



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion DG

Europe 2020: Social Policies

**Active Ageing, Pensions, Healthcare, Social Services**

## **CALL FOR PROPOSALS**

**VP/2012/011**

**Support for the development of a tracking service for private pension entitlements**

Questions should be sent by e-mail to: [empl-vp-2012-011@ec.europa.eu](mailto:empl-vp-2012-011@ec.europa.eu)

To ensure a more rapid response it is helpful if applicants send their queries in English, French or German.

The English version of the call is the original.

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# I. TEXT OF THE CALL VP/2012/011

## 1. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS CALL

### 1.1 The PROGRESS programme

This call is financed by the PROGRESS programme. PROGRESS<sup>1</sup> is the EU employment and social solidarity programme, set up to provide financial support for the attainment of the European Union's objectives in employment, social affairs and equal opportunities as set out in the Social Agenda<sup>2</sup>, as well as to the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy. This new strategy, which has a strong social dimension, aims at turning the EU into a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy delivering high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion. The European Union needs coherent and complementary contributions from different policy strands, methods and instruments, including the PROGRESS programme, to support the Member States in delivering on the Europe 2020's goals.

The PROGRESS mission is to strengthen the EU's contribution in support of Member States' commitments and efforts to create more and better jobs and to build a more cohesive society. To this effect, PROGRESS is instrumental in:

- Providing analysis and policy advice on PROGRESS policy areas;
- Monitoring and reporting on the implementation of EU legislation and policies in PROGRESS policy areas;
- Promoting policy transfer, learning and support among Member States on EU objectives and priorities; and
- Relaying the views of the stakeholders and society at large.

More specifically, PROGRESS supports:

- The implementation of the European Employment Strategy (section 1);
- The implementation of the open method of coordination in the field of social protection and inclusion (section 2);
- The improvement of the working environment and conditions including health and safety at work and reconciling work and family life (section 3);

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<sup>1</sup> Decision No 1672/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 establishing a Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity — Progress, JO L 315 of 15.11.2006

<sup>2</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Renewed social agenda: Opportunities, access and solidarity in 21st century Europe COM/2008/0412 final of 02.07.2008.

- The effective implementation of the principle of non-discrimination and promotion of its mainstreaming in all EU policies (section 4);
- The effective implementation of the principle of gender equality and promotion of its mainstreaming in all EU policies (section 5).

The call for proposals is issued in the context of the implementation of the 2012 annual work plan which can be consulted at <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=658&langId=fr>

## 1.2 The policy context

Pensions are the main income source for around a quarter of the EU's population today and younger Europeans will also come to rely on pensions later in their lives. Unless Europe delivers on decent pensions now and in the future, millions will face poverty in old age. But as Europe is ageing, pensions are putting increased financial pressure on national budgets, especially with the added strain of the financial and economic crisis.

In response to these challenges, the European Commission published a Green Paper<sup>3</sup> on pensions in 2010 to see how the EU level could best support Member States in ensuring their pension systems were adequate, sustainable and safe. Following this consultation, the Commission published a White Paper<sup>4</sup> on pensions in February 2012 which set out how the EU and the Member States can work to tackle the major challenges that confront our pension systems. The paper put forward a range of initiatives to help create the right conditions so that those who are able can continue working - leading to a better balance between time in work and time in retirement - and to help people save more for their retirement.

This White Paper built not only on the Green Paper consultation, but also on the 2011 and 2012 Annual Growth Surveys and the 2011 Country Specific Recommendations. The Surveys and Recommendations are part of the Europe 2020 strategy for jobs and growth. Pensions are an important part of this strategy, given the influence of pensions both in terms of adequate income in old age and also in public expenditure terms. So the Annual Growth Surveys and the Country Specific Recommendations had similar themes to the White Paper, aiming to encourage increasing effective retirement ages and providing better opportunities for citizens to save in supplementary pensions.

The White Paper supports the general policy orientations of the Europe 2020 strategy by proposing ways to:

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<sup>3</sup> "Green Paper: towards adequate, sustainable and safe European pension systems" Brussels, 7.7.2010

COM(2010)365 final Responses and summary of responses available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=700&langId=en&consultId=3&visib=0&furtherConsult=yes>

<sup>4</sup> White Paper "An Agenda for Adequate, Safe and Sustainable Pensions" Brussels, 16.2.2012 COM(2012) 55 final available at <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1194&furtherNews=yes>

- Create better opportunities for older workers by calling on the social partners to adapt work place and labour market practices and by using the European Social Fund to bring older workers into work. Enabling people to work longer is a major focus of the European Year 2012 for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations;
- Develop complementary private retirement schemes by encouraging social partners to develop such schemes and encouraging Member States to optimise tax and other incentives;
- Enhance the safety of supplementary pension schemes, including through a revision of the directive on Institutions for Occupational Retirement Provision (IORP) and better information for consumers;
- Make supplementary pensions compatible with mobility, through legislation protecting the pension rights of mobile workers and by promoting the establishment of pension tracking services across the EU. This can provide citizens with information about pension entitlements and projections of their income after retirement.
- Encourage Member States to promote longer working lives, by linking retirement age with life expectancy, restricting access to early retirement and closing the pension gap between men and women.
- Continue to monitor the adequacy sustainability and safety of pensions and support pension reforms in the Member States.

### **1.3 Objectives of this call and foreseen results**

The purpose of this call for proposals is to support private pension stakeholders from several Member States in developing a tracking service for supplementary pension rights. Freedom of movement requires that people who move across borders do not lose their pension entitlements. To facilitate mobility, insurance and employment periods that contribute towards entitlement to pensions based on legislation in different Member States are aggregated under Regulation (EC) No 883/2004. Together with the principle that benefits are paid out in other countries falling within the scope of the Regulation, this ensures that a person who has worked in more than one Member State does not lose out when it comes to their pension entitlements based on the Member States' legislation.

However, occupational pensions do not have a similar arrangement, which means that people who move between jobs (including within Member States, if this involves changing occupational pension schemes) may lose out on their occupational pension entitlements. With employees being more mobile often with short periods of mobility and with an increasing reliance on private pension provision for achieving adequate retirement incomes, it becomes more important to move towards a better protection of occupational pension rights of people who change jobs and move across borders.

One challenge people face is to keep track of pension entitlements with different schemes to which they were affiliated during their career. This would be important both for individuals who need to know where they stand in terms of accumulating adequate pension entitlements and for pension

providers who need to keep track of their members as they move and change address over very long periods. Responses to the 2010 Green Paper on Pensions supported the idea of building a European tracking service for pension rights.

Under this call, **one grant** shall be awarded to a partnership of supplementary pension providers (or their associations) willing to cooperate on the development of such a tracking service. The project funded under this call should build on existing experience and be designed in such a way that it could eventually result in an open system that can cover schemes across Europe. The focus of the project should be on identifying technical requirements and proposing and testing solutions that comply with the relevant legal requirements. A close integration with information on pension entitlements based on legislation should also be envisaged.

