



Contracting Authority: the European Commission

Neighbourhood Civil Society Facility 2011 Call on Public Finance Policy and Management

Guidelines
for grant applicants

Budget line: 19.080103

Reference: **ENPI/132-261**

Deadline for submission of proposals: 9 March 2012

NOTICE

This is an **Open Call for Proposals, where all documents are submitted at one stage (Concept Note and Full Proposal)**. However, in the first instance, only the Concept Notes will be evaluated. Thereafter, for the applicants whose Concept Notes have been pre-selected, evaluation of the full proposal will be carried out. Further to the evaluation of the full proposals, an eligibility check will be performed for those which are provisionally selected. This check will be undertaken 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. NEIGHBOURHOOD CIVIL SOCIETY FACILITY

1.1 BACKGROUND

Recognising the potential value-added of non-state actors and local authorities, the European Commission encourages the broadest possible participation by all parts of society to ensure ownership of development strategies by local people and to promote a dialogue on good governance within each partner country. As reflected in the 'European Consensus on Development'¹, civil society and its various actors play a key role as promoters of democracy, social justice and human rights.

Acknowledging civil society's role to contribute to policy-making and hold governments to account, in the specific context of the Neighbourhood region, the Communication "A new response to a changing Neighbourhood"² commits to supporting a greater role for non-state actors through a partnership with societies, helping civil society organisations develop their advocacy capacity, their ability to monitor reform and their role in implementing, monitoring and evaluating EU programmes. In that sense, the Communication proposes the establishment of a Civil Society Facility to provide funding for civil society organisations in the Neighbourhood.

In light of the recent events in the South Mediterranean, and in the context of further consolidation of the Eastern Partnership which includes a strong civil society component, the Facility aims to offer increased support to civil society organisations in the Neighbourhood region³, especially to develop the civil society organisations' advocacy capacity and their ability to monitor reform.

The Facility is consistent with the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) Regulation⁴ which foresees that Community assistance shall be used to support measures to: support democratisation, inter alia, by enhancing the role of civil society organisations and promoting media pluralism, as well as through electoral observation and assistance; and foster the development of civil society organisations.

The overall objective of the Neighbourhood Civil Society Facility is to strengthen and promote civil society organisations' role in reforms and democratic changes taking place in the Neighbourhood countries, through increased participation in the fulfilment of Neighbourhood Policy objectives. The Facility will pursue the following specific objectives:

- to strengthen civil society organisations and contribute to promoting an enabling environment for their work;
- to increase civil society organisations' involvement in support to programming, implementation and monitoring of EU assistance and policies in the region;
- to promote involvement of civil society in policy dialogue and increase interaction between civil society organisations and authorities at national level.

1 http://ec.europa.eu/development/icenter/repository/european_consensus_2005_en.pdf

2 COM(2011)303 – http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/com_11_303_en.pdf

3 The Neighbourhood region refers to countries covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy: Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Lebanon, Libya, Jordan, Israel, Republic of Moldova (hereafter Moldova), Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Ukraine, West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

4 Regulation (EC) No 1638/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 laying down general provisions establishing a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, Article 1 http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/oj_1310_en.pdf

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME AND PRIORITY ISSUES

The **global objective** of this Call for Proposals is to strengthen and promote civil society organisations' role in reforms and democratic changes taking place in Azerbaijan, through increased participation in the fulfilment of Neighbourhood Policy objectives.

The **specific objectives** of this Call for Proposals are:

- to increase non-state actors involvement in support of programming, implementation and monitoring of policies in Azerbaijan;
- to promote involvement of non-state actors in policy dialogue, research and evidence-based advocacy, as well as increase interaction between non-state actors and authorities at the national level so as to contribute to improving transparency and quality of public finance policy and management;
- to increase the role of non-state actors in supporting oversight functions in the area of public finance policy and management;
- To improve public understanding and participation in the budget process to increase public role in decision-making and improve effectiveness of public expenditures

Priority issues

The **priority** of this Call for Proposals is the Public Finance Policy and Management (PFPM) sector. The selection of this priority as the focus of this call for proposals aims to ensure the complementarity of the programme with the Public Finance Policy Reforms Support programme, currently being under preparation with the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, as part of the bilateral assistance envelope.

Preference will be given to proposals built upon existing and past initiatives and **best practices** in the same area. Project should contain measures ensuring **multiplication and sustainability** of its outcomes.

