



**Contracting Authority:** European Commission

Civil Society Thematic Programme

## **Strengthening Global CSO Umbrella Organisations**

### **Guidelines for Framework Partnership and Grant Applicants**

Budget line(s): 14.020220 Civil Society Organisations

Reference: EuropeAid/175018/DH/FPA/Multi

Deadline for submission<sup>1</sup> of Financial Framework Partnership Applications:

**at 27/02/2022 at 12:00 (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 during European Commission public holidays in Belgium as published in the Official Journal). 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

This is a Call for Proposals to establish Financial Framework Partnerships, understood as a long-term cooperation mechanism through **Financial Framework Partnership Agreements (FFPAs)** and grants to co-finance their implementation. The establishment of a Financial Framework Partnership Agreement does not guarantee the allocation of a grant.

This is a **restricted call for proposals**. In the **first instance**, only Financial Framework Partnership application form (first phase) (Annex A.1 – Financial Framework Partnership application form) must be submitted for evaluation. An **eligibility check** will be performed for each FFPA application. Eligibility will be checked on the basis of the supporting documents requested by the Contracting Authority and the signed ‘Declaration by the Applicant’ (Section 7 of Annex A.1) sent together with the application. Only Financial Framework Partnership Applications from Applicants having passed the eligibility check will be evaluated. **Thereafter**, applicants who have been **selected** will sign a Financial Framework Partnership Agreement and be **invited to submit a specific Grant Application Form** (Annex A.2 – Specific Grant application form). The successful grant applications will then result in the signature of Specific Grant Agreements.

At a later stage, additional grants may be awarded, for which eligibility would be restricted to organisations having signed an FFPA with the EU under the present call. Award procedures for these subsequent specific grants within the FFPA is specified in the Financial Framework Partnership Agreement template (Annex O).

**To apply to this call for proposals, organisations must register in PADOR and submit their application in PROSPECT (see section 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.

A functional mailbox specifically dedicated to this call has been set up: [INTPA-175018@ec.europa.eu](mailto:INTPA-175018@ec.europa.eu). It shall be used exclusively for the purpose explained in paragraph 2.2 of these guidelines i.e., clarification requests within the set deadline. 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 categories. In particular, neither 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 instruction given in section 2.2 of these guidelines.

Framework Partnership application forms or specific grant application forms submitted by e-mail via this mailbox or any other mailbox will not be considered.

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>.

<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)

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## 1. SUPPORTING GLOBAL CSO UMBRELLA ORGANISATIONS

### 1.1. BACKGROUND

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are vital to promote the rule of law, to protect human rights to support democracy and good governance, to preserve peace and prevent conflict and to contribute to stability and resilience. They are key partners in **devising and implementing policies and programmes that meet people's needs, reduce inequalities**, and fulfil the central commitment of the **2030 Agenda**<sup>4</sup> to leave no one behind.

The EU is a **longstanding global champion for civil society** as actors of good governance and development actors in their own right and supports their engagement to contribute to democratic processes, more effective policies, equitable and sustainable development and inclusive growth. One key support is the Civil Society Organisations thematic programme. For the financial period 2021-2027, priorities and main actions have been laid down in the **Multiannual Indicative Programme** (MIP)<sup>5</sup> for the Thematic Programme for Civil Society Organisations 2021-2027, and the **Multiannual action plan** (MAP)<sup>6</sup> covering the first half of the same period (2021-2024). The legal base is regulation (EU) 2021/947 of The European Parliament and of the Council of 9 June 2021, establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI-Global Europe)<sup>7</sup>.

As the only thematic programme with a clear **actor-based mandate**, the CSOs programme aims to foster an **enabling environment** for civil society; to promote a meaningful and structured **participation** of CSOs in domestic policies of partner countries, in the EU programming cycle and in international processes; and to increase CSOs' **capacity** to perform their roles as independent development actors and actors of good governance, as well as contributors of policy-making<sup>8</sup>. It fully integrates the impetus of the new European Consensus on Development<sup>9</sup> (the 'Consensus') to align EU policies and actions to the objectives of the **2030 Agenda**.

Both MIP (2021-2027) and the MAP (2021-2024) build on the **achievements and lessons learned** under the previous programme, the 2014-2020 CSO-LA programme (Development Cooperation Instrument). Under the latter, the European Commission concluded in **2016** the **first generation of Framework Partnership Agreements** (FPAs) with CSOs, specifically 25 FPAs with regional and global representatives of actor-based and membership-based networks of CSOs.

This call for proposals aims to **conclude a new generation** of Financial Framework Partnership Agreements (FFPA) with Civil Society umbrella organisations under the new financial period (2021-2027).<sup>10</sup>

FFPAs are **strategic partnerships** with **CSO umbrella organisations**, which promote **values** and pursue objectives that are common to the EU. Due to their broad geographical coverage and number of members,

<sup>4</sup> Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015, New York. [https://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E](https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E)

<sup>5</sup> COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION of 14.12.2021 adopting a multiannual indicative programme for the Thematic Programme "Civil Society Organisations" for the period 2021-2027 Brussels, C(2021) 9158 final.

<sup>6</sup> COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION of 16.12.2021 on the financing of the multiannual action plan of the thematic programme Civil Society Organisations for years 2021-2024, C(2021) 9633 final.

<sup>7</sup> OJ L 209, 14.6.2021: [EUR-Lex - 32021R0947 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/eur-lex-portal/lexUriHandler?uri=EUR-Lex-32021R0947-EN-EUROPA-EU)

<sup>8</sup> *The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with Civil Society in external relations*, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions (COM (2012) 492), Brussels, 12.9.2012.

<sup>9</sup> *The new European Consensus on Development: Our world, our Dignity our Future*, Joint statement by the Council and the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission, 2017/C 210/01:

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C:2017:210:FULL&from=DE>

<sup>10</sup> Under Article 130 of the Financial Regulation, a FFPA is a means to facilitate the achievement of the EU's objectives by establishing the contractual terms of a long-term cooperation.

FFPAs have a **wide scope of representation and strong expertise**, which make them **leaders in their fields**.

By **forging a strategic partnership** with a selected number of CSOs, the EU wants to strengthen these CSOs further, both in their role as actors of governance and contributors to policy-making, and thus, with them and through them, further strengthen democratic values, at regional and global level.

This needs also to be seen in light of the 2021 Communication “Inclusive Multilateralism”,<sup>11</sup> which calls for the **voice of the CSOs to be heard also in the international arena**. Supporting CSOs to make their voice heard and to advocate for our common values, becomes therefore a political impetus, which goes beyond mere CSO policies. Furthermore, the new FFPAs will also complement the Global Gateway,<sup>12</sup> a new European strategy, which provides a positive choice for partner countries who need investment, firmly grounded in the same core principles and values of the EU.

## 1.2. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME AND PRIORITY ISSUES

The **global objective** of this call for proposals is to strengthen a limited number of representative, membership-based and actor-based global Civil Society umbrella organisations as leader and coordinator of a wider group of like-minded CSOs in order to maximize the effectiveness of their work as independent actors of good governance and development in their own right and as contributors to policy-making, including within multilateral and multi-stakeholders arenas.

For the purpose of this call for proposals, **actor-based global umbrella organisations are understood** as associations/federations of regional and/or national networks/platforms of CSOs, and/or individual CSOs, which aggregate and work together to coordinate activities and/or pool resources. These umbrella organisations gather civil society organisations belonging to the same family of actors, such as, *inter alia*, non-governmental organisations, cooperatives, trade unions, women's organisations, employers' organisations, foundations, etc.

The **specific objectives** of this call for proposals are:

- 1. To strengthen the capacities of CSO umbrella organisations for coordinated actions at global and regional levels;**

The **expected results** related to specific objective 1 are, *inter alia*:

- Enhanced capacities of CSOs umbrella organisations to **coordinate advocacy actions** at global and regional level on behalf of its members ;
- Enhanced capacities of CSO umbrella organisations to **participate and influence international policy-making** and global and regional processes as well as to monitor international policies and commitments implementation;
- Enhanced capacities of CSO umbrella organisations **to benefit from digital technologies** in the conduct of their daily activities (including advocacy, awareness raising, research, and training) as well as to protect from digital threats.

- 2. To reinforce the capacities of CSO umbrella organisations to effectively represent and be more accountable to their constituencies at global, regional and/or national levels;**

The **expected results** related to specific objective 2 are, *inter alia*:

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<sup>11</sup> *Strengthening the EU's contribution to rules-based multilateralism*, Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council, JOIN (2021) 3 final, Brussels, 17.2.2021.

<sup>12</sup> *The Global Gateway*, Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank, JOIN(2021) 30 final, Brussels, 1.12.2021.

- Enhanced capacities of CSO umbrella organisations to **represent their constituencies**, by effectively gathering their views and expressing them in regional and global debates and by reporting the conclusions/outcomes of these debates back to their constituencies (specific attention being paid to representing grassroots organisations views);
- Improved **communication flows** within the network, including in sharing lessons learnt, best practices, and information between countries to ensure more effective advocacy.

**3. To reinforce the capacities of the members of the CSO umbrella organisations to be actors of good governance in their own right;**

The **expected results** related to specific objective 3 are, inter alia:

- Enhanced capacities of members of the global CSO umbrella organisations (including digital capacities) to **engage in advocacy, awareness raising, research activities** at country level;
- Enhanced capacities of members of the global CSO umbrella organisations **for fundraising and project management** at country level;
- Fostered **regular dialogue** at country level between the national members of the global umbrella organisations and national authorities as well as with EU delegations, including in the framework of the EU country roadmaps for engagement with civil society process.<sup>13</sup>

**Applications under this call for proposals must address all of the above-mentioned specific objectives, in order for an application to be considered.**

The **purpose of this call for proposals** is both to **select umbrella organisations** with which the EU will establish a Financial Framework Partnership and to award grants to co-finance related actions. Accordingly, it is structured in two phases:

1. **A first phase to select framework strategic partners:** during this phase, strategic partners will be selected on the basis of their Financial Framework Partnership applications (Annex A.1 – Financial Framework Partnership application form). Those partnerships with the EU will be formalised through a Financial Framework Partnership Agreement. This FFPA will be based on the **common political objectives** shared by the EU and the applicant as detailed in this call for proposals, and will define the respective roles and responsibilities of the Commission and its strategic partner in implementing the partnership. It will be **based on the strategic plan** of the CSO umbrella organisation.

