



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

The Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology
Data
Accessibility, Multilingualism and Safer Internet

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

PREPARATORY ACTION — APPLICATION OF WEB ACCESSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS IN WEB-AUTHORING TOOLS AND PLATFORMS BY DEFAULT (WEB ACCESS BY DEFAULT)

1. INTRODUCTION – BACKGROUND

On 1 April 2019, the European Commission adopted a work programme for 2019 for financing Pilot Projects and Preparatory Actions in the field of "Communications Networks, Content and Technology"¹.

The Web Accessibility Directive² establishes common accessibility requirements to make the websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies across the EU more accessible, in particular for persons with disabilities. The reference to the harmonised European Standard EN 301 549 v2.1.2 ('HEN')³ in support of the Directive was published in December 2018, providing presumption of conformity with the accessibility requirements set forth in the Directive.

Organizations beyond those in the scope of the Directive are also encouraged to follow accessibility best practices and conform to the HEN. By providing online and mobile services in a more accessible way, public sector bodies and private enterprises will reach more citizens and customers, thus reaping the economic and social benefits of web accessibility.

Incorporating features in authoring tools or platforms to meet accessibility requirements by default ("web access by default") will provide an effective way to support compliance with the Web Accessibility Directive. These features will facilitate the creation and maintenance of accessible websites and mobile applications, thus accelerating the adoption of web accessibility standards.

2. OBJECTIVE(S) – THEME(S) – PRIORITIES

The objective of this preparatory action is to support the adoption of the accessibility requirements set forth in the HEN when producing content for websites and mobile applications.

To that end, grants will be awarded to proposals developing authoring tools or platforms that help authors comply by default with the requirements of the HEN. Priority will be given to open-source or free-to-use solutions and to proposers involving users with

¹ C(2019) 2233 final

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32016L2102>

³ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2018.327.01.0084.01.ENG

disabilities, in particular in the validation process; accessibility of the tools or platforms for authors with disabilities will be considered an asset.

The expected results of this preparatory action are the following:

- (accessible) authoring tools or platforms that help authors produce and maintain accessible content for websites and mobile applications by default, preferably validated by users with disabilities;
- easier production of web and mobile content that complies with the accessibility requirements set out in the HEN, thus facilitating compliance with the Web Accessibility Directive;
- wider take-up of web accessibility resulting from greater awareness of its benefits;
- enhanced competition in the market for authoring tools and platforms with accessibility features.

The solutions supported under this preparatory action should automate as much as possible the features of authoring tools or platforms that provide accessibility by default. Where such automation is not possible, the authoring tools or platforms should minimise the need for technical intervention by the author (e.g. the tool/platform should trigger an automatic request to type in an alternative text description for a picture).

The proposals must take into consideration:

- other internationally recognized guidelines and the state of the art in industrial practices on how authoring tools should help authors produce accessible content;
- and
- how to ensure that the user interface of these authoring tools or platforms is in itself accessible.

The proposed actions should aim to take into account the results and relevant recommendations of the pilot project financed under the call "Application of web accessibility requirements in web-authoring tools and platforms by default (Web Access by Default)"⁴, when available.

3. TIMETABLE

	Steps	Date and time or indicative period
(a)	Publication of the call	03 May 2019
(b)	Deadline for submitting applications	28 June 2019
(c)	Evaluation period	July-September 2019

⁴ <https://www.funika.com/en/our-assignments/research-and-innovation/archive---research-projects/content-management-systems-that-generate-accessibility/>

(d)	Information to applicants	September/October 2019
(e)	Signature of grant agreement(s)	October/November 2019

4. BUDGET AVAILABLE

The total budget earmarked for the co-financing of projects under this call for proposals is estimated at EUR 600 000 (six hundred thousand Euro).

The Commission expects to fund three to five proposals.

