



Contracting authority: EU Delegation to Afghanistan

Afghanistan essential services and livelihoods stabilisation programme

Reference: AFG/2022/Call for expression of interest 1

Guidelines
for grant applicants

Budget line(s) BGUE-B2021-14.020130-C1-INTPA

Deadline for submission of concept note: 19 April 2022

NOTICE

This is a call for **expression of interest**.

In the first instance, only **concept notes** (Part A of the grant application form) must be submitted for evaluation.

Thereafter, lead applicants who have been pre-selected will be invited to submit a **full application**.

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 lead applicant' sent together with the full application.

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1. AFGHANISTAN ESSENTIAL SERVICES AND LIVELIHOODS STABILISATION PROGRAMME

1.1. BACKGROUND

This call for expression of interest responds to some of the most urgent challenges facing the Afghan population following the overthrow of the constitutional government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan by the Taliban on 15 August 2021, leading notably to a drastically altered political landscape and a severe humanitarian and economic crisis.

On 11 October 2021, the EU and its Member States agreed on the need to assist the Afghan population by supporting essential services, avoiding government channels, and going beyond humanitarian aid to support basic needs and livelihoods.

The agreed parameters for EU support are that all relevant EU funds should be channelled through international organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) on the basis of the benchmarks in the Council conclusions of 21 September 2021. More specifically, 1) principles for delivery of aid will be taken into account including: women, girls and minorities should be able to access services in a non-discriminatory fashion; 2) support cannot be given through the Taliban both in Kabul and at the local level, either directly or through other actors; and 3) all support, financial and otherwise, will be needs based, independently targeted and free from undue influence.

On 12 October 2021, the President of the European Commission announced a €1 billion EU support package for the Afghan people and neighbouring countries, addressing the urgent needs in the country and the region.

This call for expression of interest is covered by Decision ACA/2021/43637, which is one component of the EU support package. The aim of this call is to invite eligible organisations to submit concept notes in the areas of support to livelihoods and health services. Based on the evaluation procedure laid out in this document, the Contracting Authority will select entities whose concept notes best fit the objectives of this call to submit full proposals.

1.2. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME AND PRIORITY ISSUES

The **global objective** of this call is: mitigate the impact of the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, which could result in increased instability with severe security and migratory spill-over effects for neighbouring countries and the wider region.

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

1. To safeguard livelihoods of the Afghan population (lot 1).
2. To safeguard a minimal functioning of health services at local level for the Afghan population (lot 2).

The **outputs** to be delivered by this action contributing to the corresponding Specific Objectives (Outcomes) are:

- contributing to Outcome 1 (or Specific Objective 1)

1.1. Safeguarded community-based employment and income-generating opportunities as well as economic activities and opportunities for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), particularly female-headed MSMEs.

1.2. Enhanced food security and enabled sustainable food production and processing, including food diversification.

- contributing to Outcome 2 (or Specific Objective 2)

2.1. Continued access to health and nutrition services by the population, particularly women, children and vulnerable people including IDPs and returnees.

The priorities of this call are:

Sustainability: Interventions which go beyond immediate direct needs and which demonstrate potential for sustainable outcomes either in re-establishment of health services, sustainable income generation, improving performance of businesses and improved food security.

Geographical focus: Interventions having a clear focus on basic service delivery and livelihoods in underserved regions of Afghanistan. Grant applicants are therefore expected to indicate the selected provinces/districts.

Complementarity: Activities ideally complementing other activities funded under the EU Afghanistan crisis response and in particular activities under the Afghanistan essential services and livelihoods stabilisation programme.

Aggregation: Given the size of the lots, grant applicants are encouraged to create consortia, preferably with inclusion of Afghan partner organisations.

Integration of priority cross-cutting issues into the intervention: In view of the wider implications of the ongoing crisis on women, youth, internally displaced persons and migrants, applicants will need to integrate these actors into the overall intervention.

Encouraging self-reliance: Specific Objective 1 in particular aims to strengthen community resilience and self-reliance, applicants will therefore need to prioritise market based and private sector oriented approaches where feasible in order to ensure financial viability of the action.

1.3. FINANCIAL ALLOCATION PROVIDED BY THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY

The overall indicative amount made available under this call for expression of interest is EUR 34 000 000. The contracting authority reserves the right not to award all available funds.

Indicative allocation of funds by lot

Lot 1: Support to livelihoods – EUR 24,000,000

Lot 2: Health – EUR 10,000,000

If the allocation indicated for a specific lot cannot be used due to insufficient quality or number of proposals received, the contracting authority reserves the right to reallocate the remaining funds to another lot.

Size of grants

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

Lot 1: Support to livelihoods

- minimum amount: EUR 3,000,000
- maximum amount: EUR 12,000,000

Lot 2: Health

- minimum amount: EUR 2,000,000
- maximum amount: EUR 5,000,000

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

- Minimum percentage: 80 % of the total eligible costs of the action.
- Maximum percentage: 100 % 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 general budget of the Union.

The grant may cover the entire eligible costs of the action if this is deemed essential to carry it out. If that is the case, the lead applicant must justify full financing in Section 2.1 of Part B of the grant application form. The validity of the justification provided will be examined during the evaluation procedure. The absence of any justification may lead to the rejection of the application.

2. RULES FOR THIS CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

These guidelines set out the rules for the submission, selection and implementation of the actions financed under this call for expression of interest.

