



Contracting authority:

Government of the Republic of Serbia, Ministry of Finance, Department
for Contracting and Financing of EU Funded Programmes (CFCU)

**Cross-border Programme Serbia – North Macedonia 2016-2020 under
the Instrument of Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II), allocations 2016
and 2017**

Guidelines
for grant applicants

1st Call for Proposals

Budget line(s): BGUE-B2016-22.020401
BGUE-B2017-22.020401

Reference: EuropeAid/165171/ID/MULTI

Deadline for submission of concept note: September 27, 2019

NOTICE

This is a restricted call for proposals. In the first instance, only concept notes (Part A of the grant application form) must be submitted for evaluation. Thereafter, lead applicants who have been pre-selected will be invited to submit a full application. After the evaluation of the full applications, an eligibility check will be performed for those which have been provisionally selected. Eligibility will be checked on the basis of the supporting documents requested by the contracting authority and the signed 'declaration by the lead applicant' sent together with the full application.

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1. CROSS-BORDER PROGRAMME SERBIA – NORTH MACEDONIA

1.1. BACKGROUND

These Guidelines are intended to be used by those applying for grants under the 1st Call for Proposals for the Cross-border Cooperation Programme Serbia –North Macedonia (hereinafter ‘the Programme’). The Programme is implemented under the framework of the Instrument of Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II) and is the result of joint planning efforts made by the governments and other stakeholders of the two countries. IPA II supports cross-border cooperation with a view to promoting good neighbourly relations, fostering European Union integration and promoting socio-economic development. The legal provisions for its implementation are stipulated in the following pieces of legislation:

- Regulation (EU) No 231/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 establishing an Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II);
- Regulation (EU) No 236/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 laying down common rules and procedures for the implementation of the Union's instruments for financing external action; and
- Commission Implementing Regulation EU no 447/2014 of 2 May 2014 on the specific rules for implementing the IPA II regulation.

The programme analyses the socio-economic situation of the border region, sets out a common strategy for remedying problems identified and formulates joint thematic priorities for development. As specified in its programme document, its implementation is carried out through calls for proposals such as this one. These calls will be launched at regular intervals in order to fund cross-border cooperation projects that will contribute to achieving the strategic objectives agreed upon by the participating countries.

More details about this IPA II Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2016-2020 can be found on the web page www.eu.rs-mk.org and are available for download on the web page of www.mei.gov.rs, and on the web page of the www.mls.gov.mk.

The Programme is implemented jointly by both countries.

In Serbia, the responsible institutions are:

Ministry of European Integration (MEI), in charge of the overall coordination of the programme, is the operating structure (OS) in this country;

Ministry of Finance, Department for Contracting and Financing of EU Funded Projects (CFCU), responsible for all contract and payment issues, is the Contracting Authority (CA).

These two institutions constitute Operating Structure (OS) in the Republic of Serbia, together with the HOS Support Unit (HOS SU).

In North Macedonia, the responsible institution is:

Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, Ministry of Local Self-Government (MLS), responsible for the overall coordination of the programme and control function, is the OS in this country.

Moreover, the implementation of the programme is overseen by a joint monitoring committee (JMC) composed of representatives of both participating countries' institutions and civil society. The JMC will examine and provide an advisory opinion on the list of actions selected through this call for proposals before the grant award decision.

The CA, the OSs and the JMC are assisted by the Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) based in Leskovac (Serbia), and staffed with experts from Serbia and North Macedonia. The JTS is the administrative body responsible for the day-to-day management of the Programme including support and advice to potential applicants as well as grant beneficiaries. The JTS has an antenna located in Kumanovo North Macedonia. The JTS will assist potential applicants in partner search and project development, organising information days and workshops;

develop and maintain a network of stakeholders; advise grant beneficiaries in project implementation; and prepare, conduct and report on monitoring visits to cross-border cooperation actions.

1.2. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME AND PRIORITY ISSUES

In line with the objectives specified in the programme document, **the overall objective** of this Call for Proposals is to strengthen good neighbourly relations, establish partnerships and to contribute to the development of a vibrant programme area by connecting its people and resources in a sustainable way.

As a result of a decision made by the JMC of the Programme on 11th of May 2018, out of the two thematic priorities of the Programme Document,

- Priority 1: Promoting employment, labour mobility and social and cultural inclusion across the border
- Priority 2: Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage

the following are the specific objectives and the corresponding results that the applications submitted under this call will contribute to attaining:

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	RESULTS
<p>1. Specific Objective 1.1: Skills improvement and creation of employment opportunities in perspective sectors</p> <p>Specific Objective 1.2: Development of an inclusive society</p>	<p>R 1.1.1 Employability of the working age population raised</p> <p>R 1.1.2 Organisational capacities to activate cross-border employment potentials strengthened</p>
	<p>R 1.2.1 Capacities for social and cultural inclusion of disadvantaged groups improved</p>
<p>2. Specific Objective 2.1: Mobilising cultural and natural resources for joint development of sustainable tourism products and destinations</p> <p>Specific Objective 2.2: Fostering joint risk management systems of natural and cultural sites, as well as human settlements, including disaster or emergency preparedness</p>	<p>R 2.1.1 Development of sustainable Cross-border (CB) tourist products and destinations initiated</p> <p>R 2.1.2 Quality and visibility of tourist offers improved</p>
	<p>R 2.2.1 Capacities for cross-border risk management and intervention increased</p>

Mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues:

This Call for Proposals will take into account the mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues at project level. When developing a project to address any specific objective, cross-cutting issues need to be mainstreamed in the following manner:

- a) Sustainable development

The programme area is characterised by great geographical diversity and relatively well preserved nature. At the same time the nature and environment are exposed to many risks which result from human activities as well as climate change.

The programme authorities shall throughout the programme implementation ensure that the selected operations will not have any environmentally harmful effects. Moreover, environmental aspects shall be specifically

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assessed in the assessment of the full applications. A positive contribution to environmental protection shall be ensured in the design and implementation of cross-border operations.

Under the TP1, environmental aspects shall be addressed through exploring opportunities for creation of jobs through organising local value chains and promoting sustainable use of local resources (e.g. employment initiatives in the organic production and processing, sustainable tourism, green economy, circular economy, local social services, and similar).

The TP2 is primarily focused on mobilising the natural and cultural heritage and local area resources for development of sustainable tourism. Respect for environmental standards in product development will be specifically observed. Various interpretation programmes and services shall bring forward awareness raising of the visitors regarding the importance of nature conservation and heritage protection. Special attention shall be given to appropriate arrangement of high nature value sites in order to manage the increase in the visits and prevent any degradation. The specific objective 2 under this thematic priority shall significantly contribute to strengthening joint risk management systems and emergency preparedness in case of any natural and man-made disasters affecting the border area natural and cultural heritage.

b) Equal opportunities

Throughout the programme design and its implementation equal opportunities shall be promoted and any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prevented.

Promotion of equal opportunities is strongly addressed in the cooperation programme. Findings from the situation analysis show that the programme area is diverse in many socio-economic aspects, such as levels of economic development, access to public services, emigration, territorial connectivity and poverty issues. Equal opportunities should be strengthened in particular in relation to the strong rural urban divide and in relation to specific disadvantaged groups that are at higher risk of social exclusion (e.g. elderly in peripheral areas with poor access to social and health services, young unemployed, Roma, long-term unemployed, ex-convicts, people with physical or mental disabilities and others).

The TP1 will to a great extent contribute to promotion of equal opportunities, in particular through implementation CBC operations under the specific objective 2. Cross-border partnerships will be established to upgrade or develop new opportunities for inclusion of different disadvantaged groups. Priority shall be given to concepts where the persons threatened by exclusion are actively engaged in project implementation and their potentials and resources are further developed. Special attention shall be given to initiatives contributing to strengthening socio-cultural relations and cooperation between national and ethnic minorities in the programme area.

The TP2 shall be tackling sustainable tourism development of the border area, providing opportunities especially for the rural population to improve generation of additional income through tourism and tourism related activities.

c) Equal treatment for women and men

Equal treatment for women and men shall be respected by all involved actors and programme authorities in the process of design and implementation of the cross-border cooperation programme. Beneficiaries will be encouraged through information activities to explore gender mainstreaming by highlighting and explaining differences between women and men, and consider this in their project proposals where appropriate.

Equal treatment for women and men in the labour market is a matter of principle. It is estimated that a large share of working age women in rural areas belong to inactive population. The share of women and men in the structure of registered unemployed varies between regions and districts, e.g. the share of unemployed women in the North-East Region is higher than that of men, while in the Skopje Region the share of unemployed men is higher than that of women.

Equal treatment has to be enforced in laws covering a range of areas including when applying for a job, equal treatment at work, protection of pregnant workers and breastfeeding mothers, and rights to maternity leave and parental leave.

The TP1 will address equal employment opportunities for women and men. However, in some cases, the programme will try to redress inequality promoting employment initiatives that activate the hard to place unemployed, especially women in rural areas.

The TP2 shall give equal treatment for women and men to develop their specific talents and valorise them through tourism (intangible cultural heritage, crafts, local products, etc.) and risk management and emergency preparedness.

Projects prepared under the Area Based Development (ABD) approach to facilitate sustainable growth in defined geographical areas in cross-border regions in the Western Balkans, in particular rural areas characterised by specific complex development problems, may be considered for funding under this cross-border cooperation programme. Account will be taken of the preparatory work for the ABD approach already carried out in the cross-border region covering Serbia and North Macedonia.

