



**Contracting authority:** The Secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States

ACP Innovation Fund

Guidelines  
for grant applicants

11<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund

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Deadline for submission of concept note and full application: 29/01/2020

<p><b>Please note that only the English version of this call for proposals is legally binding. All other linguistic versions are provided for information only.</b></p>
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## NOTICE

This is an open call for proposals, where all documents are submitted together (concept note and full application). In the first instance, only the concept notes will be evaluated. Thereafter, for the lead applicants who have been pre-selected, the full applications will be evaluated. 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. ACP INNOVATION FUND

## 1.1. BACKGROUND

The creation, development and diffusion of knowledge, technologies and innovations are powerful drivers of inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development. Knowledge and skill diffusion are considered key to the reduction of inequality both within and between countries. As such, investments in Research and Innovation (R&I) capability are instrumental to the implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda<sup>1</sup>.

An increasing number of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries are incorporating science, innovation and technology in national development agendas. The European Union (EU) and partner countries agree upon the strategic importance of investing in science, technology and skills development. The European Consensus on Development<sup>2</sup> commits the EU and its Member States to continue investing in research and development, including enhancing national innovation systems, and through upgraded research and innovation capacity. A particular emphasis is on skills development, entrepreneurship and access to digital technologies for youth and women, with the aim to promote girls and women's rights and empowerment, and to offer young people opportunities to benefit from technological progress.

Yet, despite the increasing stock of global know-how and technical knowledge, relatively few countries have been able to leverage this stock of knowledge to achieve sustained catch-up with the more advanced economies. Strong innovation performance remains limited to those countries able to coordinate policies for education, skills development, research and innovation; at the same time, effective interactions amongst all the actors of the innovation system are key success factors to promote learning and knowledge accumulation. Moreover, well-functioning labour market information systems need an effective network of actors capable of timely observing, analysing and translating skill needs into training and education initiatives. In fact, investments in R&I capability are likely to pay a high dividend if embedded in an effective innovation eco-system, including opportunities for collaboration between R&I institutions, industry and academia, combined with efforts to constitute a critical mass of skilled people.

The **ACP-EU Programme to strengthen Research and Innovation capacity in ACP countries** (hereafter, the Programme) builds upon the results of and expands the support provided by previous ACP-EU initiatives on research, science, technology and innovation. Research and innovation have long been recognised by the EU and the ACP countries as important aspects of their cooperation; in fact, they have been the focus of three consecutive programmes aimed at strengthening research and innovation eco-systems (i.e. ACP Science and Technology programme I and II) and in support of applied research (i.e. ACP Research for Sustainable Development programme). These initiatives highlighted the value-added of the intra-ACP dimension in disseminating, exchanging and facilitating the uptake of knowledge.

The Programme proposes a strategic approach to building R&I capability in ACP countries by helping structure their innovation eco-systems and inducing change at interlocking levels: policy development, knowledge transfer, and capacity of research and innovation stakeholders. This is meant to be achieved *inter alia* through the implementation of the ACP Innovation Fund.

### Note on terminology

Within the context of this call for proposals, we understand **research** as the process of inquiry into and evidence collection on new or developing areas of knowledge to build up expertise and knowledge for development processes. Basic research, also called pure research or fundamental research, aims to enhance scientific theories for improved understanding or prediction of natural or other phenomena. Applied research, in turn, uses scientific theories to develop technology or techniques to intervene and alter natural or other phenomena. Though often driven by curiosity, basic research fuels applied science's innovations. The two aims are often coordinated in research and development.

<sup>1</sup> Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, United Nations, 2015

<sup>2</sup> The New European Consensus on Development 'Our world, our dignity, our future', 2017

We understand **innovation** as a process, idea, invention, initiative or product that is i) genuinely new and ii) creates value or more effective solutions. Innovation can be fuelled by science and technology, can entail improved ways of working with new and diverse partners, or can involve new social and business models or policy, creative financing mechanisms, or path-breaking improvements in delivering essential services and products. Research and innovation **uptake** refers to how knowledge generated from research and innovation activities can contribute to societal development.

