



Internal Security Fund – Borders and Visa

Call for proposals document

Call for proposals to support the improvement of border surveillance by enhancing cooperation between Member States in the framework of EUROSUR, including, whenever appropriate, cooperation with third countries (especially neighbouring countries)

ISFB-2018-AG-ESUR

Version 2.0
Date 16 October 2018



HISTORY OF CHANGES		
Version	Publication date	Changes
1.0	10.07.2018	▪ Initial version
2.0	16.10.2018	▪ The deadline for submitting applications has been corrected from 16/10/2018 to 07/03/2019



INTERNAL SECURITY FUND BORDERS AND VISA (2014-2020)

2018 CALL FOR PROPOSALS

ISFB-2018-AG-ESUR

Call for proposals to support the improvement of border surveillance by enhancing cooperation between Member States in the framework of EUROSUR, including, whenever appropriate, cooperation with third countries (especially neighbouring countries)

1. INTRODUCTION

Article 67(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) declares as the European Union's objective ensuring a high level of security within an area of freedom, security and justice.

To achieve this objective, a more coherent approach on the internal and external aspects of migration management is needed and a correlation should be established between the fight against illegal immigration and the improvement of security at the external borders of the Union, as well as better cooperation and dialogue with third countries for the purposes of dealing with illegal immigration and promoting legal migration.

The Internal Security Strategy for the European Union ('Internal Security Strategy'), adopted by the Council in February 2010, has constituted a shared agenda for tackling these common security challenges and has, inter alia, identified the following relevant strategic objectives for 2010-2014: to strengthen security through border management and to increase Europe's resilience in the face of crises and disasters. These strategic objectives remain valid and should continue to be pursued.

To promote the implementation of the Internal Security Strategy and to ensure that it becomes an operational reality, the Internal Security Fund (ISF Borders and Visa) was set up.

In May 2015 the European Commission adopted the European Agenda on Migration (EAM) which proposes measures for the short and medium term to respond to current challenges in the area of migration and crises at the EU external border. It identifies four pillars to manage migration better, which includes 'Border management – saving lives and securing external borders'.

Legal basis of ISF Borders and Visa are the following regulations:

- Regulation (EU) No 515/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 establishing the Instrument for financial support for external borders and visa (OJ L 150 of 20 May 2014);

- Regulation (EU) No 514/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 laying down general provisions on the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and on the instrument for financial support for police cooperation, preventing and combating crime, and crisis management (OJ L 150 of 20 May 2014).

The ISF Borders and Visa Regulation sets out two specific objectives, respectively:

(i) supporting a common visa policy to facilitate legitimate travel, provide a high quality of service to visa applicants, ensure equal treatment of third-country nationals and tackle illegal immigration;

(ii) supporting integrated border management, including promoting further harmonisation of border management-related measures in accordance with common Union standards and through the sharing of information between Member States and between Member States and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), to ensure, on one hand, a uniform and high level of control and protection of the external borders, including by the tackling of illegal immigration and, on the other hand, the smooth crossing of the external borders in conformity with the Schengen acquis, while guaranteeing access to international protection for those needing it, in accordance with the obligations contracted by the Member States in the field of human rights, including the principle of non-refoulement.

In conformity with Regulation (EU) No 514/2014 Article 6.2, in order to implement the ISF Borders and Visa, the Commission adopted on 3 July 2018, the 2018 Annual Work Programme for Union Actions which includes this Call for Proposals¹.

This call supports the implementation and further development of the European Border Surveillance System (EUROSUR), which became operational in December 2013². EUROSUR is a multi-purpose system used for preventing illegal immigration and cross-border crime at the external borders, thereby contributing to the further development of the Schengen acquis. It aims to contribute to protect and save the lives of migrants attempting to cross the external borders.