## **2. FUNDING**

### **2.1 How much funding is available and how much of the activity will be financed by EU funding?**

The total amount of EUR 750,000 has been allocated to this call.

EU financial aid granted will not exceed 80% of the total eligible costs of the action. The applicant has to guarantee the co-financing in cash of the remaining 20%. Contributions in kind are not accepted. The equivalent amount of not less than 20% of the total eligible cost is to be supported by the applicant's own resources or from other sources.

A letter confirming the amount of co-financing must be submitted with the application. **Failure to provide such a supporting letter will mean that the application will be considered ineligible.**

### **2.2 May parts of the project be subcontracted?**

If the beneficiary has to conclude contracts in order to carry out the action, it shall justify this working method and duly respect the subcontracting rules set in the financial guide attached to this call for proposals. For further information, please see point 3.2.2 of the annex Financial Guide for Applicants.

## **3. ELIGIBILITY, SELECTION AND AWARD CRITERIA**

### **3.1 How will the proposal be evaluated?**

Each of the proposals received under this call which met the requirements laid down in the submission procedure will be assessed by an evaluation committee according to the following criteria:

*a) Exclusion*

- Applicants must be in conformity with Articles 93(1), 94 and 96(2)a of the Financial regulation<sup>5</sup>.

#### *b) Eligibility*

To be eligible, applicants must:

- Be a properly constituted and registered legal person, having their registered office in one of the PROGRESS participating countries<sup>6</sup> at the time of the submission of the application under the call;
- Applicants and partners must be non-profit bodies or organisations: public administrations dealing with private pensions, supplementary pension providers or their representative organisations;

The proposal submitted for funding must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Fit in with the activities under the PROGRESS Programme;
- Only seek funding for activities in PROGRESS participating countries;
- Involve a partnership of supplementary pension providers (or their associations).
- Be complete and comply with the rules for submission published in the call for proposals.
- The proposal must respect the maximum limit for EU co-financing (80%).

#### *b) Selection*

The applicant must have the operational resources (technical, management) and the professional skills and qualifications needed to successfully complete the proposed action, as well as the ability to implement it. The applicant must have a strong track record of competence and experience in the field and in particular in the type of action proposed.

This will be demonstrated by the following:

- the CVs of persons responsible for carrying out the action, showing all relevant professional experience;
- a list of projects already undertaken within the last 3 years in the relevant fields by the applicant.

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<sup>5</sup> The situations referred to include bankruptcy, compulsory winding-up, being under court administration, in an arrangement with creditors or any other similar proceedings; convictions of professional misconduct; non fulfilment of social security or tax payment obligations; convictions of fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any illegal activity; declared in serious breach of contract in relation to activities funded by the Community budget; subject to conflict of interest; guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the required information.

<sup>6</sup> EU27, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and Serbia.



The applicant must have access to solid and adequate funding to maintain its activities for the period of the action and to help finance it as necessary. To permit assessment of the applicant's financial capacity, the official accounts for the most recent financial year for which accounts have been closed must be provided (The verification of financial capacity will not apply to public bodies).

Only organisations with the necessary financial and operational capacity may be awarded a grant.

#### c) Award

The grants will be awarded following an assessment of the proposals on the basis of the following criteria. The grants will be awarded following an assessment of the proposals on the basis of the following criteria. Only proposals achieving a total score in excess of 70 points and at least 50% of the maximum number of points for each criterion can be selected for funding.

- **Relevance to the general objectives of the call for proposals:** *Does the project address the issues raised in this call for proposals? (10 points)*
- **Overall quality of the proposal:** *Is the project well designed and clear in its conceptual and practical approach, is the methodology appropriate and does it mobilize the right kind of expertise as well as input from relevant stakeholders, are the respective roles and responsibilities among the project partners and team members clearly defined, is the work plan appropriate and realistic with regard to the project goals? (25 points)*
- **Development potential of the project:** *How likely is the project to lead towards the establishment of a sustainable tracking service that meets the needs of individuals and pension providers across the European Economic Area and countries covered by Regulation 883/2004? (40 points)*
- **Sound cost-effectiveness ratio and financial quality of the proposal:** *Will the project be cost-effective and achieve results at a reasonable cost to the EU budget? (25 points)*

## 4. INDICATIVE TIMEFRAME

### 4.1 What is the timing for this call?

<b>1/10/2012</b>	<b>Deadline for submitting applications</b>
October - November	The Commission will evaluate the proposals received and draw up a list of selected projects.
November- December	Applicants whose proposals have not been selected for funding will be informed of the results of the evaluation process and of the reasons for the rejection of the application.  Successful applicants will receive the grant agreement for their acceptance and signature.

## 4.2 When can activities start/finish?

Activities should preferably start in 2012 but not later than the first semester 2013. They may begin before the signature of the grant agreement in duly justified cases, but only after the date of submission of the related proposal. In this later case, the beneficiary will support the financial risk either of not being selected or having its proposed budget amended. The duration of the project is limited to a maximum of 24 months.

## 5. PROCEDURE

### 5.1 Submission of the applications

The procedure to submit applications is laid out in point 13 of the annex. **Before starting, please read carefully the SWIM user manual:**

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/calls/pdf/swim\\_manual\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/calls/pdf/swim_manual_en.pdf)

Only applications submitted on the official forms will be considered.

Applicants are invited to submit their project proposal in English, French or German in order to facilitate treatment of the proposals and commence the evaluation process as soon as possible. It should be noted however that applications in all other official languages will be accepted. In this case, please include an executive summary of 5-6 pages either in English, French or German.

Once the application form is filled in, applicants must submit it both electronically and in hard copy. The deadline for the submission of applications is **1/10/2012**.

#### *Electronic submission*

Applications must be submitted electronically in SWIM by the deadline.

#### *Submission of hard copy*

Applications must additionally be sent in duly signed and in **TRIPLICATE** (one marked "original" and two marked "copy"), including all documents listed in point 5.2, by the deadline (the postmark or the express courier receipt date serving as proof) to the following address:

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>European Commission</b> <b>Call for proposals VP/2012/011– DG EMPL D.3</b> <b>Rue Joseph II 27 – 01/244</b> <b>B-1049 Brussels</b></p>
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Please send your application by **registered mail or express courier service** only. Proof of posting (i.e. the post office stamp date or express courier receipt) should be conserved as it could be requested by the European Commission in cases of doubt regarding the date of submission.

**Hand-delivered applications** must be received by the European Commission before 4 p.m. on the last day for submission at the following address:

**European Commission**  
**Service central de réception du courrier**  
**Call for proposals VP/2012/011 DG EMPL D.3**  
**Avenue du Bourget, 1**  
**B-1140 Evere**

At that time the Mail Service will provide you with a signed receipt which should be conserved as proof of delivery.

If an applicant submits more than one proposal, each application must be submitted separately.

With regard to presentation of applications, please:

1. Follow the order of documents as listed in the checklist.
2. Print the documents double-sided, where possible.
3. Use 2-hole folders (do not bind or glue).

The annex gives instructions for presenting the provisional budget for the proposed activity and the main financial provision of the grant agreement.

