



Contract Title: “Technical Assistance to the Operating Structure for SOPEES”

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Questions and answers help desk support

Period covered: June-August 2019

Calls for Proposals published under SOPEES 2015-2017:

- “Training and education activities for deficit occupations and for boosting employability of RE population” (EuropeAid/163191/IH/ACT/ME)
- “Collaborative grant scheme for innovative project ideas” (EuropeAid/162457/IH/ACT/ME)
- “Support to Provision of Social and Child Protection Services” (EuropeAid/162650/IH/ACT/ME)

This project is implemented by ALTERNATIVE CONSULTING
in Consortium with Expertise Advisors and International Consulting Expertise EEIG (ICE).

The answers provided in this document are those of the Contractor implementing the Project.
They are not approved and nor do they reflect the official position or views of the European Union or
the Delegation of the European Union or the Contracting Authority.

This document has been prepared as a team effort of the project key experts.



List of questions and answers provided
(period covered: June-Aug 2019)

Q1 In regard with attaching the documents to the Annex F for both the lead applicant and co applicant of the Application Form, could you please give us some advice about the Annex D and E, also the statute of the organization and other relevant document.

A1 Please note that the Annex F form requires you to 'upload' listed documents, however this is technically not possible. Hence, you are advised to attach Annexes D and E, and the statutes to the form physically, as 'upload' function will not work.¹

Q2 Do we need to submit the supporting documentation (Article of Association, Act of registration, Balance sheet, Annex D, E and F) in 4 copies as well, as for the basic documents (Annex A, B, C), one original + 3 additional copies?

A2 Please note that such documents are listed under the section 2.4 of the Guidelines for Applicants and as such are to be requested only from provisionally selected applicants. However, you may decide to submit them when submitting FAF as well, in which case you are advised to send one copy alone, in the interest of environment protection and practicality.

Q3 In the Logframe, and generally, it is recommended to have one specific objective, and we have already formulated several specific objectives in our approved concept note. Would it be allowed to introduce now one common specific objective that would actually be derived from the existing several specific objectives? The existing specific objectives would also be listed in the following section of the Logframe titled *Other Outcomes (*where relevant) so we actually wouldn't miss out any of the approved or add completely new ones. It would be just to have more precisely formulated one common specific objective plus the list of other outcomes.

A3 You are advised to observe the following provision of the GfA: *'The elements outlined in the concept note cannot be modified by the lead applicant in the full application'*.

Q4 Taking into account that the Guidelines for the Grant Applicants, paragraph 2.2.5, stipulates: "The elements outlined in the concept note cannot be modified by the lead applicant in the full application", does that mean that the elements provided in the Concept note should be literally transferred in the final application and then elaborated in more detail and is the Concept note integral part of the final application or the application begins from the part B?

A4 Please note that in accordance with the Guidelines for Grant Applicants, Section 2.2.5. Full applications: "The elements outlined in the concept note cannot be modified by the lead applicant in the full application. The EU contribution may not vary from the initial estimate by more than 20 %, although lead applicants are free to adapt the percentage of co-financing required within the minimum and maximum amount and percentages of co-financing, as laid down in these guidelines under Section 1.3. The lead applicant may replace a co-applicant or an affiliated entity only in duly justified cases (e.g. bankruptcy of initial co-applicant or affiliated entity). In this case, the new co-applicant/affiliated entity must be of a similar nature as the initial one. The lead applicant may adjust the duration of the action if unforeseen circumstances outside the scope of the applicants have taken place following the submission of the concept note and require such

¹ Note that this question or similar questions to it, related to uploading of the documents has been asked on several occasions.



adaptation (risk of action not being carried out). In such cases the duration must remain within the limits imposed by the guidelines for applicants. An explanation/justification of the relevant replacement/adjustment shall be included in an accompanying letter or email.”

As per the same Section 2.2.5. Full applications, Guidelines for Grant Applicants stipulate:

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

Q5 Will it be acceptable to change one of the activities because we have already implemented it? In the Concept note we planned to form a working group. We were able to form it early and it has already started to work. Does this affect the acceptability of our proposal?

A5 If due to circumstances outside the scope of the applicants, activities have taken place following the submission of the concept note, for example some of the activities had already been implemented, it is advisable to explain these changes in the applicable section in the Application form. Seeking funds for activities already funded could be considered as ‘double funding’ and ineligible, and hence you are advised to amend the proposal accordingly, with clear explanation provided.

