

Contracting Authority:

Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia

Media Programme 2014

Guidelines
for grant applicants

09.01.07

Reference: EuropeAid/136989/DD/ACT/RS

Deadline for submission of Concept note: 05/06/2015

Notice

This is a restricted Call for Proposals. In the first instance, only Concept Notes must be submitted for evaluation. Thereafter, applicants who have been pre-selected will be invited to submit a Full Application Form. After the evaluation of the Full Applications, an eligibility check will be performed for those which have been provisionally selected. Eligibility will be checked on the basis of the supporting documents requested by the Contracting Authority and the signed 'Declaration by the Applicant' sent together with the application.

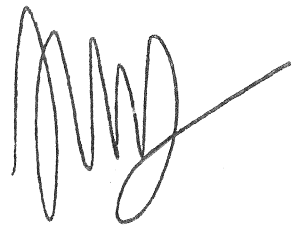
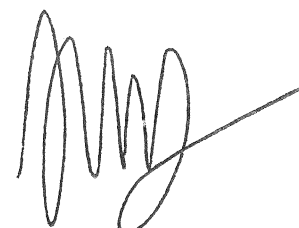
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1. MEDIA PROGRAMME 2014

1.1. BACKGROUND

The European Commission developed the Guidelines to support media freedom and media integrity in enlargement countries in the period 2014-2020¹. This strategic approach is supported by financial and technical assistance through the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance that will address three overarching areas:

- the enabling environment for free expression and media;
- strengthening journalists' and media professionals' organisations as the key drivers of the needed change;
- helping media outlets improve their internal governance, thus making them more resilient against external pressures and restoring audience's confidence in them.

The adoption of the new set of media laws by the Parliament of the Republic of Serbia on the 2nd of August 2014 represented a key milestone in the implementation of the Media Strategy. Serbia 2014 Progress report² concluded that the adoption of three laws represents a significant positive development in further aligning Serbia's legal framework with the EU acquis. However there are concerns about deteriorating conditions for the full exercise of freedom of expression and growing trend of self-censorship which affect the development of professional and investigative journalism.

Media freedoms and professional journalism need to be strengthened and supported to help citizens to protect their rights to the freedom of expression and information. The media content in Serbia has deteriorated in quality and there is a noticeable lack of media content that properly tackles common democratic principles such as transparency, good governance and the rule of law. The economic crisis in Serbia has led to the reduction of the resources for established journalists and media. This further increased the pressure on professional journalism in the country, and has led to lack of important stories in particular those that relate to the rule of law.

1.2. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME AND PRIORITY ISSUES

The **global objective** of this Call for Proposals is to improve conditions for quality investigative journalism including modern/innovative approaches to increase quality and credibility of investigative journalism.

The **specific objective (s)** of this Call for Proposals is to support quality media production in the area of rule of law.

The activities to be implemented through this Call for Proposals should lead to the following results:

- Media content of public interest produced;
- Increased professional capacities of media and journalists.

1.3. FINANCIAL ALLOCATION PROVIDED BY THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY

The overall indicative amount made available under this Call for Proposals is EUR 1,800,000. The Contracting Authority reserves the right not to award all available funds.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/news_corner/key-documents/index_en.htm

² http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2014/20140108-serbia-progress-report_en.pdf



Size of grants

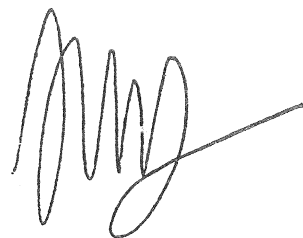
Any grant requested under this Call for Proposals must fall between the following minimum and maximum amounts:

- Minimum amount: EUR 50,000
- Maximum amount: EUR 150,000

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: 50.00% of the total eligible costs of the action.
- Maximum percentage: 90.00% of the total eligible costs of the action (see also Section 2.1.5).

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 European Union Budget or the European Development Fund³.



3 Where a grant is financed by the European Development Fund, any mention of European Union financing must be understood as referring to European Development Fund financing.

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>).

2.1. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

There are three sets of eligibility criteria, relating to:

(1) the actors:

- The **applicant**, i.e. the entity submitting the application form (2.1.1),
- if any, its **co-applicant(s)** (where it is not specified otherwise the applicant and its co-applicant(s) are hereinafter jointly referred as the "applicants") (2.1.1),
- and, if any, **affiliated entity(ies)** to the applicant and/or to a co-applicant(s). (2.1.2);

(2) the actions:

Actions for which a grant may be awarded (2.1.4);

(3) the costs:

- types of cost that may be taken into account in setting the amount of the grant (2.1.5).