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

5. ADMISSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

In order to be admissible, applications must be:

- sent no later than the deadline for submitting applications referred to in section 3;
- submitted in writing (see section 14), using the application form available at <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal>; and
- drafted in one of the EU official languages; if the application is submitted in another language than English, please provide at least a summary of the action in English.

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

6. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

6.1. Eligible applicants

Proposals may be submitted by any of the following applicants:

- non-profit organisation (private or public);
- public authorities (national, regional, local);
- international organisations;
- universities;
- educational institutions;
- research centres;
- profit making entities.
- natural persons.

Natural persons are not eligible except self-employed persons or equivalent where the company does not possess legal personality separate from that of the natural person.

Country of establishment

Only applications from legal entities established in the following countries are eligible:

- EU Member States;
- EFTA and EEA countries: Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland;
- candidate countries;
- countries associated to Horizon 2020.

Proposals from applicants in candidate or associated countries may be selected provided that, on the date of award, agreements have entered into force setting out the arrangements for the participation of those countries in the programme.

The activities may be implemented by a single entity or by several entities working together.

Multi-beneficiary requirements

In case of a proposal assuming implementation by several entities, the proposal must be submitted by at least two legal entities.

By way of exception, an application may be submitted by **one** applicant, whether established specifically or not for the action, provided that:

- it 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;
- the application identifies the said entities.

For the purpose of declaring eligible costs as specified under section 11.3, the entities composing the applicant shall be treated as affiliated entities in accordance with Article 187 of the Financial Regulation.

Supporting documents

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

- **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, decision or other official document establishing the public-law entity;
- **natural persons**: photocopy of identity card and/or passport; certificate of liability to VAT, if applicable (e.g. some self-employed persons);
- **entities without legal personality**: documents providing evidence that their representative(s) have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf.

6.2. Eligible activities

The following types of activities are eligible under this call for proposals:

- analysis, design, development and testing of solutions for authoring tools or platforms that enable, encourage and assist authors in the creation of accessible content for websites and mobile applications.

The following activities are eligible if complementary to the activities above:

- analysis, design, development and testing of accessible solutions for authoring tools or platforms allowing authors with disabilities to produce accessible content for websites and mobile applications;

- validation, with the help of users with disabilities, of the usability of the user interfaces of authoring tools and platforms and the degree of accessibility of the content that these tools or platforms produce.

Implementation period

The maximum duration of projects is 18 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

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, its assets are being administered by a liquidator or by a court, it is in an arrangement with creditors, its business activities are suspended, or it is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for under EU or 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 applicable law;
- (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 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 eligibility or 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 3 of Directive (EU) 2017/1371 of the European Parliament and of the Council and 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 4(2) of Directive (EU) 2017/1371 or 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, or conduct referred to in Article 2(1) of Council Framework Decision 2003/568/JHA, or corruption as defined in the applicable law;
- (iii) conduct related to a criminal organisation, as referred to in Article 2 of Council Framework Decision 2008/841/JHA;
 - (iv) money laundering or terrorist financing within the meaning of Article 1(3), (4) and (5) of Directive (EU) 2015/849 of the European Parliament and of the Council;
 - (v) terrorist 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 offences concerning trafficking in human beings as referred to 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) It has been established by a final judgement or final administrative decision that the applicant has created an entity in a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or any other legal obligations of mandatory application in the jurisdiction of its registered office, central administration or principal place of business;
 - (h) it has been established by a final judgement or final administrative decision that an entity has been created with the intent referred to in point (g);
 - (i) for the situations referred to in points (c) to (h) above, the applicant is subject to:
 - (i) facts established in the context of audits or investigations carried out by European Public Prosecutor's Office after its establishment, the Court of Auditors, the European Anti-Fraud Office or the internal auditor, 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 judgments or 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) facts referred to in decisions of persons or entities being entrusted with EU budget implementation tasks;
 - (iv) information transmitted by Member States implementing Union funds;
 - (v) decisions of the Commission relating to the infringement of Union competition law or of a national competent authority relating to the infringement of Union or national competition law; or

- (vi) 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 must 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 correct the conduct and prevent further occurrence, compensation of damage or payment of fines or of any taxes or social security contributions. 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; or
- (b) has misrepresented the information required as a condition for participating in the procedure or has failed to supply that information; or
- (c) was previously involved in the preparation of documents used in the award procedure where this entails a breach of the principle of equal treatment, including distortion of competition, that cannot be remedied otherwise.

