



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion DG
Social Affairs
Disability & Inclusion

Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme

Operating Grants 2021 to EU level networks having signed a framework partnership agreement for the period 2018-2021 and being active in the area: rights of persons with disabilities

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

VP/2020/006

Any questions should be sent by e-mail to:
empl-call-rec-disability@ec.europa.eu

To ensure a rapid response to requests for information, applicants are invited to send their queries in English, where possible.

This text is available in English.

Applicants are invited to read the present document in conjunction with the Financial Guidelines for Applicants and the model Grant Agreement(s) published with this call as well as the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/biblio/documents/regulations/regulations_en.cfm

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1. INTRODUCTION – BACKGROUND

1.1. Programme/Legal base

This Call for Proposals is published under the Regulation (EU) No 1381/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 establishing a **Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme** for the period 2014 to 2020 ('REC Programme')¹.

The annual work programme for 2020² was published on 05/11/2019.

1.2. Policy and economic background

According to the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions - EU SILC 2017 survey, in total 24.5% of the EU population is living with a disability. The share of women with disabilities in the overall population is higher than the share of men (26.7% vs 22.1%)³. These numbers are set to rise as the EU population grows progressively older. Many people with disabilities are too often prevented from fully participating in society and in the economy because of physical or other types of barriers, and because of discrimination.

Furthermore, the EU and its Member States must deal with a range of long-term trends, such as digitalisation, green economy and demographic change, which affect strongly the employment and social situation of persons with disabilities. In addition, while all Member States were showing signs of recovery from the economic and financial crisis of the last decade and unemployment figures were steadily improving, the recovery did still not equally reach all parts of the economy and the society. It is put at stake again today because of the COVID-19 crisis and its economic and social consequences. The previous crisis and the situation that is now appearing have exposed gaps in our social and welfare systems, leaving too many people without work, decent living or adequate protection, particularly persons with disabilities.

The EU is party to the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** (UNCRPD). This treaty entered into force for the EU on January 2011. Its purpose is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities. It concerns all areas of life such as education and employment, equality and non-discrimination, accessibility, political participation, independent living, social protection, freedom of movement and many others.

The EU sent its first report to the UN Committee on the Rights of persons with Disabilities in 2014, had a dialogue with the Committee in 2015 and afterwards received Concluding observations from the Committee in 2015. The Commission also reported in 2017 on the progress achieved on the three main recommendations: the withdrawal of the Commission of the EU monitoring Framework, the adoption of the European Accessibility Act and the update of the EU Declaration of Competences under the UNCRPD.

¹ OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, p. 64

² C(2019)7824, Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme and the adoption of the work programme for 2020.

<http://www.cc.cec/sg/vista/home?documentDetails&DocRef=C/2019/7824&ComCat=SPINE>

³ EU-SILC 2017 - disability in EU-SILC is approximated according to the concept of global activity limitation, which is defined as "limitation in activities people usually do because of health problems for at least the past six months".

The UNCRPD has guided the content of the **European disability strategy 2010-2020**⁴ which identifies actions at EU level to complement and support national efforts in eight priority areas: (1) Accessibility, (2) Participation, (3) Equality, (4) Employment, (5) Education and Training, (6) Social protection, (7) Health, and (8) External Action. It is underpinned by awareness-raising, financial support, statistics and data collection.

One of the key deliverables of the European Disability Strategy has been the adoption of the **European Accessibility Act** in April 2019. This new Directive, to be transposed within 3 years of its entry into force, is aiming to improve the functioning of the internal market for accessible products and services by removing barriers created by divergent legislation. It establishes accessibility requirements for a number of key products and services and allows the use of the same requirements to render operational accessibility provisions in other EU acts in particular in the Public Procurement Directives. It should facilitate the work of companies whilst bringing benefits for persons with disabilities and elderly people in the EU.

Another important initiative currently under study is the **Pilot Project on the EU Disability Card** that was implemented in eight Member States in 2016-2018.

In February 2017 the European Commission published a **Progress Report on the implementation of the European Disability Strategy**⁵. It notably included a table monitoring the implementation of the Strategy, a summary of the contributions to the Report (from other EU institutions and from civil society), a comprehensive overview of EU legal acts with an impact on disability matters, and the results of the **public consultation** on the review of the Strategy. The latter confirmed that despite progress achieved in the eight priority areas of the Strategy, the situation of people with disabilities remains challenging in terms of participation in everyday activities, rights, employment, accessibility, discrimination and mobility within the EU.

Equality for all and equality in all of its senses will be one of the major priorities of the new Commission and of the implementation of the **European Pillar of Social Rights** (EPSR). The EPSR, jointly proclaimed by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on 17 November 2017, reflects the unanimous support by all EU institutions and the Member States on 20 principles and rights essential for fair and well-functioning labour markets and welfare systems. These principles range from inclusion of people with disabilities to equal opportunities, quality and inclusive education, work-life balance, support to children, long-term care or access to essential services. Disability is also mainstreamed in all relevant principles.

The objectives of the Pillar are also coherent with the objectives of the **Sustainable Development Goals** and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which reflects the commitment of governments to build a better future for all people. The Agenda, aiming among others to end poverty and reduce inequalities, pays attention to the situation of persons with disabilities. It refers to them directly in five of its goals in relation to education, employment, reduction of inequalities, inclusive cities, and on means of implementation. For its follow up, it refers to the collection of data disaggregated on disability.