By **inclusive innovation** we refer to developments that marginalised groups take part in and benefit from. Technologies and their benefits must be accessible and well adapted, particularly for use by the poorest or most vulnerable, and they must ultimately be integrated into local contexts that will vary economically, politically and culturally.

**Local and indigenous knowledge** is intended as locally embedded knowledge that is context-specific, accumulated over time and unique to a given culture, society or local community. **Frugal innovation** is intended as the development of affordable, adaptable and accessible solutions to serve and fulfil the needs of underserved populations or market segments.

**Knowledge transfer** is the process of transferring skills, knowledge and/or technologies between universities and other institutions to ensure that scientific and technological developments are accessible to a wide range of users who can then further develop and exploit the technology to generate innovations. **Technology transfer** refers to the process of conveying results stemming from scientific and technological research to the market place and to the wider society, along with the associated skills and procedures; it includes the complex processes of sharing knowledge and adapting technology to meet local conditions, along with the associated management demands.

## 1.2. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME AND PRIORITY ISSUES

The **global objective** of this call for proposals is to unlock the inclusive innovation potential of ACP countries and support their transition into knowledge-based economies for sustainable development and poverty reduction.

The **specific objective** of this call for proposals is to contribute to a conducive and inclusive environment for Research and Innovation in ACP countries.

Proposals must address one or more of the four priorities listed below. The priorities of this call for proposals are:

1. To increase access to digital literacy, knowledge and use of emerging technologies;
2. To create or strengthen effective links between R&I skills development and labour market demand;
3. To establish or enable synergies in the research and innovation ecosystem, including with the private sector; facilitate conditions for technology transfer; promote R&I uptake;
4. To promote local and indigenous knowledge and its use in combination with formal knowledge systems and practices.

Actions can contribute to enhance the capacity of Research and Innovation stakeholders in ACP countries in any socio-economic sector.

**Under this call, applicants shall propose financial support to third parties.** The third parties are neither co-applicants (see 2.1.1), nor affiliated entities (see 2.1.2), nor associates or contractors (see 2.1.3). **The purpose of the support to third parties is the achievement of the objectives of the action. This implies that actions will be implemented at two levels:**

**(1) at the level of the applicants, and**

**(2) at the level of the third parties, which will benefit from the financial support.**

### **1.3. FINANCIAL ALLOCATION PROVIDED BY THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY**

The overall indicative amount made available under this call for proposals is **EUR 50,400,000**. The contracting authority reserves the right not to award all available funds.

This call for proposals is divided into six Lots:

- Each Lot corresponds to one geographical area. The six geographical areas are listed below. The list of countries included in each geographical area can be found in Annex L.
- Each Lot has identical objectives and priorities.
- Actions must take place in one or more ACP Member States belonging to the Lot for which the application is submitted.
- Third parties eligible for financial support must be established (at least since 2017) in one ACP Member State of the Lot for which the application is submitted. Please refer to Section 2.1 of these Guidelines and to Annex M.

Apart from what is listed in the preceding points, the same eligibility rules apply to all Lots.

#### **Indicative allocation of funds by Lot (i.e. geographical distribution):**

**Lot 1 – Western Africa: EUR 8,400,000**

**Lot 2 – Eastern Africa: EUR 8,400,000**

**Lot 3 – Central Africa: EUR 8,400,000**

**Lot 4 – Southern Africa: EUR 8,400,000**

**Lot 5 – Caribbean: EUR 8,400,000**

**Lot 6 – Pacific: EUR 8,400,000**

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 other Lots.

#### **Size of grants**

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

- minimum amount: EUR 4,000,000
- maximum amount: EUR 4,200,000

Any grant requested under this call for proposals must be maximum 85% 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 or the European Development Fund<sup>3</sup>.