2.1. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

There are three sets of eligibility criteria, relating to:

(1) the actors:

- The **'lead 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 lead applicant and its co-applicant(s) are hereinafter jointly referred as 'applicant(s)'**) (2.1.1),
- and, if any, **affiliated entity(ies)** to the lead 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. lead applicant and co-applicant(s))

Lead applicant

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

- be a legal person **and**
 - be non-profit-making **and**
 - be an international organisation as defined by Article 156 of the EU Financial Regulation; **or**
 - a non-governmental civil society organisation, established in¹ a Member State of the EU or an eligible country as per Article 28 of the Regulation (EU) 2021/947²;
- and**
- 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**
 - be operational (i.e. already managing a project and/or have an office) in Afghanistan.

¹ 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.

² Regulation (EU) 2021/947 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 June 2021 establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe, amending and repealing Decision No 466/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU) 2017/1601 and Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 480/2009 (Text with EEA relevance), *OJ L 209, 14.6.2021, p. 1–78*.

- (2) Potential applicants may not participate in this call for expression of interest or be awarded grants if they are in any of the situations listed in Section 2.6.10.1 of the practical guide;

Lead applicants, co-applicants, affiliated entities and, in case of legal entities, persons who have powers of representation, decision-making or control over the lead applicant, the co-applicants and the affiliated entities are informed that, should they be in one of the situations of early detection or exclusion according to Section 2.6.10.1 of the practical guide, personal details (name, given name if natural person, address, legal form and name and given name of the persons with powers of representation, decision-making or control, if legal person) may be registered in the early detection and exclusion system, and communicated to the persons and entities concerned in relation to the award or the execution of a grant contract. In this respect, provisionally selected lead applicants, co-applicants and affiliated entities are obliged to declare that they are not in one of the exclusion situations through a signed declaration on honour (PRAG Annex A14). For grants of EUR 60 000 or less, no declaration on honour is required. See section 2.4.

In Part A, Section 3 and Part B Section 8 of the grant application form ('declaration(s) by the lead applicant'), the lead applicant must declare that the lead applicant himself, the co-applicant(s) and affiliated entity(ies) are not in any of these situations.

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

If awarded the grant contract, the lead applicant will become the beneficiary identified as the coordinator in Annex G (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-applicants participate in designing and implementing the action, and the costs they incur are eligible in the same way as those incurred by the lead applicant.

Co-applicants must satisfy the eligibility criteria as applicable to the lead applicant himself.

Co-applicants must sign the mandate in Part B Section 4 of the grant application form.

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

- (3) Applicants included in the lists of EU restrictive measures (see Section 2.4. of the PRAG) at the moment of the award decision cannot be awarded the contract³.

2.1.2. Affiliated entities

Affiliated entity(ies)

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

³ The updated lists of sanctions are available at www.sanctionsmap.eu.

Please note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The source of the sanctions stems from legal acts published in the Official Journal (OJ). In case of discrepancy between the published legal acts and the updates on the website it is the OJ version that prevails.

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

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

This structural link encompasses mainly two notions:

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

Entities affiliated to an applicant may hence be:

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

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

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

What is not an affiliated entity?

The following are not considered entities affiliated to an applicant:

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

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

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

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

If the applicants are awarded a grant contract, their affiliated entity(ies) will not become beneficiary(ies) of the action and signatory(ies) of the grant contract. However, they will participate in the design and in the implementation of the action and the costs they incur (including those incurred for implementation contracts and financial support to third parties) 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 lead 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 applicants nor affiliated entities and do not have to sign the ‘mandate for co-applicant(s)’ or ‘affiliated entities’ statement’:

- Associates

Other organisations or individuals may be involved in the action. Such associates play a real role in the action but may not receive funding from the grant, with the exception of per diem or travel costs. Associates do not have to meet the eligibility criteria referred to in Section 2.1.1. Associates must be mentioned in Part B Section 6 — ‘Associates participating in the action’ — of the grant application form.

- Contractors

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

2.1.4. 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 36 months.

Sectors or themes:

Support to private sector development, agricultural development, healthcare, and women’s economic empowerment

Location:

Actions must take place in Afghanistan, country-wide and/or in selected areas of Afghanistan based on needs and local conditions

Types of action:

Financial support under this call for expression of interest must be aimed at supporting projects, i.e. coherent and self-contained sets of activities designed to achieve a specific objective(s) (see section 1.2) with clear target groups, tangible outcomes with relevant indicators, and within a limited timeframe. The proposed action should be designed to produce specific, measurable results in response to identified problems and be based on a specifically tailored strategy and intervention methodology. The proposed activities should include an indicative beneficiary quota for women and for vulnerable groups, such as IDPs/returnees and Afghans with disabilities. Attention should be also paid to ensuring youth are engaged in the activities.

Proposals should be built on a theory of change, i.e. assumptions about how the activities implemented will bring about change and produce results in terms of the objectives and priorities outlined in section 1.2 of these guidelines. The theory of change is an outcomes-based approach, which applies critical thinking to the design, implementation and evaluation of initiatives, and programmes intended to support change in their contexts.

In relation to each expected result, applicants are requested to assess the baseline, at the time of proposal submission, and the estimated improvement expected at the end of the action implementation period. Indicators should be disaggregated by gender and (where applicable) displacement status. Quantitative indicators for baseline and expected results shall be reported in the logical framework, which should also include detailed and realistic assessment of the assumptions linked to external conditions of the wider context where the action is being implemented.