An **evaluation of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020** is ongoing and the results will feed into the preparation of a follow-up initiative for the period beyond 2020.

⁴ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1137&langId=en>

⁵ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1137&newsId=2725&furtherNews=yes>

1.3. Main Purposes

This call for proposals aims to provide specific operating grants for the year 2021 to European networks having signed a Framework Partnership Agreements 2018-2021 with the European Commission.

The 4-year Framework Partnership Agreements established cooperation between the European Commission and European networks whose statutory aim is to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities. The agreements set out the framework conditions governing potential specific operating grants, and include for each partner a 4-year strategic plan. The Framework Partnership Agreements were signed in 2017 following the call for proposals VP/2017/014.

The specific operating grants will enhance the capacities of the networks to contribute actively to the development and implementation of all relevant policies. The grants will fund operating costs and those activities of the networks which have EU added value and which contribute to the implementation of the objectives of the REC Programme for the year 2021.

2. OBJECTIVE(S) – PRIORITIES – TYPES OF ACTIONS - EXPECTED RESULTS

2.1. Objectives – Priorities

The objective of the Call is to promote, protect and monitor the rights of persons with disabilities, to ensure that people with disabilities can fully enjoy their rights.

More specifically, the activities of the applicant should contribute to one or more of the following priorities:

- supporting the implementation of the priorities of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 (or follow-up initiative), taking into account both the Progress Report on its implementation and the main results of the public consultation as mentioned above;
- contributing to the reflection on the post-2020 European disability strategic framework;
- contributing to the EU Disability Card action and its promotion.
- contributing to the implementation of the UNCRPD and promoting the involvement of the national member organisations in the implementation;
- supporting the human rights model of disability, including in disability assessment and determination as well as in social protection matters;
- contributing to awareness-raising activities that would be launched by the Commission in the disability area;
- supporting and contributing to implement the UN Concluding Observations of the report on the implementation of the UNCRPD by the EU and to prepare the next reporting exercise;

- supporting the development, implementation and monitoring of EU and national policies and legislation in the area of disability, including the development of statistical data;
- contributing to mainstreaming different aspects of disability matters in EU and national policies and legislation, particularly in the areas of accessibility, employment, education, social inclusion (including housing, homelessness, migration, child poverty), social protection, health (including mental health), human rights, international cooperation and development to make sure that the rights and needs of persons with disabilities are properly addressed;
- supporting the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, in particular the principle 17 on disability, and mainstreaming disability in all its relevant areas;
- contributing to improving the accessibility of products and services, including by supporting the implementation of the European Accessibility Act and other EU accessibility legislation as well as with awareness-raising activities about these new legislations;
- supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Developments Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, notably those with a direct impact for people with disabilities;
- supporting the main EU driven processes such as the European Semester in the disability area;
- supporting and contributing to EU youth initiatives targeted at young people, including those with disabilities, to encourage inclusive education and training, access to employment, participation and independent living, and including initiatives such as the European Solidarity Corps;
- contributing to the development of specific policies relevant to disability in the area of independent living, in particular as regards the transition from institutional to community-based living.

Applicants are also expected to contribute to a number of specific initiatives where their role has a clear added value, such as:

- the annual Work Forum on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the EU and the Member States;
- the European Commission Conference on the European Day of Persons with Disabilities;
- the Access City Award, the European Prize for making cities more accessible to people with disabilities and older people;
- the Commission's civil dialogue in relevant fields, and in particular the Annual Convention for Inclusive Growth and the accompanying strategic dialogue meetings.

The proposed work programme for 2021 should be in line and have a clear link with the quadrennial strategic plan and budget forecast agreed with the European Commission in the framework partnership agreements. The proposed work programme can develop further the 4-year work programme and describe its implementation in more details, but should not contradict it.

Minor adaptations due to changes in the overall context (i.e. COVID-19 crisis) or unforeseeable new organisational developments are possible and should be marked.

Deviations (e.g. modification or suppression of an activity foreseen in the 4-year strategic plan) should be clearly explained and justified in the annex “Description of the action and work programme” under “Additional information”. This is important to assess the consistency with the 4-year strategic plan and the scope of any change proposed.

2.2. Description of the activities to be funded / Type of activities

Applicants are expected to focus particularly on the following areas of activity:

- supporting the European Commission in implementing the above-mentioned priorities by providing analysis and data for critical or emerging issues, especially those where there is a knowledge-gap;
- providing input to European Commission's Public Consultations and drafting position papers in relevant EU policy areas.
- supporting national member organisations in their involvement in the implementation, at national level, of main political EU driven processes;
- equipping member organisations with the necessary skills and competences to promote the interests and rights of people with disabilities, in particular to enhance equality of opportunities for people with disabilities, namely in employment, and combat discrimination on the basis of disability;
- developing information and campaigning tools (websites, publications or other means) to inform about EU objectives, policies and actions in the disability field, increasing the network capacity and raising public awareness.

