

# **Re-published call for proposals for buffer capacities for addressing temporary shortcomings in extraordinary disasters**

## **Q&A**

### **1. Can you highlight the main differences between the re-published call for proposals for buffer capacities, launched in June 2015 and the initial call for proposals for buffer capacities, launched in January 2015?**

The following main changes were made to the re-published call for proposals for buffer capacities ("re-published call") compared to the initial call for proposals for buffer capacities ("initial call"):

- Shortening of the duration of the action (see chapter 5 of the Guide for Applicants): the initial call required the action to cover the period from 1 July 2015 – 15 September 2015 and 15 June 2016 – 15 September 2016, whilst the re-published call requires the action to cover only the period from 15 June 2016 – 15 September 2016;
- Clarification that a single grant application could cover only one module or equivalent of forest fire fighting using planes out of the maximum of two expected (see chapter 2 of the Guide for Applicants);
- Update on the eligible applicants to include Montenegro and Serbia and clarification of the status of Turkey and FYRoM (see chapter 8 of the Guide for Applicants): the re-published call clarifies that in order to be eligible under the call, FYRoM and Turkey's respective Agreements for participation in the Union Civil Protection Mechanism must by the deadline for the submission of proposal(s) have entered into force;
- Clarification on the kind of capacities that can be proposed as buffer capacities (see chapter 5 the of the Guide for Applicants): references to 'additional' capacities that appeared in the initial call were removed and replaced with the exact wording of Article 24(3) of the Implementing Decision 2014/762/EU, meaning that buffer capacities are now defined as capacities that top up existing capacities that are available as part of national preparedness. A Statement must be signed by the relevant national authority attesting that this requirement is fulfilled.

### **2. What types of costs related to exercises can be co-financed?**

Article 21(2)(d) of Decision 1313/2013/EU states that the funding "...may cover [...] the costs of developing standard operating procedures and exercises to ensure the

effective use of assets". As a result, Chapter 4 of the Grant Application Guide for this call for proposals specifies that 100% of above costs may be covered under the EU grant.

Eligible exercise-related costs may include all costs required to develop and carry out the exercise, provided that they comply with the general eligibility criteria. Notably, the costs must be necessary for the action (i.e. the exercise is required to "ensure the effective use of assets"), they must be reasonable, justified and comply with the requirements of sound financial management (e.g. costs are not inflated). For the full set of eligibility conditions please refer to p. 23–24 of the Grant Application Guide for this call for proposals.

In addition to the above, note that in the event of a demonstration exercise involving the flying of a module or equivalent of forest fire fighting using planes, potential eligible costs may include the cost of fuel, necessary repairs and landing fees. However, if the individual(s) engaged to fly the plane for the purposes of the exercise would be national administration staff, their cost could be eligible only to the extent that they relate to the cost of activities which the relevant public authority would not carry out if the action concerned were not undertaken (i.e. these activities would be above and beyond regular duty of the individual(s) in question).

### **3. Which types of costs related to buffer capacities can be co-funded and up to what percentage limit?**

Decision 1313/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism outlines in Article 21(2)(d) the types of costs related to buffer capacities that can be co-funded by the EU and up to what percentage limit.

EU funding may cover:

- i. the costs or fees necessary to design, prepare, negotiate, conclude and manage the contracts or arrangements, as well as the costs of developing standard operating procedures and exercises to ensure the effective use of buffer capacities. Specifically, costs may include, amongst others, costs of organising and attending workshops and meetings (including associated travel, subsistence and salary costs) and consulting costs. These types of costs can be covered up to 100% through the EU grant.
- ii. the costs of ensuring rapid access to buffer capacities. Specifically, costs may include, amongst others, leasing costs; base / station costs during standby; maintenance costs during standby; replenishment costs during standby; personnel costs during standby; any other costs relevant to ensuring 24/7 availability. These types of costs can be covered up to 40% through the EU

grant. At least 60% of these types of costs must be funded from other sources.

EU funding for buffer capacities will not cover the costs of purchasing or developing new capacities, not the costs of operating buffer capacities in a disaster situation. The costs of operating buffer capacities in a disaster situation will be borne by the country(-ies) requesting the assistance.

**4. Can buffer capacities be used by Member States that have co-financed the availability of the capacities for domestic use?**

Commission Implementing Decision 2014/762/EU laying down rules for the implementation of Decision 1313/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism outlines in Article 25(9) that buffer capacities registered in the voluntary pool shall be available for domestic use in the Member States that have co-financed the availability of the capacities.

Prior to the domestic use, these Member States shall consult with the ERCC to confirm that:

- i. there is no simultaneous or imminent extraordinary disaster that may lead to a request for deployment of the buffer capacity;
- ii. the domestic use does not unduly hinder the rapid access of other Member States in the event new extraordinary disasters arise.

Furthermore, buffer capacities will be available for Union Mechanism deployments under the same general terms as other capacities registered in the voluntary pool. Notably, Decision 1313/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism states in Article 11(8) that capacities registered in the voluntary pool "can be withdrawn when domestic emergencies, force majeure or, in exceptional cases, serious reasons prevent a Member State from keeping those response capacities available, in consultation with the Commission".

**5. How should indirect cost be presented in the Financial Form F0, Budget of the Action?**

Table 1 of Form F0

Part A (Eligible cost categories) contains a row on indirect cost where information on the amount and the percentage of indirect cost, not exceeding 7 % of the total eligible direct cost, is to be included.

In Part B (Financing plan) indirect cost are generally to be included in the requested EC contribution and allocated as appropriate between cost categories A and B. As it is not always possible to allocate the indirect cost to cost category A or B, consolidating rows "requested EC contribution (cost category A)" and "requested EC contribution (cost category B)" into a single row presenting the "total requested EC contribution (including indirect cost)", will also be accepted. In this regard please note that also form F1, Project funding breakdown, must present the cost of the action and the financial contributions with the indirect cost included. The amount of the EC contribution requested on form F1 should thus equal the amount of the total requested EC contribution (for cost categories A and B) on Form F0.

Table 2 of the Form F0 entitled 'The requested EU contribution per cost category'

In this table applicants must present only the information about the direct costs of the project, without including indirect cost (i.e. the sum of the amounts of the requested EC contribution for cost categories A and B does not need to equal the amount of the total EC contribution).