



**Contracting Authority:** Central Finance and Contracting Agency (CFCA)

IPA 2011

**Supporting CSOs in Development of Partnerships for Sustainable Use  
of Protected Areas in Croatia, Including Potential NATURA 2000 sites**

Guidelines  
for grant applicants

National Programme for Croatia under IPA – Transition Assistance and  
Institution Building Component for 2011

Reference: EuropeAid/134539/M/ACT/HR

Deadline for submission of Concept note: 05 July 2013

# **NOTICE**

## **Notice**

This is a restricted Call for Proposals. In the first instance, only Concept Notes must be submitted for evaluation. Thereafter, applicants who have been pre-selected will be invited to submit a Full Application Form. 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 Applicant' sent together with the application.

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# 1. SUPPORTING CSOS IN DEVELOPMENT OF PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE USE OF PROTECTED AREAS IN CROATIA, INCLUDING POTENTIAL NATURA 2000 SITES

## 1.1. BACKGROUND

Local associations and other civil society organisations (CSOs) are often the most active stakeholders in nature conservation and often take part in and initiate nature protection and sustainable development projects. The civil society sector is also the most experienced in managing grants and forming sustainable problem-oriented inter-sectoral and cross-sectoral partnerships.

Strategic framework on the civil society development for the period 2012 - 2016 is set in the **National Strategy for the Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development 2012 - 2016**<sup>1</sup>, based on a broad consensus among civil society and government representatives. In the period of Croatia's intense preparations for joining the European Union, the National Strategy gives guidelines for the creation of an enabling environment for civil society development until 2016 in order to further improve the legal, financial and institutional system of support for civil society organizations' activities. CSOs are not only an important part of the social and economic development in Croatia, but also significant stakeholders in the shaping and implementation of European Union policies. There are four priorities defined by the National Strategy – I Institutional framework for the creation of an enabling environment for civil society development, II – Civil society and participatory democracy, III – Strengthening the role of civil society organisations for social and economic development, and IV – Activities and further development of civil society in the international context. Ensuring an active role of the civil society organisations (CSOs) in the process of European integrations and programming of EU funds are important goals defined within priority IV

In November 2008, the Croatian Parliament adopted the new **National Strategy and Action Plan for the Protection of Biological and Landscape Diversity**<sup>2</sup>, which is the fundamental strategic document for nature conservation in the Republic of Croatia, integrating also the EC nature protection directives<sup>3</sup>. This document provides strategic guidelines and actions aimed at institutional strengthening of organisations entrusted with management of conservation areas, proscribing cooperation with civil society organisations in this process.

In terms of transposition and implementation of the EU *acquis*, the **Accession Partnership**<sup>4</sup> puts an emphasis on waste management, water quality, air quality, nature protection and integrated pollution prevention and control. Well-coordinated implementation of a comprehensive plan for putting in place the necessary administrative capacity and required financial resources to implement the environmental *acquis* are in the focus, in order to ensure integration of environmental protection requirements into the definition and implementation of other sectoral policies and promote sustainable development.

The **EC 2010 Progress Report**<sup>5</sup> acknowledges some progress made related to the adoption of implementing legislation on nature impact assessments and the commencement of preparations for drafting a list of marine Natura 2000<sup>6</sup> sites. However, the lack of administrative capacities still remains to

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<sup>1</sup> Available online at: <http://www.uzuvrh.hr/userfiles/file/Nacionalna%20strategija%20FINAL.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Available online at: <http://www.cbd.int/doc/world/hr/hr-nbsap-v2-en.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Directive 2009/147/EC of the European parliament and of the council on the conservation of wild birds; and Council directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora

<sup>4</sup> Accession Partnership, Official Journal of the European Union, Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2008:042:0051:0062:EN:PDF>

<sup>5</sup> Croatia 2010 Progress Report, November 2010, p.59. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key\\_documents/2010/package/hr\\_rapport\\_2010\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2010/package/hr_rapport_2010_en.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> In 2001, the EU set itself the ambitious target of halting the loss of biodiversity in Europe by 2010 through the creation of a Europe-wide ecological network of nature conservation areas – the NATURA 2000 Network. This network is designed to conserve over a thousand rare, threatened and endemic species of wild animals and plants and some 230

be recognized as the main obstacle in the implementation of the *acquis* in the field of nature protection. Still, as one of the key issues to be improved relates to the administrative capacity for implementing and enforcing the *acquis*, especially at the local level. Another important issue recognized refers to the implementation of the horizontal *acquis* (in particular on Environmental Impact Assessment - EIA, and Strategic Environmental Assessment - SEA and access to information and justice in environmental matters). Most importantly, in that context the cooperation with non-governmental organisations active in the field of environment is to be strengthened. According to the **EC 2011 Progress Report**<sup>7</sup>, the implementation of the law on the right to access to information, especially as regards procedures, remains insufficient. The public consultation procedure was improved, but insufficient consideration was given to input from the public. Cooperation with the judiciary will require further strengthening to enable access to justice in environmental matters. Efforts to implement the SEA need to be increased. The Report also states that there has been some progress in the field of nature protection with the adoption of implementing legislation on the establishment of the Mura-Drava regional park. Gaps remain in the administrative capacity for implementing and enforcing the *acquis* in the field of nature protection, especially in the State Institute for Nature Protection and at local level.

The **EC Comprehensive Monitoring Report**<sup>8</sup> recognizes that new rules on access to information are being applied, with the first appeals reaching court. However, general monitoring by the Data Protection Agency, which is in charge of implementing the law, is difficult and the practice of applying the public interest test to classified information needs to be developed, including through legislative changes. In the field of environment, increased efforts are needed to properly implement and enforce legislation. Administrative capacity needs to be strengthened, especially in the fields of climate change, industrial pollution control and risk management, nature protection and chemicals. Also, the quality of environmental impact assessment for projects needs to be significantly improved.

Following the good practice from previous programming years, in autumn 2010, the Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs (GOfCNGO)<sup>9</sup> organised a sectoral analysis with the representatives of CSOs in close partnership with the Council for Civil Society Development. Particular attention has been given to identification of capacities and strategic priorities of Croatian CSOs in the context of the final phase of negotiations and forthcoming EU membership. The analysis provided a vital input into problem areas associated with the role of Croatian CSOs in EU-accession-related reform processes.

With a few notable exceptions, most of the stakeholders located in the nature protected areas<sup>10</sup> are inadequately involved in their management and preservation efforts, and do not efficiently use all the development potentials from their proximity to valuable natural heritage. They often lack the knowledge and capacity needed to include the nature protection considerations and development potential in their

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natural and semi-natural habitats listed in the annexes of the two EU Directives: the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive. The State Institute for Nature Protection has drafted the proposal for Natura 2000 network in Croatia based on analysis of collected data on distribution of Natura 2000 species and habitat types. Potential Natura 2000 sites are available at the interactive map: [www.natura2000.hr](http://www.natura2000.hr).