1.3 FINANCIAL ALLOCATION PROVIDED BY THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY

The overall indicative amount made available under this Call for Proposals is EUR 500.000. The Contracting Authority reserves the right not to award all available funds. This amount could be increased should more funds become available.

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 250.000

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 % of the total estimated eligible costs of the action.

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

The balance (i.e. the difference between the total cost of the action and the amount requested from the Contracting Authority) must be financed from the applicant's or partners' own resources, or from sources other than the European Union budget or the European Development Fund⁵.

⁵ 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 actions financed under this Call, in conformity with the provisions of the Practical Guide to contract procedures for EU external actions, which is applicable to the present call (available on the Internet at this address: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/implementation/index_en.htm).

2.1 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

There are three sets of eligibility criteria, relating to:

- applicant(s) which may request a grant (2.1.1), and their partners (2.1.2);
- actions for which a grant may be awarded (2.1.3);
- types of cost which may be taken into account in setting the amount of the grant (2.1.4).

2.1.1 Eligibility of applicants: who may apply?

(1) In order to be eligible for a grant, applicants **must**:

- be legal persons **and**
- be non profit making **and**
- belong to one of the following categories:
 - a) civil society organisations, including non-governmental non-profit organisations and independent political foundations, community based organisations, and private sector non-profit agencies, institutions and organisations, and networks thereof at local, national, regional and international level;
 - b) public sector non-profit agencies, research organizations, institutions and organisations and networks at local, national, regional, and international level;
 - c) natural persons, think tanks
 - d) international and regional inter-governmental organizations as defined by Article 43 of the Implementing rules to the EC Financial Regulation; **and**
- be nationals^{6 7} of the Republic of Azerbaijan or of a Member State of the European Union, or of the European Economic Area⁸, or an eligible beneficiary country under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance⁹. This obligation does not apply to international organisations **and**

⁶ Such nationality being 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. 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.

⁷ If the applicant's legal personality has been recognised in a country eligible under this section pursuant to the Council of Europe Convention n. 124 on the Recognition of the Legal Personality of International Non-Governmental Organisations (<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/QueVoulezVous.asp?NT=124&CM=8&DF=07/03/2011&CL=ENG>), the official evidence issued by the country concerned under the said Convention shall determine the nationality of the organisation.

⁸ The 27 EU Member States, Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway

⁹ [Council Regulation \(EC\)No 1085/2006 of 17 July 2006 establishing an Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance \(IPA\)](#): Croatia, Turkey, Former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244/99)

- be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action with their partners, not acting as an intermediary.
- (2) Potential applicants may not participate in calls for proposals or be awarded grants if they are in any of the situations which are listed in Section 2.3.3 of the Practical Guide to contract procedures for EU external actions (available from the following Internet address:

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/implementation/index_en.htm);

In Part B section 7 of the grant application form (“Declaration by the applicant”), applicants must declare that they do not fall into any of these situations.

2.1.2 Partnerships and eligibility of partners

Applicants must act with partner organisations as specified hereafter.

All eligible actions **must** be implemented by an applicant acting in **partnership with at least one local partner from Republic of Azerbaijan.**

Partnership with local organization/s is mandatory for all applicants not depending on nationality.

• Partners

Applicants' partners participate in designing and implementing the action, and the costs they incur are eligible in the same way as those incurred by the grant beneficiary. They must therefore satisfy the eligibility criteria as applicable on the grant beneficiary himself.

The following are not partners and do not have to sign the “partnership 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. The associates have to be mentioned in Part B section 5 - “Associates of the Applicant participating in the Action” of the Grant Application Form.

- Contractors

The grant beneficiaries have the possibility to award contracts. Contractors are neither partners nor associates, and are subject to the procurement rules set out in Annex IV to the standard grant contract.

The applicant will act as the lead organisation and, if selected, as the contracting party (the "Beneficiary").

2.1.3 Eligible actions: actions for which an application may be made

Definition:

An action (or project) is composed of a set of activities.

Duration

The planned duration of an action may not be lower than **18 months** nor exceed **36 months**.

Sectors or themes

a) Effective controls of annual and multi-annual budget totals and management of fiscal risks.

