



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
ENTERPRISE AND INDUSTRY DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

SMEs and Entrepreneurship  
**Entrepreneurship and Social Economy**

# **CALL FOR PROPOSALS**

## **TRANSFER OF BUSINESS**

**Number 118/G/ENT/CIP/13/E/NO1C06**

# **GRANT PROGRAMME 2013**

The present call for proposals is composed of a set of Grant Submission Documents,  
which form an integral part of this call:

The call for proposals,  
The Guide for Applicants  
The Submission Set

The terms set out in the call for proposals document shall take precedence over those in  
the other parts of the Grant Submission Documents.

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**INTERESTED PARTIES ARE INVITED TO READ CAREFULLY THE BELOW INSTRUCTIONS, AND TO USE THE QUESTIONNAIRE PROVIDED IN CHAPTER II OF THE GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT APPLICATIONS ARE COMPLETE WHEN SUBMITTED.**

## 1. CONTEXT

Transfer of business needs to be placed within the larger context of EU objectives to promote smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. This particular call aims to support the implementation of the Small Business Act<sup>1</sup> where business transfers are specifically mentioned under the first principle: “To create an environment within which entrepreneurs and family businesses can thrive and entrepreneurship is rewarded. In the SBA Member States are specifically invited to: ensure that taxation does not unduly hamper transfer of business, put in place schemes for matching transferable businesses with potential new owners and to provide mentoring and support for business transfers.

The SBA review conducted in 2011, found that overall implementation is progressing but more still needs to be done. Transfer of businesses, when successful, on average secures a higher number of jobs than those created by new start-ups. Particular recognition should be given to family businesses because of their typically local base, socially responsible attitudes, and balanced combination of tradition with innovation. As regards business failures, it was pointed out that about one third of business failures occur in the context of a business transfer. In response, the Commission undertook to identify best practices to support business transfers and launch a campaign to promote these practices, and invited Member States to develop user-friendly and widely supported marketplaces and databases for transferable businesses and provide training and support to increase the number of successful business transfers, including communication campaigns to raise awareness of the need for early preparation of business transfers.

Currently these issues are at the very heart of the Europe 2020 Strategy and the associated Flagship Initiatives that provide a focus for policy development at a European level. In particular, these strategic frameworks very much define the context for actions intended to promote an improvement in the framework for business transfers. Such actions however, also need to take into account a relatively well-established legacy resulting from earlier initiatives related to transfer of business launched at both European level and in the Member States (Commission Communications of 1998 and 2006<sup>2</sup>, recommendations from different projects, studies and seminars related to transfer of business that has been carried out between 1994 to date<sup>3</sup>).

In the past ten years, a number of studies have highlighted the need for SME owners that intend to transfer their business to plan and prepare correctly for this event and therefore to have access to professional support during the transfer of their business when needed. Not only does a successful transfer require an understanding of an array of organisational, financial, fiscal and legal issues, it is also likely to put those involved under significant emotional pressure. Potential buyers may also need quality support.

<sup>1</sup> Communication from the European Commission ‘Think Small First — A Small Business Act for Europe’, COM/2008/0394 final.

<sup>2</sup> Commission Communication 98/C 93/02 of 28 March 1998 on the on the transfer of small and medium-sized enterprises - Official Journal C 93 of 28.3.98; Commission Communication on Transfer of Business - Continuity through a new beginning, COM(2006) 117 final of 14 March 2006

<sup>3</sup> Commission Recommendation of 7 December 1994 on the transfer of small and medium-sized enterprises (Text with EEA relevance) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:31994H1069:en:HTML>; Final Report of the European Seminar on the transfer of businesses, 23-24 September 2002, Vienna, [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/files/support\\_measures/transfer\\_business/vienna\\_transfer\\_seminar\\_final\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/files/support_measures/transfer_business/vienna_transfer_seminar_final_report_en.pdf); Transfer of businesses – continuity through a new beginning. Final Report of the MAP 2002 project), [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf/\\_getdocument.cfm?doc\\_id=3667](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf/_getdocument.cfm?doc_id=3667); • Final report of the Expert Group on markets for business transfers, May 2006; [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/files/support\\_measures/transfer\\_business/transfer\\_business/markets\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/files/support_measures/transfer_business/transfer_business/markets_en.pdf); Final Report: A Helping Hand for SMEs – Mentoring Business Transfer, Eurochambres, August 2009, [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/files/support\\_measures/transfer\\_business/mentoring\\_business\\_transfer\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/files/support_measures/transfer_business/mentoring_business_transfer_en.pdf); Business Dynamics: Start-ups, Business Transfers and Bankruptcy - Final report, DG ENTR, January 2011, [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/business-environment/files/business\\_dynamics\\_final\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/business-environment/files/business_dynamics_final_report_en.pdf).

Today, the availability of business support specifically relating to transfer has still considered either low or moderate. In several countries there appears to be very little support, there are few national programmes that have been successful in tackling the business transfer market as a whole, initiatives have often been instigated for one particular transfer phase, at local or regional level or they have been short-term projects. In some countries, the initiatives that are available are mainly organised privately.

The lack of data on business transfers is also an issue of concern as it may results in a lack of support for governments to produce and implement specific policies to facilitate business transfers. Within this context, it becomes clear that there is a lot of potential value in creating a common approach, methodological tools and indicators, leading to the development of a regular common monitoring mechanism for business transfers in Europe.

This initiative is based on the Commission Implementing Decision C(2013) 8202 of 26.11.2013 amending Implementing Decision C(2012) 9442 concerning the adoption of the 2013 work programme for the implementation of the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme, pursuant to European Parliament and Council Decision No 1639/2006/EC establishing a Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme — CIP (2007-2013).

