



CALL FOR PROPOSALS – EAC/S07/2016

Call for proposals for a *Framework Partnership Agreement* with a European policy network in the field of the key competences including an emphasis on literacy and numeracy

1. INTRODUCTION – BACKGROUND

The Work Programme for Erasmus+ for 2017 C(2016)5571¹ as adopted by the Commission envisages the support of European network(s) for policy development and implementation in the field of school education.

The purpose of this call is to strengthen cross-European co-operation between public authorities, such as Ministries and government agencies, and associations of stakeholders and practitioners, higher education institutions, research bodies, foundations and other organisations promoting the acquisition of basic skills and key competences amongst children and young people.

The call aims at supporting one European policy network to raise awareness, analyse and develop policy approaches, and promote good practices and innovative initiatives for the implementation of the European Key Competences Framework² and the acquisition of basic skills (literacy and numeracy) in light of the Education and Training 2020 (ET2020) benchmark³.

Policy context

The 2015 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the Strategic Framework ET2020⁴ identified among others the following priorities for future work: fostering relevant and high-quality competences developed throughout lifelong learning, focusing on learning outcomes for employability, innovation, active citizenship and well-being, as well as supporting inclusive education, equality, equity, non-discrimination and promoting of civic competences.

Having the relevant competences and skills is a pre-condition for being equipped for good-quality jobs and fulfilling one's potential as a confident, active citizen. In a fast-

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/more_info/awp/docs/c-2016-5571_en.pdf

² Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on key competences for lifelong learning (December 2006), <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32006H0962&from=EN> (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32006H0962>).

³ EU Member States have agreed that by 2020, the share of low-achieving 15-years olds in reading, mathematics and science should be less than 15 %, to know more see <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:119:0002:0010:EN:PDF>

⁴ 2015 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020): New priorities for European cooperation in education and training (2015/C 417/04)

changing global economy, competences to a great extent determine competitiveness and the capacity to drive economic and cultural innovation. In addition to the basic skills (numeracy and literacy), there is a growing demand for higher levels of transversal competences such as problem-solving, risk assessment, initiative, decision-taking, constructive management of feelings, critical thinking and creativity.

In 2006 the European Parliament and the Council adopted a Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning.⁵ It sets out eight key competences including:

- Communication in the mother tongue,
- Communication in foreign languages,
- Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology,
- Digital competence,
- Learning to learn,
- Social and civic competences,
- Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, and
- Cultural awareness and expression.

Transversal skills are referred to as themes that play a role in all eight key competences, but are not described in further detail.

Key competences should be acquired by young people at the end of their compulsory education and training and by adults throughout their lives, through a process of developing and updating skills. Early acquisition of key competences helps to develop a variety of competences and skills throughout life; basic skills of literacy and numeracy are a pre-requisite for the development of all other key competences⁶.

In 2010, the Joint Progress Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the “Education & Training 2010” work programme found that, since 2006, the Key Competences Framework had “contributed to the move towards a more competence-based teaching and learning approach”.⁷ A 2012 Report by the Eurydice network on Developing Key Competences at School in Europe⁸ also confirmed that most Member States focus on at least some of the key competences and have reformed their curricula to integrate transversal skills. The report highlighted the relevance of a more strategic and comprehensive approach to key competences development, particularly focusing on integrating transversal skills across school subjects.

The European Commission supported under the Lifelong Learning Programme (2007 – 2013) and Erasmus + (2014 – 2020) a range of projects which worked on the improvement of basic skills as well as on the further development of key competences in education. From 2011 to 2014 the Commission helped to set up the policy network

⁵ Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning (2006/962/EC), <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32006H0962>

⁶ Data from the OECD’s Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) show that about one in five 15-year-olds lacks the minimum level of literacy and numeracy necessary to function in the society. Seventy million Europeans lack adequate reading and writing skills, and even more have poor numeracy and digital skills, putting them at risk of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion. More than half of the 12 million long-term unemployed are considered as low-skilled.

⁷ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=URISERV%3Aef0020>

⁸ "Developing key competences at school in Europe", Eurydice, 2012 - http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/145en.pdf

KeyCoNet⁹. The network aimed at supporting the implementation of the Key Competence Framework in school education in Europe. In recognition of the fundamental importance of literacy for all key competences, in February 2014 the European Commission also supported the creation of a European Policy Network of National Literacy Organisations (ELINET)¹⁰. Its main goal was to organise activities to raise awareness of and commitment to the importance of reading, and to reduce the number of children, young people and adults with low literacy skills in Europe.

