



Call for Proposals under a Community framework
for co-operation to promote sustainable urban development

The European Commission published a notice concerning a Call for the submission of proposals under the above-mentioned programme in the Official Journal n° C 20 of 24.01.2004.

This document is designed to provide the necessary details to help potential candidates in formulating their applications. The English text of these Guidelines will be considered as the definitive text in the case of doubt between linguistic versions.

Under the terms of the Council and European Parliament Decision 1411/2001/EC (hereafter referred as to the Decision), the Commission invites networks of local authorities to present proposals with a view to obtaining a financial contribution.

This document is designed to provide the necessary details to help potential candidates in formulating their applications and specifies the needs that the Commission considers most important in the following issues:

1. APPLICANTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

- 1.1 Applicants shall be networks of local authorities. Such networks shall include local authorities from at least four of the following countries: the 15 EU Member States¹ and Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.
- 1.2 In addition, the networks may include local authorities and networks in Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs)², Cyprus and Malta, as well as in other countries which have concluded association agreements with the European Community.

The Commission highly encourages the participation of the local authorities and networks from the Accession countries.

- 1.3 The networks may also have other partners such as civil, professional or academic institutions and organisations, specialised institutes, NGOs, public authorities and other actors organised at European level. Partnerships that

¹ Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

² Poland, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia.

include technical centres of expertise on urban environmental issues would be welcomed.

- 1.4 The proposal shall be submitted by the network if it has a formal legal status. If it does not have a legal status, it shall be submitted by one of the local authorities mentioned in § 1.1. If the proposal is successful, the grant agreement will be signed by this body (hereafter the “lead applicant”) and the Commission. The lead applicant is responsible for the technical and financial realisation of the proposal.
- 1.5 The lead applicant and each of the other participating partners of the network shall have specific tasks referring to concrete actions which shall be listed in the proposal. The funding of the actions under the project shall not cover the running costs of the entities of the network or partners.
- 1.6 As regards Community subsidies, contracts and loans, which have to be listed in points 1.5 and 1.6 of annex B of the application form, the lead applicant shall list the concrete actions undertaken or foreseen in those projects by the lead applicant and by the partners so as to prove that they are distinct in time and content from those foreseen in the proposal under this call. This refers in particular to work and travel costs of personnel or experts. In case this information is not clearly submitted, the Commission may consider these costs as not eligible for funding under this Community Framework as a precautionary measure against overlapping and cross-funding.

2. PRIORITY THEMES:

- 2.1 The projects aiming at the activities listed in paragraph 2.2 will be funded under this call. They correspond to the priority themes highlighted in the Commission’s preparatory work for the Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment³.

The projects shall aim at concrete outputs, which can encompass technical guidance documents, manuals, training resources and electronic tools, in addition to the transfer and development of skills amongst the project partners.

- Technical guidelines would set out advice on preparatory issues, procedures, difficulties and their solutions that are likely to be encountered in undertaking these initiatives.
- Manuals would provide practical, operational support.
- Training materials would provide officials, elected members and other stakeholders with the skills that they need.

³ http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/urban/thematic_strategy.htm (COM(2004)60)

These outputs shall be tested as part of the project and particular emphasis shall be made to the development of specific results which can be used and are viable once the project and EC co-funding has ended.

- 2.2. The projects listed below shall be focused on local authorities, which will develop and finalise the relevant plans or strategies or systems for their own urban areas during the lifetime of the project. At the end of the project, the participating local authorities shall have plans and strategies that are ready to be adopted although the adoption itself and delivery of the plan or strategy will not form part of the project. The project should include consultation phases by each participating local authority with stakeholders and the public to ensure that the approach identified has wide support and is likely to continue after the project ends. In addition to preparing the plans or strategies, material to further disseminate these good practice examples to other local authorities (technical guidance, manuals, training material) will also be prepared. Networks should aim to include local authorities in their projects which have not been active in preparing such plans and strategies in order to widen the use of such techniques and provide useful input into the dissemination material referred to above.

(i) Preparation of sustainable urban transport plans

The goal of the plan is to reduce the adverse environmental impacts of urban transport whilst sustaining an efficient, inclusive and effective transport system. Objectives could include reducing demand for urban motorised transport, increasing the share of public transport, promoting less polluting transport modes, rationalising the use of the private car and providing access for all citizens to key services but will depend on the circumstances of the participating local authorities. The plans shall be holistic and integrated with other plans such as any environmental management plan that exists for the urban area.