To achieve these objectives, EUROSUR provides a common framework for information exchange and cooperation among all authorities with responsibility for the surveillance of the external land and sea borders. EUROSUR follows intelligence and risk analysis driven approach, allowing national and European authorities to better understand what is happening at the external borders and enabling them to react faster to new routes and methods used for illegal immigration and cross-border crime. Key elements of this include near-real time information exchange, regular intelligence sharing and close cooperation among authorities at national and European level.

2. PRIORITIES OF THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The present Call for Proposals aims at funding projects on the topic of supporting the improvement of border surveillance by enhancing cooperation between Member States in the framework of EUROSUR, including, whenever appropriate, cooperation with third countries.

Project applications submitted under the present Call for Proposals must address at least one of the following priorities:

(1) Collection of the information on the National Situational Picture and automated exchange of information European Situational Picture and the Common Pre-frontier Intelligence Picture of EUROSUR, in order to prevent irregular departures of migrants and for early identification of smugglers, as foreseen in the EU Action Plan against migrant smuggling

In line with paragraphs 9 and 10 of Article 9 of Regulation (EU) No 1052/2013 establishing EUROSUR, the project shall enable the national coordination centres of two or more neighbouring Member States to share with each other, and exchange of the situational picture of neighbouring external border sections including:

- a) incidents and other significant events contained in the events layer;
- b) tactical risk analysis reports as contained in the analysis layer;

¹ Commission Implementing Decision C(2018)4076

² Regulation (EU) No 1052/2013 of 22.10.2013 establishing EUROSUR; Commission Recommendation C(2015)9206 final of 15.12.2015 adopting the Practical Handbook for implementing and managing EUROSUR.

- c) positions, status and type of own assets operating in the neighbouring external border sections as contained in the operational layer.

Proposal supporting the deployment of systems allowing automated collection analysis and exchange of information and capable of handling multiple levels of confidentiality within and between the National Situational Pictures of Member States and with the European Situational Picture will be given priority.

While the project proposal needs to fully cover the requirements described in letters a) and b), the requirements described in letter c) are optional. Project proposals covering also letter c) will also be given priority over projects covering only letters a) and b).

(2) Cooperation between neighbouring Member States and of Member States with third countries (mostly neighbouring) in the framework of EUROSUR

The project shall support the cooperation between two or more Member States with a third country with the aim of improving the process of information exchange at bi- or multilateral level (e.g. Seahorses, Black Sea Cooperation Forum, Baltic Sea Region Border Control Cooperation).

These activities may include actions related to

- developing, establishing, upgrading and maintaining bi-or multilateral information exchange and cooperation;
- regional networks;
- services for centres in third countries which are similar to the EUROSUR national coordination centres in Member States,
- joint operations, including patrolling and surveillance activities;
- training, studies, pilot projects.

Proposal supporting the deployment of systems allowing automated collection analysis and exchange of information and capable of handling and adapting specific rules and policies for information exchange will be given priority.

Any actions under this Call for Proposals shall respect and shall be implemented in line with the rights and principles enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Applications should pay appropriate attention to the effects of the project on individual rights and freedoms, as well as to possible remedies. In addition, any action under this Call for Proposals should comply with all relevant ethical principles and all applicable international, EU and national law on ethical issues while carrying out the project.

3. TIMETABLE

	Stages	Date and time or indicative period
a)	Publication of the call	10 July 2018
b)	Deadline for submitting applications	(07/03/2019 - 17:00 CET)
c)	Evaluation period	April- May 2019
d)	Information to applicants	June 2019
e)	Signature of Grant Agreement	December 2019
f)	Starting date of the action	1 January 2020

4. BUDGET AVAILABLE

The total budget earmarked for the co-financing of projects is estimated at **EUR 20.000.000**.

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

5. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

5.1. General eligibility provisions

Applications must be sent no later than the deadline for submitting applications referred to in section 3.

Applications must be submitted using the Electronic Submission System of the Participant Portal originally developed for the Horizon 2020 Research programmes.