If you have any further queries, please contact us quoting the reference "VP/2012/011/application nr" at the contact points below, allowing a reasonable time for response. Please note that we can only answer questions on the requirements of the call for proposals and the application process. We cannot prejudge the assessment process by offering any opinion on the merits of a particular application. Prior opinions on the merits of particular applications would prejudice the entire call procedure and could lead to its cancellation. No information regarding the award procedure will be disclosed until the notification letters have been sent to the beneficiaries.

**Our contact points are:**

- E-mail: [empl-vp-2012-011@ec.europa.eu](mailto:empl-vp-2012-011@ec.europa.eu)
- Post: see above
- Fax: + 32 2 29.98085
- E-mail: [empl-swim-support@ec.europa.eu](mailto:empl-swim-support@ec.europa.eu) (for technical problems)

## 5.2 Which forms must I fill in to apply for funding?

Before sending your application, please number the following documents as shown below and send them in **TRIPLICATE (original + two identical copies)**. The absence of any of these documents may invalidate your application.

<b>Order</b>	<b>Document</b>	<b>Check</b>	<b>To be downloaded from SWIM</b>
1	<b>Original cover letter</b> of application quoting the reference number of the call (VP/2012/011), duly signed and dated by the legal representative of the applicant organisation.		NO
2	Print-out of the submitted <b>online application form including the estimated budget</b> , duly completed, dated and signed by the legal representative of the applicant organisation.		YES
3	Print-out of <b>Declaration on honour (articles 93 (1), 94 &amp; 96 (2) a)</b> , signed by the legal representative, certifying the operational and financial capacity.		YES
4	Print-out of the <b>Letter of commitment for co-financing</b> signed by the legal representatives of the applicant organisation and each partner organisation concerned, <u>specifying the amount of each</u> cash contribution and giving, in case of a partner organisation, the authorisation to publish its data.		YES
5	Print-out of <b>Financial identification form</b> duly completed and signed by the account holder and bearing the stamp and signature of the bank.		YES
6	Print-out of <b>Legal entity form</b> , completed and signed by the legal representative of the applicant organisation. Print-out of the requested additional documents, stated in the legal entity form.		YES
7	Print-out of the document <b>Contracts for implementing the action</b> for any subcontracting of costs > 5,000 € (if applicable).		YES
8	Print-out of the <b>Description of the action</b> , specifying the information laid out in the template.		YES
9	<b>Summary Quantitative Information on Planned Deliverables / Outputs</b>		YES
10	<b>Detailed CVs</b> (educational and professional qualifications) <b>and job specifications</b> of the persons responsible for the overall management of the action in the applicant's organisation and in the organisations of other involved actors, if any (project manager/coordinator and main contributors from the applicant's		NO

	organisation and from the other involved actors). Please refer to CV models on <a href="http://www.europass.cedefop.europa.eu">http://www.europass.cedefop.europa.eu</a> .		
11	<b>List of the main projects</b> carried out in the last three years relating to the objective of the call by the applicant's organisation and by the organisations of other involved actors, if any.		NO
12	Profit and loss accounts and balance sheets for the last financial year from the applicant's organisation (only for the lead partner or coordinator). This is not necessary for public bodies & international organisations.		NO
13	An external audit report produced by an approved auditor, certifying the last accounting exercise (not necessary for national or regional public authorities).		NO

## II. PROGRESS - ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS FOR CALLS FOR PROPOSALS 2012

### 1. HOW THE ACTIVITIES SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT

The PROGRESS Programme aims to promote gender mainstreaming in all its five policy sections and supported activities. Consequently, the Beneficiary shall take the necessary steps to ensure that:

- Gender equality issues are taken into account when relevant for the drafting of the proposal by paying attention to the situation and needs of women and men;
- Implementation of proposed activities includes a gender perspective by considering systematically the women and men dimension;
- Performance monitoring includes the collection and gathering of data disaggregated by sex when needed;
- Its proposed team and/or staff respects the gender balance at all levels.

Equally, needs of disabled people shall be duly acknowledged and met while implementing the proposed activities. This will ensure in particular that where the Beneficiary organises training sessions and conferences, issues publications or develops dedicated websites, people with disabilities will have equal access to the facilities or the services provided.

Finally, the Contracting Authority encourages the Beneficiary to promote equal employment opportunities for all its staff and team. This entails that the Beneficiary is encouraged to foster an appropriate mix of people, whatever their ethnic origin, religion, age, and ability.

The Beneficiary will be required to detail in its final activity report the steps and achievements made towards meeting these contractual requirements.

## **2. PUBLICITY AND INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS**

In accordance with the General conditions, all beneficiaries are under the obligation to acknowledge that the present activity has received funding from the Union in all documents and media produced, in particular final delivered outputs, related reports, brochures, press releases, videos, software, etc, including at conferences or seminars. In the context of the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity – PROGRESS, the following formulation shall be used:

*This (publication, conference, training session etc) is supported by the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity - PROGRESS (2007-2013).*

*This programme is implemented by the European Commission. It was established to financially support the implementation of the objectives of the European Union in the employment, social affairs and equal opportunities area, and thereby contribute to the achievement of the Europe 2020 Strategy goals in these fields.*

*The seven-year Programme targets all stakeholders who can help shape the development of appropriate and effective employment and social legislation and policies, across the EU-27, EFTA-EEA and EU candidate and pre-candidate countries.*

*For more information see: <http://ec.europa.eu/progress>*

For publications it is also necessary to include the following reference: "The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission".

With regard to publication and any communication plan linked to the present activity, the Beneficiary will insert the European Union logo and mention the European Commission as the Contracting Authority in every publication or related material developed under the present grant agreement.

## **3. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

PROGRESS is implemented through a results-based management - RBM.

The Strategic Framework, developed in collaboration with Member States and civil society organisations, sets out the intervention logic for Progress-related expenditure and defines PROGRESS' mandate and its long-term and immediate outcomes. It is supplemented by performance measures which serve to determine the extent to which PROGRESS has delivered the expected results. See in Annex the overview of PROGRESS performance measurement framework. For more information on the strategic framework, please visit PROGRESS website <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=659&langId=en>.

The Commission regularly monitors the effect of PROGRESS-supported initiatives and considers how they contribute to PROGRESS outcomes as defined in the Strategic Framework. In this context, the Beneficiary will be asked to dedicatedly work in close cooperation with the Commission and/or persons authorised by it to define the expected contribution and the set of performance measures which this contribution will be assessed against. As a direct contribution to the PROGRESS Annual Performance Monitoring Report, the Beneficiary will be asked to submit a short quantitative questionnaire on the outputs produced over the course of a given calendar year. At the end of the action, the Beneficiary will also be asked to report on its own performance to the Commission and/or persons authorised by it against a template which will be annexed to the grant agreement

#### **4. INFORMATION ON PARTNERS ON PROGRESS FUNDED PROJECTS**

In order to increase the visibility of transnational partnerships established under PROGRESS and to facilitate networking between organisations involved in actions covered by PROGRESS grants, the Commission intends to publish the name and address of partners in PROGRESS-funded projects together with the name and address of the beneficiary, the reference of the call for proposals and the title and description of the project. To that purpose, the Beneficiary will be asked to seek the partners' agreement to authorise the Commission to publish this data. This written agreement should be included in the letters of commitment sent to the Commission with the application form.