## 2. OBJECTIVE OF THE CALL

### 2.1. Priority areas

The overall objective of this call is to improve the environment for business transfers. Projects to be supported under this call shall focus on one of the following priority areas:

- a) Creating trans-European models/training modules for advisors in business transfer to support the development/improvement of their skills and methods in addressing different issues that arise during the transfer process (including the psychological and emotional aspects of transfers), and adapting them to different national contexts;**
- b) Developing standards related to buyer-seller platforms to ensure the quality of the services provided by the platform;**
- c) Proposing a model of an efficient awareness-raising programme for better planning and preparation of business transfers;**
- d) Proposing measures to improve and harmonise data collection methods on transfer of business across Europe.**

### 2.2. Description of activities envisaged

**a) Creating trans-European models/training modules for advisors in business transfer to support the development/improvement of their skills and methods in addressing different issues that arise during the transfer process (including the psychological and emotional aspects of transfers), and adapting them to different national contexts;**

The Commission and the Member States need to encourage a situation where transfer is perceived as a strategically important event that enterprises should treat as a critical element in their strategic planning. Business transfer is a process during which assistance of specialised advisors is often required by many of those involved in business transfers. The level and complexity and the type of advisory services to be provided in the event of business transfer will depend on the complexity of the process and type of a business to be transferred.

Usually, the information and advice needed by smaller enterprises can often be provided by the different business support agencies/institutions. For transfers that are more complex, professional advisers specialising in business transfer are necessary. It is necessary to ensure that specialised advisers can cover the whole range of issues that arise in a transfer context, including the emotional aspects that may have a major influence on the overall outcome.

Psychological and emotional considerations (so-called 'soft' factors) are increasingly acknowledged these days as having an important effect on the process of transfer, yet consultants typically have very little or no experience in this field. It is important that a more holistic approach is adopted and that all aspects are taken into account in the support that is provided, and preferably early on. Reluctance to sell up will often mean that the transfer of know-how and skills takes place very late, if at all, with potentially serious effects on the continuity of the business.

The purpose of the call is to select organisations/institutions that will implement actions foreseen under the project proposals.

Actions under this priority area aim to develop models for advisors in business transfer to support developments of their skills and methods that will allow advisors dealing with business transfers to correctly address various issues that are likely to occur during the transfer process, including the emotional and psychological aspects related of transfers.

Actions could focus either on the creation of new models, methods/training modules or on the adaptation, improvement and further dissemination of those already in place on a condition that they have proven to be successful in their specific context. In both cases they should be easily replicated throughout Europe. The sustainability of projects needs to be ensured after the termination of EU funding.

The proposed actions could be structured according to the following steps:

- Development of models, methods/training modules (or adaptation/improvement of existing ones), based on the definition of desired outcomes, including ways of assessing their efficiency and adaptability,
- Organising cross-European dedicated training /sessions for business transfer advisors to test new models, methods/training modules. Prior to that, a group of business transfer advisors, from at least six countries, should be selected and invited to test the new tools. Criteria applied for the selection procedure shall be presented as a part of proposal,
- Broad dissemination of newly developed models/methods and training materials produced should be envisaged so that they become accessible to other advisors across Europe.

The overall expected outcome of this activity is to contribute to an improved environment for business transfers and quality of advisory services for business transfers on the whole range of issues that may arise during transfers and act as multipliers and disseminators.

#### **b) Developing standards related to buyer-seller platforms to ensure the quality of the services provided by the platform;**

The effective transfer of businesses is clearly assisted by the existence of efficient market places in which sellers and buyers can meet and also gather information about comparable opportunities and some of the subsidiary elements that are necessary for a successful deal. Because of the central importance of open, transparent markets in the facilitation of business transfer, their development has been seen as a critical element in the promotion of effective business transfers.

Such market places have existed for a long time, in the past, e.g. simple announcements of an intention to buy or sell. The emergence of the Internet has greatly facilitated this process, allowing the market place both to be open to many more participants and also to become much more sophisticated in terms of the extent and quality of the information offered and the processes involved. Impartial and trustworthy host organisation of a platform is a key success factor.

There continues to be a variety of forms taken by online markets and indeed this variety has been extended. Useful additional services have been made available such as information on transfer issues or mediation services during negotiations and tutoring. In particular, there are substantial differences in the extent to which intermediaries are active in mediating between buyers and sellers. This intermediation can take different forms. It can be as little as a reference to the possibility of professional advice right up to a compulsory checking of the information posted and intervention. A number of sites offer both possibilities, allowing clients to choose the form they wish to use. Parallel to this there is a fair degree of variation in the charges for using the online facilities.

The case for intermediation lies in the market failures relating to information transmission. Primarily, there is an asymmetry of information between seller and buyer and an intermediary can help alleviate the problem. There is also the need in many cases for confidentiality and anonymity and this can also be facilitated by the use of intermediaries. They can also play a useful role both in bridging differences between sellers and buyers, notably in relation to the perceived value of the business and also in helping to arrange finance and ensuring that the business under new ownership gets as promising a start as possible.

Currently, the number of on-line markets for business transfers is gradually growing and extending across Europe. In addition, it should be noted that all online markets are showing a gradual tendency to move beyond national boundaries and accept both businesses for sale and interest in buying from countries beyond the home country of the site. This effect could be multiplied, if more sites had links to counterparts in other countries.

However, there are cases that new online markets are not being provided by 'a neutral and trustworthy host organisation' such as Chambers of Industry and Commerce or other Business Support Organisations. Furthermore, although there is often reference to additional services, including information on transfer issues, mediation services and tutoring, and there is some evidence of a growing sophistication in such services, all the new sites do not offer sufficient and comprehensive mediation service. Therefore, even though there appear to be many positive signs taking place in the development of online markets, there is clearly still scope for additional provision to be made and especially integrated market and mediation service.