The evaluation will be based on the criteria specified in section 2.3. “Evaluation and Selection of Financial Framework Partnership Applications” and included in the evaluation grid, among which the membership, representativeness, competences, experience, expertise and capacity of the umbrella organisation as well as the relevance, coherence, quality, effectiveness and potential impact of the strategic plan translating in operational terms the objectives of the organisation.

The **successful applicants of the first phase** of this call for proposals will be invited to sign a Financial Framework Partnership Agreement (FFPA) with the European Commission (EC).

The beneficiaries of FFPAAs will then be invited to **submit a specific grant application form** (Annex A.2) that will be evaluated in the second phase of the present call.

Signature of an FFPA **does not** guarantee award of a specific grant contract.

**Under this call, the financial allocations, as well as the size of grants, relate exclusively to the second phase of the selection process: the action grants.**

2. **A second phase to invite the FFPA partners selected in the first phase, to submit specific grant applications** (Annex A.2 – Specific Grant Application form) for award of specific contracts. Specific

<sup>13</sup> <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/public-governance-civilsociety/wiki/roadmaps>

Grants will define the operational terms of the strategic partnership, instrumental to reaching political priorities and objectives which are shared between the EU and its partners.

The evaluation criteria for this second phase are explained in section 2.4. “Evaluation and selection of specific grant applications” of these guidelines.

It has to be underlined that the scope of Financial Framework Partnership Agreements, which will be established with the organisations, goes beyond the frame of the present call for proposals. In fact, at a later phase, additional grants beyond this call for proposal **may potentially be awarded** to the same umbrella organisations having signed an FFPA with the EU under the present call. They might be funded by the Civil Society Organisations Thematic Programme, or other thematic or geographic programmes, or by European Commission programmes managed by Directorate Generals other than Directorate General for International Partnerships in case those programmes support similar objectives as those identified under the strategic partnership and described in the FFPAAs. The procedure for awarding specific grants within the FFPA is specified in the FFPA template – Annex O.

It should be underlined as well that, as of 2024, grants contracts provided to FFPA holders through subsequent call for proposals will be done using eGrants, the future EU grant management system to award specific contracts.

#### **Lots under this call for proposals:**

The call for proposals is divided into different lots (4) per type of civil society actors. Financial Framework Partnership applications must target **only one** of the following lots:

**LOT 1:** proposals of **global** umbrella organisations of **non-governmental organisations (NGOs)**, having as members regional and/or national umbrella organisations and/or national individual organisations on different continents;

Under this call for proposals, applicants to an FFPA under lot 1 must clearly demonstrate how the objectives of their strategic plan as well as their applications for an action grant meet at least one of the following priorities of the European Commission:

- Climate, environment and energy
- Digital and infrastructure
- Human development
- Migration and forced displacement
- Peace and governance
- Sustainable growth and jobs

Detailed information on each of the above-mentioned priorities are provided on the following Commission website: [https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/our-work\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/our-work_en)

Under this lot, **priority will be given** to umbrella organisations that **covers a wide range of sectors**, as defined in the OECD list of CRS purpose codes<sup>14</sup>, **as well as several of the above-mentioned priorities of the Commission**. The evaluation committee will assess this in the section relevance of the action of the evaluation grids (section number 6.2 of the FFPA application form; section number 2.2 of the specific grant application form; question 2.2 of the FFPA evaluation grid).

**LOT 2:** proposals of **global** umbrella organisations of **civil society organizations with an overt youth participation and empowerment purpose**, having as members regional and/or national umbrella organisations and/or national individual organisations on different continents;

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<sup>14</sup> See Annex M: OECD list of CRS purpose codes

Under this call for proposals, applicants to an FFPA under lot 2 must clearly demonstrate how the objectives of their strategic plan as well as their applications for an action grant meet the objectives to support **civil society organizations, with an overt youth participation and empowerment purpose**, as actors of good governance and development with the aim to foster meaningful youth participation in the society (in the economic, social and cultural spheres) and in public-policy making and implementation at local, regional and global levels.

**Being youth-led organizations will be an asset.** To be considered a youth-led organisation the applicant will need to demonstrate that in their organisations young people under 30 occupy the majority of the decision-making positions, or have youth-led structures that have a formal say in the decision-making bodies, or that the majority of the members who make decisions on the working plan are young people under 30.

**LOT 3:** proposals of **global** umbrella organisations of **cooperatives**, having as members regional and/or national umbrella organisations and/or national individual organisations on different continents,

Under this call for proposals, applicants to an FFPA under lot 3 must clearly demonstrate how the objectives of their strategic plan as well as their applications for an action grant meet the objective support **cooperatives** as actors of good governance and development with the aim to **promote the world cooperative movement contribution to sustainable and inclusive growth** and its participation in public-policy making and implementation at local, regional and global levels

**LOT 4:** proposals of **global** umbrella organisations of **women's organisations**, having as members regional and/or national umbrella organisations and/or national individual organisations on different continents;

Under this call for proposals, applicants to an FFPA under lot 4 must clearly demonstrate how the objectives of their strategic plan as well as their applications for an action grant meet the objectives to support **women's organisations** as actors of good governance and development with the **primary** aim to **promote gender equality, in particular women rights and participation** in public-policy making and implementation at local, regional and global levels

Applicants should demonstrate how their strategic plan aims at **promoting gender equality and women's empowerment** in some of the key thematic areas of the [Gender Action Plan III](#)<sup>15</sup> (but not only) and more specifically in the following fields: Sexual and reproductive health and rights, economic and social rights, equal participation and leadership, women, peace and security agenda and gender equality in the green and digital transition.<sup>16</sup> Working on several of these thematic areas will be considered as an advantage.

The applicants should demonstrate that they are implementing the core GAP III principles: an intersectional, transformative and human right based approach.

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All applicants have to explain what are the specific common objectives (based on the strategic plan) that the action grant will **contribute to achieve**.

#### **Lots 1 to 4:**

The **reduction of inequality** is a key EU policy objective. Internally, this objective is enshrined in **EU treaties** and reflected in the European Pillar of Social Rights.<sup>17</sup> Equality and solidarity are also explicitly mentioned among the principles guiding the EU's external action. The **Global Strategy for the EU's**

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<sup>15</sup> [Gender Action Plan](#) (Gap) IOO – An Ambitious Agenda for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in EU External Action, Joint Communication to The European Parliament and The Council, SWD(2020) 284 final.

<sup>16</sup> NB: Support to women's organisations dealing with GBV will be done under a separate instrument (Global challenges- People component)

<sup>17</sup> Article 3 of the Treaty of Lisbon states that the EU 'shall combat social exclusion and discrimination, and shall promote social justice and protection, equality between women and men, solidarity between generations and protection of the rights of the child'.

**foreign and security policy** adopted in 2016, recalls the commitment of the EU and its Member States to fight poverty and inequality, widen access to public services and social security, promote decent work opportunities, notably for women and young people, and promote societal resilience.<sup>18</sup>

As a result, all applicants have to demonstrate how their strategic plan and grant applications take into account and aim to **contribute at reducing inequalities**, within the overall framework of the six above-mentioned priorities since inequalities is a multidimensional issue that can be tackled from a wide range of perspectives (education, climate change, digitalisation, financial inclusion, taxation etc.).

**Applicants are strongly encouraged to plan activities or work packages specifically dedicated to fighting inequality as defined in the Staff Working Document *Implementation of the new European Consensus on Development – Addressing inequality in partner countries*.**<sup>19</sup>

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Applicants to an FFPA and an action grant **are also strongly encouraged** to refer to **Commission official documents** such as Staff Working Documents, Communications, Action Plan, Strategies, etc. in order to demonstrate that their strategic plans and grant application aim to achieve objectives that are common to those of the Commission, including reducing inequalities.<sup>20</sup> In any case, applicants have to demonstrate a good knowledge of EU policies as regard selected priority(ies) and provide detailed explanation linking the applicant strategic plan and grant application to the EU objectives.

**Applicants are also invited to explain how their strategic plan and grant application aim to contribute to the achievements of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.**<sup>21</sup>

The quality of those explanations **will be assessed by the evaluation committee** in the section relevance of the action of the evaluation grids (section number 6.2 of the FFPA application form and section number 2.2 of the specific grant application form).

### **Cross-cutting issues**

The cross-cutting issues to be taken into account when designing proposals include:

- **Human Rights (Human Rights-based approach)**

The European Consensus on Development commits the EU and its Member States to implementing a human rights-based approach (HRBA) to development cooperation, encompassing all human rights. It thereby reinforces the EU's commitment to a HRBA as outlined in the [2012 EU Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy](#), the [2021 Tool-box "A Rights-Based Approach, Encompassing All Human Rights, for EU Development Cooperation"](#), and the respective [Council Conclusions](#). Besides, the NDICI Instrument shall apply a rights-based approach encompassing all human rights, whether civil and political or economic, social and cultural in order to integrate human rights principles, to support the right holders in claiming their

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<sup>18</sup> These commitments are further emphasised in the **new European Consensus on development**, which sets out the shared development-policy framework for the EU and its Member States in support of the 2030 Agenda. The **Consensus recognises the importance of addressing inequality**, calling on the EU and its Member States to “*act to reduce inequality of outcomes and promote equal opportunities for all [...] directly assist the poorest and most vulnerable sections of society and [...] promote more inclusive, sustainable growth that does not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs*”.

<sup>19</sup> European Commission, Staff Working Document, Implementation of the new European Consensus on Development – *Addressing inequality in partner countries*, Brussels, 14.6.2019, SWD(2019) 280 final, p. 5 and 6. <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10350-2019-INIT/en/pdf>

<sup>20</sup> Applicants can also access the reference document titled “Addressing income inequalities through development cooperation” that aims to support the ongoing effort of the European Union (EU) to strengthen its approach to development cooperation to address inequalities in its partner countries: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail-/publication/943dbedf-20d5-11ec-bd8e-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

<sup>21</sup> United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: <https://sdgs.un.org/fr/goals>

rights, with a focus on poorer, marginalised and vulnerable people and groups, including persons with disabilities, and to assist partner countries in implementing their international human rights obligations. That approach shall be guided by the principles of 'leaving no one behind', equality and non-discrimination on any grounds.