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

## 2. RULES FOR THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS

These guidelines set out the rules for the submission, selection and implementation of the actions financed under this call, in conformity with the practical guide, which is applicable to the present call (available on the internet at this address <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/prag/document.do?locale=en>).<sup>4</sup>

### 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).

<b>2.1.1. Eligibility of applicants (i.e. lead applicant and co-applicant(s))</b>
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#### 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 established in<sup>5</sup> one of the countries listed in Annex L

For British applicants: please be aware that eligibility criteria must be complied with for the entire duration of the grant. Unless sector-specific eligibility rules provide otherwise<sup>6</sup>, if the United Kingdom withdraws from the EU during the grant period without concluding an agreement with the EU ensuring in particular that British applicants continue to be eligible, you

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<sup>4</sup> Note that a lead applicant (i.e. a coordinator) whose pillars have been positively assessed by the European Commission and who is awarded a grant will not sign the standard grant contract published with these guidelines but a contribution agreement based on the contribution agreement template. All references in these guidelines and other documents related to this call to the standard grant contract shall in this case be understood as referring to the relevant provisions of the contribution agreement template.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> For instance, Article 9(1)(f) of Regulation (EU) No 236/2014 provides for eligibility of member countries of the OECD, in the case of contracts fully implemented in a Least Developed Country or a Highly Indebted Poor Country, as included in the list of ODA recipients.

will cease to receive EU funding (while continuing, where possible, to participate) or will be required to leave the project on the basis of Article 12.2 of the grant agreement.

This obligation does not apply to international organisations **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**
- have experience in the management of research and innovation support funds with the following characteristics:
  - have awarded and managed at least two research and innovation grants (or other forms of financial support) with the following **cumulative** characteristics:
    - The grants were simultaneously implemented during the same reference period;
    - Each grant was implemented during the last five years (2014-2018);
    - Each grant was implemented in at least two ACP countries.

Copy of the contracts should be provided as requested under Section 2.4 point 7) **and**

- demonstrate an annual turnover or annual budget of at least EUR 1,500,000 for each financial year during the last three years (2016-2018) as demonstrated by the supporting documents requested under Section 2.4 point 2).

- (2) Potential applicants may not participate in calls for proposals 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, 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.

In 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 must act with co-applicant(s) as specified hereafter.**

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-applicant(s)**

Actions must be implemented by a **partnership between the lead applicant and at least two co-applicants**. The partnership must comply with the following minimum criteria:

- in addition to the lead applicant, the partnership must include at least two co-applicants, **and**
- applicants (i.e. lead applicant and co-applicants) must be established in at least two different ACP countries as defined in Annex L, **and**



- the number of applicants (i.e. lead applicant and co-applicants) established in the ACP countries must always be greater than the number of applicants (i.e. lead applicant and co-applicants) established in non-ACP countries.

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.

In order to be eligible for a grant, the co-applicant(s) must:

- be a legal person **and**
- be non-profit-making **and**
- be established in<sup>7</sup> one of the countries listed in Annex L

For British co-applicants: please be aware that eligibility criteria must be complied with for the entire duration of the grant. Unless sector-specific eligibility rules provide otherwise<sup>8</sup>, if the United Kingdom withdraws from the EU during the grant period without concluding an agreement with the EU ensuring in particular that British applicants continue to be eligible, you will cease to receive EU funding (while continuing, where possible to participate) or will be required to leave the project on the basis of Article 12.2 of the grant agreement.

This obligation does not apply to international organisations **and**

- be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action with the lead applicant<sup>9</sup>, other co-applicant(s) and affiliated entity(ies), not acting as an intermediary.

**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) will become beneficiaries 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 contract<sup>10</sup>.

### **2.1.2. Affiliated entities**

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

**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:

<sup>7</sup> Idem as footnote 5.

<sup>8</sup> Idem as footnote 6.

<sup>9</sup> The lead applicant is referred to as "the Coordinator" once the grant contract has been signed.

<sup>10</sup> The updated lists of sanctions are available at [www.sanctionsmap.eu](http://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.

- (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 proposals 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 exceed 48 months.