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

Applicant

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

- a) be a legal persons **and**
- b) be print, electronic, on-line media, news agencies, media production houses and media associations **and**
- c) be established in⁴ a Member State of the European Union or in a country covered by the Article 10 of the IPA Regulation⁵ **and**
- d) be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action with the co-applicant(s) and affiliated entity(ies), not acting as an intermediary **and**
- e) be based in Serbia or in a Member State of the European Union but with an established office in Serbia.

⁴ 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.

⁵ Regulation (EU) N°236/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 laying down common rules and procedures for the implementation of the Union's instruments for financing external action

- (2) The potential applicant may not participate in calls for proposals or be awarded grants if it is in any of the situations listed in Section 2.3.3 of the Practical Guide;

In Part A, section 3 of the grant application form ('Declaration by the applicant'), the applicant must declare that the applicant himself, the co-applicant(s) and affiliated entity(ies) are not in any of these situations.

The applicant may act individually or with co-applicant(s).

If awarded the Grant contract, the applicant will become the Beneficiary identified as the Coordinator in annex E3h1 (Special Conditions). The Coordinator is the main 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.

Co-applicant(s)

Co-applicant(s) participate in designing and implementing the action, and the costs they incur are eligible in the same way as those incurred by the applicant.

Co-applicant(s) must satisfy the eligibility criteria as applicable to the applicant himself, except for criterion 2.1.1.(1) e) above.

Co-applicant(s) must sign the Mandate in Part B section 4 of the grant application form.

In addition to the categories referred to in section 2.1.1.(1) above for the applicant, the following are however also eligible:

- Civil society organisations working in the areas relevant for the Call.

If awarded the Grant contract, the co-applicant(s) (if any) will become beneficiaries in the Action (together with the Coordinator).

2.1.2. Affiliated entities

The applicant and its co-applicant(s) may act with affiliated entity(ies).

Only the following entities may be considered as affiliated entities to the applicant and/or to co-applicant(s):

Only entities having a structural link with the applicants, 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 a beneficiary may hence be:

- Entities directly or indirectly controlled by the beneficiary (daughter companies or first-tier subsidiaries). They may also be entities controlled by an entity controlled by the beneficiary (granddaughter companies or second-tier subsidiaries) and the same applies to further tiers of control;
- Entities directly or indirectly controlling the beneficiary (parent companies). Likewise, they may be entities controlling an entity controlling the beneficiary;
- Entities under the same direct or indirect control as the beneficiary (sister companies).

- (ii) Membership, i.e. the beneficiary is legally defined as a e.g. network, federation, association in which the proposed affiliated entities also participate or the beneficiary 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 a beneficiary 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 an 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 a beneficiary:

- Entities that have entered into a (procurement) contract or subcontract with a beneficiary, act as concessionaires or delegates for public services for a beneficiary,
- Entities that receive financial support from the beneficiary,
- Entities that cooperate on a regular basis with the beneficiary on the basis of a memorandum of understanding or share some assets,
- Entities that have signed a consortium agreement under the grant contract.

How to verify the existence of the required link with the beneficiary?

The affiliation resulting from control may in particular be proved on the basis of the consolidated accounts of the group of entities the beneficiary 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 beneficiary constitutes or in which the beneficiary participates.

If the applicants are awarded a contract, their affiliated entity(ies) will not become Beneficiary(ies) of the Action and signatory(ies) of the 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.

Affiliated entity(ies) must satisfy the same eligibility criteria as the applicant and the co-applicant(s). They must sign the affiliated entity(ies) statement in Part B section 5 of the grant application form.

2.1.3. Associates and Contractors

The following entities are not applicant(s) nor affiliated entity(ies) and do not have to sign the "mandate" or "affiliated entities' statement":

- Associates

Other organisations 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 Part B section 6 — ‘Associates of the Applicant participating in the Action’ — of the Grant Application Form.

- Contractors

The grant 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.

2.1.4. Eligible actions: actions for which an application may be made

Definition:

An action is composed of a set of activities.

Duration

The initial planned duration of an action may not be lower than 12 months nor exceed 24 months.

Sectors, themes and types of action:

Specific sectors or themes to which the actions must relate:

The actions must relate to the sector rule of law, which includes the following themes:

- Independence, transparency and efficiency in administration of justice and work of the court system;
- Law enforcement and fight against all forms of crime, including organised crime;
- Transparency of public budgeting and spending, accountability of public officials;
- Protection of human and fundamental rights.