As announced in the Communication on the New Skills Agenda for Europe¹¹, the Commission proposes to review the 2006 Key Competences Framework and to address its shortcomings in supporting competence development - including basic skills - by EU education and training systems.¹²

2. OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of this call is to support an EU-wide network of relevant organisations (policymakers, practitioners, researchers and stakeholders) to promote co-operation, policy development and implementation at different governance levels and support the Commission's work on key competences and the improvement of basic skills.

The network will promote the key competences approach in the area of school education and the raising of the basic skills levels among children and young people, particularly focusing on underachieving students with inadequate levels of functional literacy and numeracy. It will build on existing work developed at European level, especially initiatives and projects supported by European Union education programmes.

The scope of its work is defined by the political priorities of EU Member States as outlined in the 2015 Joint Report and related documents, taking also into account, where relevant, participating countries' national priorities, appropriate research, and developments within other international organisations.

The specific objectives include the following:

1. **Create and continuously develop a sustainable and inclusive network** to facilitate dialogue and co-operation among experts from policy, research and practice. The network should serve evidence-informed policy-making and promote continuous collaboration with and between other relevant stakeholders at international, European, national, regional and local levels, including especially other networks and projects funded through EU programmes;
2. **Analyse and co-create knowledge** on the main challenges and policy approaches in helping young people to acquire and develop key competences, with special focus also on improvement of basic skills (literacy and numeracy) as well as enhancing transversal skills;
3. **Identify, share and promote good policy practice** and stimulate innovation in policy development and implementation at different governance levels. There should be specific focus on the involvement of national, regional and local stakeholders;

⁹ <http://keyconet.eun.org/>

¹⁰ <http://www.eli-net.eu/>

¹¹ http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/2016/0610-education-skills-factsheet_en.htm

¹² Commission Communication 'A New Skills Agenda for Europe' - Working together to strengthen human capital, employability and competitiveness, COM(2016) 381/2, Letter of intent to the Parliament and the Council; State of the Union speech 9 September 2015, Commission Work Programme 2016 COM(2015) 610 final

4. **Contribute to content development for European Commission's dissemination tools**, for example the School Education Gateway¹³, an online platform for school education supported by the European Commission and especially the Toolkit for Schools¹⁴. Contribute to follow-up initiatives in implementing the Skills Agenda;
5. **Disseminate results and recommendations** within and beyond the network, and inform EU-level debate, including co-operation under Education and Training 2020. Target audiences should include policy-makers at different governance levels, practitioners and researchers across Europe.

The network should represent a broad geographic scope and a balance of different education systems, and a variety of backgrounds of participating institutions and associations, from policy, practice and research. Focus is on the general education of children and young people (0-18 years); an exchange with other education sectors could be an asset, but should not constitute the core activities under this partnership agreement.

3. FRAMEWORK PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

The Commission intends to support the EU policy network through a four-year framework partnership agreement (FPA), for a period of 48 months starting with the date of signature, subject to the funds being made available by the budgetary authority, on an annual basis.

The FPA will set out the conditions governing annual grants for an action. The FPA defines the respective roles and responsibilities of the Commission and the selected organisation in implementing the partnership. It presents the common objectives agreed by the organisation and the Commission; the type of activities envisaged; the procedure to conclude a specific agreement for an annual grant for an action as well as the general rights and obligations of each party under the specific grant agreements. The FPA does not constitute an obligation for the Commission to conclude a specific agreement for an annual grant for an action.

As part of the application for the FPA, the applicant is required to submit an overall work programme for its entire duration¹⁵. This shall comprise an overall description of activities and outputs for the entire period of the FPA, and an indicative description of how these will be divided into annual work plans. The applicant is also required to submit an indicative budget corresponding to the entire duration of the FPA¹⁶. Together with the other information provided, it will form the basis for awarding the FPA.

4. AWARD OF SPECIFIC GRANT AGREEMENTS

In addition and in order to ensure a timely start of the activities planned under the FPA, a detailed work plan and a corresponding budget¹⁷ are requested for the first year, which may be subject to a specific grant agreement concluded after signature of the FPA. This detailed work plan for the first year will demonstrate how the applicant intends to implement the work programme of the FPA; it will be evaluated after the framework partnership has been awarded.

