amount of 71,7 million euro.

In December 2020 it was decided to use the remaining funds (39 849 442 euro) of the programme to launch a 3rd call for proposals subject to the present guidelines. To respect the original allocation of funds the 3<sup>rd</sup> call for proposals will be organised around three geographic lots: lot-1 Africa; lot-2 Asia and the Pacific; lot-3 Latin America and the Caribbean.

The call is based on peer-to-peer learning and/or exchanges and/or short-term deployment of public officials at subnational level towards- twinning activities including from Member States of the EU, fostering the exchange of good practices and transfer of know-how that could be adapted to the specificities of local authorities in each region. Action should contribute to the achievement of SDG 11 “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” as well SDG 17 “Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

## 1.2. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME AND PRIORITY ISSUES

The **global objective** of the Programme “Partnership for sustainable cities” is to promote integrated urban development through partnerships built among Local Authorities of the EU Member States and partner countries in accordance with the 2030 Agenda on sustainable development.

Partnerships will support Local Authorities from partner countries to address sustainable urban development through capacity building and service-delivery. Decentralised cooperation and peer-to-peer exchanges of Local Authorities are at the heart of this approach. Actions could support the building of new partnerships or contribute to upscale long-lasting partnerships and cooperation relations.

This call will contribute to address the new political priorities of the EU, notably promoting good governance, “Green Deal”, growth, job creation and digitalisation as well as migration by focusing on the following specific objectives:

The **specific objectives** are:

One mandatory objective

- 1) **Strengthen urban governance** by supporting the capacity of the local authorities as autonomous policy maker, better access to services by the citizens (including e-governance) and promoting a “territorial approach” to local development.

Plus one of the 3 following objectives<sup>4</sup> (each proposal need to specifically address at least one of them):

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<sup>4</sup> A proposal could address more than one of these three priorities; however, no extra points (during the assessment of the proposals) will be given for addressing more than one priority.

- 2) **Ensure social inclusiveness of cities:** by preventing both the causes and effects of inequality, marginalisation and segregation, including tackling the needs of women, children, youth, and marginalised and vulnerable groups such as disabled people, migrants and displaced people.
- 3) **Improve resilience and greening of cities** by increasing the quality of life, fostering urban green growth and making cities more resource-efficient through sustainable modes of production and consumption;
- 4) **Improve prosperity and innovation in cities** by fostering sustainable local economies including circular economy, promoting digital transition and creating employment.

The **priority** of this call for proposals is to promote the EU development cooperation ***Rights-Based Approach***, encompassing human rights, including participation and access to the decision-making process, non-discrimination (including Gender Equality) and equal access, accountability and access to the rule of law and transparency and access to information.

Applicants must clearly indicate and explain how they address this priority. This aspect will be evaluated in point 1.1 of the concept note evaluation grid (section 2.3 of these guidelines).

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

The overall indicative amount made available under this call for proposals is **EUR 39 849 442**. The contracting authority reserves the right not to award all available funds. Likewise, this amount could be increased should more funds become available.

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

##### **Lot 1: Partnerships for sustainable cities in Sub-Saharan Africa**

Total available: EUR 15 849 442

##### **Lot 2: Partnerships for sustainable cities in Asia and the Pacific**

Total available: EUR 12 000 000

##### **Lot 3: Partnerships for sustainable cities in Latin America and the Caribbean**

Total available: EUR 12 000 000

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

#### **Size of grants**

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

- minimum amount: **EUR 1 000 000**
- maximum amount: **EUR 3 000 000**

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

- Minimum percentage: **50 %** of the total eligible costs of the action.
- Maximum percentage: **95%** of the total eligible costs of the action (see also section 2.1.5).

The balance (i.e. the difference between the total cost of the action and the amount requested from the contracting authority) must be financed from sources other than the general budget of the Union or the European Development Fund<sup>5</sup>.

