

IPA Component IIIc - Regional Competitiveness Operational Programme 2007-2009 for Community Assistance under the IPA Regional Development Component in Croatia

Science and Innovation Investment Fund (SIIF) Grant Scheme

Reference: EuropeAid/128624/M/ACT/HR

Tender type: Grant

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Date: 28th August 2009

NOTE: The final decision concerning eligibility of an applicant, a partner, an action or specific activities will be brought by the Evaluation Committee during the process of Evaluation of applications (subject to ex-ante control of the CFCA and EC Delegation).

NOTE: Questions may be sent by e-mail or by fax no later than **21 days before the each deadline for the submission of applications.**
Final version of Q&A will be published no later than **11 days before each deadline for the submission of applications.**

List of Abbreviations:
CFCA – Central Finance and Contracting Agency
GfA – Guidelines for Applicants

no.	QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
1.	If Project partner is non-profit, public organisation, does the applicant has to satisfy same criteria (of being non-profit, public organisation)?	Yes. The applicant and the partner must satisfy the same eligibility criteria. Under point 2.1.1. of the GfA, Eligibility of applicants: who may apply?, list of criteria that applicants have to satisfy is given. As stated under point 2.1.2. of the GfA, Partnerships and eligibility of partners, partners must satisfy the eligibility criteria as applicable on the grant beneficiary himself.
2.	Concerning the eligibility of the applicants, are private companies and individuals in the area of research and development eligible as applicants?	As stated under point 2.1.1. of the GfA, Eligibility of applicants: who may apply?, applicants have to be legal, non-profit making institutions, and be either public higher education institution or public research

		organization.
3.	Are market research companies eligible as applicants or partners?	<p>As stated under point 2.1.1. of the GfA, Eligibility of applicants: who may apply?, applicants have to be legal, non-profit making institutions, and be either public higher education institution or public research organization.</p> <p>In order to further estimate your potential as an applicant, we would like to draw your attention to the Objectives of the Call for Proposals and types of action and activities that may be financed under the Call.</p> <p>As stated under point 2.2.4. of the GfA, Further Information for Applications, in the interest of equal treatment of applicants, the Contracting Authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of an applicant, a partner, an action or specific activities.</p>
4.	Can the focus of the project under this Grant scheme be on purchasing equipment, rather than know-how transfer, seminars or workshops, etc.?	<p>Under point 2.1.3. of the GfA, Eligible actions: actions for which an application may be made, there is a list of eligible actions and activities, as well as ineligible types of action given. Please note that the list of <u>eligible activities</u> includes equipping of new or existing business liaison offices, technology transfer offices, knowledge transfer centres and university spin-offs / start-ups. The list of eligible activities is non-exhaustive; appropriate innovative activities that are not mentioned but fall into the mentioned themes may also be considered for support. However, the list of <u>ineligible actions</u> includes actions confined only or mainly to restoration of buildings, construction and all capital investments.</p>
5.	Could the grant be used for funding procurement of laboratory instruments, equipment and materials, machines and machine tools, all in line with the purpose of the grant?	<p>The applicant is responsible for proposing the action that would best fulfil the Objectives of the Call for Proposals.</p>
6.	Could the grant be used for funding building/refurbishment of the venues for the new laboratories and workshops?	<p>As stated under point 2.2.4. of the GfA, Further Information for Applications, in the interest of equal treatment of applicants, the Contracting Authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of an applicant, a partner, an action or specific activities.</p> <p>Final recommendation on project proposal will be brought by the</p>

		<p>Evaluation Committee during the process of Evaluation of applications. During step 2: Evaluation of the Concept Note and step 3: Evaluation of the full application, Evaluation Committee will use Evaluation grids and sub-grids as provided in the GfA under point 2.3 Evaluation and selection of applications, (2) step 2: Evaluation of the Concept Note and (3) step 3: Evaluation of the full application.</p>
7.	<p>Would the own (beneficiary's) participation in building/refurbishment of the laboratory/workshop venues be considered as own participation in the grant (co-financing)?</p>	<p>Yes. Beneficiary and/or Partner can co-finance any part of the foreseen budgeted project costs. Notwithstanding, please note that contributions in kind are not considered actual expenditure and are not eligible costs. The contributions in kind may not be treated as co-financing by the Beneficiary, as stated under point 2.1.4. Eligibility of costs: costs which may be taken into consideration for the grant, of the GfA; list of ineligible costs is given under same point. Please note that costs incurred before the signing of the contract, including project preparation costs are not eligible costs.</p>
8.	<p>When preparing a project budget, is it necessary to enclose offers for supplies and equipment foreseen to be financed within the project?</p>	<p>No. Market research, including provisional offers (if requested by the Contracting Authority - CFCA), will be requested within the budget clearing process (after all four steps of the Evaluation process are finished and project is recommended for financing).</p>
9.	<p>Are the provisional offers for supplies and equipment enclosed during the budget clearing process (and before signing of the contract), legally binding?</p>	<p>No. Any offers enclosed before signing of the Contract are provisional and only serve the purpose of justifying project costs. They are not binding for the Beneficiary. During the implementation of the Contract, Beneficiary procures services, supplies and works according to annex IV of the Contract, Procurement by grant Beneficiaries in the context of European Community external actions.</p>

