

Additional information

For information, DG Enterprise and Industry also issues Calls for Proposals for the Intellectual Property Rights Awareness and Enforcement Programme. It could prove useful to search their website (http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/funding/files/themes_2007/calls_prop.htm). Duplication with programmes from that DG should of course be avoided but development of synergies with them is most welcome.

Frequently Asked Questions

28 September 2007

This set of questions and answers has been prepared to help you with your application for the call for proposals “Pilot Project: Transatlantic Methods for Handling Global Challenges”. It answers the most frequently asked questions which we have received.

- **Is it possible to make a proposal in partnership with a research institute in the United States? Is a professor with US citizenship participating as a private researcher acceptable?**

Yes, we strongly encourage and recommend a partnership between EU and US organisations, as long as they both fulfil the profile for applicants as per point 5 in the text of the Call. Research institutes are included in that list so there are no objections for you to submit a joint proposal, your EU institute being the lead applicant.

Yes, an expert with US citizenship does qualify. The nationality should be mentioned on the CV.

- **Is participation in these projects limited to the US and the EU?**

Yes, This Call for Proposals is limited to EU and US participants, one EU organisation being the leading applicants, US and other EU organisations being partners.

- **We kindly request to know that whether we could apply to the Call for proposals as Turkey?**

This Call for Proposals is only limited to EU Member States and US institutions and organisations. The applicant has to be legally based in the EU.

- **We are an international think tank based in Washington, and I would therefore like to inquire whether you view it as preferable for us to partner with an entity which is legally based in the EU?**

As for partnership, the text of the Call is quite clear on this, the leading applicant has to be from the EU. You, as a US organisation, cannot present a proposal on your own, you have to have an EU partner and this partner has to be the leading applicant. It is mentioned under Point 5, profile of applicants: "Applications involving both EU and US organisations are

strongly encouraged, with the EU partner being the leading applicant". I would therefore strongly advise you to partner with an entity legally based in the EU.

- **Are there any restrictions/implications for the US Partner? Can funds be distributed to a US organisation in the same way that they can be distributed in the EU?**

As the lead applicant, the EU organisation will be responsible for the funds and their use; but any partner in the consortium could benefit from the grant through transfers from the leading applicant at the latter's discretion.

- **Will there be two or more projects for the first topic biosafety/biodiversity or just one?**

We do not have a set limit for the number of projects selected per topic. The selected proposals will have to fulfil all the selection criteria and receive the best scores to be selected. It all depends on the quality of the received proposals and on the availability of funds. As far as the first topic is concerned, the two paragraphs reflect two possible topics to be dealt with in separate proposals, i.e. we would not see a proposal covering both the biosafety and the G8 Potsdam initiative issues, but rather two separate proposals.

- **We would want to develop a proposal looking more broadly at "Plants, Patents and Sustainable Development". Would a proposal along these lines be considered to be "within the scope" or be excluded or downgraded because DG RELEX is really looking for a work programme addressing exactly and nothing but the task described?**

Regarding the biosafety component under point a) Policy Approaches on Biosafety/Biodiversity, there is indeed a keen political interest to receive project proposals that address the issue identified, i.e. that support reflections on potential common interests of the EU and the US in relation to the safe transfer, handling and use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in food imports. Any proposal relating to **food imports** would be within the scope of the Call.

- **In response to the biodiversity paragraph, it would be important to know the freedom to involve third countries notably Japan, other G8 countries and countries with high levels of biological diversity (according to UNEP e.g. Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, South Africa, India China, Indonesia, Australia,...).**

In relation to third countries, the text of the Call is rather clear as it reads "analysis of US and EU policies and instruments for the conservation of biodiversity in third countries"; the analysis should cover mainly US and EU policies which are aimed at all kind of third countries.

- **Is the October 2 deadline still in place?**

The deadline for sending applications is indeed October 2 (postmark) and will not be changed.