Please note that mainstreaming cross-cutting issues will be scored through the evaluation methodology of this call as formulated in section 2.3 below.

1.3. FINANCIAL ALLOCATION PROVIDED BY THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY

The overall indicative amount made available under this call for proposals is **€ 1,260,000.00**. The Contracting Authority reserves the right not to award all available funds.

More specifically, the contracting authority might cancel the call completely or partially when only few good quality applications can be contracted and relaunch the unallocated assets in the next call for the specific objective(s) concerned.

Indicative EU-funded allocations by specific objective:

Specific objective	Allocation
<p>2. TP1: Promoting employment, labour mobility and social inclusion</p> <p>SO1: Skills improvement and creation of employment opportunities in perspective sectors</p> <p>SO2: Development of an inclusive society</p>	<p>EUR 489,888.00</p>
<p>3. TP2: Encouraging tourism and cultural and natural heritage</p> <p>SO1: Mobilising natural and cultural resources for joint development of sustainable tourism</p> <p>SO2: Fostering joint risk management systems of natural and cultural sites, as well as human settlements, including disaster or emergency preparedness</p>	<p>EUR 770,112.00</p>
Total	EUR 1,260,000.00

The applications will compete with each other for the financial resources available within each specific objective separately.

When the remaining funds per specific objective will not allow financing another application, the evaluation committee may recommend to the contracting authority to pull these funds and award a grant to the application or applications with the highest scores in the ranking of the separate reserve lists irrespective of the specific objective.

If the allocation indicated for a thematic priority cannot be used due to insufficient quality or number of proposals received, the contracting authority reserves the right to reallocate the remaining funds to those application/s being higher in the ranking of the sole reserve list irrespective of the thematic priority.

Size of grants

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

Specific objective	Minimum amount of EU-funded grant	Maximum amount of EU-funded grant
1.1. Skills improvement and creation of employment opportunities in perspective sectors		
R 1.1.1 Employability of the working age population raised	EUR 120.000,00	EUR 200.000,00
R 1.1.2 Organisational capacities to activate cross-border employment potentials strengthened	EUR 120.000,00	EUR 200.000,00
1.2. Development of an inclusive society		
R 1.2.1 Capacities for social and cultural inclusion of disadvantaged groups improved	EUR 120.000,00	EUR 200.000,00
3.1. Mobilising cultural and natural resources for joint development of sustainable tourism products and destinations		
R 2.1.1 Development of sustainable CB tourist products and destinations initiated	EUR 120.000,00	EUR 200.000,00
R 2.1.2 Quality and visibility of tourist offers improved	EUR 120.000,00	EUR 200.000,00
3.2. Fostering joint risk management systems of natural and cultural sites, as well as human settlements, including disaster or emergency preparedness		
R 2.2.1 Capacities for cross-border risk management and intervention increased	EUR 120.000,00	EUR 350.000,00

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

- Minimum percentage: 60¹% of the total eligible costs of the action.
- Maximum percentage: 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.

Please note that for applicants effectively established in the North Macedonia, their Ministry of Local Self-government may provide as co-financing up to a maximum of the 15% of the total eligible costs of the action. The procedure for retrieving the National co-financing is an ISO standardized procedure of the Ministry of Local Self Government. This procedure is subject of presentations at the informative sessions organized for each launched call for proposals, and subject to specific trainings for the successful grant beneficiaries from the North Macedonia after the grant and subsidy contracts are signed. National co-financing reaches the amount of max 15% of the eligible expenditures. For grant contracts implemented under indirect management it shall be executed after issuance of each notification for verified amounts.

Applicants established in Serbia shall cover by their own resources the co-financing amount.

¹ According to the provisions of article 65.2 of the FWA for IPA II, this shall not be less than 20%.

2. RULES FOR THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS

These guidelines set out the rules for the submission, selection and implementation of the actions financed under this call, in conformity with the practical guide, which is applicable to the present call (available on the internet at this address

<http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/prag/document.do?locale=en>).²

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),
- its **co-applicant(s)** (where it is not specified otherwise the lead applicant and its co-applicant(s) are hereinafter jointly referred as 'applicant(s)') (2.1.1),
- and, if any, **affiliated entity(ies)** to the lead applicant and/or to a co-applicant(s). (2.1.2);

(2) the actions:

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

(3) the costs:

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

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

Lead applicant

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

- be a legal person, **and**
- be non-profit-making, **and**
- be established in either Serbia or North Macedonia³, **and**
- be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action with the co-applicant(s) and affiliated entity(ies), not acting as an intermediary, **and**
- be a specific type of institution or organisation such as:

² 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.

³ 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

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- Central, regional and local government units (ministries, municipalities, departments, agencies, social welfare system institutions) with competencies/responsibilities in the eligible area in the fields relevant to the call (nature protection, water supply, wastewater, solid waste management, and maintenance and development of cultural and historical heritage;
- Local tourist organisations
- Civil society organisations/NGOs
- The zones of protected natural and cultural values
- Chambers of Commerce and Chambers of Crafts and Trades
- Professional associations, farmers associations and associations of SMEs
- Formal and non-formal education and training institutions (e.g. primary schools, VET schools, Universities, etc.)
- Cultural institutions such as museums, libraries, orchestras, etc.
- Research, development and innovation (RDI) institutions
- Agencies for local or regional development
- Public utility companies
- Sport organizations

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

The lead applicant 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 and coordinates the design and implementation of the action.

Co-applicant(s)

The lead applicant must act with at least one co-applicant as specified hereafter.

If the lead applicant is established in the Serbia at least one co-applicant must be established in the North Macedonia, and vice versa.

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At least one legal entity in the partnership (being the lead applicant or the co-applicant) must be effectively established or have an office in the programme eligible area of each participating country.

The maximum number of co-applicants that could be involved in the action is 3. However, CBC partners must carefully bear in mind the most appropriate conditions to ensure an intra-project efficient coordination when deciding on this. The number of partners and the composition of the partnership should be coherent with the envisaged objectives and activities of the action (see Section 2.1.4 below).

In genuine cross-border operations, the lead applicant and co-applicant(s) shall cooperate in the development and implementation of action. In addition, they shall cooperate in either the staffing or the financing of action or both (see Section 2.1.4 below). The lead applicant and co-applicant(s) must represent different legal entities. Co-applicants participate in designing and implementing the action, and the costs they incur are eligible in the same way as those incurred by the lead applicant.

Co-applicant(s) must satisfy the eligibility criteria as applicable to the lead applicant himself⁴.

Co-applicant(s) must sign the mandate in Part B, Section 4 of the grant application form.

(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 contract⁵.

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

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:

- (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;

⁴ In line with the cross-border nature of the programme, please note that the nationality of the lead applicant (either country A or B) automatically determines the nationality of at least one co-applicant (country B if the lead applicant is effectively established in country A or country A if the lead applicant is effectively established in country B).

⁵ The updated lists of sanctions are available at www.sanctionsmap.eu.

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

- 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

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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 will meet the following requirements depending on the programme’s specific objective addressed by the application, namely:

Specific objective	Minimum number of months	Maximum number of months
1.1. Skills improvement and creation of employment opportunities in perspective sectors		
R 1.1.1 Employability of the working age population raised	12	18
R 1.1.2 Organisational capacities to activate cross-border employment potentials strengthened	12	18
1.2. Development of an inclusive society		
R 1.2.1 Capacities for social and cultural inclusion of disadvantaged groups improved	12	18
2.1. Mobilising cultural and natural resources for joint development of sustainable tourism products and destinations		
R 2.1.1 Development of sustainable CB tourist products and destinations initiated	12	18
R 2.1.2 Quality and visibility of tourist offers improved	12	18
2.2. Fostering joint risk management systems of natural and cultural sites, as well as human settlements, including disaster or emergency preparedness		
R 2.2.1 Capacities for cross-border risk management and intervention increased	12	18

Sectors or themes

As stipulated in Section 1.2 above, actions will fall under only one of the following specific objectives and will have to prove their contribution to attain one or more of their intended results:

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	RESULTS
1.1. Skills improvement and creation of employment opportunities in perspective sectors	R 1.1.1 Employability of the working age population raised
	R 1.1.2 Organisational capacities to activate cross-border employment potentials strengthened
1.2. Development of an inclusive society	R 1.2.1 Capacities for social and cultural inclusion of disadvantaged groups improved
2.1. Mobilising cultural and natural resources for joint development of sustainable tourism products and destinations	R 2.1.1 Development of sustainable CB tourist products and destinations initiated
	R 2.1.2 Quality and visibility of tourist offers improved
2.2. Fostering joint risk management systems of natural and cultural sites, as well as human settlements, including disaster or emergency preparedness	R 2.2.1 Capacities for cross-border risk management and intervention increased

In their application, the lead applicant and its co-applicant(s) will have to refer the programme's specific objective under which their action is meant to contribute, as well as the programme's result(-s) affected by the action, and the programme's indicators that will be instrumental to measure the action's success. For the sake of consistency and aggregation, applicants must have the same units to quantify their output, outcome and impact indicators in line with the programme output, outcome and impact indicators. Please introduce selected indicators in Sections of Grant Application Form (1.1. Summary of the action, 1.3.1. Relevance to the thematic priorities/objectives of the call for proposals, 2.1.1. Objectives, results and activities).