In light of the considerable amount of organisations currently active in crisis response interventions in Afghanistan, applicants are expected to elaborate on the coordination mechanism they plan to put in place to ensure complementarity and avoid overlap.

Furthermore, applicants should briefly describe the communication strategy foreseen for the project. Proposals outside the identified specific objective and priorities (section 1.2) of this call for expression of interest will not be considered for funding.

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.

Types of activity

Activities will take a sectoral approach and/or a multi-sectoral community-level approach. Activities listed below are indicative and non-exhaustive:

Activities related to Output 1.1 may include (lot 1):

- Community support through encouraging commercial activities, subsidizing or providing livelihood assets and / or provision of credits or grants depending on local conditions to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) with a focus on women, youth and marginalised populations, incl. IDPs and returnees;
- Value chain development, addressing market impediments, ranging from better access to inputs, farming, harvesting, post-harvest handling, processing and transport;
- Training and development of business skills, improving financial literacy of producers, producer groups, farmers, farmers' groups and associations/organisations;
- Provision or support to business development services for entrepreneurs, processors, traders, agro-dealers and other actors across the value chains;
- Improve access to finance, through or (micro)credits, sub-granting or a combination of both, depending on market conditions, to producers, producer groups, farmers, farmers associations, MSME's in particularly women-led, for instance through 'one-stop shop' service centres. Ideally, the beneficiary is expected to contribute in kind or in cash to support to investment.
- Identify and develop strategic domestic and – where feasible – regional value chains;
- Business incubation for start-ups and business acceleration for existing businesses;
- Creating business-to-business and business-to-market linkages for supported farmers' groups and associations/organisations, MSME's;
- Construction of feeder roads, stabilisation works, small-scale irrigation, small-scale energy generation (hydro, solar as integral part of targeted livelihoods support interventions.

Activities related to Output 1.2 may include (lot 1):

- Climate smart agriculture, i.e. sustainable and adaptive measures to increase resilience of agricultural dependent communities to climate change;
- Support to digital instruments/platforms to improve market access and digitalization in agriculture;
- Identification and responses to gender inequalities in access to water, food, agricultural inputs, business support and division of labour;
- Support to the preparation and implementation of integrated watershed development plans at community and catchment levels;
- Improvement of the availability of nutritious food and income generation through integrated vegetable and poultry/small ruminants' production.

Activities related to Output 2.1 may include (lot 2):

- Set up of and/or support to / management of static physical rehabilitation centres to deliver upgraded and comprehensive rehabilitation services;
- Delivery of Physiotherapy and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) as activities either in health centres or mobile health teams, including direct payment of healthcare staff salaries/stipends involved in delivering Physiotherapy and MHPSS;
- Setting up and deployment of mobile health teams delivering Physiotherapy and MHPSS across provinces;
- Upscaling of the production and repair of mobility aids and prosthetics & orthotics devices;
- Enhancing MHPSS competencies of psychosocial counsellors and clinical staff;
- Enhancing skills and knowledge of physiotherapy and prosthetics & orthotics to be able to deliver quality physiotherapy services;
- Drug prevention and treatment
- Enhancing and supporting community-led MHPSS activities and school mental health;
- Dissemination of key messages to promote mental health and psychosocial wellbeing;

Financial support to third parties⁴

Applicants may propose financial support to third parties in order to help achieving the objectives of the action.

The maximum amount of financial support per third party is ≤ 60.000 EUR (except where achieving the objectives of the actions would otherwise be impossible or overly difficult in which case no thresholds apply).

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

- (i) the overall objectives, the specific objective(s) and the outputs⁵ (i.e. the results) to be achieved with the financial support;
- (ii) the different types of activities eligible for financial support, on the basis of a fixed list;
- (iii) the types of persons or categories of persons which may receive financial support;

⁴ These third parties are neither affiliated entity(ies) nor associates nor contractors.

⁵ As per OECD DAC definition, the term 'results' includes: 'impact' (overall objective), 'outcome(s)' (specific objective(s) and 'output(s)'.

- (iv) the criteria for selecting these entities and giving the financial support;
- (v) the criteria for determining the exact amount of financial support for each third entity, and
- (vi) the maximum amount which may be given.

In all events, the mandatory conditions set above for giving financial support (points (i) to (vi)) have to be strictly defined in the grant contract as to avoid any exercise of discretion.

- Third parties eligible for financial support are: local partner organisations, non-governmental organisations and/or community service centres tasked with specific activities, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME's), farmers and farmers group, producers and producer groups, persons and particularly women in the process of setting up a business.
- Applicants will need to substantiate on which basis it has selected local partner organisations and/or local non-governmental organisations.

Financial support to third parties can be foreseen under the following conditions:

- For the implementation of specific (sub) activities by local partner organisations, non-governmental organisations in line with the objectives and priorities identified under this call for expression of interest, related to access to finance, delivery of inputs, training, skills development, technical. Support might also be intended to provide support in the operational cost of these organisations.
- To set-up or to expand commercial activities by any of the third parties mentioned above in line with the objectives and priorities identified under this call for expression of interest. For example, sub-grants can be used, *inter alia*, to purchase services and /or machinery and equipment, production lines, and tools to upgrade business systems, processes, products and services; purchase of services (business support, certification and accreditation); testing, etc. The Action must include a comprehensive capacity building component (training, on-the-job training, know-how transfer, etc.) to support the third parties that are benefiting from the financial support and allowing them to put into practice the technical capacities acquired through the proposed Action.
- The lead applicant is expected to provide a SWOT analysis of the potential sub-grantees in their proposed action together with the proposed size of grants, duration and type of activities. The application should demonstrate a clear strategy for the identification, selection of the sub-grantees and award mechanism for the sub-grants with clear oversight and reporting mechanisms.