- **Is there is the possibility of extending the deadline?**

There is no possibility of extending the deadline for applications beyond 2 October 2007.

- **Because the deadline is on such a short date we would like to know if the call for proposals is issued yearly or if this is a one off.**

In fact this is a pilot project and it is the first time the European Commission's Directorate General for External Relations has launched a call for proposals covering these issues. Depending on the quality and quantity of proposals we receive in response to this call for proposals, it is possible that the pilot project may be repeated in 2008 and that thereafter it may become a regular feature of the grant programme supported by the Directorate General for External Relations. However, it is impossible to forecast at this stage and there are no guarantees. It may turn out to be a one off.

- **We are a media-company/profit-making one/ mainly dealing with written newspaper distribution and publication online and offline. Are we eligible to apply or not?**

As indicated under point 5 "Profile of the Applicants" in the Text of the Call for Proposal, proposals are invited from the following organisations only: think tanks, non-governmental organisations, civil society organisations, universities, research centres, not-for-profit business associations, trade unions and labour organisations. Your company, as a profit-making company involved in publications, does not correspond to any of the profile requested. So I'm sorry to tell you that you could not submit an application or it will be rejected since it is not fulfilling the eligibility criteria.

- **Are marine invasives and biosecurity an issue of interest? And do you know if web-services and informatics development is a priority area?**

Unfortunately, the subject you are interested in, the online warning system for marine invasive species, does fall outside the scope of the text of the Call for Proposals for this Pilot Project.

- **We are looking for a potential partner organisation in Canada that is also interested in the field of managing natural disasters.**

There is no 'partner search' facility for this call for proposals. Interested applicants will have to find their own partners. Also please note that the pilot project refers only to the United States, not to Canada.

- **I understand that "for-profit" organizations are not allowed to participate directly but wish to know whether they would be allowed as sub-contractors? The**

subcontractor would be mainly responsible for producing the reports from the project workshops based on the input provided by the other project partners. Assuming a total budget between 350K – 500k euros, I would estimate that their costs would be approximately 80k euros.

The possibilities for involving a subcontractor are limited. Article II.9 of the General Conditions to the model grant agreement sets out the conditions and rules for the award of contracts. In effect, contracting out is allowed only if the contract covers a limited part of the action for which the grant has been awarded and only if it is justified and necessary given the nature of the action.

- **Can we sub-contract to partner institutes in the US, thereby giving them flexibility over hiring additional staff etc. over the course of the project without their being required to state all their expenses etc at the outset?**

Please note that sub-contracting should always be limited in Call for Proposals even though there is no set percentage of how much can be sub-contracted. It will nevertheless not exclude a request for clarification on the invoices if needed since all expenses will need to be recorded and receipts kept (see Point 5.6 Records and account of the operation in the Guidelines for Applicants). The possibilities for involving a subcontractor are limited. The Article II.9 of the General Conditions to the model grant agreement sets out the conditions and rules for the award of contracts. In effect, contracting out is allowed only if the contract covers a limited part of the action for which the grant has been awarded and only if it is justified and necessary given the nature of the action.

- **We have created a consortium of EU and US academic institutions, together with one academic institution in Norway. The applicant to the EU could be one of a number of the partners. Could you please confirm or otherwise the eligibility to submit such an application?**

The leading applicant has to be from the EU as indicated in Point 5 (profile of applicants) of the Call for proposals: "Applications involving both EU and US organisations are strongly encouraged, with the EU partner being the leading applicant". I would therefore strongly advise you to partner with an entity legally based in the EU. The Call is limited though to EU and US applicants. Organisations based in Switzerland will not be considered as an eligible partner.

