EUROPEAN COMMISSION
ENTERPRISE AND INDUSTRY DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

Directorate F: Tourism, CSR, Consumer Goods and International Regulatory Agreements

Date : 24/07/2012

Answers to requests for clarifications

Call for proposals

ACTION N°: 47/G/ENT/CIP/12/E/N02S005

TITLE: European corporate social responsibility award scheme

Question 1	a) *If I have understood correctly, the call aims to make just one grant to an overall contractor/ tenderer who shall organize several national award schemes? If yes, how many national award schemes should be included as a minimum?* b) *How can a Member State (e.g. Germany) participate in the project, or apply to participate in the project (by creating a German national CSR award scheme), if not in the role of the overall contractor/ tenderer?* c) *What would be the Maximum EU con-financing ceiling per National Award Scheme?*
Answer 1	a) This understanding is correct. No specific minimum number of award schemes is mentioned in the call. However it is stated that indicatively we expect that the winning proposal would cover at least 15 countries. b) A national government could be a member of a consortium of organisations that submit a joint proposal. c) There is no maximum EU co-financing ceiling per National Award Scheme The EU co-financing will be a percentage of 75% of the total eligible cost with a maximum of EUR 800.000 for the whole project.
Question 2	*a) How many projects does European Commission intend to fund in the range of this Call for Proposal?* *b) What do you mean with "Indicatively, the European Commission expects that the winning proposal will cover at least 15 EIP participating countries"? I suppose it means that the winning award scheme will have to be implemented through national competitions at least in 15 EIP participating countries.* *c) Can the applicant be a single organization? Have you fixed a minimum of members for each partnership?* *d) Can you confirm the following timeline?* *1.Call deadline: 27/07/2012* *2.Deadline to national competition opening day: 12/09/2012* *3.Deadline to inform the EU Commission about the winners: April 2013*
Answer 2	a) One. b) It means that we expect that the winning proposal will support national competitions in at least 15 EIP participating countries. c) The applicant can be a single organisation. We have not fixed a minimum of members for any partnership. **1. Yes** **2. The call for proposals says on page 4 that we expect the action to start in October 2012.** **3. Yes**

Question 3	*(1) How does the EC define 'stable and sufficient sources of funding' – Does the EC have a minimum annual turnover in mind for applicants?* *(2) Does the applicant need to have been in business for a specific amount of time to be eligible ? My company was established in Belgium less than one year ago. However I operated as an independent – with a VAT number for 3 years prior to this. Does this mean my company is excluded?* *(3) Do the same conditions apply for partners as regards turnover and length of business operations?* *(4) Does the requirement for co-financing of 75% mean that of a total budget of 1,066,666 EUR, the EC contributes 800,000 EUR and partners must contribute 200,066,666 EUR?*
Answer 3	(1) There is no level of turnover defined. Actually, the candidate must provide evidence that he has the financial capacity to finance the implementation of the project after the consumption of the prefinancing. Indeed the balance payment (max 50% of the EC contribution) will be only calculated at the end of the project. Moreover the candidate must include an external audit report with his proposal. (2) See Articles 5.2 and 6.3 of the call text. (3) Yes. (4) Correct.
Question 4	***A) application and application process:*** *1. Because the application needs to be submitted electronically, will you also request hard originals of the documents?* *2. Forms A2 and A3.1 – We would like to double check that it is both the leader organisation and partners who need to fill in online the two forms. (How will all forms be linked to 1 application?)* *3. What is the 'negotiation stage? Partnership agreements are to be submitted during negotiation stage. Does this mean the period between submission of the proposal and signing of the grant agreement?)* *4. With regard to threshold of 500.000 € of the grant, the obligation to submit the audit report concerns only the lead organisation or also partners? (Guide p.17)* *5. Consortium agreement (=Power of attorney): Is there a form or is it a free text? (ref. Guide p13-final check)* *6. Travel expenditure: Except for per diems are there any other thresholds? (for travel itself – flight, train tickets)* *7. Font 11 – Is this applicable only to Part A of the application?* *8. Power of attorney: Is it enough if it is signed by partners only electronically? (for the purpose of application online)* *9. **Consultant** (Expert on EU and CSR who works 4/5 of full time in our organisation with consultant contract since many years.) This person should be considered as external staff and would carry out some of the key activities. Are there any limitations to the tasks? (In similar sense as subcontracting and core business.)* ***B) project itself:*** *1. Regarding visibility and communication, in addition to creating a dedicated website for the awards, is it possible to also create a*