In this context, the purpose of the call is to develop a set of standards related to buyer-seller platforms so to ensure better quality of the services provided by the on-line platform, including the neutrality, confidentiality and independence of the operation.

Applicants making a proposal under section (b) of this call are requested to propose a set of standards that would provide guidance on establishing, managing and on necessary set of services that should ideally be offered by the online market places to ensure efficient and successful business transfers. These standards would facilitate comparisons between existing platforms and help throughout the process of establishing new ones.

These standards should be developed on the basis of existing knowledge, experience and best practices, and they should be created through a process that ensures that no one single interest overpowers the final result.

Proposals should contain the description of methodology that will be used to develop a set of standards, as well as the information on how these standards will be tested, disseminated and promoted.

**c) Proposing a model of an efficient awareness-raising programme for better planning and preparation of business transfers;**

Lack of forward planning and timely preparation is one of major problems in business transfers. Raising awareness about the need to prepare for the transfer a long time in advance is therefore a prerequisite and the starting point for a successful transfer.

Business owners often avoid the problem and are unwilling to think about business transfers. This is sometimes due to a short-term view, ill planning and lack of equity finance, but there are also psychological aspects that play an important role here, especially if the cause of transfer is an approaching retirement.

Once the business owner has been made aware of the need to prepare for transfer, s/he should receive initial information designed to increase the importance attached to a thorough preparation of the transfer/take-over procedure. This information should provide the entrepreneur with an overview of what exactly needs to be done and what type of more specific advice is available and where to get it.

Larger banks and various accountancy firms normally organise this type of information meeting aimed at achieving better business transfers/take-overs. Despite all these initiatives provided by various organisations that aim to raise awareness about business transfers, there is a lack of structure in the approach to providing support and insufficient coordination between the organisations providing support.

Although there are good practices in the area of awareness-raising for transfer of business, nevertheless putting in place effective 'support measures' related to awareness raising, support services and dedicated

finance measures proves difficult. Raising awareness of the need of any business to prepare for transfer remains a major challenge for the Commission and the Member States.

Therefore, under section (c) of this call, applicants are requested to design a model of a comprehensive programme that would contribute to an increased awareness of the need for early preparation for the transfer among business owners who for whatever reason are due to transfer their business.

The proposal should contain the description of methodology that will be used to develop such model, as well as the information on how this model will be tested, disseminated and promoted. The model proposed should allow for an easy replication and adaptation to different contexts.

#### **d) Proposing measures to improve and harmonise data collection methods on transfer of business across Europe**

The data on business transfer are very limited at European and national levels, and they largely depend on national studies focusing on differing aspects of the transfer situation. In addition, there are also important difficulties related to various definitions employed by each country and language related issues.

Different approaches to the data on business transfers used in different studies across the EU end in different factors, criteria and assumptions, as well data development methods, for example, in terms of firm sizes, age categories, sectors, and ways to measure ownership and control. There is also insufficient awareness among those collecting data on business transfers of what researchers in other countries are doing.

All this has also policy related consequences. The lack of reliable descriptive (what has already happened) and predictive (what is anticipated to happen) data on business transfers results in a lack of support for governments to produce and implement specific policies to facilitate business transfers. Within this context, it becomes clear that there is a lot of potential value in creating a common approach, methodological tools and indicators, leading to the development of a regular common monitoring mechanism for business transfers in Europe

The objective of this call is to improve and, to the extent possible, harmonise the data collection methods on transfer of business across Europe. There are examples of data collection in some Member States (Germany, UK and others<sup>4</sup>) that could serve as useful reference in this respect.

The applicant is requested to propose specific measures to improve and harmonise data collection methods that would contribute to better evidence base for transfer of business in Europe.

#### **2.3. Requirements applicable to all priority areas**

Proposals for all the above mentioned priority areas should be submitted by public or private entities, in consortia composed of at least 3 entities from at least 3 different participating countries, preferably from economically, socially and culturally diverse parts of Europe. Applicants need to demonstrate that they are involved in transfer of business. The participation of the same partner in more than one proposal is excluded, therefore applicants are encouraged to take the necessary measures to ensure that partners will not participate in several proposals.

<sup>4</sup> Hauser, H.-E., Kay, R. and Boerger, S. (2010), *Unternehmensnachfolgen in Deutschland 2010-2014*, IfM-Materialien 198, Institut für Mittelstandsforschung, Bonn); Oxford Economics Institute for Family Business: 'The UK Family Business Sector, Working to grow the UK economy', November 2011; BMWFJ. Mittelstandsbericht 2012. *Bericht über die Situation der kleinen und mittleren Unternehmen der gewerblichen Wirtschaft*, Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft, Familie und Jugend, Vienna; Erhvervs-og-Byggestyrelsen: EJERSKIFTE DIN VIRKSOMHEDS FREMTID and EJERSKIFTE, Statistik om ejerskifter i Danmark baseret på resultater fra spørgeskemaundersøgelse Okt./nov. 2009; *BPCE L'Observatoire: Quand les PME changent de mains (2011) & La cession-transmission des PME (2012)*; Kowalewska, A. (ed) (2010), *Firmy rodzinne w polskiej gospodarce – szanse i wyzwania*, Polska Agencja Rozwoju Przedsiębiorczości, Warsaw.

Applicants should address only one priority area of their choice from the four mentioned above. Activities foreseen under the project need to demonstrate a clear European added value by supporting European integration and transnational cooperation.

Proposals should contain a description of management of the project and the role of a lead applicant in the project management and implementation, what measures will be taken to ensure that high quality standards are applied by all consortium partners, how achievement of objectives will be monitored, and appropriate corrective measures (such as redistribution of objectives and budget) will be taken, if needed. The main risks that might be encountered and the corresponding mitigating measures should also be described.