In line with a Human Rights-Based Approach, development cooperation should **contribute to the development of the capacities of 'rights-holders'** to claim their rights and '**duty-bearers**' to meet their obligations. Programmes and projects therefore need to assess the capacities of rights-holders and duty-bearers and develop the appropriate strategies to build these capacities.

The HRBA methodology also reminds us that development projects can have unintended negative impact in terms of human rights such as disadvantaging certain groups, interfering with participation rights and labour rights or contributing to forced displacement. It is therefore important to abide by the 'do no harm' principle and carry out the required analysis and mitigation.

Moreover, the HRBA working methodology recognises that pursuing desired human rights outcomes is not, in itself, enough. The way these outcomes are achieved is equally important. Programmes should therefore monitor and evaluate both outcomes and processes.

Applicants should explain to what extent their applications for an FFPA and an action grant take into account the rights-based approach. Explanations will be assessed by the evaluation committee in the section relevance of the action of the evaluation grids (section number 6.2 of the FFPA application form and section number 2.2 of the specific grant application form).

- **Gender Equality**

Equality between men and women is at the **core of values of the European Union** (EU). The Gender Action Plan III 2021-2025<sup>22</sup> stresses the need for the full realisation of women's and girls' full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Gender equality is also a central, standalone goal in the 2030 Agenda.

Applicants should explain to what extent their applications for an FFPA and an action grant take into account gender equality issues (for the FFPA step), and meet the minimum criteria for the project to qualify for a 1 score under the DAC gender equality policy marker (for the action grant step)<sup>23</sup>. Explanations will be assessed by the evaluation committee in the section relevance of the action of the evaluation grids (section number 6.2 of the FFPA application form and section number 2.2 of the specific grant application form).

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<sup>22</sup> EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III – An Ambitious Agenda For Gender Equality And Women's Empowerment In EU External Action, Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council, JOIN(2020) 17 final.

<sup>23</sup> 1) Findings from a **gender analysis** inform the proposal, which adopts a 'do no harm' approach. 2) The proposal include one gender equality specific **objective/expected outcome** of the overall action in line with EU commitments and the GAP III; *or*, if it is not possible to have at least one specific objective/ expected outcome to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, clear language expressing **commitment (s) to achieve gender equality** must be integrated in one of the other specific objective(s)/outcome of the Action; *or* at least one output promoting gender equality and women's empowerment should be included. 3) The proposal includes one **gender-responsive and/or one indicator informing on gender equality** and women's empowerment either at output or preferably outcome level. Furthermore, **data and indicators disaggregated at least by sex** are planned where applicable. 5) The proposal ensures that gender equality will be **mainstreamed into the monitoring and evaluation** of the action and that indicators will be sex-disaggregated and disaggregated by other relevant aspects whenever possible (e.g. age, disability and/or any other relevant aspects).

- **Environment and climate change**

EU treaties and policies underpin the Union's high-level commitment to environmental sustainability and to combating climate change. Mainstreaming environment and climate change is essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

**Applicants should explain to what extent their applications for an FFPA and an action grant take into account the environmental and climate change issues.** Explanations will be assessed by the evaluation committee in the section relevance of the action of the evaluation grids (section number 6.2 of the FFPA application form and section number 2.2 of the grant application form).

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

The successful applicants of the first stage of this call for proposals will establish a Financial Framework Partnership with the EU through an FFPA.

The beneficiaries of FFPAAs will be invited to submit grant applications (i.e. Specific Grant Application Form) that will be evaluated in the **second stage** of the present call.

Signature of an FFPA does not guarantee that the beneficiary will be awarded a grant.

**The financial allocations, as well as the size of grants, relate exclusively to the second phase of the selection process: the action grants.**

The overall **indicative amount** made available under this call for proposals is EUR **56,000,000**. The contracting authority reserves the right not to award all available funds.

**Indicative allocation of funds by lot:**

**LOT 1 - Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)**

Total available: EUR **35,000,000** for proposals of **global** umbrella organisations of **non-governmental organisations (NGOs)**;

**LOT 2 - Civil society organizations with an overt youth participation and empowerment purpose**

Total available: EUR **3,000,000** for proposals of **global** umbrella organisations of civil society organizations with an overt youth participation and empowerment purpose;

**LOT 3 – Cooperatives**

Total available: EUR **8,000,000** for proposals of **global** umbrella organisations of **cooperatives**;

**LOT 4 – Women's organisations**

Total available: EUR **10,000,000** proposals of **global** umbrella organisations of **women's organisations**.

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

**For lot 1 - Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)**

- minimum amount: EUR **3,000,000**
- maximum amount: EUR **5,000,000**

**For lot 2 - Civil society organizations with an overt youth participation and empowerment purpose**

- minimum amount: **EUR 1,500,000**
- maximum amount: **EUR 3,000,000**

#### **For lot 3 - Cooperatives**

- minimum amount: **EUR 6,000,000**
- maximum amount: **EUR 8,000,000**

#### **For lot 4 - Women's organisations**

- minimum amount: **EUR 3,000,000**
- maximum amount: **EUR 5,000,000**

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

Minimum percentage: **60 % of the total eligible costs of the action** (see also Section 2.1.4).

Maximum percentage: **90 % of the total eligible costs of the action** (see also Section 2.1.4).

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.

## 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>24</sup>

### **2.1. Eligibility criteria**

There are three sets of eligibility criteria, relating to:

(1) the actors (section 2.1.1 and 2.1.2):

- The ‘**lead applicant**’, i.e. the entity submitting the application form,
- 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)’) ,
- and, if any, **affiliated entity(ies)** to the lead applicant and/or to a co-applicant(s);

(2) the Strategic Plan and the related actions:

- Areas of intervention of the Strategic Plan ;
- Actions for which a specific grant may be awarded (section 2.1.3);

(3) the costs under the specific grant:

- Types of cost that may be taken into account in setting the amount of the grant (2.1.4).

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

##### **Lead applicant**

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

- be a legal person **and**
- be non-profit-making **and**
- be a representative, actor-based, membership-based global umbrella organisation<sup>2526</sup> of civil society organisations<sup>27</sup>**and**

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<sup>24</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.

<sup>25</sup> For the purpose of this call for proposals, **actor-based umbrella organisations are understood** as associations/federations of regional and/or national networks/platforms of CSOs, and/or individual CSOs, which aggregate and work together to coordinate activities and/or pool resources. These umbrella organisations gather civil society organisations belonging to the same family of actors, such as, inter alia, non-governmental organisations, cooperatives, trade unions, employers' organisations, foundations, etc.

<sup>26</sup> For the purpose of this call, **networks composed of branches** of the same organisation, albeit located in different countries, **are not eligible**.

- **For LOT 1:** be a **global** umbrella organisation of **non-governmental organisations (NGOs)**, having as members regional and/or national umbrella organisations and/or national individual organisations on different continents;
- **For LOT 2:** be a **global** umbrella organisation of **civil society organizations with an overt youth participation and empowerment purpose**, having as members regional and/or national umbrella organisations and/or national individual organisations on different continents<sup>28</sup>;
- **For LOT 3:** be a **global** umbrella organisation of **cooperatives**, having as members regional and/or national umbrella organisations on different continents;
- **For LOT 4:** be a **global** umbrella organisation of **women's organisations**,<sup>29</sup> having as members regional and/or national umbrella organisations and/or national individual organisations on different continents;

**and**

- be established in<sup>30</sup>313233
- 

<sup>27</sup> Civil society organisations **embrace a wide range of actors** with multiple roles and mandates which includes all **non-State, not-for-profit independent and non-violent structures**, through which people organise the pursuit of shared objectives and ideals, whether political, cultural, religious, environmental, social or economic. Operating from local, national, regional and international levels, they comprise urban and rural, formal and informal organisations.

<sup>28</sup> The applicants should have **a diverse and inclusive membership** representing youth in all their diversity.

<sup>29</sup> In this action **women's rights organisations are understood** as being organisations or groups that work from a feminist and/or women right's perspective, are led by the people they serve, have the promotion of women and girls as their primary mission and push for structural change.

<sup>30</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.

<sup>31</sup> With regard to Israeli entities, please follow Guidelines on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards (OJ C 205, 19.7.2013, p. 9).

<sup>32</sup> With regard to entities based in India:

a) All local Indian entities applying under the Call must have a valid FCRA registration certificate at the time of submitting their Concept Note. The FCRA registration certificate will need to be uploaded in PROSPECT at the time of submission of the full proposal.

b) In case the lead applicant is an Indian Local Organization it will not be possible to have a co-applicant, except if the costs of co-applicants can be covered by the co-funding or their own funds (no transfer of foreign funds is allowed).

c) Section 2.1 & 2.1.4 of the Guidelines for applicants:

- Section 2.1 of the Guidelines: if the lead applicant is an Indian organisation, co-applicants are not allowed unless their costs are covered by the local co financing or their own funds.

- Section 2.1.4 of the Guidelines: Financial support to third parties provided by Indian entities (applicants or co-applicants) is not allowed for activities in India.

The following documents must be provided in PROSPECT and they will be verified at the moment of submission of the Full Application:

- FCRA registration certificate of all Indian entities
- Self-declaration declaring to be aware and compliant with all the provisions and requirements of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill 2020 signed by the Indian lead applicant and in case of a European lead applicant by each Indian co-applicant.
- In case of a European lead applicant, self-declaration that it can transfer funds to the Indian co-applicants.

**I. Member States**, beneficiaries listed in the relevant Annex to the IPA III Regulation and contracting parties to the Agreement on the European Economic Area;

**II. Neighbourhood partner countries;**

**III. Developing countries and territories**, as included in the list of ODA recipients published by the OECD Development Assistance Committee, which are not members of the G-20 group, and overseas countries and territories;

**IV. Developing countries**, as included in the list of ODA recipients, which are members of the G-20 group, and other countries and territories, when the relevant procedure takes place in the context of an action financed by the Union under the Instrument in which they participate;

and

- Be directly responsible for the **preparation and management of the Strategic Plan** and of any grant that might be financed under the Framework Partnership Agreement with the co-applicant(s) and members/affiliated entity(ies), not acting as an intermediary.