¹³ <http://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/en/pub/index.htm>

¹⁴ <http://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/en/pub/resources/toolkitsforschools.htm>

¹⁵ Part III "Information on the action" in the application form

¹⁶ Annex III of the application form

¹⁷ Templates provided

For years 2, 3 and 4, subject to the funds being available, the Commission will annually invite the organisation with whom the FPA has been signed to provide a detailed work plan for the following year of operation and a corresponding budget, in order to conclude a specific agreement for a grant for an action for the following year of operation. The detailed work programmes for years 2, 3 and 4 will be assessed against the award criteria indicated in this call (section 11).

The conclusion of any specific grant agreement for an action is subject to the Commission's evaluation of the detailed annual work plan and the corresponding detailed budget, as well as to the availability of budgetary appropriations.

5. INDICATIVE TIMETABLE

	Stages	Date and time or indicative period
a)	Publication of the call	October/November 2016
b)	Deadline for submitting applications	22 February 2017
c)	Evaluation period	March – April 2017
d)	Information to applicants	May 2017
e)	Signature of FPA	June 2017
f)	Signature of specific grant agreement	July 2017
g)	Starting date of the action/ work programme	July 2017

6. BUDGET AVAILABLE

The total budget earmarked for the co-financing of a network in 2017 is estimated at 400,000.00 EUR which will also be the maximum amount granted. The EU grant is limited to a maximum co-funding rate of 75% of eligible costs. This amount will cover the work plan for 2017. Due to the specific and unique nature of this Call, the Commission expects to fund only one proposal (network).

The budgets for the three subsequent years (of an estimated similar amount as for the first year) will be confirmed by the Commission on an annual basis. The Commission reserves the right not to distribute all the funds available.

7. ADMISSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Applications must be sent no later than the deadline for submitting applications referred to in section 5.
 - Applications must be submitted in writing (see section 16), using the application form available at http://ec.europa.eu/education/calls/2016-eac-s07_en¹⁸ and the related templates for the work programmes and corresponding budgets.

Failure to comply with those requirements will lead to the rejection of the application.

¹⁸ Art. 131 FR.

- Due to the nature of the activity and the need to ensure involvement of all network partners right from the beginning, applicants are encouraged to draft the application in the working language of the network. It is assumed that this will be in most cases English.

8. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA¹⁹

8.1. Eligible applicants

The call is open to entities or consortia of entities fulfilling the following conditions:

- The network should have partners from at least 15 countries. Eligible countries are the Erasmus+ programme countries²⁰.
- Only applications from legal entities established in one of the Erasmus+ programme countries are eligible. Also, the coordinating applicant has to be registered as a legal entity in one of the Erasmus+ programme countries. Actions may include Associate Partners from third countries, but the cost of their participation must be financed entirely by non-EU resources.
- Eligible applicants are associations, foundations and other similar national or international bodies; national education centres; ministries of education and/or training; higher education institutions and research centres.
- The applicant(s) must have had a legal personality for at least 2 years on the date of the deadline for submission of applications and must be able to demonstrate their existence as a legal person.
- In case the application is submitted by several entities working together (consortium), the above criteria apply to all entities.

In order to assess the applicants' eligibility, the following supporting documents are requested:

- The legal entity identification form (http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm) duly completed and signed by the person authorised to enter into legally binding commitments on behalf of the applicant organisation(s);
- **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 mandate letters²¹ confirming their participation to the project and authorising the coordinator to represent the consortium on their behalf,

¹⁹ Art. 131 FR, 201 RAP

²⁰ For a complete list of the Erasmus+ programme countries, please consult the Erasmus+ Programme Guide: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/sites/erasmusplus/files/files/resources/erasmus-plus-programme-guide_en.pdf.

²¹ Annex II of the application form

- proofs establishing that the person named as legal representative is the statutory legal representative of the applicant organisation(s)

In case the application is submitted by several entities working together (consortium), the requested documents have to be provided by all entities.

The following entities will be considered as non-eligible:

- **natural persons;**
- **entities without legal personality.**

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 as specified in section 13.2.

For that purpose, applicants shall identify such affiliated entities in the application form.

The network shall take the form of a **partnership of co-beneficiaries** in participating countries, of which one will take the lead and act as co-ordinator. The co-ordinator will act as an intermediary between the Commission and the co-beneficiaries, will be responsible for the efficient implementation of the action, and will submit requested documents on behalf of the co-beneficiaries.