Applications must be submitted using the standard Submission Form Part A and Part B. They must include all the mandatory information and be accompanied (if applicable) by the Audit Report³ Annexes.

Applications must be drafted in one of the EU official languages. English is preferred in order to speed up the evaluation procedure.

Projects cannot be scheduled to last more than 24 months. Applications for projects scheduled to run for a longer period will be rejected.

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

5.2. Eligible applicants and applications

In order to be eligible for a grant, the Applicant and the Co-applicants must be:

- a) legal persons; applications from natural persons are not eligible;
- b) a public body;
- c) established in a Member State participating in the ISF Borders and Visa instrument⁴.

In order to be eligible for a grant, applications must be:

- a) transnational, i.e. involving at least 2 organisations established in 2 different Member States participating in the ISF Borders and Visa instrument;
- b) seeking EU co-funding equal to or more than EUR 250.000 and equal to or less than EUR 2.500.000 (including the flat rate for indirect costs);
- c) activities must not have started prior to the date of submission of the grant application.

Union agencies can be neither Applicants nor Co-applicants.

The public legal entities from the third countries can be neither Applicants nor Co-applicants; however they can be involved on the non-cost basis in the activities and are included in the proposal in Part B only.

³ If the share of a grant requested by an organisation (applicant or co-applicant) exceeds EUR 750 000, this organisation must provide an audit report produced by an approved external auditor certifying its accounts for the last closed financial year.

⁴ All EU Member States, with the exception of United Kingdom and Ireland, as well as the Schengen Associated Countries, are participating in the ISF Borders and Visa instrument. Legal entities established in the United Kingdom (unless the United Kingdom decides to opt in and to participate in the ISF Borders and Visa) or Ireland cannot participate in this call at all, not even on the non-cost basis principle.

To prove these eligibility requirements, Applicants and Co-applicants will have to provide the relevant information and upload necessary documents showing their legal status in the Beneficiary Register. The information needs to be provided before the submission deadline.

5.3. Eligible activities

The following types of activities are eligible under this Call for Proposals:

- Deployment of surveillance and information exchange systems allowing automatic exchange of information and handling multiple levels of confidentiality within and between the National Situational Pictures of Member States and with the European Situational Picture.
- Enhancing cooperation with third countries, including by further development and upgrade of regional networks, with the aim of improving the process of information exchange at bi- or multilateral level (e.g. Seahorse, Black Sea Cooperation Forum, Baltic Sea Region Border Control Cooperation) and exploring the possibilities of exchanging such information within EUROSUR.
- Cooperation activities between two or more Member States supporting exchange of the situational picture of neighbouring external border sections between the national coordination centres of neighbouring Member States and sharing of relevant information with the European Situational Picture.

Any measures under this heading will be implemented in full coordination and complementarity with other on-going activities, such as the 'Seahorse Mediterranean Network' project, funded from the Thematic Programme for Migration and Asylum, existing initiatives promoting integrated border management in third countries financed by external assistance instruments as well as ongoing civilian Missions under the Common Security and Defence Policy in support of third countries' border security.

6. EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Applicants will be excluded from participating in the Call for Proposals procedure and from the grant award if they are in any of the situations referred to in articles 131(4) of the EU Financial Regulation⁵, i.e. one of the following situations:

6.1. Exclusion from participation in the Call for Proposals

- (a) they are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- (b) they or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment of a competent authority of a Member State which has the force of res judicata;
- (c) they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can justify including by decisions of the EIB and international organisations;
- (d) they are not in compliance with their obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions

⁵ Regulation (EU, EURATOM) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (OJ 2012 L298, p. 1).

of the country in which they are established or with those of Belgium or those of the country where the action is to be implemented;

- (e) they or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation, money laundering or any other illegal activity, where such an illegal activity is detrimental to the Union's financial interests;
- (f) they are currently subject to an administrative penalty for: being guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the Commission as a condition of participation in a procurement or grant award procedure or for failing to supply this information; or having been declared to be in serious breach of its obligations under grant agreements or contracts financed by the Union's budget.