#### 2.4. Deliverables

This call for proposals is expected to result in producing and submitting the reports foreseen under this call for proposals, in particular:

- an interim report
- a comprehensive final implementation report, describing the work undertaken and the obstacles encountered.

In addition, the following specific deliverables are to be provided under each section of the call:

- Under priority area a)
  - copy of training modules/materials,
  - description of criteria applied to the selection of advisors taking part in the testing/trainings sessions,
  - numbers and description of organisations and advisors taking part in testing training modules and being trained,
  - details on promotion and dissemination of project results, including estimate of impact.
- Under priority area b)
  - description of standards development process (how existing knowledge, best practices were used and what measures were taken to ensure that all interests were equally taken into consideration
  - numbers and description of organisations/persons involved in testing standards related to buyer-seller platforms
  - details on promotion and dissemination of project results –, including estimate of impact.
- Under priority area c)
  - description of main stages of model development process (how existing knowledge, best practices were used)
  - numbers and description of organisations/persons involved in testing the awareness-raising programme
  - details on promotion and dissemination of project results , including estimate of impact.
- Under priority area d)
  - Outline of possible common methodology that could be used across Europe to produce comparable information on transfer of business

- details on promotion and dissemination of project results, including estimate of impact.

In accordance with article I.4.3 of the grant agreement, all reports should be submitted in English.

The assessment of the deliverables and the subsequent acceptance of efforts and costs claimed by the participants will be done on the basis of the achievement of the objectives stated in the proposal.

### 3. TIMETABLE

Scheduled start-up date for the action: After signature of grant agreement

Maximum duration of actions is: 18 months

No applications will be accepted for projects scheduled to run for a longer period than that specified in this call for proposals.

The period of eligibility of costs will start at the earliest on the day the agreement is signed by the last of the parties. If a beneficiary can demonstrate the need to start the action before the agreement is signed, the expenditure may be eligible as from a date before the agreement is signed. Under no circumstances can the eligibility period start before the date of submission of the grant application.

	Stages	Date and time or indicative period
a)	Publication of the call	By 20 December
b)	Deadline for submitting applications	05/03/2014 [17:00 Brussels local time]
c)	Information to applicants	May 2014
d)	Signature of grant agreement or notification of grant decision	June 2014
e)	Starting date of the action/ work programme	After signature of grant agreement

The indicative calendar for projects co-financed under this call for proposals is as follows:

Interim report	9 months after signature of grant agreement
Submission of final implementation reports	After completion of the project

### 4. EU FINANCING

**Maximum budget** allocated for EU financing under this call: € 700 000.

**Indicative number of projects:** Funding will be awarded for maximum 5 projects.

**Maximum EU financing rate** of eligible costs: 70 %.

**Maximum EU financing amount** per project: € 250 000 per project.

**Proposals with an EU co-financing beyond any of the above two maxima will not be eligible.**

The Commission reserves the right to award a grant of less than the amount requested by the applicant. In such a case, applicants will be asked either to increase their co-financing, propose other co-financing means or to decrease the total costs without altering the substance of the proposal. Grants will not be awarded for more than the amount requested.

Publication of the call (on the Commission Internet site and/or in the Official Journal) does not guarantee the availability of funds for the above action.

## **4.1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF EU FUNDING**

### Non-cumulative award

Each action may give rise to the award of only one grant from the budget to any one beneficiary.

In no circumstances shall the same costs be financed twice by the Union budget.

Applicants have to inform the Commission immediately of any multiple applications and multiple grants relating to the same action. The applicant shall inform about sources and amounts of EU funding received or applied for the same action or for part of the action. Applicants shall indicate if they receive EU funding for their functioning during the financial year in which the action takes place.

### Non-retroactivity

No grant may be awarded retrospectively for actions already completed.

### Co-financing

Grants shall involve co-financing, which implies that the resources necessary to carry out the action or the work programme shall not be provided entirely by EU contribution. EU financing may not cover 100% of the total costs of the action.

Co-financing of the action or of the work programme may take the form of:

- the beneficiary's own resources,
- income generated by the action or work programme,
- financial contributions from third parties.

### Non-profit rule

EU grant may not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit within the framework of the action of the work programme of the beneficiary.

Where a profit is made, the Commission is entitled to recover the percentage of the profit corresponding to the EU contribution to the eligible costs actually incurred. For this purpose, profit shall be defined as a surplus of the receipts over the eligible costs incurred, when the request for payment of the balance is made.

### Balanced budget

The estimated budget of the action or work programme is to be attached to the application form. It must have revenue and expenditure in balance.

The budget must be drawn up in euros.

Applicants, who foresee that costs will not be incurred in euros, are invited to use the exchange rate published on the Infor-euro website available at [http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts\\_grants/info\\_contracts/inforeuro/inforeuro\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuro/inforeuro_en.cfm).

## 4.2. ELIGIBLE COSTS

In order to be eligible for funding, costs should be actually incurred by the beneficiary and meet the following criteria:

- they are incurred during the duration of the action or work programme, as indicated in the grant agreement, with the exception of costs relating to the request for payment of the balance and the corresponding supporting documents (audit certificates);
- they are indicated in the estimated budget of the action or work programme;
- they are necessary for the implementation of the action or of the work programme, in accordance with the description of the action, attached to the grant agreement;
- they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular being recorded in the accounting records of the beneficiary and determined according to the applicable accounting standards of the country where the beneficiary is established and according to the usual cost accounting practices of the beneficiary;
- they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation;
- they are reasonable, justified, and comply with the principle of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency.

The beneficiary's internal accounting and auditing procedures must permit direct reconciliation of the costs and revenue declared in respect of the action/project with the corresponding accounting statements and supporting documents.

The costs made by affiliated entities can be eligible, provided that:

- the entities concerned are identified in the grant agreement;
- the entities concerned abide by the rules applicable to the beneficiary under the grant agreement with regard to eligibility of costs and rights of checks and audits by the Commission, OLAF and the Court of Auditors.