**Under this call for proposals, International Organisations are not eligible<sup>34</sup>.**

**Coverage<sup>35</sup>**

**Under lot 1 (NGO) and lot 3 (Cooperatives)**, the membership of the umbrella organisation applying for a Financial Framework Partnership Agreement must cover **at least 50 countries, on at least 4 continents**.

**Under lot 2 (civil society organizations with an overt youth participation and empowerment purpose)**, the membership of the umbrella organisation applying for a Financial Framework Partnership Agreement must cover **at least 30 countries, on at least 3 continents**.

**Under lot 4 (women's organisations)**, the membership of the umbrella organisation applying for a Financial Framework Partnership Agreement **must cover at least 45 countries**, on at least 4 continents.

- (2) Potential applicants may not participate in calls for proposals or be awarded Financial Framework Partnership Agreement and of any grant if they are in any of the situations listed in Section 2.6.10.1 of the practical guide (PRAG 2021);

Lead applicants, co-applicants, affiliated entities and, in case of legal entities, persons who have powers of representation, decision-making or control over the lead applicant, the co-applicants and the affiliated entities are informed that, should they be in one of the situations of early detection or exclusion according to Section 2.6.10.1 of the practical guide, personal details (name, given name if natural person, address, legal form and name and given name of the persons with powers of representation,

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<sup>33</sup> List of eligible countries is available in annex N

<sup>34</sup> As per Article 156 FR, '**international organisation**' means an international public-sector organisation set up by international agreement, and specialised agencies set up by such organisations — these organisations may have a worldwide or regional scope. Organisations such as the United Nations and its agencies and specialised entities, the World Bank, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Word Trade Organisation, the International Monetary Fund, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Organisation for Migration clearly fall under the definition of '**international organisation**'. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are also recognised as international organisations. In cases of doubt, to ascertain whether an organisation is covered by the definition, the nature of the organisation must be determined mainly on the basis of its legal founding documents (for instance, its statutes and/or the intergovernmental agreement setting it up).

<sup>35</sup> If a global network is composed of regional networks, members of the regional network can be included in the determination of the geographical coverage.

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 or those placed in the reserve list are obliged to declare that they are not in one of the exclusion situations through a signed declaration on honour (PRAG Annex A14b). In the Annex A.1 Section 7 and Annex A.2 Section 6 ('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.

When submitting applications for FFPAAs, the lead applicants and the co-applicant(s) (if any) will be evaluated based on their collective experience as a whole and selected on the basis of a common strategic plan.

If awarded the specific grant contract, the lead applicant will become the beneficiary identified as the coordinator in Annex G (special conditions). The coordinator is the sole 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.

**NB: Only under lot 2**, for the purpose of this call for proposals an umbrella organisation without legal personality could be represented by one of its members designated as Lead Applicant. **In this respect, the Lead Applicant shall have a mandate signed by the other members of the umbrella organisation. Please note that subsequent possible grant agreements will be signed by the Lead Applicant in its own name and not in the name of the umbrella organisation.**<sup>36</sup>

### **Co-applicant(s)**

The lead applicant **may act individually or with co-applicant(s)**. Co-applicants should be members of the umbrella organisations. However, not all members of the umbrella organisation must be included as co-applicants. Only organisations **with a clearly defined and significant role in the strategic plan** of the umbrella organisation may be included as co-applicants in the Financial Framework Partnership application and the Action Grant application. The **number of co-applicants** included in the FFPA and the specific grant should be limited to ten (10). Co-applicants for the FFPA (first phase) will be equally considered as the co-applicants of the specific action grant (second phase).

Co-applicant(s) participate in designing and implementing the Strategic Plan, and the costs they may incur in the implementation of any grant related to the Financial Framework Partnership are eligible in the same way as those incurred by the applicant.

**NB: Under lot 2**, if the lead Applicant is a member of the umbrella organisation (without legal personality), and not the umbrella organisation itself, **other members** of the umbrella organisation participating in the implementation of the action have to be identified as **co-applicants of the Financial Framework Partnership Agreement and the Specific grant agreement**. The number of co-applicants included in the FFPA and the specific grant should be limited to ten (10).

Co-applicant(s) must satisfy the following eligibility criteria:

- be a legal person **and**
- be non-profit-making **and**
- be a Civil Society Organisation<sup>37</sup> or an association of Civil Society Organisations
- be established in<sup>38394041</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> The lead applicant should in such a case demonstrate the previous existence of the network by providing (in Annex A.1. - section 5.2.) information on common advocacy / awareness raising activities, common declarations, common studies, common recommendations, common events, common website etc.

<sup>37</sup> See footnote 28

**I. Member States**, beneficiaries listed in the relevant Annex to the IPA III Regulation and contracting parties to the Agreement on the European Economic Area;

**II. Neighbourhood partner countries;**

**III. Developing countries and territories**, as included in the list of ODA recipients published by the OECD Development Assistance Committee, which are not members of the G-20 group, and overseas countries and territories;

**IV. Developing countries**, as included in the list of ODA recipients, which are members of the G-20 group, and other countries and territories, when the relevant procedure takes place in the context of an action financed by the Union under the Instrument in which they participate;

Co-applicant(s) **must sign the Mandate** in section 4.3 of the Financial Framework Partnership application form (Annex A.1.).

If awarded the Financial Framework Partnership Agreement, the co-applicant(s)(if any) will become co-partners in the Financial Framework Partnership Agreement (together with the Partner).

If awarded the specific grant contract, the co-applicant(s) (if any) will become beneficiary(ies) in the action (together with the coordinator).

**Under this call for proposals, International Organisations<sup>42</sup> are not eligible.**

(3) In addition, please note that contracts cannot be awarded to or signed with applicants included in the lists of EU restrictive measures (see Section 2.4. of the PRAG).

**Affiliated entities (Specific Grant Application phase only)**

The lead applicant shall attach a **complete list of the members** of the umbrella organisation it represents to its FFPA form. **There will be no affiliated entities for the purpose of the FFPA.**

**However, for the purpose of the specific grant**, the lead applicant and its co-applicant(s), if any, may act with affiliated entity(ies). Only members of the umbrella organisation closely involved in the implementation of the action will be considered as affiliated entities for the specific grant. In the Grant Application Form, the applicant must specify which ones of its members will be directly involved in the Action, and identify them as affiliated entities.

The eligibility of affiliated entities is restricted to CSOs established in countries described above under section 2.1.1, which are members of the lead applicant's umbrella organisation.

**NB: Under lot 2**, if the lead applicant is a member of the umbrella organisation (without legal personality), and not the umbrella organisation itself, it should also attach a complete list of the members of the umbrella organisation. There will be **no affiliated entities** neither for the FFPA nor for the specific grant. The members of the umbrella organisation **participating in the specific grant** will be identified as co-Applicants for both the FFPA and the specific grant agreement.

**Only the following entities may be considered as affiliated entities to the lead applicant:**

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<sup>38</sup> See footnote 31

<sup>39</sup> See footnote 32

<sup>40</sup> See footnote 33

<sup>41</sup> See footnote 34 (List of eligible countries is available in annex N)

<sup>42</sup> See footnote 35

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

This structural link encompasses mainly two notions:

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

Entities affiliated to an applicant may hence be:

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

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

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

#### What is not an affiliated entity?

The following are not considered entities affiliated to an applicant:

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

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

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

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

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

They must sign the affiliated entity(ies) statement in Annex A.2 (Specific Grant application form) Section 4.3.

### ***2.1.2. Associates and contractors***

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

- Associates

Other organisations or individuals may be involved in the action. Such associates play a real role in the action but may not receive funding from the grant, with the exception of per diem or travel costs. Associates do not have to meet the eligibility criteria referred to in Section 2.1.1. Associates must be mentioned in Annex A.2 Section 5 — ‘Associates participating in the action’.

- Contractors

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

### ***2.1.3. Eligible actions: actions for which a specific grant application may be made (second phase- once the FFPA has been attributed)***

Definition:

An action is composed of a set of activities.

Duration

The duration of Financial Framework Partnerships will be **48 months** as of the date of signature.

The planned duration of the specific action grant must be **between 48 and 60 months**.

Location

The **Action must take place in eligible countries** covered by the FFPA, however, a minor part of the action may take place in other countries where **relevant for the implementation of the action**. In this case, the applicant must justify this choice in the description of the action. The justification will be assessed by the evaluation committee in section 1.3 of the evaluation grid of the grant application.

**Eligible countries** are defined as follows<sup>43</sup>:

- I. **Member States**, beneficiaries listed in the relevant Annex to the IPA III Regulation and contracting parties to the Agreement on the European Economic Area;
- II. **Neighbourhood partner countries**;

<sup>43</sup> See Annex N for the list of eligible countries

**III. Developing countries and territories**, as included in the list of ODA recipients published by the OECD Development Assistance Committee, which are not members of the G-20 group, and overseas countries and territories;

**IV. Developing countries**, as included in the list of ODA recipients, which are members of the G-20 group, and other countries and territories, when the relevant procedure takes place in the context of an action financed by the Union under the Instrument in which they participate;

#### Types of action

The actions covered by the specific grant should be directly linked to the strategic plan foreseen in the FFPA, and should be coherent with the objectives of this plan.

#### Types of activity

Activities should include elements of **capacity development of members**<sup>44</sup>, and should in principle also include some transfer of responsibilities from the global to the regional and/or national levels or from the regional to the national levels for the implementation of relevant parts of the strategic plan. Activities aiming at reaching out to grassroots organisations are encouraged.