- **The tender mentions the possibility of several EU and US institutions to form a consortium, but does not state a minimum or maximum number of institutions that can be included as partners in the proposal. Other EU funding calls often specify a minimum number of institutions from different EU member states, often including certain categories such as new member states. Does DG RELEX see a broad spread of applicant institutions across the EU as an important criterion, or would a small number of 2-3 European and 1 US institutions that combine the requisite expertise be sufficient for the purposes of this tender?**

Applicants may act individually or in consortium. In this Call for proposals, the number of partners forming the consortium is not specified. However, the applicants and all their partners must satisfy the eligibility criteria and must not be the subject of grounds for exclusion referred to in Point 8 of the Call for proposals. This Call for proposals is limited to EU and US participants and the leading applicant has to be from the EU as indicated in Point 5 (profile of applicants) of the Call for proposals: "Applications involving both EU and US organisations are strongly encouraged, with the EU partner being the leading applicant". It means that a consortium of 2-3 European and 1 US institutions is eligible if the EU partner is the leading applicant. The proposals will be assessed and selected according to the criteria mentioned in Point 8 of the Call for proposals.

- **Related to this point, are there any objections to including 2 European institutions from the same EU member state, provided that there are good substantive reasons for including them?**

There are no objections to including 2 European institutions from the same EU member state. See reply to previous question.

- **The Call for Proposals seeks projects in distinctive areas (e.g. biosafety, marine environment, nanotechnologies). In the case of nanotechnology, an important policy dimension is the question of how transatlantic cooperation can be fostered not just on existing nanotechnologies but emerging new ones, including those that may cross over into biotechnology. Would DG RELEX consider this a worthwhile focus of the project, or should proposal fall strictly within the parameters set in the call for proposals.**

Topic (c) of the Call for proposals is strictly limited to the safety of nanotechnologies and can't be broadened to other fields. The activities undertaken in response to this Call for proposals are clearly described in the point 1c) of the Call for proposals.

- **Concerning the ratio for the level of co-financing: the Call states "The individual grant amounts will not exceed 90% of the allowable costs of the activities covered in the proposal. I suppose that this means that the applicant has to provide at least 10% of co-financing either from own or from third sources. However, the Guidelines state: "Under this Pilot Project, it is compulsory to provide a level of co-financing to match the grant awarded by the European Commission. The maximum rate of financing provided by the European Commission (and, consequently, the minimum level of co-financing required from the applicant) is stipulated in the Call for Proposals". Based on the figures given in the Call this would require at least 50% of co-financing either from own or from third sources (or both).**

Indeed, the level of financing from the Commission is of 90% as a maximum, leaving only 10% co-financing from the applicant and its partners, as correctly mentioned in the text of the Call. The Guidelines does actually specify that the "maximum rate of financing from the Commission is the one stipulated in the Call". Please disregard the wording "match" as

you are correct, the Commission will co-finance up to 90% of the eligible costs, with a maximum budget of 500,000 as indicated under Point 6 of the Call for Proposals.

- **What is the background to this bid – how has it developed? Is it something DG Research is aware of or is it just a RELEX initiative? We'd like to know whether there is any substance to this call or whether it is just based on some early ideas.**

The European Parliament has decided to allocate a sum of EUR 2.500.000 from the budget for 2007 to a Pilot project on “Transatlantic methods for handling global challenges” between the EU and the US. This pilot project is operated by DG RELEX but other DGs including DG Research have been consulted and may also be involved in the evaluation of applications. The general objective of the pilot projects is to promote mutual understanding and learning among EU and US policy researchers and policymakers on a number of challenges with a global dimension. The transatlantic dimension of the proposal is an important criterion for the award of a grant (see Point 8.4. of the Call for proposals). The Pilot project is by its nature limited in time - this one for the budget year 2007, but it could be renewed and later transformed in to a regular instrument if the results of the pilot are satisfactory.

