



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL HUMANITARIAN AID AND CIVIL PROTECTION - ECHO

Directorate A - Strategy, Policy and International Cooperation
Unit A3- Policy and Implementation Frameworks

POLICY SUPPORT

ECHO/POS/BUD/2011/01000

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST
under Commission Decision on the financing of Policy Support
for improving the quality and effectiveness of humanitarian aid

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS: FRIDAY 29 APRIL 2011

1. Background

The activities of the Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (DG ECHO) in the framework of the Policy Support Decision aim to improve the quality and effectiveness of humanitarian aid delivered by non-governmental humanitarian organisations, non-profit organisations, European research institutes, universities, academic and policy institutions, and networks of non-profit humanitarian organisation or within its services by awarding service or procurement contracts.

On 2 March 2011, the European Commission adopted Decision ECHO/POS/BUD/2011/01000 on the financing of Policy Support to improve the quality and effectiveness of humanitarian aid from the general budget of the European Union for an amount of EUR 2,000,000. The implementing period of this Decision runs from 1 January 2011 until 31 December 2012.

In accordance with objective 2 of this Decision, DG ECHO will support European networks of humanitarian NGOs with the aim of reinforcing their networking capacity. The selection of networks' proposals under this call for expression of interest will lead to the conclusion of an operating grant with the successful applicant organisation(s).

The purpose of these guidelines is to set out the rules for the submission and selection of project proposals under objective 2 of this Decision, in conformity with the provisions of DG ECHO's Framework Partnership Agreement and the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Union.

Applicants should consult thoroughly the texts of the Decision and the Supporting Document as they form the legal basis for this call.

http://ec.europa.eu/echo/funding/opportunities/other_en.htm

The present guidelines complement these documents by providing additional practical information to interested applicants.

2. Objectives of the programme and priority issues

The principle objective of the Decision is to increase the coherence, quality and effectiveness of humanitarian aid.

Specific objective 2 of the Decision:

- Reinforcing networking between humanitarian non-governmental organisations.

To enhance cooperation and coordination between European NGOs regarding the rules and procedures applicable to EU funded humanitarian aid, and in particular to raise awareness of and engagement with the promotion of humanitarian principles and development of humanitarian sector policies.

Applicants are kindly invited to read carefully chapter 2 (pages 2-5) of the Supporting Document to obtain a full and detailed description of the type of actions that will be selected for funding under Decision ECHO/POS/BUD/2011/01000.

As a result of this call, the strengthened networking between humanitarian non-governmental organisations will engage with DG ECHO policy products to improve their quality, coherence, and their application both within the network and beyond.

3. Financial allocation provided by DG ECHO

Grants awarded under this Decision shall, in principle, be between EUR 100,000 and 400,000.

No grant may exceed 85 % of the total eligible costs of the action. The balance must be financed from the applicant's own resources, or from resources other than the European Union budget or the European Development Fund.

4. Duration of the projects

The proposed projects must be completed during the duration of the financing Decision. The period of implementation cannot go beyond the end date of the Decision which is 31 December 2012.

5. Eligibility criteria

Chapter 2 of the Supporting Document defines clearly the eligibility criteria for specific objective 2 and in particular:

- the type of actions for which an application can be made;
- the organisations who may apply.

It is recommended to read carefully Chapter 2 of the Supporting Document before submitting any Single Form.

5.1 Eligibility of the applicant

The eligibility verification of the applicant, based on the supporting documents requested by DG ECHO will only be performed for the applications that have been provisionally selected.

For the purpose of this call for expression of interest, the applicant organisation must be a European network of non-profit organisations:

- which are a non-profit legal person; and
- which have their main headquarters in a Member State of the European Union; and
- with a minimum of 4 FPA-partners as active member of the network; and
- with a minimum of 1 FPA-partner as a member of the steering board or committee of the network.

Where applicable, the following documents will be requested, once the proposal has been selected:

- the statutes or articles of association of the applicant organisation;

- the profit and loss account and the balance sheet for the last available financial year;
- an external audit report produced by an independent auditor, certifying the applicant's accounts for the last available financial year;
- a legal entity sheet - format see :
http://ec.europa.eu/budget/info_contract/legal_entities_en.htm#en_es_fr
- a financial identification form - format see:
http://ec.europa.eu/budget/info_contract/ftiers_en.htm

5.2 Eligible activities

The engagement of the network would contribute to the development and dissemination of DG ECHO humanitarian policies and principles through activities such as working groups, consolidated inputs from network members, advocacy forums, workshops, and possibly the facilitation of training modules.

