

Call for applications to establish an Expert Group on EU Trade Agreements
Questions and answers

last update: 23 October 2017

Question	Reply
<p>1) what would be the frequency of the meetings and if these meetings will be sector specific/ chapter specific, or on a more general basis.</p> <p>2) we would like to know if members adhering to the group of experts can also be employees of private companies</p>	<p>On your first question regarding the frequency and topics of the meetings, point 2.3 of the call for applications states that 'the group shall meet three to four times per year on Commission premises in order to discuss the various matters under its remit.' The potential work of the group is described under point 1 of the call and could cover both specific and general issues.</p> <p>Regarding your second question, the actual members of the Expert Group are the organisations, who nominate representatives, as defined under point 2.1 of the call. They are free to decide by whom they wish to be represented, of course in compliance with the call for applications.</p>
<p>Can member organisations apply in addition to their umbrella organisation?</p>	<p>According to the provisions of the call for applications, sectoral organisations who have a Europe-wide structure and comply with the criteria set out in the call can indeed apply in their own right, in addition to their European umbrella organisation. When it comes to the selection of the members, the evaluators will strike a balance in light of the applications received and of the concrete work to be performed by the group, based on the selection criteria listed in the call. The objective is to ensure balanced composition as described under point 5 of the call.</p>

<p>In the call, it is said that we should send a cover letter, and a selection criteria form fully filled (Annex II). However, for these documents, it is not clear whether they should highlight the competences/relevance of the representatives chosen, or of the organisation itself. For instance, should the cover letter highlight e.g. the number of years of experience of the representative, or rather the relevance of the organisation as a whole? The same question goes for Annex II, especially for the first category ('Proven and relevant knowledge, competence and experience related to economic, social, ethical and/or environmental aspects of EU bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral trade agreements and/or negotiations')?</p>	<p>As indicated in the call for applications, the group will be composed of European level, nongovernmental organisations that will be selected on the basis of the published criteria and the applicants are organisations, not individuals (type C members). Regarding the selection criteria (article 4 and annex II), the first two sets of criteria relate to the organisation while the last two criteria (Competence, experience and level of representation of the proposed representatives ; Good knowledge of the English language of the proposed representatives allowing active participation in the discussions) relate to the representatives to be selected. As for the cover letter, there is no formal template or guidance, the letter is aimed at summarising and highlighting the main elements organisations put forward in detail in annex II. Please note that the last two criteria will also be judged on the basis of the cvs of the representatives that are to be submitted as part of the application.</p>
<p>I was wondering if national trade and business associations (from European countries) may apply as well?</p>	<p>The call for applications specifically refers to 'European-level' organisations (point 2.1) and to the 'ability to represent the perspective of stakeholders across the European Union' (point 4). Therefore, associations only operating at national level are not eligible to apply, even though the standard Annex I used in this and all other calls does not exclude national organisations.</p>

<p>Is it required to use this template or is it also fine to use CVs that follow a similar structure (personal details – education – work experience – publications – language skills).</p>	<p>Point 3 of the call for applications for the selection of members of the expert group on trade agreements specifies that 'All CVs shall be submitted in the European format (https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/documents/curriculum-vitae/templates-instructions).'</p>
<p>Our organisation is an association established outside the EU but it has a permanent office in Brussels where the Secretary General is based and it only advocates at the European level.</p> <p>I carefully read the Call for application and it is mentioned that members of the group shall be “European-level non-governmental organisations”. I wanted to confirm with you whether these NGO necessarily have to be established in the EU or if this organisation could apply to the group.</p>	<p>The call for application indeed specifies that members of the group 'shall be European-level non-governmental organisations'. In addition, the first two selection criteria listed under point 4 are of particular relevance in your case in order to assess whether the application of the organisation could be successful:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Proven and relevant knowledge, competence and experience related to economic, social, ethical and/or environmental aspects of EU bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral trade agreements; • Relevance of the interests represented for the EU trade negotiating agenda and the degree to which the applicant's interests are affected by EU trade agreements; ability to represent the perspective of stakeholders across the European Union; representativeness of the organisation and ability to provide feedback on issues that are prominent in the debate around trade in different EU Member States and may require specific attention;'