	dedicated webpage hosted by the EC website. This would add extra credibility to visitors who will then also clearly identify the EU identity of this ever first award scheme. If this would be possible should we foresee the costs for such a page and what would be the criteria to follow regarding design, logo, etc.
Answer 4	**A) application and application process:** 1. No, the Commission don't need hard copies of the proposal. 2. The coordinator will have to fill in form A.3.1 of the Partners. Form A2 needs to be filled in by each Partner. (After registration for this call via EPSS tool, you will get a login for the Coordinator and for the Partners. After you will have to follow the instructions of the EPSS guide). 3. The negotiation stage is the period where the Commission can ask for clarifications, additional information or correction of the budget. 4. This threshold applies to each beneficiary if their contribution request exceeds € 500.000. 5. See Annex IV of the draft grant agreement (multi-beneficiairies). 6. There are no thresholds. Beneficiaries have to apply their own procedures. (see also article II.14 of the draft agreement - in particular II.14.1 § 6). 7. We have no requirement in this matter. 8. Yes, it is. Hard copies will be requested in case of the grant is awarded. 9. Article II.14.2 § 1 of the draft agreement is very clear on this subject : *"the cost of staff assigned to the action, <u>comprising actual salaries plus social security charges and other statutory costs</u> included in the remuneration, provided that this does not exceed the average rates corresponding to the beneficiary's usual policy on remuneration"*. From your question, I deduct that this type of personal must be considered as "Subcontractors". Therefore you need to follow the requirements of the call regarding their selection (Article II.9 "Award of contract" of the draft grant agreement) as well as the ceiling of subcontracting allowed for this project. **B) project itself:** *1.* We cannot say at this stage whether a webpage hosted by the European Commission would be possible. The proposal could suggest this, making clear that the final decision would rest with the Commission, and providing for an alternative if the Commission's answer were not to be positive. In terms of budget, the proposal would have to provide for a budget to develop the webpage even if the webpage were finally hosted by the European Commission.
<u>Question 5</u>	*1. Ourselves, as the lead organisation and most of our partners have intention to co-finance the project themselves. However some of them questioned what if a co-financing opportunity arises during implementation of the project? Can it be accepted by the EC even if a partner stated in the proposal that there will not be a third co-*

	financing party? 2. *How detailed needs to be the forward budget submitted with the proposal? Would you confirm that B/1 summary sheet is sufficient and can be submitted without details filled in on the sheets B.1.2b – B.1.2d ? Would you also confirm that detailed budget would be needed only for the Grant Agreement if relevant afterwards? (If not, by when?)* 3. *For all expenditure in the forward budget, is it necessary to submit also documents justifying the estimated expenditure? (e.g. quotes from providers or subcontractors, etc.)* 4. *Would you please confirm that consortium agreement (=power of attorney) is a part of the Grant agreement and need not to be submitted with the proposal?* 5. *Would you please confirm that Partnership agreements need not to be submitted with the Proposal but during the negotiation stage afterwards if relevant?*
Answer 5	(1) The Commission allows the beneficiary's self-financing to be replaced by other sources of revenue other than the Community grant during the implementation period, which is itself limited by the double ceilings in terms of absolute value and percentage of actual costs. Of course, any financial contributions from third parties must be identifiable and verifiable, in particular being recorded in the accounting records of a beneficiary/Partner. (2) Form B/1 is locked and you need to fill in, in details, the other forms. Please refer to the Guide for Applicants. (3) See point VII.14 of the Guide for Applicants (4) I confirm that the power of attorney can be signed when the grant is awarded. (5) We confirm that Partnership agreement (PA) can be submitted during the negotiation stage. However this step could delay the procedure of the agreement in case of several partnerships should be signed. Therefore we would prefer to get these PA with the proposal.
Question 6	1. *In case one partner from Switzerland and one partner from Kosovo wish to participate on non-cost basis, how to incorporate their participation in the application?* 2. *Associates do not have to meet legal status criteria but they must comply with geographical eligibility. This would mean that Kosovo or Switzerland cannot even be 'associates'? (=participating on non-cost basis)* 3. *If a national partner organisation participates as an associate (=non cost basis) and runs the CSR awards under the project, can winners of such scheme participate in the ceremony in Brussels?(In particular, we have in mind winners of potential national awards in Kosovo and Switzerland.)*
Answer 6	1. Both Partners could be considered as "Associates" and this case is well described in point 6 of section 5.2 "Legal Status Eligibility" of