The following illustrates the list of indicators that the applicants will have to include, where appropriate, to estimate the project's contribution to the programme's objectives:

Programme specific objective 1.1: To improve skills and create employment opportunities in perspective sectors

IMPACT INDICATORS	Number of direct beneficiaries involved (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Number of new jobs created by the businesses which received assistance from the scheme (including self-employment initiatives)
	Number of participants managing to find employment thanks to new skills and competences acquired and/or as a consequence of development of new programmes and services (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Number of businesses still active after two years of their establishment
	Number of new services available in the market one year after project ends
	Number of the unemployed people going through CBC initiatives (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)

	Percentage of the unemployed people going through CBC initiatives manage to get a job (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Percentage of people trained in rural areas manage to find employment and decide not to move to the cities (disaggregated by gender)
	Number of unemployed who went through an internship or mentoring hired by the host enterprises (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Percentage of unemployed who went through an internship or mentoring hired by the host enterprises (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Number of enterprises, trades, crafts and institutions accepting a continuing internship programme (out of which for vulnerable groups)
	Number of training curricula matching the needs of the labour market demand introduced and implemented in (vocational) education institutions
	Number of potential entrepreneurs having been final beneficiaries of the actions create a business (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Percentage of potential entrepreneurs having been final beneficiaries of the actions create a business (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Percentage of new SMEs established in the cross-border areas owned by young people and members of marginalised groups
	Increase in the number of registered agricultural producers and providers of rural tourism services in the cross-border areas
	Percentage of students who have finished school and were final beneficiaries of the actions found a job within one year of graduation
	Percentage of increase in the turnover and sales of the enterprises being part of the scheme
	Percentage of students and unemployed who have finished a VET course finding a job within one year after graduation
	Number of direct beneficiaries involved (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Number of new jobs created by the businesses which received assistance from the scheme (including self-employment initiatives)
OUTCOME INDICATORS	Number of organisations with increased capacities
	Number of users of digital platforms
	Number of plans implemented
	Number of new services commercialized
	Level of satisfaction of users/clients with new services
	Level of satisfaction of trainees with new training courses

	Number of new businesses established as a result of the call (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Increased level of competences among the trainees
	Number of private and/or public-sector operators developing possibilities and conditions for practical training of unemployed (disaggregated by type of vulnerable group)
	Number of new/improved cooperation models, programmes, products, services, tools, complementary courses (e.g. e-learning), industrial and commercial processes implemented
	Number of training courses certified
	Number of new employment and career information centres established
	Number of companies in which operations, products and/or processes were improved through joint initiatives
	Number of participants with increased employability and employment competences (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Number of enterprises involved in cooperation with education institutions for creating adequate training curricula
	No of agreements concluded for integration of cross-border labour markets
	Number of teachers and social services staff participating in the implementation of these operations in favour of vulnerable groups
	Percentage of increase in the number of people employed as a result of work of labour promotion institutions
	Number of training curricula recognized
	Number of training curricula matching needs of labour market demand introduced in (vocational) education institutions
	Number of partnerships including research and development institutions, individual innovators and young university graduates
	Number of certificates granted to enterprises for the implementation of quality systems
	Number of partnerships between labour market stakeholders for addressing labour mobility and employment development
	Number of economic operators participating in capacity building for sustainable use of local resources and market needs
	Number of students and unemployed who have finished a VET course
OUTPUT INDICATORS	Number of organisations directly involved in the implementation of this type of projects (disaggregated by type of organisation)
	Number of inter-sectoral (local authorities-CSOs-private sector-public agencies-research and educational institutions) partnerships implementing this type of projects

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	Number of information/promotion campaigns implemented
	Number of information/promotion events organised
	Number of participants at information/promotion events (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Number of promotion materials produced and distributed/broadcasted
	Number of people reached by information/promotion campaigns
	Number of capacity building events organised
	Number of participants at capacity building events organised disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Number of training curricula developed
	Number of studies developed
	Number of digital platforms (information systems) developed
	Number of websites operational
	Number of sets of equipment purchased and made available to target groups
	Number of cross-border networks/partnerships formed
	Number of organisations participating at cross-border networks/partnerships formed (disaggregated by type of organisation)
	Number of cross-border cooperation agreements signed
	Number of plans developed
	Number of clusters formed
	Number of new services developed
	Number of facilities enhanced
	Number of manuals, guidelines, handbooks developed
	Number of study visits organised
	Number of participants at study visits (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Number of persons obtaining new practical skills (VET programmes, internships and business skills) which directly contribute to their employability (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Number of internship programmes supporting new business opportunities of unemployed, including social entrepreneurship activities implemented
	Number of interns involved (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Number of mentoring support services supporting new business opportunities of unemployed, including social entrepreneurship activities delivered

	Number of persons receiving mentoring support (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Number of new VET and life-long learning programmes implemented
	Number of people trained through new life-long learning services (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Number of campaigns for self-employment implemented
	Number of cross-border partnerships between labour promotion institutions formalized
	Number of curricula for employment and/or employability developed
	Number of people attending courses that were developed (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Number of people that completed courses that were developed (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Number of digital platforms for increasing employability developed
	Number of people involved in self-employment initiatives (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Number of people trained for establishing their own business (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Number of PCM trainings organised
	Number of participants at PCM trainings
	Number of business start-up packs (equipment and supplies) provided
	Number of fairs visited
	Number of new labour market information systems developed
	Number of new products developed
	Number of new industrial and commercial processes developed
	Number of facilities of the relevant actors providing training, work experience, research and innovation support concerning employment and employment initiatives enhanced
	Number of businesses, public sector operators and persons on the labour market linked through targeted cross-border cooperation models or pilot employment projects focusing on the unemployed and inactive working age population
	Number of local value chains built
	Number of local food processing activities carried out
	Number of organic production and processing activities carried out
	Number of co-working facilities established
	Number of talent development programmes implemented

	Number of SMEs supported to work with students/unemployed
	Number of events organised for the integration and employability of vulnerable groups
	Number of participants at events organised for the integration and employability of vulnerable groups (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Number of entrepreneurial internships in the tourism sector carried out

Programme specific objective 1.2: To support the development of an inclusive society

IMPACT INDICATORS	Number of direct beneficiaries involved (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Number of new jobs created as a result of promoting social inclusion through employment
	Number of businesses still active after two years of their establishment
	Number of new services available in the market one year after project ends
	Number of persons resolving concrete social issues and challenges through the supported social schemes (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Percentage of reduction of early school leavers and drop-outs (men, women, ethnic minorities) amongst the targeted population
	Percentage of sickness incidence reduction amongst the socially vulnerable groups being beneficiaries of the programme
	Number of final beneficiaries from vulnerable groups enrolled as new pupils or students (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Number of new beneficiaries of the upgraded social services (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Number of new beneficiaries of the upgraded health services
OUTCOME INDICATORS	Number of organisations with increased capacities
	Number of users of digital platforms
	Number of plans implemented
	Number of new services commercialized
	Level of satisfaction of users/clients with new services
	Level of satisfaction of trainees with new training courses
	Number of new businesses established as a result of the call
	Increased level of competences among the trainees

	Number of medical staff, teachers and social welfare professionals participating in the implementation of these operations
	No. of organisations dealing with vulnerable groups with increased competences
	Number of training courses certified
	Number of medical staff, teachers and social welfare professionals participating in the implementation of these operations
	Number of innovative approaches, methods and processes put in practice through actions
	Number of participants using infrastructure/services across the border
	Number of persons from vulnerable groups with access to better services (disaggregated by type of vulnerable group)
	Number of new solutions (services, tools, programmes) developed for fostering social and cultural inclusion
	Number of existing health and social services and their accessibility improved
OUTPUT INDICATORS	Number of organisations directly involved in the implementation of this type of projects (disaggregated by type of organisation)
	Number of inter-sectoral (local authorities-CSOs-private sector-public agencies-research and educational institutions) partnerships implementing this type of projects
	Number of information/promotion campaigns implemented
	Number of information/promotion events organised
	Number of participants at information/promotion events
	Number of promotion materials produced and distributed/broadcasted
	Number of people reached by information/promotion campaigns
	Number of capacity building events organised
	Number of participants at capacity building events organised (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Number of training curricula developed
	Number of studies developed
	Number of digital platforms (information systems) developed
	Number of websites operational
	Number of sets of equipment purchased and made available to target groups
	Number of cross-border networks/partnerships formed
	Number of networks and partnerships amongst actors for setting new services and/or programmes

	Number of men and women from disadvantaged groups included in those new programmes and services (to be disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Number of organisations participating at cross-border networks/partnerships formed (disaggregated by type of organisation)
	Number of cross-border cooperation agreements signed
	Number of plans developed
	Number of clusters formed
	Number of new services developed
	Number of facilities enhanced
	Number of manuals, guidelines, handbooks developed
	Number of study visits organised
	Number of participants at study visits (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Number of innovative approaches, methods and processes designed in promoting social and cultural inclusion across border
	Number of events organised for the empowerment of socially vulnerable groups (disaggregated by type of event)
	Number of health care facilities in rural areas enhanced
	Number of programmes promoting healthy lifestyle and prevention activities developed
	Number of social support schemes newly developed or upgraded
	Number of local actors in the field of social inclusion mapped, including their expertise and resources
	Number of local actors that exchange their experience in the field of social inclusion
	Number of fairs visited

Programme specific objective 2.1: To mobilise natural and cultural resources for the joint development of sustainable tourism in the programme area

IMPACT INDICATORS	Number of direct beneficiaries involved (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Number of new jobs resulting from programme activities (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Number of businesses still active after two years of their establishment