- **How will the results of the study be utilised? Are the results likely to have any impact?**

On the Commission side, the results will be published on the official website. They will be presented by the project leaders in specific workshops during the final wrap-up conference organised under the auspices of the European Commission in winter 2009. The recommendations and the conclusions will also be compiled in a publication and presented to the EU-US Summit of 2010 (see Point 2 of the Call for proposals). The impact and dissemination of the projects' results are also award criteria of the grant. Applicants will be evaluated according to the expected impact of the proposed activities on the policy process, and on the visibility of the project (dissemination of information, publicity, capacity to raise awareness about the project at different political levels etc.) (see Point 8.4. of the Call for proposals). The results and findings of grant funded projects are owned by the beneficiary, so beneficiaries are free to use them as they wish. However, any documents produced using the financial support provided by the European Commission must visibly acknowledge the support of the EU (Point 5.8 of the Guidelines for applicants).

- **What exactly do you want to achieve from topic (c)? Would there be any flexibility to broaden the remit to investigate what is also relevant to other new and emerging technologies, or is it very specific to nanotechnologies?**

Topic (c) is strictly limited to the safety of nanotechnologies and can't be broadened to other fields. The activities undertaken in response to this Call for proposals are described in the point 1c of the Call for proposals.

- **The proposal will be submitted in a partnership with a US University. Which supporting documents does it need to provide in the context of the proposal? The checklist for the lead applicant is clear. Does this also apply for this university?**

As indicated in the Guidelines for Applicants under point 1.2, all applicants' partners must also satisfy the eligibility criteria and must not be subject of grounds for exclusion.

- **Does the US-partner also has to fill in Part 1 of the Model Grant Application Form, Part 5 Declaration by the applicant of the Model Grant Application Form, and provide all supporting documents which are listed in Part 6 of the Model Grant Application Form. Or is it sufficient that they only provide an original Declaration by the applicant (part 5 of the Model Grant Application Form)?**

The partners will have to submit: - Part 1.6 filled in; - A Declaration as in Part 5; - And the documents requested under Part 6.1 to clearly establish that they do fulfil the eligibility criteria.

- **Is the "Official registration certificate" referring to a company registration certificate?**

An "official" registration certificate means a certificate of registration at the Chamber of Commerce, in a Register of Companies, whatever official body exists in your country of origin.

- **This tender states that there isn't an application form and yet requests supporting documents of "Signed Applicants' Declaration Part 5 of the Application Form" and "Signed undertaking by each co-financing organisation to provide the amount of funding indicated in Part 4 of the grant application". Are these elements to be ignored or are there forms that take their place somewhere?**

There is an Application Form and it is available on the Webpage where the Call is published. The Form is mention in the Call under Point 7.3 and in the Guidelines for Applicants under Point 2.31. The form is actually available on the website, in both a Word and a PDF version. The Part 5 and Part 6 are within the text of this Application Form.

- **An organisation which represents the interests of businesses across Europe, although directed towards citizens was set-up as a limited profit company. Is it excluded from the allowed profiles?**

I'm sorry but the profile of the applicants is very clear under Point 5 of the text of the Call: only not-for-profit business associations are eligible.

- **We are a leading research institution. However, we are a government organisation, and I am not clear whether we can (as a research institute) lead the project or being a government organisation are barred from it. I have read the instructions carefully but have not found anything conclusive.**

I agree that from the text of the Call under Point 5 Profile of the Applicants, it may not be very clear. We do consider research institutes eligible whether their legal status is private or public. But in your specific case, since you are the executive agency of a government body, I'm afraid you are not eligible.

- **The US partner organisations have a legal requirement to factor in 40-50% of overheads in any application, which is well above the 7% indirect costs allowed in this call. To overcome this legal problem, we would have to treat the two US partners as subcontractors to the lead applicant, but their share of the budget would be of such a size that the rules on procurement (1.5) would kick in, i.e. we would have to go through a tender and negotiation process, with 5 candidates to be consulted.**

The 7% is a percentage that is calculated on the overall amount, i.e. the Total Eligible Costs mentioned under column A of the budget summary of in Part 3.2 of the Application Form. These 7% will not be divided per partners but calculated on the overall amount. The details given under Part 3.3 are also not separating the sources of funds but should be considered as the overall costs of the project itself. Your partners should remain partners and not be sub-contractors.