The same exclusion criteria apply to affiliated entities.

Administrative sanctions (exclusion) may be imposed on applicants, or affiliated entities where applicable, if any of the declarations or information provided as a condition for participating in this procedure prove to be false.

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 136(1) and 141 FR, by filling in the relevant form attached to the application form accompanying the call for proposals and available at <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal>.

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 each sign a separate declaration in their own name.

b) for multi-beneficiary 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 of its affiliated entities; OR

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

8. SELECTION CRITERIA

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 $>$ 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.

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 Commission 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 11.6 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, by a list of publications relevant to the scope of this call);
- a lists of previous projects and activities performed in the last three years and connected to the scope of this call or to the actions to be carried out;
- a description of the technical equipment, tools or facilities and patents at the disposal of the 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.

9. AWARD CRITERIA

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

Award criteria	Maximum score/weighting	Threshold
<p>Excellence</p> <p>Clarity and pertinence of the objectives;</p> <p>Soundness of the concept, and credibility of the proposed methodology;</p> <p>Extent that the proposed work is beyond the state of the art, and demonstrates innovation potential (e.g. ground-breaking objectives, novel concepts and approaches, new products, services or business and organisational models);</p> <p>Appropriate consideration of interdisciplinary approaches and, where relevant, involvement of stakeholders (in particular persons with disabilities).</p>	30	15
<p>Impact</p> <p>The extent to which the outputs of the project would contribute to each of the expected results of this call (Section 2);</p> <p>Sustainability of the proposed solutions.</p> <p>Any substantial impacts not mentioned in this call, that would enhance innovation capacity, create new market opportunities, strengthen competitiveness and growth of companies or bring other important benefits for society;</p> <p>Quality of the proposed measures to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – exploit and disseminate the project results (including management of intellectual property rights and cost-effectiveness of application, where applicable); – communicate the project activities to different target audiences. 	50	25
<p>Implementation</p> <p>Quality and effectiveness of the work plan, including</p>	20	10

<p>extent to which the resources assigned to work packages are in line with their objectives and deliverables;</p> <p>Appropriateness of the management structures and procedures, including risk and innovation management;</p> <p>Complementarity of the participants and extent to which the consortium as whole brings together the necessary expertise;</p> <p>Appropriateness of the allocation of tasks, ensuring that all participants have a valid role and adequate resources in the project to fulfil that role.</p>		
Total	100	60

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.

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

11. FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

11.1. Form of the grant

11.1.1 Reimbursement of costs actually incurred

The grant will be defined by applying a maximum co-financing rate of 50% to the eligible costs actually incurred and declared by the beneficiary and its affiliated entities.

For details on eligibility of costs, please refer to section 11.2.

11.1.2 Reimbursement of eligible costs declared on the basis of flat-rate

The grant will be defined by applying a maximum co-financing rate of 50% to the eligible costs declared by the beneficiary and its affiliated entities on the basis of:

a flat rate of 7% of the eligible direct costs ('reimbursement of flat-rate costs') for the following categories of costs: indirect costs (overheads).

The flat rate will be paid following acceptance of the costs to which the flat rate is to be applied.

11.1.3 Payment conditions, checks and audits for flat rate

- Contributions based on flat rate will be paid in full provided the action is implemented properly (with the required quality, fully and on time). If the action is not properly implemented the amount of the grant will be reduced proportionately. See also step 4 of section 11.5.

