
CENTRAL ASIA-INVEST PROGRAMME

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) 2007-2008

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/asia/regional-cooperation/trade-business/ca_invest_en.htm

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Ref.	Question	Answer
A. About the Central Asia-Invest Programme		
A1.	Central Asia-Invest programme What is the Central Asia-Invest Programme about in short?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">è The Central Asia-Invest Programmes aims to promote sustainable economic development of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the five Central Asian Countries Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. This is done through supporting capacity building of business intermediary organisations and through establishment of closer cooperation between organisations/institutions in Europe and the five Central Asian countries.è Much of the support goes to partnership projects which are conceived, designed and implemented by these organisations/institutions on the basis of partnerships. By improving the capacity of business support organisations in assisting SMEs and creating linkages between government and the private sector, they will play part in the development of civil society, create employment opportunities and contribute to the gradual democratic and economic transition in Central Asia

<p>A2.</p>	<p>Main features of the Central Asia-Invest</p> <p>Short Fact list</p>	<p>The Call for Proposals 2007-2008 has sought to significantly simplify the procedures in comparison to previous Asia-Wide Programmes. The main features are highlighted below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> è Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacity Building: to reinforce the skills of Central Asian Intermediary Business Organisations. - Closer linkages: promote sustainable partnerships and relations between Business Intermediary Organisation in the EU and Central Asian countries and contribute to regional economic integration è The size of the EC grant is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Min EUR 200 000 - Max EUR 500 000 è The percentage of co-financing may be up to 85 % of total eligible costs. è The remaining 15% has to be financed by the applicants or partners own resources. è The Partnership requirements Minimum of 2 partners, each from a different country and with both regions represented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partnership = 1 + 1 (1 Central Asian + 1 European). è proposals do not necessarily need to have a regional Central Asian dimension (refer to question D2) è TWO deadlines: 15 February 2008 (Concept notes) and 15 May 2008 (Full application) è The overall indicative amount available under this call is EUR 4 400 000. è Project duration: min 12 Months max 24 Months.
<p>A3.</p>	<p>Eligible sectors and industry</p> <p>Does the Central Asia-Invest programme support projects under specific sectors only?</p>	<p>Central Asia-Invest Call for Proposals 2007-2008 is demand driven; it supports projects across all sectors and areas of industry, as long as the proposed activities clearly address the needs of the target groups (i.e. SMEs, business organisations, the EU-Central Asia network).</p>
<p>A4.</p>	<p>Background and references</p> <p>Which references and papers should be referred to when preparing a proposal under the Call for Proposals 2007-2008?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> è The Regional Strategy Paper 2007-2013 and Central Asia Indicative Programme 2007-2010 are available on: http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/asia/index.htm. è There is no individual Country Strategy Paper for each country and there will be none. There is only a regional one with country envelopes defined in it. è EC regulation No 1905/2006 of 18 December 2006 establishing a Financing Instrument for Development Cooperation (DCI); Budget line 19.10.02 è Practical Guide to contract procedures for EC external actions (revised on May 2007) è
<p>A5.</p>	<p>Maximum provision for grants</p> <p>What is meant by the 'overall indicative amount available' under the Call for Proposals which is set at EUR 4.4 million for the Call for Proposals 2007-2008?</p>	<p>The EUR 4.4 million available under the Call for Proposals 2007-2008 represents the amount of grant funding available for projects submitted under the co-financing components for the upcoming deadline.</p> <p>The number of approved projects is based on the quality of proposals. The Commission reserves the right not to award all the funding.</p>
<p>A6.</p>	<p>Commission grant size</p> <p>What is the Commission grant size available for approved projects?</p>	<p>The min. amount of EC grant is EUR 200.000, the maximum amount of EC grant is EUR 500.000.</p> <p>The EC grant can not exceed 85% of total eligible costs.</p>

A7. Next deadlines What is the planned schedule for the next Calls for Proposals?	The Call for Proposals 2007-2008 is currently open with deadlines: <u>15 February 2008 (Concept notes)</u> and <u>15 May 2008 (Full applications)</u> . The Programme is foreseen to continue beyond 2008 . However the structure and timing of future Calls for Proposals has not yet been determined.
A8. Information on selected projects What type of information is available on the selected projects?	After the applicants have countersigned the grant contracts, a summary sheet for each project will be made available via the Central Asia-Invest website.
A9. Participation of individuals and companies Can individuals or private enterprises participate in Central Asia-Invest projects?	While SMEs are the ultimate beneficiaries of Central Asia-Invest, both the applicant and partners in an Asia-Invest project must be non-profit-making. Companies can participate in projects either as associates or individuals as service providers providing expertise to the project, but cannot receive direct funding from the Commission.
A10. Definition of SME What is the definition of a small and medium-sized enterprise (SMEs) for the purposes of the Central Asia-Invest Programme?	Given the variation in understanding and in practice of what constitutes an SME in the EU and Central Asia, Central Asia-Invest does not operate according to a strict definition. Instead it simply does not involve multinational companies. Companies that are the beneficiaries of training activities under the co-financed projects should be those with specific needs for capacity-building (as substantiated in the justification of target groups in the proposal) and would not, therefore, be multinationals.