- **In relation to section 3.2 of the application form, I assume that the value of Total Cost is to be identical to Total Revenue. However, I am not clear on whether Total Eligible Costs and Total Revenue Against Eligible Costs are to be the same. A draft budget we have received currently notes the Total Eligible Costs as identical to the Contribution Requested from the Commission. The 10% co-financing required from the applicant is composed entirely of Uncovered Overheads (which in fact amount to far more than 10%). Would this be permissible?**

In relation to Section 3.2 of the Application Form, yes, the value of Total Cost must be identical to Total Revenue. And similarly, the Total Eligible Costs and Total Revenue Against Eligible Costs are to be the same. Now, it seems that your co-financing only comes from in-kind contribution. This will not be acceptable. The Guidelines for Applicants clearly indicates on page 5 that in-kind contributions are not considered as eligible costs "nor may they be treated as co-financing".

- **We received an inquiry from a US non-profit, tax exempt organisation. In relation to the declaration or certificate of non-liability for VAT, would you be in any position to let us know what would be required for the partner to be able to show non-liability for VAT?**

To show that an organisation is not liable to VAT, any kind of official document would be suitable. It is mentioned in the Application Form as a footnote 3 on Part 1.1, in "the light of the applicable national legislation" which would mean the US legislation in this case. If such document does not exist, we could then consider a Declaration certified by a notary or attorney at law as acceptable. Actually, in the US, this would be done via a letter from the

Internal Revenue Service recognizing non-profit status and thus federal tax exemption, usually under section 501 (most commonly 501 C 3) of the US tax code.

- **At the time of the application, do we have to specify our matching funds, i.e. how much is available, where do the funds come from, etc.?**

Yes, the matching funds (the amounts and where they are coming from) are requested and should figure in your Application package. These are included in the Application Form in Part 3.2 Budget Summary) and in Part 4 Co-Financing.

- **I see from the guidance notes that the deadline for submissions is 2 October, “as per postmark”. Can I confirm that this means that as long as the proposal is sent and postmarked by the UK postal service on 2 October, it will be acceptable, or do you have to receive it by 2 October?**

Yes, I confirm that the deadline of 2 October is the date as per postmark. You have to post your application on the 2 October at the latest.

- **Under section 4.2 is it necessary to have letters from each of our co-funders directly? Or is it possible to have a letter from the leading applicant confirming that they have received grants for our programme and listing the donors and amounts received?**

As per Section 4.2, yes, we do need a signed commitment from the partners that they will provide the funds they say they will. You cannot guarantee these funds for them. The Application Form is quite clear on this.

- **One of our partners is a public university and they do not think that the form 1.6 Financial viability of the applicant applies to them. Is this correct?**

Public sector bodies are indeed exempted from the demonstration of their financial viability (Reference to the Financial Regulation and Implementing Rules Article 176: "the verification of financial capacity in accordance with paragraph 3 shall not apply to natural persons in receipt of scholarships, to public bodies or to the international organisations referred to in Article 43(2)").

- **Are scanned PDF signatures ok because one of our partners is in the Arctic Circle and will not be able to get his original to me in time.**

Yes, we could accept the scanned version of the original letter (given the location) but the original will have to be submitted later to us then if your application is successful.

- **Can you tell me if there is a template for the Grant request Letter or do I have to draft my own? And what such letter needs to state?**

The Grant Request Letter does not have a template; it's more a cover letter that you have to draft on your own; it can be signed by the contact person of the project.
The Grant Letter is different than the Application Form.

- **Do the maximum 5 pages of the proposal include a Table of Content and the budget summary?**

No, a table of Content will not be considered as being one page out of the 5-pages proposal. These 5 pages do not need to include either a budget summary. This will be clear enough in the budget section of the Application Form.