The main macroeconomic policy challenge in the medium-term in Azerbaijan is to maintain aggregate fiscal (i.e., budget) discipline within the implementation of a credible medium-term fiscal consolidation. In this context, the action will focus on (i) reviewing relevant budget documents and (ii) supporting the

dissemination of information aimed at contributing to enhance the readability of the general government budget at both annual and multi-annual levels. In doing so, the action will pay specific attention to the non-hydrocarbon fiscal balance.

b) Comprehensiveness and transparency. The government budget being the main instrument through which political promises are translated into verifiable commitments, a fundamental requirement of modern governance relates to the interrelated dimensions of budget transparency and accountability. The action will pay specific attention to clarity, brevity, ease of accessibility and timeliness in providing policy-relevant information free of charge to the general public and to private sector, in the national language as well as in the English language.

c) Efficient service delivery. Information on the quality of front-line service delivery units (e.g., primary schools, health centres, etc) as well as on the predictability in the availability of funds to such services represent a critical governance dimension in all modern societies. In this context, the action will focus on (i) reviewing relevant budget documents and (ii) supporting dissemination of information aimed at contributing to progressively enhance information on important public services. In doing so, the action will pay specific attention to both benefits and costs (to the citizen and to the budget) at service delivery unit level, and it will do so via relevant, sector-specific reviews and/or, when already available, by representative sampling. In all cases, the source of information has to be systematically quoted and it has to relate to reports and/or surveys published by reputed public (national and/or foreign) organizations.

d) External scrutiny and audit. A high quality external audit is an essential requirement for increasing transparency in the use of public funds and in reducing the risk of corruption, and the role of the Parliament is central in critical domains such as, inter alia, approval and oversight of audit reports and budget laws. In this context, the action will focus on (i) reviewing relevant documents and (ii) supporting dissemination of information aimed at contributing to enhance knowledge on the work undertaken / scheduled at Supreme Audit Institution and at Parliament's level and on the progress expected and/or recommended as realistically achievable by such institutions in the medium-term period. In doing so, the action will pay specific attention to review and inform on actions' theme a), b) and c) above.

e) Information sharing. Access, at both national and at international level, to free of charge, simple to understand, budget-related information is an important element for progressively improving public information and responsible governance. In this context, the action will focus (i) on identifying and making more easily available internet links to relevant documents and reports recently published on public finance policy and management (PFPM) by reputed public (national and/or foreign) organizations, and (ii) on cost-free sharing of the above information and knowledge with other civil society organizations and concerned citizens and firms. In doing so, the action will pay specific attention to provide useful and up-to-date information which is specific to the country's context and its medium-term challenges.

In its final award decision, the European Commission reserves the right to ensure a balanced coverage of specific objectives (as defined in section 1.2 above) and sectors.

Location

Actions **must** take place in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Types of action

Actions will be selected, inter alia, on the basis of their relevance, expected results and potential effectiveness. Preference will be given to proposals built upon existing and past initiatives and **best practices** in the same area. The applicant shall not start from scratch and work in an isolated way, but rather co-operate with a wide range of stakeholders (other actors, authorities, state institutions etc.) so as to jointly strive for synergies and to eventually ensure consolidated outcomes. Project should contain measures ensuring **multiplication and sustainability** of its outcomes.

Under this Call for Proposals, all proposals **must** include **capacity building activities** for other NGOs working in the same field.

Types of activity

The following examples are not exhaustive.

- Policy advice, advocacy and ongoing oversight for the improvement of the PFPM administrative/institutional/legal framework;
- Building budget literacy among citizens, awareness raising to encourage public discussion and dialogue between local authorities, citizens and civil society on public policies and budgets;
- Capacity building of civil society organizations, media and other stakeholders to exercise oversight over budget process, including budget cycle, government dialogue mechanisms, budget reporting and public policy and budget data collection techniques;
- Research based analysis and dissemination of information on budget and PFPM issues;
- Lobbying/advocacy activities directed towards decision-makers and authorities for strategic and inclusive allocation of resources and effectiveness of public expenditures.

All of the proposed activities may be directed towards state, local authorities and state owned (public institutions) budgets.

Note that the applicant 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 laid down and published by the European Commission at (see http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/visibility/index_en.htm).

The following types of action are ineligible:

- actions concerned only or mainly with individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences, congresses;
- actions concerned only or mainly with individual scholarships for studies or training courses;
- actions which consist fully and exclusively in the production and maintenance of websites, the production of magazines and newspapers, the organisation of conferences or seminars and the production of studies or reports;
- actions supporting political parties, groups and movements;
- sub-granting.