6.2. Exclusion from award

Applicants will not be granted financial assistance if, in the course of the grant award procedure, they:

- (a) are subject to a conflict of interest in connection with the action;
- (b) are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the Commission as a condition of participation in the grant award procedure or fail to supply this information;
- (c) find themselves in one of the situations of exclusion, referred to in section 6.1.

Administrative and financial penalties may be imposed on Applicants and Co-applicants who are guilty of misrepresentation.

7. SELECTION CRITERIA

7.1. Financial capacity

Applicants and Co-applicants must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activity throughout the period during which the action is being carried out and to participate in its funding. Organisations participating in several projects shall have sufficient financial capacity to implement multiple projects.

Financial capacity check will be performed by the Research Executive Agency (REA). It will be assessed in line with the requirements of the Financial Regulation (EC) No 966/2012.

The documents that will be requested when assessing the financial capacity include (1) the profit and loss accounts and (2) the balance sheets. For newly created entities the business plan may replace the above documents.

The financial documents must be uploaded in the Beneficiary Register when uploading the application package.

In case of low financial capacity, the Commission may decide the following:

- request further documents;
- request budget modifications / reallocations of costs;
- introduce interim payments based on interim reports;
- modify pre-financing percentage.

In case of insufficient financial capacity, the Commission may decide the following:

- request a change of Co-applicant;
- reject the application.

Financial Capacity assessment **will not be carried out** if:

- the Applicant or Co-applicant is a public body or an international organisation;
- the EU contribution requested by the Applicant or Co-applicant is \leq EUR 60 000.

If the share of a grant requested by an organisation (Applicant or Co-applicant) exceeds EUR 750 000, this organisation must also provide an audit report produced by an approved external auditor certifying its accounts for the last closed financial year. **This provision shall not apply to public bodies or to international organisations.**

7.2. Operational capacity

Applicants and Co-applicants must have the professional competencies as well as appropriate qualifications necessary to complete the proposed action. This capacity shall be assessed based on the experience of the Applicants and each Co-applicant or, as an alternative, on the relevant experience of their directly involved employees.

As evidence, the following information must be provided in the Submission Form Part B of the proposal:

- general profiles (qualifications and experiences) of the staff primary responsible for managing and implementing the proposed action to be described under point 5.1.3,
- a description of the partnership in the context of the proposed action to be provided under point 5.1.1.

The operational capacity assessment is not applicable to public bodies and international organisations.

8. AWARD CRITERIA

Eligible applications and their proposed action will be assessed on the basis of the following award criteria:

Award Criteria	Maximum Points	Threshold
1. Relevance	30	21
2. Quality of the project	20	-
3. Cost effectiveness	20	-
4. European added value	20	-
5. Expected results, dissemination, sustainability and long-term impact	10	-
TOTAL	100	65

Evaluation Step 1:

- Relevance: applications will be assessed on the extent to which they match the priorities as identified in this Call for Proposals (section 2 above) and in the relevant EU strategic documents and/or action plans (section 1 above), and on whether the expected impact will be significant on the selected priority(ies) (30 points).

Applications receiving less than 21 points for the "relevance" criterion will not be evaluated further, i.e. will not go to Evaluation Step 2.

Evaluation Step 2:

- Quality: applications will be assessed with regards to the appropriateness of their design and planned implementation, taking into account the envisaged activities,

methodology, organisation of work and strategy for project management, evaluation and dissemination (20 points);

- Cost-effectiveness: applications will be assessed with regards to whether the costs of the proposed action are adequate to the activities and proportionate to the expected results (20 points);
- European added value: the project activities, outcomes and impact should have a broad EU relevance; applications will be assessed on whether a suitable number of countries is involved in the project activities and on whether the expected impact will concern a significant number of countries (20 points);
- Expected results, dissemination, sustainability and long-term impact : the expected results are appropriate for the achievement of the objectives in the action; the dissemination strategy is clear, targeted and appropriate; the stream of benefits is likely to continue after the period of external support has ended; the project's results ensure a long-term impact on the target groups and/or general public (10 points).