Applicants shall describe which internal systems and procedure they have in place, or will put in place, to provide financial support to third parties

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 https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/comm-visibility-requirements_en).

Number of applications and grants per applicants / affiliated entities

The lead applicant may not submit more than 1 application per lot under this call for expression of interest.

The lead applicant may not be awarded more than 1 grant per lot under this call for expression of interest.

The lead applicant may be a co-applicant or an affiliated entity in another application at the same time.

A co-applicant/affiliated entity may be the co-applicant or affiliated entity in more than 1 application under this call for expressions of interest.

2.1.5. Eligibility of costs: costs that can be included

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.

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’.

Simplified cost options may take the form of:

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

Simplified costs options (SCOs) are divided in two categories:

1/ "output or result based SCOs": this category includes costs linked to outputs, results, activities, deliverables in the framework of a specific project (for example the determination of a lump sum for the organization of a conference, or for the realisation of a determined output/activity). Where possible and appropriate, lump sums, unit costs or flat rates shall be determined in such a way to allow their payment upon achievement of concrete outputs and/or results. This type of SCO can be proposed by the Beneficiary (no threshold is applicable) at proposal's stage. In case the evaluation committee and the contracting authority are not satisfied with the quality of the justification provided reimbursement on the basis of actually incurred costs is always possible.

2/ "other SCOs". This second category entails simplified cost options embedded in the cost accounting practices of the beneficiary, if they have been accepted by national authorities under comparable funding schemes. In this case, the grant beneficiary shall demonstrate that the national authority accepted the cost accounting practices and will have to specify in which context this acceptance was given. The evaluation committee will assess if the funding scheme is comparable. To obtain reimbursement of this category of SCOs, the beneficiary shall make reference to the comparable funding schemes of national authorities in the budget justification sheet (annex B). In case the evaluation committee and the contracting authority are not satisfied with the quality of the justification provided reimbursement on the basis of actually incurred costs is always possible.

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 beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies), are in line with their cost 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 the details of the procedure to be followed depending on the type and amount of the costs to be declared as SCO.

Applicants proposing this form of reimbursement, must clearly indicate in worksheet no.1 of Annex B, each heading/item of eligible costs concerned by this type of financing, i.e. add the reference in capital letters to ‘UNIT COST’ (per month/flight etc.), ‘LUMPSUM’, ‘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 applicants 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 for output or result based SCO.
- clearly explain the formulas for calculation of the final eligible amount for output or result based SCO⁶
- make reference to the previously obtained ex-ante assessment for other SCOs

In case of output or result based SCOs the evaluation committee and the contracting authority decide whether to accept the proposed amounts or rates on the basis of the provisional budget submitted by the applicants, by analysing factual data of grants carried out by the applicants or of similar actions. In case the evaluation committee and the contracting authority are not satisfied with the quality of the justification provided reimbursement on the basis of actually incurred costs is always possible.

No threshold is set ex-ante for the total amount of financing that can be authorised by the contracting authority on the basis of simplified cost options. Other SCOs can be declared only if previously successfully ex-ante assessed.

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

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

Eligible direct costs

To be eligible under this call for expression of interest, 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 lead applicant may be asked to justify the percentage requested before the grant contract is signed. However, once the flat rate has been fixed in the special conditions of the grant contract, no supporting documents need to be provided.

If any of the applicants or affiliated entity(ies) is in receipt of an operating grant financed by the EU, it may not claim indirect costs on its incurred costs within the proposed budget for the action.

Contributions in kind

Contributions in kind mean the provision of goods or services to beneficiaries or affiliated entities free of charge by a third party. As contributions in kind do not involve any expenditure for beneficiaries or affiliated entities, they are normally not eligible costs.

⁶ 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 * 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.

Contributions in kind may not be treated as co-financing. 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 European Union (including through EDF) grant;
- purchases of land or buildings, except where necessary for the direct implementation of the action, in which case ownership must be transferred in accordance with Article 7.5 of the general conditions of the standard grant contract, at the latest at the end of the action;
- currency exchange losses;
- salary costs of the personnel of national administrations.

Ethics clauses and Code of Conduct

a) Adherence to the EU benchmarks for assistance to the Afghan population

The EU and its Member States agreed on 21 September 2021 on five benchmarks for assistance⁷ by the EU and its Member States to the Afghan population. While these benchmarks define the modalities for support and therefore address the EU and its Member States, the Delegation of the European Union to Afghanistan as Contracting Authority expects that applicant in the implementation of the action will not act against the principles contained in these benchmarks. This means that:

- 1) Applicant will need to ensure that the action complies with the principles for delivery of aid: in particular, women, girls and persons belonging to minorities should be able to access services provided under the proposed action in a non-discriminatory fashion;
- 2) The action will not support the Taliban both in Kabul and at the local level, either directly or through other actors, and;
- 3) The Taliban cannot be involved in the hiring, the recruitment policy nor in the implementation and management of support mechanisms.