Capacity development activities should in all cases be determined on the basis of concrete needs of the concerned CSOs. It needs to adhere to **a holistic approach** and project capacity development in the future as a **long-term commitment**. The following broad categories of capacity development should be considered (not exhaustive):

- **Capacity for legitimacy and internal governance**, including accountability and transparency: By improving internal governance, including decision-making processes in which the leadership of the CSO is enacted in a representative, participative, effective and accountable way; and by building trust and legitimacy by representing the objectives and concerns of their members in an effective, transparent and accountable way;
- **Capacity to learn**: By developing CSO expertise on various thematic areas / sector as well as staff skills, including the use of (digital) tools, that will ultimately produce results conducive to the fulfilment of the organization's mission;
- **Capacity for organizational and project management**: By developing technical strength on project formulation, implementation, financial management, monitoring and evaluation, fundraising, internal administration, etc., in order to achieve technical and financial sustainability of the organisation;
- **Capacity for research, awareness raising and evidence-based advocacy**: By strengthening the capacity to generate independent research and evidence to inform stakeholders and the public, building cases for policy change, and developing adequate advocacy and communication skills ;
- **Capacity for coordination and collaboration**: By improving the ability to build and strengthen coalitions and networks to share information and knowledge, lessons learnt, and strategies, and developing common positions and participation in joint actions.

Applicants are in particular invited, if relevant, to propose **activities aimed at developing IT infrastructure and tools** (hardware and software) to facilitate communication and exchange of information within the network ; to strengthen digital security and data protection mechanisms, including through training on **digital**

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<sup>44</sup> In line with definitions adopted by the OECD, capacity is here defined as the ability of people, organisations, and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully. Capacity development in turn is the process whereby people, organisations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt, and maintain capacity over time. The capacities of CSOs should be viewed holistically. This means for example that specific capacities of CSOs should not be viewed as isolated phenomena, but rather it is important to understand the dynamics between different types of capacities

**security** ; to improve the capacity of umbrella organisations and its members to **benefit from new digital technologies** in the achievement of their strategic plan objectives;

The contracting authority **reminds and underlines** that one key aspect of the FFPA is to support the umbrella organisations in their capacity and mission to represent their constituencies, by effectively gathering their views and expressing them in regional and global debates. The applicants are therefore requested to clearly demonstrate in their applications for the action grant how they will proceed to ensure and strengthen the bottom-up flow of information from their members in order to convey their local voices, experiences and concerns within regional and global arenas. The quality of those explanations **will be assessed by the evaluation committee** in the section relevance of the action of the evaluation grids (section number 6.2 of the FFPA application form and section number 2.2 of the grant application form).

In addition to **capacity-building and advocacy**, activities should also pay attention to **awareness raising, and research**.

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**Examples of above-mentioned activities**, which could be financed by the action grant, may include, among others:

- organise capacity/needs assessments and provide capacity-building and strengthening support to members of the umbrella organisations including possibly through dissemination of good practices, mentoring and/or coaching, peer-learning seminars, development and delivery of trainings, staff exchanges etc.;
- share information between members of the umbrella organisations e.g. through seminars, webinars,
- organise and participate to conferences and side events;
- conduct research, analysis, shadow reporting, and publication of reports;
- awareness raising and advocacy with national and international organisations as well as with the private sector;
- provide inputs to the High-Level Political Forum and other relevant selected global processes;
- participate to the development or revision of government policies;
- coordinate advocacy activities at international level;
- monitor the implementation of public commitments;
- represent and convey the voices of the members of the umbrella organisation within international organisations and fora

Applicants should ensure that support provided to its members is **well-adapted to the local context**.

#### **Under the lot 2 – civil society organizations with an overt youth participation and empowerment purpose**

In complementarity with the activities mentioned for all lots, activities should in particular consist in advocacy on **youth participation and inclusion** within decision-making processes and policy dialogues at local, national, regional and global level as well as strengthening young people and youth organisations capacities to **engage with policy-makers**. Activities should also contribute to the Youth Action Plan<sup>45</sup> and include (the coordination of) consultations with young people, youth organisations and networks to **feed into EU policies and programmes**.

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<sup>45</sup> [Youth Action Plan \(YAP\)](#) in EU external action 2022 – 2027 Promoting meaningful youth participation and empowerment in EU external action for sustainable development, equality and peace, Joint Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, JOIN(2022) 53 final

## **Policy Forum on Development.**

Activities should also consist in **chairing or participating** in (and potentially in the creation of) thematic and/or actor based working groups that will be established within and beyond the **Policy Forum on Development**.<sup>46</sup>

Specifically, based on their expertise, grantees will have to select or establish and chair – during the whole implementation period - **at least one thematic or actor based working group** that will meet mostly online and occasionally in situ.

The working groups will **hold discussions on policies and produce** policy briefs /positions papers<sup>47</sup> either spontaneously based on the discussions and initiatives of the working groups, or upon request of the contracting authority e.g. in the framework of consultations aimed at collecting inputs and opinions from civil society organisations and local authorities in the design of EU policies and programmes.

The FFPA members of such working groups will have key responsibility and will be **key interlocutors to the contracting authority** on the work and outcome (e.g. production of studies and policy papers etc.) Sufficient human resources should be planned in this regard (organising the meeting and its agenda, steering the discussion, research and drafting of studies etc.).

More detailed orientations in terms of working methods will be provided at the beginning of the implementation period.

Applicants are also requested to explain how the activities proposed will **contribute in achieving the common political objectives**<sup>48</sup> shared by the EU and the applicant in the context of the strategic plan (section number 2.2 of the grant application form).

The following types of action are ineligible:

- actions concerned only or mainly with individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences and congresses;
- actions concerned only or mainly with individual scholarships for studies or training courses;
- actions which consist exclusively or primarily in capital expenditure, such as infrastructure, land, equipment
- actions which discriminate against individuals or groups of people on grounds of their gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or lack of them, or their ethnic origin;
- actions supporting directly political parties.
- actions which include proselytising activities

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<sup>46</sup> The overarching goal of the **Policy Forum on Development (PFD)** is to offer CSOs and LAs from the EU and partner countries, as well as European institutions, a multi-stakeholder space for dialogue on development issues at EU Headquarters level. The PFD pursues 3 **key objectives**:

**1. Dialogue** on cross-cutting issues directly related to the role of CSOs and LAs as relevant development actors in their own rights

**2. Policy debate**, consultation and exchange of information and experiences on key EU development policies and initiatives

**3. Drafting key recommendations** to be shared with representatives of EU institutions and other key development stakeholders

Further information on the PFD are available on the following website: <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/policy-forum-development/book/820/print>

<sup>47</sup> Applicants will have to draft an indicative number of 2 to 4 policy briefs /positions papers a year.

<sup>48</sup> The common political objectives are based on the priorities defined under section 1.2. of the guidelines titled "Objectives of the Programme and priority issues"

The activities covered by the action grant should be directly linked to the strategic plan foreseen in the FPA, and should be coherent with the objectives of this plan.

#### Financial support to third parties (FSTP)<sup>49</sup>

Applicants **may** propose financial support to third parties in order to help achieving the objectives of the action.<sup>50</sup>

The maximum amount of financial support per third party is EUR ≤ 60,000 except where achieving the objectives of the actions would otherwise be impossible or overly difficult, in which case this threshold can be exceeded. It would have to be justified and authorised by the contracting authority. A threshold below EUR 60,000 can be set if appropriate.

**Under this call, financial support to third parties may exclusively be provided to members of the umbrella organisation (when they are not identified as co-applicant or affiliated entities in the grant contract).<sup>51</sup>**

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 2.2. of Annex A.2 (Specific Grant application form)

- (i) the overall objectives, the specific objective(s) and the outputs<sup>52</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
- (vi) the maximum amount which may be given.

In all events, the mandatory conditions set above for giving financial support (points (i) to (vi)) 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. Unless the European Commission agrees otherwise, actions that are wholly or partially funded by the European Union must ensure the visibility of EU financing by displaying the EU emblem in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Operational guidelines for recipients of EU funding, published by the European Commission. If applicable, communication activities may be undertaken 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. All measures and activities relating to visibility and, if applicable, communication, must comply with the latest Communication and Visibility Requirements for EU-funded external action, laid down and published by the

<sup>49</sup> These third parties are neither affiliated entity(ies) nor associates nor contractors.

<sup>50</sup> When proposing financial support to third parties, applicants are invited to ensure they plan sufficient human resources to allow appropriate management of the FSTP.

<sup>51</sup> If a member of the umbrella organisation is expected to significantly participate in the implementation of the action, it is recommended to include that member as an affiliated entity instead of using FSTP.

<sup>52</sup> As per OECD DAC definition, the term ‘results’ includes: ‘impact’ (overall objective), ‘outcome(s)’ (specific objective(s) and ‘output(s)’.

Exceptions to the standard visibility requirements established in the general conditions of the grant contract are to be agreed with the contracting authority prior to conclusion of the specific grant contract.

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

The lead applicant **may not** submit more than one Financial Framework Partnership application form under this call for proposals.

Under this call for proposals, the lead applicant **may not** be a co-applicant or an affiliated entity in another Financial Framework Partnership application form at the same time.

Under this call for proposals, a co-applicant/affiliated entity **may not** be the co-applicant or affiliated entity in another Financial Framework Partnership application form at the same time.

#### ***2.1.4. Eligibility of costs: costs that can be included (second phase)***

European Union contribution under this call for proposals take the following form:

- Reimbursement of eligible costs that may be based on any or a combination of the following forms:
  - (i) actual costs incurred by the beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies);
  - (ii) one or more simplified cost options (see below).

Only ‘eligible costs’ can be covered by a specific 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’.

Simplified cost options may take the form of:

- **unit costs:** covering all or certain specific categories of eligible costs which are clearly identified in advance by reference to an amount per unit.
- **lump sums:** covering in global terms all or certain specific categories of eligible costs which are clearly identified in advance.
- **flat-rate financing:** covering specific categories of eligible costs which are clearly identified in advance by applying a percentage fixed ex ante.

Simplified costs options (SCOs) which can be proposed are the following:

"Output or result based SCOs": they include costs linked to outputs, results, activities, deliverables in the framework of a specific project (for example the determination of a lump sum for the organization of a conference, or for the realisation of a determined output/activity). Where possible and appropriate, lump sums or unit costs shall be determined in such a way to allow their payment upon achievement of concrete outputs and/or results. This type of SCO can be proposed by the beneficiary (no threshold is applicable) at proposal's stage (in Annex A.2 – Grant Application Form –). In case the evaluation committee is not satisfied with the quality of the justification provided reimbursement on the basis of actually incurred costs is always possible.

Refer to Annex K for the details of the procedure to be followed depending on the type and amount of the costs to be declared as SCO.