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.

Location

Actions must take place in the Republic of Serbia. Should the activities described in the project proposal involve investigative work, recording or similar activities in countries outside Serbia, the expenses incurred in this way shall be considered eligible, and such activities deemed appropriate.

Types of activity

Types of activities which may be financed under this call for proposals:

- (i) Production and development of new electronic and multimedia productions;
- (ii) Series of documentaries, docudrama and TV films;
- (iii) Print productions such as reports, new columns, and series of articles or features;
- (iv) Joint productions or production exchange within networks of local media;
- (v) Analytical and investigative journalism trainings for local media that include sub-granting for media productions covering specific sector/themes relevant to this Call for Proposals;

Financial support to third parties⁶

Only for type of activity (v) *Analytical and investigative journalism trainings for local media that include sub-granting for media productions covering specific sector/themes relevant to this Call for Proposals*, applicants may propose financial support to third parties in order to help achieving the objectives of the action for the activity.

The maximum amount of financial support per third party is EUR 20 000.

Under this Call, financial support to third parties may not be the main purpose of the action. The financial support to the third party must include the training activities as described in 2.1.4.

In compliance with the present guidelines and notably of any conditions or restrictions in this section, applicants should define mandatorily in section 2.1.1 of the grant application form:

- (i) the objectives and results to be obtained 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 contract as to avoid any exercise of discretion.

For the purposes of this Call for Proposals, third parties are local media in Serbia.

The following types of activities may be eligible and addressed for financial support:

- Production and development of new electronic and multimedia productions;
- Print productions such as reports, new columns, and series of articles or features.

Visibility

The Applicants must take all necessary steps to publicise the fact that the European Union has financed or co-financed the Action. As far as possible, actions that are wholly or partially funded by the European Union must incorporate information and communication activities designed 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.

Applicants must comply with the objectives and priorities and guarantee the visibility of the EU financing (see the Communication and Visibility Manual for EU external actions specified and published by the European Commission at http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/funding/communication-and-visibility-manual-eu-external-actions_en).

Number of applications and grants per applicants

The applicant may not submit more than one application under this Call for Proposals.

The applicant may not be awarded more than one grant under this Call for Proposals.

⁶ These third parties are neither affiliated entity(ies) nor associates nor contractors.

The applicant may not be a co-applicant or an affiliated entity in another application at the same time.

A co-applicant/affiliated entity may not submit more than one application under this Call for Proposals.

A co-applicant/affiliated entity may not be awarded more than one grant under this Call for Proposals.

A co-applicant/affiliated entity may not be the applicant or an affiliated entity in another application at the same time.

2.1.5. Eligibility of costs: costs that can be included

Only 'eligible costs' can be covered by a 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'.

The reimbursement of eligible costs may be based on any or a combination of the following forms:

- actual costs incurred by the Beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies)
- one or more simplified cost options.

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.

The amounts or rates have to be based on estimates using objective data such as statistical data or any other objective means or with reference to certified or auditable historical data of the applicants or the affiliated entity(ies). The methods used to determine the amounts or rates of unit costs, lump sums or flat-rates must comply with the criteria established in Annex K, and especially ensure that the costs correspond fairly to the actual costs incurred by the Grant Beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies), are in line with their accounting practices, no profit is made and the costs are not already covered by other sources of funding (no double funding). Refer to Annex K for directions and a checklist of controls to assess the minimum necessary conditions that provide reasonable assurance for the acceptance of the proposed amounts.

The applicant 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" (per month/flight etc), "LUMPSUM" or "FLAT RATE" 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 the applicant must:

- describe the information and methods used to establish the amounts of unit costs, lump sums and/or flat-rates, to which costs they refer, etc.
- clearly explain the formulas for calculation of the final eligible amount⁷

⁷ Examples:- for staff costs: number of hours or days of work * hourly or daily rate pre-set according to the category of personnel concerned;- for travel expenses: distance in km * pre-set cost of transport per km; number of days *

- identify the beneficiary who will use the simplified cost option (in case of affiliated entity, specify first the beneficiary), in order to verify the maximum amount per each beneficiary (which includes if applicable simplified cost options of its affiliated entity(ies))

At contracting phase, the Contracting Authority decides whether to accept the proposed amounts or rates on the basis of the provisional budget submitted by the applicant, by analysing factual data of grants carried out by the applicant or of similar actions and by performing checks established by Annex K.