By way of exception, application may be submitted by **one applicant**, whether established specifically for the action or not, provided that:

- The applicant is formed of several legal entities, each complying with the eligibility, non-exclusion and selection criteria set out in this Call for proposals, and implementing the proposed action together;
- The application identifies the said entities.

For the purpose of declaring eligible costs, the entities constituting the applicant shall be treated as affiliated entities.

8.2. Eligible activities

The following activities are eligible under this call of proposals:

- Creation and further improvement of the network; cooperation with partner institutions and organisations inside and outside the network;
- Activities aiming to develop, test, adapt and adopt/implement innovative policy and practice;
- Exchange experiences and good practice, peer learning activities, peer reviews, study visits and workshops; organisation of conferences and seminars;
- Joint research, surveys, studies and analyses in the thematic area of the call, including country analysis or mapping of approaches and practices; analysis of recent or ongoing reforms;
- Awareness raising and dissemination of results;
- Reporting, evaluation and monitoring of network activities.

9. EXCLUSION CRITERIA

9.1. Exclusion from participation:

Any applicant will be excluded from participating in the call for proposals procedure if it is in any of the following situations:

- (a) it is bankrupt, subject to insolvency or winding up procedures, its assets are being administered by a liquidator or by a court, it is in an arrangement with creditors, its business activities are suspended or it is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for under national legislation or regulations;
- (b) it has been established by a final judgement or a final administrative decision that the applicant is in breach of its obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions in accordance with the law of the country in which it is established, with those of the country in which the authorising officer is located or those of the country of the performance of the contract;
- (c) it has been established by a final judgement or a final administrative decision that the applicant is guilty of grave professional misconduct by having violated applicable laws or regulations or ethical standards of the profession to which the applicant belongs, or by having engaged in any wrongful conduct which has an impact on its professional credibility where such conduct denotes wrongful intent or gross negligence, including, in particular, any of the following:
 - (i) fraudulently or negligently misrepresenting information required for the verification of the absence of grounds for exclusion or the fulfilment of selection criteria or in the performance of a contract, a grant agreement or a grant decision;
 - (ii) entering into agreement with other persons with the aim of distorting competition;
 - (iii) violating intellectual property rights;
 - (iv) attempting to influence the decision-making process of the Commission during the award procedure;
 - (v) attempting to obtain confidential information that may confer upon it undue advantages in the award procedure;
- (d) it has been established by a final judgement that the applicant is guilty of any of the following:
 - (i) fraud, within the meaning of Article 1 of the Convention on the protection of the European Communities' financial interests, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 July 1995;
 - (ii) corruption, as defined in Article 3 of the Convention on the fight against corruption involving officials of the European Communities or officials of EU Member States, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 May 1997, and in Article 2(1) of Council Framework Decision 2003/568/JHA, as well as corruption as defined in the legal provisions of the country where the authorising officer is located, the country in which the applicant is established or the country of the performance of the contract;
 - (iii) participation in a criminal organisation, as defined in Article 2 of Council Framework Decision 2008/841/JHA;
 - (iv) money laundering or terrorist financing, as defined in Article 1 of Directive 2005/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council;

- (v) terrorist-related offences or offences linked to terrorist activities, as defined in Articles 1 and 3 of Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA, respectively, or inciting, aiding, abetting or attempting to commit such offences, as referred to in Article 4 of that Decision;
- (vi) child labour or other forms of trafficking in human beings as defined in Article 2 of Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council;
- (e) it has shown significant deficiencies in complying with the main obligations in the performance of a contract, a grant agreement or a grant decision financed by the Union's budget, which has led to its early termination or to the application of liquidated damages or other contractual penalties, or which has been discovered following checks, audits or investigations by an Authorising Officer, OLAF or the Court of Auditors;
- (f) it has been established by a final judgment or final administrative decision that the applicant has committed an irregularity within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95;
- (g) for the situations of grave professional misconduct, fraud, corruption, other criminal offences, significant deficiencies in the performance of the contract or irregularity, the applicant is subject to:
 - i. facts established in the context of audits or investigations carried out by the Court of Auditors, OLAF or internal audit, or any other check, audit or control performed under the responsibility of an authorising officer of an EU institution, of a European office or of an EU agency or body;
 - ii. non-final administrative decisions which may include disciplinary measures taken by the competent supervisory body responsible for the verification of the application of standards of professional ethics;
 - iii. decisions of the ECB, the EIB, the European Investment Fund or international organisations;
 - iv. decisions of the Commission relating to the infringement of the Union's competition rules or of a national competent authority relating to the infringement of Union or national competition law.
 - v. decisions of exclusion by an authorising officer of an EU institution, of a European office or of an EU agency or body.