Number of applications and grants per applicant

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

An applicant may at the same time be partner in another application

Partners may take part in more than one application.

2.1.4 Eligibility of costs: costs which may be taken into consideration for the grant

Only "eligible costs" can be taken into account for a grant. The categories of costs considered as eligible and non-eligible are indicated below. The budget is both a cost estimate and a ceiling for "eligible costs". Note that the eligible costs must be based on real costs based on supporting documents (except for subsistence costs and indirect costs where flat-rate funding applies).

Recommendations to award a grant are always subject to the condition that the checking process which precedes the signing of the contract does not reveal problems requiring changes to the budget (for instance arithmetical errors, inaccuracies or unrealistic costs and other 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. The amount of the grant and the percentage of the EU co-financing as a result of these corrections may not be increased.

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).

Note that taxes, including VAT will only be accepted as eligible costs when the beneficiary (or, where applicable, its partners) can show it cannot reclaim them. Taxes shall in such cases be included in the budget of the action under each heading. Information on taxes can be found in Annex J to these Guidelines.

Contingency reserve

A contingency reserve not exceeding 5% of the estimated direct eligible costs may be included in the Budget of the Action. It can only be used with the **prior written authorisation** of the Contracting Authority.

Eligible indirect costs (overheads)

The indirect costs incurred in carrying out the action may be eligible for flat-rate funding fixed at not more than 7% of the estimated total eligible direct costs. Indirect costs are eligible provided that they do not include costs assigned to another heading of the budget of the standard grant contract. The applicant may be asked to justify the requested percentage before contracting. 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 the applicant is in receipt of an operating grant financed from the EU, no indirect costs may be claimed within the proposed budget for the action.

Contributions in kind

Contributions in kind are not considered actual expenditure and are not eligible costs. The contributions in kind may not be treated as co-financing by the Beneficiary.

Notwithstanding the above, if the description of the action as proposed by the Beneficiary foresees the contributions in kind, such contributions have to be provided.

Ineligible costs

The following costs are not eligible:

- debts and debt service charges;
- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- interest owed;
- costs declared by the beneficiary and covered by another action or work programme;
- purchases of land or buildings, except where necessary for the direct implementation of the action, in which case ownership must be transferred to the final beneficiaries and/or local partners, at the latest by the end of the action;
- currency exchange losses;
- taxes, including VAT, unless the Beneficiary (or the Beneficiary's partners) cannot reclaim them (information on taxes can be found in Annex J to the Guidelines);
- credit to third parties.

2.2 HOW TO APPLY AND THE PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW

Registration in PADOR is obligatory for all applicants and their partners.

PADOR is an on-line database in which organisations register themselves and update regularly their data, through the Europeaid website: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/online-services/pador/index_en.htm

Before starting the registration of your organisation in PADOR, please read the "Quick guide" available on the website. It explains the registration process.

You have to indicate on the paper version of the proposal the EuropeAid ID (EID). To get this identification, your organisation must register, save and "sign" (committing your responsibility) in PADOR obligatory data (on each screen the fields written in orange) and the related documents (see section 2.4).

Notwithstanding the above, if the organisation is in a situation where it is impossible to register in PADOR, it shall submit a justification proving that such impossibility is of a general nature and goes beyond the control of the applicant and or its partner(s). In this case, the applicant and/or the partners concerned shall complete the "PADOR off-line form"¹⁰ in annex of these Guidelines and send it by the submission deadline along with the application to the address indicated in sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.6. Subsequently, the registration in PADOR will be initiated by the European Commission. If, at a later stage, the organisation wishes to update itself its data, an access request will have to be sent to the PADOR helpdesk.

All questions related to the registration in PADOR should be addressed to the PADOR helpdesk at: Europeaid-pador@ec.europa.eu.

2.2.1 Application form

Applications must be submitted in accordance with the instructions on the Concept Note and the Full application form included in the Grant Application Form annexes to these Guidelines (Annex A)

Applicants must apply in English.

Any error or major discrepancy related to the points listed in the instructions on the Concept Note or any major inconsistency in the application form (e.g. the amounts mentioned in the budget worksheets are inconsistent) may lead to the rejection of the application.

Clarifications will only be requested when information provided is unclear, thus preventing the Contracting Authority from conducting an objective assessment.