#### Sectors or themes

To be eligible, actions must comply with the objectives and the priorities of this call for proposals. As listed in Section 1.2, the priorities of this call for proposals are:

1. To increase access to digital literacy, knowledge and use of emerging technologies;
2. To create or strengthen effective links between R&I skills development and labour market demand;
3. To establish or enable synergies in the research and innovation ecosystem, including with the private sector; facilitate conditions for technology transfer; promote R&I uptake;
4. To promote local and indigenous knowledge and its use in combination with formal knowledge systems and practices.

Proposals must address one or more of the four priorities listed above. Applicants have to specify in the summary of the action (see Section 1.1 of the grant application form, under objectives of the action) which priority (or priorities) their proposal intends to address.

## Location

Actions must take place in one or more ACP Member States<sup>11</sup> belonging to the specific Lot for which the application is submitted, as listed in Annex L.

Applicants have to specify in the first page of the grant application form for which Lot they are applying.

Some activities may be carried out in ACP Member States belonging to other Lots or in non-ACP Member States. The applicant should explain in the application form how the location of activities is justified within the context of the overall action and how these activities benefit the target populations in the ACP Member States belonging to the specific Lot for which the application is submitted.

## Types of action

Applicants and co-applicants, as defined in Section 2.1.1, are the direct beneficiaries of the present call for proposals.

These entities will be responsible for the subsidiary award of funding support to third parties, in compliance with the terms and conditions defined in the present Guidelines and in Annex M. At least 65% of the total grant amount must be further redistributed to third parties.

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;
- actions that consist of or contain mainly pure research and/or research and development activities;
- actions concerned only with once-off conferences. Conferences can only be funded if they form part of a wider range of activities to be implemented during the life-time of the action. For this purpose, preparatory activities for a conference and the publication of the proceedings of the conference do not, by themselves, constitute such 'wider activities';
- actions which consist exclusively or primarily in capital expenditure, e.g. land, buildings, equipment and vehicles;
- actions supporting directly political parties;
- actions including proselytism.

## Types of activity

Activities under this call for proposals (all Lots) must include financial support to third parties (as defined in the following paragraph) **and** sound mechanisms to transfer to third parties skills, know-how and experience in relation to the objectives and priorities of the call. An indicative and non-exhaustive list of activities to be implemented by the applicants includes:

- Establishment of a mechanism to award and manage the financial support to third parties:
  - Establishing a selection and award process;
  - Financial control and follow-up;
  - Establishing a monitoring and evaluation system.

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<sup>11</sup> Please refer to Annex L, in particular footnote 1, with regards to the status of South Africa.

- Training and capacity building, peer assistance and/or mentoring of third parties, *inter alia* on:
  - Designing, implementing and evaluating quality research and innovation initiatives;
  - Meeting needs of different target groups and final beneficiaries;
  - Use of research methods, collection of evidence;
  - Writing research and innovation project proposals and/or grant applications;
  - Developing skills for innovation business management.
- Networking, exchange and dissemination of practices, experiences and results, and related policy advocacy:
  - Facilitating the exchange and dissemination of knowledge, practices and experiences amongst third parties and other relevant actors;
  - Shaping the research/innovation message for the relevant policy-making audience; selecting advocacy activities and communication tools;
  - Contributing to the use of research evidence and innovation results by policy makers, practitioners and other relevant actors.

In proposing actions, the applicant should clearly indicate and explain in the grant application form the following:

- In which manner the action is innovative for the target geographical area and population;
- The value-added that all applicants bring to the partnership and to its activities. The partnership should involve organisations with demonstrated and complementary experience in the relevant areas of the proposal;
- If and in which manner the action establishes complementarity, synergy and/or coordination with other actions funded either by the EU or national Governments or other donors in the same sector, so to achieve greater impact;
- Which performance indicators will be used to evaluate the benefits of the action and its overall performance, and how these parameters will be monitored during and after implementation;
- How sex-disaggregated data will be sourced and used for monitoring and evaluating the action;
- What concrete measures will be taken to share the knowledge and the results generated by the action.