9.2. Exclusion from award:

Any applicant will not be granted financial assistance if, in the course of the grant award procedure, it:

- (a) is in an exclusion situation established in accordance with Article 106;
- (b) has misrepresented the information required as a condition for participating in the procedure or has failed to supply that information;
- (c) was previously involved in the preparation of procurement documents where this entails a distortion of competition that cannot be remedied otherwise.

The same exclusion criteria apply to affiliated entities.

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

9.3. Supporting documents²²

Applicants must sign a declaration on their honour certifying that they are not in one of the situations referred to in articles 106(1) and 107 to 109, filling in the relevant form attached to the application form²³ accompanying the call for proposals and available at http://ec.europa.eu/education/calls/2016-eac-s07_en. In case the application is submitted by several entities working together (consortium), all entities must sign this declaration.

10. SELECTION CRITERIA²⁴

10.1. Financial capacity²⁵

The financial capacity will be assessed based on the following methodology and its annexes: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/calls/evaluation-grants-2016_en.htm.

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:

Grants with a pre-financing value of EUR 600 000 or less

For grants of this type, proof of financial capacity is constituted by a declaration on the honour by the grant applicant(s) (see Annex I of the Application form).

However, in case of doubt and only for grants exceeding EUR 60 000, the assessment committee reserves the right to request supporting documents and to carry out a financial analysis as described at point 4 of the above mentioned methodology (cf. Article 131(3) of the FR)

Moreover for grants exceeding EUR 60 000, entities falling into one of the high-risk categories mentioned at point 3.1 of the methodology must provide proof of their financial capacity and are required to undergo the financial analysis provided for in point 4 of the same methodology.

On the basis of the documents submitted, if the RAO considers that financial capacity is not satisfactory, he may:

- request further information;
- propose a grant agreement without pre-financing;
- propose a grant agreement with a pre-financing paid in instalments;
- propose a grant agreement with a pre-financing covered by a bank guarantee (see section 13.4 below);
- where applicable, require the joint and several financial liability of all the co-beneficiaries;
- reject the application.

²² Art. 197 RAP

²³ Annex I "Declaration of honour" of the application form

²⁴ Art. 132 FR, 202 RAP

²⁵ Art. 131, 132 FR, 202 RAP.

10.2. Operational capacity²⁶

Applicants must have the professional competencies as well as appropriate qualifications necessary to complete the proposed action or work programme. In this respect, applicants have to submit a declaration on their honour, and the following supporting documents:

- curriculum vitae or description of the profile of the people primarily responsible for managing and implementing the operation (accompanied where appropriate, like in the field of research and education, by a list of relevant publications)²⁷;
- the coordinator organisation's/sole beneficiary's activity reports of the previous two years²⁸;
- an exhaustive lists of previous projects and activities performed and connected to the policy field of this Call or to the actions to be carried out²⁹;

In case the application is submitted by several entities working together (consortium), the requested documents have to be provided by all entities, unless otherwise mentioned.

11. AWARD CRITERIA³⁰

Eligible applications/projects will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

- the **relevance of the project**, i.e. appropriateness of the proposed activities to the objectives of the call. (0-20 points)
- the **quality of the work's plan design and implementation**, i.e. effectiveness and rationality of the proposed methodology, the timetable and monitoring, the innovative nature of the project, , the resources deployed in relation to the objectives envisaged, particularly in terms of cost-effectiveness. (0-30 points)
- the **quality of the project consortium (and cooperation arrangements)** with regard to the variety of backgrounds of participating institutions or associations, the geographical coverage and the distribution of tasks and responsibilities among its members. (0-20 points)
- the **impact, dissemination and sustainability** of the expected results, i.e. the expected multiplying effect, the transferability and sustainability of the expected results. (0-30 points)

Points will be allocated to eligible applications out of a total of 100 on the basis of the above-specified weighting. A minimum threshold of 60 points will be applied for all award criteria taken together. Applications below this threshold will be rejected.

These award criteria will be also used to assess the detailed work plans for the following years of operation and their corresponding budgets in order to conclude a specific agreement for a grant for an action for the following year.

²⁶ Art. 131 FR, 202 RAP.

