

Call for proposals
FOSTERING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SME INTERNATIONALISATION
BY SUPPORTING SME NETWORKS FOR EXPORT

Annex

Guidance on the selection of third parties which may receive financial support from beneficiaries in indirect actions

Beneficiaries from this pilot project may award financial support to third parties, in line with the conditions laid down in Article II.12 of the Model Grant Agreement.

The above mentioned Article II.12 requires that Annex 1 of the grant agreement includes, among other conditions, the persons or categories of persons that may receive financial support.

At this regards, Article 137 of the Financial Regulation forbids the exercise of discretion by the beneficiaries when defining the conditions for the giving of such financial support to third parties.

Third parties shall be selected through open calls which to be published widely and with respect for transparency, equal treatment, conflict of interest and confidentiality. All calls for third parties have to be published on the projects own web site. The calls should be open for at least three months. If call deadlines are changed this has to be published on the call page and all registered applicants are to be informed of the change.

It is the responsibility of the applicants to define the rules for publishing the call for proposal, and for evaluating and selecting the third parties that may receive financial support.

Nevertheless, this guidance is provided to assist the beneficiaries in the definition of these rules. This guidance is not to be seen as binding obligations on the beneficiaries, which, ultimately, remain responsible for defining the rules and principles that they will apply for selecting third parties.

1. Introduction

Your call should be carried out in the light of the same basic principles which govern EU calls:

- i. **Excellence.** The proposal(s) selected for funding must demonstrate a high quality in the context of the topics and criteria set out in the call;
- ii. **Transparency.** Funding decisions must be based on clearly described rules and procedures, and all applicants should receive adequate feedback on the outcome of the evaluation of their proposals;
- iii. **Fairness and impartiality.** All proposals submitted to a call are treated equally. They are evaluated impartially on their merits, irrespective of their origin or the identity of the applicants;
- iv. **Confidentiality.** All proposals and related data, knowledge and documents are treated in confidence;
- v. **Efficiency and speed.** Evaluation of proposals and award of the financial support should be as rapid as possible, commensurate with maintaining the quality of the evaluation, and respecting the legal framework.

The costs to the action of managing the open call are limited to those which are actual, economic

and necessary. They may be claimed under the relevant cost category.

2. Preparation activities

The Full Call Details

A dedicated section on your action's website which will give proposers the Full Call Details with the following elements:

- A clear and exhaustive list of the types of activities that qualify for receiving financial support, please refer to the objectives in the terms of reference for guidance.
- Any restrictions on participation in any part of the call (e.g. only SMEs, based in EU countries etc.).
- The criteria determining the award of the financial support, such as relevance, impact, quality, cost effectiveness.
- The criteria for determining the exact amount of financial support and the form that the financial support takes (e.g. the reimbursement of actual costs incurred by the recipients when implementing the supported activities).
- The specific arrangements that the beneficiaries may impose on the third parties (e.g. specific reporting and feedback obligations from the third party towards the beneficiary in respect to the implementation of the supported activities; specific arrangements for providing the financial support; specific rights for the beneficiaries to access and use the results of the supported activities).
- The coordinates (email address and telephone number) of a help facility which you must maintain for proposers during the call
- The email address to which proposals should be submitted and the call identifier which will be used on these emails
- The deadline for proposal submission, clearly specifying the local time involved (normally this is local time at the website where the proposals are received).

<p>To respect fair and equal treatment, information or facilities which you supply to any proposer must be equally available to all.</p>

3. Publication of the call

Publish and promote the Call Announcement, at least on the action's own website.

The call to remain open for the submission of proposals for a period of at least three months. If call deadlines are changed, this has to be published on the call page and all registered applicants have to be informed of the change.

4. Proposal reception

A good practise is to close the call on a Wednesday, so that your help facility is available to proposers throughout the last three days of the call, and that there are two working days after the call to deal with any unresolved problems. A good practice is to close your call at 17h00 *local time*.

Proposers are asked to submit their proposals by email. On receipt of each proposal please send an email for Acknowledgment of receipt to the proposer (see Annex 2).

Late submissions cannot be accepted; late submitters must receive by return email a "call closed" message.

Evaluate the proposals as submitted: after the close of the call no additions or changes to received proposals should be taken into account.

5. Proposal evaluation and selection

Evaluation criteria

The beneficiaries will have to evaluate proposals received in the light of the criteria laid down in the Full Call Details. *For this project it is suggested to have each proposals evaluated by minimum 2 evaluators.* The attached form may be used (see Annex 3).

If experts are engaged for evaluating the proposals, please ensure that they are independent of the organisations involved in the consortium and of any proposer.

The selected experts should sign with you a declaration of confidentiality concerning the contents of the proposals they read (see Annex 4). The form which they use in the evaluation also carries a declaration of freedom from conflict of interest which they agree to by signing them.