	Number of new services/products/offers available in the market one year after project ends
	Percentage of target groups of self-employment initiatives establishing new business initiatives in tourism and hospitality
	Percentage of returning visitors
	Percentage of increase in the amount of financial income from tourism attractions
	Percentage of increase in the number of hotel bookings
	Percentage of increase in the length of hotel bookings
	Number of new profiles officially introduced in schools for hotels and catering
	Increase in the number of visitors to the cross-border area
	Average length of tourist stay increased (overnights)
	Percentage of increase in the number of registered SMEs with a tourism related function (tourist guide, hotel, restaurant, bar, taxi driver)
	Percentage of increase in the number of hotels and restaurants with internationally recognised certificates
	Percentage of increase in the number of clients in outdoors active tourism services and products
	Percentage of stakeholders involved in activities
	Number of new jobs created by the businesses which received assistance from the scheme (including self-employment initiatives)
	Percentage of students and unemployed who have finished a VET course finding a job within one year after graduation
	Percentage of unemployed who went through an internship hired by the host tourism enterprises
	Number of tourism enterprises accepting a continuing internship programme
	Percentage of increase in the number of students deciding to go for tourism-related careers after finishing high school
	Number of new creative enterprises run by young people or women
OUTCOME INDICATORS	Number of organisations with increased capacities
	Number of users of digital platforms
	Number of plans implemented
	Number of new services commercialized
	Level of satisfaction of users/clients with new services
	Level of satisfaction of trainees with new training courses

Number of new businesses established as a result of the call (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
Increased level of competences among the trainees
Number of new offers commercialised
Number of new ideas commercialised
Number of training courses certified
Number of new products commercialised
Number of new sites commercialised
Number of historical, cultural and natural sites and buildings newly open to public visits
Percentage of tourism offers generated by the CBC initiatives adopted by tourist operators active in the area
Number of qualified tourism workers available in the labour market
Number of new destinations integrated in the tourism offer
Number of new or improved tourism trails or routes
Length of new or improved tourism trails or routes
Number of tourists using new/improved products/services/offers/ideas
Number of visitors (men and women) to natural and cultural sites supported by the programme
Number of existing tourist providers with improved competences
Number of hotels with increased standards
Number of students from the eligible areas participating in supported VET programmes related to tourism
Percentage of increase in the number of students deciding to go for tourism-related careers after finishing high school (disaggregated by gender)
Percentage of tourism operators active in the area that adopted touristic offers generated by the CBC initiatives
Number of people with increased capacities for the development of complementary services valorising natural and cultural potentials
Number of people belonging to specific groups using new niche offers developed (disaggregated by type of vulnerable group)
Number of newly included subjects (providers of tourism services) in systems for gathering statistical data related to tourism
Number of training curricula matching the needs of the labour market demand in the tourism sector implemented in (vocational) education institutions

	Number of students and unemployed who have finished a VET course in tourism services and products (disaggregated by gender)
	Number of unemployed who went through an internship in host tourism enterprises (disaggregated by gender)
OUTPUT INDICATORS	Number of organisations directly involved in the implementation of this type of projects (to be disaggregated by type of organisation)
	Number of inter-sectoral (local authorities-CSOs-private sector-public agencies-research and educational institutions) partnerships implementing this type of projects
	Number of information/promotion campaigns implemented
	Number of information/promotion events organised
	Number of participants at information/promotion events
	Number of promotion materials produced and distributed/broadcasted
	Number of people reached by information/promotion campaigns
	Number of capacity building events organised
	Number of participants at capacity building events organised (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Number of training curricula developed
	Number of studies developed
	Number of digital platforms (information systems) developed
	Number of websites operational
	Number of sets of equipment purchased and made available to target groups
	Number of cross-border networks/partnerships formed
	Number of organisations participating at cross-border networks/partnerships formed (disaggregated by type of organisation)
	Number of cross-border cooperation agreements signed
	Number of plans developed
	Number of clusters formed
	Number of new services developed
	Number of facilities enhanced
	Number of manuals, guidelines, handbooks developed
Number of study visits organised	
Number of participants at study visits (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)	

Number of new joint tourism offers developed/introduced in the programme area
Number of new/improved sites developed
Number of new/improved products developed
Number of new/improved ideas developed
Number of enhanced touristic sites
Number of tourism providers benefiting from trainings and mentorship
Number of organisations providing specific services (e.g. mountain rescuing, guiding services) included in capacity building activities
Number of participants in training and capacity building schemes related to the management and provision of tourism services and products (disaggregated by gender)
Number of participants in training and capacity building schemes interested in creating a tourism business or developing a tourism product (disaggregated by gender)
Number of trainees in hospitality industry (disaggregated by gender)
Number of tourism employees who participated in capacity building events for business opportunities in the tourism sector (disaggregated by gender)
Number of unemployed who participated in capacity building events for (self-)employment in the tourism sector (disaggregated by gender)
Number of participants of capacity building events for the development of complementary services valorising natural and cultural potentials (disaggregated by gender)
Number of touristic maps and integrated touristic offers introduced for the areas with tourism potential on both sides of the border
Number of cultural heritage sites improved
Number of cultural heritage places without or with poor previous touristic activity, requesting support
Number of territorial management plans for tourism development created
Number of fairs visited
Number of participants at fairs visited (disaggregated by gender)
Number of participants in visibility and communication events organised in the programme area to promote the new tourism products and services developed
Number of kms of new or rehabilitated biking or hiking trails
Increase in the number of mountain lodges
Number of professional and comprehensive hospitality programmes prepared
Number of secondary professional schools for hotels and catering included in programmes aiming to introducing new professional profiles of professionals in tourism

	Number of innovative niche offers focusing on specific target groups (persons with disabilities, youth, elderly) developed (to be disaggregated by type of vulnerable group)
	Number of systems developed for collecting and monitoring of tourist statistics developed
	Number of hotels included in activities aiming to assurance of standards of international quality
	Number of beneficiaries targeted by self-employment initiatives in tourism (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Knowledge base established (mapping of resources and potentials, common strategic development concepts) due to, for instance, studies, databases or other
	Number of men and women participating to training and capacity building for sustainable tourist product development
	Number of small scale investments in tourist infrastructure

Programme specific objective 2.2: To foster the development of joint risk management systems for natural and cultural sites, as well as human settlements, including disaster or emergency preparedness plans

IMPACT INDICATORS	Number of direct beneficiaries involved (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Number of new jobs created in relation to prevention or management of disasters (including self-employment initiatives) (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Number of businesses still active after two years of their establishment
	Number of new services available in the market one year after project ends
	Number of strategies and action plans adopted on prevention and mitigation of manmade hazards and natural disasters
	Number of cross-border teams established and empowered to deal with emergency situations
	Percentage of decrease in response time of the emergency services confronted with a crisis caused by manmade hazards and natural disasters
	Percentage of population benefitting from emergency preparedness and risk prevention measures
	Percentage of the population in the eligible area has been reached by an information campaign
OUTCOME INDICATORS	Number of organisations with increased capacities
	Number of users of digital platforms

	Number of plans implemented
	Number of new services commercialized
	Level of satisfaction of users/clients with new services
	Level of satisfaction of trainees with new training courses
	Number of new businesses established as a result of the call (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Increased level of competences among the trainees
	Number of local communities being beneficiaries of capacity building activities on prevention and mitigation of manmade hazards and natural disasters
	Population encompassed by the awareness campaigns for prevention and mitigation of manmade hazards and natural disasters
	Number of training courses certified
	Number of new or upgraded planning, action, information, coordination and notification systems to prevent and mitigate the consequence of manmade hazards and natural disasters at local and central level
	Number of new special departments created at local level for fighting against the consequences of manmade hazards and natural disasters
	Number of emergency services from both sides of the border with increased capacities through joint initiatives
	Area covered by joint risk measures / management plans for prevention of risks and man-made hazards (ha)
	No of people with increased competences related to emergency preparedness and risk management and adaptation action (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
	Number of joint risk management measures included in the routine of relevant bodies in the cross-border area
	Number of departments within the public administration equipped for improved cross-border management of disasters and dealing with climate change
	Length of roads protected from risks and man-made hazards (km)
	Population benefitting from emergency preparedness and risk prevention measures supported by the programme
	Percentage of areas/ sites at risk of soil contamination covered by joint harmonised plans/studies
	Level of cooperation between actors in the field of risk management and emergency preparedness increased
OUTPUT INDICATORS	Number of organisations directly involved in the implementation of this type of projects (disaggregated by type of organisation)

Number of inter-sectoral (local authorities-CSOs-private sector-public agencies-research and educational institutions) partnerships implementing this type of projects
Number of information/promotion campaigns implemented
Number of local information campaigns for local population in the border area
Number of information/promotion events organised
Number of participants at information/promotion events
Number of promotion materials produced and distributed/broadcasted
Number of people reached by information/promotion campaigns
Number of capacity building events organised
Number of participants at capacity building events organised (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
Number of staff local and regional authorities participating in in joint cross-border capacity building activities (disaggregated by gender)
Number of training curricula developed
Number of studies developed
Number of digital platforms (information systems) developed
Number of websites operational
Number of sets of equipment purchased and made available to target groups
Number of cross-border networks/partnerships formed
Number of organisations participating at cross-border networks/partnerships formed (disaggregated by type of organisation)
Number of cross-border cooperation agreements signed
Number of plans developed
Number of joint risk management plans developed and operationalised
Number of clusters formed
Number of new services developed
Number of facilities enhanced
Number of manuals, guidelines, handbooks developed
Number of study visits organised
Number of participants at study visits (disaggregated by gender and type of vulnerable group)
Number of awareness raising campaigns to prevent or mitigate the consequences of natural catastrophes

	Number of households/farms and other organisations benefitting from the upgraded infrastructure
	Number of disaster management systems developed based on the type of disaster
	Number of flood and wildfire protection facilities equipped
	Number of joint risk management measures agreed
	Number of joint risk management measures developed
	Number of joint emergency centres established
	Number of small scale investments realised
	Number of priority locations/areas of natural and cultural heritage and related hazard risks mapped
	Number of protocols for joint interventions in border areas established

The contracting authority will discuss with the would-be beneficiaries the **indicators** included in their application form and eventually agree upon their revision prior to the contract signature. This is meant to improve the quality of the project indicators to capture the outcomes at the level of overall objective, specific objective(s) and results⁶.