Hand-written applications will not be accepted.

Please note that only the application form and the published annexes which have to be filled in (budget, logical framework) will be evaluated. It is therefore of utmost importance that these documents contain ALL relevant information concerning the action. No additional annexes should be sent.

2.2.2 Where and how to send the Applications

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

The Checklist (Section 6 of Part B the grant application form) and the Declaration by the applicant (Section 7 of Part B of the grant application form) must be stapled separately and enclosed in the envelope

Where an applicant sends several different applications (if allowed to do so by the Guidelines of the Call), each one has to be sent separately.

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".

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) at the address below:

Postal address
Delegation of the European Union
to the Republic of Azerbaijan

¹⁰ Which corresponds to Sections 3 and 4 of Part B of the application form.

Attn: Finance and Contracts Section
11th floor, Landmark III
90A Nizami Street
AZERBAIJAN - AZ1010 Baku

Applications 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 application is complete using the checklist (Section 6 of Part B of the grant application form). Incomplete applications may be rejected.

2.2.3 *Deadline for submission of Applications*

The deadline for the submission of applications is 9 March 2012 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 at 16:00 local time as evidenced by the signed and dated receipt. Any application submitted after the deadline will automatically be rejected.

However, for reasons of administrative efficiency, the Contracting Authority may reject any application received after the effective date of approval of the first evaluation step (i.e. Concept Note) (see indicative calendar under Section 2.5.2)

2.2.4 *Further information for the Application*

An information session on this Call for Proposals will be held in Baku on 15 January 2012 at 11:00.

Prior to the meeting, please verify the exact location and time for the meeting on the following website:
http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/azerbaijan/press_corner/all_news/news/2011/20111208_call_for_proposals_en.htm

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

E-mail address: delegation-azerbaijan-grants@eeas.europa.eu

Fax: (+994) 12 497 20 69

Contracting Authority has no obligation to provide further clarifications after this date.

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

In the interest of equal treatment of Applicants, the Contracting Authority can only answer questions sent in writing. Questions asked by telephone or personal contact will not be entertained and continued attempts to obtain information by telephone or personal contact may lead to exclusion from the Call for Proposals.

In the interest of equal treatment of Applicants, the Contracting Authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of an applicant, a partner, an action or specific activities.

Questions that may be relevant to other applicants, together with the answers, will be published on the internet at:

- The EuropeAid web site:
<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome>
- The EU Delegation to the Republic of Azerbaijan website:

http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/azerbaijan/press_corner/all_news/news/2011/20111208_call_for_proposals_en.htm

It is therefore highly recommended to regularly consult the abovementioned websites in order to be informed of the questions and answers published.

All questions related to PADOR registration should be addressed to the PADOR helpdesk:

Europeaid-pador@ec.europa.eu

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 2.1.3, the application shall be rejected on this sole basis.

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

The following will be assessed:

- The submission deadline has been respected. If the deadline has not been respected the application will automatically be rejected.
- The Application Form satisfies all the criteria specified in points 1-5 of the Checklist Section 6 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 evaluation of the Concept Notes that have passed the first administrative check will cover the relevance and design of the action.

The Concept Note will be given an overall score out of 50 points in accordance with the breakdown provided in the Evaluation Grid below. The evaluation shall also verify the compliance with instructions provided in the guidance for Concept Note.

The evaluation criteria are divided into headings and subheadings. Each subheading will be given a score between 1 and 5 in accordance with the following assessment categories: 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? Note: Only proposals that include capacity building and propose activities based on best practices and that include multiplication and sustainability measures will be given a score of 5 points.	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? In particular, does it reflect the analysis of the problems involved, take into account external factors and relevant stakeholders?	5x2**	
2.2 Is the action feasible and consistent in relation to the objectives and expected results?	5x2**	

TOTAL SCORE 50

** the scores are multiplied by 2 because of their importance

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

First, only the Concept Notes which have been given a score of a minimum of 30 points will be considered for pre-selection.

Secondly, the list of Concept Notes will be reduced in accordance to the ranking to those whose sum of requested contributions amounts to at least twice the available budget for this Call for Proposals, taking into account the indicative financial envelopes foreseen.