The setting of targets by each local authority to reflect their own priorities and local circumstances (taking into account any European level targets agreed through European law or initiatives such as Aalborg +10⁴) will be an important element of the plan as will be establishing mechanisms to deliver them. The adoption of the plan and the delivery of its objectives do not form part of the project.

In parallel, the project shall develop technical guidelines, manuals and training materials for other towns and cities in order that they can also prepare and adopt similar plans.

(ii) Preparation of urban environmental management plans.

The aim of the plan is to tackle the wide range of environmental problems that urban areas face at the scale of the entire urban area. Objectives should be wide-ranging and comprehensive and could include reducing the urban area's environmental impact, improving the quality of key environmental factors such as air quality and improving the quality of life for citizens but will depend on the circumstances of the participating local authorities. The plans shall be holistic and integrated with other sectoral plans that already exist, for instance on air quality and on noise.

⁴ <http://www.aalborgplus10.dk/default.aspx>

The setting of targets by each local authority to reflect their own priorities and local circumstances (taking into account any targets agreed through European law or initiatives such as Aalborg +10) will be an important element of the plan as will be establishing mechanisms to deliver them. The adoption of the plan and the delivery of its objectives do not form part of the project.

In parallel, the project should develop technical guidelines, manuals and training materials for other towns and cities in order that can also prepare and adopt such plans.

(iii) Preparation of environmental management systems for urban areas
(examples of environmental management systems include EMAS and ISO 14001)

The environmental management system will seek to ensure compliance with the local authority's environmental legal obligations and to achieve the objectives set out in their local environmental strategies, plans or any commitments entered into through participation in initiatives such as Local Agenda 21 or Aalborg +10. The system would apply to the whole urban area and not just the local authority's own activities. The systems should include mechanisms to ensure effective delivery of the objectives such as links to financial resources. Different management systems can be developed and prepared by the different local authorities participating in the project. The adoption of the management system and its objectives does not form part of the project.

In parallel, the project should develop technical guidelines, manuals and training materials for other towns and cities in order that can also prepare and adopt such management systems. An important element of the final report for the project will be an assessment of the different approaches adopted by the local authorities, their relative strengths and weaknesses and recommendations for preparing environmental management systems for urban areas.

(iv) Local strategies to increase the use of sustainable construction methods and techniques.

The strategies to be developed by local authorities shall promote and increase the level of sustainable construction within their urban areas. A wide range of approaches and actions, both internal and external, are likely to be considered for inclusion in the strategy. Targets shall be identified as part of the strategy and action plans prepared for delivering them. The strategy should consider promoting sustainable construction methods and techniques for new buildings and also renovation of existing buildings and could cover infrastructure development. Delivering the strategy and measures in the action plan do not form part of the project.

In parallel, the project should develop technical guidelines, manuals and training materials for other towns and cities in order that can also develop similar strategies to increase the use of sustainable construction methods and techniques.

3. BUDGET AND FINANCIAL CONDITIONS

- 3.1 The indicative amount of the framework budget for financial year 2004 is 4.750.000 euros.

- 3.2 As a general guideline, the overall rate of Community contribution shall not exceed 60% of the eligible costs of the actions to be supported.
- In the case where the lead applicant or some of the partners are from Objective 1 regions or from the Accession countries, the Community funding can increase to 75% of the costs incurred by the lead applicant and for those partners. All other lead applicant or partners outside Objective 1 or outside the Accession Countries will be funded only up to 50% of their eligible costs. This means that if a lead applicant and/or one or more partners for an action belong to Objective 1 regions or Accession countries, the other partners will be funded only up to 50% of their eligible costs respecting the overall maximum funding rate of 60%.
- All lead applicants and partners shall contribute financially to the action.

