



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL HUMANITARIAN AID AND CIVIL PROTECTION - ECHO

European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps

Call for proposals 2012

for pilot projects

Guidelines for Grant Applicants

Deadline for submission of proposals: 05/03/2012

NOTICE

This guide gives detailed information and advice on grant applications for pilot projects concerning the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps.

This guide aims to offer user-friendly guidance through the application procedure and the application form. It also provides quick answers to any questions you may have when preparing your application. Please read it carefully.

Any question on the Call for Proposals should be sent to: ECHO-POLICIES@ec.europa.eu

A grant application form is annexed to this guide and should be used to draft your project proposal.

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1. EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY HUMANITARIAN AID CORPS – PILOT PROJECTS 2012

1.1 Background

The Lisbon Treaty foresees the setting up of a European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps, with the objective "to establish framework for joint contributions from young Europeans to the humanitarian aid operations of the Union" (Art 214.5 TEU).

In order to set up the Corps, the Commission has engaged in a stocktaking phase to obtain a broad overview of the current situation of volunteering in humanitarian aid. All relevant stakeholders have been consulted through a range of bilateral meetings, surveys, stakeholder conferences and a public on-line consultation during spring 2011.

A Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council was adopted on 23/11/2010¹ setting out first reflections on the nature and set-up of the future Corps. The Commission is committed to making this a programme of effective solidarity in action, allowing Europeans to express solidarity with those in need while enhancing the response capacity of the humanitarian sector and building local capacities in third countries.

These reviews have identified some gaps and areas where the Voluntary Corps can have an added value. These include a need for

- Tested selection criteria to identify suitable volunteers for the humanitarian sector
- Structured training, common standards and benchmarks based on good practices in the field
- Improved stand-by rosters of experienced volunteers for rapid deployment in crisis contexts aimed at having the right people at the right place at the right time; (surge capacity).
- Deployment of volunteers to contribute to humanitarian operations including back-office functions in implementing organisations, such as advocacy, information and online activities

Alongside these needs, there are also conditions for success so that the future Corps brings a positive contribution to humanitarian aid operations, including:

- Avoid duplication: Support and complement existing programmes for volunteering in humanitarian aid.
- Professionalization of the humanitarian sector: volunteers deployed through the Voluntary Corps must provide a real added value.
- Security: un-experienced volunteers will be dealing with pre/post crisis activities rather than emergency response (Disaster Risk Reduction and activities in transition contexts).
- Local capacities should be supported and further developed, including through exchange and pairing programmes.

¹COM(2010) 683 final; refer to: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/aid/voluntarycorps_en.htm.

The Commission considers various options and formats of the future Corps. An Impact Assessment exercise will provide early 2012 an evaluation of the impact and the cost effectiveness of different implementing options on the beneficiaries of humanitarian aid; the humanitarian volunteers; the recruiting and the hosting humanitarian organisations; and to society at large.

This call for proposals intends to select pilot projects developing some of the possible features of the future Corps. A first call in 2011 has delivered interesting learning through the proposals received and the implementation of the projects focusing on volunteers in projects on crisis prevention and post crises recovery. This call 2012 aims at enlarging the scope of testing options, including civil protection and crises response as eligible activities.

These different activities will feed into the preparation of the legislative proposal establishing the Corps. This legislative proposal is tabled for 2012; the final Corps is expected to be established by 2014.

1.2 Objective of the programme and priority issues

The objective of this call is to select pilot projects that will support the Commission in the process leading-up to the establishment of a European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps through the implementation of pilot actions. The pilot actions shall test some of the possible modules of the future Corps and inform the European Commission's work setting up the Corps.

For the purpose of this call, three different Lots shall be attributed to achieve results in the following areas:

- **Lot 1:** Strengthening resilience
- **Lot 2:** Building civil protection capacities
- **Lot 3:** Responding to disaster

The main expected results for all three lots are:

- To provide opportunities for Europeans to engage as volunteers in humanitarian aid and / or civil protection activities outside the EU and to contribute to laying the grounds for a community of European volunteers active in this field;
- To develop training curricula for volunteers in humanitarian aid based on best practice of humanitarian organisations and with a particular focus on the European dimension;
- To add value to humanitarian aid operations in the fields of resilience, disaster risk reduction, crisis response and post crisis recovery through volunteering and by promoting partnerships between organisations active in humanitarian aid and / or civil protection operations;
- To strengthen local capacities in countries in order to support resilience and/or response to crisis.