5.3 Eligibility of costs

Costs will be eligible at the earliest from the date of reception by DG ECHO of the first version of the Single Form. Subsequent versions of the Single Form do not change the start date of this eligibility period for expenses.

Contributions in kind are not considered actual expenditure and are not eligible costs. Contributions in kind may not be treated as co-financing by the beneficiary.

Eligible costs of the work programme are costs actually incurred by the beneficiary, which meet the following criteria:

- they are incurred during the duration of the work programme as specified in Article I.2.2 of the agreement, with the exception of costs relating to final reports and certificates on the financial statements and underlying accounts;
- they are connected with the subject of the agreement and they are indicated in the estimated overall budget of the work programme;
- they are necessary for the implementation of the work programme which is the subject of the grant;
- 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 requirements of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency.

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

In particular, the following operating costs are eligible provided that they satisfy the criteria set out in the previous paragraph:

- the cost of staff, comprising actual salaries plus social security charges and other statutory costs included in the remuneration, provided that this does not exceed the average rates corresponding to the beneficiary's usual policy on remuneration;

The corresponding salary costs of personnel of national administrations are eligible 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;

- travel and subsistence allowances for staff, provided that they are in line with the beneficiary's usual practices on travel costs or do not exceed the scales approved annually by the Commission;
- the purchase cost of equipment (new or second-hand), provided that it is written off in accordance with the tax and accounting rules applicable to the beneficiary and generally accepted for items of the same kind. Only the portion of the equipment's depreciation corresponding to the period of eligibility for Union funding covered by the agreement may be taken into account by the Commission, except where the nature and/or the context of its use justifies different treatment by the Commission;
- costs of consumables and supplies;
- costs entailed by other contracts awarded by the beneficiary for the purposes of implementing the work programme, provided that the conditions laid down in Article II.7 are met;
- costs arising directly from requirements imposed by the agreement (in particular, audit costs), including the costs of any financial services (especially the cost of financial guarantees);
- overheads.

The following costs shall not be considered eligible:

- capital increases and return on capital;
- debt and debt service charges;
- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- interest owed;
- doubtful debts;
- exchange losses;
- VAT, unless the beneficiary can show that he is unable to recover it according to the applicable national legislation;
- costs declared and covered by a specific action receiving a Union grant;

- excessive or reckless expenditure.

6. Evaluation and selection of applications

Applications will be examined and evaluated by DG ECHO. All proposals submitted by applicants will be assessed according to the following two steps:

- If the examination of the application reveals that the proposed action does not meet the eligibility criteria stated in chapter 2 of the Supporting Document, the application shall be rejected solely on this basis.
- An evaluation of the quality of the application, including the proposed budget, and of the capacity of the applicant and its partners, will be carried out in accordance with the following criteria:
 - o the relevance of the proposal to the specific objective;
 - o the added value in improving the quality of humanitarian aid and in increasing its effectiveness;
 - o the proposed methodology, experience and quality of the logical framework;
 - o budget and cost-effectiveness;
 - o individual proposal or proposal introduced by several partners;
 - o the contribution to DG ECHO's visibility.

It should be noted that the Commission will only guarantee the allocation of funds once a specific agreement to finance a project proposal approved by the Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection enters into force.

7. Complementary information

Questions may be sent by e-mail to echo-policies@ec.europa.eu

8. How and where to send an application

8.1 E-Single forms

Single Forms will be submitted to DG ECHO using APPEL (e-SingleForm). The Single Form guidelines intend to help the applicants complete the Single Form. The single form Guidelines are available at the following address: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/about/actors/fpa_en.htm

Applications should preferably be in English or French in order to avoid administrative delays for translation.

8.2 Deadline for submission of applications

The deadline for submission of applications is Friday 29 April 2011 - 24H00 Brussels time. For reasons of administrative efficiency, DG ECHO may reject any application received after the above mentioned deadline.

8.3 Acknowledgement of receipts

DG ECHO will send an acknowledgement of receipt to all applicants, indicating the date of receipt and informing them of the reference number they have been allocated. Any further correspondence related to the application and selection process should use this reference number.

9. Notification of DG ECHO's decision

Applicants will be informed in writing of DG ECHO's decision concerning their application, and, in case of rejection, the reason for the negative decision. The indicative date for the notifications of award or rejection is end March 2011. The indicative date for signature of the grant agreements is April 2011.

10. Contact persons:

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