



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Pilot Project - Start This Up! Start-up-based ecosystem (connecting Universities, Entrepreneurs and a start-up hub in West Pomerania) involving regional potential outside central cities in Poland.

1. INTRODUCTION

This Call for proposals is published under Article 54(2)(b) of the Regulation (EU, Euratom) N°966/2012.

The European Commission adopted on 28.04.2017¹ a financing decision for a pilot project in the field of startup ecosystems, 'Start This Up'. The pilot project has the merits of creating links between ecosystems, focusing on connecting people, local ecosystems, international outreach and providing information through the One Stop Shop for start-ups for the West Pomerania region and neighbouring regions. The Pilot will reinforce matchmaking between investors, corporates, higher education institutions and entrepreneurs as well as networking of regional decision-makers.

In Europe too many promising high tech start-ups or innovative SMEs do not manage to grow and scale up at pan-European or international level. The tendency is that they either remain within a restricted national market or, if they manage to emerge, are often bought while they are still too small, thus failing to become full actors on the international scene and to create a sound ecosystem around their success. Even more so in peripheral and less developed areas such as West Pomerania. Turning research results with high innovation potential into viable products and services, bringing them to the market at European or even global level is a big challenge

Creation of new opportunities, notably by connecting with Startup Europe, which will allow the local ecosystem to connect to clusters and ecosystems across Europe, as well as bringing stronger coherence between the different EU initiatives in particular by linking up regional authorities, innovation agencies and other stakeholders and ecosystems.

¹ C(2017) 2755

2. OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of this pilot project is to change a still unfavourable trend on the start-up market within the EU, and in Poland. The pilot project will start to build the ecosystem corresponding to three basic needs of the market: sharing knowledge, new ideas and know-how in order to build a start-up scheme.

The aim of the project would be to create links between ecosystems, focus on connecting people, local ecosystems, international outreach and provide information through the One Stop Shop for start-ups for the West Pomerania region and neighbouring regions. The pilot project would reinforce matchmaking between investors, corporates, higher education institutions and entrepreneurs as well as networking of regional decision-makers.

Actions should support the expansion of startups from West Pomerania on a pan-European and international level. They should stimulate further tech entrepreneurship and the creation of new high growth businesses and jobs, seeking maximum synergies through European innovation ecosystems.

The current infrastructure present in West Pomerania and the potential synergy stemming from the proximity to big 'ideas hubs' such as Berlin or Copenhagen, make of Szczecin a natural core of the proposed start-up cluster. The Szczecin cluster would have spill-over effects on Poland's other regions as well as.

Proposals should address one or both of the following themes:

1. Reinforcing ICT ecosystems for high growth tech startups by interconnecting and creating new synergies between 3-4 different Startup hubs across Europe. Activities should focus on scaling-up of companies by connecting, across different entrepreneurial ecosystems, key relevant stakeholders such as tech entrepreneurs, mentors, corporates, customers, artists, designers, media, investors and local authorities. Cross-border actions can include, strategic partnerships among the players from local startups hubs across Europe; actions to help startups to find skilled employees throughout the connected hubs; access to the right combination of finance; helping startups to have access to procurement opportunities; and provide information to allow startups to grow across borders.
2. Facilitating financing and improving the liquidity for European investments in fast growing ICT startups and scaleups, increasing their chances for a successful exit. Activities should support networking for corporates, help EU and international investors to gather and improve knowledge of opportunities for investing in digital sectors as well as stimulating financing through European stock markets, preparing companies for investment, enlarging the pool of investors and analysts with deeper understanding of market trends and business models in digital sectors.

Proposals should address the following and provide appropriate metrics for measuring success with respect to a defined baseline:

- Connecting West Pomerania tech start-up hubs and their companies (startups, scaleups) to the larger European business ecosystem seeking maximum synergies

in terms of number of concrete collaborations between relevant players within existing ecosystems and networks;

- Increased access to customers, new products or services on the market in West Pomerania, as well as increase in turnover, better access to qualified employees, access to the right combination of finance and prospects for scaling up across borders and new job opportunities;
- Stimulate European investments in West Pomerania in digital sectors through creating increased mutual understanding between investor communities and in particular tech startups and scaleups;
- Where appropriate, seeking synergies with ESIF funds or ESIF supported actions to improve the synergies between H2020 and ESIF.