Additional results expected for lot 2:

- To promote partnerships between humanitarian organisations and civil protection organisms;
- To provide support to structures involved in civil protection activities in countries outside the EU.

Additional result expected for lot 3:

- To provide opportunities for expertise from the EU public or private sector to be made available in crisis response.

1.3 Financial allocation provided by the contracting authority

The overall indicative amount made available under this Call for Proposals is EUR 2,450 000. The Contracting Authority reserves the right not to award part or all available funds.

The indicative amounts allocated to the different lots is as follows:

- **Lot 1:** 1,350 000 €
- **Lot 2:** 675,000 €
- **Lot 3:** 425,000 €

The **maximum amount** awarded per proposal will be EUR 675,000 for lot 1 and 2, EUR 425,000 for lot 3.

In the case where the allocation foreseen for a specific lot cannot be used due to insufficient quality or number of proposals received, the Contracting Authority reserves the right to relocate the remaining funds to another lot.

The maximum EU funding rate (percentage applied to the total eligible costs according to the project budget) is **80%** per proposal.

The balance must be financed from the applicant's or partners' own resources, or from sources other than the European Union budget or the European Development Fund².

When the grant is awarded and both parties have signed the Grant Agreement, the Commission will pay 80% of its contribution as a pre-financing payment. No further pre-financing or interim payment will be made. The final payment of up to 20% of the EU contribution will be made when the Commission has accepted the final technical report and it will be based on the final financial statement and the eligible costs of the activity/project calculated by the Commission.

1.4 Duration of the projects

The duration of a project shall not exceed 15 months.

2. WHO CAN SUBMIT A PROPOSAL? WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

2.1 Eligibility of applicants: who may apply?

For all three lots, in order to be eligible for a grant, applicants must:

2.1.1. be legal persons and

² Where a grant is financed by the European Development Fund, any mention of European Union financing must be understood as referring to European Development Fund financing.

2.1.2. be non profit making and

2.1.3. be specific types of organisations such as: non-governmental organisations, public sector operators, local authorities, international organisations as defined by Article 43 of the Implementing Rules to the EC Financial Regulation³ and

2.1.4. be nationals⁴ of a Member State of the European Union (this obligation does not apply to international organisations) and

2.1.5. be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action with their partners, not acting as an intermediary and

2.1.6. have a proven track record of successful management and deployment of volunteers in third countries, including the last three years of operation (see section 3.3. of the application form).

2.2 Partnerships and eligibility of partners

The applicant, i.e the entity that has submitted the proposal to the Commission, will act as the lead organisation and, if selected, as the contracting party (the "co-ordinator"). The applicant has sole legal and financial responsibility for the implementation of the project. It will be the single point of contact for the Commission and will also be the only beneficiary to report directly to the Commission on the project's technical and financial progress. It receives the EU financial contribution from the Commission and ensures its distribution with the partner organisations (the "co-beneficiaries").

Applicants must act with at least two partner organisations from two different Member States. More partner organisations and Member States represented in a project partnership will be considered an asset. In case of international organisations, they must act with at least three national partners from three different Member States.

For projects submitted under lot 2, at least one project partner organisation (or the applicant) must be an organisation or public institution with a proven track record and expertise in civil protection operations as evidenced under section 3.3.2. of the grant application form.

Partner organisations participate in designing and implementing the action, and the costs they incur are eligible in the same way as those incurred by the co-ordinator. They must satisfy the eligibility criteria 2.1.1. through 2.1.5. as applicable to the applicant (see 2.1).

Partner organisations must sign the "partnership statement" (see the Grant Application Form 4.2). They must contribute technically to the project and hence be responsible for the

³ International organisations are international public-sector organisations set up by intergovernmental agreements as well as specialised agencies set up by them; the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, European Investment Bank (EIB) and European Investment Fund (EIF) are also recognized as international organisations.

⁴ Such nationality being determined on the basis of the organisation's statutes which should demonstrate that it has been established by an instrument governed by the national law of the country concerned. In this respect, any legal entity whose statutes have been established in another country cannot be considered an eligible local organisation, even if the statutes are registered locally or a "Memorandum of Understanding" has been concluded.

implementation of one or several project activities. They must contribute financially to the project but must also receive part of the financial contribution from the Commission. They cannot act, in the context of the project, as a sub-contractor to the co-ordinator or to other beneficiaries.