²⁷ List of CVs to be provided in Annex V in addition to the CVs of all key staff of the coordinator/ sole beneficiary, and of 1-2 key staff for the other applicant entities

²⁸ Not necessary to provide for possible co-beneficiaries or affiliated entities

²⁹ List of previous projects in the last 3 years to be provided in Annex IV by all applicant entities

³⁰ Art. 132 FR, 203 RAP

12. LEGAL COMMITMENTS³¹

In the event of a grant awarded by the Commission, a FPA, and a specific agreement, drawn up in euro and detailing the conditions and level of funding, will be sent to the beneficiary, as well as the procedure in view to formalise the obligations of the parties. The 2 copies of the original agreement must be signed first by the beneficiary and returned to the Commission immediately. The Commission will sign it last.

Please note that the award of a specific grant agreement does not establish an entitlement for subsequent years.

13. FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

13.1. General Principles

a) Non-cumulative award³²

An action may only receive one grant from the EU budget.

In no circumstances shall the same costs be financed twice by the Union budget. To ensure this, applicants shall indicate the sources and amounts of Union funding received or applied for the same action or part of the action or for its functioning during the same financial year as well as any other funding received or applied for the same action.³³

b) Non-retroactivity³⁴

No grant may be awarded retrospectively for actions already completed.

Action grants:

A grant may be awarded for an action which has already begun only where the applicant can demonstrate the need to start the action before the grant agreement is signed or the grant decision is notified.

In such cases, costs eligible for financing may not have been incurred prior to the date of submission of the grant application.

c) Co-financing³⁵

Co-financing means that the resources which are necessary to carry out the action or the work programme may not be entirely provided by the EU grant.

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.

d) Balanced budget³⁶

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.

³¹ Art. 121 FR, 174 RAP.

³² Art. 129 FR

³³ Art. 196.4 RAP.

³⁴ Art. 130 FR

³⁵ Art. 125 FR, 183 RAP.

³⁶ Art. 196.2 RAP

The budget must be drawn up in euros.

Applicants which 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.

e) Implementation contracts/subcontracting³⁷

Where the implementation of the action or the work programme requires the award of procurement contracts (implementation contracts), the beneficiary must award the contract 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.

In the event of procurement exceeding € 60 000, the beneficiary must abide by special rules as referred in the FPA annexed to the call. Moreover the beneficiary is expected to clearly document the tendering procedure and retain the documentation for the event of an audit.

Entities acting in their capacity of contracting authorities in the meaning of Directive 2014/24/EU³⁸ or contracting entities in the meaning of Directive 2004/25/EU³⁹ shall abide by the applicable national public procurement rules.

Sub-contracting, i.e. the externalisation of specific tasks or activities which form part of the action/work programme as described in the proposal must satisfy the conditions applicable to any implementation contract (as specified above) and in addition to them the following conditions:

- it may only cover the implementation of a limited part of the action;
- it must be justified having regard to the nature of the action and what is necessary for its implementation;
- it must be clearly stated in the proposal.

f) Financial support to third parties⁴⁰.

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

13.2. Funding forms⁴¹

Mixed financing grants are calculated on the basis of a detailed estimated budget indicating clearly the costs that are eligible for EU funding. The grant amount may neither exceed the eligible costs nor the amount requested. Amounts are indicated in euros.

➤ **Maximum amount requested**

The EU grant is limited to a maximum co-funding rate of 75% of **eligible costs**.

Consequently, part of the total eligible expenses entered in the estimative budget must be financed from sources other than the EU grant (see section 13.1c).

➤ **Eligible costs**⁴²

³⁷ Art. 137 FR, 209 RAP

³⁸ Directive 2014/24/EU on public procurement and repealing Directive 2004/18/EC.

³⁹ Directive 2004/25/EU on procurement by entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors and repealing Directive 2004/17/EC

⁴⁰ Art. 137 FR, 210 RAP.

⁴¹ Art. 123 FR, 181 RAP.

Eligible costs are costs actually incurred by the beneficiary of a grant which meet all the following criteria:

- ✓ they are incurred during the duration of the action or of the work programme, with the exception of costs relating to final reports and audit certificates;

The period of eligibility of costs will start as specified in the grant agreement or the grant decision.

If a beneficiary can demonstrate the need to start the action before the agreement is signed, expenditure may be authorised before the grant is awarded. Under no circumstances can the eligibility period start before the date of submission of the grant application (see section 13.1b).

- ✓ 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 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 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 same criteria apply to the affiliated entities.