Expected results are the creation of new opportunities, notably by connecting with the 'Startup Europe' initiative², which will allow the local ecosystem to connect to clusters and ecosystems across Europe, as well as bringing stronger coherence between the different EU initiatives in particular by linking up regional authorities, innovation agencies and other stakeholders and ecosystems.

In 2018 Start This Up will launch 4 events on matchmaking, linking start-ups, mid-caps and larger enterprises. It will also organise an 'Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs' conference to bring up to 10 incubators and up to 200 entrepreneurs towards international markets.

The pilot project will build on the New Skills Agenda of the Commission by promoting entrepreneurship, management and innovation skills to up to 100 innovators and researchers.

3. TIMETABLE

	Stages	Date and time or indicative period
a)	Publication of the call	1 July 2017
b)	Deadline for submitting applications	1 September 2017 17:00 CET
c)	Evaluation period	October 2017
d)	Information to applicants	November 2017
e)	Signature of grant agreement or notification of grant decision	December 2017
f)	Starting date of the action	January 2018

4. BUDGET AVAILABLE

The total budget earmarked for the co-financing of projects is estimated at EUR 750 000 (Seven hundred and fifty thousand Euro).

² COM(2016)733

The Commission expects to fund one single proposal.

The Commission reserves the right not to distribute all the funds available.

5. ADMISSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Applications must be sent no later than the deadline for submitting applications referred to in section 3.
- Applications must be submitted in writing and on usb key using the application forms available at <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/news-redirect/75145>
- Applications must be drafted in English.

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

6. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

6.1. Eligible applicants

Only applications from legal entities established in the EU Member States are eligible.

Applications may be submitted:

- by a single legal entity;
- by a consortium made up of several legal entities; or
- by one applicant, whether established specifically or not for the action, which is formed of several legal entities complying with the eligibility, non-exclusion and selection criteria set out in this call for proposals, and implementing together the proposed action, provided the application identifies the said entities. For the purpose of declaring eligible costs as specified under section 11.2, the entities composing the applicant shall be treated as affiliated entities.

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

Examples of supporting documents:

- private entity: extract from the official journal, copy of articles of association, extract of trade or association register, certificate of liability to VAT (if, as in certain countries, the trade register number and VAT number are identical, only one of these documents is required); public entity: copy of the resolution or decision establishing the public company, or other official document establishing the public-law entity;
- consortium: in addition to the supporting documents referring to their legal status, consortium members will submit letters confirming their participation to the project;
- natural persons: photocopy of identity card and/or passport;

- entities without legal personality: documents providing evidence that their representative(s) have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf.

Eligible legal entities having a legal or capital link with applicants, which is neither limited to the action nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation, may take part in the action as affiliated entities, and may declare eligible costs as specified in section 11.2.

6.2. Eligible activities

Types of activities eligible under this call for proposals:

- Conferences, seminars;
- Awareness and dissemination actions;
- Actions aiming at the creation and improving of networks, exchanges of good practices;
- Studies, analyses, mapping projects;

6.3. Implementation period

The duration of the action is expected to be no more than 12 months;

Applications for projects scheduled to run for a longer period than that specified in this call for proposals will not be accepted.

7. EXCLUSION CRITERIA

7.1. Exclusion from participation

The authorising officer shall exclude an applicant from participating in call for proposals procedures where:

(a) the applicant is bankrupt, subject to insolvency or winding-up procedures, where its assets are being administered by a liquidator or by a court, where it is in an arrangement with creditors, where its business activities are suspended, or where it is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for under national laws or regulations;

(b) it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the applicant is in breach of its obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions in accordance with the law of the country in which it is established, with those of the country in which the authorising officer is located or those of the country of the performance of the contract;

(c) it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the applicant is guilty of grave professional misconduct by having violated applicable laws or regulations or ethical standards of the profession to which the applicant belongs, or by having engaged in any wrongful conduct which has an impact on its professional credibility where such conduct denotes wrongful intent or gross negligence, including, in particular, any of the following:

- (i) fraudulently or negligently misrepresenting information required for the verification of the absence of grounds for exclusion or the fulfilment of selection criteria or in the performance of a contract, a grant agreement or a grant decision;