<sup>7</sup> Croatia 2011 Progress Report, October 2011, p.58. Available at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key\\_documents/2011/package/hr\\_rapport\\_2011\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2011/package/hr_rapport_2011_en.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Main Findings of the Comprehensive Monitoring Report on Croatia's state of preparedness for EU membership, October 2012, p. 10, p.17. Available at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key\\_documents/2012/package/hr\\_rapport\\_2012\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2012/package/hr_rapport_2012_en.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> The GOfCNGO performs expert work in the domain of the Croatian Government with regards to creating conditions for cooperation and partnership with non-governmental, non-profit sector, especially with associations in the Republic of Croatia.

<sup>10</sup> Presently there are 441 nature protected areas in the Republic of Croatia which cover 7.54% of its surface area. The national nature protection legislation defines nine categories of protection which are largely in accordance with internationally recognized IUCN categories. These are (the number of each is indicated in the brackets); Strict Nature Reserve (2), National Park (8), Special Reserve (79), Nature Park (11), Regional Park (1), Natural Monument (100), Protected Landscape (85), Park Forest (385), Monuments of Park Architecture (120).

activities, causing a lack of coordination between nature protection and local and/or regional development initiatives. This results in an inadequate integration of the environmental *acquis* in general, and nature protection issues in particular, in local and regional development practices. This project targets the area to be covered by the potential NATURA 2000 network, including presently designated protected areas.

The proposed project developed in cooperation of the GOfCNGO and the State Institute for Nature Protection, as the central institute dealing with expert tasks of nature conservation in Croatia, will aim at supporting CSOs' projects that contribute to successful execution of EU-accession-related reform processes, meeting the political criteria for EU membership and full implementation of the *acquis*. By applying intra-sectoral and cross-sectoral approach through cooperation, partnership and networking on local levels, the expected results of the project will be enhanced capacities of CSOs involved in the implementation of a number of sustainable development initiatives along with public institutions involved in nature conservation and other local stakeholders. This will serve to promote, in practical terms, a complete inclusion of the EU environmental directives into local development projects and policies through the establishment of lasting collaboration mechanisms between CSOs (primarily those environmentally oriented) and public institutions charged with management of nature conservation areas. The project will promote the creation of synergies and cross-fertilization among partners of different legal statuses (CSOs, units of local and regional self-government, educational and research institutions etc.), thus contributing to the cross-sectoral cooperation and the effectiveness of implementation of public policies in question. An additional value of the project will be in motivating smaller, local CSOs as partners to work with more experienced CSOs in the implementation of projects, which shall induce a spill over effect contributing to the capacity building and sustainability of local, grass-roots initiatives in Croatia. Also, by promoting the creation of partnerships with CSOs at the European level – which foresees both strengthening the existing ones and building new partnerships – the proposed project will promote EU-wide networking activities of Croatian CSOs, thus preparing them for making use of financial opportunities which will be available for them in the post-accession period.

The proposed IPA 2011 project will also aim at fostering structured dialogue in the consultation process in the triangle: Croatian CSOs, Croatian state administration and EU institutions in the framework of the process of shaping, monitoring and evaluating public policies at the national and EU level, with the aim of increasing capacities of the Croatian CSOs for competently fulfilling the role of independent monitoring agents and advocates in the policy fields where successful implementation of reform processes is particularly important in the context of Croatia's accession to the EU.

## **1.2. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME AND PRIORITY ISSUES**

The **global objective** of this Call for Proposals is: to enhance the role of CSOs in the process of achieving consistent and durable application of sustainable use of natural resources in Croatia.

The **specific objective** of this Call for Proposals is: to build capacities of CSOs for the implementation of various activities aimed at improving and integrating nature protection measures in local economic and social development processes through development of sustainable inter- and cross-sectoral partnerships.

The **priorities** of this Call for Proposals are:

1. Building capacities of the CSOs for quality cooperation with the public sector in the context of their engagement in sustainable use of protected areas in Croatia including potential NATURA 2000 sites aimed at sustainable development of local community
2. Increasing of competences of CSOs capacities for quality implementing and monitoring of biodiversity protection and environment protection and sustainable use of protected areas in Croatia, including potential NATURA 2000 sites
3. Developing of cross-sectoral cooperation and partnership aiming at incorporating the idea of nature conservation into socio-economic development policies at the local level
4. Public awareness raising on nature protection as well as sustainable use of nature conservation areas

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

The overall indicative amount made available under this Call for Proposals is € 800.000. The Contracting Authority reserves the right not to award all available funds.

#### Size of grants

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

- minimum amount: € 50.000
- maximum amount: € 150.000

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

- Minimum percentage: 50 % of the total eligible costs of the action.
- Maximum percentage: 90 % of the total eligible costs of the action (see also Section 2.1.4).

The balance (i.e. the difference between the total cost of the action and the amount requested from the Contracting Authority) must be financed from sources other than the European Union budget or the European Development Fund<sup>11</sup>.

## 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 to contract procedures for EU external actions, which is applicable to the present call (available on the Internet at this address: [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/implementation/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/implementation/index_en.htm)).

### 2.1. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

There are three sets of eligibility criteria, relating to:

(1) the actors:

- The **applicant**, i.e. the entity submitting the application form (2.1.1),
- if any, its **co-applicant(s)** (where it is not specified otherwise the applicant and its co-applicant(s) are hereinafter jointly referred as the "applicants") (2.1.1),
- and, if any, **affiliated entity(ies)** to the 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).

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<sup>11</sup> Where a grant is financed by the European Development Fund, any mention of European Union financing must be understood as referring to European Development Fund financing.

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

#### Applicant

- (1) In order to be eligible for a grant, the applicant must:
- be legal persons **and**
  - be non profit making **and**
  - be non-governmental organisations or formal networks of non-governmental organisations of the following legal status: associations<sup>12</sup>, business associations<sup>13</sup>, trade unions<sup>14</sup> and foundations<sup>15</sup>, **and**
  - be established in<sup>16</sup> a Member State of the European Union and a Member State of the European Economic Area, Croatia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, including Kosovo under UNSC Resolution 1244/99 as well as of other countries eligible under Council Regulation (EC) No 1085/2006 of 17th July 2006 establishing an Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) **and**
  - be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action with their co-applicants and affiliated entity(ies), not acting as an intermediary.

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<sup>12</sup> During evaluation process, applicants will be required to prove that they are founded as association according to relevant legal Act of the Country involved, by presenting the Extract from the relevant register of Associations proving specified legal status or justification in case the latter requirement is not applicable for the Country involved. If applicants are of nation of Croatia, associations must prove that they are founded according to the Act on Associations (O. G. 88/01) and submit the Extract from the Register of Associations, administered by the State Administration Offices in counties/the City Administration Office for General Administration of the City of Zagreb.

<sup>13</sup> During evaluation process, applicants will be required to prove that they are founded as business association according to relevant legal Act of the Country involved, by presenting the Extract from the relevant register of Associations proving specified legal status or justification in case the latter requirement is not applicable for the Country involved. If applicants are of nation of Croatia, business associations must prove that they are founded according the Act on Labour (O. G. 149/09) and submit the Extract from the Register of Associations, administered by the State Administration Offices in counties/the City Administration Office for Economy Labour and Entrepreneurship of the City of Zagreb/Ministry of Labour and Pension System.