Ref	Question	Answer
B. Eligibility of applicants and partners		
B1	Organisations funded by other European Commission programmes Are organisations participating in EU-Central Asia bilateral programmes eligible to apply for support under the Central Asia-Invest Programme?	Yes, but obviously there must be no overlap in funding. è
B2	Presence in several partnerships for Applicants Can the same organisation participate in several applications under the same deadline?	Applicants may submit more than one proposal. However the partners, the geographical coverage and content must be different for each proposal. Each proposal must be submitted in a separate envelope. An organisation may not be awarded more than two grants as applicant under this call for proposals. è Guidelines for Applicants (Section 2.1.3)
B3	Number of partners Is priority given to a project involving a greater number of partners rather than the minimum of 1 + 1?	As a minimum, a partnership must involve at least <u>two</u> (2) organisations from different countries representing both the Central Asian and the European region. There is no upper limit to the number of members in the partnership. Applications involving more than the minimum number of two partners will be particularly welcome. However, this does not mean that very large partnerships are seen as preferable to smaller ones: the optimum size of a partnership is one allowing the achievement of project objectives in the most cost-effective way. Each member of the partnership must have a precise and clearly identified role in the implementation of the project. The partnership should be composed in such a way as to allow for the achievement of project objectives in the most efficient manner. è Guidelines for Applicants (Section 2.1.2)
B4	Presence in several partnerships for Partners Can a partner be involved in more than one project proposal and be engaged with different lead applicants?	A partner can take part in more than one project submission and can also be applying together with different lead applicants. However the geographical coverage, partners and content must be different for each proposal. Officially there is no upper limit to how many project applications a partner can be involved in or how many grants it can be awarded. However Partners should be careful to avoid claims for double funding if they are working on more than one Central Asia-Invest (or another EC funded) project at the same time. Where a partner has already gained financial support under the Central Asia-Invest Programme, subsequent proposals will only be accepted if, at the time of submitting the new proposal, the organisation is up to date with all reporting obligations as identified in the grant contract. è Guidelines for Applicants (Section 2.1.3)

Ref	Question	Answer
B. Eligibility of applicants and partners		
B5	Associates What is an associate?	<p>An associate is an organisation that does not constitute part of a formal partnership but which is associated with a project on the condition that it provides effective support.</p> <p>An associate must play a real role within the project. However, this must remain marginal, and the actual partners must remain responsible for the majority of work done within a project. The role and the added value of an associate must be clearly explained in the Application Form (Annex A, Section IV).</p> <p>An associate may not be taken into consideration for the fulfilment of the minimum requirement of a partnership. Institutions that would otherwise be eligible as partners are not excluded from being associates.</p> <p>As an associate is not a member of a partnership, it is not required to provide a partnership statement.</p> <p>The associates have to be mentioned in Part B section IV – "Associates of the Applicant participating in the Action" of the Grant Application Form.</p> <p>It is not a requirement to include an associate within a grant application.</p> <p>è Guidelines for Applicants (Section 2.1.2)</p> <p>è Annex A (Application Form, Section IV)</p>
B6	Country of origin of an associate Who is eligible to apply as an associate? Is there any restriction regarding the country of origin of an associate?	<p>è In addition to organisations from eligible European and Central Asian countries, organisations from the following non-eligible Asian countries or territories are eligible to participate fully in projects as associates: China, Mongolia, Russian Federation, Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. Guidelines for Applicants (Section 2.1.1 and 2.1.2)</p>
B7	Associates and EC funding May associates benefit from EC funding?	<p>No, Associates may not receive funding from the EC grant with the exception of per diem and travel costs.</p> <p>è Guidelines for Applicants (Section 2.1.2)</p>
B8	Number of associates What is the maximum number of associates in a project?	<p>The number of associates should not be more than the number of actual partners. It is also important that the associates do not handle the majority of the work done in the implementation of the project. Associates may not receive funding from the project. The actual partners must remain responsible for the majority of work done in the project. This matter will be looked into in the technical evaluation of the proposal. The number of associates coming from the same country is not restricted.</p> <p>è Guidelines for Applicants (Section 2.1.2)</p>
B9	Responsibilities of associates May an associate be responsible for the project coordination/management?	<p>No. The applicant retains responsibility.</p>
B10	Funding provided by an associate May an associate provide funding to a project?	<p>Yes. Should an associate provide complementary funding to a project, it must be declared in the budget, on Worksheet 2 "Expected Sources of Funding" (either under "Contribution(s) from other European institutions or EU Member States", or under "Contributions from other organisations").</p> <p>è Annex B (Budget, Worksheet 2)</p>
B11	Participation of International Organisations	<p>International organisations are not eligible under Central Asia-Invest.</p>
B12	Higher education institutions and Research centres Is a higher education institution eligible to apply?	<p>Eligible applicants must be "business intermediaries representing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and promoting trade and investment". Universities and research centres are not business intermediaries and do not have as their mission to represent SMEs. Therefore, they are not eligible as applicant or partners but can be involved as service providers (for example for specific training courses) or as associate.</p> <p>è Guidelines for Applicants (Section 2.1.1)</p>
B13	Eligibility of government bodies Is a government ministry/body/agency eligible to apply?	<p>Agencies that are directly and strictly related to the governments (both in Asia and in Europe) are eligible only as partner.</p>