- (ii) entering into agreement with other applicants with the aim of distorting competition;
 - (iii) violating intellectual property rights;
 - (iv) attempting to influence the decision-making process of the Commission during the award procedure;
 - (v) attempting to obtain confidential information that may confer upon it undue advantages in the award procedure;
- (d) it has been established by a final judgment that the applicant is guilty of any of the following:
- (i) fraud, within the meaning of Article 1 of the Convention on the protection of the European Communities' financial interests, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 July 1995;
 - (ii) corruption, as defined in Article 3 of the Convention on the fight against corruption involving officials of the European Communities or officials of Member States of the European Union, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 May 1997, and in Article 2(1) of Council Framework Decision 2003/568/JHA, as well as corruption as defined in the law of the country where the contracting authority is located, the country in which the applicant is established or the country of the performance of the contract;
 - (iii) participation in a criminal organisation, as defined in Article 2 of Council Framework Decision 2008/841/JHA;
 - (iv) money laundering or terrorist financing, as defined in Article 1 of Directive 2005/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council;
 - (v) terrorist-related offences or offences linked to terrorist activities, as defined in Articles 1 and 3 of Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA, respectively, or inciting, aiding, abetting or attempting to commit such offences, as referred to in Article 4 of that Decision;
 - (vi) child labour or other forms of trafficking in human beings as defined in Article 2 of Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council;
- (e) the applicant has shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations in the performance of a contract, a grant agreement or a grant decision financed by the Union's budget, which has led to its early termination or to the application of liquidated damages or other contractual penalties, or which has been discovered following checks, audits or investigations by an authorising officer, OLAF or the Court of Auditors;
- (f) it has been established by a final judgment or final administrative decision that the applicant has committed an irregularity within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95.
- (g) for the situations of grave professional misconduct, fraud, corruption, other criminal offences, significant deficiencies in the performance of the contract or irregularity, the applicant is subject to:
- (i) facts established in the context of audits or investigations carried out by the Court of Auditors, OLAF or internal audit, or any other check, audit or control performed under the responsibility of an authorising officer of an EU institution, of a European office or of an EU agency or body;

- (ii) non-final administrative decisions which may include disciplinary measures taken by the competent supervisory body responsible for the verification of the application of standards of professional ethics;
- (iii) decisions of the ECB, the EIB, the European Investment Fund or international organisations;
- (iv) decisions of the Commission relating to the infringement of the Union's competition rules or of a national competent authority relating to the infringement of Union or national competition law.
- (v) decisions of exclusion by an authorising officer of an EU institution, of a European office or of an EU agency or body.

7.2. Remedial Measures

If an applicant declares one of the situations of exclusion listed above (see section 7.4), it should indicate the measures it has taken to remedy the exclusion situation, thus demonstrating its reliability. This may include e.g. technical, organisational and personnel measures to prevent further occurrence, compensation of damage or payment of fines. The relevant documentary evidence which illustrates the remedial measures taken must be provided in annex to the declaration. This does not apply for situations referred in point (d) of section 7.1

7.3. Rejection from the call for proposals

The authorising officer shall not award a grant to an applicant who:

- a. is in an exclusion situation established in accordance with section 7.1;
- b. has misrepresented the information required as a condition for participating in the procedure or has failed to supply that information;
- c. was previously involved in the preparation of calls for proposal documents where this entails a distortion of competition that cannot be remedied otherwise.

The same exclusion criteria apply to affiliated entities.

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

7.4. Supporting documents

Applicants [and affiliated entities] must provide a declaration on their honour certifying that they are not in one of the situations referred to in articles 106(1) and 107 FR, by filling in the relevant form attached to the application form accompanying the call for proposals and available at <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/news-redirect/75145>.