Q6 Is it necessary to submit a pro forma invoice or offers?

A6 Please observe section 2.2.6 of the GfA listing documents to be submitted *‘Please note that only the full application form and the published annexes which have to be filled in (budget, logical framework) will be transmitted to the evaluators (and assessors, if used). It is therefore of utmost importance that these documents contain all the relevant information concerning the action.’* And also the following *‘No additional annexes should be sent.’* Hence, you are advised not to send pro forma invoices or offers you have collected during the process of potential market research. Please also note that, as per the same section of the GfA *‘Clarifications will only be requested when information provided is unclear and thus prevents the contracting authority from conducting an objective assessment.’*

Q7 Should supporting documents be translated into English?

A7 Please observe the text of the GfA, section 2.4 *‘Where such documents are not in one of the official languages of the European Union or in the language of the country where the action is implemented, a translation into English of the relevant parts of these documents proving the lead applicant’s and, where applicable, co-applicants’ and affiliated entity(ies)’ eligibility, must be attached for the purpose of analysing the application. Where these documents are in an official language of the European Union other than English, it is strongly recommended, in order to facilitate the evaluation, to provide a translation of the relevant parts of the documents, proving the lead applicant’s and, where applicable, co-applicants’ and affiliated entity(ies)’ eligibility, into English.’* If your supporting documents are in in the language of the country where the action is implemented (Montenegro), translation is not required.

Q8² Referring to:

1.3. FINANCIAL ALLOCATION PROVIDED BY THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY, IN THE GUIDELINES

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

Lot 1:

- minimum amount: EUR 60.000
- maximum amount: EUR 150.000

² Note that this clarification has been also published by CA, specifically referring to EuropeAid/163191/IH/ACT/ME



Note: Maximum amount per trainee (unemployed person engaged in training/education activities) must not exceed EUR 2.000.

Does it mean that

- a) total budget of the project should be calculated based on number of trainees? Example: if the requested budget from the applicant side is 60 000 EUR, does it mean that 30 trainees should be covered by the project?
- b) Or the another interpretation of the same provision: the total budget is combination of training cost (max 2000 EUR per person) + other operational/ indirect cost?

A8 Clarification published by the CA in this regard is:

The amount of 2000 EUR (LOT 1) is the maximum amount per trainee (unemployed person engaged in training/education activities). The cost per trainee considers all direct eligible costs that are directly related to the training/education activities in accordance with the GfA.

Q9 What is legal entity file?

A9 Observe the CfP package published on EuropeAid (link provided). You will observe Annexes D and E (Legal entity file and Financial Identification form).

Q10 In case that Lead Partner and Co-Applicants are already registered in PADOR, does Annex F have to be submitted with FAF? Please advise.

A10 Observe section 2.2 of the GfA *'Information in PADOR will not be drawn upon in the present call.'* Hence, yes, you are advised to submit Annex F, as information you have already presented in PADOR cannot be used for the present Call.

Q11 When is the deadlines for the submission of FAFs?

A11 Such deadline is indicated in the letters you received from the CA inviting you to submit FAF.

Q12 What is the difference between the 'Other' and 'Similar' experience in the Full application form?

A12 Similar experience is experience related to the project now proposed. Other experience is related to your project management/technical experience not necessarily related to the action now proposed. Both are important for the assessment of your financial and operational capacities.

Q13 Shall a public body provide a copy of the profit and loss accounts as well?

A13 Please observe the GfA, section 2.2 footnote 12: *'This obligation does not apply to natural persons who have received a scholarship or that are in most need in receipt of direct support, nor to public bodies and to international organizations.'*

Q14 How are financial and operational capacities assessed?

A14 You may consider wording from Annex 'E4a'

<http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/prag/annexes.do?chapterTitleCode=E>

'The first section contains the selection criteria which evaluate the financial, professional and technical capacity of the applicants to implement the action proposed. Applicants and their affiliated entity(ies) must have the necessary professional competencies and qualifications to complete the proposed action. The lead applicant must also have stable and sufficient sources of funding to keep operating throughout the action period and to participate, where appropriate, in its funding. The assessments are made considering the



action proposed, the applicable payment schedule of the contract and on the basis of the relevant supporting documents defined in the guidelines for applicants. These may include an external audit report of the lead applicant, the profit and loss account and the balance sheet for the last financial year for which the accounts have been closed. If the answer is negative to one or more of the criteria, the evaluation of the other subsections must still be carried out by the assessor.'