#### **5. COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION PLAN**

Adequate communication and dissemination of results is essential in ensuring the EU added value of the action and its sustainability after the funding has ended. Information-giving and awareness raising are key activities to ensure that other interested parties benefit from the project and can create new opportunities to extend it or develop new partnerships. The proposals must therefore include a detailed plan for communication and dissemination of the projects' results. In particular, such a plan must include information on dissemination activities and targeted audiences.

At final report stage, the Beneficiary will be required to provide details about how and to whom the results, best practices and findings have been disseminated and how interested parties have been involved in the project.

**Annex I: OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK**

**Annex II: MAIN FINANCIAL PROVISIONS - FINANCIAL GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS**

## ANNEX I – OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK

### PROGRESS Ultimate Outcome

*Member States implement laws, policies and practices in a manner that contributes to the desired outcomes of the Social Agenda*

PROGRESS works toward its ultimate outcome by helping strengthen the EU's support for Member States' efforts to create more and better jobs and to build a more cohesive society. PROGRESS seeks to contribute to (i) an **effective legal regime** in the EU in relation to the Social Agenda; (ii) **shared understanding** across the EU with regard to Social Agenda objectives; and (iii) **strong partnerships** working toward Social Agenda objectives.

In operational terms, support provided by PROGRESS facilitates (i) provision of analysis and policy advice; (ii) monitoring and reporting on the implementation of EU legislation and policies; (iii) policy transfer, learning and support among Member States; and (iv) relaying to decision-makers the views of the stakeholders and society at large.

#### Legal Regime

##### Outcome:

*Compliance in Member States with EU law related to PROGRESS areas.*

##### Performance Indicators

1. Transposition rate of EU law on matters related to PROGRESS policy areas
2. Effectiveness of application in Member States of EU law on matters related to PROGRESS policy areas.
3. EU policies and legislation are grounded in thorough analysis of situation and responsive to conditions, needs and expectations in Member States in PROGRESS areas
4. Extent to which PROGRESS-supported policy advice feeds into the development and implementation of EU legislation and policies
5. Cross-cutting issues are addressed in PROGRESS policy sections
6. EU policies and legislation display a common underlying logic of intervention in relation to PROGRESS issues
7. Gender mainstreaming is systematically promoted in PROGRESS

#### Shared Understanding

##### Outcome:

*Shared understanding and ownership among policy/decision-makers and stakeholders in Member States, and the Commission, of objectives related to PROGRESS policy areas.*

##### Performance Indicators

1. Attitudes of decision-makers, key stakeholders and general public regarding EU objectives in PROGRESS policy areas
2. Extent to which national policy discourses or priorities reflect EU objectives
3. Extent to which principles of good governance (including minimum standards on consultation) are respected in policy debate
4. Extent to which the outcomes of policy debates feed into the development of EU law and policy.
5. Greater awareness of policy-and decision-makers, social partners, NGOs, networks regarding their rights/obligations in relation to PROGRESS policy areas
6. Greater awareness of policy-and decision-makers, social partners, NGOs, networks regarding EU objectives and policies in relation to PROGRESS policy areas

#### Strong Partnerships

##### Outcome:

*Effective partnerships with national and pan-European stakeholders in support of outcomes related to PROGRESS policy areas.*

##### Performance Indicators

1. Existence of common ground/consensus among policy and decision-makers and stakeholders on EU objectives and policies
2. Identification and involvement by the EU of key actors in a position to exert influence or change at EU and national levels
3. Effectiveness of partnerships in relation to outcomes related to PROGRESS policy areas.
4. Number of individuals served or reached by networks supported by PROGRESS.
5. Extent to which advocacy skills of PROGRESS-supported networks have improved
6. Satisfaction of EU and national authorities with the contribution of networks
7. Extent to which PROGRESS-supported networks take a cross-cutting approach



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The purpose of this document is to enable applicants to prepare their grant applications.

Please be sure to read these guidelines carefully before replying to the current call for proposals.

## MAIN FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT RULES

**Disclaimer:** this document provides the applicants with a quick summary of the main legal and financial rules contained in the Financial Regulation (FR) applicable to the general budget of the European Communities<sup>7</sup> and its Implementing Rules (IR)<sup>8</sup>. The information given is not exhaustive and beneficiaries are therefore asked to carefully read the agreement sent to them, as it will constitute the legal basis for the grant.

### 1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Grants are subject to the principles laid down in the Financial Regulation, in particular the principles of co-financing, prohibition of double financing and no-profit.

#### *Co-financing principle*

European Union grants may not finance the entire cost of the action to be subsidised. The applicant must contribute to the implementation of the action either by way of own resources or by financial contribution from third parties (in the form of public or private assistance obtained elsewhere).<sup>9</sup>

#### *No double financing rule*

Each action may give rise to the award of only one grant, there can be no duplicate European Union funding of the same expenditure. The applicant must indicate the sources and amounts of any other funding received or applied for in the same financial year for the same action or for any other action and for routine activities (running costs).<sup>10</sup>

#### *No-profit rule*

The EU grant may not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit for the beneficiary. Profit is defined as a surplus of total actual receipts over the total actual costs of the action. Any income of the action must be indicated in the estimated budget and the final financial statement. The amount of the grant will be reduced by the amount of any surplus.<sup>11</sup>

### 2. RULES RELATED TO THE GRANT REQUESTED

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<sup>7</sup> Council Regulation (EC, Euratom), n° 1605/2002 of 25.06.2002 (OJ L 248, 16.09.2002), as amended by Regulation n° 1995/2006 (OJ L 390, 30.12.2006) (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/consleg/2002/R/02002R1605-20070101-en.pdf>).

<sup>8</sup> Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) n° 2342/2002 of 23.12.2002, (OJ L 357, 31.12.2002) and subsequent amendments: Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) n° 1261/2005 of 20.07.2005 (OJ L 201, 02.08.2005), Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) n° 1248 of 07.08.2006 (OJ L 227, 07.08.2006) and Commission Regulation n° 478/2007 (OJ L 111, 28.04.2007) (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/consleg/2002/R/02002R2342-20070501-en.pdf>).

<sup>9</sup> Art. 113 FR and 172 IR.

<sup>10</sup> Art. 111 FR and 173(5) IR.

<sup>11</sup> Art. 109(2) FR and 165(1) IR.

- The rules on co-financing rates can be found in the text of the call for proposals.
- The grant does not cover ineligible costs (see below for definition).
- Contributions in kind (i.e. contributions for which no financial flow can be traced in the written accounts like unpaid charity work by a private individual or corporate body, etc.) cannot be accepted.
- Signed letters of commitment from the applicant organisation and/or other sources must be provided stating the precise amount of each financial (cash) contribution to the budget. If other institutions or organisations (partners) are involved in carrying out the project, the letter of commitment/partnership, from each of the partners, should also provide the name, address and person responsible and explain the nature of their involvement as well as, where applicable, their financial contribution in cash.
- Costs incurred by partners will be eligible in the same way as those incurred by the beneficiary.