<sup>14</sup> During evaluation process, applicants will be required to prove that they are founded as trade unions according to relevant legal Act of the Country involved, by presenting the Extract from the relevant register of Associations proving specified legal status or justification in case the latter requirement is not applicable for the Country involved. If applicants are of nation of Croatia, trade unions must prove that they are founded according the Act on Labour (O. G. 149/09) and submit the Extract from the Register of Associations, administered by the State Administration Offices in counties/the City Administration Office for Economy Labour and Entrepreneurship of the City of Zagreb/Ministry of Labour and Pension System.

<sup>15</sup> During evaluation process, applicants will be required to prove that they are founded as foundation according to relevant legal Act of the Country involved, by presenting the Extract from the relevant register of Foundations proving specified legal status or justification in case the latter requirement is not applicable for the Country involved. If Croatian, foundations must prove that they are founded according to the Act on Foundations and Funds (O. G. 36/95) and Act on Amendments to the Law on Foundations and Funds (O. G. 64/01) and submit the Extract from the Register of Foundations, administered by the Ministry of Public Administration of the Republic of Croatia.

<sup>16</sup> To be determined on the basis of the organisation's statutes which should demonstrate that it has been established by an instrument governed by the national law of the country concerned. In this respect, any legal entity whose statutes have been established in another country cannot be considered an eligible local organisation, even if the statutes are registered locally or a "Memorandum of Understanding" has been concluded.

(2) The potential applicant may not participate in calls for proposals or be awarded grants if it is in any of the situations listed in Section 2.3.3 of the Practical Guide to contract procedures for EU external actions (available from the following Internet address:

[http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/implementation/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/implementation/index_en.htm));

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

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

- Commission decision (2008/969/EC, Euratom) of 16 December 2008 on the Early Warning System (EWS) for the use of authorising officers of the Commission and the executive agencies (OJ, L 344, 20.12.2008, p. 125),
- Commission Regulation (2008/1302/EC, Euratom) of 17 December 2008 on the central Exclusion Database – CED (OJ, L 344, 20.12.2008, p.12),

their personal details (name, given name if natural person, address, legal form and name and given name of the person with powers of representation, decision-making or control, if legal person) may be registered in the EWS and CED, and communicated to the persons and entities listed in the above-mentioned decision and regulation, in relation to the award or the execution of a procurement contract or a grant agreement or decision.

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

If awarded the Grant contract, the applicant will become the Beneficiary identified as the Coordinator in annex E3h1 (Special conditions). The Coordinator is the main interlocutor of the Contracting Authority. It represents and acts on behalf of any other co-beneficiary (if any) and coordinate the design and implementation of the Action.

Co-applicant(s)

Co-applicant(s) participate in designing and implementing the action, and the costs they incur are eligible in the same way as those incurred by the applicant.

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

In addition to the categories referred to in section 2.1.1, the following are however also eligible:

1. trans-national organisations (i.e. organisations representing a series of organisations based in different countries) may not apply as applicants. They may be involved as co-applicants in projects provided that:
  - a) their member organisations include at least one EU Member State, and
  - b) more than half of member organisations are CSOs/non-profit organisations (NPOs)<sup>17</sup>;
2. local and regional self-government<sup>18</sup> may be involved as co-applicants in projects but may not apply as applicants;

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<sup>17</sup> The status of transnational organisations should be proved by providing the most recent membership list.

3. institutions and legal entities in public services delivery' including public media, founded according to Institutions Act (O.G. 76/93; 29/97; 47/99 and 35/08) in case a co-applicant is a national of Croatia, or according to a relevant legal Act of the Country involved, in case a co-applicant is a national of a country other than Croatia, may be involved as co-applicants in projects but may not apply as applicants;
4. **public** elementary and secondary schools<sup>19</sup> may be involved as co-applicants in projects but may not apply as applicants;
5. **public institutions for management of protected natural sites in Croatia**<sup>20</sup> must be involved as co-applicants in projects but may not apply as applicants.

**There is an unlimited number of co-applicants allowed; however, an action should involve a minimum of two co-applicants from Croatia acting in the field relevant for this call for proposals (namely: nature and environment protection policies), of which at least one must be a public institution for management of protected natural sites in Croatia.**

In addition, to strengthen the effect at the local level **at least two co-applicants are to be registered in the same County of the Republic of Croatia**<sup>21</sup>.

Types of organisations and institutions which are not eligible neither as project applicants nor as project co-applicants include private sector companies (Ltd, joint-stock companies, SMEs), central government bodies (ministries, central government departments and agencies, bodies founded by national parliaments), political parties, international organisations created by States as well as intergovernmental organisations.

Nevertheless, private sector companies and central government bodies can be project co-financers. The profit-making media may act as sponsors of media coverage and such contributions will be considered as contributions in kind as specified in art 2.1.5.

Co-applicant(s) must sign the Mandate in Part B section 4 of the grant application form.

If awarded the Grant contract, the co-applicant(s)(if any) will become beneficiaries in the Action (together with the Coordinator)

### **2.1.2. *Affiliated entities***

Affiliated entity(ies)

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

<sup>18</sup> In case a co-applicant is a national of a country other than Croatia, they will be required to prove that they are founded as any of the listed eligible co-applicants according to relevant legal Act of the Country involved. In case a co-applicants is a national of Croatia, they will be required to prove that they are founded according **Act on Local and Regional Self-Governments** (O.G. 33/01, 60/01, 129/05, 109/07, 125/08, 36/09, 150/11).

<sup>19</sup> Co-applicants will be required to prove that they are founded as elementary or secondary schools according to relevant legal Act of the Country involved. If Croatian, elementary and secondary schools should prove that they are founded according to Act on Elementary and High School Education (O.G. 87/08, 86/09, 92/10, 105/10, 90/11, 5/12, and 16/12).

<sup>20</sup> Co-applicants will be required to prove that they are founded as public institutions for management of protected natural sites according to Article 72 of the **Nature Protection Act** (O.G. 70/05, 139/08, 57/11 ). **Note:** The State Institute for Nature Protection may not apply as an applicant, nor may it be involved as a co-applicant in the action.

<sup>21</sup> The County of registration is to be determined on the basis of the **official address of the organisation**, stated in the relevant register, as stated in 2.4.

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

- (i) legal entities together forming one entity, including where it is specifically established for the purpose of implementing the action. In this case, the resulting entity may apply as a applicant or co-applicant whereas the other entities as its affiliated entity(ies).
- (ii) legal entities having a link with the applicants, notably a legal or capital link, which is neither limited to the action nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation on the condition that they satisfy the eligibility and non-exclusion criteria of an applicant.

If the applicants are awarded a contract, their affiliated entity(ies) will not become Beneficiary(ies) of the Action and signatory(ies) of the 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 respectively the eligibility criteria as applicable to the applicant and to the co-applicant(s).