Ref	Question	Answer
B. Eligibility of applicants and partners		
		Public agencies at regional and local level are eligible both as an applicant as a partner. è Guidelines for Applicants (Section 2.1.1)
B14	Eligibility of Micro-finance organisations Is a micro finance organisation eligible to apply?	We do not mention micro-finance organizations in the Guidelines. Micro-finance organizations are not business intermediaries and do not represent SMEs. Moreover, they are profit organizations. They can not be considered as eligible.
B15	Boards of Investment Is a Board of Investment eligible to apply?	See answer B13 è Guidelines for Applicants (Section 2.1.1)
B16	Nationality of project team members Can members of the project team be nationals of a country other than those eligible to apply e.g. US, Swiss or Japanese?	With the adoption by the Commission of two new regulations on the 'Untying of Aid' (28 December 2005), an unprecedented level of untying for actions financed from the general budget with a thematic and geographical scope has been achieved. Team members can now be of any nationality provided that they are permanently employed by an eligible organisation. www.europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/tender/gestion/thematic_fiche_untying_en.pdf

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C. Eligibility of countries		
C1	Eligible countries What countries are considered eligible under the Central Asia-Invest Programme for the Call for Proposals 2007-2008 ?	Organisations from the following countries are eligible as applicant or partner : EU: Austria, Bulgaria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom European Economic Area: Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. Official Candidate Countries as recognised by the EC: Croatia, FYRoM, and Turkey. Asia: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.
C2	Northern Cyprus Are organisations from Northern Cyprus eligible to participate?	Yes.
C3	Asian countries/territories Are organisations from China, Mongolia, Russian Federation, Afghanistan Iran and Pakistan eligible?	Organisations from these countries/territories may participate fully in projects as associates, and are encouraged to do so provided they do not receive Commission funding (with the exception of travel costs and per diem). See questions B5-B10 for further information on associates.
C4	European organisations in Asia Is a European organisation registered in one of the eligible Central Asian countries considered to be a Central Asian applicant/partner?	Yes, an EU organisation would be considered as a Central Asian applicant/partner if it meets all eligibility requirements outlined in the Guidelines for Applicants and if it has been established by an instrument governed by the internal law of the country concerned. A simple registration is not sufficient.

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D. Eligibility of projects and activities		
D1	Creativity of the proposals	We suggest that applicants read very carefully the guidelines. The call does not set any specific priority but its aim is to strengthen the capacity of Business intermediaries in Central Asia and to foster their relationship with their counterparts in Europe. It's not simply "support to the development of the private sector". Therefore, the project must

Ref.	Question	Answer
		be in line with this aim.
D2	Regional dimension of a project Is it an advantage to submit a project which has a regional dimension?	It is not a mandatory. The first criteria for the selection of projects are their quality. Nevertheless, we encourage projects involving more than one Central Asian countries or more than one partner from the same Central Asian country.
D3	Division of projects in the region Will there be a maximum of project for each country?	There is no specific budget assigned to each single country. The quality of the proposal will be the first criteria used for the evaluation of the project proposals but a balance in terms of number of projects between the 5 countries will be observed.
D4	Duration of projects How long is the duration of a project?	è minimum 12 Months maximum 24 Months.
D5	Eligible Activities Is participation in a fair an eligible activity?	No, participation in fairs is not an eligible activity.

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E. Eligibility of costs		
E1.	Preparatory phases Does the Central Asia-Invest Programme provide grants for the preparation of projects?	Central Asia-Invest does not finance preparatory phases of projects. Any costs related to activities that have already taken place before the signature of a grant contract are ineligible.
E2.	Total project costs Is there a restriction on the total project cost?	No. There is no restriction concerning project cost. However the Commission grant must respect the percentage and the minimum and maximum amounts indicated in the Guidelines for Applicants. è <u>Guidelines for Applicants</u> (Section 1.3 and 2.1.3)
E3.	Administrative costs & overheads Are administrative costs/overheads eligible? Are these costs allowed if the applicant is currently implementing another EC funded project?	Yes. However, administrative/overhead costs cannot exceed a maximum of 7% of the total amount of direct eligible project costs. These administrative costs are presented as a provision in the budget sheet under item 8. It is not necessary to itemise individual costs for these expenses or provide justification in the form of invoices. As long as the administrative provisions do not exceed 7% of the total eligible costs within an individual project, there is no restriction across projects. è <u>Guidelines for Applicants</u> (Section 2.1.4) è <u>Annex B</u> (Budget, Worksheet 1)
E4.	Contributions to the project Which items may be included by the applicant as contributions with a monetary value?	The Guidelines for Applicants explain which costs are eligible (direct and indirect costs). Examples of eligible costs include project staff salaries, travel and subsistence costs for project staff, purchase costs for equipment and services, costs for consumables and supplies etc. Other in-kind contributions such as the following are not eligible: land, immovable property, durable capital goods, raw materials and unpaid charity work. Existing equipment including computers may not be included. Vehicles may not be included, although petrol may. The use of existing premises may not be included. Contributions from other sources (including sponsors) may be included. NB: this list is not exhaustive. A non-exhaustive list of ineligible costs may be consulted in the Guidelines for Applicants. The project accounts must be clearly justifiable, as they may be subject to an audit for a seven-year period following the end of the project implementation. è <u>Guidelines for Applicants</u> (Section 2.1.4 and 2.1.3) è <u>Annex B</u> (Budget, Worksheets 1 & 2)
E5.	Co-financing of a project How is the co-financing calculated?	The Commission provides a grant as a means of co-financing the project. The Commission contribution is calculated as a percentage of the <u>total eligible costs</u> of the project. All costs presented in the project budget must be eligible. Worksheet 2 of the Budget ("Expected Sources of Funding") should be completed indicating the total amounts in question. Contributions from other organisations may be included as a source of co-financing.