This obligation may be fulfilled in one of the following ways:

a) for mono beneficiary grants

- (i) the applicant signs a declaration in its name and on behalf of its affiliated entities OR
- (ii) the applicant and its affiliated entities sign each a separate declaration in their own name]

b) for multi beneficiaries grants

(i) the coordinator of a consortium signs a declaration on behalf of all applicants and their affiliated entities OR

(ii) each applicant in the consortium signs a declaration in its name and on behalf its affiliated entities OR

(iii) each applicant in the consortium and the affiliated entities sign each a separate declaration in their own name

8. SELECTION CRITERIA

8.1. 8.1. Financial capacity

Applicants must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activity throughout the duration of the grant and to participate in its funding. The applicants' financial capacity will be assessed on the basis of the following supporting documents to be submitted with the application:

a) Low value grants (\leq EUR 60 000):

- a declaration on their honour.

b) Grants \geq EUR 60 000:

- a declaration on their honour and

EITHER

- the profit and loss account as well as the balance sheet for the last financial year for which the accounts were closed;
- for newly created entities: the business plan might replace the above documents;

OR

- the table provided for in the application form, filled in with the relevant statutory accounting figures, in order to calculate the ratios as detailed in the form.

c) Grants for an action \geq EUR 750 000:

- the information and supporting documents mentioned above in point b) above and
- **an audit report** produced by an approved external auditor certifying the accounts for the last financial year available.
In the event of an application grouping several applicants (consortium), the above thresholds apply to each applicant.

In the case of legal entities forming **one** applicant (the "sole applicant"), as specified in section 6.1, the above requirements apply to each one of those entities.

On the basis of the documents submitted, if the responsible authorising officer (RAO) considers that financial capacity is weak, s/he may:

- request further information;
- decide not to give pre-financing;
- decide to give pre-financing paid in instalments;

- decide to give pre-financing covered by a bank guarantee (see section 11.4 below);
 - where applicable, require the joint and several financial liability of all the co-beneficiaries.
- If the RAO considered that the financial capacity is insufficient s/he will reject the application.

8.2. Operational capacity

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

- curriculum vitae or description of the profile of the people primarily responsible for managing and implementing the operation (accompanied where appropriate, like in the field of research and education, by a list of relevant publications);
- the organisation's activity reports;
- an exhaustive lists of previous projects and activities performed in the last three years and connected to the policy field of a given call or to the actions to be carried out;
- an inventory of natural or economic resources involved in the project.

In the case of legal entities forming **one** applicant (the "sole" applicant), as specified in section 6.1, the above requirements apply to each one of those entities.

9. AWARD CRITERIA

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

Award criterion	Maximum score/weighting	Threshold
Excellence Clarity and pertinence of the objectives, credibility of the proposed approach, soundness of the concept and innovation potential.	30	18
Impact The European dimension of the project, including the expected multiplying effect on other Startup ecosystems in Europe. The broader awareness of high potential innovators in Europe with specific targeted actions for maturing innovation excellence in EU-funded ICT projects The effectiveness of the proposed measures to connect Startups and the concrete collaborations between relevant players within existing ecosystems and networks;.	50	30
Implementation Coherence and effectiveness of the work plan, including appropriateness of the allocation of tasks and resources, relevance and complementarity of the participants within the consortium (when relevant), and appropriateness of the management structures and procedures, including risk and innovation management.	20	12
Total	100	60

Minimum score per criterion (threshold):

Proposals scoring less than 60% of the maximum score for any technical award criterion will be considered of insufficient quality and rejected.

Minimum total score (threshold):

Proposals with a total score of less than 60 points at the end of the evaluation process will be considered of insufficient quality and rejected.

10. LEGAL COMMITMENTS

In the event of a grant awarded by the Commission, a grant agreement, drawn up in euro and detailing the conditions and level of funding, will be sent to the applicant, as well as the information on the procedure to formalise the agreement of the parties.

The 2 copies of the original agreement must be signed first by the beneficiary on behalf of the consortium and returned to the Commission immediately. The Commission will sign it last.

In the event the application for framework partnership is selected, a framework partnership agreement detailing the conditions of cooperation will be sent to the applicant, as well as information on the procedure to formalise the agreement of the parties

11. FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

11.1. Eligible costs

Eligible costs shall meet all the following criteria:

- they are incurred by the beneficiary.
- they are incurred during the duration of the action, with the exception of costs relating to final reports and audit certificates;
 - The period of eligibility of costs will start as specified in the grant agreement.
 - Costs eligible for financing may not have been incurred before the grant application was submitted.
- they are indicated in the estimated budget;
- they are necessary for the implementation of the action which is the subject of the grant;
- they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular being recorded in the accounting records of the beneficiary and determined according to the applicable accounting standards of the country where the beneficiary is established and according to the usual cost accounting practices of the beneficiary;
- they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation;
- they are reasonable, justified, and comply with the requirements of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency.