Applicants are advised that according to the provisions of the Article 4.3 of the special conditions of the grant contract they will quarterly have to report on the achievement of indicators to the JTS of the programme. These reports will be submitted at regular intervals on 31 March, 30 June, 30 September and 31 December every year and then upon the submission of the final report. The JTS of the programme will provide the grant beneficiaries with the Excel table they will use for this purpose.

Baseline data surveys: All applicants will have to devote some time and resources while preparing their application to collect statistics from relevant bodies or conduct surveys by their own in order to determine the baseline data of their indicators. Expenses such as these, related to the preparation of the application, are ineligible. However, during the period of implementation of the action, the expertise costs associated to the launch of surveys (particularly recommendable for qualitative indicators) and the collection and analysis of statistics to refine or amend the baseline data of the action indicators may be eligible. The contracting authority strongly recommends that the applicants envisage an amount in the budget for this purpose.

⁶ This should be carefully treated as the general rule is that **any alteration to the successful applicant's proposal, or negotiation of it, is prohibited.**

As stated in the PRAG (Section 6.5.10.2. Contract preparation and signature), "the contracting authority may decide that other clarifications or minor corrections may be made to the description of the action or to the budget in so far as they do not call into question the grant award decision, do not conflict with equal treatment of applicants, and:

- relate to matters clearly identified by the evaluation committee; or
- aim at taking into consideration changes which have occurred since the date of receipt of the proposal.

Any other alteration to the successful applicant's proposal, or negotiation of it, is prohibited".

Therefore in order to make it possible there should be a specific prior decision of the CA which defines the procedure and the change of indicators. This decision must not modify the budget and the overall and specific objectives and results of the project proposal.

Location:

Actions must have as final beneficiaries the population of the programme area. They must take place in one or more of the following territorial units:

1. For Serbia:

- Jablanica district: City of Leskovac and municipalities of Bojnik, Lebane, Medveđa, Vlasotince and Crna Trava;
- Pčinja district: City of Vranje with two city municipalities: Vranje and Vranjska Banja, and municipalities of Vladičin Han, Surdulica, Bosilegrad, Trgovište, Bujanovac and Preševo.

2. For North Macedonia:

- North – East region: municipalities of Kratovo, Lipkovo, Kumanovo, Staro Nagoričane, Rankovce and Kriva Palanka;
- Skopje region: municipalities of Aračinovo, Čučer Sandevo, Ilinden, Petrovec, Sopište, Studeničani, Zelenikovo, and municipalities of Butel, Gjorče Petrov and Saraj of the City of Skopje.

Types of action

Actions selected under this cross-border cooperation programme shall deliver clear cross-border impacts and benefits, that is, they must:

- take place in the specific programme area of Serbia and North Macedonia
- have cross-border impacts and benefits in parts of the programme area of Serbia and North Macedonia;
- foresee cooperation of the cross-border applicant and co-applicant(s) in both:
 - joint development: applicant and co-applicant(s) cooperate in designing the action, filling in a joint application form and drawing up their respective budget;
 - joint implementation: grant beneficiaries coordinate, in the frame of the operation, their activities across the border, and carry out most of the project activities together and not as independent, unrelated, mechanically reproduced and country-bound initiatives;
- foresee cooperation of the cross-border applicant and co-applicant(s) in either:
 - joint staffing: staff on both sides of the border act as one project team (e.g. some staffers carry out their duties for all entities in the partnership: procurement, financial management, overall coordination, training planning, etc.); or
 - joint financing: activities are financed by the applicant's and co-applicant(s)'s own budget;
 - or both joint staffing and financing.

Briefly, following the joint development of an action by at least two cross-border partners, **full cross-border cooperation would mean the joint implementation and financing of activities by the partners resulting in the intensification of neighborly relations, sustainable partnerships for socio-economic development and/or the removal of obstacles to this development.**

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 or research;
- actions aimed at the upgrading of infrastructure and equipment in privately owned facilities;
- preparatory studies or preparation of preliminary design for works to be carried out within the project;
- actions without a real cross-border impact;
- actions linked to political parties;
- actions including commercial and profit-making activities⁷;
- actions which fall within the general activities of competent state institutions or state administration services, including local government;
- actions confined to charitable donations;
- actions covered and financed by other EU funded programmes.

Types of activity

Indicative types of activities which may be financed under this call for proposals are given below. The following list is not exhaustive and appropriate innovative activities that are not mentioned below may also be considered for financing when they can clearly contribute to the achievement of the call's specific objectives and results. By way of illustration applications could contain a range of the following activities in relation to the programme's results targeted in the call:

R.1.1.1 Employability of the working age population in the cross-border area raised

Skills and knowledge of the unemployed, students or inactive population included in the programme to engage in perspective sectors are raised. Acquired practical work experience through hands-on training or on-the-job training increases the chances to successfully approach potential employers. Inactive working age population, in particular in rural areas, is able to identify and further develop traditional knowledge and skills and generate additional income. Students and young people from the border area shall be supported in developing their own talents and entrepreneurial ideas to secure their own jobs.

R.1.1.2 Organisational capacities to activate cross-border employment potentials strengthened:

Cross-border cooperation between various actors (business, education, employment services, local self-governments, CSOs, etc.) is established. These actors join resources and knowledge to improve the existing cooperation models, programmes and services or create new ones supporting re-skilling and/or up skilling of the unemployed according to sector specific needs, enabling the acquisition of practical on-the-job experience in SMEs and other organisations, providing start-up support, or developing pilot employment initiatives based on sustainable use of local resources and market needs. These models, programmes and services would

⁷ In case the project generates revenue, it shall be used to finance the operation, together with the other sources of funding. Revenue of an operation means cash in-flows directly paid by users for the goods and services provided by the operation, such as charges borne directly by users for the use of infrastructure, sale or rent of land or buildings, or payment for services incurred during the period of implementation of the operation.

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enhance the knowledge about the cross-border labour market mobility and would open new opportunities for expansion.

Indicative list of activities (the list is non-exhaustive):

- Mapping of actors, their expertise, capacities and exchange of experience, identification of cooperation interest
- Activities to explore the situation and needs on the cross-border labour market (cross-border mobility, obstacles, potentials for cooperation)
- Development of tools for exchange of data on cross-border labour market (e.g. cross-border job-search platforms, access to information about tax, health, social insurance, etc.)
- Development of targeted cross-border cooperation models or pilot employment projects in perspective sectors linking businesses, public sector and persons on the labour market, focusing on the unemployed and inactive working age population (e.g. building local value chains, local food processing activities, organic production and processing, circular economy, social services, local tourism services, etc.)
- Implementation of programmes offering skills improvement for the unemployed in accordance with identified labour market needs in specific sectors (focusing on of practical work experience, re-skilling or up-skilling) and linked to employment initiatives
- Activities aiming at promotion of social entrepreneurship
- Activities focusing on establishment of new programmes/services/facilities supporting job creation in urban centres (e.g. cross-border start-up initiatives, co-working facilities, talent development programmes, mentoring programmes, support to SMEs to work with students/unemployed)
- Small investment in equipment and infrastructure to support the implementation of programmes and services
- Capacity building activities for providers of new employment programmes/initiatives.

Note: Developed solutions should go beyond existing practices and measures or these shall be significantly upgraded. Training activities should be linked with concrete employment initiatives and not to be implemented as stand-alone actions.

R 1.2.1 Capacities for social and cultural inclusion of disadvantaged groups improved:

The ultimate change is in increased possibilities for people at risk of exclusion to be empowered and actively involved in programmes and services supported by the programme. Knowledge base on the situation, actors and good practices in the programme area shall be established. Strengthened cooperation of different actors across the border to jointly address challenges of social and cultural exclusion of disadvantaged groups provides the basis for long term cooperation. New solutions shall be tested and implemented.

Indicative list of activities (the list is non-exhaustive):

- Mapping of actors, their expertise and resources, exchange of experience and identification of cross-border cooperation interest
- Activities promoting social innovation related to social and cultural inclusion – demonstration projects focusing on the joint development of new solutions (services, tools, programmes) improving the wellbeing and active participation of the various groups at a disadvantage in society (elderly, women, young in peripheral areas; victims of domestic violence, victims of bullying, people with mental health

problems, people with disabilities, and others) - (e.g. peer to peer support, support in advancing talents and employability, involvement in local employment initiatives, volunteering, etc.)