The following participants are not partners and do not have to sign the “partnership statement”

- Associates

Other organisations and entities may be involved in the action as associates. Such associates play a real role in the action (they are for example involved in the activities developed in third countries or provide some of their experts as volunteers in projects submitted under lot 3). They have no contractual relationship with the Commission and do not have to meet the eligibility criteria referred to in section 2.1. They may be for example private companies or organisations from non EU countries. The associates have to be mentioned in section 5 of the Grant Application Form.

- Sub-contractors

The grant beneficiaries have the possibility to award contracts in order to carry out the action. The contract must be awarded to the tenderer offering the best value for money, that is to say, the best price-quality ratio, in compliance with the principles of transparency and equal treatment for potential contractors, care being taken to avoid any conflict of interests. Sub-granting is not allowed.

2.3 Eligible actions: projects for which an application may be made

The pilot projects shall cover the whole project cycle from identifying, selecting, training and deploying volunteers as well as suitable hosting organisations in third countries for those volunteers.

For lot 1, the volunteers shall be contributing to strengthening resilience, i.e. building capacities in disaster risk reduction and post crises recovery. **The deployment of volunteers should be for periods from 4 to 12 months.**

In lot 2, volunteers shall have a background in civil protection and shall be deployed in projects aiming at contributing to building civil protection capacities in third countries. **The deployment of volunteers should be for periods from 4 to 12 months**⁵. The deployment of groups of trained civil protection volunteers is encouraged. Any specific training provided under the pilot projects should be complementary to the trainings organised under the Civil Protection Mechanism.

In lot 1 and 2, volunteers will be working with local communities or local organisations such as local authorities (municipalities, provincial services), local NGOs etc. and preferably placed in those local organisations.

⁵ Where the capacity building project justifies, the deployment period may be covered by more than one volunteer provided that the total deployment within one single project is between 4 and 12 months.

Projects in lot 3 shall focus on crisis response deploying volunteers with particular technical expertise for short term assignments of no more than two months. These could be deployments to international humanitarian organisations; to ECHO offices; or to EU civil protection teams deployed under the EU Civil Protection Mechanism where these deployments reinforce synergies with humanitarian and civil protection response instruments.

Projects have to clearly demonstrate the added value of the activities in the framework of the pilot action to the usual activities of the project applicant and partners. The European dimension of this volunteering scheme shall be explicitly developed.

As these projects will be implemented during the 2012 European Year of Active Ageing and the 2013 European Year of Citizens, special attention to horizontal themes such as intergenerational dialogue and promoting European citizenship through solidarity in action is encouraged.

The following activities (non exhaustive list) can be financed under this call:

Lot 1-3

- Development of standards and benchmarks for identification and selection and of training modules for volunteers in humanitarian aid and / or civil protection with a particular focus on the European dimension and encouraging multi-lingual training;
- Make these training modules available to feed into the on-going reflection /setting up of the Corps;
- Identification and selection of volunteers;
- Running of training for volunteers based on identified standards and benchmarks;
- Identification of suitable third country host organisations;
- Activities to ensure sound management of the European volunteers in host organisations;
- Activities to strengthen and maximize the impact of the volunteer's presence on local capacity building;
- Deployment of volunteers outside the EU; these can be deployment of individual volunteers or volunteers in groups;
- Bonding activities to lay the basis for a community of European humanitarian volunteers including contacts between the volunteers of previous pilot projects and other current pilot projects;
- Twinning activities of European volunteers with local volunteers in the recipient countries; third country volunteers and / or staff in third country humanitarian and / or civil protection organisations may benefit from activities of the pilot such as training if these activities are clearly linked to the European volunteers deployed under this

call.

- Awareness raising activities around the project.

Other activities (non exhaustive list) that can be financed under the different lots:

Lot 1:

- Develop online volunteering opportunities for Europeans to engage with humanitarian aid activities outside the EU;
- While identifying third country host organisations, ECHO's regional support offices and field offices may be taken into account for some placements.

Lot 2:

- Specific activities of European volunteers to build capacities and disaster preparedness in third countries in the field of civil protection. This may cover areas such as fire fighting; flood management; marine pollution; and preparedness for earthquakes (non exhaustive list); it may equally include training and advice services performed by volunteers;
- Targeted volunteers may include particularly EU nationals trained through the ECHO civil protection mechanism;

Lot 3:

- Establishment of a pool of expert volunteers with a professional track record in a field linked to humanitarian response such as medical support; water and sanitation; food assistance; logistical support; protection etc. (non exhaustive list).