**Please note that the exact scope of the eligibility of costs is defined by the grant agreement, which will be signed with the successful applicants.**

### 4.2.1. Eligible direct costs

Direct costs of the action are those specific costs which are directly linked to the implementation of the action and can therefore be attributed directly to it. They shall not include any eligible indirect costs.

The following categories of costs can be considered as eligible direct costs:

- the costs of personnel working under an employment contract with the beneficiary or an equivalent appointing act and assigned to the action, comprising actual salaries plus social security contributions and other statutory costs included in the remuneration, provided that these costs are in line with the beneficiary's usual policy on remuneration. Those costs may also include additional remunerations, including payments on the basis of supplementary contracts regardless of the nature

of those contracts, provided that they are paid in a consistent manner whenever the same kind of work or expertise is required, independently from the source of funding used.

- salary costs of the personnel of national administrations to the extent that they relate to the cost of activities which the relevant public authority would not carry out if the project concerned were not undertaken.
- costs of travel and related subsistence allowances, provided that these costs are in line with the beneficiary's usual practices on travel;
- the depreciation costs of equipment or other assets (new or second-hand) as recorded in the accounting statements of the beneficiary, provided that the asset has been purchased in accordance with the conditions applicable to implementation contracts and that it is written off in accordance with the international accounting standards and the usual accounting practices of the beneficiary
- costs of consumables and supplies, provided that they are purchased in accordance with the conditions applicable to implementation contracts;
- costs arising directly from requirements imposed by the grant agreement (dissemination of information, specific evaluation of the action, audits, translations, reproduction), including the costs of requested financial guarantees, provided that the corresponding services are purchased in accordance with the conditions applicable to implementation contracts;
- costs entailed by subcontracts, concluded for the externalisation of specific tasks or activities which form part of the action or workprogramme as described in the proposal, provided that the conditions with the conditions applicable to implementation contracts are met;
- costs of financial support to third parties, in accordance with the conditions set by the grant agreement for such financing;
- duties, taxes and charges paid by the beneficiary, provided that they are included in eligible direct costs, and unless specified otherwise in the Agreement;
- non-deductible VAT is eligible.

#### **4.2.2. Eligible indirect costs**

A flat-rate amount of 7% of the total eligible direct costs of the action is eligible under indirect costs, representing the beneficiary's general administrative costs which can be regarded as chargeable to the action/project.

Indirect costs may not include costs entered under another budget heading.

Indirect costs are not eligible for beneficiaries that receive an operating grant from the European Commission.

#### **4.2.3. Non-eligible costs**

In addition to any other costs which do not fulfill the conditions set out in Article II.19.1, the following costs shall not be considered eligible:

- return on capital;
- debt and debt service charges;
- provisions for losses or debts;
- interest owed;
- doubtful debts;
- exchange losses;
- costs of transfers from the Commission charged by the bank of a beneficiary;

- costs declared by the beneficiary in the framework of another action receiving a grant financed from the Union budget (including grants awarded by a Member State and financed from the Union budget and grants awarded by other bodies than the Commission for the purpose of implementing the Union budget);
- in particular, indirect costs shall not be eligible under a grant for an action awarded to a beneficiary which already receives an operating grant financed from the Union budget during the period in question;
- contributions in kind from third parties;
- excessive or reckless expenditure;
- deductible VAT;
- participation by any staff of the institutions in actions receiving grants;
- any other costs which have been specified as ineligible in the call for proposal.

In addition to the above, the Commission can refuse to finance certain costs included in the proposal. The beneficiary can decide to maintain and finance these costs out of his own resources, but they will not be taken into account as eligible costs.

### **4.3. CO-FINANCING AND JOINT AND SEVERAL RESPONSIBILITY**

The beneficiary has to supply evidence of the co-financing provided. It can be provided either by way of own resources, or in the form of financial transfers from third parties,

In case of a joint application, all partners shall agree upon appropriate arrangements between themselves for the proper performance of the action.

In particular, they shall accept joint and several responsibility up to the value of the contribution that the beneficiary held liable is entitled to receive, as stipulated in the General Conditions of the draft grant agreement.

The final grant agreement shall be signed by each applicant. Alternatively it shall be signed by the appointed co-ordinator, provided that a power of attorney has been conferred to this entity (Annex IV of the draft grant agreement).

### **4.4. IMPLEMENTATION CONTRACTS/SUBCONTRACTING**

Where the implementation of the action or the work programme requires the use of contracts (implementation contracts), the beneficiary must ensure that the contract is awarded to the bid offering best value for money or the lowest price (as appropriate), avoiding conflicts of interests and retain the documentation for the event of an audit.

Entities acting in their capacity of contracting authorities shall abide by the applicable national public procurement rules, in the meaning of Directive 2004/18/EC on the coordination of procedures for the award of public work contracts, public supply contracts and public service contracts or contracting entities in the meaning of Directive 2004/17/EC coordinating the procurement procedures of entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors.

#### **Sub-contracting for the purpose of the action**

Sub-contracting refers to contracts concluded for the externalisation of specific tasks or activities which form part of the action or work programme as described in the proposal. Such contracts must satisfy the conditions applicable to any implementation contract and, in addition, the following conditions:

- Subcontracting may only cover the implementation of a limited part of the action up to 30% of the eligible costs.
- It must be justified having regard to the nature of the action and what is necessary for its implementation;

- The proposal should clearly identify the subcontracted activities

**Subcontracting does not in any way limit the responsibility of beneficiaries for the implementation of the action. Please note that the beneficiary(ies) should have the necessary capacity to perform the project. Only tasks that are not core business can be sub-contracted to consultants.**

**It is not necessary to have already selected subcontractors at the time the proposal is submitted. However, cost of contractors not selected in accordance with the applicable rules for procurement will not be eligible.**

#### **4.5. FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO THIRD PARTIES**

The applications may not envisage provision of financial support to third parties.