Applicants proposing this form of reimbursement, must clearly indicate in worksheet no.1 of Annex B, each heading/item of eligible costs concerned by this type of financing, i.e. add the reference in capital letters to ‘UNIT COST’, ‘LUMPSUM’, in the Unit column (see example in Annex K).

Additionally in Annex B, in the second column of worksheet no.2, ‘Justification of the estimated costs’ per each of the corresponding budget item or heading applicants must:

- describe the information and methods used to establish the amounts of unit costs and/or lump sums to which costs they refer, etc. for output or result based SCO;
- clearly explain the formulas for calculation of the final eligible amount for output or result based SCO;

No threshold is set ex-ante for the total amount of financing that can be authorised by the contracting authority on the basis of simplified cost options.

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

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

The grant may take the form of a single lump-sum covering the entire eligible costs of an action or a work programme.

Single lump sums may be determined on the basis of the estimated budget, which should comply with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Compliance with these principles shall be verified ex ante at the time of evaluation of the grant application.

When authorising single lump sums the authorising officer responsible shall comply with the conditions applicable to output or result based SCOs.

When using this form of financing, the description of the action shall include detailed information on the essential conditions triggering the payment, including, where applicable, the achievement of outputs and/or results.

#### 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 (Annex G of the Guidelines).

#### 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 not eligible costs (except for personnel costs for the work carried out by volunteers under an action or operating grant if so authorised).

The contracting authority may accept co-financing in kind in the form of volunteers' work. Volunteers' work may comprise up to 50 % of the co-financing. For the purposes of calculating this percentage, contributions in kind in the form of volunteers' work must be based on the unit cost per volunteer per day as defined and authorised by the European Commission at the following address: [https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/?fuseaction=list&coteId=3&year=2019&number=2646&version=A\\_LL&language=en](https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/?fuseaction=list&coteId=3&year=2019&number=2646&version=A_LL&language=en). This type of costs must be presented separately from other eligible costs in the estimated budget, in the dedicated budget line 10.2 of the budget template (Annex B). The value of the volunteer's work must always be excluded from the calculation of indirect costs. When the estimated costs include volunteers' work, the grant shall not exceed the estimated eligible costs other than the costs for volunteers' work.

Contributions involving real estate must be excluded from the calculation of the amount of co-financing. In kind contributions must comply with national tax and social security rules.

If co-financing in kind is proposed, it must be included in Annex B (Worksheet 3) to the guidelines for applicants on the expected sources of funding for the action. The same amount must be indicated in the budget (worksheet 1).

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

#### 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;
- in kind contributions (except for volunteers' work);
- bonuses included in costs of staff;
- negative interest charged by banks or other financial institutions;
- credit to third parties;
- salary costs of the personnel of national administrations.

## **2.1.5. 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.

Applicants (and affiliated entities) other than (i) natural persons (ii) pillar-assessed entities and (iii) governments and other public bodies whose application has been pre-selected or placed in a reserve list, shall assess their internal policy against sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEA-H) through a self-evaluation questionnaire (Annex L of the Guidelines). For grants of EUR 60,000 or less no self-evaluation is required. Such self-evaluation questionnaire is not part of the evaluation of the Grant Application Form by the contracting authority, but is an administrative requirement. See section 2.5.6 of the PRAG.

### **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 contracting authority 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.

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, Corrigendum, etc.) are uploaded.

PADOR and PROSPECT are 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>53</sup>.

All technical questions related the use of these systems 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. **Prior registration in PADOR for this Call for Proposals is obligatory.**

- I. **Phase one, Financial Framework Partnership Application:** Registration in PADOR and uploading **all** relevant supporting documents is obligatory for the lead applicant and co-applicant(s), if any. Lead applicants must make sure that their PADOR profile is up to date.
- II. **Phase two, specific grant application:** Registration in PADOR and uploading **all** relevant supporting documents is obligatory for all affiliated entity(ies), if any, (i.e.: the members participating in the Action). Lead applicants must make sure that their PADOR profile is up to date.

Please note that online submission via **PROSPECT is obligatory** for this call.

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

If it is impossible to register online in PADOR for technical reasons, the applicants and/or affiliated entity(ies) must complete the 'PADOR off-line form'<sup>54</sup> attached to these guidelines. This form must be sent **together with the application**, by the submission deadline (see sections 2.2.1.3 and 2.2.2.3).

Before starting using PADOR and PROSPECT, please read the user guides available on the website:

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<sup>53</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>54</sup> Which corresponds to sections 3 and 4 of the Grant Application Form– Annex A.2.

- E-Calls PADOR - EXACT External Wiki - EN - EC Public Wiki ([europa.eu](http://europa.eu))
- Manual for Applicants - e-Calls PROSPECT - EXACT External Wiki - EN - EC Public Wiki ([europa.eu](http://europa.eu))

All technical questions related the use of these systems 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.

### ***2.2.1. Financial Framework Partnership Application (first phase)***

The Financial Framework Partnership Application is composed by the Strategic Plan of the umbrella organisation, the application form, the information concerning the lead applicant, co-applicant(s), the list of the umbrella organisation's members, the checklist, the mandate of the co-applicant(s) and the declaration by the Lead applicant.

The list of all members of the umbrella organisation should include for each member the following information: the name of the organisation, the legal status (not-for-profit), the country of registration, and the total of countries covered. The list of members should be presented by region. If the umbrella organisation is composed of regional members that have in turn national members, information should be provided for all members until the national level.

The lead applicant should sign the declaration on honour certifying that all information provided in the above mentioned list of members is correct (section 5.2) of Annex A.1.

#### **2.2.1.1. Strategic Plan content (first phase)**

Applications must be submitted in accordance with the Financial Framework Partnership Application instructions included in the Application Form annexed to these Guidelines (Annex A.1). Please complete the Application Forms as carefully and as clearly as possible so that they can be assessed properly.

Financial Framework Partnership Applications must be submitted in English.

The Financial Framework Partnership Application is composed of:

1. the Strategic Plan of the applicant organisation,
2. the application form (Annex A.1),
3. the information concerning the applicant, co-applicant(s), the checklist, the declaration by the lead applicant, the mandate for co-applicant(s) (Annex A.1).

Applicants must attach their complete strategic plan to their application form. This plan is an internal document of the organisation, as endorsed by its governing body. The applicant may submit this plan in its original form (following no specific template).

In the application form (Annex A.1), the Lead applicant must clearly identify which parts of this strategic plan they consider to be relevant for a partnership with the European Union, which should be based on common political objectives shared with the EU, particularly with regards to the Commission priorities as defined in the section "1.2. Objectives and priorities of the call for proposals". If the applicant is selected as a Financial Framework Partner, the strategic plan and explanation will become part of Annex I ("Strategic Plan") of the Financial Framework Partnership Agreement.

The following documents shall be uploaded in PADOR by the Financial Framework Partnership application deadline (first phase):

1. **The statutes or articles of association** of the lead applicant, and of each co-applicant (if any). Where the contracting authority has recognised the lead applicant's, or the co-applicant(s)'s, 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. This obligation does not apply to international organisations which have signed a framework agreement with the European Commission.

2. **Legal entity form** (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, if any), accompanied by the justifying documents requested there. If the applicants have already signed a contract with the contracting authority, instead of the legal entity form and supporting documents, the legal entity number may be provided, unless a change in legal status occurred in the meantime.
3. 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.

In addition, for the purpose of the evaluation of the financial capacity, the following documents should be submitted:

1. 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. (**This requirement shall apply only to the first application made by an applicant to the contracting authority in any one financial year.**)

The external audit report as well as the self-declaration certifying the validity of the accounts are not required from the co-applicant(s) or affiliated entities (if any).

2. **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). A copy of the latest account is neither required from the co-applicant(s) (if any) nor from affiliated entity(ies) (if any).

The requested supporting documents (uploaded in PADOR or sent together with the PADOR offline form) must be supplied in the form of originals, photocopies or scanned versions (i.e. showing legible stamps, signatures and dates) of the said originals. Originals should be kept on file for controls.

Where such documents are not in one of the official languages of the European Union, a translation into one of the language(s) of the call for proposals of the relevant parts of these documents proving the lead applicant's and, where applicable, co-applicants' and affiliated entity(ies)' eligibility, **must** be attached for the purpose of analysing the application. Where these documents are in an official language of the European Union other than one of the language(s) of the call for proposals, it is strongly **recommended**, in order to facilitate the evaluation, to provide a translation of the relevant parts of the documents, proving the lead applicant's and, where applicable, co-applicants' and affiliated entity(ies)' eligibility, into one of the language(s) of the call for proposals.

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

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 by the deadline for the submission of the Financial Framework Partnership application, the application may be rejected.

Please complete the Application Form (Annex A1) as carefully and as clearly as possible so that they can be assessed properly. Any error or major discrepancy related to the points listed in the instructions on the

Framework Partnership application or any major inconsistency in the application may lead to the rejection of the application.

It is of utmost importance that the Financial Framework Partnership Application contains ALL relevant information for evaluation at this stage. No additional annexes should be sent. Clarifications will only be requested when information provided is not sufficient to conduct an objective assessment.

### **2.2.1.2. Where and how to send Financial Framework Partnership Applications (first phase)**

The Financial Framework Partnership Application including the relating Checklist and Declaration by the applicant and mandate for co-applicant(s) (Annex A.1) **must be submitted online via PROSPECT** <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/prospect> following the instructions given in the PROSPECT user manual.

**Please note that incomplete Financial Framework Partnership applications may be rejected.** Lead applicants are advised to verify that their FFPA application is complete by using the checklist for the Financial Framework partnership application (included in Annex A.1).

### **2.2.1.3. Deadline for submission of Financial Framework Partnership Applications**

The deadline for the submission of Financial Framework Partnership Applications is **27/02/2022 at 12:00** (Brussels date and time). In order to convert this deadline to local time you can use any online time converter tool that takes into account time zones and winter/summer time changes (example available [here](#))<sup>55</sup>. **The lead applicant is strongly advised not to wait until the last day to submit** its Financial Framework Partnership Application, 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 Financial Framework Partnership Application submitted after the deadline will be rejected.