In addition, proposed actions should take into account a number of **working principles**. Working principles are principles or conditions that should orient and govern the design and implementation of actions/activities under this call. The extent to which the working principles are integrated into the proposals will be examined during the evaluation process (see Evaluation grid Step 1, point 1.4). The working principles are:

- a. Put forward multi-stakeholder and multi-country actions, as well as participatory approaches;
- b. Privilege social innovation and/or frugal innovation approaches;
- c. Encourage bottom-up initiatives and demonstrate ownership as well as a realistic impact pathway (i.e. exit strategies);
- d. Focus on specific measurable results which make a concrete difference in lives of target populations.

The Evaluation grid (see Step 1 point 2.5) provides a non-exhaustive list of **cross cutting elements** which will be taken into consideration when evaluating the proposals. Particular attention will be paid to the following cross-cutting elements:

- a. The role that girls and women can play in research and innovation, as well as their capacity to benefit from inclusive innovation. This could be demonstrated through the systematic consideration of the differences between the conditions, situations and needs of women and men and the potential impact of the action on their rights to access to opportunities and outcomes in the research and innovation ecosystem;
- b. Climate change mitigation and environmental issues.

**The costs necessary for the implementation of the action should be reflected in the Budget for the Action** (see Annex B of these Guidelines).

It is mandatory that the following items are listed in the budget:

- The allocation of the minimum 65% of the total grant amount for the financial support to third parties, which should be included under the budget heading "6. Other";
- The action should include the participation to three annual stakeholders' meetings organised either in Brussels, Belgium or an ACP Member State by the contracting authority. The related costs should be included as appropriate in the budget;
- Each financial report should be accompanied by an expenditure verification report. For instance an action of four years will have three expenditure verification reports. The templates for expenditure verification can be found in Annex G.VII of these Guidelines. In establishing the sample size and the selection of individual items for testing, the expenditure verifier needs to cover the whole action. The whole action includes the financial support to third parties. The costs related to expenditure verification should be included under budget line "5.3. Expenditure verification/Audit";
- The action should foresee at least one evaluation. Costs related to evaluations should be included under the budget line "5.4. Evaluation costs".

#### Financial support to third parties<sup>12</sup>

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

A minimum of 65% of the total grant amount (including administrative and operating costs needed to implement the activities) must be further distributed to third parties established in one of the ACP countries<sup>13</sup> of the specific Lot.

Annex M of these Guidelines define the conditions for support to third parties. In line with these conditions the applicant must define in Section 2.1.1 of the grant application form the following:

- (i) the overall objectives, the specific objective(s) and the outputs<sup>14</sup> (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
- (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.

<sup>12</sup> These third parties are neither affiliated entity(ies) nor associates nor contractors.

<sup>13</sup> Please refer to Annex L, in particular footnote 1, with regards to the status of South Africa.

<sup>14</sup> As per OECD DAC definition, the term 'results' includes: 'impact' (overall objective), 'outcome(s)' (specific objective(s) and 'output(s)'.

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.

### Visibility

The applicants must take all necessary steps to publicise the fact that the European Union has financed or co-financed the action. As far as possible, actions that are wholly or partially funded by the European Union must incorporate information and communication activities designed to raise the awareness of specific or general audiences of the reasons for the action and the EU support for the action in the country or region concerned, as well as the results and the impact of this support.

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

### Number of applications and grants per applicants / affiliated entities

The lead applicant may submit more than one application per lot under this call for proposals.

The lead applicant may not be awarded more than one grant per lot under this call for proposals.

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

A co-applicant/affiliated entity may not be the co-applicant or affiliated entity in more than one application per lot under this call for proposals.

A co-applicant/affiliated entity may not be awarded more than one grant per lot under this call for proposals.

## ***2.1.5. Eligibility of costs: costs that can be included***

Only 'eligible costs' can be covered by a grant. The categories of costs that are eligible and non-eligible are indicated below. The budget is both a cost estimate and an overall ceiling for 'eligible costs'.