- Activities aiming at improvement of existing health and social services and their accessibility
- Awareness raising and empowerment target groups affected by health and social inequalities
- Activities supporting the cooperation between local self-governments, CSOs and other actors to increase capacities for integration and inclusion of migrants
- Activities supporting cross cultural cooperation among different national and ethnic minorities (e.g. social and cultural inclusion initiatives, community cooperation supporting the learning and exchanges regarding traditions and cultural heritage, youth cooperation and exchanges)
- Small scale investments into equipment or renovation of facilities for provision of services to the target groups of users.

Note: Developed solutions should go beyond existing practices and measures or these shall be significantly upgraded. Training activities should be linked with concrete employment initiatives and not to be implemented as stand-alone actions.

R 2.1.1: Development of sustainable CB tourist products and destinations initiated

The basis is provided in established contacts and cooperation between relevant actors in the field of sustainable tourism. Integrated knowledge (nature and cultural values, intangible heritage, traditions, people resources, etc.) is used for the elaboration of common strategic development concepts. Knowledge and skills of tourism actors for development of sustainable cross-border tourism products on the basis of active heritage preservation and cooperation are raised. Local population inspired and supported in mobilising their own talents and resources through tourism.

R 2.1.2: Quality and visibility of tourist offers improved:

A gradual valorisation of natural and cultural assets through tourism products and an increased number of visits to the area are expected. Natural and cultural sites/products will be enhanced using active heritage preservation concepts and the development of new interpretative contents to raise the quality of visitors' experience. Joint communication materials, channels and actions will help increase the visibility of the programme area as an undiscovered destination offering genuine experiences.

Indicative list of activities (the list is non-exhaustive):

- Mapping of actors in tourism and tourism related sectors, of main natural and cultural heritage sites, population resources, skills, knowledge, etc.
- Development of common cross-border sustainable tourism concepts based on the mapping of resources and integration of programme area key actors
- Capacity building actions to strengthen competences of local/regional tourist organisations and other actors as part of tourism product development or development of joint cooperation structures (tourism trends and opportunities, standards, services, product innovation, nature conservation and environmental aspects, destination management, involvement of local population in product development, building of local/border area identity, etc.)
- Awareness raising activities for local population, businesses and CSOs to identify, develop and introduce new products and offers. These actions should be integrated in pilot/demonstration projects setting up tourist services and complementary offers (e.g. traditional food, crafts, souvenirs, tourist guiding services, nature and cultural interpretation products, accommodation)

- Small scale investments in tourism infrastructure (e.g. arrangement of natural sites for opening to increased visits considering conservation requirements, equipment for interpretation programmes, enhancement or setting up visitor centres, sign-posting)
- Support activities necessary for operation of new or improved offers (e.g. cleaning of the sites, collection of wastes at sites located in peripheral areas where such services don't exist)
- Establishment of site management where these are not yet in place (e.g. areas of natural values, cultural or historical heritage)
- Activities linking the various tourist providers into joint cooperation structures (e.g. value chains, product based cooperation, and similar)
- Production of communication materials and development of innovative communication channels, including multimedia, social media, setting up info-centres, etc.)
- Promotion actions to increase the visibility of the tourism products.

Note: Training and capacity building activities should be part of the product/ destination development and not a stand-alone action.

R 2.2.1: Capacities for cross-border risk management and intervention increased:

Established knowledge base and common approaches to risk management at natural and cultural sites in the border area provide a basis for further cooperation. Relevant authorities at national, regional and local level will be able to coordinate and intervene across the border in case of emergency events. Awareness of local providers, population and visitors to areas of natural and cultural heritage regarding the risks and prevention measures will be raised.

Indicative list of activities (the list is non-exhaustive):

- Establishing connections between relevant actors across the border
- Mapping of the programme area with regard to priority locations/areas of natural and cultural heritage and related hazard risks
- Joint planning and risk management (collection, management and exchange of data, identification of administrative burdens and operational gaps to cross-border risk management and interventions, establishment of protocols for joint interventions in border areas)
- Activities aiming at increasing preparedness and capacities for joint interventions in the event of natural or man-made disasters (fires, floods, earthquakes, technical or technological hazards) in the areas of cultural or natural heritage or high visitor/tourist flows
- Awareness raising of the population, tourism providers, visitors and tourists on the potential risk, prevention measures and conduct in the event of emergency situations
- Information and communication activities
- Investment in equipment of the intervention units
- Pilot small scale investment in risk prevention measures

Financial support to third parties⁸:

Applicants may not propose financial support to third parties. In other words, sub-granting is not allowed under this call for proposals.

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 2018 Communication and Visibility Requirements for EU External Actions: https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/communication-and-visibility-manual-eu-external-actions_en).

Number of applications and grants per applicants / affiliated entities

The lead applicant may not submit more than 1 application(s) per specific objective under this call for proposals.

The lead applicant may not be awarded more than 1 grant under this call for proposals.⁹

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

A co-applicant/affiliated entity may not be the co-applicant or affiliated entity in more than 2 application(s) under this call for proposals.

A co-applicant/affiliated entity may not be awarded more than 1 grant under this call for proposals.¹⁰

2.1.5. Eligibility of costs: costs that can be included

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

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

- financing not linked to costs of the relevant operations based on:
 - (i) either the fulfilment of conditions set out in sector specific legislation or Commission Decisions; or
 - (ii) the achievement of results measured by reference to the previously set milestones or through performance indicators;
- actual costs incurred by the beneficiaries and affiliated entity(ies)
- one or more simplified cost options.

⁸ These third parties are neither affiliated entity(ies) nor associates nor contractors.

⁹ In a case of multiple proposed project proposals by the same lead applicant, award criteria will be better overall score of the project proposals, regardless of the ranking position on the particular list

¹⁰ In a case where the lead applicants are different and co-applicant is the same, award criteria will be better overall score of the project proposals, regardless of the ranking position on the particular list

Simplified cost options may take the form of:

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

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

1. "output or result based SCOs": this category includes costs linked to outputs, results, activities, deliverables in the framework of a specific project (for example the determination of a lump sum for the organization of a conference, or for the realisation of a determined output/activity). Where possible and appropriate, lump sums, unit costs or flat rates shall be determined in such a way to allow their payment upon achievement of concrete outputs and/or results. This type of SCO can be proposed by the Beneficiary (no threshold is applicable) at proposal's stage. In case the evaluation committee and the contracting authority are not satisfied with the quality of the justification provided reimbursement on the basis of actually incurred costs is always possible.
2. "Other/recurrent SCOs". This second category entails simplified cost options embedded in the accounting practices of the beneficiary, for which an ex-ante assessment is deemed necessary, considering the need of a consistent application of the conditions required. Examples are: an additional percentage on actual salaries to cover remuneration-related costs or the use of an allocation method to apportion costs of a project office foreseen in the Description of the Action. In order the use of systemic/recurrent SCOs, the beneficiary's accounting practices need to have been positively assessed by an audit firm based on standard ToRs provided by the Commission. To obtain reimbursement of this category of SCOs, the beneficiary shall make reference to the previously obtained ex-ante assessment in the budget justification sheet (annex e3c).

The amounts or rates have to be based on estimates using objective data such as statistical data or any other objective means or with reference to certified or auditable historical data of the applicants or the affiliated entity(-ies). Determining SCO is possible also through 'expert judgement' provided by internally available experts or procured in accordance with the applicable rules. Experts must be either commissioned auditors or chartered accountants, or staff of the Commission but cannot be staff of the beneficiary. The methods used to determine the amounts or rates of unit costs, lump sums or flat-rates must comply with the criteria established in Annex K, and especially ensure that the costs correspond fairly to the actual costs incurred by the beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies), are in line with their accounting practices, no profit is made and the costs are not already covered by other sources of funding (no double funding). Refer to Annex K for the details of the procedure to be followed depending on the type and amount of the costs to be declared as SCO.

Applicants proposing this form of reimbursement, must clearly indicate in worksheet no.1 of Annex B, each heading/item of eligible costs concerned by this type of financing, i.e. add the reference in capital letters to 'UNIT COST' (per month/flight etc.), 'LUMPSUM', 'FLAT RATE' in the Unit column (see example in Annex K).

Additionally in Annex B, in the second column of worksheet no.2, 'Justification of the estimated costs' per each of the corresponding budget item or heading applicants must:

- describe the information and methods used to establish the amounts of unit costs, lump sums and/or flat-rates, to which costs they refer, etc. for output or result based SCO

- clearly explain the formulas for calculation of the final eligible amount for output or result based SCO¹¹
- make reference to the previously obtained ex-ante assessment for other/recurrent SCOs.

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

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

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

The grant may take the form of a single lump-sum covering the entire eligible costs of an action or a work programme.

Single lump sums may be determined on the basis of the estimated budget, which should comply with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Compliance with these principles shall be verified ex ante at the time of evaluation of the grant application.

When authorising single lump sums the authorising officer responsible shall comply with the conditions applicable to output or result based SCOs.

When using this form of financing, the description of the action shall include detailed information on the essential conditions triggering the payment, including, where applicable, the achievement of outputs and/or results.

The responsible authorising officer may consider that the usual cost accounting practices of the beneficiary are compliant with the conditions applicable to simplified cost options, if they are accepted by national authorities under comparable funding schemes. In this case the grant beneficiary shall demonstrate that the national authority accepted the cost accounting practices and will have to specify in which context this acceptance is given.