The beneficiary's internal accounting and auditing procedures must permit direct reconciliation of the costs and revenue declared in respect of the action/project with the corresponding accounting statements and supporting documents.

The same criteria apply to costs incurred by the affiliated entities.

Eligible costs may be direct or indirect.

11.1.1. *Eligible direct costs*

The eligible direct costs for the action are those costs which:

with due regard for the conditions of eligibility set out above, are identifiable as specific costs directly linked to the performance of the action and which can therefore be booked to it directly, such as :

- (a) *the costs of personnel working under an employment contract with the beneficiary or an equivalent appointing act and assigned to the action, provided that these costs are in line with the beneficiary's usual policy on remuneration.*

Those costs include actual salaries plus social security contributions and other statutory costs included in the remuneration. They may also comprise additional remunerations, including payments on the basis of supplementary contracts regardless of the nature of those contracts, provided that they are paid in a consistent manner whenever the same kind of work or expertise is required, independently from the source of funding used;

The costs of natural persons working under a contract with the beneficiary other than an employment contract or who are seconded to the beneficiary by a third

party against payment may also be included under such personnel costs, provided that the following conditions are fulfilled:

- (i) the person works under conditions similar to those of an employee (in particular regarding the way the work is organised, the tasks that are performed and the premises where they are performed);*
- (ii) the result of the work belongs to the beneficiary (unless exceptionally agreed otherwise); and*
- (iii) the costs are not significantly different from the costs of staff performing similar tasks under an employment contract with the beneficiary;*

The recommended methods for calculation of direct personnel costs are provided in Appendix.

- (b) costs of travel and related subsistence allowances, provided that these costs are in line with the beneficiary's usual practices on travel;*
- (c) the depreciation costs of equipment or other assets (new or second-hand) as recorded in the beneficiary's accounting statements, provided that the asset:
 - (i) is written off in accordance with the international accounting standards and the beneficiary's usual accounting practices; and*
 - (ii) has been purchased in accordance with the rules on implementation contracts laid down in the grant agreement, if the purchase occurred within the implementation period;**

The costs of renting or leasing equipment or other assets are also eligible, provided that these costs do not exceed the depreciation costs of similar equipment or assets and are exclusive of any finance fee;

Only the portion of the equipment's depreciation, rental or lease costs corresponding to the implementation period and the rate of actual use for the purposes of the action may be taken into account when determining the eligible costs. By way of exception, the full cost of purchase of equipment may be eligible under the Special Conditions, if this is justified by the nature of the action and the context of the use of the equipment or assets;

- (d) costs of consumables and supplies, provided that they:
 - (i) are purchased in accordance with the rules on implementation contracts laid down in the grant agreement; and*
 - (ii) are directly assigned to the action;**
- (e) costs arising directly from requirements imposed by the Agreement (dissemination of information, specific evaluation of the action, audits, translations, reproduction), including the costs of requested financial guarantees, provided that the corresponding services are purchased in accordance with the rules on implementation contracts laid down in the grant agreement;*

- (f) *costs entailed by subcontracts, provided that specific conditions on subcontracting as laid down in the grant agreement are met;*
- (g) *costs of financial support to third parties, provided that the conditions laid down in the grant agreement are met;*
- (h) *duties, taxes and charges paid by the beneficiary, notably value added tax (VAT), provided that they are included in eligible direct costs, and unless specified otherwise in the grant agreement.*

11.1.2. Eligible indirect costs (overheads)

Indirect costs are costs that are not directly linked to the action implementation and therefore cannot be attributed directly to it.

A flat-rate amount of 7% of the total eligible direct costs of the action, is eligible as indirect costs, representing the beneficiary's general administrative costs which can be regarded as chargeable to the action/project.

Indirect costs may not include costs entered under another budget heading.

Applicants' attention is drawn to the fact that if they are receiving an operating grant financed by the EU or Euratom budget, they may not declare indirect costs for the period(s) covered by the operating grant, unless they can demonstrate that the operating grant does not cover any costs of the action.