Eligible direct costs

The eligible direct costs for the action/ work programme are those costs which, **with due regard for the conditions of eligibility set out above**, are identifiable as specific costs directly linked to the performance of the action or the work programme and which can therefore be booked to it directly, such as :

- the costs of personnel working under an employment contract with the applicant or 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 applicant's usual policy on remuneration. Those costs may include additional remuneration, including payments on the basis of supplementary contracts regardless of their nature, provided that it is paid in a consistent manner whenever the same kind of work or expertise is required and independently from the source of funding used;

- the costs of natural persons working under a contract with the beneficiary other than an employment contract or who are seconded to the beneficiary by a third party against payment may also be included under such personnel costs, provided that the following conditions are fulfilled:

i) the natural person works under the instructions of the beneficiary and, unless otherwise agreed with the beneficiary, in the beneficiary's premises;

ii) the result of the work belongs to the beneficiary; and

iii) the costs are not significantly different from the costs of staff performing similar tasks under an employment contract with the beneficiary

- 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;
- subsistence allowances (for meetings, including kick-off meetings where applicable, conferences etc.) provided that these costs are in line with the beneficiary's usual practices;
- costs of travel (for meetings, including kick-off meetings where applicable, conferences etc.), provided that these costs are in line with the beneficiary's usual practices on travel;
- depreciation cost of equipment (new or second-hand): only the portion of the equipment's depreciation corresponding to the duration of the action/project and the rate of actual use for the purposes of the action may be taken into account by the Commission;
- costs of consumables and supplies, provided that they are identifiable and assigned to the action/project;
- costs entailed by implementation contracts awarded by the beneficiaries for the purposes of carrying out the action/project, provided that the conditions laid down in the grant agreement or grant decision are met;
- costs arising directly from requirements linked to the implementation of the action/project (dissemination of information, specific evaluation of the action, translations, reproduction);
- costs relating to a pre-financing guarantee lodged by the beneficiary of the grant, where required;
- costs relating to external audits where required in support of the requests for payments.
- duties, taxes and charges paid by the partner, notably value added tax (VAT), provided that they are included in eligible direct costs, and unless specified otherwise in the Special Conditions or in the Specific Agreement.

Eligible indirect costs (overheads)

- 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.

Applicants's attention is drawn to the fact that in the case of organisations receiving an operating grant, indirect costs are not eligible under specific actions.

➤ **Ineligible costs**

- 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 a beneficiary and covered by another action receiving a European Union grant. In particular, indirect costs shall not be eligible under a grant for an action awarded to a beneficiary who already receives an operating grant financed from the Union budget during the period in question;
- contributions in kind;
- excessive or reckless expenditure;
- Deductible VAT;
- others (in accordance with the relevant legal base).

➤ Calculation of the final grant amount

The final amount of the grant to be awarded to the beneficiary is established after completion of the action or work programme, upon approval of the request for payment containing the following documents⁴³:

- a final report providing details of the implementation and results of the action/work programme ;
- the final financial statement of costs actually incurred.

EU grants may not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit within the framework of the action or the work programme of the beneficiary. **Profit shall be 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. In this respect, where a profit is made, the Commission shall be entitled to recover the percentage of the profit corresponding to the Union contribution to the eligible costs actually incurred by the beneficiary to carry out the action or work programme.

13.3. Payment arrangements⁴⁴

A pre-financing payment⁴⁵ corresponding to 70 % of the grant amount will be transferred to the beneficiary within 30⁴⁶ days either of the date when the last of the two parties signs the agreement, or of the notification of the grant decision, provided all requested guarantees have been received. This pre-financing payment may be reduced, and/or an interim payment may be introduced, subject to a risk analysis.

The Commission will establish the amount of the final payment to be made to the beneficiary on the basis of the calculation of the final grant amount (see section 13.2 above). If the total of earlier payments is higher than the final grant amount, the beneficiary will be required to reimburse the amount paid in excess by the Commission through a recovery order⁴⁷.

13.4. Pre-financing guarantee⁴⁸

Subject to a risk analysis, the authorising officer may, on a case by case basis, require a pre-financing guarantee for up to the same amount as the pre-financing in order to limit the financial risks linked to the pre-financing payment.

⁴³ Art. 135 FR

⁴⁴ Art. 90, 135 FR, 207 RAP.

