



Common Challenges – Shared Solutions

Call no. **2018-01** (Call ID)

EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Regional Cooperation

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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DISCLAIMER

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

Please note that in the interest of equal treatment of applicants, the Fund Operator (FO) cannot give a prior opinion on eligibility, partnership composition and/or project description.

ELIGIBILITY AND PARTNERSHIP

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

An eligible entity can be a member in only one consortium regardless of whether this entity participates as lead or beneficiary partner. Only expertise partners may participate in more than one consortium.

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

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

3. How should we interpret the information that projects shall involve entities from at least three countries, including at least two Beneficiary States?

The consortium must consist of minimum three countries. At least three eligible entities from three different eligible countries listed in the call for proposals shall be involved. Each consortium must include **one lead partner from a Beneficiary State** (Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia) and **at least two beneficiary partners of which at least one must be from a Beneficiary State. The other may be from a Beneficiary State or from one of the following countries:** Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Russia, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine.

4. Is there a template for partnership agreements to be given by the Fund Operator or shall we create such an agreement by ourselves?

The template partnership agreement will be made available to the shortlisted applicants when the full proposal phase is opened. A declaration signed by all project partners is necessary in the concept note phase. The template of the 'declaration related to Project Consortium composition' is available in the EGREG system upon registration.

5. Is the Fund Operator or Financial Mechanism Office planning to help/assist applicants in finding a beneficiary partner and building a proper consortium?

The Fund Operator provides the applicants with an on-line partner search tool, available at the Fund Operator's website: <http://ecorys.pl/#eeagrants>

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

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

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

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

8. How we can be sure that the institution shall be recognised as a NGO in this call? Please provide us with a definition.

Non-governmental organisation: a non-profit voluntary organisation established as a legal entity, having a non-commercial purpose, independent of local, regional and central government, public entities, political parties and commercial organisations. Religious institutions and political parties are not considered NGOs.

9. What is the definition of a research organisations under this call?

Research Organisation means an entity (such as universities or research institutes, technology transfer agencies, innovation intermediaries, research-oriented physical or virtual collaborative entities), irrespective of its legal status (organised under public or private law) or way of financing, whose primary goal is to independently conduct fundamental research, industrial research or experimental development or to widely disseminate the results of such activities by way of teaching, publication or knowledge transfer.

10. In this call for proposal the same expertise partner may participate in multiple project consortia if it is an international organisation or a Donor State entity. In addition, by approval of the Financial Mechanism Committee (FMC), an entity established in a Donor State or an international organisation may have the role of lead partner provided that the other requirements in the call are satisfied. Can you please explain?

Various consortia may benefit from one expertise partner's know-how. It is possible to select an international organisation or a partner from the Donor States as a leader of the consortium. Such consortium construction shall be deemed eligible only upon FMC's consent. Other requirements indicated above refer to the number and countries of consortium members.

11. a) Our institution is a separate legal entity from our university, and we have separate VAT codes. All institutions at our university are separate legal entities with separate VAT. Can they apply as a separate legal entities under this call? Yes, see explanation below.

b) Our university is one institution with multiple different faculties where the different faculties all want to submit proposals to EEA grants as beneficiary partners or lead partners. As institution, the university has only one VAT number, but different faculties and one rector. Can we participate in more than one project as beneficiary partner or lead partner? No, see explanation below.

c) Can our faculty only submit one concept note as beneficiary partner or lead partner under this call? Yes, see explanation below.

Each organisation/separate legal entity can only participate in one project consortium. Each organisation/separate legal entity can only submit one concept note as Beneficiary partner or Lead partner. There is an exception for expertise partners and international organisations, which can participate in multiple project consortia. The entity in question must prove that it constitutes a separate legal entity. As a minimum, it must be proved that the entity has separate legal personality (separate registration documents/charters/VAT numbers etc.).

12. Are entities from Kosovo eligible for participation in this call for proposals?

The list of eligible entities and countries is indicated in the call for proposals. The eligible countries are specified in the Call for Proposals and limited to land-bordering countries with the EEA and Norway Grants EU -Beneficiary States for 2014-2021. Kosovo is not among them. International organisations from Kosovo may participate as expertise partners by invitation from the consortium, but target groups cannot benefit or activities in Kosovo would not be eligible for funding or contributions from this Fund.

13. Are the EEA and Norway Grants programmes 2014-2021 planning Calls for Proposals for Ukraine since this Fund in its Call for Proposals have Ukraine as a possible beneficiary partner?

In the call for this Fund, Ukraine can participate as a beneficiary partner by invitation of the consortium, but the country is not among the Beneficiary partners of the EEA and Norway Grants Programmes for 2014-2021. For more information on the EEA and Norway Grants programmes or funds please visit the website: <https://eeagrants.org>

CONCEPT NOTE SUBMISSION

1. If we decide to combine several priority sectors in our concept note, should we choose and indicate which one is the 'main one'?