The fulfilment of the above conditions and/or results triggering the payment of the flat rate as specified in section 11.1.2 including where required the

achievement of outputs and/or results, will be checked at the latest before the payment of the balance. In addition, the fulfilment of those conditions and/or results may be subject to ex post controls.

- For this purpose, in case of verifications, checks or audits, the beneficiary will be required to provide supporting documents proving:
 - the eligible costs to which the flat rate applies.
- Where the grant takes the form specified in section 11.1.2, the beneficiary will not be required to report on the costs actually incurred for the implementation.
- The amounts of flat-rates as specified in section 11.1.2 will not be challenged by ex-post controls. This does not affect the possibility to reduce the grant as specified above or in the case of irregularity, fraud or a breach of other obligations.
- Payment of the grant on the basis of flat-rates as specified in section 11.1.2 does not affect the right of access to the statutory records of the beneficiaries for the purposes of:
 - reviewing them for future grants, or
 - protecting the Union financial interests, e.g. detection of fraud, irregularities or breach of obligations.

11.2. 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.
 - If a beneficiary can demonstrate the need to start the action before the agreement is signed, the costs eligibility period may start before that signature. Under no circumstances can the eligibility period start before the date of submission of the grant application.
- they are indicated in the estimated budget of the action;
- 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 principle 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.

11.2.1. Eligible direct costs

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

with due regard to 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 the calculation of direct personnel costs are provided in Appendix.

- (c) *costs of travel and related subsistence allowances, provided that these costs are in line with the beneficiary's usual practices on travel;*
- (d) *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;

- (e) *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;*
- (f) *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;*
- (g) *costs derived from subcontracts, provided that specific conditions on subcontracting as laid down in the grant agreement are met;*
- (h) *costs of financial support to third parties, provided that the conditions laid down in the grant agreement are met;*
- (i) *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.*

11.2.2. 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.

11.3. Ineligible costs

The following items are not considered as eligible 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;
- k) deductible VAT.

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 InforEuro 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. providing a meeting room or equipment for free, etc.

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

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 applying the reimbursement rate specified in section 11.1.1 to the eligible costs actually incurred and accepted by the Commission, including costs declared in the form of a flat rate to which the co-financing rate applies in accordance with section 11.1.2.

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 the no-profit rule

‘Profit’ means the surplus of receipts over the total eligible costs of the action, where receipts are the amount obtained following Steps 1 and 2 plus the revenue generated by the action for beneficiaries and affiliated entities other than non-profit organisations.

In-kind and financial contributions by third parties are not considered receipts.

The total eligible costs of the action are the consolidated total eligible costs approved by the Commission. The revenue generated by the action is the consolidated revenue established, generated or confirmed for beneficiaries and affiliated entities other than non-profit organisations on the date on which the request for payment of the balance is drawn up.

If there is a profit, it will be deducted in proportion to the final rate of reimbursement of the actual eligible costs of the action approved by the Commission.

Step 4 — 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

11.6.1 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 50% of the maximum grant amount	financial guarantee (if applicable, see section 11.6.2)
<p>1 interim payment:</p> <p>For the purpose of determining the amount due as interim payment, the reimbursement rate to be applied to the eligible costs approved by the Commission shall be 50%.</p> <p>The interim payment shall clear 50% of the amount of the pre-financing previously paid.</p> <p>The total amount of pre-financing and interim payment shall not exceed 90% of the maximum grant amount.</p>	<p>(a) interim technical report</p> <p>(b) interim financial report</p>
<p>Payment of the balance</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>(a) final technical report</p> <p>(b) final financial report</p> <p>(c) a certificate on the financial statements and underlying accounts (if applicable)</p>

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

11.6.2 Pre-financing guarantee

A pre-financing guarantee for up to the same amount as the pre-financing may be requested in order to limit the financial risks linked to the pre-financing payment.

The financial guarantee, in euro, shall be provided by an approved bank or financial institution established in one of the EU Member States. When the beneficiary is established in a third country, the Commission may agree that a bank or financial institution established in that third country may provide the guarantee if it considers that the bank or financial institution offers equivalent security and characteristics as those offered by a bank or financial institution established in a Member State. Amounts blocked in bank accounts shall not be accepted as financial guarantees.