In line with section 6.3.10. of the Practical Guide, **neither the beneficiaries** (coordinator/lead applicant and co-beneficiaries/co-applicants) **nor affiliated entities** must produce a profit within the framework of the action. In the context of this call, profit is defined as a surplus of the receipts over the eligible costs approved by the contracting authority when the request for payment of the balance is made. Income generated by the action may be accepted as co-financing.

In case a profit is made, the contracting authority has the right to reduce the final amount of the grant by the percentage of the profit corresponding to the final European Union contribution to the eligible costs actually incurred approved by the contracting authority (thus excluding other eligible costs declared on a simplified cost option basis).

## 2. RULES FOR THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS

These guidelines set out the rules for the submission, selection and implementation of the actions financed under this call, in conformity with the practical guide, which is applicable to the present call (available on the internet at this address <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/prag/document.do?locale=en>).<sup>6</sup>

### 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).

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<sup>5</sup> Where a grant is financed by the European Development Fund, any mention of European Union financing must be understood as referring to European Development Fund financing.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

### 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 a specific type of organisation such as:
  - Local Authorities (LA)<sup>7</sup>; **or**
  - Association of Local Authorities (ALA), including city networks constituted in accordance with the legislation in force in the country; **and**
- be established in<sup>8</sup> one of the eligible countries or territories listed in Annex L to these guidelines; **and**
- be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action with the co-applicant(s) and affiliated entity(ies), not acting as an intermediary.

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

Lead applicants, co-applicants, affiliated entities and, in case of legal entities, persons who have powers of representation, decision-making or control over the lead applicant, the co-applicants and the affiliated entities are informed that, should they be in one of the situations of early detection or exclusion according to Section 2.6.10.1 of the PRAG, personal details (name, given name if natural person, address, legal form and name and given name of the persons with powers of representation, decision-making or control, if legal person) may be registered in the early detection and exclusion system, and communicated to the persons and entities concerned in relation to the award or the execution of a grant contract. In this respect, provisionally selected lead applicants, co-applicants and affiliated entities are obliged to declare that they are not in one of the exclusion situations through a signed declaration on honour (Annex h to these guidelines) together with the full application.

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

**The lead applicant must act with at least one co-applicant as specified hereafter. The partnership must include at least one Local Authority either as lead applicant or as co-applicant.**

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<sup>7</sup> For the purpose of this call for proposals, the term «Local Authorities» refers to public institutions **with legal personality**, component of the State structure, below the level of central government and accountable to citizens. Local Authorities are usually composed of a deliberative or policymaking body (council or assembly) and an executive body (the Mayor or other executive officer), directly or indirectly elected or selected at local level. Local authorities encompass a large variety of sub-national levels and branches of government, i.e. municipalities, communities, districts, counties, provinces, regions etc

<sup>8</sup> 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.



If awarded the grant contract, the lead applicant will become the beneficiary identified as the coordinator in Annex G (special conditions) to these guidelines. 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)**

**Under all lots, the lead applicant must act with at least one co-applicant** as specified hereafter.

To be eligible, the partnership must include **at least one applicant** (either as lead applicant or co-applicant) **established in a EU Member State** and **at least one applicant** (either as lead applicant or co-applicant) **established in the beneficiary country** where the action will take place (see section 2.1.4 “Location”).

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.

In order to be eligible for a grant, the co-applicant must:

- be a legal person **and**
- be a specific type of organisation such as:
  - Local Authorities (LA)<sup>9</sup>; **or**
  - Association of Local Authorities (ALA), including city networks constituted in accordance with the legislation in force in the country; **or**
  - Private, public or semi-public bodies/agencies/organisations of public utility<sup>10</sup>; **or**
  - Universities or a research centres constituted in accordance with the legislation in force in the country; **and**
- be established in<sup>11</sup> one of the eligible countries or territories listed in Annex L to these guidelines.

Co-applicants must sign the mandate in Section 5 of Annex A.2 (grant application form – full application).

