

SPECIFICATIONS CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Reference 2015 ECFIN 016/A4

Joint Harmonised European Union Programme of Business and Consumer Surveys Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Albania and Montenegro

This call for proposals (reference 2015 ECFIN 016/A4) does not constitute any sort of contractual obligation on the part of the Commission towards any applicant submitting a proposal on the basis of it. All communication regarding this call for proposals must be in writing.

1. CONTEXT

The Joint Harmonised European Union Programme of Business and Consumer Surveys (BCS) constitutes an essential tool for the European Commission (Commission) in fulfilling its Treaty-based obligations of surveillance of the EU economies. The BCS programme was set up based on the Commission's institutional prerogatives¹ and constitutes an important source for decision-making of EU economic policy makers. The programme was initiated by a Commission decision in November 1961 and was modified through subsequent Council and Commission decisions. It was last approved through Commission decision C(97) 2241 of 15 July 1997 and presented in Commission communication COM(2006) 379 of 12 July 2006.

The Commission is launching a call for proposals for carrying out surveys, as part of the BCS Programme, in Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Albania and Montenegro. This co-operation between the Commission and future partners shall be in the form of a framework partnership agreement over a period of maximum five years (May 2016 – April 2021), covering the Multi-annual Financial Framework 2014-2020.

2. PURPOSE AND SPECIFICATIONS OF THE ACTION

2.1 Objectives

The programme is designed to gather information on the state of the economies in the EU Member States and Candidate Countries, in order to be able to compare their business cycles for EMU (Economic and Monetary Union) management purposes. It has become an indispensable tool in the EMU economic surveillance process, as well as for general economic policy purposes.

The Commission wishes to establish a long-term co-operation on a joint financing basis with the successful applicants. For this purpose, framework partnership agreements will be concluded for a maximum period of five years. Under this framework partnership agreement, which will specify the common objectives and the nature of the actions to be carried out, five specific annual grant agreements may be concluded between the parties. Each of the actions to be carried out will have a duration of maximum 12 months: from 1 May until 30 April the year after. The action for the first year will cover the period 1 May 2016 to 30 April 2017 and will be carried out, conditional on the approval and availability of the Commission's annual appropriations.

¹ Art. 54.2 (d) of FR (Financial Regulation)

The Commission is looking to conclude agreements with bodies and institutes qualified to carry out actions consisting in one or more of the following surveys:

- For Ireland, Montenegro and Albania:
 - Industry survey
 - Investment survey
 - Construction survey
 - Retail trade survey
 - Services survey
 - Consumer survey
- For Luxembourg:
 - Retail trade survey
 - Services survey
 - Consumer survey
- For Malta:
 - Consumer survey
- For all five countries:
 - Ad hoc surveys on topical economic issues. These ad hoc surveys are by definition more occasional and are carried out in addition to the monthly surveys, using the same established samples as the monthly surveys, to obtain information on specific economic policy issues.

2.2 Technical specifications

2.2.1 Survey timing and reporting of results

The surveys target managers in the manufacturing sector (Industry and Investment surveys), construction, retail trade and services sectors, as well as consumers.

The following table gives an overview of the features of the surveys requested under this call for proposals:

Survey name	Number of activities / size classes to be reported	Number of aggregates to be reported	Number of questions to be asked monthly	Number of questions to be asked quarterly
Industry	68 / -	15	7	9
Investment	6 / 6	2	2 questions in March/April 4 questions in October/November	
Construction	3 / -	1	5	1
Retail trade	5 / -	3	6	-

Services	37 / -	1	6	2
Consumer	23 categories	1	14	3

- The monthly surveys must be carried out in the first two to three weeks of each month. The results of the business surveys must be e-mailed to the Commission in accordance with the calendar that will be included in the grant agreement; the deadline is generally five working days before the end of the month and the publication of results by the Commission is generally on the second-last working day of the month. In accordance with the calendar that will be included in the grant agreement, the deadline for the delivery of consumer survey results is generally seven working days before the end of the month, day on which the Commission publishes the Flash Consumer Confidence Indicator for the EU and euro area. The consumer survey results per country are published together with the publication of the business survey results (see above).
- The quarterly surveys must be carried out in the first two to three weeks of the first month of each quarter (January, April, July and October) and the results must be e-mailed to the Commission in January, April, July and October in line with the deadlines for the respective monthly survey results (see above).
- The six-monthly surveys of investment in manufacturing must be carried out in March/April and October/November and the results must be e-mailed to the Commission in April and November in accordance with the calendar that will be included in the grant agreement, generally at least five working days before the end of the month.
- In the case of *ad hoc* surveys, the beneficiary must undertake to adhere to the specific timetables laid down for them.