b) Absence of conflict of interest

The applicant must not be affected by any conflict of interest and must have no equivalent relation in that respect with other applicants or parties involved in the actions. Any attempt by an applicant to obtain confidential information, enter into unlawful agreements with competitors or influence the evaluation committee or the contracting authority during the process of examining, clarifying, evaluating and comparing applications will lead to the rejection of its application and may result in administrative penalties according to the Financial Regulation in force.

c) Respect for human rights as well as environmental legislation and core labour standards

The applicant and its staff must comply with human rights. In particular and in accordance with the applicable act, applicants who have been awarded contracts must comply with the environmental legislation including multilateral environmental agreements, and with the core labour standards as applicable and as defined in the relevant International Labour Organisation conventions (such as the

⁷ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11713-2021-REV-2/en/pdf>

conventions on freedom of association and collective bargaining; elimination of forced and compulsory labour; abolition of child labour).

Zero tolerance for sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment

The European Commission applies a policy of 'zero tolerance' in relation to all wrongful conduct which has an impact on the professional credibility of the applicant.

Physical abuse or punishment, or threats of physical abuse, sexual abuse or exploitation, harassment and verbal abuse, as well as other forms of intimidation shall be prohibited.

d) Anti-corruption and anti-bribery

The applicant shall comply with all applicable laws and regulations and codes relating to anti-bribery and anti-corruption. The European Commission reserves the right to suspend or cancel project financing if corrupt practices of any kind are discovered at any stage of the award process or during the execution of a contract and if the contracting authority fails to take all appropriate measures to remedy the situation. For the purposes of this provision, 'corrupt practices' are the offer of a bribe, gift, gratuity or commission to any person as an inducement or reward for performing or refraining from any act relating to the award of a contract or execution of a contract already concluded with the contracting authority.

e) Unusual commercial expenses

Applications will be rejected or contracts terminated if it emerges that the award or execution of a contract has given rise to unusual commercial expenses. Such unusual commercial expenses are commissions not mentioned in the main contract or not stemming from a properly concluded contract referring to the main contract, commissions not paid in return for any actual and legitimate service, commissions remitted to a tax haven, commissions paid to a payee who is not clearly identified or commissions paid to a company which has every appearance of being a front company.

Grant beneficiaries found to have paid unusual commercial expenses on projects funded by the European Union are liable, depending on the seriousness of the facts observed, to have their contracts terminated or to be permanently excluded from receiving EU/EDF funds.

f) Breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud

The contracting authority reserves the right to suspend or cancel the procedure, where the award procedure proves to have been subject to breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud. If breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud are discovered after the award of the contract, the contracting authority may refrain from concluding the contract.

2.2. HOW TO APPLY AND THE PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW

Information in PADOR will not be drawn upon in the present call.

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). Lead applicants should then keep strictly to the format of the concept note and fill in the paragraphs and pages in order.

Applicants must apply in English.

Please note that:

1. In the concept note, lead applicants must only provide an estimate of the requested EU contribution as well as an indicative percentage of that contribution in relation to the eligible costs of the action. A detailed budget is to be submitted only by the lead applicants invited to submit a full application in the second phase.

2. The elements outlined in the concept note may only be modified in the full application at the request of the Contracting Authority. Except for the elements described below:

Lead applicants are free to adapt the percentage of co-financing required within the minimum and maximum amount and percentages of co-financing, as laid down in these guidelines in Section 1.3.

The lead applicant may replace a co-applicant or an affiliated entity only in duly justified cases (e.g. bankruptcy of initial co-applicant or affiliated entity). In this case the new co-applicant/affiliated entity must be of a similar nature as the initial one.

The lead applicant may adjust the duration of the action if unforeseen circumstances outside the scope of the applicants have taken place following the submission of the concept note and require such adaptation (risk of action not being carried out). In such cases the duration must remain within the limits imposed by the guidelines for applicants. An explanation/justification of the relevant replacement/adjustment shall be included in an accompanying letter or email. Own contributions by the applicants can be replaced by other donors' contributions at any time. 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.

Any error or major discrepancy related to 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.

2.2.2. Where and how to send concept notes

The concept note together with its relating checklist and declaration by the lead applicant (to be found in **Part A Sections 2 and 3** of the grant application form) must be submitted electronically via e-mail.

Where lead applicants send several different concept notes (if allowed to do so by the guidelines of the call), each one must be sent separately.

The e-mail should include the **reference number and the title of the call for expression of interest**, together with the lot number and title and the full name and address of the lead applicant.

Concept notes must be submitted to the e-mail address below:

delegation-afghanistan-CfEoI-1-2022@eeas.europa.eu

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

Lead 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 19 April 2022 as evidenced by the date of the e-mail. Any concept note submitted after the deadline will be rejected.

2.2.4. Further information about concept notes

Questions may be sent by e-mail no later than 10 days before the deadline for the submission of concept notes to the e-mail address below, indicating clearly the reference of the call for expression of interest:

delegation-afghanistan-CfEoI-1-2022@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 5 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 lead applicants, co-applicants, affiliated entity(ies), an action or specific activities.

No individual replies will be given to questions.

Please note that the contracting authority may decide to cancel the call for expression of interest at any stage.

2.2.5. Full applications

Following the evaluation of the Concept Notes submitted, a ranking of the Concept Notes will be made in function of their scores. A reserve list may also be created in this context.