The total amount of financing on the basis of simplified cost options that can be authorised by the Contracting Authority for any of the applicants individually (including simplified cost options proposed by their own affiliated entities) cannot exceed EUR 60 000 (the indirect costs are not taken into account).

For the purpose of this call, the Contracting Authority authorises the use of simplified cost options only to the following budget subheadings: 1.1 and 1.2 Salaries.

Recommendations to award a grant are always subject to the condition that the checks preceding the signing of the 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 applicant's interest to provide a **realistic and cost-effective budget**.

Eligible direct costs

To be eligible under the Call for Proposals, costs must comply with the provisions of Article 14 of the General Conditions to the Standard Grant Contract (see 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 applicant may be asked to justify the percentage requested before the contract is signed. However, once the flat rate has been fixed in the special conditions of the standard 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 a Beneficiary(ies) or affiliated entity(ies) free of charge by a third party. As contributions in kind do not involve any expenditure for a Beneficiary(ies) or affiliated entity(ies), they are not eligible costs.

Contributions in kind may not be treated as co-financing.

daily allowance pre-set according to the country;- for specific costs arising from the organization of an event:
number of participants at the event * pre-set total cost per participant etc.

However, if the description of the action as proposed includes contributions in kind, the contributions have to be made.

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 Union (including through EDF) grant;
- purchases of land or buildings,;
- currency exchange losses;
- taxes, including VAT, duties and charges;
- credit to third parties;
- salary costs of the personnel of national administrations;
- profit or surplus of the receipts over the eligible costs: no grant may give rise to profits, i.e. it must only balance income and expenditure for the action.

2.2. HOW TO APPLY AND THE PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW

Prior registration in PADOR for this Call for Proposals is obligatory.

- **Phase 1, concept note:** Registration in PADOR is obligatory for an applicant applying for grants above EUR 60 000.

Registration is optional **though strongly recommended** for:

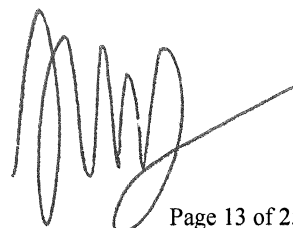
- An applicant applying for grants of EUR 60 000 or less;
- co-applicant(s) and affiliated entity(ies).
- **Phase 2, full proposal:** Registration in PADOR is obligatory for all pre-selected applicants, co-applicant(s) and all their affiliated entity(ies).

PADOR is an on-line database in which organisations register and update their data regularly, through the EuropeAid website: <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/pador>.

Before starting to register your organisation in PADOR, please read the 'Quick guide' on the website. It explains the registration process.

It is strongly recommended to register in PADOR when you start drafting your proposal and not to wait until just before the deadline of submission.

On the paper version of the proposal you must give your EuropeAid ID (EID). To get this ID, your organisation must enter PADOR to register, save and 'sign' certain obligatory data (the fields shown in orange on each screen) and the related documents (see section 2.4).



However, if it is impossible for the organisation to register in PADOR, it must submit a justification proving that this impossibility is general and beyond the control of the applicant and/or its affiliated entity(ies). In such cases, the applicants and/or affiliated entity(ies) concerned must complete the 'PADOR off-line form'⁸ attached to these Guidelines and send it by the submission deadline, together with the application, to the address indicated in sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.6. The registration in PADOR will then be carried out by the European Commission service in charge of the Call for Proposals. If, at a later stage, the organisation wishes to update its data itself, it will have to send an access request to the PADOR helpdesk.

All questions related to registration in PADOR should be addressed to the PADOR helpdesk at: <mailto:EuropeAid-IT-support@ec.europa.eu>.

2.2.1. Concept Note content

Applications must be submitted in accordance with the Concept Note instructions in the Grant Application Form annexed to these Guidelines (Annex A).

Applicants must apply in English.

In the Concept Note, applicants must only provide an estimate of the amount of contribution requested from the Contracting Authority and an indicative percentage of that contribution in relation to the total amount of the Action. Only the applicants invited to submit a full application in the second phase will be required to present a detailed budget. The elements outlined in the Concept Note may not be modified by the applicant in the full application form. The EU contribution may not vary from the initial estimate by more than 20%. 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 in section 1.3. Own contributions by the applicants can be replaced by other donors' contributions at any time.

Any error or major discrepancy related to the points listed in the Concept Note instructions may lead to the rejection of the Concept Note.