The types of activities which may be funded under this call for proposals include:

- **analytical activities**, such as the collection of data and statistics; the development of common methodologies and, where appropriate, indicators or benchmarks; studies, researches, analyses and surveys; evaluations; the elaboration and publication of guides, reports and educational material; workshops, seminars, experts' meetings and conferences;
- **training activities**, such as staff exchanges, workshops, seminars, train-the-trainer events and the development of online training tools or other training modules;
- **mutual learning, cooperation, awareness-raising and dissemination activities**, such as the identification of, and exchanges concerning, good practices, innovative approaches and experiences; the organisation of peer reviews and mutual learning; the organisation of conferences, seminars, media campaigns, including in the online media, information campaigns, including institutional communication on the political priorities of the Union as far as they relate to the objectives of the Programme; the compilation and publication of materials to disseminate information about the Programme and its results; the development, operation and maintenance of systems and tools using information and communication technologies;
- **management activities** to support the operations of the network as well as capacity building for its members.

In order to ensure an inclusive perspective, beneficiaries shall encourage the participation of relevant target groups in actions financed by the Programme, and in particular of people with disabilities, their families and representative organisations.

2.3. Expected outputs/results

The European Commission supports an output-oriented approach, looking at the quality, relevance and sustainability of the results reached. The work programme should therefore clearly demonstrate the organisation's potential and capacity to generate concrete impacts in the objectives and priorities defined in 2.1.

Applicants are invited to:

- provide a clear description of the methodology, main outputs and their expected contribution to European policy development in the thematic areas of this call, as well as to demonstrate the added value of their activities;
- describe their monitoring system and the way in which they use monitoring and external evaluations in order to assess, on the one hand, their overall performance and, on the other hand, the relevance and impact of their outputs.

The documents, information, websites, meetings and other events organised in the framework of the work programme are expected to be accessible, and reasonable accommodation should be provided.

3. TIMETABLE

	Stages	Date or period
a)	Publication of the call	Mid-May 2020
b)	Deadline for questions and requests for clarification	14/08/2020
c)	Deadline for submitting proposals	24/08/2020 Swim, Courier and Post : 24:00 Brussels' time (CET) Hand deliveries 16:00 Brussels' time (CET)
d)	Evaluation period (indicative)	September-October 2020
e)	Information to applicants (indicative)	November 2020 ⁶
f)	Signature of the specific grant agreements (indicative)	December 2020 ⁷
g)	Starting date of the action	01 January 2021

⁶ And in any case no later than 6 months after the submission deadline.

⁷ And in any case no later than 3 months after the date of information to applicants.

3.1. Starting date and duration of the projects

The actual starting date of the action will be the starting date of the applicant's budgetary financial year.

No expenditure can be incurred before the start of the beneficiary's budgetary year for operating grants. Any expenditure incurred before the signature of the Specific Grant Agreement (SGA) may be considered eligible but it will be at the applicant's risk.

The duration of the work programme to be covered by the 2021 operating grant should coincide with the budgetary (financial) year of the applicant (12 months).

4. AVAILABLE BUDGET AND CO-FINANCING RATE

4.1. Available Budget and Grant Amounts

The total budget earmarked for the EU co-financing of projects under this call is estimated at € **3,100,000.00** EUR.

The Commission reserves the right not to distribute all the funds available.

The Commission reserves the right to increase the amount of the funds, if available, and distribute them to proposals admitted in the possible reserve list. This top-up is limited to 20% of the initial budget of the call.

4.2. Co-financing rate

Under this call for proposals, the EU grant may not exceed **80 %** of the total eligible costs of the action. The applicants must guarantee their co-financing of the remaining amount covered by the applicants' own resources or from sources other than the European Union budget⁸.

5. ADMISSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Applications must be sent no later than the deadline for submission referred to in section 3(c)
- Applications (meaning, the application form, including budget, description of the action and work programme) must be submitted using the electronic submission system available at <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/swim>, and by sending a signed, printed version of the complete application form (including all documents specified in the check-list) by post or courier service (one original dossier and two copies; see section 14).

Failure to comply with the above requirements may lead to the rejection of the application.

Applicants are encouraged to submit their project proposal in English in order to facilitate the treatment of the proposals and speed up the evaluation process. It should be noted,

⁸ Letters of commitment are required from any third party providing financial contributions to the eligible costs of the action (see checklist, point 5).

however, that proposals submitted in any other of the official languages of the EU will be accepted. In this case, applications should be accompanied by an executive summary in English (see checklist point 3).

6. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Please be aware that eligibility criteria must be complied with for the entire duration of the grant.

For British Applicants: Please be aware that following the entry into force of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement⁹ on 1 February 2020 and in particular Articles 127(6)¹⁰, 137¹¹ and 138¹², the references to natural or legal persons residing or established in a Member State of the European Union are to be understood as including natural or legal persons residing or established in the United Kingdom. UK residents and entities are therefore eligible to participate under this call.¹³

6.1. Eligibility of the applicants¹⁴

Proposals can only be submitted by organisations having signed a Framework Partnership Agreement with the European Commission following the 2017 Call for Proposals establishing four-year Framework Partnership Agreements for the period 2018-2021¹⁵.