Affiliated entity(ies) 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 applicant(s) nor affiliated entity(ies) and do not have to sign the "mandate" or "affiliated entities' statement":

- Associates

Other organisations may be involved in the action. Such associates play a real role in the action but may not receive funding from the grant, with the exception of per diem or travel costs. Associates do not have to meet the eligibility criteria referred to in section 2.1.1. Associates must be mentioned in Part B section 6 — 'Associates of the Applicant participating in the Action' — of the Grant Application Form.

- Contractors

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

### ***2.1.4. Eligible actions: actions for which an application may be made***

Definition:

An action is composed of a set of activities.

Duration

The initial planned duration of an action may not be lower than 12 months nor exceed 18 months.

Sectors or themes

In order for the proposal to be eligible, actions' activities should further strengthen the capacities and the engagement of CSOs in active collaboration with public institutions in nature and environment protection and sustainable use of natural resources in Croatia at the local level, addressing a concrete issue of relevance for the quality implementation of the Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Republic of Croatia, the National Environmental Strategy and the National Environmental Action Plan and the National Strategy and Action Plan for Biodiversity Protection. More specifically, projects under this Call are to improve the environment for joint cooperation between civil society and government in monitoring the progress of nature protection policy documents implementation measures, increase public participation in developing,

implementing and monitoring of public policies, as well as raising public awareness on nature and environment protection and sustainable use of natural resources issues.

The specific, **relevant themes** to which the action must relate for the benefit of the final beneficiaries in the target area are:

- Fostering and strengthening public support and participation in the implementation of nature and/or biodiversity protection and environment protection policies
- Developing tools and mechanisms to identify, prevent and/or combat (potential) practices which are inconsistent with nature and/or biodiversity protection and environment protection policies
- Developing initiatives aiming at consolidation of nature conservation measures
- Fostering cooperation in local communities through development of sustainable cross-sectoral partnerships in the field of nature protection in order to incorporate the idea of nature conservation and nature protection measures into socio-economic development policies and processes at the local level
- Developing tools for quality implementing and monitoring of biodiversity protection and environment protection and sustainable use of protected areas in Croatia, including potential NATURA 2000 sites
- Promoting principles of sustainable use of natural resources

#### Location

Actions must take place in Croatia **and** in at least three different Counties of the Republic of Croatia. However, part of the action (but not more than two individual activities) may take place in a country other than Croatia (a Member State of the European Union, a Member State of the European Economic Area, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, including Kosovo under UNSC Resolution 1244/99 as well as of other countries eligible under Council Regulation (EC) No 1085/2006 of 17th July 2006 establishing an Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA).

Since the actions should contribute to the specific and global objective of this Call for Proposals, it is especially required that all the results/outputs remain at disposal of the target groups and that the final beneficiaries in Croatia, namely in at least three different Counties of the Republic of Croatia, benefit from them.

#### Types of action

Types of actions which may be financed under this call are the following:

- 1) Capacity building actions;
- 2) Awareness raising and education actions;
- 3) Advocacy actions;
- 4) Direct assistance actions;
- 5) Combined actions, including more than one type of action quoted under 1-4.

#### Types of activity

Types of activity, within each type of action identified, which may be financed under this call, are the following:

- 1) Capacity building actions:

- developing and implementing training programmes aimed at building of CSOs analytical skills for their active contribution to monitoring of the integration of nature protection measures into the framework of local development policies;
- developing and implementing training and mentorship initiatives focusing on strengthening analytical capacities of CSOs for their engagement in procedures aimed to enable sustainable use of natural resources, nature and/or biodiversity protection and environment protection;
- designing and applying innovative instruments aiming to enhance the effectiveness and quality of independent monitoring and policy advocacy initiatives related to issues relevant for sustainable use of natural resources, nature and/or biodiversity protection and environment protection policies;
- developing innovative programmes of cooperation with policy research and academic institutions;
- fostering of public and academic community engagement in monitoring of environment and nature protection and sustainable use of protected areas in Croatia related policies;
- designing and implementing non-formal training programmes on the economic value and potential of protected natural sites aimed at CSOs, public institutions and all relevant stakeholders at the local level aimed at sustainable use of natural resources by local communities;
- strengthening existing and/or establishing new sectoral and/or cross-sectoral partnerships, networks and coalitions at all levels (local, regional, regional and/or EU level), focusing on enhancement of effectiveness of implementation of sustainable use of natural resources, nature and/or biodiversity protection and environment protection principles;
- fostering of intra-sectoral and cross-sectoral partnerships, networks and coalitions at all levels (local, regional, EU level) focusing on economic value and potential of protected natural sites with the view of (purposing on) sustainable growth of local communities;
- subscribing to specialized data sources, education and research materials and literature, related to issues relevant for enabling quality implementation of sustainable use of natural resources, nature and/or biodiversity protection and environment protection;
- exchanging experience and know-how among EU and Croatian organisations on issues related with CSOs' engagement in sustainable use of natural resources, nature and/or biodiversity protection and environment protection;
- proposing and implementing improvements related with internal procedures and organisational structures of organisations involved in the action, based on experience and know how shared;
- developing and implementing non-formal educational programmes on nature and/or biodiversity protection and environment protection, sustainable use of natural resources and sustainable use of protected areas related policies
- educational activities on the economic value and potential of protected natural sites targeting local population and local stakeholders.

## 2) Awareness raising and education actions:

- developing specialized innovative tools for establishing participatory management of protected areas and/or future NATURA 2000 sites;
- designing and implementing of mechanisms for habitat conservation/restoration/revitalization in protected areas and/or future NATURA 2000 sites;
- developing and implementing training programmes aiming to inform and educate all stakeholders on issues relevant for quality implementation of sustainable use of natural resources, nature and/or biodiversity protection and environment protection policies as well as the economic value and potential of protected natural sites;
- enhancing public understanding of biological diversity due to contribute active engagement in processes related to functioning and openness of local public administration;
- encouraging CSOs' and citizens' active engagement in processes related to functioning and openness of local public administration;
- awareness raising and informational campaigns aimed at promotion of the integration of nature conservation measures into local socio-economic development policies;

- executing local level information and awareness rising initiatives regarding environment and nature protection, sustainable use of natural resources and sustainable use of protected areas in Croatia, including potential NATURA 2000 sites.