#### **4.6. FINAL GRANT AND PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

The draft grant agreement annexed to this call for proposals specifies the calculation of the final grant and the payment arrangements.

Your attention is in particular drawn to the General Conditions of the grant agreement, where the eligibility of costs is described. Detailed explanations and a description how costs should be budgeted and reported can be found in the Guide for Applicants.

EU grant may not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit within the framework of the action of the work programme of the beneficiary. Where a profit is made, the Commission is entitled to recover the percentage of the profit corresponding to the EU contribution to the eligible costs actually incurred. For this purpose, profit is defined as a surplus of the receipts over the eligible costs incurred by the beneficiary, when the request is made for payment of the balance. Where such a surplus occurs, the Commission is entitled to recover the percentage of the profit corresponding to the EU contribution to the eligible costs actually incurred by the beneficiary.

The Commission may require the beneficiary to lodge a guarantee for grants exceeding € 60 000, based on a risk analysis.

In the event that the applicant's financial capacity is not satisfactory, a pre-financing guarantee for up to the same amount as the pre-financing may be requested in order to limit the financial risks linked to the pre-financing payment.

The financial guarantee, in euro, shall be provided by an approved bank or financial institution established in one of the Member State of the European Union. When the beneficiary is established in a third country, the authorising officer responsible may agree that a bank or financial institution established in that third country may provide the guarantee if he considers that the bank or financial institution offers equivalent security and characteristics as those offered by a bank or financial institution established in a Member State. Amounts blocked in bank accounts shall not be accepted as financial guarantees.

The guarantee may be replaced by a joint and several guarantee by a third party or by a joint guarantee of the beneficiaries of an action who are parties to the same grant agreement.

## **5. ELIGIBILITY**

**APPLICATIONS MUST COMPLY WITH ALL OF THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA SET OUT IN THIS SECTION.**

## 5.1. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Applications from legal entities established in one of the CIP countries are eligible:

- EU Member States
- EEA countries: Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway
- Acceding/candidate countries: the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey
- Other countries: Albania and Israel

Proposals must be submitted by public or private entities, in consortia composed of at least 3 entities from at least 3 different participating countries. Applicants need to demonstrate that they are involved in transfer of business.

Applicants shall address in their proposals only one priority area of their choice from the four priority areas described in point 2.2.

The Commission may select proposals from applicants in participating countries, provided that, on the date of selection, agreements have been signed setting out the arrangements for the participation of those countries in the programme established by the Decision referred to under point 1 of this call.

The transnational nature of the project must be demonstrated by submitting form A/2 to the submission set duly filled in and signed from the partner organisations in order to confirm their participation (original signatures required).

Several applicants, submitting a joint proposal should choose within their midst a lead organisation, referred to as the coordinator.

All applicants must satisfy the same eligibility criteria.

- Applications must be submitted by a legal person.
- Applicants must correspond to the definition of the following target organisations: any public or private entity whose activities involve transfer of business.. Such entities may include:
  - public entities responsible for or active in the fields of economic affairs, enterprise, business support or related issues, e.g. national/regional authorities, governmental agencies
  - education and training providers (public and private);
  - chambers of commerce and industry, chambers of handicrafts or similar bodies,
  - business support organisations,
  - business associations and business support networks.
- Corporate bodies must be properly constituted and registered under the law. If a body or organisation is not constituted under the law, a physical person must be designated to provide the legal responsibility.
- Legal entities having a legal or capital link with applicants, which is neither limited to the action nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation, may take part in the action as affiliated entities, and may declare eligible costs. For that purpose, applicants shall identify such affiliated entities in the application form. The affiliated entities will have to comply with the eligibility and exclusion criteria.

- Several entities that form together one entity, whether or not this entity is established for the purpose of implementing the action, may apply as a sole beneficiary. The entities will be considered as affiliated entities, which each will have to comply with eligibility, exclusion and selection criteria.
- Participation of the same partner in more than one proposal is excluded.

### **Supporting documents**

Subject to the eligibility criteria indicated above, the applicants should provide the following supporting documents to establish their eligibility:

- **private entity:** extract from the official journal, copy of articles of association, extract of trade or association register, certificate of liability to VAT (if, as in certain countries, the trade register number and VAT number are identical, only one of these documents is required);
- **public entity:** copy of the resolution or decision establishing the public company, or other official document establishing the public-law entity;
- **consortium:** in addition to the supporting documents referring to their legal status, consortium members will submit letters confirming their participation to the project;
- **natural persons:** photocopy of identity card and/or passport;
- **entities without legal personality:** documents providing evidence that their representative(s) have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf.

## **5.2. ADMISSIBLE AND ELIGIBLE PROPOSALS**

Applications must comply with the following conditions in order to be eligible for a grant:

- Applications must be sent no later than the deadline for submitting applications referred to in section 9.
- Applications must be submitted in writing, using the application form and the electronic submission system, as indicated in the Guide for Applicants.
- Applications must be drafted in one of the EU official Languages. If your proposal is not in English, a translation of the full proposal would be of assistance to the evaluators. An English translation of an abstract may be included in the proposal (see Guide for Applicants).
- Proposals must be submitted in conformity with the call specifications;
- Only projects that are strictly non-profit-making and/or whose immediate objective is non-commercial shall be eligible.
- Applications must respect the maximum rate for EU co-financing.
- Applications must respect the maximum amount for EU co-financing.
- Applications must respect the maximum duration of projects.
- Applications may not include contributions in kind as part of their co-financing.

In this context, will be rejected any project directly or indirectly contrary to EU policy or against public health, human rights, citizen's security or freedom of expression.