The reimbursement of eligible costs may be based on the following forms:

- actual costs incurred by the beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies).

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 not possible to increase the grant or the percentage of EU co-financing as a result of these corrections.

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 proposals, costs must comply with the provisions of Article 14 of the general conditions to the standard grant contract (see Annex G of these 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.

As an exception, contributions in kind may include personnel costs for the work carried out by volunteers under an action or work programme (which are eligible costs).

Volunteers' work may comprise up to 50 % of the co-financing. For the purposes of calculating this percentage, contributions in kind in the form of volunteers' work must be based on the unit cost provided by the contracting authority. This type of costs must be presented separately from other eligible costs in the estimated budget. The value of the volunteer's work must always be excluded from the calculation of indirect costs.

When the estimated costs include volunteers' work, the grant shall not exceed the estimated eligible costs other than the costs for volunteers' work.

Other co-financing shall be based on estimates provided by the applicant.

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;
- credit to third parties;
- salary costs of the personnel of national administrations;
- tuition fees or any similar fee for participation to workshops, seminars, conferences, congresses, training events, winter/summer courses, or research periods organised by one of the applicants.



## **Ethics clauses and Code of Conduct**

### **a) 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.

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

#### **Zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and sexual abuse:**

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.

### **c) 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.

### **d) 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.

### **e) 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. *Application forms*

Applications must be submitted in accordance with the instructions on the concept note and the full applications in the grant application form annexed to these Guidelines (Annex A).

Applicants must apply in English or French.

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

Clarifications will only be requested when the information provided is unclear and thus prevents the contracting authority from conducting an objective assessment.

Hand-written applications will not be accepted.

Please note that only the grant application form and the published annexes which have to be filled in (budget, logical framework) will be evaluated. It is therefore of utmost importance that these documents contain ALL the relevant information concerning the action.

**With the 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 entities.**

No additional annexes should be sent.

### 2.2.2. *Where and how to send applications*

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

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 stapled separately and enclosed in the envelope.

Where a lead applicant sends several different applications (if allowed to do so by the guidelines of the call), each one has to be sent separately.

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

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

#### **Postal address**

Secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States

Mr Léonard Emile OGNIMBA

Assistant Secretary General, Department for Political Affairs and Human Development

Avenue Georges Henri 451

B-1200 Brussels, Belgium

### **Address for hand delivery**

Secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States

Mr Léonard Emile OGNIMBA

Assistant Secretary General, Department for Policy Political Affairs and Human Development

Avenue Georges Henri 451

B-1200 Brussels, Belgium

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

**Lead 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.**

#### ***2.2.3. Deadline for submission of applications***

The applicants' attention is drawn to the fact that there are two different systems for sending applications/full proposals: one is by post or private courier service, the other is by hand delivery.

In the first case, the application/full proposal must be sent before the date for submission, as evidenced by the postmark or deposit slip, but in the second case it is the acknowledgment of receipt given at the time of the delivery of the application/full proposal which will serve as proof.

The deadline for the submission of applications is 29/01/2020 as evidenced by the date of dispatch, the postmark or the date of the deposit slip. In the case of hand-deliveries, the deadline for receipt is at 29/01/2020, before 18:00 hours local time, as evidenced by the signed and dated receipt. Any application submitted after the deadline will automatically be rejected.

The contracting authority may, for reasons of administrative efficiency, reject any application submitted on time to the postal service but received, for any reason beyond the contracting authority's control, after the effective date of approval of the first evaluation step (i.e. concept note), if accepting applications that were submitted on time but arrived late would considerably delay the award procedure or jeopardise decisions already taken and notified (see indicative calendar under Section 2.5.2).

#### ***2.2.4. Further information about applications***

An information session on this call for proposals will be held between October and November 2019. Dates will be published on the website of DG International Cooperation and Development: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome>, as soon as available.