### 3) Advocacy actions:

- executing public policy advocacy campaigns at the local level with the view of sensibilising on environment and nature protection, sustainable use of natural resources and sustainable use of protected areas in Croatia, including potential NATURA 2000 sites;
- advocating and lobbying for legislative and regulatory solutions conducive to environment and nature protection, sustainable use of natural resources and sustainable use of protected areas in Croatia, including potential NATURA 2000 sites;
- monitoring the quality of implementation of sustainable use of natural resources, nature and/or biodiversity protection and environment protection policy documents implementation measures, and proposing relevant improvements at the local level;
- conducting independent policy research and analysis regarding the quality and scope of civil society dialogue and public participation in the policy-making process on environment and nature protection, sustainable use of natural resources and sustainable use of protected areas in Croatia, including potential NATURA 2000 sites;
- drafting shadow reports of local level relevance;
- conducting studies, research and similar analysis documents in the field of nature and/or biodiversity protection and environment protection and sustainable use of natural resources as well as sustainable use of protected areas in Croatia, including potential NATURA 2000 sites;
- designing local level tailor made programmes conducive to prevention or combat of practices which are inconsistent with sustainable use of natural resources, nature and/or biodiversity protection and environment protection principles;
- advocating concrete cross-sectoral partnerships between CSOs and relevant stakeholders at the local level;
- developing specialized innovative tools enabling direct citizens engagement in policy making at the local level, conducive to sustainable use of natural resources, nature and/or biodiversity protection and environment protection;
- mobilizing CSOs for active engagement in procedures relevant for the quality implementation of sustainable use of natural resources, nature and/or biodiversity protection and environment protection – mobilizing academic institutions and public for their active engagement in monitoring of the environment and nature protection, sustainable use of natural resources and sustainable use of protected areas in Croatia related policies.

### 4) Direct assistance actions:

- designing, developing and implementing concrete local level initiatives and innovative approaches for: environment and nature protection, sustainable use of natural resources and sustainable use of protected areas in Croatia, including potential NATURA 2000 sites and for suppression of existing unsustainable trends at the local level;
- developing and/or administrating the functioning of innovative instruments aimed to enable and strengthen citizens' engagement in procedures relevant to sustainable use of natural resources, nature and/or biodiversity protection and environment protection;
- providing counselling and legal services in relation to concrete (potential) cases of violation of sustainable use of natural resources, nature and/or biodiversity protection and environment protection principles at the local level;
- investing in sustainable use of natural resources, nature and/or biodiversity protection and environment protection infrastructure at the local level;
- developing concrete initiatives, activities and tools for responsible nature management and sustainable use of natural resources principles.

#### 5) Combined actions:

- combining various activities stated under types of action 1-4.

The above mentioned activities are listed in a non-exhaustive breakdown; appropriate innovative activities that are not mentioned but fall into the above mentioned actions may also be considered for support.

The following types of action are ineligible:

- actions concerned only or mainly with individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences, congresses;
- actions concerned only or mainly with individual scholarships for studies or training courses;
- language courses;
- actions limited only or mainly to restoration of buildings, construction and all capital investments;
- consultancy services that are continuous or periodic activity or relate to applicants operating expenditures, particularly if related to tax counselling, legal services and similar;
- proposals with provisions for financing the usual (routine) activities, especially covering their operational costs (not related to the implementation of the project);
- establishing, assisting or developing any project or activity that contributes to the violation of internationally recognised worker's rights rules and regulations in force in Croatia;
- actions that are already financed from any other sources for the same activity (double-funding is strictly prohibited).

#### Financial support to third parties

Applicants may not propose financial support to third parties.

#### Visibility

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

Number of applications and grants per applicant

The applicant may submit more than 1 application under this Call for Proposals.

The applicant may not be awarded more than 1 grant under this Call for Proposals.

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

A co-applicant may submit more than 1 application under this Call for Proposals.

A co-applicant may not be awarded more than 1 grant under this Call for Proposals.

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

The affiliated entity(ies) may take part in more than one application.

#### ***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 a ceiling for 'eligible costs'.

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

- actual costs incurred by the Beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies)
- one or more simplified cost options.

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.

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). 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 Grant 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 directions and a checklist of controls to assess the minimum necessary conditions that provide reasonable assurance for the acceptance of the proposed amounts.

The applicant 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 RATE" (per month/flight etc), "LUMPSUM" or "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 the applicant 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.
- clearly explain the formulas for calculation of the final eligible amount<sup>22</sup>
- identify the beneficiary who will use the simplified cost option (in case of affiliated entity, specify first the beneficiary), in order to verify the maximum amount per each beneficiary (which includes if applicable simplified cost options of its affiliated entity(ies))

At contracting phase, the Contracting Authority decides whether to accept the proposed amounts or rates on the basis of the provisional budget submitted by the applicant, by analysing factual data of grants carried out by the applicant or of similar actions and by performing checks established by Annex K.

The total amount of financing on the basis of simplified cost options that can be authorised by the Contracting Authority for any of the applicants individually (including simplified cost options proposed by their own affiliated entities) cannot exceed EUR 60 000 (the indirect costs are not taken into account).

Recommendations to award a grant are always subject to the condition that the checks preceding the signing of the 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

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22 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.

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 applicant's interest to provide a **realistic and cost-effective budget**.

#### Eligible direct costs

To be eligible under the Call for Proposals, costs must comply with the provisions of Article 14 of the General Conditions to the Standard Grant Contract (see Annex G of the Guidelines).

#### 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 applicant may be asked to justify the percentage requested before the contract is signed. However, once the flat rate has been fixed in the special conditions of the standard grant contract, no supporting documents need to be provided.

If 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 a Beneficiary(ies) or affiliated entity(ies) free of charge by a third party. As contributions in kind do not involve any expenditure for a Beneficiary(ies) or affiliated entity(ies), they are not eligible costs.

Contributions in kind may not be treated as co-financing.

However, if the description of the action as proposed includes contributions in kind, the contributions have to be made.

#### Ineligible costs

The following costs are not eligible:

- debts and debt service charges; interests;
- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- costs declared by the Beneficiary(ies) and financed by another action or work programme receiving a Union (including through EDF) grant;
- credit to third parties;
- taxes, including value added taxes;
- customs and import duties, or any other charges;
- purchases of land or buildings, except where necessary for the direct implementation of the action, in which case ownership must be transferred to the final beneficiaries and/or local Beneficiary(ies), at the latest at the end of the action;
- fines, financial penalties and expenses of litigation;
- operating costs;
- second hand equipment;
- bank charges, costs of guarantees and similar charges;
- conversion costs, charges and exchange losses associated with any of the component specific euro accounts, as well as other purely financial expenses;
- contributions in kind;
- any leasing costs;
- depreciation costs.

By way of derogation from the Article 34 and Article 66 of Commission Regulation (EC) No 718/2007, it shall be decided on a case by case basis whether the following expenditure is eligible:

- (a) Operating costs, including rental costs, exclusively related to the period of co-financing of the operation;
- (b) Value added taxes, if the following conditions are fulfilled:
  - (i) the value added taxes are not recoverable by any means;
  - (ii) it is established that they are borne by the final beneficiary, and
  - (iii) they are clearly identified in the project proposal
- c) Costs relating to a bank guarantee or comparable surety to be lodged by the final beneficiary of a grant.

## **2.2. HOW TO APPLY AND THE PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW**

Prior registration in PADOR for this Call for Proposals is not obligatory. 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.

In the Concept Note, applicants must only provide an estimate of the amount of contribution requested from the Contracting Authority and an indicative percentage of that contribution in relation to the total amount of the Action. Only the applicant invited to submit a full application in the second phase will be required to present a detailed budget. The elements outlined in the Concept Note may not be modified by the applicant in the full application form. The EU contribution may not vary from the initial estimate by more than 20%. 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. Own contributions by the applicants can be replaced by other donors' contributions at any time.