Example:

Total Budget: 800.000 € (Leader/Partner total costs: 400.000 € + 400.000 €) EC funding: 480.000 € = 60%
Partners contribution: 320.000 € = 40%

Possibilities

1- Mixed Network of outside Obj 1/AC and Obj.1/AC:

(a)

Leader/Partner outside Obj 1/AC contribution: $200.000 + 20.000 = 220.000 \text{ €} = 55\%$ of 400.000 €

Leader/Partner outside Obj 1/AC EC funding: $200.000 - 20.000 = 180.000 \text{ €} = 45 \%$ of 400.000 €

Leader/Partner Obj 1/AC contribution: $100.000 \text{ €} = 25\%$ of 400.000 €

Leader/Partner Obj 1/AC EC funding: $300.000 \text{ €} = 75 \%$ of 400.000 €

EC funding $180.000 + 300.000 = 480.000 \text{ €} = 60\%$ of 800.000 €

(b)

Leader/Partner outside Obj 1/AC contribution: $200.000 \text{ €} = 50\%$ of 400.000 €

Leader/Partner outside Obj 1/AC EC funding: $200.000 \text{ €} = 50\%$ of 400.000 €

Leader/Partner Obj 1/AC contribution: $120.000 \text{ €} = 30 \%$ of 400.000 €

Leader/Partner Obj 1/AC EC funding: $280.000 \text{ €} = 70 \%$ of 400.000 €

EC funding $200.000 + 280.000 = 480.000 \text{ €} = 60\%$ of 800.000 €

2- Network of Obj.1/AC only:

Leader Obj 1/AC contribution: $160.000 = 40\%$ of 400.000 €

Leader Obj 1/AC EC funding: $240.000 = 60\%$ of 400.000 €

Partner Obj 1/AC contribution: $160.000 \text{ €} = 40 \%$ of 400.000 €

Partner Obj 1/AC EC funding: $240.000 \text{ €} = 60 \%$ of 400.000 €

EC funding $240.000 + 240.000 = 480.000 \text{ €} = 60\%$ of 800.000 €

3- Network of Non Obj. 1/AC only:

Leader outside Obj 1/AC: $200.000 \text{ €} = 50\%$ of 400.000 €

Leader outside Obj 1/AC EC funding: $200.000 \text{ €} = 50\%$ of 400.000 €

Partner outside Obj 1/AC contribution: $200.000 \text{ €} = 50 \%$ of 400.000 €

Partner outside Obj 1/AC EC funding: $200.000 \text{ €} = 50 \%$ of 400.000 €

EC funding $200.000 + 200.000 = 400.000 \text{ €} = 50\%$ of 800.000 €

- 3.3 Only proposals requesting a financial support of € 350,000 or more will be considered eligible for Community co-funding.
- 3.4 Annex C sets out the General conditions applicable to all types of financial assistance given by the Environment Directorate-General of the Commission. If the application is successful the Commission will co-finance a percentage of the total eligible expenditure in accordance with the attached General conditions (Annex C).
- 3.5 For successful proposals the lead applicant may be required to provide a bank guarantee to the equivalent amount of the pre-financing obligatory when pre-financing represents more than 80% of total amount of the grant.
- 3.6 These conditions will form an integral part of the agreement concluded with each beneficiary.
- 3.7 Those proposals evaluated as the highest ranking proposals amongst the four themes according to the criteria detailed in chapter 7 will be included in a final selection list according to their score ranking. The lead applicant may be requested to come to Brussels at their own expense and without any commitment from the Commission to discuss their proposal and revise their foreseen budget in the light of the recommendations of the Evaluation Committee. The Commission will take its final decision on the number and projects to be funded based on the results of this exercise and the available credits.

4. DURATION

- 4.1 The proposal submitted must be valid until at least 31 December 2004.
- 4.2 Community support shall relate to activities scheduled in the proposal to start before 1 April 2005 and could be of a duration of up to 36 months.
- 4.3 Actions for which a grant application has been submitted can not start before the grant agreement is signed by both parties except in duly substantiated cases. However, if it is the case, only expenditures incurred after the date of submission of the grant application will be considered eligible. An action which is already completed will not be considered eligible of Community support.

5. SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

- 5.1 The call for proposals is open until 31/03/2004. All the documents required for a proposal must be presented using the attached forms and must be delivered by registered letter, by courier or by hand in triplicate only to the following address:

Commission Central Mail Office
Directorate-General for the Environment

DG ENV B4
Rue de Genève n° 1
B – 1140 EVERE

Electronic mail, faxes, incomplete dossiers or dossiers sent in several parts (not shipped at the same time) will not be accepted/admitted.