The Contracting Authority will start negotiated procedures with the Lead Applicants that submitted the Concept Notes with the best rankings by inviting them to submit full applications.

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

The elements outlined in the concept note can only be modified by the lead applicant in the full application at the request of the Contracting Authority, except for the changes described below.

- The lead applicants are free to adapt the percentage of co-financing required within the minimum and maximum amount and percentages of co-financing, as laid down in these guidelines under Section 1.3.
- The lead applicant may replace a co-applicant or an affiliated entity only in duly justified cases (e.g. bankruptcy of initial co-applicant or affiliated entity). In this case the new co-applicant/affiliated entity must be of a similar nature as the initial one.
- The lead applicant may adjust the duration of the action if unforeseen circumstances outside the scope of the applicants have taken place following the submission of the concept note and require such adaptation (risk of action not being carried out). In such cases the duration must remain within the limits imposed by the guidelines for applicants. An explanation/justification of the relevant replacement/adjustment shall be included in an accompanying letter or email.

Lead 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 (e.g. if the amounts in the budget worksheets are inconsistent) may lead to the rejection of the application.

Applicants can be requested by the contracting authority to revise the full applications to revise when information provided is unclear and thus prevents the contracting authority from conducting an objective assessment.

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.

Hand-written applications will not be accepted.

With the full application the lead applicant also has to submit completed PADOR registration form (Annex F) for the lead applicant, each (if any) co-applicants and each (if any) affiliated entities⁸.

No additional annexes should be sent at this stage of the selection procedure.

2.2.6. Where and how to send full applications

Full applications (i.e. the full application form, the budget, the logical framework and the declaration by the lead applicant) must be submitted to the e-mail address below:

delegation-afghanistan-CfEoI-1-2022@eeas.europa.eu

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

The full application form, budget logical framework, the checklist (Section 7 of Part B of the grant application form) and the declaration by the lead applicant (Section 8 of Part B of the grant application form) must be supplied in a single PDF file (i.e. the full application must not be split into several different files).

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

The e-mail should include the **reference number and the title of the call for expression of interest**, together with the number and title of the lot, the full name and address of the lead applicant.

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 applications

The deadline for the submission of full applications will be indicated in the communication sent to the lead applicants whose Concept Notes have been pre-selected.

2.2.8. Further information about full applications

Questions may be sent by e-mail no later than 10 days before the deadline for the submission of full applications to the addresses listed below, indicating clearly the reference of the call for expression of interest:

delegation-afghanistan-CfEoI-1-2022@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 5 days before the deadline for the submission of full applications.

To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the contracting authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of lead applicants, co-applicants, affiliated entity(ies), or an action.

No individual replies will be given to questions.

⁸ Natural persons who apply for a grant (if so allowed in the guidelines for applicants) do not have to provide an organisation data form. In this case, the information included in the grant application form is sufficient.

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 applications will be assessed according to the following steps and criteria.

If the examination of the application reveals that the proposed action does not meet the eligibility criteria stated in Section 2.1, the application will be rejected on this sole basis.

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

During the administrative check the following will be assessed:

- If the deadline has been met. Otherwise, the application will be automatically rejected.
- If the concept note satisfies all the criteria specified in the checklist in Section 2 of Part A of the grant application form. This includes also an assessment of the eligibility of the action. 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 this check will be evaluated on the relevance and design of the proposed action.

The concept notes 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 how to complete the concept note, which can be found in Part A of the grant 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	20
1.1 How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the call for expression of interest and to the specific themes/sectors/areas or any other specific requirement stated in the guidelines for applicants? Are the expected results of the action aligned with the priorities defined in the guidelines for applicants (section 1.2)?	5	
1.2 How relevant is the proposal to the particular needs and constraints of the target country(ies), region(s) and/or relevant sectors (including synergy with other development initiatives and avoidance of duplication, coordinating mechanisms)?	5	
1.3 How clearly defined and strategically chosen are those involved (final beneficiaries, target groups)? Have their needs (as rights holders and/or duty bearers) and constraints been clearly defined and does the proposal address them appropriately?	5	
1.4 Does the proposal contain particular added-value elements (e.g. innovation, best practices, delivery through consortium/local partners) and the other additional elements indicated under 1.2. of the guidelines for applicants?	5	
2. Design of the action	Sub-score	30
2.1 How coherent is the overall design of the action? Does the proposal indicate the expected results to be achieved by the action? Does the intervention logic explain the rationale to achieve the expected results?	5x2**	
2.2 Does the design reflect a robust analysis of the problems involved, and the capacities of the relevant stakeholders?	5	
2.3 Does the design take into account external factors (risks and assumptions)?	5	
2.4 Are the activities feasible and consistent in relation to the expected results (including timeframe)? Are results (output, outcome and impact) realistic?	5	

2.5 To which extent does the proposal integrate relevant cross-cutting elements such as environmental/climate change issues, promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities, migration, needs of disabled people, rights of minorities and rights of indigenous peoples, youth, combating HIV/AIDS (if there is a strong prevalence in the target country/region)?	5	
TOTAL SCORE		50

**this score is multiplied by 2 because of its 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 130% of the available budget for this call for expression of interest. The amount of requested contributions of each concept note will be based on the indicative financial envelopes for each lot, where relevant.

After the evaluation of concept notes, the contracting authority will send e-mails to all lead applicants, indicating whether their application was submitted by the deadline, informing them whether the concept note was evaluated and the results of that evaluation. The pre-selected lead applicants will subsequently be invited to submit full applications.