Following the Concept Note evaluation, the Contracting Authority will send a letter to all applicants, indicating whether their application was submitted prior to the deadline, informing them of the reference number they have been allocated and whether the Concept Note were evaluated and the results of that evaluation. The Evaluation Committee will subsequently proceed with the applicants whose proposals have been pre-selected.

(2) STEP 2: EVALUATION OF THE FULL APPLICATION

First, the following will be assessed:

- The full application form satisfies all the criteria specified in points 1-8 of the Checklist (Section 6 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.

An evaluation of the quality of the applications, including the proposed budget, and of the capacity of the applicant and its partners, will be subsequently carried out in accordance with the evaluation criteria set out

in the Evaluation Grid included below. There are two types of evaluation criteria: selection and award criteria.

The selection criteria are intended to help evaluate the applicants' financial and operational capacity to ensure that they:

- have stable and sufficient sources of finance to maintain their activity throughout the period during which the action is being carried out 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 partners of the applicant.

The award criteria allow the quality of the applications submitted to be evaluated in relation to the set objectives and priorities, and grants to be awarded to actions which maximise the overall effectiveness of the Call for Proposals. They enable the selection of applications which the Contracting Authority can be confident will comply with its objectives and priorities. They cover such aspects as 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 criteria are divided into sections and subsections. Each subsection will be given a score between 1 and 5 in accordance with the following guidelines: 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 applicant and, if applicable, partners have sufficient experience of project management?	5
1.2 Do the applicant and, if applicable partners have sufficient technical expertise? (notably knowledge of the issues to be addressed.)	5
1.3 Do the applicant and, if applicable, partners have sufficient management capacity? (including staff, equipment and ability to handle the budget for the action)?	5
1.4 Does the 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 evaluation foreseen?	5
3.4 Is the partners' 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 and extension of the outcome of the action and dissemination of information.)	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</i>)	5

<i>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. Budget and cost-effectiveness of the action	15
5.1 Are the activities appropriately reflected in the budget?	5x2*
5.2 Is the ratio between the estimated costs and the expected results satisfactory?	5
Maximum total score	100

*the scores are multiplied by 2 because of their importance

Note on Section 1. Financial and operational capacity

If the score is less than 12 points for section 1, the application will be rejected.

Provisional selection

Following the evaluation, a table listing the applications ranked according to their score and within the available financial envelope will be established as well as a reserve list following the same criteria.

(3) STEP 3: VERIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY OF THE APPLICANT AND PARTNERS

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 7 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 the applicant, the partners, and the action will be verified according to the criteria set out in Sections 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and 2.1.3.

Following the above analysis and if necessary, any rejected application will be replaced by the next best placed application in the reserve list that falls within the available financial envelope, which will then be examined for the eligibility of its applicant and the partners.

2.4 SUBMISSION OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS FOR PROVISIONALLY SELECTED APPLICATIONS

Applicants who have been provisionally selected or listed under the reserve list will be informed in writing by the Contracting Authority. They will be requested to supply the following documents in order to allow the Contracting Authority to verify the eligibility of the applicants and their partners:¹¹

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

1. The statutes or articles of association of the applicant organisation¹² and of each partner organisation¹³. Where the Contracting Authority has recognized the applicant’s eligibility for another call for proposals under the same budget line within 2 years before the deadline for receipt of applications, the applicant may submit, instead of its statutes, copy of the document proving the eligibility of the applicant in a

¹¹ No supporting document will be requested for applications for a grant not exceeding EUR 25 000.

¹² Where the applicant and/or (a) partner(s) is a public body created by a law, a copy of the said law must be provided

¹³ Where Council of Europe Convention n. 124 on the Recognition of the Legal Personality of International Non-Governmental Organisations is applied please refer to footnote n. 9.

former Call (e.g.: copy of the special conditions of a grant contract received during the reference period), unless a change in its legal status has occurred in the meantime.¹⁴ This obligation does not apply to international organisations which have signed a framework agreement with the European Commission. A list of the relevant framework agreements is available at the following address:
http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/financing/international_organisations/other_international_organisations/index_en.htm]

2. Copy of the applicant's latest accounts (the profit and loss account and the balance sheet for the previous financial year for which the accounts have been closed)¹⁵.
3. Legal entity sheet (see annex D of these Guidelines) duly completed and signed by the applicant, accompanied by the justifying documents which are requested therein. If the applicant has already signed a contract with the Contracting Authority, instead of the legal entity sheet and its supporting documents the legal entity number may be provided, unless a change in its legal status occurred in the meantime.
5. A financial identification form conforming to the model attached at Annex E of these Guidelines, certified by the bank to which the payments will be made. This bank must be located in the country where the applicant is registered. If the applicant has already signed a contract with the European Commission or where the European Commission has been in charge of the payments of a contract, a copy of the previous financial identification form may be provided instead, unless a change in its bank account occurred in the meantime.