- 5.2 The Commission shall only exchange correspondence on the on-going of the procedure with the lead applicant of each project and not with any of the other partners and this will be preferably in English or French.
- 5.3 The Urban mail box of DG Environment will only answer questions related to the formal interpretation of these guidelines and not on the technical contents of a specific proposal in preparation.

6. ANNEX B. APPLICATION FORM.

As a general remark, the proposal should avoid general statements and ensure that the application is detailed in its description of the project and its work programme and the internal management system established among the partners. All correspondence with the Commission's services should similarly be as specific as possible and all financial and budgetary data that is required must be provided in full, be accurate and correctly calculated.

- 6.1 The proposal must be drawn up in one of the official languages of the European Union, preferably English or French to facilitate processing the volume of requests expected, and be accompanied by an official letter explicitly requesting the subsidy. It should include Annex B (official application form + annexes) to this document, duly completed by machine (not hand-written). Only requests submitted on the basis of the application form contained in Annex B will be considered. All sections of the form must be completed, clearly and accurately and the format and the wording of the forms must not be modified.
- 6.2 All relevant information must be provided for each of the partners. This includes the general information under items 1.3 - 1.6 of the application form, description of tasks to be performed by each partner under item 2.1- 2.8 of the application form and the summary budget and detailed breakdowns of costs under item 3 of the application form (including the amounts of the Commission funding intended to be transferred to each of the partners). Only one Summary sheet in triplicate, under item 3.5, is to be submitted with the proposal.
- 6.3 All relevant documents shall be duly completed and signed by each participant.

7. APPRAISAL OF PROPOSALS: EXCLUSION, SELECTION AND AWARD CRITERIA

The Commission will acknowledge receipt of proposals.

The Commission services will review if the application is complete and meets all the exclusion criteria.

Proposals failing to fulfil one or more of the criteria will be excluded. The remaining projects will constitute the eligible projects which will be examined by the evaluation Committee.

The exclusion criteria are the following:

7.1 Exclusion criteria:

- a) An official submission letter signed by the person entitled to enter into legally binding commitments on behalf of the lead applicant must be provided.
- b) The proposal must be submitted in triplicate, using the official application form and annexes as explained in point 6, duly fulfilled and signed by the lead applicant and all the partners concerned. All incomplete requests will be systematically rejected. Fax and e-mail will not be admitted. Any proposal presented by a body acting as an intermediary for a third party shall be excluded.
- c) A certificate and stamp of the bank confirming that the holder of the bank account is the lead applicant must be provided.
- d) The theme of the proposed action must correspond to one of the priority themes included in point 2.
- e) The official status and certificate of legal registration (unless the lead applicant is a public authority) must be provided.
- f) Any project or project phase, which has already been completed or already begun, at the time of receipt of the proposal, is not eligible for co-financing.
- g) The application for a Community grant may not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit for the beneficiary.
- h) Written evidence of (an) explicit commitment(s) of co-funding for the action envisaged and for the amount indicated in the request for funding must be provided.
- i) Fulfilment of the conditions listed in and on their honour signing of Declaration on exclusion criteria (annex B)
- j) Summary sheet completed following the standard format annexed to the application form.
- k) The proposal is clearly stated to be valid until 31/12/2004
- l) The proposal is submitted before 31/03/2004.
- m) Only proposals for EC funding for minimum €350.000 and respecting the maximum funding rate of the Commission as set out in point 2 will be considered.

- n) The proposal is from a network of local authorities of at least four Member States and EEA Countries as mentioned in § 1.1.

7.2 Selection criteria:

A second assessment phase will concentrate on assessing applicant's financial and operational capability to carry out the proposed action. These criteria are the following:

- a) Only organisations which are legally constituted are eligible for assistance. To this end, parties submitting proposals must enclose the following with their application (unless the application is submitted by a recognised public authority):
- the articles of association of the organisation and a copy of the statutory registration certificate
 - if it is not enclosed with the articles of association, a list of the members of the management board
 - all information required by the application form (title of organisation, VAT, etc.).
- b) Only organisations capable of funding their activities will be eligible for a grant. To this end, the party submitting a proposal must enclose with its application a copy of the annual accounts of the organisation (or the annual budget in the case of a public body) for the last financial year preceding the submission of the proposal. The budget estimate for the project must be in balance (expenditures/incomes).
- c) Certified audit report produced by an approved auditor. This obligation may be waived for public bodies, secondary and higher education establishments.
- That report must certify the accounts for the last financial year available and give an assessment of the financial viability of the lead applicant.
- d) Only organisations providing evidence of adequate operational capacity and professional qualifications and experience will be eligible for assistance. To this end, parties submitting proposals must enclose with their application
- the annual activity report of their organisation
 - the CVs of the persons who will carry out the project activities.