Applications that pass the threshold of minimum 65 points will be considered for funding within the limits of the available budget.

9. LEGAL COMMITMENTS

The award of each grant is subject to the conclusion of a Grant Agreement in writing.

The coordinators of projects proposed for funding will be invited to engage in a grant agreement preparation process, which will be carried out via an online IT system (SYGMA). If successful, it will conclude with the signature of a Grant Agreement, drawn up in euro and detailing the conditions and level of funding.

The Grant Agreement must be signed electronically first by the coordinator on behalf of the consortium and then by the European Commission. All co-beneficiaries must accede to the Grant Agreement by signing electronically the accession form to the grant.

Please note, that if international organisations are involved in the application, no other specific clauses applicable to international organisations than the ones already included in the Model Grant Agreement will be added.

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

10. FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

10.1. General Principles

a) Non-cumulative award

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

In no circumstances shall the same costs be financed twice by the Union budget. To ensure this, applicants shall indicate the sources and amounts of Union funding received or applied for the same action or part of the action or for its functioning during the same financial year as well as any other funding received or applied for the same action (Submission Form Part B, section 6).

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 the need to start the action before the Grant Agreement is signed. In any case, costs eligible for financing may not have been incurred prior to the date of submission of the grant application.

c) Co-financing

Co-financing means that the resources which are necessary to carry out the action may not be 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,
- financial contributions from third parties.

d) Balanced budget

The Budget Estimate of the action is to be included in the Application Form. It must have revenue and expenditure in balance and must be drawn up in euro.

Beneficiaries with general accounts in a currency other than the euro shall convert costs incurred in another currency into euro at the average of the daily exchange rates published in the C series of Official Journal of the European Union, determined over the corresponding reporting period.⁶ Where no daily euro exchange rate is published in the Official Journal of the European Union for the currency in question, conversion shall be made at the average of the monthly accounting rates established by the Commission and published on its [website](#), determined over the corresponding reporting period.

Beneficiaries with general accounts in euro shall convert costs incurred in another currency into euro according to their usual accounting practices.

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 and retaining the documentation for the event of an audit. Detailed information on subcontracting is provided in the Guide for Applicants.

e) Financial support to third parties

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

f) Non-profit rule

EU grants may not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit within the framework of the action. Profit shall be defined as a surplus of the receipts over the eligible costs incurred by the Beneficiary, when the request is made for payment of the balance. In this respect, where a profit is made, the Commission shall be entitled to recover the percentage of the profit corresponding to the Union contribution to the eligible costs actually incurred by the Beneficiary to carry out the action.

g) Eligibility of the full cost of equipment

If necessary to implement the action, the beneficiaries may incur the full cost of some equipment items, infrastructure or other assets (new or second-hand; as recorded in the beneficiary's accounts).

10.2. Maximum amount requested

The EU grant is limited to a co-funding rate of 95% of the total eligible costs of the action.

Consequently, part of the total eligible expenses must be financed from sources other than the EU grant (see section 10.1.c).

⁶ For further guidance on exchange rate please consult the Guide for Applicants.

10.3. Payment arrangements

A pre-financing payment corresponding to maximum 80% of the EU grant amount will be transferred to the Coordinator after the signature of the Grant Agreement by both parties and in accordance with its terms.

The Commission will establish the amount of the final payment to be made to the Coordinator on the basis of the calculation of the final grant amount. If the total of earlier payments is higher than the final grant amount, the Beneficiaries will be required to reimburse the amount paid in excess by the Commission through a recovery order.