### **2.2.1.4. Further information about the Financial Framework Partnership Applications (first phase)**

Questions may be sent by e-mail no later than 21 days before the deadline for the submission of Financial Framework Partnership Application to the address below, indicating clearly the reference of the call for proposals:

E-mail address: [INTPA-175018@ec.europa.eu](mailto:INTPA-175018@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 Financial Framework Partnership 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), 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 where the call was published: website of DG International Partnerships [https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/home\\_fr](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/home_fr) or Funding & Tender opportunities (F&T Portal) <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home> as the need arises. It is therefore advisable to consult the abovementioned website regularly in order to be informed of the questions and answers published.

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<sup>55</sup> For example: <http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/converter.html>.

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.

## **2.2.2. Specific Grant Applications (second phase)**

### **2.2.2.1. Specific Grant Content (second phase)**

This phase will only be valid for applicants which have been awarded an FFPA.

The specific grant application is composed by the Description of the Action, the logframe, the Budget (Annex B), the information concerning the applicant, affiliated entity(ies) and associates/contractors (if any), the checklist, the Declaration by the Applicant, the affiliated entity(ies) statement, and the assessment grid.

An applicant invited to submit a specific grant application following the selection of their Financial Framework Partnership Application must do so using the Application Form annexed to these Guidelines (Annex A.2 – Specific Grant Application Form). Lead Applicants should then keep strictly to the format of the Application Form and fill in the paragraphs and pages in order. Specific Grant Applications submitted using any template besides the one provided in the attached Application Form **may be rejected**.

In the specific Grant Application, applicants must provide a detailed budget for the specific grant (Annex B). The specific grant budget must contain the contribution requested from the Contracting Authority and the percentage of that contribution in relation to the total amount of the grant, which must fall between the minimum and maximum amount and respect the percentages of co-financing, as laid down in these Guidelines in section 1.3. Own contributions by the applicants can be replaced by other donors' contributions at any time.

The elements outlined in the Financial Framework Application Form may not be modified in the application for an action grant, except for the changes described below:

- The lead applicant may add, remove or replace one or more co-applicant(s) only in duly justified cases.

### **Supporting documents must be provided through PADOR**

Applicants must supply the following documents for all their affiliated entity(ies) participating in the action grant who were part of the Financial Framework Partnership Agreement as members, in order to allow the Contracting Authority to verify their eligibility:

The **statutes or articles of association** of each affiliated entity(ies)<sup>56</sup>. Where the Contracting Authority has recognised the affiliated entity(ies)'s eligibility for another call for proposals, 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 Contract received during the reference period), unless a change in legal status has occurred in the meantime<sup>57</sup>.

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<sup>56</sup> Where the 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>57</sup> To be inserted only where the eligibility conditions have not changed from one call for proposals to the other.

Where the requested supporting documents are not uploaded in PADOR they must be supplied in the form of originals, photocopies or scanned versions (i.e. showing legible stamps, signatures and dates) of the said originals.

Where such documents are not in one of the official languages of the European Union, a translation into one of the languages of the call for proposals of the relevant parts of these documents proving the co-applicants' 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 one of the languages of the call for proposals, it is **strongly** recommended, in order to facilitate the evaluation, to provide a translation of the relevant parts of the documents, proving the applicants' eligibility, into one of the language(s) of the call for proposals.

Lead applicants must submit their Specific Grant Application Form in the same language as their Financial Framework Partnership Application.

Please complete the Specific Grant 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) or any major inconsistency in the 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 specific grant 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.

**No additional annexes should be sent.**

#### **2.2.2.2. Where and how to send Specific Grant Application Forms (second phase)**

Specific Grant Application Forms, PADOR registration form (where applicable), the budget, the logical framework and the declaration by the lead applicant **must be submitted online** via **PROSPECT** <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/prospect> following the instructions given in the PROSPECT users' manual.

Upon submission of the Specific Grant Application Forms online, the lead applicants will receive an automatic confirmation of receipt in their PROSPECT profile.

Specific Grant Application Forms submitted by other means (e-mail, registered mail, courier service, fax, hand delivery, etc.) will be rejected.

**Lead applicants must verify that their application is complete using the checklist (included in Annex A.2). Incomplete applications may be rejected.**

#### **2.2.2.3. Deadline for submission of Specific Grant Application Forms (second phase)**

The deadline for the submission of Specific Grant Application Forms will be indicated in the letter sent to the applicants who have been selected for an FFPA. 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 Grant Application Forms**, 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.

#### **2.2.2.4. Further information about Specific Grant Application Forms (second phase)**

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

E-mail address: [INTPA-175018@ec.europa.eu](mailto:INTPA-175018@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 Specific Grant Application Forms.

**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: [https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/home\\_fr](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/home_fr) as appropriate. 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 FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK PARTNERSHIP APPLICATIONS**

Applications will be examined and evaluated by the Contracting Authority with the possible assistance of external assessors. All applications submitted by applicants 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.

#### ***STEP 1: Financial Framework Partnership administrative check***

During the administrative check the following will be assessed:

- Compliance with the submission deadline. If the deadline has not been met, the application will automatically be rejected.
- The Financial Framework Partnership Application satisfies all the criteria specified in the Checklist in Annex A.1 of the FFPA application form. 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.

#### ***STEP 2: verification of eligibility of the FFPA Applicants (lead applicant ad co-applicants(s), if any)***

Only the Framework Partnership applications that pass the administrative check will be evaluated.

The eligibility verification will be based on the supporting documents requested by the Contracting Authority (see section 2.2.1.1.).

- The Declaration by the applicant (Annex A.1) 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 applicant and the supporting documents may lead to the rejection of the application on that sole basis.
- The eligibility of applicants and the areas of intervention will be verified according to the criteria set out in Sections 2.1.

### ***STEP 3: evaluation of the Financial Framework Partnership Application***

The Financial Framework Partnership Applications that pass the first administrative check and the eligibility verification will be evaluated.

The Financial Framework Partnership Application will receive an overall score out of 100 using the breakdown in the evaluation grid below. The evaluation will also check on compliance with the instructions on how to complete the Financial Framework Partnership Application, which can be found in the Application Form (Annex A.1).

The quality of the Financial Framework Partnership Applications 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 umbrella organisation's operational capacity as well as its financial capacity and to ensure that they:

- have stable and sufficient sources of finance to maintain their activity throughout the proposed Framework Partnership Strategic Plan (this only applies to lead applicants);
- have the management capacity, professional competencies and qualifications required to successfully implement the proposed Framework Partnership Strategic Plan. This also applies to co-applicants, if any.

**The award criteria** help to evaluate the quality of the applications in relation to the objectives and priorities, and to award Financial Framework Partnership to applicants that 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 Strategic Plan, its relevance with the objectives of the Call for Proposals, quality, efficiency, effectiveness and expected impact and sustainability as reflected in the strategic plan.

Scoring:

The evaluation grid is divided into headings and subheadings. 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**

<b>heading</b>	<b>Maximum score</b>
<b>1. Applicant's financial and operational capacity</b>	<b>20</b>
1.1 Does the umbrella organisation (lead applicant) and, if applicable, its co-applicants have sufficient in-house experience of project management?	5
1.2 Does the umbrella organisation (lead applicant) and, if applicable, its co-applicants have sufficient technical in-house expertise? (especially knowledge of the issues to be addressed)	5
1.3 Does the umbrella organisation (lead applicant) and, if applicable, its co-applicants have sufficient in-house management capacity? (Including staff, equipment and ability to handle the budget for the Strategic Plan)?	5
1.4 Does the umbrella organisation (lead applicant) have stable and sufficient sources of finance?	5
<b>2. Relevance of the proposed Financial Framework Partnership</b>	<b>40</b>

2.1 How relevant is the mandate of the umbrella organisation to the objectives and expected results of the Call for Proposals, e.g. as regards representing constituencies?	5x2*
2.2 How relevant (and wide) are the common policy objectives/priorities (based on the strategic plan) with the EU priorities defined under the Call for Proposals (under each relevant lot)?	5x2*
2.3 How relevant is the umbrella organisation's contribution to regional and/or global policy-making?	5
2.4 How strong is the umbrella organisation's representativeness including number of members, presence in a significant number of countries and continents?	5
2.5 How does the strategic plan integrate specific cross-cutting issues that are human rights, environment and climate change and gender equality?	5
2.6 How coherent is the strategic plan and its priorities / objectives with the analysis of international / regional political / economic context?	5
<b>3. Efficiency of the proposed Framework Partnership Strategic Plan</b>	<b>10</b>
3.1 Is the Strategic Plan consistent with the organisation's administrative and financial capacity?	5
3.2 How consistent are the foreseen organisational development initiatives with the objectives of the Strategic Plan and the needs of the members?	5
<b>4. Effectiveness of the Strategic Plan</b>	<b>20</b>
4.1 How are the foreseen organisational development initiatives likely to impact the results of the Strategic Plan at political level (e.g. in terms of advocacy)?	5 x2*
4.2 How are the foreseen organisational development initiatives likely to impact the results of the Strategic Plan with its members?	5 x2*
<b>5. Potential impact and sustainability</b>	<b>10</b>
5.1 Is the Strategic Plan likely to have impact on relevant policies? Is a results assessment framework foreseen in the Strategic Plan?	5
5.2 Is the Strategic Plan likely to contribute to the umbrella organisation sustainability?	5
<b>Maximum total score</b>	<b>100</b>

\*these scores are multiplied by 2 because of their importance

Once all Financial Framework Partnership Applications have been assessed, a list will be drawn up with the evaluated proposals ranked according to their total score.

If the total score for section 1 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 total score for section 2 is less than 20 points, the application will be rejected.

The indicative number of Financial Framework Partnership Agreements will be reduced, taking account of the ranking, to:

- Lot 1 : seven (7) FFPA
- Lot 2 : one (1) FFPA
- Lot 3 : one (1) FFPA
- Lot 4 : two (2) FFPA

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 sign the FFPA and submit a specific grant application.

#### ***STEP 4: notification of the contracting authority's 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. Please note that the lead applicant is the intermediary for all communications between applicants and the contracting authority during the procedure.

The beneficiaries of a Financial Framework Partnership Agreement will subsequently be invited to submit action grant applications.

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

Applicants and, if they are legal entities, persons who have powers of representation, decision-making or control over them, are informed that, should they be in one of the situations of early detection or exclusion, their 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.