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

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<sup>9</sup> For the purpose of this call for proposals, the term «Local Authorities» refers to public institutions **with legal personality**, component of the State structure, below the level of central government and accountable to citizens. Local Authorities are usually composed of a deliberative or policymaking body (council or assembly) and an executive body (the Mayor or other executive officer), directly or indirectly elected or selected at local level. Local authorities encompass a large variety of sub-national levels and branches of government, i.e. municipalities, communities, districts, counties, provinces, regions etc.

<sup>10</sup> Ex: water distribution, water or waste management, public transportation, producer or provider of electricity, etc.

<sup>11</sup> 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.

- (3) Applicants included in the lists of EU restrictive measures (see Section 2.4. of the PRAG) at the moment of the award decision cannot be awarded the contract<sup>12</sup>.

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

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

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

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

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

### **2.1.2. *Affiliated entities***

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

**Only the following entities may be considered as affiliated entities to the lead applicant and/or to co-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

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<sup>12</sup> The updated lists of sanctions are available at [www.sanctionsmap.eu](http://www.sanctionsmap.eu).

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

- (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 co-applicant(s). They must sign the affiliated entity(ies) statement in Section 5 of Annex A.2 (grant application form – full application).**

Note that the fact of having a structural link with the lead applicant does not prevent an organisation from being co-applicant in the partnership. It is the lead applicant's decision to define the role of the actors composing its partnership and implementing the action: co-applicants or affiliated entities.

### **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 such as Civil Society Organisations (CSO) 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 Section 4 'Associates participating in the action'. of Annex A.2 (grant application form – full application).**

- **Contractors**

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

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

Definition:

An action is composed of a set of activities.

Duration

The initial planned duration of an action may **not be lower than 24 months nor exceed 36 months.**

Sectors or themes

Support to good governance, Green Deal, growth, job creation and digitalisation as well as migration

Location

Action must take place in **one country only**

See **Annex M** to these guidelines for a detailed list of eligible countries as action location per each lot.

Exception can be made for cross-border activities in case of a proposal targeting actions on different sizes of a border.

Activities can target more than one city and territory of the same partner country, should the action aim at replicating, improving or expanding projects in areas of urban policy already carried out in cities or territories of the same country.

A restricted number of activities, if duly justified in the description of the action, might take place in a EU Member State or other partner countries if essential for the accomplishment of the objectives. These reasons will be examined during the evaluation process. These activities could include the organisation of workshops, seminars and dedicated events gathering multi-level of government stakeholders as well as the private sector, civil society and academia, for participatory technical and political dialogue. Upon specific

requirements of targeted cities, business events to raise interest of potential investors as well for a focussing on new technologies and innovative solutions at local level could also be envisaged.

**Please note that only the main action location (beneficiary country) must be encoded in PROSPECT, except in case of cross-border activities where the different countries targeted by the action must be encoded. In case more than one country is encoded in PROSPECT as action location, the proposal will be rejected.**

Geographical balance could be taken into account by the European Commission at any stage of the technical evaluation.

#### Types of action

To be eligible for co-financing, actions under this call must comply with the objectives and the priorities of this call for proposals described in section 1.2 of these guidelines. The objectives will be reached through:

- peer-to-peer activities,
- decentralised cooperation: city-to-city and territory-to-territory cooperation among the EU Member State and the partner country.

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;
- one-off conferences. Conferences may only be funded if they form part of a wider range of activities to be implemented over the time life of the action. For this purpose, preparatory activities for a conference and the publication of the proceedings of the conference do not in themselves, constitute such wider activities;
- actions intended to raise funds or promote the visibility of the applicant and its partner(s);
- actions consisting mainly of research or of study;
- actions, which consist exclusively, or primarily in capital expenditure, e.g. lands, buildings, equipment and vehicles.
- actions which discriminate against individuals or groups of people on grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status;
- actions supporting directly political parties;
- actions which include proselytising activities.

#### Types of activity

Applicants are invited to present all activities they consider necessary in order to achieve the objectives of this call for proposals and to obtain tangible results in the context where the selected projects will be implemented.