Location of deployments

Selection of volunteers and training activities as well as awareness raising activities can take place in the EU, while the deployment of volunteers must take place in third countries (outside the EU).

Projects shall focus on countries with ongoing ECHO interventions.

2.4 Eligibility of costs: costs which may be taken into consideration for the grant

Only "eligible costs" can be taken into account for a grant. The categories of costs considered as eligible and non-eligible are indicated in article II.12 of the General conditions of the standard Grant Agreement (see annex B). The budget is both a cost estimate and a ceiling for "eligible costs". Note that the eligible costs must be based on real costs based on supporting documents.

Recommendations to award a grant are always subject to the condition that the checking process which precedes the signing of the Grant Agreement does not reveal problems requiring changes to the budget (for instance arithmetical errors, inaccuracies or unrealistic

costs and other ineligible costs). The checks may give rise to requests for clarification and may lead the Contracting Authority to impose modifications or reductions to address such mistakes or inaccuracies. The amount of the grant and the percentage of the EU co-financing as a result of these corrections may not be increased.

It is therefore in the applicant's interest to provide a realistic and cost-effective budget.

Eligible direct costs

To be eligible under the Call for Proposals, costs must comply with the provisions of Article II.12 of the General Conditions to the standard Grant Agreement (see Annex B of the Guidelines).

Eligible costs include also (non exhaustive list):

- Travel costs of the volunteers (economy class flight ticket)
- Visa costs, residence permit, vaccination costs, insurance costs
- Volunteer's allowance
- Staff costs for project managers; mentors and coaches; etc.
- Costs for training; material etc.

Eligible indirect costs (overheads)

The indirect costs incurred in carrying out the action may be eligible for flat-rate funding fixed at not more than 7% of the estimated total eligible direct costs. Indirect costs are eligible provided that they do not include costs assigned to another heading of the budget of the standard Grant Agreement. The applicant may be asked to justify the requested percentage before contracting. However, once the flat-rate has been fixed in the special conditions of the standard Grant Agreement, no supporting documents need to be provided.

Ineligible costs

The following costs are not eligible:

- debts and debt service charges;
- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- interests owed;
- costs declared by a beneficiary and covered by another action or work programme;
- purchases of land or buildings, except where necessary for the direct implementation of the action, in which case ownership must be transferred to the final beneficiaries and/or local partners, at the latest by the end of the action;
- currency exchange losses;
- VAT (unless the beneficiary can show that he is unable to recover it according to the applicable national legislation).

Contributions in kind

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 Co-ordinator.

Notwithstanding the above, if the description of the action as proposed by the Co-ordinator foresees the contributions in kind, such contributions have to be provided.

3. EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications will be examined and evaluated by the Contracting Authority. All actions submitted by applicants will be assessed according to the following admissibility, eligibility, selection and award criteria.

To ensure fair treatment of the applicants, the Commission will not provide any information regarding the eligibility or the quality of proposals until the end of the selection procedure.

The Commission reserves the right to contact applicants during the evaluation procedure in order to obtain additional information, documentation or clarifications on the content of the proposal, including technical and budgetary aspects. However, this does not imply any kind of negotiations.

The Commission will evaluate the proposals in the following order:

- (1) assessing the formal eligibility of the proposals (admissibility and eligibility criteria);
- (2) assessing whether or not exclusion criteria apply (exclusion criteria);
- (3) assessing the operational and financial viability of the applicant (selection criteria) and;
- (4) evaluating the overall relevance and quality of the proposals (award criteria).

3.1 Admissibility and eligibility Criteria

Admissibility criteria

- The submission deadline has been respected. If the deadline has not been respected the application will automatically be rejected.
- The Application Form satisfies all the criteria specified in points 1-5 of the Checklist (section 9 of the grant application form). If any of the requested information is missing or is incorrect, the application may be rejected on that sole basis and the application will not be evaluated further.

The application form should include (see application form sections 6,7 and 8):

1. The statutes or articles of association as well as a document establishing the legal registration of the applicant⁶ organisation and of each partner organisation. This obligation does not apply to international organisations which have signed a framework agreement with the European Commission.