Ref.	Question	Answer
		<p>The partnership is expected to be able to declare how its part of the financing is calculated.</p> <p>è <u>Guidelines for Applicants</u> (Section 2.1.4)</p> <p>è <u>Annex B</u> (Budget, Worksheet 1 & 2)</p>
E6.	<p>In-Kind Contributions</p> <p>What can be regarded as in kind contribution by the applicant and/or Partner?</p>	<p>Any contributions in kind, which must be listed separately at Annex III, do not represent actual expenditure and are not eligible costs. The contributions in kind may not be treated as co-financing by the Beneficiary (see also Question E4).</p> <p>The cost of staff assigned to the Action is not a contribution in kind and may be considered as co-financing in the Budget of the Action when paid by the Beneficiary or his partners.</p> <p>Notwithstanding to the above, if the description of the action as proposed by the beneficiary foresees the contributions in kind, such contributions have to be provided.</p> <p>Contributions involving real estate shall be excluded from the calculation of the amount of co-financing.</p>
E7.	<p>Costs of associates</p> <p>Are the costs incurred by associates considered as part of the total eligible costs for co-financing?</p>	<p>No. Associates, those partners external to the eligible partnership, must carry their own costs regarding any activities in which they participate, with the exception of travel costs and per diem.</p> <p>See questions B5-B10 for further information on associates.</p>
E8.	<p>Balance of funding</p> <p>Can the balance of funding (other expected sources of funding) come from banks, financial institutions, government, donations etc?</p>	<p>Yes. The balance of funding may come from any source <u>other than</u> the European Union budget.</p>
E9.	<p>Revenues</p> <p>What will happen to possible revenue of a project?</p>	<p>Should there be any sales income, conference fees or equivalent, it should be estimated and indicated in the budget sheet under "expected sources of funding" as "direct revenue from the project". It cannot be calculated as being part of the required minimum of 15% of own financing for the project. Revenue should be clearly indicated and reinvested in the project.</p> <p>è <u>Annex B</u> (Budget, Worksheet 2)</p>
E10.	<p>Eligible travel expenses</p> <p>What are the eligible costs incurred by air, by car or by train? What supporting documents are required to justify expenses incurred?</p> <p>Which travel costs are eligible? How are they calculated? Which documents are required to support a claim?</p>	<p>By air: if the distance is greater than 400 km, air travel is acceptable in economy class. The cost must not exceed the most economical rate available (APEX, PEX). Boarding card and payment invoice to be kept to justify the expenses incurred.</p> <p>By train: when a journey is made by train, the cost must not exceed the price of a first class train ticket for the journey. Train ticket to be kept as justification of the expenses incurred</p> <p>By car: when a journey is made by car, the cost must not exceed the price of a first class train ticket for the journey. An 'expenditure note' signed by the lead applicant institution to be kept, indicating the start point, the point of arrival, the dates of travel, the number of kilometres covered, the average consumption of the vehicle, the fuel costs and the maintenance costs. The total cost may not exceed the price of a first class train ticket; justification of the first class train ticket price shall be kept. Rented car: invoice and proof of payment or paid invoice including evidence of the distance travelled in order to calculate petrol costs to be kept.</p> <p>è <u>Guidelines for Applicants</u> (Section 2.1.4)</p> <p>è <u>Annex B</u> (Budget, Worksheet 1)</p>
E11.	<p>Purchase of equipment</p> <p>What proportion of the project budget can be used for the purchase of equipment?</p>	<p>The purchase of equipment and training material is typically only an eligible cost when it applies to the necessary purchase of equipment for training purposes. Nevertheless, the amount allocated to equipment should be reasonable and fully justified in line with the requirements of the proposal, consuming only a limited part of the budget (not more than 15%). Should the equipment for a specific project be particularly expensive (for example for ICT projects), applicants are suggested to rent the necessary equipment instead of purchasing it. In any case, if equipment and supplies are required, the budget justification must include a full explanation of the proposed purchase.</p> <p>The programme aims to foster economic co-operation between Europe and Central Asia and is based on partnerships between equals. It is not a development co-</p>