For indicative purpose, the following non-exhaustive list of activities that may be financed under this call:

#### **1/ Promote urban governance**

- Capacity building of public officials responsible for urban matters at sub national level.

- Action related to the management/ response to sanitary crisis such as covid-19
- To develop urban planning, spatial planning and land use management.
- Supporting LAs to improve institutional arrangements for city management.
- Promoting e-governance and eServices in line with creating an inclusive and fair digital transformation on the city level
- Elaborating / arrangements for consultation and cooperation among different stakeholders (government levels, private sector, academia, civil society organisations) in different areas of sustainable urban development.
- Improving or designing accountability mechanisms towards city dwellers and civil society.
- Support LA's to design action plans and projects improving municipal PFM and revenue generation systems and innovative finance.
- Trainings towards city/local administration representatives in urban governance methods and principles.

## **2/ Ensure social inclusiveness of cities**

- Improving and mainstreaming the integration of marginalised and vulnerable groups, including internal displaced persons and migrants
- Projects promoting urban systems which address the 'urban-planning gender gap' by responding to women's needs, including safety and security in urban public spaces.
- Pilot projects on basic services and network infrastructures, i.e. water, sanitation, waste (including recycling), energy (including efficiency) and public transport.
- Technical support to LAs for access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food in a wider context supporting functional rural-urban links.
- Projects in the field of integrated urban development targeting cultural heritage/cultural spaces in cities as factors to ensure inclusiveness.
- supporting digital skills including literacy and basic digital skills particularly for women and youth

## **3/ Resilience and greening of cities**

- Improving environmental quality in cities and circular economy including climate change mitigation and adaptation and measures.
- Pilot projects to support the design and implementation of new environmental and climate resilient local public policies in line with the EU green deal.
- Awareness raising on alternative modes of transport improving sustainable and low carbon urban mobility.
- Improving the quality of air in the cities and management of water and solid waste
- Developing disaster preparedness and risks reduction interventions. Nature based solutions to disaster risk reduction (eco-DRR) will be promoted, especially when these also contribute to climate change adaptation.

## **4/ Prosperity and innovation in cities**

- stimulate an enabling environment for the private sector, including local firms promoting inclusive and social enterprises, business incubator and business accelerator
- Increasing job creation and entrepreneurship including through business incubator and supporting digital skills
- Providing technical support to devise innovative and financial arrangements to finance large-scale sustainable infrastructure investment and maintenance.

- Pilot projects focussing on innovation to create employment and promote socially responsible entrepreneurship.
- Promoting transition toward a digital economy and promote a related business environment

**The following activities and their related costs must be included in all proposals at the full application step in both the budget and the description of the action:**

- 1) Participation (costs for travel and hotel) of two representatives of the partnership submitting a proposal, ideally one from the beneficiary country and one from the European partner, once a year to the *Coordination Committee* meeting in Brussels.
- 2) Expenditure verification: requests for payment submitted by Beneficiaries must be accompanied by an expenditure verification report (see Annex VII to the standard grant contract).
- 3) External final evaluation of the proposed action.

Successful applicants could also be asked to cooperate with both support contracts of the Partnerships programme:

- ***Coordination support contract*** in charge of promoting knowledge sharing and capitalization of best practices, to increase visibility and to foster synergies among the partnerships, as well as to support Europeaid services to build in house knowledge about the partnership.
- ***Audio-visual communication support contract*** in charge of producing videos about the objectives and priorities of the Partnerships.

**Financial support to third parties<sup>13</sup>**

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

The maximum amount of financial support per third party is EUR 60 000.

**Under this call, financial support to third parties is not considered essential to achieve the objective of the action.**

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

- (i) the overall objectives, the specific objective(s) and the outputs<sup>14</sup> (i.e. the results) to be achieved with the financial support
- (ii) the different types of activities eligible for financial support, on the basis of a fixed list
- (iii) the types of persons or categories of persons which may receive financial support
- (iv) the criteria for selecting these entities and giving the financial support
- (v) the criteria for determining the exact amount of financial support for each third entity, and

<sup>13</sup> These third parties are neither affiliated entity(ies) nor associates nor contractors.