Any error or major discrepancy related to the points listed in the Concept Note instructions may lead to the rejection of the Concept Note.

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

Hand-written Concept Notes will not be accepted.

Please note that only the Concept Note form will be evaluated. It is therefore of utmost importance that this document contain ALL relevant information concerning the action. No additional annexes should be sent.

### **2.2.2. Where and how to send Concept Notes**

The Concept Note together with the Checklist for the Concept Note (Part A section 2 of the grant application form) and the Declaration by the applicant for the Concept Note (Part A section 3 of the grant application form) must be submitted in one original and 3 copies in A4 size, each bound.

An electronic version of the Concept Note must also be submitted. A CD-Rom 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.

Where applicants send several different Concept Notes (if allowed to do so by the Guidelines of the Call), each one must be sent separately.

The outer envelope must bear the **reference number and the title of the call for proposals**, together with the full name and address of the applicant, and the words 'Not to be opened before the opening session' and '*Ne otvarati prije sastanka za otvaranje projektnih prijedloga*'

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  
Central Finance and Contracting Agency (CFCA)  
(Središnja agencija za financiranje i ugovaranje programa i projekata EU – SAFU)  
Ulica grada Vukovara 284, Objekt C, 5th floor  
10000 Zagreb  
Croatia

Address for hand delivery or by private courier service  
Central Finance and Contracting Agency (CFCA)  
(Središnja agencija za financiranje i ugovaranje programa i projekata EU – SAFU)  
Ulica grada Vukovara 284, Objekt C, 5th floor  
10000 Zagreb  
Croatia

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

**Applicants must verify that their Concept Note is complete using the Checklist for Concept Note (Part A section 2 of the grant application form). Incomplete concept notes may be rejected.**

### ***2.2.3. Deadline for submission of Concept Notes***

The deadline for the submission of Concept Notes is 05 July 2013 as evidenced by the date of dispatch, the postmark or the date of the deposit slip. In the case of hand-deliveries, the deadline for receipt is at 16:00 hours local time as evidenced by the signed and dated receipt. Any Concept Note submitted after the deadline will be rejected.

However, for reasons of administrative efficiency, the Contracting Authority may reject any Concept Note sent in due time but received after the effective date of approval of the Concept Note evaluation (see indicative calendar under section 2.5.2)

### ***2.2.4. Further information about Concept Notes***

The date and place of the information session on this Call for Proposals will be published on the internet at: <http://www.safu.hr/> (in section: Tenders/IPA component I) within 7 days of the launch of this call for proposals.

Questions may be sent by e-mail or by fax no later than 21 days before the deadline for the submission of concept notes to the address(es) below, indicating clearly the reference of the Call for Proposals:

E-mail address: [procurement@safu.hr](mailto:procurement@safu.hr)  
Fax: +385 1 4591 075

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 applicants, or affiliated entity(ies), an action or specific activities.

Questions that may be relevant to other applicants, together with answers and other important notices in the course of the evaluation procedure, will be published on the EuropeAid website <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome> and [www.safu.hr](http://www.safu.hr), 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.

### **2.2.5. Full Application forms**

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

The elements outlined in the Concept Note cannot be modified by the applicant in the full application form. The EU contribution may not vary from the initial estimate by more than 20%, although 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.

Applicants must submit their applications in the same language as their Concept Note.

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 form (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. **No supplementary annexes should be sent.**

### **2.2.6. Where and how to send Full Application forms**

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

Postal address

Central Finance and Contracting Agency (CFCA)  
(Središnja agencija za financiranje i ugovaranje programa i projekata EU – SAFU)  
Ulica grada Vukovara 284, Objekt C, 5th floor  
10000 Zagreb  
Croatia

Address for hand delivery or by private courier service

Central Finance and Contracting Agency (CFCA)  
(Središnja agencija za financiranje i ugovaranje programa i projekata EU – SAFU)  
Ulica grada Vukovara 284, Objekt C, 5th floor  
10000 Zagreb  
Croatia

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 3 copies in A4 size, each bound. The full application form, budget and logical framework must also be supplied in electronic format (CD-Rom) in a separate and single file (i.e. the full application form 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 applicant (Section 8 of Part B of the grant application form) must be stapled separately and enclosed in the envelope

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

The outer envelope must bear the **reference number and the title of the Call for Proposals**, together with the number and title of the lot, the full name and address of the applicant, and the words 'Not to be opened before the opening session' and '*Ne otvarati prije sastanka za otvaranje projektnih prijedloga*'.

**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 Application forms***

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

However, for reasons of administrative efficiency, the Contracting Authority may reject any application sent in due time but received after the date of approval of evaluation report for full applications (see indicative calendar under Section 2.5.2)

### ***2.2.8. Further information about Full Application forms***

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

E-mail address: [procurement@safu.hr](mailto:procurement@safu.hr)  
Fax: +385 1 4591 075

The Contracting Authority has no obligation to provide clarifications to questions received after this date.

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

To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the Contracting Authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of 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 <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome> and [www.safu.hr](http://www.safu.hr). 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 actions submitted by applicants will be assessed according to the following steps and criteria.

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

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

The following will be assessed:

- Compliance with the submission deadline. If the deadline has not been met, the application will automatically be rejected.
- The Concept Note satisfies all the criteria specified in points 1-5 of the Checklist (Section 2 of Part A of the grant application form). If any of the requested information is missing or is incorrect, the application may be rejected on that **sole** basis and the application will not be evaluated further.

The Concept Notes that pass the first administrative check will be evaluated on the relevance and design of the proposed action.

The Concept Note 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 the Concept Note, which can be found in Part A of the Application Form.

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

**Scores**

<b>1. Relevance of the action</b>	Sub-score	<b>30</b>
1.1 How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the Call for Proposals?	5x2**	
1.2 How relevant to the particular needs and constraints of the target country(ies) or region(s) is the proposal (including synergy with other EU initiatives and avoidance of duplication)?	5x2**	
1.3 How clearly defined and strategically chosen are those involved (final beneficiaries, target groups)? Have their needs been clearly defined and does the proposal address them appropriately?	5	
1.4 Does the proposal contain specific added-value elements, such as environmental issues, promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities, needs of disabled people, rights of minorities and rights of indigenous peoples, or innovation and best practices	5	
<b>2. Design of the action</b>	Sub-score	<b>20</b>
2.1 How coherent is the overall design of the action?  In particular, does it reflect the analysis of the problems involved, take into account external factors and relevant stakeholders?	5x2**	
2.2 Is the action feasible and consistent in relation to the objectives and expected results?	5x2**	

**TOTAL SCORE** **50**

\*\*these scores are multiplied by 2 because of their importance

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

First, only the Concept Notes with a score of at least 30 will be considered for pre-selection.

Secondly, the number of Concept Notes will be reduced, taking account of the ranking, to the number of Concept Notes whose total aggregate amount of requested contributions is equal to at least 200% of the available budget for this Call for Proposals. The amount of requested contributions of each concept note will be based on the indicative financial envelopes for each lot.