In order to demonstrate this, in principle, the beneficiary should:

- a. use *analytical cost accounting that allows to separate all costs (including overheads) attributable to the operating grant and the action grant. For that purpose the beneficiary should use reliable accounting codes and allocation keys ensuring that the allocation of the costs is done in a fair, objective and realistic way.*
- b. *record separately:*
 - all costs incurred for the operating grants (i.e. personnel, general running costs and other operating costs linked to the part of its usual annual activities), and
 - all costs incurred for the action grants (including the actual indirect costs linked to the action)

If the operating grant covers the entire usual annual activity and budget of the beneficiary, the latter is not entitled to receive any indirect costs under the action grant.

11.2. Ineligible costs

- a) *return on capital and dividends paid by a beneficiary;*
- b) *debt and debt service charges;*
- c) *provisions for losses or debts;*
- d) *interest owed;*
- e) *doubtful debts;*
- f) *exchange losses;*
- g) *costs of transfers from the Commission charged by the bank of a beneficiary;*

- h) costs declared by the beneficiary under another action receiving a grant financed from the Union budget. Such grants include grants awarded by a Member State and financed from the Union budget and grants awarded by bodies other than the Commission for the purpose of implementing the Union budget. In particular, beneficiaries receiving an operating grant financed by the EU or Euratom budget cannot declare indirect costs for the period(s) covered by the operating grant, unless they can demonstrate that the operating grant does not cover any costs of the action.*
- i) contributions in kind from third parties;*
- j) excessive or reckless expenditure;*

11.3. Form of the grant

11.3.1. Reimbursement of costs actually incurred

The grant will be defined by applying a maximum co-financing rate of 70% to the eligible costs actually incurred and declared by the beneficiary and its affiliated entities.

11.4. Balanced budget

The estimated budget of the action must be attached to the application form. It must have revenue and expenditure in balance.

The budget must be drawn up in euros.

Applicants for whom costs will not be incurred in euros should use the exchange rate published on the Infor-euro website available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuro/inforeuro_en.cfm

The applicant must ensure that the resources which are necessary to carry out the action are not entirely provided by the EU grant.

Co-financing of the action may take the form of:

- the beneficiary's own resources,
- income generated by the action or work programme,
- financial contributions from third parties.

Overall co-financing may also include in-kind contributions from third parties, i.e. non-financial resources made available free of charge by third parties to the beneficiary or to the consortium. The corresponding costs of third parties are not eligible under the grant, e.g. volunteer work, providing a meeting room for free, etc.

The value of the contribution in kind must not exceed:

- either the costs actually borne and duly supported by accounting documents;
- or, in the absence of such documents, the costs generally accepted on the market in question.

In-kind contributions shall be presented separately in the estimated budget to reflect the total resources allocated to the action. Their unit value is evaluated in the provisional budget and shall not be subject to subsequent changes.

In-kind contributions shall comply with national tax and social security rules.

11.5. Calculation of the final grant amount

The final amount of the grant is calculated by the Commission at the time of the payment of the balance. The calculation involves the following steps:

Step 1 — Application of the reimbursement rate to the eligible costs

The amount under step 1 is obtained by application of the reimbursement rate specified in section 11.3.1 to the eligible costs accepted by the Commission, to which the co-financing rate applies.

Step 2 — Limit to the maximum amount of the grant

The total amount paid to the beneficiaries by the Commission may in no circumstances exceed the maximum amount of the grant as indicated in the grant agreement. If the amount obtained following Step 1 is higher than this maximum amount, the final amount of the grant is limited to the latter.

Step 3 — Reduction due to improper implementation or breach of other obligations.

The Commission may reduce the maximum amount of the grant if the action has not been implemented properly (i.e. if it has not been implemented or has been implemented poorly, partially or late), or if another obligation under the Agreement has been breached.

The amount of the reduction will be proportionate to the degree to which the action has been implemented improperly or to the seriousness of the breach.

11.6. Reporting and Payment arrangements

The beneficiary may request the following payments provided that the conditions of the grant agreement are fulfilled (e.g. payment deadlines, ceilings, etc.). The payment requests shall be accompanied by the documents provided below and detailed in the grant agreement:

Payment request	Accompanying documents
A pre-financing payment corresponding to 33,3% of the grant amount	
Payment of the balance The Commission will establish the amount of this payment on the basis of the calculation of the final grant amount (see section 11.5 above). If the total of earlier payments is higher than the final grant amount, the beneficiary will be required to reimburse the amount paid in excess by the Commission through a recovery order.	(a) final technical report; (b) final financial statement; (c) summary financial statement aggregating the financial statements already submitted previously and indicating the receipts

In case of a weak financial capacity section 8.1 above applies.