<sup>14</sup> As per OECD DAC definition, the term ‘results’ includes: ‘impact’ (overall objective), ‘outcome(s)’ (specific objective(s) and ‘output(s)’.

- (vi) the maximum amount which may be given
- (vii) the control system for verifying the eligibility of costs.

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

### Visibility

The applicants must take all necessary steps to publicise the fact that the European Union has financed or co-financed the action. As far as possible, actions that are wholly or partially funded by the European Union must incorporate information and communication activities designed to raise the awareness of specific or 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.

A specific visual identity of the programme has been developed by the *Audio-visual communication support contract* mentioned above. Each proposal selected should use it.

A knowledge sharing platform with a dedicated group related to the programme will soon be available on the INPTA interactive platform [Capacity4dev](#).

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 [https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/communication-visibility-requirements-2018\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/communication-visibility-requirements-2018_en.pdf))

### Number of applications and grants per applicants / affiliated entities

**An organisation can only submit one proposal either as lead applicant or as co-applicant/affiliated entity under this call for proposals.** Should this be the case, the Evaluation Committee will only consider the first proposal arrived (based on the date and hour of submission) and any other proposal will be rejected.

It is the responsibility of each lead applicant to verify that its co-applicants/affiliated entities are not involved in any other application under this call for proposals. The Contracting Authority cannot be considered as responsible for the unauthorized use of the EuropeAid ID or name of an entity in a proposal.

### ***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 must be based on **actual costs** incurred by the beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies).

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

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



### Eligible direct costs

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

The applicants (and where applicable their affiliated entities) agree that the expenditure verification(s) referred to in Article 15.7 of the general conditions to the standard grant contract (see Annex G of the guidelines) will be carried out by any external body authorised by the European Commission.

Salary costs of the personnel working for local authorities may be eligible to the extent that they relate to the cost of activities which the relevant public authority would not carry out if the action were not undertaken.

### 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.

**Notwithstanding under this call for proposals, 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.

## 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

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

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

[https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/funding/looking-for-funding\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/funding/looking-for-funding_en)

PROSPECT is the European Commission's online application system developed for the submission of applications for call for proposals in the field of external action. The aim of PROSPECT is to increase the efficiency of the management of the call for proposals and to offer a better service to civil society organisations allowing them to submit their proposals online and to follow up online the status of their application. Applicants also receive automatic notifications when new documents (clarifications, corrigenda, etc.) are published for their call. PROSPECT is accessible via the website:

[https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/funding/looking-for-funding\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/funding/looking-for-funding_en)

Please note that individual users need to set up an **EU Login account (ECAS)** in order to access PADOR and PROSPECT<sup>15</sup>.

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

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

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

### 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<sup>16</sup> for this call for proposals. Organisations registered in PADOR get a unique ID (**EuropeAid ID**) which they must mention in their application.
  - **Concept note step:** Registration is obligatory for lead applicants.
  - **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.

**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.**

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<sup>15</sup> Please note that once the ECAS account (EU login) is created, the synchronisation/validation may take up to 24 hours before PADOR/PROSPECT recognize the user's ID and allow the access.

<sup>16</sup> Natural persons who apply for a grant (if so allowed in the guidelines for applicants) do not have to register in PADOR. In this case, the information included in PROSPECT and the grant application form is sufficient.

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**”<sup>17</sup> attached to these guidelines. This form must be sent **together with the application (concept note and full application)** by the submission deadline (see section 2.2.2 and 2.2.5 of these guidelines).