The invitation to submit a full application does not commit the contracting authority to sign an agreement with the applicant.

(2) STEP 2: ASSESSMENT OF THE FULL APPLICATION

The Contracting Authority will start a negotiated procedure with each of the Lead Applicants invited to submit a Full Application.

The Contracting Authority may also start negotiated procedures with the Lead Applicants of Concept Notes that have been placed on the reserve list.

The Full Applications will be further assessed on their quality, including the proposed budget, capacity of the applicants and affiliated entity(ies), and how comments from the contracting authority after the evaluation of the concept note have been incorporated in the text. The aspects that will be taken into account in the assessments of the Full Application are detailed in the table below (pages 25 and 26). However, please note that this is not an exhaustive list.

The contracting authority reserves the right to request modification of the action (including budget and period of implementation).

The following aspects will be taken into account in the assessment of the Full Applications:

Section
1. Financial and operational capacity
1.1 Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient in-house experience of project management?
1.2 Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient in-house technical expertise? (especially knowledge of the issues to be addressed)
1.3 Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient in-house management capacity? (Including staff, sector coordination capacity, equipment and ability to handle the budget for the action)?
1.4 Does the lead applicant have stable and sufficient sources of finance?
2. Relevance
3. Design of the action
3.1 How coherent is the design of the action? Does the proposal indicate the expected results to be achieved by the action? Does the intervention logic explain the rationale to achieve the expected results? Are the activities proposed appropriate, practical, and consistent with the envisaged outputs and outcome(s)?
3.2 Does the proposal/Logical Framework include credible baseline, targets and sources of verification? If not, is a baseline study foreseen (and is the study budgeted appropriately in the proposal)?
3.3 Does the design reflect a robust analysis of the problems involved, and the capacities of the relevant stakeholders?
4. Implementation approach
4.1 Is the action plan for implementing the action clear and feasible? Is the timeline realistic?
4.2 Does the proposal include an effective and efficient monitoring system? Is there an evaluation planned (previous, during or/and at the end of the implementation)?
4.3 Is the co-applicant(s)'s and affiliated entity(ies)'s level of involvement and participation in the action satisfactory?
5. Sustainability of the action
5.1 Is the action likely to have a tangible impact on its target groups?

5.2 Is the action likely to have multiplier effects, including scope for replication, extension, capitalisation on experience and knowledge sharing?
<p>5.3 Are the expected results of the proposed action sustainable?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financially (<i>e.g. financing of follow-up activities, sources of revenue for covering all future operating and maintenance costs</i>) - Institutionally (<i>will structures allow the results of the action to be sustained 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. improved legislation, codes of conduct, methods</i>) - Environmentally (if applicable) (<i>will the action have a negative/positive environmental impact?</i>)
6. Budget and cost-effectiveness of the action
6.1 Are the activities appropriately reflected in the budget?
6.2 Is the ratio between the estimated costs and the results satisfactory?

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

The eligibility verification will be performed on the basis of the supporting documents requested by the contracting authority (see Section 2.4). It will by default only be performed for the full applications that have been provisionally selected and within the available budget for this call for expression of interest.

- The declaration by the lead applicant (Section 8 of Part B of the grant application form) will be cross-checked with the supporting documents provided by the lead applicant. Any missing supporting document or any incoherence between the declaration by the lead applicant and the supporting documents may lead to the rejection of the application on that sole basis.
- The eligibility of applicants and the affiliated entity(ies) 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 budget for this call for expression of interest.

2.4. SUBMISSION OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS FOR PROVISIONALLY SELECTED APPLICATIONS

A lead applicant whose application has been provisionally selected or placed on the reserve list will be informed in writing by the contracting authority. It will be requested to supply the following documents in order to allow the contracting authority to verify the eligibility of the lead applicant, (if any) of the co-applicant(s) and (if any) of their affiliated entity(ies)⁹:

1. The statutes or articles of association of the lead applicant, (if any) of each co-applicant and (if any) of each affiliated entity¹⁰. Where the contracting authority has recognised the lead applicant's, or the co-applicant(s)'s, or their affiliated entity(ies)'s eligibility for a 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. For action grants exceeding EUR 750.000 and for operating grants above EUR 100.000, the lead applicant must provide an audit report produced by an approved external auditor where it is available, and always in cases where a statutory audit is required by EU or national law. That report shall certify the accounts for up to the last 3 financial years available. In all other cases, the applicant shall provide a self-declaration signed by its authorised representative certifying the validity of its accounts for up to the last 3 financial years available.

This requirement shall apply only to the first application made by a beneficiary to an authorising officer responsible in any one financial year.

3. The external audit report is not required from (if any) the co-applicant(s) or affiliated entities.

This obligation does not apply to international organisations 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.

4. A copy of the lead applicant's latest accounts (the profit and loss account and the balance sheet for the last financial year for which the accounts have been closed)¹². A copy of the latest account is neither required from (if any) the co-applicant(s) nor from (if any) affiliated entity(ies).
5. Legal entity sheet (see Annex D of these guidelines) duly completed and signed by each of the applicants (i.e. by the lead applicant and (if any) by each co-applicant), 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.
6. A financial identification form of the lead applicant (not from co-applicant(s)) conforming to the model attached as Annex E of these guidelines, certified by the bank to which the payments will be made. This bank should be located in the country where the lead applicant is established. If the lead applicant has already submitted a financial identification form in the past for a contract where the European

⁹ No supporting document will be requested for applications for a grant not exceeding EUR 60 000.