Please note that:

- Proposals may not involve consortia;
- Affiliated entities to the applicant are NOT eligible to receive funding under this call for proposals

⁹ Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community

¹⁰ Art 127 (6) Unless otherwise provided in this Agreement, during the transition period, any reference to Member States in the Union law applicable pursuant to paragraph 1, including as implemented and applied by Member States, shall be understood as including the United Kingdom (*extract*).

¹¹ Art. 137. The United Kingdom's participation in the implementation of the Union programmes and activities in 2019 and 2020 (*extract*)

¹² Art. 138 Union law applicable after 31 December 2020 in relation to the United Kingdom's participation in the implementation of the Union programmes and activities committed under the MFF 2014-2020 or previous financial perspectives (*extract*)

¹³ On the basis of the Withdrawal Agreement, the United Kingdom is to be treated as if it was a Member State during and after the transition period for actions which implement Union programmes and activities committed under the current Multiannual Financial Framework (2014-2020)

¹⁴ See section 2 of the Financial Guidelines for definitions.

¹⁵ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=629&langId=en&callId=519&furtherCalls=yes>

6.2. Eligible activities

a) Geographical Location

To be eligible, actions must be fully carried out in eligible participating REC countries:

- EU Member State;
- Iceland and Liechtenstein;
- Serbia (an Agreement between the European Union and Serbia on the participation of Serbia in the REC programme was signed on 16.07.2018).

Activities taking place in other countries are therefore not eligible in this Call for proposals. However, where the Beneficiary can adequately justify that the participation in such activities is fundamental for the implementation of its annual work programme and maximise its European added value, and where they contribute to achieving the objectives of the funding programme, related costs could be accepted as eligible provided that they are originated in a REC programme country, and subject to prior explicit approval by the Commission.

b) Types of activities

The grant will finance inter alia the activities indicated in section 2.2.

c) Core activities

The following activities are considered core activities and may not be subcontracted:

- management of the work Programme

6.3. Ineligible activities

The following types of activities are not eligible for EU funding:

- financial support to third parties as defined in point 3 of the Financial Guidelines
- membership fees to other networks supported by EU grants;
- sponsorships/scholarships to individuals for their participation in workshops, seminars, conferences, congresses, training courses etc. (i.e. fees to attend an event) ;
- activities supporting political parties;
- legal actions before national or international courts regardless of their grounds or objectives.
- Volunteers' work is accepted as an activity but volunteers' costs in the meaning of art 181(8) and 190 (2) of the Financial Regulation are not eligible for reimbursement.

7. EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Applicant must sign a declaration on their honour signed in their name, certifying that they are not in one of the situations referred to in article 136 and 141 of the Financial Regulation concerning exclusion and rejection from the procedure respectively, using the relevant form

attached to the application form available at:
<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/swim/external/displayWelcome.do>.

7.1. Exclusion

The authorising officer shall exclude an applicant from participating in call for proposals procedures where:

(a) the applicant is bankrupt, subject to insolvency or winding-up procedures, its assets are being administered by a liquidator or by a court, it is in an arrangement with creditors, its business activities are suspended, or it is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for under EU or national laws or regulations;

(b) it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the applicant is in breach of its obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions in accordance with the applicable law;

(c) it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the applicant is guilty of grave professional misconduct by having violated applicable laws or regulations or ethical standards of the profession to which the applicant belongs, or by having engaged in any wrongful intent or gross negligence, including, in particular, any of the following:

(i) fraudulently or negligently misrepresenting information required for the verification of the absence of grounds for exclusion or the fulfilment of eligibility or selection criteria or in the performance of a contract, a grant agreement or a grant decision;

(ii) entering into agreement with other applicants with the aim of distorting competition;

(iii) violating intellectual property rights;

(iv) attempting to influence the decision-making process of the Commission during the award procedure;

(v) attempting to obtain confidential information that may confer upon it undue advantages in the award procedure;

(d) it has been established by a final judgment that the applicant is guilty of any of the following:

(i) fraud, within the meaning of Article 3 of Directive (EU) 2017/1371 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Article 1 of the Convention on the protection of the European Communities' financial interests, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 July 1995;

(ii) corruption, as defined in Article 4(2) of Directive (EU) 2017/1371 or Article 3 of the Convention on the fight against corruption involving officials of the European Communities or officials of Member States of the European Union, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 May 1997, or conduct referred to in Article 2(1) of Council Framework Decision 2003/568/JHA, or corruption as defined in the applicable law;

(iii) conduct related to a criminal organisation, as referred to in Article 2 of Council Framework Decision 2008/841/JHA;

(iv) money laundering or terrorist financing within the meaning of Article 1(3), (4) and (5) of Directive (EU) 2015/849 of the European Parliament and of the Council;