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

Hand-written Concept Notes will not be accepted.

Please note that only the Concept Note form will be evaluated. It is therefore of utmost importance that this document contains ALL relevant information concerning the action. No additional annexes should be sent.

2.2.2. Where and how to send Concept Notes

The Concept Note together with its relating Checklist and Declaration by the applicant (to be found in **Part A sections 2 and 3** of the grant application form) must be submitted in **one original and two copies in A4 size, each bound**.

An electronic version of the Concept Note must also be submitted. **A CD-Rom with the Concept Note in electronic format will be included**, along with the paper version, in a sealed envelope as described below. The electronic file must contain **exactly the same** application as the paper version enclosed.

Where applicants send several different Concept Notes (if allowed to do so by the Guidelines of the Call), each one must be sent separately.

⁸ Which corresponds to Sections 3 and 4 of Part B of the application form.

The outer envelope must bear the **reference number and the title of the call for proposals**, together with the full name and address of the applicant, and the words 'Not to be opened before the opening session' and 'Ne otvarati pre zvanicne sednice otvaranja'.

Concept Notes must be submitted in a sealed envelope by registered mail, private courier service or by hand-delivery (a signed and dated certificate of receipt will be given to the deliverer) to the address below:

Postal address and address for hand delivery or by private courier service:

Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia
Contracts and Finance Section
Vladimira Popovica 40/V
11070 Belgrade, Serbia

Concept Notes sent by any other means (e.g. by fax or by e-mail) or delivered to other addresses will be rejected.

Applicants must verify that their Concept Note is complete using the Checklist for Concept Note (Part A section 2 of the grant application form). Incomplete concept notes may be rejected.

2.2.3. Deadline for submission of Concept Notes

The deadline for the submission of Concept Notes is **05/06/2015** as evidenced by the date of dispatch, the postmark or the date of the deposit slip. In the case of hand-deliveries, the deadline for receipt is **15:00 hours local time (CET)** as evidenced by the signed and dated receipt. Any Concept Note submitted after the deadline will be rejected.

However, for reasons of administrative efficiency, the Contracting Authority may reject any Concept Note sent in due time but received after the effective date of approval of the Concept Note evaluation (see indicative calendar under section 2.5.2)

2.2.4. Further information about Concept Notes

Information sessions on this call for proposals will be held throughout Serbia. The schedule of the information sessions will be published at a later date at the following websites:

- EU Delegation to the Republic of Serbia: www.europa.rs

- EuropeAid: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome>
Questions may be sent by e-mail no later than 21 days before the deadline for the submission of concept notes to the address(es) below, indicating clearly the reference of the Call for Proposals:

E-mail address: DELEGATION-SERBIA-FCS@eeas.europa.eu

The Contracting Authority has no obligation to provide clarifications to questions received after this date.

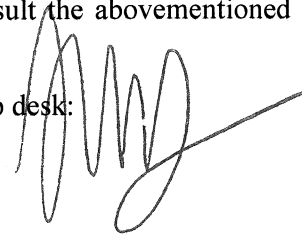
Replies will be given no later than 11 days before the deadline for submission of Concept Notes.

To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the Contracting Authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of applicants, affiliated entity(ies), an action or specific activities.

Questions that may be relevant to other applicants, together with answers and other important notices in the course of the evaluation procedure, will be published on the EuropeAid website <http://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome> and the Delegation's website: <http://www.europa.rs>, 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.

All questions related to PADOR registration should be addressed to the PADOR help desk:

<mailto:EuropeAid-IT-support@ec.europa.eu>



2.2.5. Full Application forms

An applicant invited to submit a full application form following pre-selection of their Concept Note must do so using Part B of the application form annexed to these Guidelines (Annex A). Applicants should then keep strictly to the format of the application form and fill in the paragraphs and pages in order.

The elements outlined in the Concept Note cannot be modified by the applicant in the full application form. 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, as laid down in these Guidelines under section 1.3.

Applicants must submit their full applications in the same language as their Concept Notes.

Please complete the full 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 (Part B, Section 7 of the Grant Application form) or any major inconsistency in the full application form (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 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. **No supplementary annexes should be sent.**

2.2.6. Where and how to send Full Application forms

Applications must be submitted in a sealed envelope by registered mail, private courier service or by hand-delivery (a signed and dated certificate of receipt will be given to the deliverer) to the address below:

Postal address and address for hand delivery or by private courier service:

Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia
Contracts and Finance Section
Vladimira Popovica 40/V
11070 Belgrade, Serbia

Applications sent by any other means (e.g. by fax or by e-mail) or delivered to other addresses will be rejected.