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, a translation into English of the relevant parts of these documents, proving the applicant's eligibility, must be attached and will prevail 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 applicant's eligibility, into English.

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.

Based on the verification of the supporting documents by the Evaluation Committee it will make a final recommendation to the Contracting Authority which will decide on the award of grants.

2.5 NOTIFICATION OF THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY'S DECISION

2.5.1 Content of the decision

Applicants will be informed in writing of the Contracting Authority's decision concerning their application and, in case of rejections, the reasons for the negative decision.

Applicants believing that they have been harmed by an error or irregularity during the award process may file a complaint. See further Section 2.4.15 of the Practical Guide.

¹⁴ To be inserted only where the eligibility conditions have not changed from one call for proposals to the other.

¹⁵ This obligation does not apply to natural persons who have received a scholarship, nor to public bodies nor 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.

2.5.2 Indicative time table

	DATE	TIME*
Information meeting (if any)	15 January 2012	11:00
Deadline for request for any clarifications from the Contracting Authority	17 February 2012	16:00
Last date on which clarifications are issued by the Contracting Authority	28 February 2012	16:00
Deadline for submission of Application Form	9 March 2012	16:00
Information to applicants on the opening & administrative checks and concept note evaluation (step 1)	15 March 2012*	-
Information to applicants on the evaluation of the Full Application Form (step 2)	30 March 2012*	-
Notification of award (after the eligibility check) (step 3)	9 April 2012*	-
Contract signature	25 May 2012*	-

*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 case, the updated timetable shall be published on internet at Delegation web site http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/azerbaijan/press_corner/all_news/news/2011/20111208_call_for_proposals_en.htm

2.6 CONDITIONS APPLICABLE TO IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION FOLLOWING THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY'S DECISION TO AWARD A GRANT

Following the decision to award a grant, the Beneficiary will be offered a contract based on the Contracting Authority's standard grant contract (see Annex G of these Guidelines). By signing the Application form (Annex A of these Guidelines), the applicant declares accepting, in case where it is awarded a grant, the Contractual conditions as laid down in the standard grant contract.

If the successful applicant is an international organisation, the model Contribution Agreement with an international organisation or any other contract template agreed between the international organisation concerned and the Contracting Authority will be used instead of the standard grant contract provided that the international organisation in question offers the guarantees provided for in the applicable Financial Regulation, as described in Chapter 6 of the Practical Guide to contract procedures for EU external actions.

Implementation contracts

Where implementation of the action requires the Beneficiary to award procurement contracts, it must award the contract to the tenderer offering the best value for money, that is to say, the best price-quality ratio, in compliance with the principles of transparency and equal treatment for potential contractors, care being taken to avoid any conflict of interests. To this end, the Beneficiary must follow the procedures set out in Annex IV to the standard grant contract.

2.7 EARLY WARNING SYSTEM AND CENTRAL EXCLUSION DATABASE

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

- the 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

-the 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.

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 SHEET ¹⁷

ANNEX E: FINANCIAL IDENTIFICATION FORM

ANNEX F: PADOR OFF-LINE FORM¹⁸

Available at the following address: (E3b – E3f)

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/implementation/grants/index_en.htm

DOCUMENTS FOR INFORMATION

ANNEX G: STANDARD GRANT CONTRACT

- ANNEX II: GENERAL CONDITIONS APPLICABLE TO EUROPEAN UNION-FINANCED GRANT CONTRACTS FOR EXTERNAL ACTIONS
- 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 ACTIONS

ANNEX H: DAILY ALLOWANCE RATES (PER DIEM), available at the following address:

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/implementation/index_en.htm

ANNEX J: INFORMATION ON THE TAX REGIME APPLICABLE TO GRANT CONTRACTS, available at the following

address: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/implementation/grants/index_en.htm

PROJECT CYCLE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/multimedia/publications/publications/manuals-tools/t101_en.htm

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 Only applicable in centralised calls where PADOR is made of use