After the evaluation of Concept Notes, the Contracting Authority will send letters to all 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 applicants will subsequently be invited to submit full applications.

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

First, the following will be assessed:

- Compliance with the submission deadline. If the deadline has not been met, the application will automatically be rejected.
- The full application form satisfies all the criteria specified in points 1-9 of the Checklist (Section 7 of Part B of the grant application form). If any of the requested information is missing or is incorrect, the application may be rejected on that **sole** basis and the application will not be evaluated further.

The quality of the applications, including the proposed budget and capacity of the applicants and affiliated entity(ies), 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) operational capacity and the applicant's financial capacity and to ensure 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;
- have the management capacity, professional competencies and qualifications required to successfully complete the proposed action. This also applies to any affiliated entity(ies) of the applicants.

**The award criteria** help to evaluate the quality of the applications in relation to the objectives and priorities, 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 of sections 1 of the evaluation grid will be assessed on whether the criteria has been fulfilled or not. Each subsection of sections 2, 3,4 and 5 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	
<b>1. Financial and operational capacity</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
1.1 Do the applicants and, if applicable, affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient experience of project management?	
1.2 Do the applicants and, if applicable, affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient technical expertise? (especially knowledge of the issues to be addressed.)	
1.3 Do the applicants and, if applicable, affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient management capacity? (including staff, equipment and ability to handle the budget for the action)?	
1.4 Does the applicant have stable and sufficient sources of finance?	
	<b>Maximum Score</b>

<b>2. Relevance of the action</b>	<b>30</b>
<i>Score transferred from the Concept Note evaluation</i>	
<b>3. Effectiveness and feasibility of the action</b>	<b>20</b>
3.1 Are the activities proposed appropriate, practical, and consistent with the objectives and expected results?	5
3.2 Is the action plan clear and feasible?	5
3.3 Does the proposal contain objectively verifiable indicators for the outcome of the action? Is any evaluation planned?	5
3.4 Is the co-applicant(s)'s and affiliated entity(ies)'s level of involvement and participation in the action satisfactory?	5
<b>4. Sustainability of the action</b>	<b>15</b>
4.1 Is the action likely to have a tangible impact on its target groups?	5
4.2 Is the proposal likely to have multiplier effects? (Including scope for replication, extension and information sharing.)	5
4.3 Are the expected results of the proposed action sustainable?:  - financially ( <i>how will the activities be financed after the funding ends?</i> )  - institutionally ( <i>will structures allowing the activities to continue be in place at the end of the action? Will there be local 'ownership' of the results of the action?</i> )  - at policy level (where applicable) ( <i>what will be the structural impact of the action — e.g. will it lead to improved legislation, codes of conduct, methods, etc?</i> ) - environmentally (if applicable) ( <i>will the action have a negative/positive environmental impact?</i> )	5
<b>5. Budget and cost-effectiveness of the action</b>	<b>15</b>
5.1 Are the activities appropriately reflected in the budget?	5x2*
5.2 Is the ratio between the estimated costs and the expected results satisfactory?	5
<b>Maximum total score</b>	<b>80</b>

\*these scores are multiplied by 2 because of their importance

*Note on Section 1. Financial and operational capacity*

If the answer is negative to one or more of the criteria, the application will be rejected.

*Provisional selection*

After the evaluation, a table will be drawn up listing the applications ranked according to their score and within the limits of the funds available. In addition, a reserve list will be drawn up following the same criteria to be used if more funds should 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, based on the supporting documents requested by the Contracting Authority (see Section 2.4) will only be performed for the applications that have been provisionally selected according to their score and within the available financial envelope.

- The Declaration by the applicant (Section 8 of Part B the grant application form) will be cross-checked with the supporting documents provided by the applicant. Any missing supporting document or any incoherence between the Declaration by the applicant and the supporting documents may lead to the rejection of the application on that sole basis.
- The eligibility of applicants, the affiliated entities(ies), and the action will be verified according to the criteria set out in Sections 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and 2.1.3.

Any rejected application will be replaced by the next best placed application in the reserve list that falls within the available financial envelope.

### **2.4. SUBMISSION OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS FOR PROVISIONALLY SELECTED APPLICATIONS**

An applicant that 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 applicant, (if any) of the co-applicant(s) and (if any) of their affiliated entity(ies)<sup>23</sup>:

1. The statutes or articles of association of the applicant, (if any) of each co-applicant(s) and (if any) of each affiliated entity(ies)<sup>24</sup> Where the Contracting Authority has recognised the applicant's, or the co-applicant(s)'s, or their affiliated entity(ies)'s eligibility for another call for proposals under the same budget line within 2 years before the deadline for receipt of applications, it should be submitted, instead of the statutes or articles of association, a copy of the document proving their eligibility in a former Call (e.g. a copy of the special conditions of a grant contract received during the reference period), unless a change in legal status has occurred in the meantime<sup>25</sup>. This obligation does not apply to international organisations which have signed a framework agreement with the European Commission.
2. A copy of the applicant's latest accounts (the profit and loss account and the balance sheet for the last financial year for which the accounts have been closed)<sup>26</sup>. A copy of the latest account is not required from (if any) the co-applicant(s).

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23 No supporting document will be requested for applications for a grant not exceeding EUR 60000.

24 Where the 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.

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

26 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.

3. Legal entity sheet (see annex D of these Guidelines) duly completed and signed by each of the applicants (i.e. by the applicant and (if any) by each co-applicant(s)), 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
4. A financial identification form of the applicant (not from co-applicant(s)) conforming to the model attached at 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 applicant is established. If the 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.
5. For applicants and/or co-applicants and/or affiliated entities of the legal status of association from Croatia, the Extract from the Register of Associations administered by State Administration Offices in counties/the City Administration Office for General Administration of the City of Zagreb. For applicants and/or co-applicants of the legal status of association which are nationals of a country other than Croatia, they will be required to provide an extract from the relevant register of associations proving their legal status or justification in case the latter requirement is not applicable for the Country involved. The Extract from the Register of Associations in both cases must not be older than 6 months from the deadline for submission of Full Application form<sup>27</sup>.
6. For applicants and/or co-applicants and/or affiliated entities of the legal status of business association from Croatia, the Extract from the Register of Associations administered by the State Administration Offices in counties/the City Administration Office for Economy Labour and Entrepreneurship of the City of Zagreb/Ministry of Labour and Pension System. For applicants and/ co-applicants of the legal status of business association which are nationals of a country other than Croatia, they will be required to provide an extract from the relevant register of associations, proving their legal status, or justification in case the latter requirement is not applicable for the Country involved. The Extract from the Register of Associations in both cases must not be older than 6 months from the deadline for submission of Full Application form<sup>28</sup>.
7. For applicants and/or co-applicants and/or affiliated entities of the legal status of trade union from Croatia, the Extract from the Register of Associations administered by the State Administration Offices in counties/the City Administration Office for Economy Labour and Entrepreneurship of the City of Zagreb/Ministry of Labour and Pension System. For applicants and/or co-applicants of the legal status of trade union which are nationals of a country other than Croatia, they will be required to provide an extract from the relevant register of associations, proving their legal status, or justification in case the latter requirement is not applicable for the Country involved. The Extract from the Register of Associations in both cases must not be older than 6 months from the deadline for submission of Full Application form<sup>29</sup>.
8. For applicants and/or co-applicants and/or affiliated entities of the legal status of foundation from Croatia, the Extract from the Register of Foundations administered by the Ministry of Public Administration of the Republic of Croatia. For applicants and/or co-applicants of the legal status of foundation which are nationals of a country other than Croatia, they will be required to provide an extract from the relevant register of foundations, proving their legal status, or justification in case the