⁶ Where the applicant and/or (a) partner(s) is a public body created by a law, a copy of the said law must be provided

2. Copy of the applicant's latest accounts (the profit and loss account and the balance sheet for the 2 previous financial years for which the accounts have been closed)⁷.
3. Legal entity sheet (see section 6 of the Grant Application Form) duly completed and signed by the applicant, accompanied by the justifying documents which are requested therein. If the applicant has already signed a Grant Agreement with the Contracting Authority, instead of the legal entity sheet and its supporting documents the legal entity number may be provided, unless a change in its legal status occurred in the meantime.
4. A financial identification form conforming to the model (see section 7 of the grant application form) duly completed and signed by the applicant, certified by the bank to which the payments will be made. This bank must be located in the country where the applicant is registered. If the applicant has already signed a contract or Grant Agreement with the European Commission or where the European Commission has been in charge of the payments of a contract, a copy of the previous financial identification form may be provided instead, unless a change in its bank account occurred in the meantime.
5. The list of projects involving the deployment of volunteers in the last 3 years (number of volunteers deployed, budget, type of tasks implemented by the volunteers; see section 3.3.1. of the grant application form.). Applications under lot 2 shall equally provide information on the civil protection expertise of at least one partner (or the applicant; see section 3.3.2. of the grant application form).

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

Eligibility criteria

- The proposal must fall within the scope of this call (see section 1).
- The applicant must be established in one of the countries specified in section 2.
- The applicant must have legal status.
- The proposal fulfils the applicable requirement of a minimum number of participating independent entities from different Member (see section 2)
- The project should cover selection, training and deployment of volunteers. Deployment should take place outside the EU for at least 3 months (max 12 months).
- The project or project activities must not receive any financial support under other EU financial instruments (European Union Budget or European Development Fund).
- The EU financing rate requested must be within the limits of the EU contribution and not exceed the maximum amounts specified (see section 1.3).

⁷ This obligation does not apply to natural persons who have received a scholarship, nor to public bodies nor to international organisations. It does not apply either when the accounts are in practice the same documents as the external audit report already provided pursuant to section 2.4.2.

3.2 Exclusion Criteria

A proposal will be excluded if the Co-ordinator or co-beneficiary is in any of the situations mentioned below:

According to Article 93 (1) of the Financial Regulation,

- a) 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;
- b) they have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment that has the force of *res judicata*;
- c) they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the Commission can justify;
- d) they have not fulfilled 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 those of the country of the contracting authority or those of the country where the Grant Agreement is to be performed;
- e) they have been the subject of a judgment that has the force of *res judicata* for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity detrimental to the Communities' financial interests.

According to Article 94 of the Financial Regulation:

- f) they are subject to a conflict of interest
- g) they are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the contracting authority as a condition of participation in the procurement procedure or fail to supply this information.

Both the applicant and the partners have to sign a declaration on oath that their organisation is not in any of the situations mentioned above (see section 10 of the Grant Application Form). Omitting to sign and/or date this form will result in the exclusion of the proposal. The Commission may request at any time further evidence for the correctness of that declaration.

3.3 Selection Criteria

The application having passed the opening and the administrative checks will be assessed according to the selection criteria, which are intended to help evaluate the applicants' financial and operational capacity to ensure that they:

- have stable and sufficient sources of finance to maintain their activity throughout the period during which the action is being carried out and, where appropriate, to participate in its funding;
- have the management capacity, professional competencies and qualifications required to successfully complete the proposed action. This also applies to any partners of the applicant.

The issues that will be considered by the Evaluation Committee include:

- Do the applicant and partners have sufficient experience of project management in the field of volunteering in third countries?
- Do the applicant and partners have sufficient technical expertise? (Notably concerning selection, training, deployment of volunteers in humanitarian aid and / or civil protection operations)?
- Do the applicant and, if applicable, partners have sufficient management capacity? (including staff, equipment and ability to handle the budget for the action)?
- Do the applicant and, if applicable, partners possess the financial capacity to cover their share of project costs/financing?

The applicants must be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the project, and not acting as an intermediary for another party.

If the above selection criteria are not fulfilled, a project is declared not selected and is eliminated from the evaluation procedure.

3.4 Award Criteria

The award criteria allow the quality of the applications submitted to be evaluated in relation to the set objectives and priorities, and grants to be awarded to actions which maximise the overall effectiveness of the Call for Proposals. They enable the selection of applications which the Contracting Authority can be confident will comply with its objectives and priorities. They cover such aspects as the relevance of the action, its consistency with the objectives of the Call for Proposals, quality, expected impact, sustainability and cost-effectiveness.