The beneficiary alone shall be accountable to the Commission for the implementation of the action. It shall undertake that the conditions applicable to it under Articles II.14 (eligible costs) and II.19 (checks and audits) of the Grant Agreement shall also apply to the partners.

- An external audit report of the previous accounts of the applicant organisation produced by an approved external auditor must be provided for grant applications where the cost to be financed exceeds EUR 500.000. No audit report is required from public bodies or international organisations.<sup>12</sup> The report must certify the accounts for the last financial year available.
- The partial or total withholding by the applicant of any information that may have an impact on the Commission's final decision concerning the application will entail the automatic disqualification of the application or, if discovered at a later stage, will entitle the Commission to impose financial and administrative penalties<sup>13</sup>.

### **3. THE ESTIMATED BUDGET OF THE ACTION**

#### **3.1. The budget must be detailed and balanced**

Grant applications must include a detailed estimated budget presented in Euro (see application form). Applicants established in countries outside the Euro zone must use the conversion rates published in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJ) (<http://ec.europa.eu/budget/inforeuro/index.cfm?Language=en>). Applicants should be aware that they fully carry the exchange rate risk.

The budget estimate must be properly balanced: the two totals (income and expenditure) must be the same, since the available income (including the grant requested from the Commission) will have to finance the planned expenditure<sup>14</sup>. Please make sure that all the items related to the implementation of the action are included and not just those for which financing are being sought.

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<sup>12</sup> Art. 173(4) IR

<sup>13</sup> Art. 175 IR

<sup>14</sup> Art. 173(3) IR.

## 3.2. Expenditure

Expenditure must include the estimated costs exclusively for the implementation of the action.

### 3.2.1. *General criteria for eligibility of costs*

In order to be eligible for EU funding, costs actually incurred must meet the following criteria<sup>15</sup>:

- (a) be incurred during the duration of the action, with the exception of costs relating to final reports and audit certificates;
- (b) be indicated in the estimated overall budget of the action attached to the grant agreement;
- (c) be necessary for the implementation of the action which is the subject of the grant;
- (d) be 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;
- (e) comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation;
- (f) be reasonable, justified, and comply with the requirements of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency.

**The successful applicant must take care to avoid any unnecessary or unnecessarily high expenditure.**

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

Documentation justifying costs must be kept by the beneficiary for **five years** following final payment by the Commission.

Expenditure eligible for financing may not have been incurred before the grant application was lodged. Please note that the call might precise a specific reference date for the eligibility of costs.

Extra costs associated with the participation of people with disabilities are also eligible. These costs may be required to cover the use, for example, of special means of transport, personal assistants or sign language interpreters.

### 3.2.2. *Eligible direct costs*

The eligible direct costs for the action are those costs which, provided that they satisfy the criteria 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.

In particular, the following direct costs may be considered eligible:

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<sup>15</sup> Art. 172a IR.



### **Travel, accommodation and subsistence allowances**

Travel costs must not exceed the most reasonable rates available on the market. Accommodation and subsistence costs for staff taking part in the action are eligible provided that they are in line with the beneficiary's usual practices on travel costs and do not exceed the scales approved periodically by the Commission which are set out in the table below.

Expenses for participants from non-partner organisations (i.e. in conferences) could also be declared under "travel".

Journeys must be carried out by the most direct and economic route. Economy class fares will be used as the benchmark for analysing air travel costs. Air travel is acceptable only for distances above 400 km, i.e. return flight above 800 km. For other modes of transport, the benchmark is the first-class rail fare. Car journeys: equivalent of corresponding first-class train ticket.

The *Daily subsistence allowances (DSA)* are paid in addition to costs for accommodation as a flat-rate amount and are considered to cover breakfast and two main meals, local transport, the cost of telecommunications and all other sundries. Daily subsistence allowances are to be calculated as follows according to the length of the mission:

- stays less or equal to 6 hours: reimbursement of actual costs (on production of supporting documents);
- more than 6 hours up to 12 hours inclusive: 0.5 DSA;
- more than 12 hours up to 24 hours inclusive: 1 DSA;
- more than 24 hours up to 36 hours inclusive: 1.5 DSA;
- more than 36 hours up to 48 hours inclusive: 2 DSA;
- more than 48 hours up to 60 hours inclusive: 2.5 DSA, etc.

The maximum amounts (in Euro per calendar day) accepted for each country are set out in the table below, and applicants are advised to adhere to these rates in their budget estimates<sup>16</sup>. Please note that this is a general list; please check the call for proposals to find out the eligible countries for your specific call.

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<sup>16</sup> The daily allowance rates are subject to periodic review by the Commission.

Destinations		DSA in EUR	Maximum hotel price in EUR	Destinations		DSA in EUR	Maximum hotel price in EUR
AL	Albania	50,00	160,00	LI	Liechtenstein	80,00	95,00
AT	Austria	95,00	130,00	LT	Lithuania	68,00	115,00
BA	Bosnia-Herzegovina	65,00	135,00	LU	Luxembourg	92,00	145,00
BE	Belgium	92,00	140,00	LV	Latvia	66,00	145,00
BG	Bulgaria	58,00	169,00	ME	Montenegro	80,00	140,00
CH	Switzerland	80,00	140,00	MK	F.Y.R. of Macedonia	50,00	160,00
CY	Cyprus	93,00	145,00	MT	Malta	90,00	115,00
CZ	Czech Republic	75,00	155,00	NL	The Netherlands	93,00	170,00
DE	Germany	93,00	115,00	NO	Norway	80,00	140,00
DK	Denmark	120,00	150,00	PL	Poland	72,00	145,00
EE	Estonia	71,00	110,00	PT	Portugal	84,00	120,00
EL	Greece	82,00	140,00	RO	Romania	52,00	170,00
ES	Spain	87,00	125,00	RS	Serbia	80,00	140,00
FI	Finland	104,00	140,00	SE	Sweden	97,00	160,00
FR	France	95,00	150,00	SI	Slovenia	70,00	110,00
HR	Croatia	60,00	120,00	SK	Slovakia	80,00	125,00
HU	Hungary	72,00	150,00	TR	Turkey	55,00	165,00
IE	Ireland	104,00	150,00	UK	United Kingdom	101,00	175,00
IS	Iceland	85,00	160,00	XK	Kosovo	80,00	140,00
IT	Italy	95,00	135,00				

Please note that the Commission and the other European Institutions cover the travel and subsistence costs of their own officials when they participate in an event organised by the beneficiary and these should therefore not be included in the budget estimate.

### **Catering**

**The total amount calculated according to the above mentioned rules regarding Daily subsistence allowances shall constitute a maximum.** If catering services are provided by the organisers, the DSAs directly paid to participants must be reduced accordingly. In such cases, the daily allowance would be reduced by 30% for each meal provided, and by 15% for breakfast.