For more information, you may consult the privacy statement available on [http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protect\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protect_en.cfm)

#### ***STEP 5: Award of FFPA***

Following the decision to award a Financial Framework Partnership, the Beneficiary(ies) will be offered a contract based on the Contracting Authority's standard Financial Framework Partnership Agreement (see Annex G of these Guidelines). By signing the application form for an FFPA (Annex A.1. of these Guidelines), the applicants agree, if awarded a Financial Framework Partnership Agreement, to accept the contractual conditions of the standard Financial Framework Partnership Agreement.

#### ***Signature of Financial Framework Partnership Agreement***

Successful Applicants may be invited to Brussels for the signature of the Financial Framework Partnership Agreement.

### **2.4. EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF SPECIFIC GRANT APPLICATIONS**

#### ***STEP 1: administrative check***

The following will be assessed:

- If the submission deadline has been met. Otherwise, the application will automatically be rejected.
- If the Specific Grant Application Form satisfies all the criteria specified in the checklist (Annex A.2.). 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.

#### ***STEP 2: verification of eligibility of the affiliated entity(ies) and the eligibility of the Action***

The eligibility verification will be based on the supporting documents requested by the Contracting Authority (see Section 2.2.2.).

The eligibility of affiliated entity(ies) participating in the action, and the areas of intervention will be verified according to the criteria set out in Section 2.1.

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 applicant has to submit the application form revised accordingly.

### ***STEP 3: evaluation of the specific grant application***

The Specific Grant Application Forms that pass this check will be further evaluated on their quality, including the proposed budget and capacity of the applicants (lead applicant and co-applicant(s) if any, and affiliated entity(ies), if any. They will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria in the evaluation grid below.

**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**

<b>Section</b>	
<b>heading</b>	<b>Maximum Score</b>
<b>1. Relevance of the action</b>	<b>35</b>
1.1 How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the Call for Proposals <b>under the relevant lot</b> and to the areas of action indicated in the Guidelines for applicants (section 1.2 an 2.1.3)?	5x2*
1.2 How relevant is the proposal to the common objectives and priorities of the Financial Framework Partnership?	5x2*
1.3 How clearly defined and strategically chosen are those involved (final beneficiaries, target groups, countries where activities take place etc.)? Have their needs and constraints been clearly defined and does the proposal address them appropriately?	5
1.4 How strategically chosen are the co-applicants and the affiliated entities involved in the action and how clearly defined are their roles?	5
1.5 How does the proposal integrate specific cross-cutting issues that are human rights, environment and climate change and gender equality (section 1.2).	5
<b>2. Design of the action</b>	<b>20</b>
2.1 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)?	5x2*
2.2 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)? Does the proposal contains objectively verifiable indicators for the outcome of the action?	5
2.3 Does the design reflect a robust analysis of the problems involved, and the capacities of the relevant stakeholders?	5

<b>3. Implementation approach</b>	<b>15</b>
3.1 Is the action plan for implementing the action (in section 2.2. of the grant application) clear and feasible? Is the timeline realistic?	5
3.2 Does the proposal include an effective and efficient monitoring system? Is any evaluation planned?	5
3.3 Is the co-applicant(s)'s and affiliated entity(ies)'s level of involvement and participation in the action satisfactory?	5
<b>4. Sustainability of the action</b>	<b>15</b>
4.1 Is the action likely to have a tangible impact on its target groups and thematic trends?	5
4.2 Is the proposal likely to have multiplier effects? (Including scope for replication, extension and information sharing.)	5
4.3 Are the expected results of the proposed action sustainable? - Financially ( <i>how will the activities be financed after the funding ends?</i> ) - Institutionally ( <i>will structures allowing the activities to continue be in place at the end of the action? Will there be local 'ownership' of the results of the action?</i> ) - At policy level (where applicable) ( <i>what will be the structural impact of the action — e.g. will it lead to improved legislation, codes of conduct, methods, etc.?</i> ) - Environmentally (if applicable) ( <i>will the action have a negative/positive environmental impact?</i> )	5
<b>5. Budget and cost-effectiveness of the action</b>	<b>15</b>
5.1 Are the activities appropriately reflected in the budget?	5
5.2 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 lead applicant applies without co-applicants or affiliated entities the score for point 3.3 shall be 5 unless the involvement of co-applicants or affiliated entities is mandatory according to these guidelines for applicants.

#### **STEP 4: Notification of the contracting authority's decision**

The 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. Please note that the lead applicant is the intermediary for all communications between applicants and the contracting authority during the procedure.

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

Applicants and, if they are legal entities, persons who have powers of representation, decision-making or control over them, are informed that, should they be in one of the situations of early detection or exclusion, their 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.

For more information, you may consult the privacy statement available on [http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect_en.cfm)

#### **STEP 5: Award of a Specific Grant Agreement**

Following the decision to award a grant, the Beneficiary(ies) will be offered a contract based on the Contracting Authority's Specific Grant Agreement (see Annex G of these Guidelines). By signing the

application form (Annex A.2 of these Guidelines), the applicants agree, if awarded a grant, to accept the contractual conditions of the Specific Grant 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 Specific Grant Agreement.

## **2.5. SUBMISSION OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

The lead applicant shall submit the documents listed in section 2.2.1 and 2.2.2.

In addition, 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 via PROSPECT:

1. **Declaration on honour (Annex H):** 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) where the amount of the grant exceeds EUR 15,000. Please note that the declaration on honour should be submitted via PROSPECT.
2. **Self-evaluation questionnaire on SEA-H:** the lead applicant as well as all co-applicants and affiliated entity(ies) shall fill in the self-evaluation questionnaire assessing the organisation's internal policy and procedure against sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEA-H) (Annex L to the Guidelines) where the amount of grant exceeds EUR 60,000 (see Section 2.5.6 of the PRAG)<sup>58</sup>. Please note that the self-evaluation questionnaire on SEA-H should be submitted via PADOR in the PADOR profile of each organisation.

**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.

## **NOTIFICATION OF THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY'S DECISION (SECOND PHASE) - Content of the decision**

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

An applicant believing that it has been harmed by an error or irregularity during the award process may lodge a complaint. See further Section 2.12 of the practical guide.

Applicants and, if they are legal entities, persons who have powers of representation, decision-making or control over them, are informed that, should they be in one of the situations of early detection or exclusion, their 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.

For more information, you may consult the privacy statement available on [http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect_en.cfm)

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<sup>58</sup> Applicants, co-applicants and affiliated entities who are (i) natural persons (ii) pillar-assessed entities and (iii) governments and other public bodies do not have to submit the self-evaluation questionnaire.

## INDICATIVE TIMETABLE

	DATE	TIME*
<b>1. Information meeting (if any)</b>	Not applicable	Not applicable
<b>2. Deadline for requesting any clarifications from the Contracting Authority</b>	06/02/2023	12:00
<b>3. Last date on which clarifications are issued by the Contracting Authority</b>	16/02/2023	
<b>4. Deadline for submission of Financial Framework Partnership Applications</b>	<b>27/02/2023</b>	<b>12:00</b>
<b>5. Information to applicants on opening, administrative checks and Financial Framework Partnership Application evaluation</b>	April/May 2023	-
<b>6. Signature of FFPA</b>	May 2023	
<b>7. Invitations to submit Specific Grant Application Form</b>	May 2023	-
<b>8. Deadline for submission of Specific Grant Application Form</b>	End July 2023	
<b>9. Information to lead applicants on the evaluation of the Specific Grant Application Form<sup>59</sup></b>	September/October 2023	-
<b>10. Notification of award (after the eligibility check)</b>	October 2023	-
<b>11. Specific Grant Contract signature<sup>60</sup></b>	October/November 2023	-

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 where the call was published: website of DG International Partnerships [https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/home\\_fr](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/home_fr) or Funding & Tender opportunities (F&T Portal) <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>

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

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59 Note that according to the financial regulation, in direct management, applicants must be notified the outcome of the evaluation of their applications within 6 months following the submission deadline of the Grant application. This time-limit may be exceeded in exceptional cases, in particular for complex actions (including Multi-beneficiary calls), large number of proposals or in case of delays attributable to the applicants.

60 Note that according to the financial regulation, in direct management the Specific Grant Agreement must be signed within 3 months following the notification of the award decision. This time-limit may be exceeded in exceptional cases, in particular for complex actions (including Multi-beneficiary calls), large number of proposals or in case of delays attributable to the applicants

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.2 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.

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

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

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

### **3. LIST OF ANNEXES**

#### **DOCUMENTS TO BE COMPLETED**

- Annex A: Grant application form (Word format)
  - A.1 – Financial Framework Partnership Agreement Application Form (Word format)
  - A.2 – Specific Grant Application Form (Word format)
- Annex B: Budget (Excel format)
- Annex C: Logical framework
- Annex D: Legal entity sheet
- Annex E: Financial identification form
- Annex F: PADOR offline registration form (ONLY IF IMPOSSIBLE TO REGISTER IN PADOR)

#### **DOCUMENTS FOR INFORMATION<sup>61</sup>**

- Annex G: Standard grant contract (phase two)
  - Annex I: FFPA Specific Grant Agreement
  - 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: Standard template for Transfer of Asset Ownership
- Annex H: Declaration on Honour on exclusion and selection
- Annex J: Information on the tax regime applicable to grant contracts signed under the call.
- Annex K: Guidelines for assessing simplified cost options.
- Annex L: Self-evaluation questionnaire on SEA-H
- Annex M: OECD list of CRS purpose codes
- Annex N: List of countries eligible for applicants (lead applicant, co-applicant and affiliated entities) and as action location
- Annex O: FFPA template (first phase)
- Annex P: Prospect Instructions

#### **Useful links:**

##### **Daily allowance rates (per diem)**

[https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/funding/guidelines/managing-project/diem-rates\\_en](https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/funding/guidelines/managing-project/diem-rates_en)

##### **Project Cycle Management Guidelines**

[http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/aid-delivery-methods-project-cycle-management-guidelines-vol-1\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/aid-delivery-methods-project-cycle-management-guidelines-vol-1_en)

##### **The implementation of grant contracts**

##### **A Users' Guide**

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

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<sup>61</sup> These documents should also be published by the contracting authority.

## **Financial Toolkit**

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

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

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