11.7. Other financial conditions

a) Non-cumulative award

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

b) Non-retroactivity

No grant may be awarded retrospectively for actions already completed.

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

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

c) Implementation contracts/subcontracting

Where the implementation of the action requires the award of procurement contracts (implementation contracts), the beneficiary must award the contract to the bid offering best value for money or the lowest price (as appropriate), avoiding conflicts of interests.

The beneficiary is expected to clearly document the tendering procedure and retain the documentation for the event of an audit.

Beneficiaries may subcontract tasks forming part of the action. If they do so, they must ensure that, in addition to the above-mentioned conditions of best value for money and absence of conflicts of interests, the following conditions are also complied with:

- a) subcontracting does not cover core tasks of the action;
- b) recourse to subcontracting is justified because of the nature of the action and what is necessary for its implementation;
- c) the estimated costs of the subcontracting are clearly identifiable in the estimated budget;
- d) any recourse to subcontracting, if not provided for in description of the action, is communicated by the beneficiary and approved by the Commission. The Commission may grant approval:
 - (i) before any recourse to subcontracting, if the beneficiaries requests an amendment
 - (ii) after recourse to subcontracting if the subcontracting:
 - is specifically justified in the interim or final technical report and
 - does not entail changes to the grant agreement which would call into question the decision awarding the grant or be contrary to the equal treatment of applicants;
- e) the beneficiaries ensure that certain conditions applicable to beneficiaries, enumerated in the grant agreement (e.g. visibility, confidentiality, etc.), are also applicable to the subcontractors.

d) Financial support to third parties

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

12. PUBLICITY

12.1 By the beneficiaries

Beneficiaries must clearly acknowledge the European Union's contribution in all publications or in conjunction with activities for which the grant is used.

In this respect, beneficiaries are required to give prominence to the name and emblem of the European Commission on all their publications, posters, programmes and other products realised under the co-financed project.

12.2 By the Commission

With the exception of scholarships paid to natural persons and other direct support paid to natural persons in most need, all information relating to grants awarded in the course of a financial year shall be published on an internet site of the European Union institutions no later than the 30 June of the year following the financial year in which the grants were awarded.

The Commission will publish the following information:

- name of the beneficiary;
- address of the beneficiary when the latter is a legal person, region when the beneficiary is a natural person, as defined on NUTS 2 level³ if he/she is domiciled within EU or equivalent if domiciled outside EU;
- subject of the grant;
- amount awarded.

Upon a reasoned and duly substantiated request by the beneficiary, the publication shall be waived if such disclosure risks threatening the rights and freedoms of individuals concerned as protected by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union or harm the commercial interests of the beneficiaries.

13. PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA

The reply to any call for proposals involves the recording and processing of personal data (such as name, address and CV). Such data will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data. Unless indicated otherwise, the questions and any personal data requested that are required to evaluate the application in accordance with the call for proposal will be processed solely for that purpose by Startups and Innovation Unit of the Communications Networks, Content and Technology DG.

Personal data may be registered in the Early Detection and Exclusion System by the Commission, should the beneficiary be in one of the situations mentioned in Article 106(1) and 107 of the Financial Regulation 966/2012⁴ (for more information see the Privacy Statement on:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/library/explained/management/protecting/privacy_statement_des_en.pdf.

³ European Union Official Journal L 39, of 10 February 2007.

⁴ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=celex%3A32012R0966>

14. PROCEDURE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Proposals must be submitted by the deadline set out under section 3.

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

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

Application forms are available at <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/news-redirect/75145>

Applications must be submitted in the correct form, duly completed and dated. They must be submitted in 5 copies (one original clearly identified as such, plus four copies) and signed by the person authorised to enter into legally binding commitments on behalf of the applicant organisation.