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		operation scheme and consequently the main aim is not to improve physical infrastructure, to create new physical facilities, to equip offices etc. è Guidelines for Applicants (Section 2.1.3 and 2.1.4)
E12.	Exchange rates How does the Commission take into account changes in conversion rates for eligible project costs?	In cases where real costs were borne in other currency than the EURO, the conversion shall be done at a rate made up by the average of the rates published in InforEuro for the months covered by the relevant report: www.ec.europa.eu/budget/inforeuro/ Eventual currency exchanges losses are not considered eligible costs. However, in the event of an exceptional exchange-rate fluctuation, consultation on an eventual restructuring of the Action can be envisaged so as to lessen the impact of the fluctuation.

Ref.	Question	Answer
F. Concept Note, Application Form and Annexes and supporting documents		
F1.	Grant Application procedure Where do I find the relevant documents to the grant application?	All documents relevant to the grant application procedure are available via the EuropeAid Co-operation Office web site: www.europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/cgi/frame12.pl : (Left panel, select: region:Asie, status:Open, Type:Grants, Submit Query -> Central Asia-Invest) and on the Central Asia-Invest web site: è http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/asia/regional-cooperation/trade-business/ca_invest_en.htm . è The publication reference no is: EuropeAid126265/C/ACT/Multi
F2.	Other languages Where can I find the Guidelines for Applicants, Application Form, etc. in languages other than English?	The Notice of the Call for Proposals was published October 2007 in English only, with the Guidelines for Applicants and relevant Annexes also only available in English.
F3.	PADOR registration Is registration at PADOR compulsory for all applicants and partners before the deadline of submission of the Concept Note?	Prior registration in PADOR for applicants and partners for this Call for proposal <u>is not obligatory</u> . However, applicant can register its organisation data and upload supporting documents in PADOR. PADOR is available on the following link: http://www.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/onlineservices/pador/index_en.htm
F4.	Concept Note Is there a specific template for the Concept Note?	Applications must be submitted with the guidance on the Concept Note in the Grant Application Form annexed to these Guidelines (Annex A). There is no specific template for the Concept Note but the applicant has to ensure that the text of his concept note follows the instructions as given in part A (Guidance of the drafting of the concept note) of the Grant Application Form. See also Guidelines for Applicants (Section 2.2) Maximum 4 full pages (A4 size), in English, not handwritten, including: - Relevance of the Action - Effectiveness and Feasibility of the action - Sustainability of the action The Concept Note must be complete (please respect and use the Checklist). Incomplete concept notes may be rejected. Concept Notes must be submitted as well in electronic format (CD-Rom).

Ref.	Question	Answer
F5.	<p>Supporting documents</p> <p>What are supporting documents? Who has to submit them? Why?</p>	<p>Supporting documents are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the statutes/articles of association of the applicant and each partner organisation - Copy of the Applicant's latest accounts - A completed legal entity sheet when applicable - A completed financial identification form <p>In accordance with the new selection procedure, supporting documents will only be required for proposals that have been provisionally selected (see Section G).</p> <p>These documents will allow confirming the eligibility of the applicant and partners by confirming the information provided in the application form. If any incoherence is noted, the application will be rejected.</p> <p>è <u>Guidelines for Applicants</u> (Section 2.4)</p>
F6.	<p>Statutes/Articles of Association</p> <p>What are they? And when should they be submitted?</p>	<p>Statutes/Articles of Association are legal documents that provide the legal proof of the establishment of the institutions/organisations involved in the partnership that is applying for a grant.</p> <p>In the context of the Central Asia Invest programme, the statutes/articles of association allow to verify that institutions/organisations involved in a project proposal as applicant or as partners are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - legal persons - non-profit making - business intermediaries - established in one of the eligible countries <p>In accordance with the new selection procedure, Statutes/Articles of Association will only be required for proposals that have been provisionally selected (see Section G). The Applicant will be notified of this provisional selection and will be asked to submit all supporting documents, including Statutes/Articles of Association (see question F3) within a specific timeframe (15 calendar days). As the gathering of supporting documents can be a time-consuming process, applicants are strongly advised starting to gather them once they have been notified that their Concept Note passed the first selection stage (see Section G).</p>
F7.	<p>Legal Entity Sheet</p> <p>What is it?</p>	<p>The legal entity sheet forms Annex D of the Guidelines for Applicants. In accordance with the new selection procedure, a completed Legal Entity Sheet will only be required for proposals that have been provisionally selected (see Section G).</p> <p>è <u>Guidelines for Applicants</u> (Section 2.4)</p> <p>è <u>Annex A</u> (Application Form, Section II, Point 1)</p> <p>è <u>Annex D</u> (Legal Entity Sheets)</p>
F8.	<p>Legal entity sheet – Private Companies</p> <p>Who has to fill it in?</p>	<p>Business intermediaries (are) public or private sector operators representing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). In that sense, as long as the applicant fulfils the other eligible criteria, it will use the corresponding Legal Entity Sheet (Public Entities or Private companies).</p>
F9.	<p>Co-financing levels</p> <p>Is there a preferred size for co-financing? Will a project be evaluated more highly if it asks for less than the maximum co-financing level?</p>	<p>No. As long as the minimum and maximum grant size and the maximum levels of co-financing are respected, there is no preferential size for the co-financing and a project will not be evaluated more highly if it requests less than the maximum co-financing level indicated.</p>
F10.	<p>Methodology</p> <p>What is meant by "methods of implementation"?</p>	<p>The Methodology in the application should explain how a project is going to be organised and managed. The methodology should describe how a project is to be implemented, focusing on the methods, rather than the activities. This section should also contain a detailed description of the project's management structure (e.g. the nomination of an advisory committee, decision-making procedures, communications/information flow, schedule of meetings etc.).</p> <p>è <u>Annex A</u> (Application Form, Section I, Point 1.8)</p>
F11.	<p>Plan of action</p> <p>Is it permitted to modify the plan of action template?</p>	<p>No. The plan of action as outlined in the application form of a proposal must be presented according to the given template, as provided in the Guidelines for Applicants. The description of activities should be completed in a detailed manner giving a precise overview of the activities for the whole project duration.</p> <p>è <u>Annex A</u> (Application Form, Section I, Point 1.7 and 1.9)</p>