- (v) terrorist offences or offences linked to terrorist activities, as defined in Articles 1 and 3 of Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA, respectively, or inciting, aiding, abetting or attempting to commit such offences, as referred to in Article 4 of that Decision;
- (vi) child labour or other offences concerning trafficking in human beings as referred to in Article 2 of Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council;
- (e) the applicant has shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations in the performance of a contract, a grant agreement or a grant decision financed by the Union's budget, which has led to its early termination or to the application of liquidated damages or other contractual penalties, or which has been discovered following checks, audits or investigations by an authorising officer, OLAF or the Court of Auditors;
- (f) it has been established by a final judgment or final administrative decision that the applicant has committed an irregularity within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95;
- (g) It has been established by a final judgement or final administrative decision that the applicant has created an entity in a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or any other legal obligations of mandatory application in the jurisdiction of its registered office, central administration or principal place of business;
- (h) it has been established by a final judgement or final administrative decision that an entity has been created with the intent referred to in point (g);
- (i) for the situations referred to in points (c) to (h) above, the applicant is subject to:
 - (i) facts established in the context of audits or investigations carried out by European Public Prosecutor's Office after its establishment, the Court of Auditors, the European Anti-Fraud Office or the internal auditor, or any other check, audit or control performed under the responsibility of an authorising officer of an EU institution, of a European office or of an EU agency or body;
 - (ii) non-final judgments or non-final administrative decisions which may include disciplinary measures taken by the competent supervisory body responsible for the verification of the application of standards of professional ethics;
 - (iii) facts referred to in decisions of persons or entities being entrusted with EU budget implementation tasks;
 - (iv) information transmitted by Member States implementing Union funds;
 - (v) decisions of the Commission relating to the infringement of Union competition law or of a national competent authority relating to the infringement of Union or national competition law; or
 - (vi) decisions of exclusion by an authorising officer of an EU institution, of a European office or of an EU agency or body.

7.2. Remedial measures

If an applicant declares one of the situations of exclusion listed above it must indicate the measures it has taken to remedy the exclusion situation, thus demonstrating its reliability. This may include e.g. technical, organisational and personnel measures to correct the conduct and prevent further occurrence, compensation of damage or payment of fines or of any taxes or social security contributions. The relevant documentary evidence, which

illustrates the remedial measures taken, must be provided in annex to the declaration. This does not apply for situations referred in point (d) of section 7.1.

7.3. Rejection from the call for proposals

The Commission shall not award a grant to an applicant who:

- a. is in an exclusion situation established in accordance with Section 7.1; or
- b. has misrepresented the information required as a condition for participating in the procedure or has failed to supply this information; or
- c. was previously involved in the preparation of calls for proposals documents used in the award procedure where this entails breach of the principle of equality of treatment, including a distortion of competition that cannot be remedied otherwise.

Administrative sanctions may be imposed on applicants, or affiliated entities where applicable, who are guilty of misrepresentation, if any of the declarations or information provided as a condition for participating in this procedure prove to be false.

8. SELECTION CRITERIA

Not applicable

9. AWARD CRITERIA

The proposals which comply with the admissibility requirements and fulfil the eligibility and exclusion criteria will be assessed on the basis of the following award criteria:

1) Relevance and coherence (Max. 20 points)

Particular attention will be paid to:

- the extent to which the proposed annual work programme addresses the priorities announced by the Commission;
- the coherence with the organisation's 4 year Action plan annexed to the Framework Partnership Agreement.

2) Quality of the annual work programme, which must be clear, realistic and well detailed (Max. 30 points)

Particular attention will be paid to:

- the activities, in particular if they are well-designed, clearly presented, linked to the priorities of the Call, and realistic;
- how the activities will be implemented, including the distribution of the work among the network and its members, which should be efficient and balanced, and the time schedule;
- the use of human resources, including the roles and responsibilities and the division of tasks within the team;
- the evaluation and monitoring strategy, including measures to assess the success of the activities and the indicators to be used.

3) European added value of the annual work programme (Max. 10 points)

Particular attention will be paid to:

- transnational impact, including transnational aspect of the activities and the outputs;
- contribution to the elaboration and dissemination of best practices or their potential to create practical tools and solutions that address cross-border or Union-wide challenges;
- contribution to the consistent and coherent implementation of Union law and policies and to wide public awareness about the rights deriving from it;
- potential to improve cross-border cooperation and to voice stakeholders' concerns from different regions of the Union.

4) Expected results, dissemination, sustainability and long-term impact (Max. 30 points)

Particular attention will be paid to:

- the relevance of the expected results to achieve the network's objectives for 2021, and in particular of the proposed contribution/recommendations to be addressed to policy makers and to stakeholders at European, national, regional and/or local level;
- the existence of a clear, targeted and appropriate dissemination strategy, which will ensure that the results efficiently reach the target groups and/or the general public, that they are accessible and that they are optimally used;
- the sustainability of the activities after the EU funding;
- the expected short and long-term quantitative and qualitative impact of the activities and outputs on:
 - the target groups and/or the general public;
 - on policies, strategies or systems at European, national, regional and/or local level.

5) Cost-effectiveness (Max. 10 points)

Particular attention will be paid to:

- financial feasibility of the proposed activities by means of a clear, detailed, realistic and reasonable budget, coherent with the 2021 annual work programme of the applicant.

Applications will be ranked according to the total score awarded. Taking into account the available budget, the proposals with the highest total scores will be recommended for award, **on condition that:**

- **the total score reaches at least 70% of the maximum possible score;**
- **the score for each criterion is at least 50% of the maximum possible score for that criterion.**

10. LEGAL COMMITMENTS

In the event of a grant being awarded by the Commission, a Specific Grant Agreement, drawn up in euros and detailing the conditions and level of funding, will be sent to the Partner.