### **Costs of services**

**Information dissemination and publications** costs can be taken into account provided that they are directly related to the action. Please give, for each publication and/or other materials, a description, an estimate of the number of pages and copies planned the frequency and language of publication, an indication of the production costs per copy as well as an estimate of the distribution costs where appropriate.

**Translation** costs must include the following details: the number of languages, the number of pages to be translated and the rate applied per page. These rates may not exceed the most reasonable market rates.

**Interpretation:** the different components must be specified. In particular, the number of languages, the number of interpreters, the number of days and the daily rates must be specified. The accepted daily fee of an interpreter may not exceed EUR 700 (including VAT). Interpreters should be hired locally. For their travel and subsistence expenses to be covered by the grant, it must be impossible to hire them locally and it must be explained why this is so.

**Evaluation**: if the action proposed requires some form of evaluation, monitoring and evaluation methods must be developed, as well as tools to assess, on an on-going basis, the progress of the action in relation to the objectives defined at the beginning and the results. The cost of such work will be regarded as eligible expenditure.

### **Subcontracting and provision of services**

This heading can cover the costs of subcontracting or provision of services by an external party in connection with the implementation of the action (consultancy fees, production of documents, studies, external evaluation etc.).

Work and tasks carried out by the project partners (as described in the letters of commitment) are not subject to these rules of subcontracting. However, it is not permissible to include normal commercial suppliers of goods and services as project partners in order to avoid these rules. By way of example, the Commission does not find it appropriate to include as project partners independent consultants, conference organisers, and so on.

Applicants should have the operational capacity to complete the action to be supported. However, if the staff does not have the skills required, when justified and necessary, parts of the project may be subcontracted to another person or organisation. In this case, the beneficiary shall ensure that<sup>17</sup> the relevant terms applicable to itself under the agreement are also applicable to the subcontractors.

It must be clearly specified which tasks will be subcontracted and why this subcontracting is necessary, in the annex foreseen for this purpose in the electronic application form ("Contracts for implementing the action").

Only contracts that exceed the threshold of €5 000 should be included in this annex. The general rules on subcontracting should however be observed.

### **Main rules related to subcontracting activities**

When concluding external contracts in order to implement the action, the beneficiary must seek competitive tenders from potential contractors and award the contract in writing to the bid offering **the best value for money, i.e. the best price-quality ratio**. In doing so, the beneficiary shall observe the principles of transparency and equal treatment of potential contractors and shall take care to avoid any conflict of interests<sup>18</sup>.

Sub-contracts by a "public" beneficiary/partner must be awarded in accordance with the applicable national rules on public tendering and in conformity with EU Directives on public tendering procedures.

### **Contracts as referred above may be awarded only in the following cases:**

- a) They may only cover the execution of a limited part of the action;
- b) Recourse to the award of contracts must be justified in relation to the nature of the tasks necessary for the implementation of the action;
- c) The tasks to be subcontracted and the corresponding estimated costs must be set out in detail in the budget estimate;

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<sup>17</sup> The terms related to liability, conflict of interests, confidentiality, publicity, evaluation, assignment and checks and audits

<sup>18</sup> Art. 120FR, 184 IR



- d) Any recourse to the award of contracts while the action is underway shall be subject to prior written authorisation by the Commission;
- e) The beneficiary shall retain sole responsibility for the implementation of the action and for compliance with the provisions of the agreement. The beneficiary must undertake the necessary arrangements to ensure that the subcontractor waives all rights in respect of the Commission under the agreement;
- f) The beneficiary must undertake to ensure that the terms, mentioned above, applicable to itself under the agreement are also applicable to the subcontractor.

### **Administration costs**

Depreciation for purchase of equipment<sup>19</sup>: the purchase cost of equipment (new or second-hand) is eligible provided that it is written off in accordance with the tax and accounting rules applicable to the beneficiary and generally accepted for items of the same kind. Only the portion of the equipment's depreciation corresponding to the period of eligibility for EU funding covered by the grant agreement and the rate of actual use for the purposes of the action may be taken into account by the Commission. A justification for the need of purchasing such equipment is to be annexed to the budget estimate.

Other eligible administrative costs are: rental of meeting rooms (coffee breaks included), rental of interpretation booths, communication costs (other than overheads), charges for financial services, costs relating to a bank guarantee and to external audits, etc. Indicative amounts for rental of booths, excluding technical equipment: EUR 750 (excluding VAT) per booth per day; rental of booths with equipment and technical assistance: EUR 1200 (excluding VAT) per booth per day.

#### **3.2.3. Eligible indirect costs - Overheads**

Indirect costs are general administrative costs – overhead costs incurred in connection with the eligible direct costs of the action. They are limited to a maximum flat-rate of 7% of the total eligible direct costs for the action. These can include maintenance, stationery, photocopying, mailing postage, telephone and fax costs, heating, electricity or other forms of energy, water, office furniture, insurance and any other expenditure necessary for the successful completion of the project. Postage costs are considered as overhead costs and cannot be accepted under the headings "publications" or "administration".

If the accepted budget includes a provision for flat-rate funding in respect of indirect costs, such costs do not need to be supported by accounting documents.

Indirect costs are not eligible for an action where the beneficiary already receives an operating grant from the EU budget during the period in question.

#### **3.2.4. Non-eligible costs**

The following expenses are ineligible and therefore not accepted:

- contributions in kind: these are contributions that are not invoiced, such as voluntary work, equipment or premises made available free of charge;

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<sup>19</sup> Art. 172 IR

- return on capital;
- debt and debt service charges;
- doubtful debts;
- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- interest owed;
- exchange losses;
- VAT, unless the beneficiary can show that he/she is unable to recover it according to the applicable national legislation. VAT paid by public bodies is not an eligible cost.  
It should be noted that VAT paid by a public body<sup>20</sup> to operators who are subject to VAT (when purchasing goods or supplying services within the framework of the implementation of the co-financed action) is not eligible. The VAT thus collected by operators liable for tax will in fact be returned to accounts of the Member State of the public body. Considering this VAT as an eligible cost would lead to double financing (by the EU and by the fiscal revenue).
- excessive or reckless expenditure;
- costs declared by the beneficiary and covered by another action or work programme receiving an EU grant.

### **3.3. Income**

Total income must be identical to total expenditure. The income side of the budget must show:

- The beneficiary's contribution in cash: the direct monetary contribution from the applicant's own resources and/or the contribution from any other fund providers. This means an effective expenditure, i.e. a financial flow that can be traced in the written accounts. Placing a civil servant remunerated by a public administration, or an employee of a company or organisation, at the disposal of the project is treated as a cash contribution since this gives rise to an expense that can be identified in the accounts of these administrations or organisations.  
By way of another example, if a meeting room is made available paying the cost of rental, then this is treated as a cash contribution, which can be included in the direct eligible costs of the project and on the income side.
- The revenue generated by the action: any income expected to be generated by the implementation of the action should be detailed (such as. the yield from sales of publications or conference registration fees).

The EU grant: the grant requested from the Commission.