10.	Does the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports (MSES) co-finance projects within this Grant Scheme?	<p>Yes.</p> <p>As stated under point 1.3. of the GfA, Financial allocation provided by the Contracting Authority, 25% of the total eligible costs of the action will be financed from the national public contribution of the Beneficiary Country provided by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports (MSES) of the Republic of Croatia.</p>
11.	<p>What does it mean that all activities must be held in Croatia? If the partner is from Greece, can they print a booklet in their own language and collect case studies, but all conferences and workshops would be held in Croatia?</p>	<p>Within the GfA Article 2.1.3. <i>Eligible actions: actions for which an application may be made</i> it is stated:</p> <p>„Since all the actions should take place in Croatia and should contribute to the specific objective of this Call for Proposals, i.e. should contribute to creation of a productive environment where innovation capacity can grow and develop, thus strengthening the overall competitiveness of Croatia, it is especially required that all the results/outputs remain at disposal of the target groups and that the final beneficiaries in Croatia benefit from them.“</p> <p>However, the applicant is responsible for proposing the action that would best fulfil the Objectives of the Call for Proposals.</p> <p>You therefore have to assess whether the booklet in Greek would contribute to the objectives and priorities of this Call.</p> <p>As stated under point 2.2.4. of the GfA, Further Information for Applications, in the interest of equal treatment of applicants, the Contracting Authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of an applicant, a partner, an action or specific activities.</p> <p>Final recommendation on project proposal will be brought by the Evaluation Committee during the process of Evaluation of applications.</p> <p>During step 2: Evaluation of the Concept Note and step 3: Evaluation of the full application, Evaluation Committee will use Evaluation grids and sub-grids as provided in the GfA under point 2.3 Evaluation and selection of applications, (2) step 2: Evaluation of the Concept Note and (3) step 3: Evaluation of the full application.</p>

12.	Which projects should be mentioned under chapter 4. EXPERIENCE OF SIMILAR ACTIONS of the application form: projects thematically related to this project proposal or all projects which could benefit the applicants project management skills: CBC PHARE 2005 and 2006, FP, UKF, etc?	According to the instructions given within the application form of the related tender this chapter provides a detailed description of actions managed by your organisation over the past three years in the same sector and of a comparable scale to the one for which a grant is being requested. This includes also projects funded by other donors than EU.
13	Should we under the point 3.2. Experience by Geographical area (country or region) of the application form list within Europe Non-EU projects implemented on the territory of the Republic of Croatia?	Yes. Europe Non-EU is considered as a geographical region which includes projects implemented on the territory of the Republic of Croatia.
14	Is the EuropeAid ID number of applicants, all partners and associates obligatory or not? Is it sufficient to fill in required information without indicating ID number in order to avoid PADOR application?	EuropeAid ID number of applicants, all partners and associates is <i>not</i> obligatory. According to the GfA, Chapter 2.2. HOW TO APPLY AND PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW the prior registration in PADOR for applicants and their partners for this Call for proposal is not obligatory. However the applicant and partners can register their organisation data, and upload supporting documents in PADOR.
15	I have a question regarding paying the newly employed people of the Applicant that are employed to work full-time on the project. Is such thing possible and is it possible to pay their full monthly salary from the European Commission part of the project budget? I am aware that "current employees" cannot be paid from the budget and this is stressed on several places in Guidelines, I am strictly interested in salaries of the new employees. Does the same rule apply also to partner institutions?	Full monthly salaries of the new employees during the project implementation are eligible to be financed under EU funded projects according to the standard grant contract General Conditions, article 14.2: “the following direct costs of the Beneficiary and his partners shall be eligible: – the cost of staff assigned to the Action, corresponding to actual salaries plus social security charges and other remuneration-related costs; salaries and costs must not exceed those normally borne by the Beneficiary or his partners, as the case may be, unless it is justified by showing that it is essential to carry out the action.” Please note that for current employees this is applicable up to 25% of the total eligible direct cost, in which case it is considered as co-financing.