Questions may be sent by e-mail no later than 21 days before the deadline for the submission of applications to the below address, indicating clearly the reference of the call for proposals:

E-mail address: [kakule@acp.int](mailto:kakule@acp.int)

The contracting authority has no obligation to provide clarifications to questions received after this date.

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

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

Questions that may be relevant to other applicants, together with the answers, will be published on the website of DG International Cooperation and Development: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome>, as the need arises. It is therefore advisable to consult the abovementioned website regularly in order to be informed of the questions and answers published.

### **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: OPENING & ADMINISTRATIVE CHECKS AND CONCEPT NOTE EVALUATION

During the opening and administrative check the following will be assessed:

- If the deadline has been met. Otherwise, the application will be automatically rejected.
- If the application satisfies all the criteria specified in the checklist in Section 7 of Part B 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

<b>1. Relevance of the action</b>	Sub-score	<b>20</b>
1.1 How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the call for proposals 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)?	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, working principles as listed under Section 2.1.4 of these Guidelines)?	5	
<b>2. Design of the action</b>	Sub-score	<b>30</b>
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, 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	
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>		<b>50</b>

\*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 200% of the available budget for this call for proposals. The amount of requested contributions of each concept note will be based on the indicative financial envelopes for each lot, where relevant.

After the evaluation of concept notes, the contracting authority will send letters to all lead applicants, indicating whether their application was submitted by the deadline, informing them of the reference number they have been allocated, whether the concept note was evaluated and the results of that evaluation. The evaluation committee will then proceed with the lead applicants whose proposals have been pre-selected.

## **(2) STEP 2: EVALUATION OF THE FULL APPLICATION**

Firstly, the following will be assessed:

- If the full application satisfies all the criteria specified in the checklist (Section 7 of Part B 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 full applications that pass this check will be further evaluated on their quality, including the proposed budget and capacity of the applicants and affiliated entity(ies). They will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria in the evaluation grid below. There are two types of evaluation criteria: selection and award criteria.

**The selection criteria** help to evaluate the applicant(s)'s and affiliated entity(ies)'s operational capacity and the lead applicant's financial capacity and are used to verify that they:

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

**The award criteria** help to evaluate the quality of the applications in relation to the objectives and priorities set forth in the guidelines, and to award grants to projects which maximise the overall effectiveness of the call for proposals. They help to select applications which the contracting authority can be confident will comply with its objectives and priorities. They cover the relevance of the action, its consistency with the objectives of the call for proposals, quality, expected impact, sustainability and cost-effectiveness.

*Scoring:*

The evaluation grid is divided into Sections and subsections. Each subsection will be given a score between 1 and 5 as follows: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.

## Evaluation grid

Section	Maximum Score
<b>1. Financial and operational capacity</b>	<b>20</b>
1.1 Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient in-house experience of project management?	5
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)	5
1.3 Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient in-house management capacity? (Including staff, equipment and ability to handle the budget for the action)?	5
1.4 Does the lead applicant have stable and sufficient sources of finance?	5
<b>2. Relevance</b>	<b>20</b>
<i>Score transferred from the Concept Note evaluation</i>	
<b>3. Design of the action</b>	<b>15</b>
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)?	5
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)?	5
3.3 Does the design reflect a robust analysis of the problems involved, and the capacities of the relevant stakeholders?	5
<b>4. Implementation approach</b>	<b>15</b>
4.1 Is the action plan for implementing the action clear and feasible? Is the timeline realistic?	5
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)?	5
4.3 Is the co-applicant(s)'s and affiliated entity(ies)'s level of involvement and participation in the action satisfactory?	5
<b>5. Sustainability of the action</b>	<b>15</b>
5.1 Is the action likely to have a tangible impact on its target groups?	5



5.2 Is the action likely to have multiplier effects, including scope for replication, extension, capitalisation on experience and knowledge sharing?	5
5.3 Are the expected results of the proposed action sustainable?:  - 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> )	5
<b>6. Budget and cost-effectiveness of the action</b>	<b>15</b>
6.1 Are the activities appropriately reflected in the budget?	/ 5
6.2 Is the ratio between the estimated costs and the results satisfactory?	/ 10
<b>Maximum total score</b>	<b>100</b>

If the total score for Section 1 (financial and operational capacity) is less than 12 points, the application will be rejected. If the score for at least one of the subsections under Section 1 is 1, the application will also be rejected.