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F12.	Missing supporting documents Is there a 'grace period' for supplying missing supporting documents?	In accordance with the new selection procedure, supporting documents will only be required for proposals that have been provisionally selected (see Section G). Applicants provisionally selected will be informed in writing and will be requested to supply the supporting documents for a set deadline. If <u>ALL</u> requested documents are not received within the set deadline, the application will be rejected and the next application will be drawn from the reserve list.
F13.	Partnership Statement What is the Partnership Statement? Who must submit it and when?	The Partnership Statement is not considered a supporting document because it does not serve the purpose of verifying the information provided in the Application Form. The Partnership Statement is there to demonstrate that the partners are all committed to the project for its duration. <u>The Applicant and each partner</u> must sign a Partnership Statement using and respecting the template provided. The Associate partners are not required to sign a partnership statement. All applications for a grant must be accompanied by the signed Partnership Statements. Therefore, there must be as many signed Partnership Statements as there are partners. A missing Partnership Statement can lead to the rejection of a project proposal. è Annex A (Application Form, Part a, Section III - Part B section VI)
F14.	Signatures on Partnership Statements Are fax copies of partnership statements accepted?	The applicant and each partner must provide a signed Partnership Statement (a template is provided in the Application Form). Partnership Statements must be signed in original è Annex A (Application Form, Part a, Section III - Part B section VI))
F15.	Validity of Partnership Statement Is a Partnership Statement signed for the submission of a proposal under one deadline valid under a future deadline?	No. A Partnership Statement is always related to a specific project proposal under a specified deadline. Consequently, documents that are related to a previous deadline may not be used. è Annex A (Application Form, Part a, Section III - Part B section VI))
F16.	Declaration by the Applicant/Signature of the application Who should sign the Declaration by the Applicant?	A person who is responsible in the applicant organisation for the project and who is authorised to enter into contractual engagements on behalf of the applicant organisation should sign the Declaration by the Applicant. To be considered valid, this document must be signed in original. The Applicant must use and respect the template provided. Failure to submit a signed Sworn Statement can lead to the rejection of the proposal. è Annex A (Application Form, Part b , Section VI)
F17.	Partnership agreement What is a partnership agreement?	It is recommended for the applicant and partner organisations to sign a comprehensive <u>agreement</u> explaining in detail the tasks, responsibilities and duties of each party, and the related costs, in the event that any one fails to comply with its obligations which may impact on the partner(s). Such an agreement is an internal document between the applicant and partners and would not be required within the application itself. It is different from the required Partnership Statement.
F18.	Budget justification Is it necessary to provide a budget justification?	Yes. While a template is not provided, it is necessary to include with the Budget an explanation for the use of each budget item with respect to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the necessity for the item (e.g.: flight, rental of computer etc)• the reason for the number of units proposed• the choice of unit rate applied The budget justification should make reference to the specific activities foreseen in your proposal, and is an opportunity to explain in more detail than is possible in the budget itself. Example: <i>Budget item 1.3.1.1: 20 days per diem in Turkmenistan</i> 4 x 5-day missions to Turkmenistan by co-ordinator to participate in 2 Advisory Group meetings and 2 training sessions (see Activities 2.1 and 4 for detail). EC per diem rate applied.
F19.	Contingencies Can an allowance be included in the budget for unexpected expenditure beyond the project's control?	Yes, budget item 8 on the budget template foresees the possibility to allocate a maximum of 5% of the total direct eligible costs to cover unexpected expenditure. However, please note that the use of the contingency during the course of project implementation requires the prior approval of the Commission. è Annex B (Budget)