Q15 What is the difference between internal and external evaluation?

A15 Observe, for example Guide for Programming (EC) available at https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/financial_assistance/phare/evaluation/2016/20160831-dg-near-guidelines-on-linking-planning-programming-vol-1-v-0.4.pdf

which defines 'Internal evaluation: Evaluation conducted by a unit and/or individuals reporting to the management of the donor, partner country, or implementing organization. They do not involve an external contractor.' And 'External evaluation: The evaluation conducted by entities and/or individuals outside the donor and implementing organizations. They are contracted by the donor and/or implementing organizations services.'

Q16 What reporting arrangements will be in place?

A16 Observe Annex II, General conditions – Article 2 which provides details on reporting as well as Special Conditions to Grant contract laying down additional reporting requirements.

Q17 External experts who will be engaged in this project are not from Montenegro. In which part of BH 5 shall I include their costs when the fields for filling out are already defined and there is no row for external experts. Shall I present their costs in the part of BH 1 (human resources) or 5 (Other cost, services)?

A17 Observe the title of BL 5.2 'Studies, research'. As a general rule, you may want to consider the following *'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).

Q18 Can you please explain what "applicable tax and social legislation" that need to be included and applied in the calculation of cost of staff assigned to the Action mean?

A18 In accordance with art. 14.2 of Annex II to the grant contract (General conditions), under the cost of staff assigned to the Action, it is necessary to cover the costs of gross salaries, including all taxes, social security charges and other statutory costs as it is stipulated in the respective national labor related legalizations.



Q19 Are the costs of the personnel of the national administration eligible?

A19 For reference, please see Heading 2.1.5. Eligibility of costs, Section 'Eligible' and 'Ineligible costs'. In "Collaborative grant scheme for innovative project ideas", for example, there it is stated *'Salary costs of the personnel of national administrations may be eligible to the extent that they relate to the cost of activities which the relevant public authority would not carry out if the actions were not undertaken.'*

Q20 Considering the manner of human resources budgeting in the project (part-time positions, that are only predetermined % of full working time. i.e. 50% or 33% of full working time), - should the payment of the salaries be made on a monthly basis during the whole project period, or should the full amount (unit value corresponding to full time salary) be paid accordingly?

A20 Number of payment instalments should be agreed between Grant beneficiary and the nominated staff for the respective position by means of the labour contract, with the respect to the applicable national legislation. However, in order to ensure compliance with sound financial management, it is advisable that payments follow the work done both in the terms of the time worked and of the work produced.

Q21 Which procurement procedure should be planned for procurement of goods/services/works below 2,500 EUR?

A21 Annex IV to grant contract is defining the framework for the procurement undertaken by grant Beneficiaries in the context of European Union external actions. According to its provisions, the Beneficiary may decide to apply the procurement procedures set forth in the Practical Guide. If the grant Beneficiary decided to do so, such procurements can be done based on an invoice.

Q22 Are there any different procurement rules that should be applied for the part of Action financed by the applicants' (the own co-financing to be provided by the grant beneficiaries)?

A22 According to the Annex IV of the grant contract, award procedure is integral part of the Grant contract, and there is no distinction between Contracting authority's and applicant's contribution. Annex IV defines the requirements to be followed and it is applicable to the Beneficiary and all partners, as well as affiliated entities, regardless of their legal status (public or private) or nationality.

Q23 Are there any recommendation as to the definition of the indicators?

A23 You may consult the DG Near Guidelines available at https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/financial_assistance/phare/evaluation/2016/20160831-dg-near-guidelines-on-linking-planning-progrming-vol-1-v-0.4.pdf, page 52. For example, there it is stated the following: *'Indicators must be expressed in neutral terms: they signal a change, not the direction of the change (as objectives do). For example, if there is an objective to decrease the number of gender based violence cases, the corresponding indicator might be 'Number of gender-based violence cases reported', and not 'Decreased number of gender-based violence cases reported'.*

Q24 How to fill in the column "Current value" in the log frame?