If the lead applicant applies without co-applicants or affiliated entities the score for point 4.3 shall be 5 unless the involvement of co-applicants or affiliated entities is mandatory according to these Guidelines for applicants.

#### *Provisional selection*

After the evaluation, a table will be drawn up listing the applications ranked according to their score. The highest scoring applications will be provisionally selected until the available budget for this call for proposals is reached. In addition, a reserve list will be drawn up following the same criteria. This list will be used if more funds become available during the validity period of the reserve list.

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

The eligibility verification 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 applications that have been provisionally selected according to their score and within the available budget for this call for proposals.

- 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 proposals.

## 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)<sup>15</sup>:

1. The statutes or articles of association of the lead applicant, (if any) of each co-applicant and (if any) of each affiliated entity<sup>16</sup>. Where the contracting authority has recognised the lead applicant's, or the co-applicant(s)'s, or their affiliated entity(ies)'s eligibility for another call for proposals under the same budget line within 2 years before the deadline for receipt of applications, it should be submitted, instead of the statutes or articles of association, a copy of the document proving their eligibility in a former call (e.g. a copy of the special conditions of a grant contract received during the reference period), unless a change in legal status has occurred in the meantime<sup>17</sup>. 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 public bodies and 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)<sup>18</sup>. 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

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<sup>15</sup> No supporting document will be requested for applications for a grant not exceeding EUR 60,000.

<sup>16</sup> 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.

<sup>17</sup> To be inserted only where the eligibility conditions have not changed from one call for proposals to the other.

<sup>18</sup> 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. Copy of contracts proving the award and management of research and innovation grants (or other forms of financial support) to projects implemented in at least two ACP countries over the last 5 years (2014-2018).
8. 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).

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 one of the languages of the call for proposals 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 one of the languages of the call for proposals, 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 one of the languages of the call for proposals.

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.

An applicant believing that it has been harmed by an error or irregularity during the award process may lodge a complaint. See further Section 2.4.15 of the practical guide.

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 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](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect_en.cfm).

### **2.5.2. Indicative timetable**

	<b>DATE</b>	<b>TIME</b>
<b>1. Information meeting (if any)</b>	October/November 2019 (to be confirmed)	To be confirmed
<b>2. Deadline for requesting any clarifications from the contracting authority</b>	08/01/2020	-
<b>3. Last date on which clarifications are issued by the contracting authority</b>	17/01/2020	-
<b>4. Deadline for submission of applications</b>	29/01/2020	18:00 h (Brussels time)
<b>5. Information to lead applicants on opening, administrative checks and concept note evaluation (Step 1)</b>	20/04/2020	-
<b>6. Information to lead applicants on the evaluation of the full applications (Step 2)</b>	15/06/2020	-
<b>7. Notification of award (after the eligibility check) (Step 3)</b>	24/07/2020	-
<b>8. Contract signature</b>	August 2020	-

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. In such cases, the updated timetable will be published on the web site of DG International Cooperation and Development: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome>.

## **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 (see 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<sup>19</sup>  
Annex E: Financial identification form  
Annex F: PADOR registration form

#### DOCUMENTS FOR INFORMATION<sup>20</sup>

- 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](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: List of eligible countries
- Annex M: Financial support to third parties – conditions
- Annex N: Derogations international organisations

#### Useful links:

##### Project Cycle Management Guidelines

[http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/aid-delivery-methods-project-cycle-management-guidelines-vol-1\\_en](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

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<sup>19</sup> Only applicable where the European Commission will make the payments under the contracts to be signed.

<sup>20</sup> These documents should also be published by the contracting authority.

[http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/funding/procedures-beneficiary-countries-and-partners/financial-management-toolkit\\_en](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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