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

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

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

Applicants must apply in **English**. Please note that:

1. All information encoded in PROSPECT must be exhaustive and in line with the content of the concept note. The administrative check will be performed **taking into consideration only the information available in PROSPECT** in sections: 1 - Contact; 2 - Project; 3 - Co- applicants; 4 - Documents. Please make sure that there are no inconsistencies between the information in PROSPECT and the content of the concept note;
2. In the concept note, lead applicants must **only provide an estimate of the requested EU contribution** as well as **an indicative percentage of that contribution** in relation to the eligible costs of the action. A detailed budget is to be submitted only by the lead applicants invited to submit a full application in the second phase.
3. The elements outlined in the concept note may not be modified in the full application, with the exceptions below:
  - The EU contribution may **not vary** from the initial estimate **by more than 20%**. Lead applicants are free to adapt the percentage of co-financing required within the minimum and maximum amount and percentages of co-financing, as laid down in these guidelines in Section 1.3.
  - The lead applicant may **add, remove or 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 replacements/adjustments shall be included in section 2.1.1 of the full application form – Annex A.2. The validity of the justification provided will be examined during the evaluation procedure. Should the explanation/justification not be accepted by the Evaluation Committee, the proposal may be rejected on that sole basis.**

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

<sup>17</sup>Which corresponds to sections 3 and 4 of the full application form – Annex A.2.

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

**No additional annexes should be sent.**

Any error related to the concept note instructions (Annex A.1) or any major inconsistency related to the points listed in the checklist (Annex A.1) 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 (Annex A.1) 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's manual](#).

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

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

Hand-written concept notes will not be accepted.

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

All IT technical questions related to **PROSPECT** should be addressed to the PROSPECT helpdesk at:

[INTPA-SUPPORT-SERVICES@ec.europa.eu](mailto:INTPA-SUPPORT-SERVICES@ec.europa.eu)

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

The deadline for the submission of concept notes is **23/04/2021 at 16:00 (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)<sup>18</sup>. **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 aforementioned difficulties.

Any concept note submitted after the deadline will be rejected.

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<sup>18</sup> For example: <http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/converter.html>.

#### 2.2.4. Further information about concept notes

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

E-mail address: **intpa-171273@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 Partnerships as the need arises

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

It is therefore advisable to consult the abovementioned website regularly in order to be informed of the questions and answers published.

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

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

#### 2.2.5. Full applications

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

Please note that:

1. All information encoded in PROSPECT must be exhaustive and in line with the content of the full application. The administrative check will be performed **taking into consideration only the information available in PROSPECT** in sections: 1 - Contact; 2 - Project; 3 - Co- applicants; 4 - Documents. Please make sure that there are no inconsistencies between the information in PROSPECT and the content of the full application.
2. The elements outlined in the concept note cannot be modified by the lead applicant in the full application, with the exceptions below:
  - 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 **add, replace, or remove** 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.

**An explanation/justification of the relevant replacements/adjustments shall be included in section 2.1.1 of the full application form – Annex A.2. The validity of the justification provided will be examined during the evaluation procedure. Should the explanation/justification not be accepted by the Evaluation Committee, the proposal may be rejected on that sole basis.**

3. Lead applicants must submit their full applications **in the same language** as their concept notes.
4. A copy of **the lead applicant's accounts of the latest financial year** (the profit and loss account and the balance sheet for the last financial year for which the accounts have been closed) 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, each co-applicant(s) and each (if any) affiliated entities have to be registered in PADOR (or, if impossible for technical reasons, submit the completed PADOR form - Annex F to these guidelines)<sup>19</sup>.**

No additional annexes should be sent.

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<sup>19</sup> Natural persons who apply for a grant (if so allowed in the guidelines for applicants) do not have to provide an organisation data form. In this case, the information included in the grant application form is sufficient.

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

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

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

Applications sent by any other means (e.g. by envelop or by e-mail) will be rejected.

Hand-written applications will not be accepted.

**Please note that incomplete applications may be rejected.** Lead applicants are advised to verify that their application is complete using the checklist (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 Contacting Authority cannot be held responsible for any delay due to such afore-mentioned difficulties.

Any application submitted after the deadline will be rejected.