## **4. HOW THE GRANT WILL BE CALCULATED**

If the proposal is selected for a grant, the Commission will calculate the EU contribution as a percentage of the total eligible costs as shown in the estimated budget for the implementation of the action.

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<sup>20</sup> In accordance to Council Directive 2006/112/EC of 28/11/06, states, regional and local government authorities and other bodies governed by public law shall not in theory be regarded as taxable persons in respect of the activities or transactions in which they engage as public authorities.

The Commission reserves the right to reduce the grant requested if the proposal is acceptable but considered too expensive, and to reduce individual unit costs if these are estimated to be too high.

### ***Determination of the final amount of the grant***

The EU final grant is calculated on the basis of the **actual** eligible expenditure by applying the "double ceiling" rule and verifying compliance with the non-profit rule.

#### **- Application of the "double ceiling" rule limiting the grant both to the percentage of the eligible costs and to the maximum amount mentioned in the grant agreement**

The EU final grant is calculated by applying the percentage for the co-financing of the eligible costs laid down in the grant agreement to the total of the actual eligible costs. This amount must not exceed the maximum amount for the EU grant laid down in the grant agreement.

As a result, if the actual expenditure turns out to be lower than the expenditure you budgeted, the actual grant will also be reduced in application of the percentage contribution which will remain the same. If the actual expenditure turns out to be higher than the expenditure budgeted, the EU grant will not be increased. It is therefore in the applicant's interest to submit a realistic estimate of expenses.

#### **- Verification of compliance with the non-profit rule**

The grant may not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit for the beneficiary<sup>21</sup>. On the basis of the above rule if the total income of the action is higher than the total costs, the final grant amount will be reduced accordingly so that it will not produce a profit.

A mere forecast of expenditure does not give entitlement to a grant. This is why the exact amount of the final grant cannot be calculated until the Commission has received the final activity report and the final statement of expenditure. The expenditure that is committed to the implementation of the action must be justified by invoices or equivalent supporting documents, in order to be accepted as actual expenditure. It must also relate to actual rather than inputted costs.

## **5. AGREEMENT GOVERNING THE GRANT**

Should the Commission award a grant, a grant agreement setting out the conditions and maximum level of funding will be concluded with the beneficiary.

Successful applicants will receive two original copies of the grant agreement for acceptance and signature. Both of these copies must be sent back to the Commission, which will then return one of them once it has been signed by both parties.

## **6. PAYMENT PROCEDURES**

The payment procedures will be laid down in the grant agreement.

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<sup>21</sup> Art. 109(2) FR

Generally, payment of the grant will be made in three instalments (two pre-financing payments and a final payment under the following conditions:

- A pre-financing payment of 30% at the signature of the grant agreement.
  
- A second pre-financing payment of 40% of the total amount awarded upon receipt and approval by the Commission of a progress report on implementation of the action and detailed statement of the costs already incurred, showing that at least 70% of the previous pre-financing payment has been used up. Where the consumption of the previous pre-financing is less than 70%, the amount of the new-pre-financing payment shall be reduced by the unused amounts of the previous pre-financing payment<sup>22</sup>.
  
- The balance will be paid upon acceptance by the Commission of the final technical implementation report and final financial statement.

## **7. GUARANTEE<sup>23</sup>**

The Commission may require the beneficiary to provide a guarantee in advance, in order to limit the financial risk linked to the payment of the pre-financing.

This guarantee shall be denominated in euro and shall be valid for a period sufficiently long to allow it to be activated. The guarantee shall be provided by an approved bank or financial institution established in one of the Member States.

The guarantee shall be released as the pre-financing is gradually cleared against interim payment(s) or payment of the balance to the beneficiary in accordance with the conditions laid down in the grant agreement or, in the absence of such clearing, three months after a recovery is notified to the beneficiary by which the Commission asks him to repay the pre-financing. The Commission undertakes to release the guarantee within the following month.

In exceptional cases, the guarantee may be replaced by a joint and several guarantee by a third party or by the irrevocable and unconditional joint guarantee of the beneficiaries of an action who are parties to the same grant agreement.

## **8. BANK ACCOUNT AND INTEREST GENERATED BY PRE-FINANCING PAYMENTS<sup>24</sup>**

Payment shall be made to the beneficiary's bank account or sub-account denominated in Euro. The account or sub-account indicated by the beneficiary must make it possible to identify the funds transferred by the Commission and the interest yielded by the pre-financing payments.

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<sup>22</sup> Art. 180(1) IR

<sup>23</sup> Compulsory in the case of pre-financing representing over 80% of the total amount of the grant and exceeding EUR 60 000. However, this requirement may be waived for public-sector bodies and international organisations or for beneficiaries who have signed a framework partnership agreement with the Commission. (Art.118 FR and 182(1) IR).

<sup>24</sup> Art. 5(a) FR, Art. 3, 4, 4(a) IR.

If the funds paid into the account yield interest or equivalent benefits under the law of the State on whose territory the account is opened, such interest or benefits, if they have been generated by pre-financing payments which remain the property of the European Union, shall not be treated as a receipt for the action.

The beneficiary shall, as specified in the grant agreement, inform the Commission of any interest or equivalent benefits yielded by pre-financing payments higher than EUR 50 000, it has received from the Commission. Notification must be made when the request is introduced for interim payment or for payment of the balance that clears the pre-financing.

Interests yielded by pre-financing payments between EUR 50 000 and EUR 750 000 will be directly deducted from payments. Interests generated by pre-financing payments higher than EUR 750 000 will be recovered through a recovery order.

Interests shall not be due to the EU on pre-financing paid to Member States, that is to say, not only the central structure of the State, but also, on the one hand, the regional or local authorities and, on the other hand, the public bodies acting on behalf, under the control or the responsibility of the Member State, or paid in the framework of joint management with international organisations.

All costs related to these requirements (such as the cost for opening and closing accounts) are eligible and may be submitted in the budget estimate.

## **9. SUBMISSION OF REPORTS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS**

Within three months after the closing date of the action, the beneficiary must submit to the Commission the final report on the implementation of the action, along with a final financial statement of all actual expenditure and actual revenue. Both reports must be submitted on-line via SWIM as well as in paper version (see section 13). The final implementation report must be completed using the template announced in the call that will also be annexed to the grant agreement.

Should the final report be deemed to be inadequate or of low quality, the Commission reserves the right to request additional information within 60 days of reception of the final report, and, if necessary, to suspend the final payment until the requested information is provided.

In addition to these requirements, other documents that might be indicated in the text of the call for proposals must also be provided (*i.e. annual reports for Progress calls*).

## **10. PUBLICITY**

All grant beneficiaries are required to mention clearly the fact that they have received funding from the EU in any publication, in other materials, and during activities (conferences or seminars, etc.), for which the grant is used, using the following wording: "**With financial support from the European Union**". The logo of the EU, given at the following web address: [http://europa.eu/abc/symbols/emblem/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/abc/symbols/emblem/index_en.htm) should also be visible.

Any communication or publication by the beneficiary, in any form and medium, including the Internet, shall indicate that sole responsibility lies with the author and that the Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

In addition to these minimum requirements, references specified in the text of the call for proposals must also be indicated.