¹⁰ Where the lead 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/call for expression of interest to the other.

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.

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.

7. The lead applicant as well as all co-applicants and affiliated entities shall fill in and sign the declaration on honour certifying that they are not in one of the exclusion situations (see Section 2.6.10.1 of the PRAG). The declaration on honour shall be dated and signed, either by hand or by applying a qualified electronic signature (QES) by an authorised representative of the signatory.
8. Self-evaluation questionnaire on SEA-H: the lead applicant as well as all co-applicants and affiliated entities shall fill in the self-evaluation questionnaire assessing the organisation's internal policy and procedure against sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEA-H) (Annex L) (see Section 2.5.6 of the PRAG)¹³.

Documents must be supplied in the form of originals, photocopies or scanned versions (i.e. showing legible stamps, signatures and dates) of the said originals.

Where such documents are not in one of the official languages of the European Union, a translation into the of the language of the call for expression of interest of the relevant parts of these documents proving the lead applicant's and, where applicable, co-applicants' and affiliated entity(ies)' eligibility, must be attached for the purpose of analysing the application.

Where these documents are in an official language of the European Union other than the language of the call for expression of interest, it is **strongly** recommended, in order to facilitate the evaluation, to provide a translation of the relevant parts of the documents, proving the lead applicant's and, where applicable, co-applicants' and affiliated entity(ies)' eligibility, into the language(s) of the call for expression of interest.

If the abovementioned supporting documents are not provided before the deadline indicated in the request for supporting documents sent to the lead 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 lead 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 lead applicants will be informed in writing of the contracting authority's decision concerning their application and, if rejected, the reasons for the negative decision. Please note that the lead applicant is the intermediary for all communications between applicants and the contracting authority during the procedure.

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

Applicants and, if they are legal entities, persons who have powers of representation, decision-making or control over them, are informed that, should they be in one of the situations of early detection or exclusion, their personal details (name, given name if natural person, address, legal form and name and given name of the persons with powers of representation, decision-making or control, if legal person) may be registered in

¹³ Applicants, co-applicants and affiliated entities who are (i) natural persons (ii) pillar-assessed entities and (iii) governments and other public bodies do not have to submit the self-evaluation questionnaire.

the early detection and exclusion system, and communicated to the persons and entities concerned in relation to the award or the execution of a grant contract.

For more information, you may consult the privacy statement available on http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect_en.cfm

2.5.2. Indicative timetable

	DATE	TIME
1. Information meeting (if any)	29 March 2022	
2. Deadline for requesting any clarifications from the contracting authority	8 April 2022	17:00 CET (Brussels time)
3. Last date on which clarifications are issued by the contracting authority	14 April 2022	
4. Deadline for submission of concept notes	19 April 2022	17:00 CET (Brussels time)
5. Information to lead applicants on the results of the concept note evaluation (Step 1)	5 May 2022	
6. Deadline for submission of the full applications	10 June 2022	17:00 CET (Brussels time)
8. Information to lead applicants on the assessment of the full applications (Step 2) Notification of award (after the eligibility check) (Step 3)	1 July 2022	-
9. Contract signature	31 July 2022	

All times are in the time zone of the country of the contracting authority.

This indicative timetable refers to provisional dates (except for dates 2, 3, and 4) and may be updated by the contracting authority during the procedure.

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 standard grant contract (see Annex G of these guidelines). 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. Where the coordinator is an organisation whose pillars have been positively assessed, it will sign a contribution agreement based on the contribution agreement template. In this case references to provisions of

the standard grant contract and its annexes shall not apply. References in these guidelines to the grant contract shall be understood as references to the relevant provisions of the contribution agreement.

Implementation contracts

Where implementation of the action requires the beneficiary(ies) and its affiliated entity(ies) (if any) to award procurement contracts, those contracts must be awarded in accordance with Annex IV to the standard grant contract.

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

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

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

3. LIST OF ANNEXES

DOCUMENTS TO BE COMPLETED

- Annex A: Grant application form (Word format)
- Annex B: Budget (Excel format)
- Annex C: Logical framework (Excel format)
- Annex D: Legal entity sheet
- Annex E: Financial identification form
- Annex F: PADOR registration form

DOCUMENTS FOR INFORMATION

- Annex G: Standard grant contract
 - Annex II: general conditions
 - Annex IV: contract award rules
 - Annex V: standard request for payment
 - Annex VI: model narrative and financial report
 - Annex VII: model report of factual findings and terms of reference for an expenditure verification of an EU financed grant contract for external action
 - Annex VIII: model financial guarantee
 - Annex IX: standard template for transfer of ownership of assets
- Annex H: Declaration on Honour
- Annex I: Daily allowance rates (per diem), available at the following address:
http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/funding/about-procurement-contracts/procedures-and-practical-guide-prag/diems_en
- Annex J: Information on the tax regime applicable to grant contracts signed under the call.
- Annex K: Guidelines for assessing simplified cost options.
- Annex L: Self-evaluation questionnaire on SEA-H

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

Please note: The toolkit is not part of the grant contract and has no legal value. It merely provides general guidance and may in some details differ from the signed grant contract. In order to ensure compliance with

their contractual obligations beneficiaries should not exclusively rely on the toolkit but always consult their individual contract documents.

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