### **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: **intpa-171273@ec.europa.eu**

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

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

To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the contracting authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of lead applicants, co-applicants, affiliated 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 Partnerships as the need arises.

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

It is therefore advisable to consult the abovementioned website regularly in order to be informed of the questions and answers published.

All questions related to registration in PADOR or the online submission via PROSPECT should be addressed to the IT helpdesk at [INTPA-SUPPORT-SERVICES@ec.europa.eu](mailto:INTPA-SUPPORT-SERVICES@ec.europa.eu) **via the online support form in PROSPECT**. Please note that the working languages of the IT support are: English French and Spanish. Therefore users are invited to send their questions in 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
<b>1. Relevance of the action</b>	<b>20</b>
1.1. How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the call for proposals and to the specific themes/sectors/areas or any other specific requirement stated in the guidelines for applicants? Are the expected results of the action aligned with the priorities defined in the guidelines for applicants (section 1.2)?	5
1.2. How relevant is the proposal to the particular needs and constraints of the target country(ies), region(s) and/or relevant sectors (including synergy with other development initiatives and avoidance of duplication)?	5
1.3. How clearly defined and strategically chosen are those involved (final beneficiaries, target groups)? Have their needs (as rights holders and/or duty bearers) and constraints been clearly defined and does the proposal address them appropriately?	5
1.4. Does the proposal contain particular added-value elements (e.g. innovation, best practices)?	5
<b>2. Design of the action</b>	<b>30</b>
2.1. How coherent is the overall design of the action? Does the proposal indicate the expected results to be achieved by the action? Does the intervention logic explain the rationale to achieve the expected results?	5x2**
2.2. Does the design reflect a robust analysis of the problems involved, and the capacities of the relevant stakeholders?	5
2.3. Does the design take into account external factors (risks and assumptions)?	5
2.4. Are the activities feasible and consistent in relation to the expected results (including timeframe)? Are results (output, outcome and impact) realistic?	5

2.5. To which extent does the proposal integrate relevant cross-cutting elements such as 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
<b>Maximum total score</b>	<b>50</b>

**\*\*:** 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 **at least 200% of the available budget** for this call for proposals. The amount of requested contributions of each concept note will be based on the indicative financial envelopes for each lot, where relevant.

Lead applicants will receive a letter indicating the reference number of their application and the respective results. This letter will automatically appear online in the PROSPECT profile of the lead applicant.

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

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

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

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

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

#### *Provisional selection*

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

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

The eligibility verification will be performed on the basis of the supporting documents requested by the contracting authority (see Section 2.4). 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)<sup>20</sup>:

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

1. The statutes or articles of association of the lead applicant, (of each co-applicant and (if any) of each affiliated entity<sup>21</sup>. Where the contracting authority has recognised the lead applicant's, or the co-applicant(s)'s, or their affiliated entity(ies)'s eligibility for another call for proposals under the same budget line within 2 years before the deadline for receipt of applications, it should be submitted, instead of the statutes or articles of association, a copy of the document proving their eligibility in a former call (e.g. a copy of the special conditions of a grant contract received during the reference period), unless a change in legal status has occurred in the meantime<sup>22</sup>. This obligation does not apply to international organisations which have signed a framework agreement with the European Commission.
2. The lead applicant must provide an audit report produced by an approved external auditor where it is available, and always in cases where a statutory audit is required by EU or national law. That report shall certify the accounts for up to the last 3 financial years available. In all other cases, the applicant shall provide a self-declaration signed by its authorised representative certifying the validity of its accounts for up to the last 3 financial years available.
3. The external audit report is not required from the co-applicant(s) or affiliated entities.
4. A copy of the lead applicant's latest accounts (the profit and loss account and the balance sheet for the last financial year for which the accounts have been closed)<sup>23</sup>. A copy of the latest account is neither required from (if any) the co-applicant(s) nor from (if any) affiliated entity(ies)).
5. Legal entity sheet (see Annex D of these guidelines) duly completed and signed by each of the applicants (i.e. by the lead applicant and by each co-applicant), accompanied by the justifying documents requested there. If the applicants have already signed a contract with the contracting authority, instead of the legal entity sheet and supporting documents, the legal entity number may be provided, unless a change in legal status occurred in the meantime.
6. A financial identification form of the lead applicant (not from co-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.