Ref.	Question	Answer
F20.	Budget modifications Is it allowed to modify the budget template when preparing a project proposal?	The budget template consists of two MS Excel work sheets (1. Budget, Worksheet 2. Expected Sources of Funding). The project budget has to follow the template and use the main headings (1. Human Resources, 2. Travel, etc.) It is allowed to add and/or delete lines within a main heading. The calculation formula must respect the logic of the budget template. The budget must be presented for the <u>whole duration of the project and for the first year of activities</u> . è Annex B (Budget)
F21.	Standard grant contract Is it necessary to complete the standard grant contract and attach it to the application (Annex F)?	No. Annex F (Standard Contract) is for information only and it should not be completed as a part of the application. Should the proposal be successful, the European Commission will prepare a complete grant contract of this nature. è Annex F (Standard Grant Contract)
F22.	CVs of project team Is it necessary to attach the CVs of the staff involved in the project?	No, the submission of CVs is no longer required.
F23.	Constitution of project team Is it necessary that each of the key project staff come from the partnership organisations or can they be recruited externally?	The management of the project may <u>not</u> be sub-contracted. Therefore, the Project Coordinator should be employed by the applicant organisation, and the key project staff should be members of the partnership organisations. Any external recruits should be sub-contracted according to Commission rules as set out in Annex IV of the standard grant contract (Annex F), which sets out the rules on nationality and origin and determines the procedures to be followed when tendering, according to the value of the contract.
F24.	Staff of the project team Can a free lance expert be considered as key staff member of the project?	The applicant (and its partners) must demonstrate to have the financial and operational capacity to manage a project, including the necessary staff. So, independently from the type of contract, the key staff should be working for the applicant and its partner continuously and independently from the grant awarded.
F25.	Copies of application Is it possible to have paper copies of the grant application documents?	No. Applicants are strongly encouraged to make use of the electronic files via the Internet. The necessary documents for the grant application procedure are available on the main EuropeAid Co-operation Office web site under funding opportunities (see F1) The Guidelines for Applicants provide that a project proposal must include one original of the Full proposal and <u>one (1) electronic version</u> of the proposal in the form of memory stick or CD-ROM, .
F26.	Hard copies Which documents have to be provided in hard copy?	It is mandatory to include <u>one (1) original hard copy</u> of the Application Form, relevant Annexes (A, B, C), signed Partnership Statements of the partners and the signed Declaration by the Applicant. è Guidelines for Applicants (Section 2.2.2)
F27.	Electronic copies Which documents have to be provided in electronic form?	In addition to the (1) set of original application materials, it is mandatory to include <u>one (1) electronic versions</u> of the proposal in the form of a USB memory stick or CD-ROM, for the Application Form and relevant Annexes (A, B, C). è Guidelines for Applicants (Section 2.2.2)
F28.	Documents submitted under a Call for Proposals Will the Application Form be returned to an applicant in the case where a proposal is rejected?	No. The European Commission retains all documents submitted under a Call for Proposals. It is not possible to return them to the applicant. For this reason, an applicant is advised to keep a copy of all documents submitted.