Applications must be submitted in **one original and two copies in A4 size, each bound. The full application form, budget and logical framework must also be supplied in electronic format (CD-Rom)** in a separate and single file (i.e. the full application form must not be split into several different files). The electronic file must contain **exactly the same** application as the paper version.

The Checklist (Section 7 of Part B of the grant application form) and the Declaration by the applicant (Section 8 of Part B of the grant application form) must be stapled separately and enclosed in the envelope

Where applicants send several different applications (if allowed to do so by the Guidelines of the Call), each one must be sent separately.

The outer envelope must bear the **reference number and the title of the Call for Proposals**, together with the number and title of the lot, the full name and address of the applicant, and the words 'Not to be opened before the opening session' and 'Ne otvarati pre zvanične sednice otvaranja'.

Applicants must verify that their application is complete using the checklist (Section 7 of Part B of the grant application form). Incomplete applications may be rejected.

2.2.7. *Deadline for submission of Full Application forms*

The deadline for the submission of applications will be indicated in the letter sent to the applicants whose application has been pre-selected.

However, for reasons of administrative efficiency, the Contracting Authority may reject any application sent in due time but received after the date of approval of the evaluation report for full applications (see indicative calendar under Section 2.5.2)

2.2.8. *Further information about Full Application forms*

Questions may be sent by e-mail no later than 21 days before the deadline for the submission of applications to the addresses listed below, indicating clearly the reference of the Call for Proposals:

E-mail address: DELEGATION-SERBIA-FCS@eeas.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 applications.

To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the Contracting Authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of 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 <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome> and the Delegation's website: <http://www.europa.rs>. It is therefore advisable to consult the abovementioned website regularly in order to be informed of the questions and answers published.

2.3. EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications will be examined and evaluated by the Contracting Authority with the possible assistance of external assessors. All actions 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 paragraph 2.1, the application will be rejected on this sole basis.

(1) STEP 1: OPENING & ADMINISTRATIVE CHECKS AND CONCEPT NOTE EVALUATION

The following will be assessed:

- Compliance with the submission deadline. If the deadline has not been met, the application will automatically be rejected.
- The Concept Note satisfies all the criteria specified in points 1-5 of the Checklist (Section 2 of Part A of the grant 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.

The Concept Notes that pass the first administrative check will be evaluated on the relevance and design of the proposed action.

The Concept Note will receive an overall score out of 50 using the breakdown in the evaluation grid below. The evaluation will also check on compliance with the instructions on the Concept Note, which can be found

in Part A of the Application Form.

The evaluation criteria are divided into headings and subheadings. Each subheading will be given a score between 1 and 5 as follows: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.

Scores

1. Relevance of the action		Sub-score	30
1.1 How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the Call for Proposals?		5x2*	
1.2 How relevant to the particular needs and constraints of the target country(ies) or region(s) is the proposal (including synergy with other EU initiatives and avoidance of duplication)?		5x2*	
1.3 How clearly defined and strategically chosen are those involved (final beneficiaries, target groups)? Have their needs been clearly defined and does the proposal address them appropriately?		5	
1.4 Does the proposal contain specific added-value elements, such as environmental issues, promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities, needs of disabled people, rights of minorities and rights of indigenous peoples, or innovation and best practices?		5	
2. Design of the action		Sub-score	20
2.1 How coherent is the overall design of the action?		5x2*	
In particular, does it reflect the analysis of the problems involved, take into account external factors and relevant stakeholders?			
2.2 Is the action feasible and consistent in relation to the objectives and expected results?		5x2*	

TOTAL SCORE 50

*these scores are multiplied by 2 because of their importance

Once all Concept Notes have been assessed, a list will be drawn up with the proposed actions ranked according to their total score.

Firstly, only the Concept Notes with a score of at least 30 will be considered for pre-selection.

Secondly, the number of Concept Notes will be reduced, taking account of the ranking, to the number of Concept Notes whose total aggregate amount of requested contributions is equal to 200% of the available budget for this Call for Proposals. The amount of requested contributions of each concept note will be based on the indicative financial envelopes for each lot.

After the evaluation of Concept Notes, the Contracting Authority will send letters to all applicants, indicating whether their application was submitted by the deadline, informing them of the reference number they have been allocated, whether the Concept Note was evaluated and the results of that evaluation. The pre-selected applicants will subsequently be invited to submit full applications.