The two copies of the original specific agreement must be signed by the Partner and returned to the Commission immediately. The Commission will sign them last.

The Commission may have made relevant corrections and deletion of ineligible costs or activities in the Specific Grant Agreement sent to the applicant – therefore the applicant should carefully read the whole specific agreement before signing and returning the copies to the Commission.

The applicable model Specific Agreement is published on the Europa website under the relevant call: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=629&langId=en>. There is no alternative to these models in the context of this call.

Please note that the award of a grant does not establish an entitlement for subsequent years.

11. PUBLICITY/SOURCES OF FUNDING

By the beneficiaries

In addition to the obligations with regard to visibility of Union funding foreseen in the General conditions to the grant agreement, beneficiaries must clearly acknowledge the European Union's contribution in all publications or in conjunction with activities for which the grant is used (information or promotional materials, and during conferences or seminars, etc.). The following wording must be used:

“This (publication, conference, ...) has received financial support from the European Union.”

The European emblem must appear on every publication or other material produced. Please see: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/eu_emblem_rules.pdf. When displayed in association with another name or logo, the European emblem must have appropriate prominence

Any communication or publication by the beneficiary/ies related to the action, in any form and using any means, including the Internet, shall indicate that it reflects only the author's view and that the Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

Every publication must therefore include the following:

“The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the official position of the European Commission”

In addition to these minimum requirements, references specified in the text of the call for proposals must also be specified.

If these requirements are not fully complied with, the beneficiary's grant may be reduced in accordance with the provisions of the grant agreement.

By the Commission¹⁶

With the exception of scholarships paid to natural persons and other direct support paid to natural persons in most need, all information relating to grants awarded in the course of a financial year shall be published on an internet site of the European Union

¹⁶ Articles 38 & 189 FR

institutions no later than the 30th June of the year following the financial year in which the grants were awarded.

By signing the grant agreement for an action, the beneficiary/ies authorises the Commission to publish the following information in any form and medium, including via the Internet site of the EU¹⁷:

- name of the beneficiary
- address/es of the beneficiary when the latter is a legal person, region when the beneficiary is a natural person, as defined on NUTS 2 level¹⁸ if he/she is domiciled within the EU or equivalent if domiciled outside the EU
- subject of the grant,
- amount awarded

With a view to disseminating all results obtained and outputs delivered under the grant agreement, the Executive Summary sent with the Implementation Report will be posted on the website of the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

Upon a reasoned and duly substantiated request by the beneficiary, the publication shall be waived if such disclosure risks threatening the rights and freedoms of individuals concerned as protected by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union or harm the commercial interests of the beneficiaries.

12. DATA PROTECTION

12.1. Before the grant agreement's signature:

The reply to any call for proposals involves the recording and processing of personal data (such as name, address and CV). Such data will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2018/1725. Unless indicated otherwise, the applicant's replies to the questions and any personal data requested that are required to evaluate the application in accordance with the call for proposal, will be processed solely for that purpose by the Head of Unit F.4 – Programme Management and Implementation, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. Details concerning the processing of your personal data are available on the privacy statement at :

https://ec.europa.eu/info/data-protection-public-procurement-procedures_en

Personal data may be registered in the Early Detection and Exclusion System by the Commission, should the beneficiary be in one of the situations mentioned in Articles 136 and 141 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/104619. For more information see the Privacy Statement on:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/library/explained/management/protecting/privacy_statement_eds_en.pdf

¹⁷ Article 189 2. FR

¹⁸ Commission Regulation (EC) No 105/2007 of 1 February 2007 amending the annexes to Regulation (EC) No 1059/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a common classification of territorial units for statistics (NUTS), OJ L39, 10.2.2007, p.1.

¹⁹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32018R1046>

12.2. Once the grant agreement is signed:

Beneficiaries must process personal data in compliance with the applicable EU and national law on data protection in accordance with the Regulation (EU) 2016/679²⁰

Any personal data included in the Agreement must be processed by the Commission in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 2018/1725²¹

Such data must be processed by the data controller identified in Article I.7.1 solely for implementing, managing and monitoring the Agreement or to protect the financial interests of the EU, including checks, audits and investigations in accordance with Article II.27.

Please refer to Article II.7 of the General Conditions of the model grant agreements.

13. FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

Details on financial provisions are laid out in the Financial Guidelines for Applicants and the model Grant Agreement, both published on the Europa website under the relevant call: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=629&langId=en>.

Implementation contracts/subcontracting:

Where the implementation of the work programme requires the award of procurement contracts (implementation contracts intended to cover the **purchase of services and/or goods**, equipment etc. **necessary for the implementation of the action**), the beneficiary may award the contract in accordance with its usual purchasing practices provided that the contract is awarded to the tender offering best value for money or the lowest price (as appropriate), avoiding conflicts of interests.

The beneficiary must clearly document the tendering procedure and retain the documentation in the event of an audit.