All grants awarded in the course of a financial year shall be published on the Internet site of the EU institutions during the first half of the year following the closure of the budget year in respect of which they were awarded.

By signing the grant agreement for an action, the beneficiary authorises the Commission to publish the following information in any form and medium, including via the Internet site of the EU<sup>25</sup>:

- the beneficiary's name and the address
- the subject of the grant,
- the amount awarded and the rate of funding of the costs of the action.

In order to increase the visibility of partnerships and to facilitate networking between organisations, the Commission intends to publish the name and address of partners together with the name and address of the beneficiary. To that purpose, the beneficiary will be asked to seek the partners' agreement to authorise the Commission to publish this data. This written agreement should be included in the letters of commitment sent to the Commission with the application form.

With a view to disseminate all results obtained and outputs delivered under the grant agreement, the Executive Summary sent with the Implementation Report will be posted on the website of the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

Upon a duly substantiated request by the beneficiary, publication of this data can be waived if it threatens the safety of the beneficiary or harms his business interests.

## **11. EVALUATION**

If the proposal should include a specific evaluation component for ongoing monitoring and final evaluation of the action, these costs can be taken into account as eligible in the budget estimate.

Successful proposals could be the subject of an ongoing and ex-post evaluation led by the Commission and/or by independent experts selected by the European Commission. Therefore, the beneficiaries of the grant undertake to make available to the Commission and/or persons authorised by it, all necessary documents or information as will allow the evaluation to be successfully completed and give these persons the rights of access required.

## **12. CHECKS AND AUDITS**

An external audit report is required in the following cases:

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<sup>25</sup> Art. 110(2) FR, 169(2) IR

## **12.1 Audit report in support of grant applications<sup>26</sup>.**

Organisations' proposals for an action for which the grant exceeds EUR 500 000, shall be accompanied by an external audit report produced by a certified auditor. That report shall certify the accounts for the last financial year available.

## **12.2 Audit report in support of requests for payment<sup>27</sup>**

An external audit report produced by an approved auditor or in case of public bodies, by a competent and independent public officer may be required by the authorising officer in respect of any interim or final payment request, depending on his assessment of the management risk.

It is compulsory in the case of a grant for an action over EUR 750 000, when the cumulative amounts per financial year of requests for interim payments and for payment of the balance is at least EUR 325 000. The purpose of the audit report is to certify that the submitted accounts comply with the financial provisions of the agreement, that the costs declared by the beneficiary in the financial statements on which the request for payment is based are real, accurately recorded and eligible according to the grant agreement and that all receipts have been declared.

The obligation to provide such a certification of the financial statements and underlying accounts may be waived in the cases of grant beneficiaries that are public bodies or international organisations. If an external audit of the action's accounts is not required, the beneficiary himself shall certify on his honour that information contained in requests for payments is full, reliable and true. He shall also certify that the costs incurred can be considered eligible in accordance with the grant agreement and that requests for payment are substantiated by adequate supporting documents that can be checked.

The beneficiary undertakes to provide any detailed information requested by the Commission or by another qualified outside body chosen by the Commission for the purposes of checking that the action and the provisions of the agreement are being properly implemented. The beneficiary must enable the Commission and/or the Court of Auditors to verify the organisation's accounting documents, if they deem this appropriate. To this end, documentation justifying items of expenditure must be retained by the applicant's organisation for five years following final payment by the Commission.

## **13. PROCEDURE: ELECTRONIC MEANS OF SUBMISSION - SWIM**

The Internet Web application called "SWIM" (SAGA Web Input Module) allows applicants/beneficiaries to introduce, edit, validate, submit and print grant applications, as well as requests for payments and modifications on the budget estimate. SWIM can be accessed in the following web address<sup>28</sup>: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/swim>  
The final financial statement and the final implementation report will also be submitted via SWIM.

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<sup>26</sup> Art. 173(4) IR

<sup>27</sup> Art. 180(2) IR

<sup>28</sup> For more technical details on using SWIM, a user's manual is available on-line

### **13.1 Introduction of grant applications**

The grant application form has to be filled in electronically as follows: first, access the system at the address mentioned above and select the number of the call for proposals you wish to apply for in the box "New grant application", enter your e-mail address and then fill in your application. Once your application is completed, click on the "submission" button in order to finalise the submission procedure. Please note that after submitting your application form electronically no changes to the application are possible.

After electronic submission, the application form must also be printed out, signed by the legal representative of the organization submitting the proposal and sent by post to the responsible Unit, as specified in the text of the call for proposals.

Failure to respect this procedure will render the application ineligible.

### **13.2 Requests for payments and budgetary modifications**

In addition to the documents specified in the grant agreement, financial documents required in support of requests for further pre-financing payments (if applicable) and for payment of the balance, as well as requests for modifications of the budget estimate to be made by addendum must also be submitted electronically using SWIM, as well as by post duly signed by the legal representative.

To be allowed to log on to SWIM and to access its grant file, the beneficiary will be asked to enter the same application reference number and password assigned by the system to the grant application when it was created.

### **13.3 Final reports**

As mentioned in section 9, the final report on the implementation of the action and the final financial statement of the actual expenditure and actual revenue must be submitted on-line via SWIM as well as by post duly signed by the legal representative.

## **14. DATA PROTECTION**

The grant application will be processed by computer. All personal data (such as names, addresses, CVs, etc.) will be processed in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 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.<sup>29</sup> Replies to the questions in the application form are necessary in order to assess the grant application and they will be processed solely for that purpose by the department responsible for the EU grant programme concerned. On request, applicants may be sent personal data to correct or complete. For any question relating to these data, please contact the Commission department to which the form must be returned.

Beneficiaries may lodge a complaint against the processing of their personal data with the European Data Protection Supervisor at any time.

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<sup>29</sup> Official Journal L 8, 12.1.2001.



## 15 EARLY WARNING SYSTEM AND CENTRAL EXCLUSION DATABASE

Grant applicants and, if they are legal entities, persons who have powers of representation, decision-making or control over them, are informed that, should they be in one of the situations mentioned in:

- the Commission Decision 2008/969 of 16.12.2008 on the Early Warning System (EWS) for the use of authorising officers of the Commission and the executive agencies (OJ, L 344, 20.12.2008, p. 125) (for more information see the Privacy Statement on [http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts\\_grants/info\\_contracts/legal\\_entities/legal\\_entities\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm)), or

- the Commission Regulation 2008/1302 of 17.12.2008 on the Central Exclusion Database – CED (OJ L 344, 20.12.2008, p. 12) (for more information see the Privacy Statement on [http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect\\_en.cfm#BDCE](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect_en.cfm#BDCE)),

their personal details (name, given name if natural person, address, legal form and name and given name of the persons with powers of representation, decision-making or control, if legal person) may be registered in the EWS only or both in the EWS and CED, and communicated to the persons and entities listed in the above-mentioned Decision and Regulation, in relation to the award or the execution of a procurement contract or a grant agreement or decision.