(It is a wise precaution to be prepared to bring in a "reserve" expert in case of sickness or the last-minute discovery of a conflict of interest.)

Evaluation procedure

The evaluation should start within two weeks from the close of the call. Note that you can only finally confirm the appointment of your experts after the close of call, when you have discovered who all the proposers are and therefore you can select your experts without risk of conflict of interest.

Each evaluator will record his/her individual opinion of each proposal on the attached evaluation form. They will then meet or communicate together to prepare a single "consensus" form for each proposal, representing opinions and scores on which the evaluators agree and which they will sign.

Using the overall scores for each proposal, the evaluators will generate a ranked list, or several ranked lists if the call is in different parts.

Proposal selection

Using the scores given on the consensus form, normally the highest scoring proposals are selected for the call.

However, the beneficiary is not obliged to select the highest scoring proposal where it has objective grounds for objecting the third party.

The consortium may conclude that even the highest scoring proposal is of inadequate quality, in which case it will make no selection. This conclusion is obligatory if all the proposals fall below the threshold scores given on the attached evaluation form.

6. Reporting

Reporting

In a written report submitted within three week of the conclusion of the evaluation, please supply your Project Officer with a brief report on the evaluation and selection process.

Communications with proposers

After the evaluation of the proposals, you will get into contact with the successful proposer(s).

Remember that the beneficiaries are responsible for the proper use of the funding by the recipients and must ensure that they comply with certain obligations under the grant agreement with the Commission. In order to be able to fulfil this obligation, the beneficiaries should impose contractual arrangements on the recipients (including control measures and/or reducing the financial support).

The other proposers will have to be informed that their proposal was not successful in the call, please enclose to each an unsigned version of the consensus report of the evaluation of their proposal.

Annex 1 – Sample Call announcement format

Announcement of an open call for recipients of financial support

Action acronym: XXX

Action grant agreement number: XXX

Action full name: YYY

The action XXX, co-funded from the European Union under agreement No XXX, foresees as an eligible activity the provision of financial support to third parties, as a mean to achieve its own objectives.

The types of activities to perform that qualify for receiving financial support are XXX.

Deadline: XXX

Expected duration of participation: XXX

Maximum amount of financial support for third parties: XXX

Call identifier: XXX call

Language in which proposal should be submitted: XXX

Web address for further information (full call text/proposal guidelines): www.xxx-project.eu

Email address for further information: XXX@XXX.com

Annex 2 – Sample Acknowledgment of receipt

Acknowledgement of receipt

Dear XXX,

Thank you for submitting your proposal for consideration as recipient of financial support in the frame of action XXX.

This evaluation will take place in the next few weeks. You will be notified as soon as possible after this of whether your proposal has been successful or not.

On behalf of my colleagues in the project I would like to thank you for your interest in our activities.

Yours sincerely,

Annex 3 – Evaluation form

Individual evaluation/Consensus (delete as appropriate)

Proposal No. :	Acronym :
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<p>1. Award criterion 1 <i>Note: when a proposal only partially addresses the topics, this condition will be reflected in the scoring of this criterion</i></p>	<p>Score: <i>(Threshold 3/5; Weight 1)</i></p>
<p>2. Award criterion 2</p>	<p>Score: <i>(Threshold 3/5; Weight 1)</i></p>

0 The proposal fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information; 1 Poor The criterion is addressed in an inadequate manner, or there are serious inherent weaknesses; 2 Fair While the proposal broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses; 3 Good The proposal addresses the criterion well, although improvements would be necessary; 4 Very good The proposal addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are still possible; 5 Excellent The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor.

3. Award criterion 3	Score: <i>(Threshold 3/5; Weight 1)</i>
Remarks	Overall score: <i>(Threshold 10/15)</i>

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge, I have no direct or indirect conflict of interest in the evaluation of this proposal

Name	
Signature	
Date	

Name	
Signature	
Date	

0 The proposal fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information; 1 Poor The criterion is addressed in an inadequate manner, or there are serious inherent weaknesses; 2 Fair While the proposal broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses; 3 Good The proposal addresses the criterion well, although improvements would be necessary; 4 Very good The proposal addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are still possible; 5 Excellent The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor.

Annex 4 – Sample Confidentiality and conflict of interest declaration

I the undersigned declare that, in participating as an independent expert in the evaluation of proposals received in the open call of the action XXX

I undertake to treat as confidential all information contained in the proposals which I am asked to evaluate, both during the evaluation and afterwards.

I will not reveal to any third party the identity or any details of the views of my fellow evaluator(s), neither during the evaluation nor afterwards

I do not, to the best of my knowledge, have any interest in any of the proposals submitted in this call, I have not been involved in their preparation and I do not benefit either directly or indirectly from the eventual selection. Should I discover a conflict of interest during the evaluation, I undertake to declare this and to withdraw from the evaluation.

Name	
Signature	
Date	