Beneficiaries may also subcontract **tasks forming part of the action**. If they do so, they must ensure that, in addition to the above-mentioned conditions for “implementing contracts” including best value for money and absence of conflicts of interests, the following conditions are also complied with:

- a) subcontracting does not cover core tasks of the action;
- b) recourse to subcontracting is justified because of the nature of the action and what is necessary for its implementation;
- c) the estimated costs of the subcontracting are clearly identifiable in the estimated budget;
- d) any recourse to subcontracting, if not provided for in description of the action, is communicated by the beneficiary and approved by the Commission. The Commission may grant approval:

²⁰ Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC, OJ L 119, 4.5.2016, p. 1, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2016.119.01.0001.01.ENG

²¹ Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC

- (i) before any recourse to subcontracting, if the beneficiaries requests an amendment;
- (ii) after recourse to subcontracting if the subcontracting:
 - is specifically justified in the interim technical report and;
 - does not entail changes to the grant agreement which would call into question the decision awarding the grant or be contrary to the equal treatment of applicants;
- e) the beneficiaries ensure that certain conditions applicable to beneficiaries, enumerated in the grant agreement (e.g. visibility, confidentiality, etc.), are also applicable to the subcontractors..

14. PROCEDURE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

The procedure to submit proposals electronically is specified in point 14 of the "Financial Guidelines for Applicants". Before starting, please read carefully the SWIM user manual:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/calls/pdf/swim_manual_en.pdf

Once the application form is filled in, applicants must submit it both electronically and in hard copy, by the deadline set in section 3(c) above.

The SWIM electronic application form is available until midnight (Brussels time) on the day of the submission deadline. Since the applicants must first submit the form electronically, and then print, blue ink sign and send it by post service or hand delivery by the submission deadline, it is the **applicant's responsibility to ensure that the appropriate postal or courier services are locally available on the day of the deadline.**

The hard copy of the proposal must be duly blue ink signed and sent in together with **two copies** (one marked "original" and two marked "copy"), including all documents listed in section 16, by the deadline set in section 3(c), either by registered post, express courier service or hand delivery.

Address for registered post or express courier service:

<p>European Commission</p> <p>(NOT TO BE OPENED BY CENTRAL MAIL SERVICES)</p> <p>Call for proposals VP/2020/006 – DG EMPL</p> <p>CAD J-27 00/120</p> <p>B-1049 Bruxelles - BELGIUM</p>
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Evidence of posting or express courier deposit slip should be kept as it could be requested by the European Commission in cases of doubt regarding the date of submission.

- a) registered post evidence : postmark
- b) express courier service evidence : deposit slip of express courier service

Hand-delivered proposals must be received by the European Commission by 4 p.m. (Brussels time) of the date indicated in section 3 at the following address:

European Commission
Service central de réception du courrier
(NOT TO BE OPENED BY CENTRAL MAIL SERVICES)
Call for proposals VP/2020/006 – DG EMPL.C3
Avenue du Bourget, 1
B-1140 Evere

At that time, the European Commission's Central Mail Service will provide a signed and dated proof of receipt, which should be conserved as evidence of delivery.

If an applicant submits more than one proposal, each proposal must be submitted separately.

Additional documents sent by post, by fax or by electronic mail after the deadlines mentioned above will not be considered for evaluation unless requested by the European Commission (see section 15).

The applicant's attention is also drawn to the fact that incomplete or unsigned forms, handwritten forms and those sent by fax or e-mail will not be accepted.

15. COMMUNICATION

The information contained in the present call document together with the Financial Guidelines for Applicants provides all the information you require to submit an application. Please read it carefully before doing so, paying particular attention to the priorities of the present call.

The Commission may, on its own initiative, inform the public of any, error, inaccuracy, omission or clerical error in the text of the call for proposals on the mentioned Europa website.

The Commission therefore advises you to consult this website regularly in order to be informed of updates and of the questions and answers published. It is the applicant's responsibility to check for updates and modifications regularly during the submission period.

At the request of the applicant, the Commission may provide additional information solely for the purpose of clarifying the nature of the call.

Contacts between the Commission and potential applicants can only take place in certain circumstances and under the following conditions only:

Before the final date for submission of proposals

Any requests for additional information must be made by e-mail only to the coordinates stated below.

All enquiries must be made by e-mail only to:

empl-call-rec-disability@ec.europa.eu

For any technical problems, please contact: empl-swim-support@ec.europa.eu

The Commission has no obligation to reply to requests for additional information received after the deadline for questions and clarifications set in Section 3(b).

Replies will be given no later than 5 days before the deadline for submission of proposals. To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the Commission will not give a prior opinion on the eligibility of applicants, an action or specific activities.

No individual replies to questions will be sent but all questions together with the answers and other important notices will be published (FAQ in EN) at regular intervals on the Europa website under the relevant call:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=629&langId=en>.

After the deadline for submission of proposals

No modification to the proposal is allowed once the deadline for submission has elapsed.

If clarification is requested or if obvious clerical errors in the proposal need to be corrected, the Commission may contact the applicant by e-mail provided the terms of the proposal are not modified as a result.

It is the applicant's responsibility to provide a valid e-mail address and contact details and to check this e-mail address regularly. In case of any change of contact details, please send an e-mail with the application VP reference and the new contact details to (empl-call-rec-disability@ec.europa.eu).

Applicants will be informed in writing about the results of the selection process. Unsuccessful applicants will be informed of the reasons for rejection. No information regarding the award procedure will be disclosed until the notification letters have been sent to the beneficiaries.

16. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PRESENTATION OF THE APPLICATION AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

16.1. Instructions for the presentation of the application

The application file must be composed of:

- 1) the SWIM application form duly signed and stamped, including the budget;
- 2) an annex description of the action (work programme 2021) ; and
- 3) a series of other required documents (see section 16.2).

The description of the action and work programme must be written using the template available on the EUROPA website. The work programme must be simple and understandable. **NEW**: please indicate the matching activity reference number of the 4-year strategic plan (see template). This will highlight changes between the 4-year and the 2021 work programme.

The budget must be presented using the application form in SWIM – please indicate the activity number where relevant in the SWIM budget (e.g. “Social inclusion workshop (1.2)”);

“Social housing brochure (2.3)”). It must be complemented by additional **resource/budget explanation per activity** in the description of the action and work plan or in a separate free format annex.

In case of **subcontracting** any tasks comprising part of the action (see the Financial Guidelines), the description of the action must provide details on the tasks to be subcontracted and the reasons for doing so and these tasks must be clearly identified in the budget. Core activities as defined in section 6.2(c) of the call cannot be subcontracted.

16.2. Required documents

The table in annex includes the documents that should be provided, including the documents mentioned in 16.1. It also indicates where originals are required. Documents highlighted in brown must be provided only if the situation changed since the signature of the Framework Partnership Agreement and Specific Grant Agreement 2020. We recommend that applicants use the table as a **checklist** in order to verify compliance with all requirements.

While some information must be supplied using the templates available in SWIM, other documents may need to be completed and/or attached electronically, usually either administrative documents or free format text descriptions. The SWIM application indicates in each section where SWIM templates should be used as well as which and where free format documents can be uploaded electronically.

Regarding the compilation of the application file, it is recommended to:

- 1) follow the order of documents as listed in the checklist (and attach a ticked checklist as below to the proposal);
- 2) print the documents double-sided;
- 3) use 2-hole folders (do not bind or glue; stapling is acceptable).

CHECKLIST for required documents

This table includes the documents that must be provided for the proposal and where originals are required. We strongly recommend using the table as a checklist in order to verify compliance with all requirements. All the listed documents must be provided in SWIM.

Notes: highlighted documents must be provided **only** if the situation changed since the signature of the Framework Partnership Agreement and Specific grant agreement 2020

No.	Document	Specification and content	The document must be provided by each				Originally signed?	Checkbox
			Lead applicant	Co-applicant	Affiliated entity	Third party		
1	Official cover letter of the application	This letter must quote the reference of the call for proposals, be originally signed and dated by the authorised representative and include the proposal reference number generated by SWIM (e.g. VP/2020/006/xxxx) – free format	✓	N/A	N/A	--	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Signed SWIM application form submitted online + hard copies	The SWIM application form submitted online must be printed and dated and signed by the authorised legal representative and sent by hard copies as foreseen in Section 11. <i>Note: the online form must be electronically submitted before printing. After electronic submission, no further changes to the proposal are permitted.</i>	✓	N/A	N/A	--	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Executive summary (only if necessary)	Executive summary in EN (maximum 2 pages), if required (see section 5 of the call). – free format	✓	N/A	N/A	--	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Declaration on honour	The template is available in SWIM and must be written on the official letterhead of the organisation, bearing the original signature of the authorised legal representative and include the application's reference number generated by SWIM (VP/2020/006/XXXX). Where applicable, the relevant documentary evidence which illustrates the remedial measures taken for applicants who declared one of the situations of exclusion listed in the declaration.	✓	N/A	N/A	--	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Letter of commitment	The template is available in SWIM and must explain the nature of the organisation's involvement and specify the amount of any funding provided (for third parties). The letter must be written on the official letterhead of the organisation and bear the original signature of the legal representative. <i>Copies of the original signed letters of commitment are accepted at the submission of the application; originals to be submitted upon request.</i>	--	N/A	N/A	✓	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Description of the action and work programme	The template is available in SWIM. It must be duly completed and submitted electronically together with the online submission form and on paper as well. The paper version must be identical to the electronic version. The document should be submitted in English.	✓	N/A	N/A	--	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	REC indicators	The template is available in SWIM and must be duly completed by applicants to transmit quantitative reporting on policy-related outputs (indicators).	✓	N/A	N/A	--	--	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	Budget Explanation	This separate free-format document is requested only if the applicant decides not to provide information on the breakdown of the staff/budget per activity in the Description of the Action and Work programme. It aims at explaining how the budget is set-up, including how working days per staff involved in the implementation of the activities are estimated. – free format	✓	N/A	N/A	--	--	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Legal entity form (only if change of situation)	The template is available in SWIM and online (http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm) and must be duly signed and dated by the legal representative.	✓	N/A	N/A	--	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	VAT certificate (only if change of situation)	A document showing the identification number for tax purposes or the VAT number, if applicable.	✓	N/A	N/A	--	--	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	Financial identification form (only if change of situation)	The template is available in SWIM and online (http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/financial_id/financial_id_en.cfm) and must be duly signed and dated by the account holder and bearing the bank stamp and signature of the bank representative (or a copy of recent bank statement attached).	✓	N/A	N/A	--	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>

ANNEX I:

FINANCIAL GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

Annex I is available on the Europa website under the relevant call:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=629&langId=en>