The award criteria include:

Relevance and consistency with the objectives of the call (30 points)

- Relevance of the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the Call;
- Understanding of the work to be performed, including the objectives, results and activities to be carried-out.

Quality of the project and methodology (30 points)

- Clarity, appropriateness and feasibility of the proposed methodology including quality of:
 - identification/selection process
 - training and support to volunteers
 - quality and appropriateness of tasks to be performed by volunteers
 - risk prevention and crisis management measures
- European dimension and European added value;
- Support to local capacities/volunteering;
- Quality and scope of the partnership: The partnership needs to be able to demonstrate a solid partnership as well as a reach-out to European Member States and European volunteers. Additional partners and Member States to the minimum requirements set out under eligibility criteria under 2.1. will be considered an asset;
- Complementarity with existing humanitarian and civil protection response instruments (where applicable).

Approach proposed for the management of the project (20 points)

- Clarity and feasibility of the general approach to the management of the Grant Agreement, including the organisation of the work, allocation of responsibilities, involvement of different partners;
- Mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of project's activities, opportunities for knowledge sharing.

Budget and cost-effectiveness of the action (20 points)

- Activities appropriately reflected in the budget;
- Satisfactory ratio between the estimated costs and the expected results.

Please note that the proposals which do not obtain at least a total of 30 points from the two first criteria (Relevance and Quality), will be rejected.

On the basis of the list of merit drawn up by the evaluation committee, the authorising officer adopts a final list for allocation of the grants. If the total requested amount of all the pre-selected technically sufficient projects exceeds the total indicative budget available (see section 1.3.), the proposals will be ranked according to the total points given to them. The Evaluation Committee will propose that the Authorising Officer selects those projects with higher ranking according to the available budget.

The award decision

Upon completion of the above procedure, the Authorising Officer will take the final decision on the project proposals to be co-financed including the respective maximum financial amount and the rate of co-financing granted. Please note that the Commission reserves the right to award a grant of less than the amount requested by the applicant. However, grants will not be awarded for more than the amount requested in the proposal. The Commission will co-finance the proposals achieving at least the score required to reach technical sufficiency within the limits of the overall budget available for this call for proposals. At this stage the Commission will commit the relevant funds and send a Grant Agreement to the successful applicants (coordinator) to be signed and returned to the Commission. The Grant Agreement will come into force only once both parties have signed it.

4. HOW TO APPLY AND THE PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW

An applicant shall not submit more than one application under this Call for Proposals.

An applicant may be at the same time partner in another application.

Partners may take part in more than one application.

4.1 Application form

Applications must be submitted in accordance with the instructions included in the Grant Application Form annex to these Guidelines (Annex A)

Project proposals may be submitted in any official language of the European Union. However, in order to facilitate assessment by evaluators, an English translation should preferably accompany any proposal written in another language. In such cases, applicants should submit their applications both in hard copy (i.e. paper) and in electronic format in their own language and in English.

Any error or major discrepancy related to the points listed in the instructions or any major inconsistency in the application form (e.g. the amounts mentioned in the budget are inconsistent with those mentioned in the application form) may lead to the rejection of the application.

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

Hand-written applications will not be accepted.

4.2 Where and how to send the Applications

Applications must be submitted in one original and 2 copies in A4 size, each bound. The complete application form must also be supplied in electronic format (CD-Rom, USB) in a separate and unique file (e.g. the application form must not be split into several different files). The electronic format must contain **exactly the same** application as the paper version enclosed.

The outer envelope must bear the title of the Call for Proposals: "**European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps Call for proposals 2012 for pilot projects**", and the words "**Not to be opened before the opening session**".

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

Postal address

Henrike Trautmann

Head of Unit A3

"European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps Call for Proposals 2012 for pilot projects "

Office AN88 04/25

B 1049 Brussels

Address for hand delivery or by private courier service

European Commission

Central Mail Service

OIB 4

Avenue du Bourget,1

1140 Brussels

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

Applicants must verify that their application is complete using the checklist (section 9 of the grant application form). Incomplete applications may be rejected.

Proposals submitted to the Commission remain the property of the Commission and will not be returned.

4.3 Deadline for submission of Applications

The deadline for the submission of applications is 05/03/2012 as evidenced by the date of dispatch, the postmark or the date of the deposit slip. In the case of hand-deliveries, the deadline for receipt is at 16:00 local time as evidenced by the signed and dated receipt. Any application submitted after the deadline will automatically be rejected.