	the call text : "*In addition to the lead applicant and any partner organisations, other organisations (associates) may be involved in the action. Such associates play a real role in the action but may not receive funding from the grant with the exception of per diem and travel costs (**see point VII.13 of the Guide for Applicants**). Associates do not have to meet the eligibility criteria referred to in this section.* **Associates** *should, however, be clearly identified in the proposal and* **should sign a letter of intention addressed to the lead applicant, which should be annexed to the proposal**. 2. Associates (=participating on non-cost basis) do not have to meet the **eligibility criteria**. 3. Why not ? They are not direct beneficiaries of the grant.
Question 7	*Under this call for proposal we would like to know:* *1. If we need to evidence partnerships with national authorities of 15 EIP already in the application or these partnerships can be held during the project implementation?* *2. If we can propose a European CSR award scheme - under the "renewed EU strategy 2011-14 for Corporate Social Responsibility" and ISO 26000 framework - applicable to all countries or we need to identify/create national award schemes in each country?*
Answer 7	*1.* There is no rule on this issue. However a proposal that already provides evidence of partnerships with national authorities is likely to be more convincing than a proposal that does not. *2.* The terms of reference of the call clearly specify that we intend to co-finance a series of national award schemes, not one single European award.
Question 8	*I've read Call for Proposal for the CSR award scheme. I've noticed that the intention is to create one big application. This means the best chance for our initiative (an new Award scheme in multiple countries) to have a chance of getting an approval is to cooperate.* *I hope you know the one (or maybe two) organizations who are preparing an application. Can I have their contact information, so I can ask them if we can join them? We've got our information well prepared so I think submitting before the 27th of July would not be a problem. We can have our information way before that day with them.*
Answer 8	A list of organisations that have expressed an interest is available on the webpage announcing this call: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=5959&lang=en&title=47%2FG%2FENT%2FCIP%2F12%2FE%2FN02S005%2D%2D%2DEuropean%2Dcorporate%2Dsocial%2Dresponsibility%2Daward%2Dscheme
Question 9	*1. We would like to know if for the two categories, small and medium sized enterprises and larger companies, should we use*

	the same precise theme in developing the award schemes or we can develop different themes for each category provided that it remains within the overall common proposition? *2. Is considered to be a partnership a form of commercial collaboration between an enterprise and his providers?* *3. Is considered to be a partnership the collaboration between employee's unions and the employer?*
Answer 9	1. You may propose different themes for each category provided it stays within the overall common theme of "Corporate social responsibility: partnership, innovation and impact". 2. The call text says that the partnership should be between an enterprise and at least one other non-business stakeholder. A partnership just between an enterprise and its suppliers would in principle therefore not be applicable. 3. Yes
Question 10	*We were advised to speak to you by EIF regarding the potential grant schemes available via the EU Commission, especially connected to SMEs and CSR activities.* *We are a clean tech German start up aiming at developing the optimised water condenser to provide clean drinking water to communities in need in emerging countries.* *We are seeking grants to support NGO project activity, as well as for the development of the prototype in Munich , with the grant ranges of EUR 1,000 – 25,000.* *Please let us know whether we can / should apply for the grant CSR award or whether you can direct us towards a more suitable scheme.*
Answer 10	Please refer to the text of the call for proposals for the European award scheme. It does not appear to us that what you mention in your message would correspond to the call for proposals in question. For possible more relevant calls for proposals you could consult the webpages of our Directorate-General for development: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?ADSSChck=1224846858672&do=publi.welcome&userlanguage=en
Question 11	At this stage (proposal) there is no need that the budget and project description (B6) be signed or certified by administrative officer. Is this correct?
Answer 11	We confirm that Forms B6 and the budget should not be signed at this stage. r

Question 12	1. Would you please confirm that the only **document to be signed** in the proposal is Form B4? (REF.: checklist in the Guide p. 13 "*My proposal is signed, dated and complete, using the standard submission set.*") 2. Would you please specify what is meant by : "*Do you have the **agreement of all the members** of the consortium to submit this proposal on their behalf?*" (Guide, p.13, Final checks before submission) Our partners only filled in and submitted all forms. If relevant, all of them will sign grant agreement later on. Is there anything else we need as "authorisation" from their part? (We followed the call instructions closely and no such document was requested.) 3. When registering as leader in EPSS, we were not allowed to enter **Proposal Number**. Therefore it is stated as "0000". Is this correct?
Answer 12	1. B3 should be signed as well if applicable. 2. No further specific authorization is requested. 3. The proposal number is a code generated and managed by the EPSS system. You should not worry about it.