		<p>Salaries of new employees (full-time or part-time) who will work on project implementation, and who will be hired after the grant award decision are eligible.</p> <p>Please be aware that the project budget is not supposed to be divided into European Commission part and other part(s). All costs in the budget breakdown therefore have to be eligible according to the rules of this Call for Proposals.</p>
<p>16.</p>	<p>Is it possible to engage and reimburse honorariums for collaborators on the project which are employees of a public institute?</p> <p>We assume that engagement of outsourced experts is inappropriate for tasks that we can perform even better than outsourced experts.</p>	<p>According to the GfA, Article 2.1.4.: “fees for Civil Servants (Civil Servants or other officials of the public administration of the beneficiary country, regardless of their administrative situation, must not be engaged as experts by tenderers unless the prior approval of the Contracting Authority has been obtained)“ the employees of the public institute can not be engaged without prior approval since the public institute is partly financed from the national budget. It is important to point out that within the application procedure it is not obligatory to identify persons that will be engaged as outsourced experts (Annex III, Budget for the Action, budget heading 5).</p>
<p>17.</p>	<p>Further clarification with regard to the question nr. 16:</p> <p>Does your answer mean that the employees of the public institute can receive the fee or not in case they work on the public institute project or on the project of their partner?</p> <p>I do not understand your interpretation of the term outsourced expert. I believe it is a person from the institution y that is sent to work on a specific activity for the institution x that is in charge for the project, or a person engaged directly (individually) by the institution in charge of the project.</p> <p>My question refers strictly on the situation in which the public institute</p>	<p>Civil Servants or other officials of the public administration of the beneficiary country should not be engaged as experts <i>as a rule</i>. Exceptions are sometimes possible based on the assessment of the statutes of the organization, their financing mechanism or individual job descriptions. It is clear that this kind of assessment is done on individual basis, and goes beyond the scope of this document (Q&A). The individual assessment is done in the course of evaluation of project proposals and during contract preparation if the project is selected for financing It should be clear that for all these reasons, the Contracting Authority cannot prejudice the eligibility of applicants, action or costs at this point.</p> <p>External associate (outsourced expert) is a person / company selected in</p>

	<p>is project holder or project partner. Hence, can my colleagues and I receive the honorarium for the engagement on the project where we are project holders or project partners?</p>	<p>line with Annex IV to the grant contract <i>Procurement by grant Beneficiaries in the context of European Community external actions</i> to provide services for the organization implementing the project. Costs of these services are presented in heading 5. in the budget template form.</p> <p>We repeat that within the application procedure it is not obligatory to identify persons that will be engaged as outsourced experts (Annex III, Budget for the Action, budget heading 5).</p>
18.	<p>If the applicant is multidisciplinary public research institute (II. The Applicant - 2.1. Category, Public – Research Institute) is it appropriate to mark only sector 43.430.43082 (under point 2.2. Sector(s) Other multisector - Research/scientific institutions)?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
19.	<p>What is the meaning of budget item "salaries for international staff"? Can we consider this as salaries for persons that are employed or this represents honorariums for eventually partners for services?</p>	<p>Salaries for international staff are costs for project staff engaged on this project as employees in other country than Croatia.</p> <p>Salaries for international staff, if stated within the budget heading 1, represent salaries of applicant's or partners' staff assigned to the action and they also can be considered as applicant's financial contribution. If stated within the budget heading 5, the same will represent the fees for the outsourced experts.</p>
20.	<p>In the GfA, Article 2.1.1. it is stated that the applicant has to be a public higher education institution or public research organisation. In the article 2.1.2. it is stated that in case an applicant is not Public Higher Education Institution or Public Research Organization one of the partners must be a Higher Education Institution (HEI) or Public Research Organisation.</p> <p>Is it possible for an agricultural cooperative in partnership with a Higher Education Institution to apply as a project holder?</p> <p>Can the agricultural cooperative be considered as non profit organisation?</p>	<p>The Guidelines in art 2.1.2 actually state that if an applicant is not PHEI or PRO <i>founded by the Republic of Croatia</i> (but by some other country), than at least one of the partners must be PHEI/PRO founded by the Republic of Croatia. So in any case the applicant, and equally so the partner, must be registered as either PHEI (Public Higher Education Institution) or PRO (Public Research Organization), and at least one legal person in the partnership has to be funded by the Republic of Croatia.</p> <p>As stated under point 2.2.4. of the GfA, Further Information for Applications, in the interest of equal treatment of applicants, the</p>

	<p>For instance in some other EU tenders agricultural cooperatives are considered as non for profit organisations (CBC programmes with B&H).</p>	<p>Contracting Authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of an applicant, a partner, an action or specific activities. Final recommendation on project proposal will be brought by the Evaluation Committee during the process of Evaluation of applications.</p>
<p>21.</p>	<p>Can the associated partners be subcontracted for some of the project activities on the same project actually work performers?</p>	<p>It is not clear what is meant by the term "associated partners". In this Call we have categories of "associates" and "partners", but not "associated partners".</p> <p>Grant beneficiaries have the possibility to award contracts to subcontractors. Subcontractors are neither partners nor associates, and are subject to the procurement rules set out in Annex IV to the standard grant contract.</p> <p>This is regulated in the Guidelines art 2.1.2.</p> <p>All procurement procedures must be implemented according to the standard grant Contract, Annex IV <i>Procurement by grant Beneficiaries in the context of European Community external actions</i>: “If the implementation of an Action requires procurement by the Beneficiary, the contract must be awarded to the most economically advantageous tender (ie, the tender offering the best price-quality ratio), in accordance with the principles of transparency and fair competition for potential contractors and taking care to avoid any conflicts of interest.”</p>