(2) STEP 2: EVALUATION OF THE FULL APPLICATION

Firstly, the following will be assessed:

- Compliance with the submission deadline. If the deadline has not been met, the application will automatically be rejected.
- The full application form satisfies all the criteria specified in points 1-9 of the Checklist (Section 7 of Part B of the grant 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.

The quality of the applications, including the proposed budget and capacity of the applicants and affiliated entity(ies), 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 applicant(s)'s and affiliated entity(ies)'s operational capacity and the applicant's financial capacity and to ensure that they:

- have stable and sufficient sources of finance to maintain their activity throughout the proposed action and, where appropriate, to participate in its funding;
- have the management capacity, professional competencies and qualifications required to successfully complete the proposed action. This also applies to any affiliated entity(ies) of the applicants.

The award criteria help to evaluate the quality of the applications in relation to the objectives and priorities, 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

Section	Maximum Score
1. Financial and operational capacity	20
1.1 Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient experience of project management?	5
1.2 Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient technical expertise? (especially knowledge of the issues to be addressed)	5
1.3 Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient management capacity? (Including staff, equipment and ability to handle the budget for the action)?	5
1.4 Does the lead applicant have stable and sufficient sources of finance?	5

2. Relevance of the action	30
<i>Score transferred from the Concept Note evaluation</i>	
3. Effectiveness and feasibility of the action	20
3.1 Are the activities proposed appropriate, practical, and consistent with the objectives and expected results?	5
3.2 Is the action plan clear and feasible?	5
3.3 Does the proposal contain objectively verifiable indicators for the outcome of the action? Is any evaluation planned?	5
3.4 Is the co-applicant(s)'s and affiliated entity(ies)'s level of involvement and participation in the action satisfactory?	5
4. Sustainability of the action	15
4.1 Is the action likely to have a tangible impact on its target groups?	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
5. Budget and cost-effectiveness of the action	15
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?	/ 10
Maximum total score	100

Note on section 1. Financial and operational capacity

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.

Provisional selection

After the evaluation, a table will be drawn up listing the applications ranked according to their score and within the limits of the funds available. In addition, a reserve list will be drawn up following the same criteria to be used if more funds should become available during the validity period of the reserve list.

(3) STEP 3: VERIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY OF THE APPLICANTS AND AFFILIATED ENTITY(IES)

The eligibility verification, based on the supporting documents requested by the Contracting Authority (see Section 2.4) will only be performed for the applications that have been provisionally selected according to their score and within the available financial envelope.

- The Declaration by the applicant (Section 8 of Part B the grant application form) will be cross-checked with the supporting documents provided by the 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, the affiliated entity(ies), and the action will be verified according to the criteria set out in Sections 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and 2.1.3.

Any rejected application will be replaced by the next best placed application on the reserve list that falls within the available financial envelope.

2.4. SUBMISSION OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS FOR PROVISIONALLY SELECTED APPLICATIONS

An applicant that 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 in order to allow the Contracting Authority to verify the eligibility of the applicant, (if any) of the co-applicant(s) and (if any) of their affiliated entity(ies)⁹:

Supporting documents may/must be provided through PADOR, see Section 2.2.

1. The statutes or articles of association of the applicant, (if any) of each co-applicant(s) and (if any) of each affiliated entity(ies)¹⁰. Where the Contracting Authority has recognised the applicant's, or the co-applicant(s)'s, or their affiliated entity(ies)'s eligibility 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 meantime¹¹. This obligation does not apply to international organisations which have signed a framework agreement with the European Commission.
2. An external audit report produced by an approved auditor, certifying the applicant's accounts for the last financial year available where the total amount of the grant exceeds EUR 750 000 (EUR 100 000 for an operating grant). The external audit report is not required from (if any) the co-applicant(s)).

9 No supporting document will be requested for applications for a grant not exceeding EUR 60000.

10 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.

11 To be inserted only where the eligibility conditions have not changed from one call for proposals to the other.

3. A copy of the 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)¹². A copy of the latest account is neither required from (if any) the co-applicant(s) nor from (if any) affiliated entity(ies)).
4. Legal entity sheet (see annex D of these Guidelines) duly completed and signed by each of the applicants (i.e. by the applicant and (if any) by each co-applicant(s), accompanied by the justifying documents requested there. If the applicants have already signed a contract with the Contracting Authority, instead of the legal entity sheet and supporting documents, the legal entity number may be provided, unless a change in legal status occurred in the meantime.
5. A financial identification form of the applicant (not from co-applicant(s)) conforming to the model attached at 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 applicant is established. If the 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.