A24 Column current value is presented in the log frame for reporting purposes only, hence, you will be completing it once reporting against the progress of the action, if awarded. It is NOT to be completed at the submission stage.



Q25 Can for example, the Co-Applicant implement a project activity and Applicant transfers the means for the realization of that activity to the Co-Applicant's account?

A25 In accordance with the provisions of the Call for proposals, (for reference please see GfA, Heading 2.1.1, 'Eligibility of Applicants', section 'Co-applicants') partners participate in the design and implementation of the Action; therefore, the costs they incur are eligible in the same way as those incurred by the applicant, if they apply all necessary procedures and regulations.

Q26 Does the FIF relate to the applicant's current account, or is it necessary to open a separate account for the project's needs? If it is necessary to open a separate account, do we do it now or before signing a contract?

A26 FIF relates to your current bank account. If CA decides to recommend opening of a separate bank account, you will be instructed about this in due time.

Q27 Can the lecturers be paid by the contract?

A27 Yes, it is recommendable that all services are paid through written terms, such as contracts.

Q28 In the name of one output, a technical error has occurred, so the word "professional" with "soft" should be replaced. Is that allowed?

A28 In case of any changes in comparison with the CN, you are advised to explain these in the applicable section of the Full Application Form.

Q29 Can an affiliated entity have a project team member? If he can, can he give participation in the project with his salary?

A29 Please note that according to the GfA, section 2.1.2 *'If the applicants are awarded a grant contract, their affiliated entity(ies) will not become beneficiary(ies) of the action and signatory(ies) of the grant contract. However, they will participate in the design and in the implementation of the action and the costs they incur (including those incurred for implementation contracts and financial support to third parties) may be accepted as eligible costs, provided they comply with all the relevant rules already applicable to the beneficiary(ies) under the grant contract.'*

Q30 Can co-applicant have a project team member? If he can, can he give participation in the project with his salary?

A30 In accordance with the provisions of the Call for proposals, (for reference please see GfA, Heading 2.1.1, 'Eligibility of Applicants', section 'Co-applicants') partners participate in the design and implementation of the Action; therefore, the costs they incur are eligible in the same way as those incurred by the applicant, if they apply all necessary procedures and regulations.

Q31 As we are planning to procure some equipment in the project, are there any concerns there that we need to take into account?

A31 Please note that according to Article 7.5 of the General conditions, Annex II to the grant contract it is stated: *'Unless otherwise clearly specified in the Description of the Action in Annex I, the equipment, vehicles and supplies paid for by the Budget for the Action shall be transferred to the final beneficiaries of the Action,*



at the latest when submitting the final report.' Hence, clear specification of your plans towards such transfer of ownership need to be depicted in the application.

Q32 Where can we find information on the baseline for some of the SOPEES indicators?

A32 In relation to 'Collaborative grant scheme for innovative project ideas' GS, for example you may see that the 'Number of start-ups and spin-off companies involved in R&D activities, established by PhDs' has been 10 in 2015. The document is available at

https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/montenegro/ipa/2015/ipa_2015_2017_037895_me_sectoral_operation_al_programme.pdf, page 67.

Q33 I would appreciate some further information about Declaration by the Lead Applicant. In part where we have to state actions, is that any action (project) funded by Union or only these connected with this action?

A33 As visible from the text above the section where these actions are to be inserted *'These are the sources and amounts of Union funding received or applied for the action or part of the action or for its functioning during the same financial year as well as any other funding received or applied for the same action'*, these lists refer only to the action (project) you are now applying for.

Q34 Can a pre-selected applicant who requested 80% EU contribution on the concept note have 20% modification on the project?

A34 As per the Guidelines for Applicants, *'the EU contribution may not vary from the initial estimate by more than 20 %, although applicants are free to adapt the percentage of co-financing required within the minimum and maximum amount and percentages of co-financing'*.

Q35 Can we increase the budget of the project?

A35 Budget can be increased abiding by certain limits. As per Guidelines, *'the EU contribution may not vary from the initial estimate by more than 20 %, although applicants are free to adapt the percentage of co-financing required within the minimum and maximum amount and percentages of co-financing.'* Please note that a budget total includes both the EU contribution and the grant beneficiary co-financing.