Ref	Question	Answer
G. Evaluation of proposals		

Ref	Question	Answer
G. Evaluation of proposals		
G1.	<p>New evaluation procedure</p> <p>What are the main features of the new evaluation and selection procedure?</p>	<p>The new selection procedure significantly simplifies the process of submitting a proposal. The main features of the new procedure are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Administrative Check: the administrative check will be carried on the basis of the Checklist provided in the Application Form (Section ii). The applicant should ensure that each component on the Checklist is satisfied and that the Declaration by the Applicant is duly signed in original. Ø Evaluation of the Concept Note and Pre-selection: The Concept Note will be evaluated on the basis of the Concept Note Evaluation Grid provided in the Guidelines for Applicants (Section 2.3 - Step 2). To proceed to the next step of the selection procedure, two criteria will have to be met: (1) the Concept Note must have scored 30 out of 50 and min 12 points in the category "Relevance". The number of Concept Notes will be reduced in accordance to the ranking to those whose sum of requested contributions amounts to at least two times the available budget for this Call for proposals. The pre-selected applicants will subsequently be invited to submit full proposals. <p>IMPORTANT: Only short listed applicants must submit a full application form.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluation of the Application Form and Provisional Selection: provided that the Concept Note was pre-selected, the applicant will be asked to submit a whole Application Form for evaluation. This evaluation will be carried out on the basis of the Evaluation Grid provided in the Application Form (Section 2.3 - Step 3). To be provisionally selected for funding, a proposal will have to meet the following criteria: (1) be amongst the best scoring ones and within the funding available (2) have scored at least 12 out of 20 under "Financial and Operational Capacity" (3) have scored at least 20 out of 25 under "Relevance". - Eligibility conformity check: The eligibility conformity check will only be carried out for projects that have been provisionally selected. These projects will be contacted and will be asked to provide all the necessary supporting documents within a deadline (see F5). <p>IMPORTANT: If the Applicant fails to provide all requested documents within the specified deadline or if it appears that the information provided in the Application Form and the Declaration by the Applicant do not conform with the supporting documents, the Application Form will be rejected and a proposal will be taken from the Reserve List.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reserve list: a reserve list will be constituted and will be drawn upon if a proposal fails to pass the eligibility conformity check.
G2.	<p>Evaluation and selection results</p> <p>What kind of feedback on the evaluation results will be given to rejected applicants?</p>	<p>All Applicants will be contacted after the Administrative Check. They will be given a reference number and will be informed whether or not their Concept Note was recommended for evaluation following the Administrative Check.</p> <p>Following the evaluation of the Concept Notes, the Applicants whose Concept Note was evaluated will be contacted and will be informed of the score they were attributed and whether or not their Application Form will be further evaluated.</p> <p>Following the evaluation of the Application Forms, the Applicants whose Application Form was evaluated will be informed whether or not their Application was provisionally selected for funding. Applicants whose application was retained will be asked to submit all necessary supporting documents within a certain deadline.</p> <p>è Guidelines for Applicants (Section 2.3 and 2.4)</p>
G3.	<p>Evaluation committee</p> <p>Who evaluates the project proposals?</p>	<p>The evaluation process will be co-managed by the EuropeAid Office in Brussels and the EC Delegation in the respective countries. The assessors sign a declaration of impartiality and confidentiality. The final score awarded to a project is the average score of the two assessments. On the basis of the assessments, the evaluation committee recommends projects for financing. The evaluation committee is composed of Commission staff representing different services of the European Commission.</p>
G4.	<p>Signing the contract</p> <p>With whom will the beneficiary sign the contract? The Headquarter or the Delegation?</p>	<p>For projects concerning Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, the contracts will be signed with the delegations in the countries. For projects concerning Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, the contracts will be signed with the Headquarter.</p>
G5.	<p>Resubmission of a proposal</p> <p>Can rejected proposals be resubmitted, provided the deficiencies that led to their rejection are remedied?</p>	<p>Yes. Having rectified the reasons for the initial rejection, an applicant is free to resubmit a proposal for another deadline. There is no guarantee that the revamped proposal will be successful second time round. A resubmitted proposal must be submitted as a "new" and separate application, complete with all required supporting</p>

Ref	Question	Answer
G. Evaluation of proposals		
		documents, originals etc. A resubmitted proposal should be indicated as such.
G6.	Feedback on rejected proposals Does the Commission provide feedback on reasons for a rejected project proposal?	Yes. The weak points of a project will be communicated in a letter notifying the applicant of an unsuccessful proposal.
G7.	Returning proposals Is it possible to have a proposal returned to the applicant?	No. The Commission is obliged to retain all successful and unsuccessful applications and supporting documents for the purposes of auditing (for up to 7 years).

Ref	Question	Answer
H. Support by the EuropeAid Co-operation Office		
H1.	Assistance to applicants Is any assistance provided by the European Commission for the screening of project ideas and the development of project proposals?	Individual assistance and counselling on project ideas or proposals is <u>not</u> available, in order to ensure transparency and equal opportunities to all. Only applications officially submitted within the framework of the Calls for Proposals can be evaluated. Specific enquiries related to the Central Asia-Invest Programme may be sent to: europaaid-ca-invest@ec.europa.eu Frequently asked questions (FAQ) and materials from Information Sessions are published on the Central Asia-Invest website for the benefit of all potential applicants.
H2.	Visits to the European Commission Is it necessary for the applicant or partners to visit the European Commission at any time to further a project?	No. Unless it is beneficial to the project for the applicant or partners to visit Brussels, they are not required to visit the European Commission. All information may be provided over the telephone, via the post, fax or email.
H3.	Partner Search facility There will be a partner search facility?	No, there won't be any, but the potential beneficiaries can ask the list of participants in the Info sessions held in Europe and Central Asia or download them from the Central Asia Invest web site.
H4.	Further information on Central Asia-Invest Where may I obtain information and promotional material on the Programme?	The Central Asia-Invest web site provides information and promotional material including information flyers, presentations, speaking notes, posters, banners and press communiqués for use when promoting the Central Asia-Invest Programme. è http://ec.europa.eu/europaaid/where/asia/regional-cooperation/trade-business/ca_invest_en.htm
H5.	Timeframe for questions prior to a deadline Until when may questions related to a project proposal be asked prior to a deadline?	During the time between the publication and the deadline for receipt of proposals, applicants may present questions to the EuropeAid Co-operation Office, in writing up to 15 days before the submission of proposals. Replies must be provided to all such questions at least 11 days before the deadline for submission.

Answers to the most frequently asked questions are provided on the web site for wider reference. As additional questions are received, the answers are added to the current listing. In addition to the Call for Proposals and Guidelines for Applicants, they serve as an additional reference point when preparing an application for a grant.

NB The FAQs are provided for information only and are not legally binding. Only the Guidelines for Applicants are legally binding.