## 6. EXCLUSION CRITERIA

### 6.1. EXCLUSION FROM PARTICIPATION

Applicants will be excluded from participating in the call for proposals procedure if they are in any of the following situations:

- they are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- they or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment of a competent authority of a Member State which has the force of *res judicata*;
- they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the Commission can justify, including by decisions of the European Investment Bank and international organisations;
- they are not in compliance with their obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the contracting authority or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;
- they or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of *res judicata* for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation, money laundering or any other illegal activity, where such illegal activity is detrimental to the Union's financial interests;
- they are subject to an administrative penalty referred to in Article 109(1) Financial Regulation (see section 6.3).

The same exclusion criteria apply to affiliated entities.

### 6.2. EXCLUSION FROM AWARD

Applicants will not be granted financial assistance if, in the course of the grant award procedure, they:

- are subject to a conflict of interest;
- are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the Commission as a condition of participation in the grant award procedure or fail to supply this information;
- find themselves in one of the situations of exclusion, referred to in article 106 Financial Regulation (see section 6.3)

The same exclusion criteria apply to affiliated entities.

### 6.3. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Applicants must sign a declaration on their honour certifying that they are not in one of the situations referred to by filling in the “**Exclusion Criteria Form**” (**form B4**).

Administrative and financial penalties may be imposed on applicants, or affiliated entities where applicable, who are guilty of misrepresentation.

By using the “Exclusion Criteria Form” applicants shall declare on their honour that they are not in one of the situations referred to in Articles 106 and 107 of the Regulation (EC, Euratom) n° 966/2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (Financial Regulation).

Please note that, according to articles 109 and 131.4 of Regulation (EC, Euratom) n° 966/2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (Financial Regulation) and according to article 145 of the Commission Delegated Regulation (EC, Euratom) n° 2342/2002 on the rules of application of the Financial Regulation, administrative and financial penalties may be imposed by the Commission on applicants who are excluded in relation to points a) to h) of the form in question.

For grants with a value exceeding € 60 000, the Commission may require further evidence, as indicated in article 143 Rules of Application.

## 7. SELECTION

### 7.1. FINANCIAL CAPACITY

Applicants must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activity throughout the period during which the action is being carried out or the year for which the grant is awarded and to participate in its funding. The applicants' financial capacity will be assessed on the basis of the following supporting documents to be submitted with the application:

For grants of a total value < EUR 60 000:

- a declaration on honour

For grants of a total value ≥ EUR 60 000, in addition:

- a declaration on honour and,
- form B/5 provided for in the submission set, filled in with the relevant statutory accounting figures. Other documents may be submitted if needed (see IV.4 Guide to applicants)

For grants for an action ≥ EUR 750 000 or operating grants ≥ EUR 100 000, in addition:

- an audit report produced by an approved external auditor certifying the accounts for the last financial year available.
- In the event of an application grouping several applicants (consortium), the above threshold regarding audit reports applies per applicant.
- In the case of affiliated entities forming together **one** sole applicant, the above requirements apply to each of the affiliated entity.

### 7.2. OPERATIONAL CAPACITY

Applicants must show they have the **operational (technical and management) capacity** to complete the operation to be supported and must **demonstrate their capacity to manage scale activity** corresponding to the size of the project for which the grant is requested. In particular, the **team responsible** for the project/operation must have **adequate professional qualifications and experience**.

In this respect, applicants have to submit a declaration on their honour, and the following supporting documents:

Applicants must prove that they have at least three years of experience in activities related to the transfer of business or in providing and organising services/trainings related to this field.

- Applicants must demonstrate experience in cooperating with partners in other European countries and in running projects and activities at transnational and European level.
- In order to prove their experience as specified above, applicants will need to submit a list of projects carried out in the last 3 years (whether funded by the EU or not).
- Furthermore, applicants must include with their grant application form a curriculum vitae (CV) for each member of the team that will primarily be responsible for managing and implementing the action as well as professional references.

The CVs should preferably be submitted in the Europass format, which can be found at:

<http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/documents/curriculum-vitae>

Applicants must be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the project, and not be acting as an intermediary.

In the case of affiliated entities forming together a sole applicant, the above requirements apply to each affiliate entity.

The selection procedure is described in further detail in the Guide for Applicants.

## 8. AWARD

An evaluation of the quality of proposals, including the proposed budget, will be carried out in accordance with the evaluation criteria set out in annex 3 to this call for proposals.

The evaluation procedure is described in further detail in the Guide for Applicants.

## 9. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

**Please note that only electronic submissions are allowed for this call.**

**Please consult the Guide for Applicants for the modalities of preparing the proposal.**

**Submission of a grant application implies acceptance of the conditions of the grant agreement, attached to this call**

**The deadline for submission of proposals is:**

**05/03/2014 [17:00 Brussels local time]**

## 10. CONTACTS

Contacts between the contracting authority and potential applicants can only take place in certain circumstances and under the following conditions only:

Before the final date for submission of proposals,

- At the request of the applicant, the Commission may provide additional information solely for the purpose of clarifying the nature of the call.
- Any requests for additional information must be made in writing only to the coordinates stated below.
- The Commission may, on its own initiative, inform interested parties of any error, inaccuracy, omission or other clerical error in the text of the call for proposals.
- Any additional information including that referred to above will be published on the internet in concordance with the various call for proposals documents.

After the deadline for submission of proposals:

- If clarification is requested or if obvious clerical errors in the proposal need to be corrected, the Commission will contact the applicant provided the terms of the proposal are not modified as a result.
- If the authorising officer finds that those proposals, which have been listed for award needs limited adaptations to their proposal. In such case, these applicants will receive a formal letter setting out the requested modifications. Any such modifications must stay within the limits of the request. This phase will not lead to a re-evaluation of the proposals, but a proposal might be rejected if the applicant does not wish to comply with the modifications requested.