Applications must be sent to the following postal address:

- by registered mail, date as postmark or by courier service, date of receipt by the courier service

*European Commission
Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology
Directorate Digital Single Market (unit Startup and Innovation - F.3)
To the attention of Head of Unit
B-1049 Brussels, Belgium*

- or, by hand delivery by 17.00 on 01/09/2017 at the latest to the following address:

*European Commission
Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology
Directorate Digital Single Market (unit Startup and Innovation - F.3)
To the attention of Head of Unit
Avenue du Bourget 1
B-1140 Brussels (Evere), Belgium*

In this case, a receipt must be obtained as proof of submission, signed and dated by the official in the Commission's central mail department who took delivery.

The department is open from 08.00 to 17.00 Monday to Thursday, and from 8.00 to 16.00 on Fridays. It is closed on Saturdays, Sundays and Commission holidays. Please note that in this case it is the date and time of reception at the Commission services that will count, not the actual date in which it was dispatched.

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

➤ **Contacts**

Indicate the contact point for any questions: - CNECT-CALLS-F3@EC.EUROPA.EU

➤ **Annexes:**

- Application form
- Checklist of documents to be provided
- Model grant agreement
- Any other relevant statement according to the call

Appendix

Specific conditions for direct personnel costs

1. Calculation

The ways of calculating eligible direct personnel costs laid down in points (a) and (b) below are recommended and accepted as offering assurance as to the costs declared being actual.

In case beneficiary uses a different method of calculating personnel costs, the Commission may accept it, if it considers that it offers an adequate level of assurance of the costs declared being actual.

a) for persons working exclusively on the action:

{monthly rate for the person multiplied by number of actual months worked on the action}

The months declared for these persons may not be declared for any other EU or Euratom grant.

The **monthly rate** is calculated as follows:

{annual personnel costs for the person divided by 12} using the personnel costs for each full financial year covered by the reporting period concerned.

If a financial year is not closed at the end of the reporting period, the beneficiaries must use the monthly rate of the last closed financial year available;

b) for persons working part time on the action

(i) If the person is assigned to the action at a fixed pro-rata of their working time:

{monthly rate for the person multiplied by pro-rata assigned to the action multiplied by number of actual months worked on the action}

The working time pro-rata declared for these persons may not be declared for any other EU or Euratom grant.

The monthly rate is calculated as above.

(ii) In other cases:

{hourly rate for the person multiplied by number of actual hours worked on the action}

or

{daily rate for the person multiplied by number of actual days worked on the action}

(rounded up or down to the nearest half-day)

The number of actual hours/days declared for a person must be identifiable and verifiable.

The total number of hours/days declared in EU or Euratom grants, for a person for a year, cannot be higher than the annual productive hours/days used for the calculations of the hourly/daily rate. Therefore, the maximum number of hours/days that can be declared for the grant are:

{number of annual productive hours/days for the year (see below)}

minus

total number of hours and days declared by the beneficiary, for that person for that year, for other EU or Euratom grants}.

The ‘**hourly/daily rate**’ is calculated as follows:

{annual personnel costs for the person

divided by

number of individual annual productive hours/days} using the personnel costs and the number of annual productive hours/days for each full financial year covered by the reporting period concerned.

If a financial year is not closed at the end of the reporting period, the beneficiaries must use the hourly/daily rate of the last closed financial year available.

The ‘number of individual annual productive hours/days’ is the total actual hours/days worked by the person in the year. It may not include holidays and other absences (such as sick leave, maternity leave, special leave, etc). However, it may include overtime and time spent in meetings, trainings and other similar activities.

2. Records and other documentation to support the personnel costs declared as actual costs

For **persons working exclusively on the action**, where the direct personnel costs are calculated following **point (a)**, there is no need to keep time records, if the beneficiary signs a **declaration** confirming that the persons concerned have worked exclusively on the action.

For **persons assigned to the action at a fixed pro-rata of their working time**, where the direct personnel costs are calculated following **point (b)(i)**, there is no need to keep time records, if the beneficiary signs a declaration that the persons concerned have effectively worked at the fixed pro-rata on the action.

For **persons working part time on the action**, where direct personnel costs are calculated following **point (b)(ii)**, the beneficiaries must keep **time records** for the

number of hours/days declared. The time records must be in writing and approved by the persons working on the action and their supervisors, at least monthly.

In the absence of reliable time records of the hours worked on the action, the Commission may accept alternative evidence supporting the number of hours/days declared, if it considers that it offers an adequate level of assurance.