The applicants may combine several priority sectors in their concept note. If one of the sectors is considered by the applicant as the main one, this should be indicated in point 1.2 Project summary.

2. What kind of activities are eligible under priority sector "Culture, civil society, good governance and fundamental rights"?

Focus areas of these and remaining priority sectors are described in the annex to the call for proposals. Please also see *Priority sectors and programme areas EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021* referred to in the call text that is available here: <https://eeagrants.org/regionalcooperation>.

3. In other grant programs which we know, Applicants, together with their grant applications, are required to submit financial documents such as the Applicant's balance sheet or profit and loss account. We cannot see such requirements in your Fund. Does it mean that the financial and economic situation of the Applicants shall not be verified?

This application process has a two-step application procedure. For this first step, a concept note template is required to be submitted. When registered in the EGREG system, access to the template is given and the declarations related to project consortium composition can be filled in - no other documents are required at this stage.

Shortlisted applicants (through the Lead Partners) invited to submit a full proposal for the second step will have to provide full financial and legal documentation and information.

PROJECT IDEA

1. What is the maximum and minimum allowed project duration?

Expenditures incurred by the project partners shall be eligible as of the date on which the FMC decides to award the project grant, while the final date for eligibility of expenditures for projects is 30 April 2024 at the latest. The minimum duration should be reasonable and sufficient for implementation of the planned activities.

2. Where are the evaluation grid and the scoring chart published? According to art. 7.3.2. (d) from EEA Regulation, the call for proposals "shall contain detailed selection criteria as well as a scoring chart" and we cannot identify this information in the published Call for proposal.

The Regulation on the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 does not apply to this Fund.

The selection criteria for the concept note phase are described in the Call for Proposals (section 6.1).

BUDGET DEVELOPMENT

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

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

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

There is no maximum grant amount per project. However, please note that the total allocation for this call for proposals is 15 million EUR. In line with the requirements foreseen in the call for proposals, costs included under the indicative project budget should be proportionate and necessary as well as complying with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

3. What is the payment model for selected projects?

The payment system under the Fund consist of two alternative ways: 1) reimbursement of costs incurred or 2) a model including an advance payment. Under point 2), the lead partner will be required to provide a corresponding financial guarantee that will cover the total amount of the advance payment. Templates of contractual documents will be available to shortlisted applicants before submission of the Full Proposal.

4. a) Are investments (hard measures) at all eligible under the EEA and Norway Grants Regional Cooperation Fund in the current call?

Hard measures may be eligible. Project ideas need to be in alignment with the objectives and the criteria of the call and are further expected to contribute to knowledge sharing, development of best practice and capacity building addressing common European challenges.

The FO cannot give prior opinion on eligibility in the interest of equal treatment of applicants.

b) If investments (hard measures) are eligible, would 60% of the total project budget dedicated to investments be acceptable?

Please see question a) of this section. No prior opinion on eligibility can be given in the Q&A.

5. Are costs for establishment and operation of a transnational financial instrument (equity instrument) eligible under the current call? If yes, under which eligible costs are they to be filed?

Please note that neither financial instruments nor sub-granting are eligible under this call for proposals.

FUND OPERATOR'S SUPPORT

1. Is there any Guidelines for applicants?

The Call for proposals – concept note phase is published here: <https://eeagrants.org/regionalcooperation>.

The applicants may access various tutorials published by the Fund Operator as well as a manual for filling in the Concept Note in the EGREG system under this link: <https://www.egregsystem.info/regionalcooperation/>. The offline template for the concept note is also available under the above indicated link. No further information and/or pre-acceptance or opinion on project proposals will be provided by the FO.

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

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

Information Units, where basic information on the call for proposals is provided. To ensure equal treatment, all questions registered and answers will be published for the knowledge of any other applicants in this FAQ tool. No specific information on a specific topic will be provided in writing or verbally from the FO Hubs.

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

All answers published on the Fund's website (<https://eeagrants.org/regionalcooperation>) are prepared jointly by the Fund Operator and the Financial Mechanism Office. The last up-date of Q&As is foreseen for 20th June 2018.

4. What is the timeframe for Fund Operator's support?

The Fund Operator shall answer the phone calls to info lines until Friday, 29th June 2018, by 4 p.m. All questions via e-mail should be submitted by Sunday, 10th June 2018. The FO cannot guarantee that questions asked later shall be provided with an answer. The IT support is available to applicants by Friday, 29th June 2018, end of business day. Please note that standard response time for EGREG helpdesk is 2 working days.

5. Is registration in the system mandatory?

Yes. It is required that all partners, regardless of their role assumed in the project (lead, beneficiary, expertise), are registered in EGREG system prior to submission of the Concept Note. Each entity (see 'Eligibility and Partnership') can be registered only once and with one contact person.

It is highly recommended that registration forms are completed by the partners before Wednesday, 20th June 2018, as the completion of registration requires Fund Operator's approval.