The guarantee may be replaced by:

- a joint and several guarantee by a third party or,
- a joint guarantee of the beneficiaries of an action who are parties to the same grant agreement.

The guarantee shall be released as the pre-financing is gradually cleared against interim payments or the payment of the balance, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the grant agreement.

11.7. Other financial conditions

a) Non-cumulative award

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

Under no circumstances shall the same costs be financed twice by the Union budget. To ensure this, applicants shall indicate in the grant application the sources and amounts of Union funding received or applied for the same action or part of the action or for its (the applicant's) functioning during the same financial year as well as any other funding received or applied for the same action.

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 may award the contract in accordance with its usual purchasing practices provided that the contract is awarded to the tender offering best value for money or the lowest price (as appropriate), avoiding conflicts of interest.

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

Entities acting in their capacity as contracting authorities within the meaning of Directive 2014/24/EU⁵ or contracting entities within the meaning of Directive 2014/25/EU⁶ must comply with the applicable national public procurement rules.

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

⁵ Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on public procurement and repealing Directive 2004/18/EC (OJ L 94, 28.3.2014, p. 65-242)

⁶ Directive 2014/25/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on procurement by entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors and repealing Directive 2004/17/EC (OJ L 94, 28.3.2014, p. 243-374)

(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 level⁷ if he/she is domiciled within the EU or equivalent if domiciled outside the 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 (EU) 2018/1725 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of

⁷ Commission Regulation (EC) No 105/2007 of 1 February 2007 amending the annexes to Regulation (EC) No 1059/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a common classification of territorial units for statistics (NUTS), OJ L39, 10.2.2007, p.1.

personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC. Unless indicated otherwise, any personal data requested are required to evaluate your application in accordance with the call for proposals and will be processed solely for that purpose by Head of Unit G3 Accessibility, Multilingualism, Safer Internet in the European Commission, The Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology. Details concerning the processing of your personal data are available on the privacy statement at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/data-protection-public-procurement-procedures_en.

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 Articles 136 and 141 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046⁸. For more information see the Privacy Statement on: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/library/explained/management/protecting/privacy_statement_des_en.pdf.

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/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal>.

Applications must be submitted on paper in the correct form, duly completed and dated. They must be submitted in 2 copies (one original clearly identified as such, plus 1 copy) and signed by the person authorised to enter into legally binding commitments on behalf of the applicant organisation.

Additionally an electronic copy (text file – in pdf, doc/docx or other office file format) of the application together with applicant's declaration confirming that paper and electronic copies are identical must be provided.

Where applicable, all additional information considered necessary by the applicant can be included on separate sheets.

Applications must be sent to the following address:

European Commission
Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology
Directorate Data – Accessibility, Multilingualism and Safer Internet (Unit G.3)
For the attention of the Head of Unit (EUFO 2/274)
L-2920 Luxembourg
Please include the following marking on the envelope: " WEB ACCESS 2019"

– by post (evidence will be constituted by the postmark),

⁸ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32018R1046>

- by hand-delivery, (evidence will be constituted by the acknowledgement of receipt), or
- by courier service (evidence will be constituted by the acknowledgement of receipt).

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

➤ **Contacts**

For any questions please contact:

CNECT-G3@EC.EUROPA.EU

➤ **Annexes:**

- Application form for monobeneficiary, including checklist of documents to be provided
- Budgetary annex to application for monobeneficiary
- Application form for multibeneficiary, including checklist of documents to be provided
- Budgetary annex to application for multibeneficiary
- Declaration on honour
- Model grant agreement for monobeneficiary
- Model grant agreement for multibeneficiary
- Model technical report
- Model financial report

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.

The Commission may accept a different method of calculating personnel costs used by the beneficiary, 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. Documentation to support 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.