⁴⁵ Art. 109, 110 RAP

⁴⁶ Art. 92 FR

⁴⁷ Art. 109, 110 RAP

⁴⁸ Art. 134 FR, 206 RAP

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.

The guarantee shall be released as the pre-financing is gradually cleared against interim payments or payments of balances to the beneficiary, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the grant agreement.

14. PUBLICITY

14.1. By the beneficiaries

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.

For graphic requirements, please refer to:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/services/visual_identity/index_en.htm and the European Commission's visual identity guidelines. For further details you may also contact comm-visual-identity@ec.europa.eu.

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.

14.2. By the Commission⁴⁹

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 when the latter is a legal person, region when the beneficiary is a natural person, as defined on NUTS 2 level⁵⁰ if he/she is domiciled within EU or equivalent if domiciled outside EU,
- 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

⁴⁹ Art. 35, 128.3 FR, 21, 191 RAP.

⁵⁰ European Union Official Journal L 39, of 10 February 2007.

concerned as protected by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union or harm the commercial interests of the beneficiaries.

15. 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 *European Commission, Directorate General for Education and Culture, unit B.2*. Details concerning the processing of personal data are available on the privacy statement at: http://ec.europa.eu/dataprotectionofficer/privacystatement_publicprocurement_en.pdf

Personal data may be registered in the Early Detection and Exclusion System (EDES) if you are in one of the situations mentioned in Article 106 of the Financial Regulation⁵¹. For more information, see the Privacy Statement on http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect_en.cfm).

16. PROCEDURE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Proposals must be submitted in accordance with the formal requirements and by the deadline set out under section 5.

No modification to the application is allowed once the deadline for submission has elapsed. However, if there is a need to clarify certain aspects or for the correction of clerical mistakes, the Commission may contact the applicant for this purpose during the evaluation process⁵².

Applicants will be informed in writing about the results of the selection process.⁵³

➤ Submission on paper

Application forms are available at http://ec.europa.eu/education/calls/2016-eac-s07_en.

Applications shall be submitted on the correct form, duly completed, dated, showing a balanced budget (revenue/expenditure), submitted in 3 (three) copies (one original clearly identified as such, plus 2 copies plus a copy on CD or USB stick), and signed by the person authorised to enter into legally binding commitments on behalf of the applicant organisation.

Offers must be submitted in a sealed envelope itself enclosed within a second sealed envelope, addressed as indicated above. The inner envelope must bear, in addition to the address indicated above, the words, “**CALL FOR PROPOSALS – EAC/S07/2016 – Not to be opened by the mail service.**” If self-adhesive envelopes are used, they must be sealed with adhesive tape and the sender must sign across that tape.

Where applicable, all additional information considered necessary by the applicant can be included on separate sheets.

Applications must be sent

⁵¹ Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 (OJ L 298 of 26.10.2012, p. 1) as amended.

⁵² Art. 96 FR

⁵³ Art. 133 FR, 205 RAP

- by post, date as postmark, or by courier service, date of receipt by the courier service, to the following address⁵⁴:

*European Commission
Directorate-General for Education and Culture
Call for proposals EAC/S07/2016
Ms. Susanne Conze
J-70 – 04/185
Rue Joseph II 70
B-1049 Brussels
Belgium*

- or hand-delivered in person, date as receipt, at the following address (opening hours: Monday to Friday, 08.30 – 17.00)

*European Commission
Avenue du Bourget 1
B-1140 Brussels
Belgium*

Applications sent by fax or e-mail will not be accepted.

➤ Contacts

The contact point for any questions is: EAC-SCHOOL-POLICY-NETWORKS@ec.europa.eu

➤ Annexes:

- **Application form** including the template for work programme for the entire period of the FPA⁵⁵

- Annex I Declaration of honour
- Annex II Mandate letters (if applicable)
- Annex III Indicative overall budget for the entire duration of the FPA
- Annex IV List of previous projects
- Annex V List of CVs
- Other supporting documents to be provided where applicable: see check list for applicants

- **Checklist for applicants**

- **Template for detailed work programme of the first year of implementation**⁵⁶

- **Detailed budget for the first year of implementation**⁵⁷

- **Model draft FPA for information (currently under revision, but will be uploaded before the submission deadline)**

⁵⁴ Art. 195.3 RAP

⁵⁵ Part III "Information on the action" in the application form

⁵⁶ Detailed work programme and budget of the first year of implementation will be evaluated in more detail only after the framework partnership agreement has been awarded

⁵⁷ Idem.