**Contact coordinates for the call:**

European Commission
Enterprise and Industry Directorate-General
Directorate D —SMEs and Entrepreneurship
Unit D.1 — Entrepreneurship 2020
E-mail address: ENTR-CFP-CIP13-TOB@ec.europa.eu
Office address: BREY 06/290, B-1049 Brussels, Belgium

## 11. DATA PROTECTION

The reply to any call for proposals involves the recording and processing of personal data (such as name, address and CV). Such data will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data. Unless indicated otherwise, the questions and any personal data requested are required to evaluate the application in accordance with the specifications of the call for proposal will be processed solely for that purpose by Unit D.1 – Entrepreneurship 2020, Directorate D – SMEs and Entrepreneurship, Enterprise and Industry Directorate-General, European Commission.

Details concerning the processing of personal data are available on the privacy statement at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/dataprotectionofficer/privacystatement\\_publicprocurement\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dataprotectionofficer/privacystatement_publicprocurement_en.pdf).

Personal data may be registered in the Early Warning System (EWS) only or both in the EWS and Central Exclusion Database (CED) by the Accounting Officer of the Commission, should the beneficiary be in one of the situations mentioned in:

- the Commission Decision 2008/969 of 16.12.2008 on the Early Warning System

(for more information see the Privacy Statement on:

[http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts\\_grants/info\\_contracts/legal\\_entities/legal\\_entities\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm) ),

or

- the Commission Regulation 2008/1302 of 17.12.2008 on the Central Exclusion Database (for more information see the Privacy Statement on

[http://ec.europa.eu/budget/expained/management/protecting/protect\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/expained/management/protecting/protect_en.cfm)).

## 12. PUBLICITY

Beneficiaries must clearly acknowledge the European Union's contribution in all publications or in conjunction with activities for which the grant is used.

In this respect, beneficiaries are required to give prominence to the name and emblem of the European Commission on all their publications, posters, programmes and other products realised under the co-financed project.

To do this they must use the text, the emblem and the disclaimer available at [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/services/visual\\_identity/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/services/visual_identity/index_en.htm). If this requirement is not fully complied with, the beneficiary's grant may be reduced in accordance with the provisions of the grant agreement or grant decision.

With the exception of scholarships paid to natural persons and other direct support paid to natural persons in most need, all information relating to grants awarded in the course of a financial year shall be published on an internet site of the European Union institutions no later than the 30 June of the year following the financial year in which the grants were awarded.

The Commission will publish the following information:

- name of the beneficiary;
- address of the beneficiary (legal persons) or reference to the region (natural persons);
- subject of the grant;
- amount awarded.

Upon a reasoned and duly substantiated request by the beneficiary, the publication shall be waived if such disclosure risks threatening the rights and freedoms of individuals concerned as protected by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union or harm the commercial interests of the beneficiaries.

### **13. ANNEX 1 SUBMISSION SET**

The Submission Set can be downloaded from the following page: <http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/contracts-grants/calls-for-proposals/>

## 14. ANNEX 2 GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

The Guide for Applicants can be downloaded from the following page:  
<http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/contracts-grants/calls-for-proposals/>

## 15. ANNEX 3 EVALUATION CRITERIA

When assessing the below evaluation criteria, the evaluation committee generally pays attention to the elements indicated below each criterion. Please note that these elements, which are indicative and non-exhaustive, are given on the basis of transparency and in order to help applicants to improve their applications.

EVALUATION CRITERIA AND KEY ELEMENTS LIKELY TO BE ASSESSED BY THE EVALUATION COMMITTEE	MAX. SCORE
<b>1. Relevance</b>	<b>20</b>
To what extent the proposal addresses the general objectives of the call?	
To what extent the proposal clearly fit into one of the priority areas listed in the call?	
How relevant are activities foreseen in the proposal to the required actions under the priority area of the call?	
To what extent is the proposal likely to address the issues indicated in the call's description of actions required under a specific priority area?	
<b>2. Quality</b>	<b>30</b>
How coherent is the overall project design, including preparedness for evaluation?	
To what extent is the methodology proposed to develop actions under this call likely to deliver high quality result?	
How clear and feasible is the plan of action?	
To what extent does the proposal contain specific elements contributing to its added value, e.g. innovative approaches, proposals for good practice dissemination and replication?	
To what extent measures are foreseen to ensure the overall quality of project management, including quality control and risk management?	
<b>3. Impact</b>	<b>35</b>
To what extent is the project likely to improve the environment and conditions for transfer of business?	
To what extent do the structure of the project and its implementation strategy allow for, or facilitate a continuity of the activity after the duration of the action (either by the applicant or by other organisations)?	
To what extent are the proposed activities demonstrating a clear European added value by supporting transnational cooperation?	
To what extent are the proposed models/standards transferable and applicable to different contexts in different Member States?	
To what extent dissemination tools and measures proposed are likely to reach the intended audience so as to create the greatest and most appropriate impact?	

What are concrete and objectively verifiable indicators for project outcomes proposed within the proposal?	
<b>4. Budget and Cost-effectiveness</b>	<b>15</b>
To what extent is the budget clear and detailed?	
Does the breakdown of the budget, category by category, offer a way of ensuring that the amount of the grant awarded is the minimum necessary for the operation to be completed?	
Are the probable results of the project in a reasonable relationship to the amount of the grant?	
To what extent are there no better ways of achieving the expected results?	
To what extent is the proposed expenditure relevant and/or necessary for the implementation of the project?	
<b>Maximum total score</b>	<b>100</b>

If a total score lower than 70% points or a score lower than 50% for any of the above four criteria is obtained, the proposal will not be evaluated further.

## 16. ANNEX 4 - AGREEMENT

- [Multi-beneficiary Grant agreement for action](#)