Proposals failing to fulfil one or more of these criteria will be excluded.

7.3 Award criteria:

The eligible proposals will be submitted to an evaluation Committee established by the Commission. This Committee will assess the proposals according to the following award criteria:

7.3.1 Technical quality of the project:

- a) The extent to which the proposal corresponds with the priorities indicated in point 2.
- b) The feasibility (technical and financial), proved by a feasibility study, report or other documents annexed to the proposal
- c) Demonstrate that the lead applicant and partners are active in the area of the project and that it builds on previous work that they have undertaken
- d) Effective and balanced co-operation among the various project partners with regard to programming and tasks, and demonstration on how the project benefits all the partners of the network
- e) The time-scale of the project and work programme are clear and balanced with objectives and targets set out for each participant.
- f) The lead applicant and each of the participating partners have specific tasks in the project which do not constitute running costs.
- g) The degree to which the project involves relevant stakeholders, including representatives of civil society,
- h) The extent to which the project facilitates co-ordination and coherence of the public authorities with other administrative levels.

7.3.2 Management of the project:

- a) The technical capacity and competence to carry out the project (Curriculum vitae must be submitted).
- b) An effective project management system to assure good communication among the different participants on technical and financial matters to ensure sound financial management.
- c) A quality control system to deliver the good quality results for the project
- d) An efficient dissemination strategy, with special attention to new Members of the European Union and those local and regional authorities which have not yet developed plans and measures to achieve a sustainable urban development.

7.3.3 Financial aspects:

- a) Sound cost-benefit ratio, duly justified
- b) Balanced financial participation of the partners, notwithstanding the possibility of subcontracting in accordance with articles II.9 and II.14 of the General conditions applicable to grant agreements of the European Communities (Annex C).
- c) Degree of financial contribution of project partners versus the financial contribution requested from the Community framework.

7.3.4 Added value:

- a) Lasting multiplier effect at European level and the extent to which the project will continue to be developed in the future without European funding

- b) Contribution to strengthening and revitalising public services of general interest.
- c) Innovative or demonstrative character

A maximum of 5 points can be given for each of these criteria (total 90 points)

7.4 Final list:

- (a) Only proposals obtaining a minimum of 60 points can come under consideration for the establishment of the final list of beneficiaries. The proposals will consequently be ranked according to merit (scores at the evaluation).
The Commission will only put forward for funding the highest-ranking proposals in order of merit according to the available funds. The Commission may include other projects in the final list if it is considered appropriate to do so to achieve a balance of projects between the themes in section 2.
- (b) In the light of the recommendations done by the Evaluation Committee, the Commission may request the highest-ranking proposals to revise their proposals from a technical and financial point of view in order to assure their best potentialities. The lead applicant and partners may be requested to come to Brussels to discuss their proposal at their own costs.
- (c) The Commission shall proceed to consult the Advisory Committee composed of representatives of the EU member states and the EEA countries (the latter with no right to vote) as foreseen in the Decision.
- (d) The Commission will establish the final approved list of beneficiaries and communicate the result to the applicants. According to the Decision, the list should be established by 31 May 2004.

The decision of the Commission is final.

Please note that a financial contribution may not be awarded to candidates who, during the evaluation procedure, are discovered to be:

- * subject to a conflict of interest;
- * guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the Commission as a condition of participation in the evaluation procedure or fail to supply this information.

The proposed activities must not, directly or indirectly, send messages which conflict with Union policies or be associated with an image, which is not in keeping with that of the institutions.

ANNEXES:

- A Parliament & Council Decision (1411/2001/EC)
- B. Standard application Forms with Summary sheet, Declaration of Exclusion criteria and acknowledgement of receipt.
- C. General conditions applicable to grant agreements of the European Communities (Annex C)