The evaluation committee and the contracting authority will assess if the funding scheme is comparable and in case of positive outcome will consider these practices as if they were ex-ante assessed by an external auditor

¹¹ Examples:

- for staff costs: number of hours or days of work * hourly or daily rate pre-set according to the category of personnel concerned;
- for travel expenses: distance in km * pre-set cost of transport per km; number of days * daily allowance pre-set according to the country;
- for specific costs arising from the organization of an event: number of participants at the event * pre-set total cost per participant etc.

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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 the guidelines).

Salary costs of the personnel of national, regional or local administrations, as well as those of other publicly owned or controlled institutions or enterprises, may be eligible to the extent that they relate to the cost of activities which the relevant public authority would not carry out if the action were not undertaken.

This personnel shall not receive for the engagement in the project activities any other remuneration than their standard, regular salaries in their respective institutions.

The total sum of the salaries of this personnel shall not exceed the amount of co-financing provided by the applicant, co-applicant(s) and affiliated entity(ies).

Prior to the signature of a grant contract, the contracting authority may require from the relevant beneficiaries the appointment of these staffers by their authorised representative in writing (indicating their names, project function and gross salaries).

Potential applicants are also reminded that assessment of the operational capacities will be focused on in-house expertise, which is reflected in assessment grids.

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).

Contributions in kind from third parties in the form of volunteers' work, valued on the basis of unit costs defined and authorised by the contracting authority, shall be presented in the estimated budget, separately from the other eligible costs (i.e. as an accepted costs together with other contributions in kind).

Volunteers' work may comprise up to 50 % of the co-financing. For the purposes of calculating this percentage, contributions in kind and other co-financing shall be based on estimates provided by the applicant.

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

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

According to the provisions of Article 43(2) of Commission implementing regulation (EU) No 447/2014 of 2 May 2014 and those of Article 6 of the General Conditions of the Financing Agreements for the yearly allocations of the programme, the following expenditures **are not eligible**¹² for a contribution from IPA II:

- (a) value added tax (VAT) except when it is non-recoverable under national VAT legislation;
- (b) the decommissioning and the construction of nuclear power stations;
- (c) investment to achieve the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from activities falling under Annex I to Directive 2003/87/EC of the European Parliament and Council of 13 October 2003;
- (d) the manufacturing, processing and marketing of tobacco and tobacco products;
- (e) undertakings in difficulties as defined under Union State aid rules;
- (f) investment in airport infrastructure unless related to environmental protection or accompanied by investment necessary to mitigate or reduce its negative environmental impact;
- (g) debts and debt service charges (interest on debt);
- (h) provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- (i) cost declared by the beneficiaries and financed by another action or work programme receiving a Union grant;
- (j) currency exchange losses;
- (k) credits to third parties;
- (l) fines, financial penalties and expenses of litigation;
- (m) the purchase of land and existing buildings. However, by way of derogation, the purchase of land not built on and land built on in the amount up to 10 % of the total eligible expenditure for the operation concerned shall be eligible for funding. For derelict sites and for those formerly in industrial use which comprise buildings, this limit shall be increased to 15 %. In exceptional and duly justified cases, this limit may be raised above the respective preceding percentages for operations concerning environmental conservation.

In addition, the following costs **are not eligible either**:

- (n) consultant fees between the beneficiaries for services or work carried out within the project;
- (o) remuneration of any kind for staff of any of the beneficiaries being hired as external experts or freelance consultants;
- (p) taxes, customs and import duties and levies and/or charges having equivalent effect¹³.

¹² Depending on the amendments of the relevant regulations, the contracting authority could extend the list of ineligible costs.

¹³ Please see Article 28(1) of the IPA II framework agreement

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. Concept note content

Applications must be submitted in accordance with the concept note instructions in the grant application form annexed to these guidelines (Annex A).

Applicants must apply in English.

Please note that:

1. In the concept note, lead applicants must only provide an estimate of the requested EU contribution as well as an indicative percentage of that contribution in relation to the eligible costs of the action. A detailed budget is to be submitted only by the lead applicants invited to submit a full application in the second phase.
2. The elements outlined in the concept note may not be modified in the full application. The EU contribution may not vary from the initial estimate by more than 20%. Lead applicants are free to adapt the percentage of co-financing required within the minimum and maximum amount and percentages of co-financing, as laid down in these guidelines in Section 1.3. The lead applicant may replace a co-applicant or an affiliated entity only in duly justified cases (e.g. bankruptcy of initial co-applicant or affiliated entity). In this case the new co-applicant/affiliated entity must be of a similar nature as the initial one. The lead applicant may adjust the duration of the action if unforeseen circumstances outside the scope of the applicants have taken place following the submission of the concept note and require such adaptation (risk of action not being carried out). In such cases the duration must remain within the limits imposed by the guidelines for applicants. An explanation/justification of the relevant replacement/adjustment shall be included in an accompanying letter or email.

Own contributions by the applicants can be replaced by other donors' contributions at any time.

3. Only the concept note form will be evaluated. It is therefore of utmost importance that this document contains ALL relevant information concerning the action. No additional annexes should be sent.

Any error or major discrepancy related to the concept note instructions may lead to the rejection of the concept note.

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

Hand-written concept notes will not be accepted.

2.2.2. Where and how to send concept notes

The concept note together with its relating checklist¹⁴ and declaration by the lead applicant (to be found in **Part A Sections 2 and 3** of the grant application form) must be submitted in **one original and three (3) copies** in A4 size, each bound.

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

¹⁴ Please note that the concept note / full application should not be rejected only because the lead applicant did not submit the checklist or the information in the checklist is not correct.

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

The envelope must bear the **reference number and the title of the call for proposals**, together with the number and title of the specific objective of the call under which the concept note is submitted, the full name and address of the lead applicant, and the words 'Not to be opened before the opening session' and '*Ne otvarati pre početka zvaničnog sastanka za otvaranje predloga projekata*'.

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

Postal address

Ministry of Finance
Department for Contracting and Financing of EU Funded Programmes (CFCU)
Division for Tender Evaluation and Contracting
3-5, Sremska Str, VII floor/office 701,
11000 Belgrade, Republic of Serbia

Address for hand delivery

Ministry of Finance
Department for Contracting and Financing of EU Funded Programmes (CFCU)
Division for Tender Evaluation and Contracting
3-5, Sremska Str, VII floor/office 701,
11000 Belgrade, Republic of Serbia

Concept notes 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 concept note is complete using the checklist for concept note (Part A Section 2 of the grant application form). Incomplete concept notes may be rejected.

2.2.3. Deadline for submission of concept notes

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

In the first case, the concept note must be sent before the deadline for submission, as evidenced by the postmark or deposit slip¹⁵, but in the second case it is the acknowledgment of receipt given at the time of the delivery of the concept note which will serve as proof.

The deadline for the submission of concept notes is 27 September 2019 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 27 September 2019, before 15:00 hours as evidenced by the signed and dated receipt. Any concept note submitted after the deadline will be rejected.

The contracting authority may, for reasons of administrative efficiency, reject any concept note 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 concept note evaluation, if accepting concept notes that were submitted on time but arrived late would considerably delay the evaluation procedure (for instance when concept notes are received after the evaluation committee has finished its work and evaluating them would imply re-calling the evaluation committee) or jeopardise decisions already taken and notified (see indicative calendar under Section 2.5.2).

¹⁵ It is recommended to use registered mail in case the postmark would not be readable.

2.2.4. Further information about concept notes

Information sessions on this call for proposals will be held in Serbia and North Macedonia. The dates, time and location of these sessions will be announced within 15 days of the publication of this call for proposals, on:

- The programme website <http://www.eu.rs-mk.org>
- The website of the contracting authority <http://www.cfcu.gov.rs>
- The website of DG International Cooperation and Development <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome>

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

E-mail address: cfcu.questions@mfin.gov.rs

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

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

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

No individual replies will be given to questions. All questions and answers as well as other important notices to applicants during the course of the evaluation procedure will be published on the website of DG International Cooperation and Development <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome> and the website of the contracting authority <http://www.cfcu.gov.rs> and that of the programme <http://www.eu.rs-mk.org>, as the need arises. It is therefore advisable to consult the abovementioned websites regularly in order to be informed of the questions and answers published.

2.2.5. Full applications

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

The elements outlined in the concept note cannot be modified by the lead applicant in the full application. The EU contribution may not vary from the initial estimate by more than 20 %, although lead applicants are free to adapt the percentage of co-financing required within the minimum and maximum amount and percentages of co-financing, as laid down in these guidelines under Section 1.3. The lead applicant may replace a co-applicant or an affiliated entity only in duly justified cases (e.g. bankruptcy of initial co-applicant or affiliated entity). In this case the new co-applicant/affiliated entity must be of a similar nature as the initial one. The lead applicant may adjust the duration of the action if unforeseen circumstances outside the scope of the applicants have taken place following the submission of the concept note and require such adaptation (risk of action not being carried out). In such cases the duration must remain within the limits imposed by the guidelines for applicants. An explanation/justification of the relevant replacement/adjustment shall be included in an accompanying letter or email.

Lead applicants must submit their full applications in the same language as their concept notes.

Please complete the full application form carefully and as clearly as possible so that it can be assessed properly.

Any error related to the points listed in the checklist (Part B, Section 7 of the grant application form) or any major inconsistency in the full application (e.g. if the amounts in the budget worksheets are inconsistent) may lead to the rejection of the application.

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

Hand-written applications will not be accepted.

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

With the full application the lead applicant also has to submit completed organisation data forms (Annex F) for the lead applicant, each co-applicant and each affiliated entity.

No additional annexes should be sent.