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<sup>23</sup> The exact deadline for submission of Full Application forms will be communicated to the applicants whose Concept notes are pre-selected after the first step of the evaluation

<sup>24</sup> The exact deadline for submission of Full Application forms will be communicated to the applicants whose Concept notes are pre-selected after the first step of the evaluation

<sup>25</sup> The exact deadline for submission of Full Application forms will be communicated to the applicants whose Concept notes are pre-selected after the first step of the evaluation

latter requirement is not applicable for the Country involved. The Extract from the Register of Foundations must not be older than 6 months from the deadline for submission of Full Application form<sup>30</sup>.

9. Co-applicants and their affiliated entities (if any) will be required to prove that they are founded as local and regional self-government units according to relevant legal Act of the Country involved. In case a co-applicant or an affiliated entity is a national of Croatia, they will be required to prove that they are founded according to the Act on Local and Regional Self-Governments (O.G. 33/01, 60/01, 129/05, 109/07, 125/08, 36/09, 150/11).
10. Co-applicants and affiliated entities will be required to prove that they are founded as institutions according to the relevant legal Act of the Country involved. If Croatian, institutions should prove that they are founded according to the Institutions Act (O.G. 76/93; 29/97; 47/99 and 35/08).
11. Co-applicants and affiliated entities will be required to prove that they are founded as elementary or secondary schools according to the relevant legal Act of the Country involved. If Croatian, elementary and secondary schools should prove that they are founded according to the Act on Elementary and High School Education (O.G. 87/08, 86/09, 92/10, 105/10, 90/11, 5/12, and 16/12).
12. Co-applicants and affiliated entities will be required to prove that they are founded as a public institution for management of protected natural sites in Croatia, according to Article 72 of the Nature Protection Act (O.G. 70/05, 139/08, 57/11).
13. If the co-applicant or the affiliated entity is a trans-national organisation the most recent membership list must be provided.

Where the requested supporting documents are not uploaded in PADOR they must be supplied in the form of originals, photocopies or scanned versions (i.e. showing legible stamps, signatures and dates) of the said originals. However, the Legal entity sheet and the financial identification form must always be submitted in original.

Where such documents are not in one of the official languages of the European Union or in the language of the country where the action is implemented, a translation into English of the relevant parts of these documents proving the applicant(s)'s eligibility, must be attached and will prevail for the purpose of analysing the application.

Where these documents are in an official language of the European Union other than English, it is **strongly** recommended, in order to facilitate the evaluation, to provide a translation of the relevant parts of the documents, proving the applicant's eligibility, into English.

If the abovementioned supporting documents are not provided before the deadline indicated in the request for supporting documents sent to the applicant by the Contracting Authority, the application may be rejected.

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.

## **2.5. NOTIFICATION OF THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY'S DECISION**

### **2.5.1. Content of the decision**

The applicant will be informed in writing of the Contracting Authority's decision concerning their application and, if rejected, the reasons for the negative decision.

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<sup>26</sup> The exact deadline for submission of Full Application forms will be communicated to the applicants whose Concept notes are pre-selected after the first step of the evaluation

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

<b>2.5.2. Indicative timetable</b>		
	<b>DATE</b>	<b>TIME*</b>
<b>Information meeting (if any)</b>	To be announced subsequently <sup>31</sup>	-
<b>Deadline for requesting any clarifications from the Contracting Authority</b>	14 June 2013	16:00
<b>Last date on which clarifications are issued by the Contracting Authority</b>	24 June 2013	-
<b>Deadline for submission of Concept Notes</b>	05 July 2013	16:00
<b>Information to applicants on opening, administrative checks and concept note evaluation (Step 1)</b>	29 November 2013 *	-
<b>Invitations to submit Full Application Form</b>	29 November 2013 **	-
<b>Deadline for submission of Full Application Form</b>	31 January 2014*	-
<b>Information to applicants on the evaluation of the Full Application Form (Step 2)</b>	11 June 2014*	-
<b>Notification of award (after the eligibility check) (Step 3)</b>	11 August 2014 *	-
<b>Contract signature</b>	November 2014*	-

**Provisional date.** All times are in the time zone of the country of the Contracting Authority.

**\*\* Provisional date.** Date min.45 days after invitations.

This indicative timetable may be updated by the Contracting Authority during the procedure. In such cases, the updated timetable will be published on the EuropeAid web site

<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome> and [www.safu.hr](http://www.safu.hr).

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

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27The date and place of the information session on this call for proposals will be published on the CFCA web-page at: [www.safu.hr](http://www.safu.hr) (in section: Tenders/IPA component I) within 7 days of the launch of this call for proposals.

Following the decision to award a grant, the Beneficiary(ies) will be offered a contract based on the Contracting Authority's standard grant contract (see Annex G of these Guidelines). By signing the application form (Annex A of these Guidelines), the applicant agrees, if awarded a grant, to accept the contractual conditions of the standard grant contract.

The Beneficiary/Coordinator will be obliged to submit narrative quarterly reports by the day 15 after the end of every three month period of the implementation.

### Implementation contracts

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

## **3. LIST OF ANNEXES**

### **DOCUMENTS TO BE COMPLETED**

Annex A: Grant Application Form (Word format)

Annex B: Budget (Excel format)

Annex C: Logical Framework (Excel format)<sup>32</sup>

Annex D: Legal Entity Sheet

Annex E: Financial identification form

### **DOCUMENTS FOR INFORMATION**

Annex G: Standard Grant Contract

- Annex II: General conditions applicable to european union-financed grant contracts for external actions
- Annex IV: contract award procedures
- Annex V: standard request for payment
- annex VI: model narrative and financial report
- Annex VII: model report of factual findings and terms of reference for an expenditure verification of an EU financed grant contract for external action
- Annex IX: standard template for transfer of ownership of assets

Annex H: Daily allowance rates (Per diem), available at the following address:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/implementation/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/implementation/index_en.htm)

Annex K: Guidelines and Checklist for assessing Budget and Simplified cost options.

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32 Optional where the total amount of the grants to be awarded under the Call for Proposals is € 100 000 or less.

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

Project Cycle Management Guidelines

[http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/multimedia/publications/publications/manuals-tools/t101\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/multimedia/publications/publications/manuals-tools/t101_en.htm)