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<sup>20</sup> No supporting document will be requested for applications for a grant not exceeding EUR 60 000.

<sup>21</sup> Where the lead applicant and/or a co-applicant(s) and or an affiliated entity(ies) is a public body created by a law, a copy of the said law must be provided.

<sup>22</sup> To be inserted only where the eligibility conditions have not changed from one call for proposals to the other.

<sup>23</sup> This obligation does not apply to natural persons who have received a scholarship or that are in most need in receipt of direct support, nor to public bodies and to international organisations. It does not apply either when the accounts are in practice the same documents as the external audit report already provided pursuant to Section 2.4.2.



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-Annex F) must be supplied in the form of originals, photocopies or scanned versions (i.e. showing legible stamps, signatures and dates) of the said originals.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **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. Therefore, please check regularly your PROSPECT profile, taking into account the indicative timetable below.

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

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

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

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

European Commission  
Directorate-General for International Partnerships  
Unit G.2 - Local Authorities, Civil Society Organisations and Foundations  
Attn. Head of Unit L-41 03/043  
Avenue du Bourget, 1 B-1140 Brussels BELGIUM

### 2.5.2. Indicative timetable

	DATE	TIME
<b>1. Publication of the call for proposals</b>	-	-
<b>2. Deadline for requesting any clarifications from the contracting authority</b>	2/04/2021	-
<b>3. Last date on which clarifications are issued by the contracting authority</b>	12/04/2021	-
<b>4. Deadline for submission of concept notes</b>	23/04/2021	16:00
<b>5. Information to lead applicants on opening, administrative checks and concept note evaluation (Step 1)</b>	May/June 2021	-
<b>6. Invitations to submit full applications</b>	May/June 2021	-
<b>7. Deadline for submission of full applications</b>	July 2021	-
<b>8. Information to lead applicants on the evaluation of the full applications (Step 2)</b>	September 2021	-
<b>9. Notification of award (after the eligibility check) (Step 3)</b>	October 2021	-
<b>10. Contract signature</b>	At the latest 31/12/2021	-

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 Partnerships: <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.

### 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 (Annex G to these guidelines).

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

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

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

### 3. LIST OF ANNEXES

#### DOCUMENTS TO BE COMPLETED

Annex A.1: Grant application form - Concept note

Annex A.2 – Grant application form - Full application form

Annex B: Budget (Excel format)

Annex C: Logical framework (Excel format)

Annex D: Legal entity sheet<sup>24</sup>

Annex E: Financial identification form

Annex F: PADOR registration form (**only if impossible to register in PADOR**)

#### DOCUMENTS FOR INFORMATION<sup>25</sup>

Annex G: Standard grant contract (Special Conditions)

- 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:

[https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/per-diem-rates-20200201\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/per-diem-rates-20200201_en.pdf)

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

Annex L: List of countries and territories as referred to in Section 2.1.1 “Eligibility of applicants” and Section 2.1.2 “Affiliated entities”

Annex M: List of countries and territories as referred to in Section 2.1.4 “Eligible actions – Action location”

#### Useful links:

##### Project Cycle Management Guidelines

[https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/methodology-aid-delivery-methods-project-cycle-management-200403\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/methodology-aid-delivery-methods-project-cycle-management-200403_en.pdf)

##### The implementation of grant contracts

###### A Users' Guide

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

###### Financial Toolkit

[https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/financial-management-toolkit\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/financial-management-toolkit_en)

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<sup>24</sup> Only applicable where the European Commission will make the payments under the contracts to be signed.

<sup>25</sup> These documents should also be published by the contracting authority.

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