4.4 Further information for the Applications

Questions of clarification may in addition be sent by e-mail no later than 21 days before the deadline for the submission of applications to ECHO-POLICIES@ec.europa.eu.

The Contracting Authority has no obligation to provide further clarifications after this date. Replies will be given no later than 11 days before the deadline for the submission of 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.

Questions that may be relevant to other applicants, together with the answers, will be published on the internet at the website below. It is therefore highly recommended to regularly consult the abovementioned website in order to be informed of the questions and answers published: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/aid/voluntarycorps_en.htm.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT

Once your proposal has been received and registered by the Commission, an acknowledgement of receipt will be dispatched to the applicant in three weeks after the closing date of the second stage of the present call for proposals. The acknowledgment of receipt will contain a reference number, which must be mentioned in all correspondence concerning the proposal.

Applicants who have not received an acknowledgement of receipt by e-mail within three weeks after the closing date, should contact ECHO by e-mail:

ECHO-POLICIES@ec.europa.eu

5. NOTIFICATION AWARD

Applicants will be informed in writing of the Contracting Authority's decision concerning their application and, in case of rejections, the reasons for the negative decision.

For the follow-up of your response to the call for proposals it will be necessary to record and process some personal data (name, address and CV, for example).

You are protected by Regulation (EC) 45/2001, of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the European Union institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data.

We need your replies to questions and personal data in order to assess proposals in line with the specifications of the call for proposals. The data will only be processed by DG ECHO for this purpose and, if applicable, for the Grant Agreement.

You may, upon request, obtain a copy of your personal data and correct any inaccurate or incomplete data. You also have a right of recourse at any time to the European Data Protection Supervisor.

5.1 Indicative time table

	DATE	TIME*
Deadline for request for any clarifications from the Contracting Authority	13/02/2012	16:00
Last date on which clarifications are issued by the Contracting Authority	23/02/2011	-
Deadline for submission of Application Form	05/03/2012	16:00**
Notification of award	April*	-
Grant agreement signature	April*	-

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

** In case of hand delivery (see 4.3. above)

This indicative timetable may be updated by the Contracting Authority during the procedure. In such case, the updated timetable shall be published on internet at http://ec.europa.eu/echo/aid/voluntarycorps_en.htm.

5.2 Conditions applicable to implementation of the action following the Contracting Authority's decision to award a grant

Following the decision to award a grant, the Co-ordinator will be offered a grant based on the Contracting Authority's standard Grant Agreement (see Annex B of these Guidelines). By signing the Application forms (Annex A of these Guidelines), the applicant declares accepting, in case where it is awarded a grant, the Contractual conditions as laid down in the standard Grant Agreement.

If the successful applicant is an international organisation, the model Contribution Agreement with an international organisation or any other contract template agreed between the international organisation concerned and the Contracting Authority will be used instead of the

standard grant contract provided that the international organisation in question offers the guarantees provided for in the applicable Financial Regulation.

5.3 Early warning system and central exclusion database

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

- the Commission Decision of 16.12.2008 on the Early Warning System (EWS) for the use of authorising officers of the Commission and the executive agencies (OJ, L 344, 20.12.2008, p.125) or
- the Commission Regulation of 17.12.2008 on the Central Exclusion Database (CED) (OJ L344, 20.12.2008, p.12), or
- their personal details (name, given name if natural person, address, legal form and name and given name of the persons with powers of representation, decision-making or control, if legal person) may be registered in the EWS only or both in the EWS and CED, and communicated to the persons and entities listed in the above-mentioned Decision and Regulation, in relation to the award or the execution of a Grant Agreement or decision.

6. LIST OF ANNEXES

DOCUMENTS TO BE COMPLETED

ANNEX A1: GRANT APPLICATION FORM (WORD FORMAT)

ANNEX A2: BUDGET FOR THE ACTION (EXCEL FORMAT)

DOCUMENTS FOR INFORMATION

ANNEX B: STANDARD GRANT AGREEMENT

ANNEX C: DAILY ALLOWANCE RATES (PER DIEM), available at the following address:
http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/implementation/index_en.htm

ANNEX D: STANDARD CONTRIBUTION AGREEMENT, applicable in case where the Co-ordinator is an International organisation, available at the following address:
http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/financing/international_organisations/