2.2.6. Where and how to send full applications

Full applications (i.e. the full application form, the budget, the logical framework and the declaration by the lead applicant) must be submitted in a sealed envelope by registered mail, private courier service or by hand-delivery (a signed and dated certificate of receipt will be given to the deliverer) to the address below:

Postal address

Ministry of Finance
Department for Contracting and Financing of EU Funded Programmes (CFCU)
Division for Tender Evaluation and Contracting
3-5, Sremska Str, VII floor/office 701,
11000 Belgrade, Republic of Serbia

Address for hand delivery

Ministry of Finance
Department for Contracting and Financing of EU Funded Programmes (CFCU)
Division for Tender Evaluation and Contracting
3-5, Sremska Str, VII floor/office 701,
11000 Belgrade, Republic of Serbia

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

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

The checklist (Section 7 of Part B of the grant application form) and the declaration by the lead applicant (Section 8 of Part B of the grant application form) must be stapled separately and enclosed in the envelope.

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

The envelope must bear the **reference number and the title of the call for proposals**, together with the number and title of the specific objective of the call, the full name and address of the lead applicant, and the words 'Not to be opened before the opening session' and '*Ne otvarati pre početka zvaničnog sastanka za otvaranje predloga projekata*'.

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

2.2.7. Deadline for submission of full applications

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

In the first case, the full application must be sent before the deadline for submission, as evidenced by the postmark or deposit slip. In the case of hand-deliveries, it is the acknowledgment of signed and dated receipt given at the time of the delivery of the full application which will serve as proof.

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

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 full application evaluation, if accepting applications that were submitted on time but arrived late would considerably delay the award procedure (for instance when full applications are received after the evaluation committee has finished its works and evaluating them would imply re-calling the evaluation committee) or jeopardise decisions already taken and notified (see indicative calendar under Section 2.5.2).

2.2.8. Further information about full applications

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

E-mail address: cfcu.questions@mfin.gov.rs

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 full applications.

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

No individual replies will be given to questions. All questions and answers as well as other important notices to applicants during the course of the evaluation procedure, will be published on the website of DG International Cooperation and Development: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome> and the website of the contracting authority <http://www.cfcu.gov.rs> and that of the programme <http://www.eu.rs-mk.org>, 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 concept note satisfies all the criteria specified in the checklist in Section 2 of Part A of the grant application form. This includes also an assessment of the eligibility of the action. If any of the requested information is missing or is incorrect, the application may be rejected on that **sole** basis and the application will not be evaluated further.

The concept notes that pass this check will be evaluated on the relevance and design of the proposed action.

The concept notes will receive an overall score out of 50 using the breakdown in the evaluation grid below. The evaluation will also check on compliance with the instructions on how to complete the concept note, which can be found in Part A of the grant application form.

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

Scores

1. Relevance of the action	Sub-score	20
1.1 How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the call for 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 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)?	5	
2. Design of the action	Sub-score	30
2.1 How coherent is the overall design of the action? Does the proposal indicate the expected results to be achieved by the action? Does the intervention logic explain the rationale to achieve the expected results?	5x2**	
2.2 Does the design reflect a robust analysis of the problems involved, and the capacities of the relevant stakeholders?	5	
2.3 Does the design take into account external factors (risks and assumptions)?	5	
2.4 Are the activities feasible and consistent in relation to the expected results (including timeframe)? Are results (output, outcome and impact) realistic?	5	
2.5 To which extent does the proposal integrate relevant cross-cutting elements such as environmental/climate change issues, promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities, needs of disabled people, rights of minorities and rights of indigenous peoples, youth, combating HIV/AIDS (if there is a strong prevalence in the target country/region)?	5	

TOTAL SCORE 50

* Note: A score of 5 (very good) will only be allocated if the concept note clearly demonstrates how it specifically addresses one of the specific objectives of the call as indicated in Section 1.2 (Objectives of the programme) of these guidelines.

****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 per thematic priority, to the number of concept notes whose total aggregate amount of requested contributions is equal to 300% 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 thematic priority, 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 pre-selected lead applicants will subsequently be invited to submit full applications.



(2) STEP 2: OPENING & ADMINISTRATIVE CHECKS AND EVALUATION OF THE FULL APPLICATION

Firstly, the following will be assessed:

- If the submission deadline has been met. Otherwise, the application will automatically be rejected.
- 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
1. Financial and operational capacity	20
1.1 Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient in-house <u>experience of project management</u> ?	5
1.2 Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient in-house <u>technical expertise</u> ? (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 <u>management capacity</u> ? (Including staff, equipment and ability to handle the budget for the action)?	5
1.4 Does the lead applicant have <u>stable and sufficient sources of finance</u> ?	5
2. Relevance	20
<i>Score transferred from the Concept Note evaluation</i>	
3. Design of the action	15
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
4. Implementation approach	15
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
5. Sustainability of the action	15

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?: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financially (<i>e.g. financing of follow-up activities, sources of revenue for covering all future operating and maintenance costs</i>) - Institutionally (<i>will structures allow the results of the action to be sustained at the end of the action? Will there be local 'ownership' of the results of the action?</i>) - At policy level (where applicable) (<i>what will be the structural impact of the action — e.g. improved legislation, codes of conduct, methods</i>) - Environmentally (if applicable) (<i>will the action have a negative/positive environmental impact?</i>) 	5
6. Budget and cost-effectiveness of the action	15
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
Maximum total score	100

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 3.3 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 per thematic priority. The highest scoring applications will be provisionally selected until the available budget for this call for proposals is reached. In addition, a reserve list per thematic priority will be drawn up following the same criteria. These lists 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 and 2.1.2.

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, of the co-applicant(s) and (if any) of their affiliated entity(ies)¹⁶:

1. The statutes or articles of association of the lead applicant, of each co-applicant and (if any) of each affiliated entity¹⁷. 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. 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.
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)¹⁸. A copy of the latest account is neither required from 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 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-applicants) 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 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. **Please bear in mind when an action contains the execution of works, the following supporting documents, submitted along with the full application form, will be necessary:**

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

17 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.

18 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.

- a. Proof of ownership or long term lease (at least for 10 years after the signature of the contract) of the land/assets where the works are to be executed;
- b. Approved/certified detailed work design or otherwise a statement by the relevant national institution(s) confirming that the national legislation(s) do/does not require the design's approval for this type of works;
- c. A positive decision on environmental impact assessment or otherwise a statement from the relevant public authority(ies) that the latter assessment(s) are/is not needed for the specific project activities;
- d. All necessary legal authorisations (e.g.: location and construction permits);
- e. An indicative priced bill of quantities issued not earlier than 2 years prior to the deadline for submission of full applications – calculated in euro.

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 or in the official languages of the country where the action will be implemented, a translation into English language 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 English, 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 English.

If the abovementioned supporting documents (with the exception of those submitted for operations containing the execution of works¹⁹) 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.

¹⁹ Where appropriate, submitted together with the full application form.

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 2.12 of the practical guide.

2.5.2. Indicative timetable

	DATE	TIME
1. Information meeting (if any)	Will be published separately	Will be published separately
2. Deadline for requesting any clarifications from the contracting authority	6 September 2019	15:00
3. Last date on which clarifications are issued by the contracting authority	16 September 2019	-
4. Deadline for submission of concept notes	27 September 2019	15:00
5. Information to lead applicants on opening, administrative checks and concept note evaluation (Step 1)	December 2019	-
6. Invitations to submit full applications	December 2019	-
7. Deadline for submission of full applications and, where appropriate, supporting documents for the execution of works	January 2020	-
8. Information to lead applicants on the evaluation of the full applications (Step 2)	April 2020	-
9. Notification of award after eligibility check (Step 3)	June 2020	-
10. Contract signature	July 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> and the websites of the programme <http://www.eu.rs-mk.org> and the contracting authority www.cfcu.gov.rs.

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

Following the decision to award a grant, the beneficiary(ies) will be offered a contract based on the standard grant contract (see Annex G of these guidelines). By signing the application form (Annex A of these guidelines), the applicants agree, if awarded a grant, to accept the contractual conditions of the standard grant contract. Where the coordinator is an organisation whose pillars have been positively assessed, it will sign a contribution agreement based on the contribution agreement template. In this case references to provisions of the standard grant contract and its annexes shall not apply. References in these guidelines to the grant contract shall be understood as references to the relevant provisions of the contribution agreement.

Implementation contracts

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

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

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

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

4. LIST OF ANNEXES

DOCUMENTS TO BE COMPLETED

Annex A: Grant application form (Word format)

Annex B: Budget (Excel format)

Annex C: Logical framework (Word format)

Annex D: Legal entity sheet²⁰

Annex E: Financial identification form

Annex F: Organisation data form

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 assets

Annex H: 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 (as all necessary information is available via the link the publication of the annex is optional)

Annex J: Information on the tax regime applicable to grant contracts signed under the call.

Annex K: Guidelines for simplified cost options.

Useful links:

Project Cycle Management Guidelines

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

The implementation of grant contracts

A Users' Guide

<http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/companion/document.do?nodeNumber=19&locale=en>

Financial Toolkit

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

Please note: The toolkit is not part of the grant contract and has no legal value. It merely provides general guidance and may in some details differ from the signed grant contract. In order to ensure compliance with their contractual obligations beneficiaries should not exclusively rely on the toolkit but always consult their individual contract documents.

* * *

²⁰ Only applicable where the European Commission will make the payments under the contracts to be signed.