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. However, the Legal entity sheet and the financial identification form must always be submitted in original.

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 applicant(s)'s 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 applicants' eligibility, into English language.

If the abovementioned supporting documents are not provided before the deadline indicated in the request for supporting documents sent to the applicant by the Contracting Authority, the application may be rejected.

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.

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.

2.5. NOTIFICATION OF THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY'S DECISION

2.5.1. *Content of the 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.

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 organisations. It does not apply either when the accounts are in practice the same documents as the external audit report already provided pursuant to Section 2.4.2.

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.

2.5.2. Indicative timetable

	DATE	TIME*
Information meeting (if any)	See Section 2.2.4	See Section 2.2.4
Deadline for requesting any clarifications from the Contracting Authority	15/05/2015	16:00 hrs CET
Last date on which clarifications are issued by the Contracting Authority	25/05/2015	-
Deadline for submission of Concept	05/06/2015	15:00 hrs CET
Information to applicants on opening, administrative checks and concept note evaluation (Step 1)	July 2015*	-
Invitations to submit Full Application Form	July 2015*	-
Deadline for submission of Full Application Form	September 2015*	-
Information to applicants on the evaluation of the Full Application Form (Step 2)¹³	October 2015*	-
Notification of award (after the eligibility check) (Step 3)	November 2015*	-
Contract signature¹⁴	December 2015*	-

***Provisional date.** All times are in the time zone of the country of the Contracting Authority.

This indicative timetable may be updated by the Contracting Authority during the procedure. In such cases, the updated timetable will be published on the EuropeAid web site <http://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome> and on the website of the Contracting Authority <http://www.europa.rs>.

13 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 full 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.

14 Note that according to the financial regulation, in direct management the grant contract 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

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

Following the decision to award a grant, the Beneficiary(ies) will be offered a contract based on the Contracting Authority's grant contract (see Annex G of these Guidelines¹⁵). By signing the application form (Annex A of these Guidelines), the applicants agree, if awarded a grant, to accept the contractual conditions of the standard grant contract.

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.

2.7. EARLY WARNING SYSTEM AND CENTRAL EXCLUSION DATABASE

The applicants and, if they are legal entities, the persons who have powers of representation, decision-making or control over them, are informed that, should they be in one of the situations mentioned in:

- Commission Decision of 16.12.2008 on the Early Warning System (EWS) for the use of authorising officers of the Commission and the executive agencies (OJ, L 344, 20.12.2008, p.125) or
- Commission Regulation of 17.12.2008 on the Central Exclusion Database (CED) (OJ L344, 20.12.2008, p.12),

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 EWS only or both in the EWS and CED, and communicated to the persons and entities listed in the above-mentioned Decision and Regulation, in relation to the award or the execution of a grant agreement or decision.

¹⁵ Complemented by the provisions in Annex e3h11 where at least one of the beneficiaries is an international organisation.

3. LIST OF ANNEXES

DOCUMENTS TO BE COMPLETED

- Annex A: Grant Application Form (Word format)
Annex B: Budget (Excel format)
Annex C: Logical Framework (Excel format)¹⁶
Annex D: Legal Entity Sheet¹⁷
Annex E: Financial identification form
Annex F: PADOR offline Form¹⁸

DOCUMENTS FOR INFORMATION

- Annex G: Standard Grant Contract
- Annex II: General conditions
 - Annex IV: contract award procedures
 - 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 IX: standard template for transfer of ownership of assets
- Annex H: Daily allowance rates (Per diem), available at the following address:
https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/applicable-rates-diems-framework-ec-funded-external-aid-contracts-05072013_en
- Annex K: Guidelines and Checklist for assessing Budget and Simplified cost options.
- Annex J: Information on the tax regime applicable to grant contracts signed under the call.

Useful links:

Project Cycle Management Guidelines

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>

Financial Toolkit

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/funding/procedures-beneficiary-countries-and-partners/financial-management-toolkit_en

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- 16 Optional where the total amount of the grants to be awarded under the Call for Proposals is EUR 100 000 or less.
- 17 Only applicable where the European Commission is the Contracting Authority or will make the payments under the contracts to be signed.
- 18 http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/pador-line-form-0_en . Only applicable in calls under direct management where PADOR is used.