11. PROCEDURE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

11.1. How to apply

Proposals must be submitted by the deadline indicated in section 3 via the Electronic Submission System. The list of available calls can be found at the [calls for proposals page](#).

Before submitting a proposal both the Applicant and Co-applicants must be registered via the [Beneficiary Register](#) and obtain the 9-digit Participant Identification Code (PIC) (one for each applicant).

In submitting a proposal, the Applicant accepts the procedures and conditions as described in this Call for Proposals and in the documents to which it refers.

No modification of the application is allowed once the deadline for submission has elapsed. However, if there is a need to clarify certain aspects or for the correction of clerical mistakes, the Commission may contact the Applicant for this purpose during the evaluation process⁷.

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

11.2. Related documents

The following documents are available via the Electronic Submission System:

- Application form (Submission Form Part A and Part B)
- Required annex –Audit Report⁸ if applicable
- Model Grant Agreement
- Guide for applicants

11.3. Applications for several projects

The Applicant may submit more than one application under this call for proposals.

The Applicant may be awarded more than one grant under this call for proposals.

An organisation may participate as Applicant or Co-applicant in several applications.

⁷ Article 96 of the Financial Regulation

⁸ If the share of a grant requested by an organisation (applicant or co-applicant) exceeds EUR 750 000, this organisation must also provide an audit report produced by an approved external auditor certifying its accounts for the last closed financial year. Not applicable for public bodies and international organisations.

11.4. Several applications for the same project

Only one application will be accepted and evaluated for any given project. In case there are several applications for the same project, the Applicant will be asked to clarify which application shall be evaluated.

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

11.5. Contacts

For questions on the online submission tools, please contact the [IT helpdesk](#) set-up for this purpose via the Participant Portal website.

Non-IT related questions shall be sent to the following email address HOME-ISF@ec.europa.eu. In order to ensure an efficient handling of any enquiry please indicate clearly the reference of this Call for Proposals.

Questions will be answered as soon as possible. Questions received later than 7 calendar days before the deadline for submitting applications will not be answered. In the interest of equal treatment of applicants, the Commission cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of applicants or actions or on the outcome of the Call for Proposals before the official announcement of results.

Applicants are advised to consult the Call's website regularly. The Commission will publish at this website any additional information relevant to the Call, such as responses to frequently asked questions (if appropriate) and the results of the selection procedure.

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. Please refer to the Grant Agreement for more details.

12.2. By the Commission

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 and address of the beneficiary,
- 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. DATA PROTECTION

The reply to any call for proposals involves the recording and processing of personal data (such as name, address and CVs of individuals participating in the co-financed action). Such data will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council 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 in

order to evaluate the application in accordance with the specifications of the Call for Proposal will be processed solely for that purpose by the Commission or third parties acting on behalf and under the responsibility of the Commission. Data subjects may be informed regarding further details of the processing operations, their rights and how they may be enforced by referring to the privacy statement published in the [Legal Notice page](#) of the Participant Portal.

Applicants are invited to check the relevant privacy statement at regular intervals so as to be duly informed on possible updates that may occur by the deadline for submission of their proposals or afterwards. Beneficiaries assume the legal obligation to inform their staff on the relevant processing operations that are to be performed by the Research Executive Agency; in order to do so, they have to provide them with the privacy statements published by the Agency in the Participant Portal before transmitting their data to the Agency. Personal data may be registered in the Early Detection and Exclusion System (EDES) of the European Commission provided for in Articles 105a and 108 of the EU Financial Regulation according to the applicable provisions.

14. MEANS OF REDRESS

If, at any stage of the administrative treatment of grant applications, the persons or entities concerned consider that they have been affected by an instance of maladministration, they may, irrespective of any other means of redress, make a complaint to the European Ombudsman in accordance with Article 228(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and as provided by the Parliament Decision of 9 March 1994 on the regulations and general conditions governing the performance of the Ombudsman's duties published in Official Journal L 113 of 4 May 1994.