A **detailed description of the action** including the harmonised questionnaires to be used for the individual surveys, the required breakdowns of the results in terms of branches (based on NACE rev.2 for business surveys), size classes (investment survey) or categories (consumer survey) as well as provisions concerning the transmission and publication of data can be found in the ‘Description of the action’ - Annex 1 of the Model specific grant agreement:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/economy_finance/procurement_grants/grants/proposals/index_en.htm

2.2.2 Methodology

The principle of harmonisation underlying the Commission’s survey programme aims to produce a set of comparable data across countries. Harmonisation is essential to allow the comparison of business cycles in the different countries as well as the calculation of meaningful business cycle indices for the euro area and the EU as a whole. To achieve comparability between countries, the BCS programme is governed by two basic principles:

- use by all national institutes of the same harmonised questionnaires; and
- conduct of the national surveys, and transmission of the results, according to a common timetable.

The national questionnaires may include additional questions, beyond the harmonised ones. However, in designing national questionnaires, priority must be given to ensuring high response rates for the harmonised EU questions. This implies that the harmonised questions shall precede any other questions. Mixing harmonised questions with additional questions on related concepts that might alter respondents' understanding of the harmonised questions shall be avoided. The breakdown of the collected survey results (into sectors, size classes, categories) may be more

detailed than the one set in the programme, as long as the required breakdowns (section 2.2.1) are provided to the Commission. Partner institutes are free to organise the fieldwork the way that best suits the purpose. The sample design, the sample size, the survey mode, and other methodological considerations should be chosen so as to ensure a high degree of representativeness and a low degree of irregular short-term fluctuations (noise) in the data. A broad and frequently updated sampling frame and a high number of completed questionnaires are considered as key in this respect. The proposed survey methodology will be scrutinised in the evaluation of the received proposals (see Section 9). Institutes are encouraged to follow the list of best practices for the conduct of business and consumer surveys developed by the Commission,² available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/db_indicators/surveys/documents/bcs_best_practice_en.pdf

3. TIMETABLE

3.1 Timetable

Stages	Date and time or indicative period
Publication of the call	31.07.2015
Deadline for asking questions	02.10.2015
Deadline for submitting applications	09.10.2015
Evaluation period	October – November 2015
Information to applicants	December 2015
Signature of the framework partnership agreements	January 2016
Consultation of partner to submit a budget proposal (for first year) (*)	February 2016
Signature of the specific grant agreement 2016-2017 (*)	March - April 2016
Starting date of the action (first year) (*)	01.05.2016

(*) *Conditional on the approval and availability of the Commission's annual appropriations for the year 2016.*

3.2 Evaluation steps

The evaluation of the proposals will take place in three steps:

Step 1 Verification of the admissibility requirements, the eligibility criteria and the exclusion criteria

Step 2 Selection of applicants on the basis of selection criteria

Step 3 Evaluation of the proposals on the basis of the award criteria.

Only proposals meeting the requirements of one evaluation step will pass on to the next step.

² The list builds on the earlier international guidelines on data collection and survey design developed by the Commission and the OECD in cooperation with national survey institutes. These guidelines, together with general methodological considerations, can be found in the European Commission special report No 5/2006 on the Joint Harmonised EU Programme of Business and Consumer Surveys, available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/db_indicators/surveys/documents/studies/ee_bcs_2006_05_en.pdf.

4. BUDGET AVAILABLE

4.1 Sources of Union funding

The action will be financed from budget heading 01.02.01 - Coordination, surveillance and communication on the economic and monetary union, including the euro.

4.2 Estimated total Union budget for this call

The total annual budget available for all surveys is in the region of EUR 400 000 (four hundred thousand euro). The Commission reserves the right not to distribute all the funds available. The estimation of the budget is based on the grants awarded to beneficiaries in past grant periods, assuming a maximum annual increase of 2%.

5. ADMISSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

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

Applications must be submitted in writing (see Section 14. PROCEDURE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS), using the application form and other standard forms where requested.

Applications may be completed in one of the official languages of the European Union. However, applications in English are encouraged as they facilitate the evaluation procedure.

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

6. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

6.1 Eligible applicants

Only applications from **legal entities** established in the following countries are eligible for carrying out actions in EU Member states and candidate countries in the context of the current call for proposals:

- EU Member States
- Candidate Countries [Albania, Montenegro, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Serbia and Turkey] and
- EFTA and EEA countries [Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland]

Applicants must show that they exist as a legal entity. Examples of eligible applicants are:

- national statistical institutes
- research centres
- companies
- professional organisations/ associations
- non-profit organisations
- public authorities (national, regional, local)
- universities
- educational institutions.

Applicants, co-applicants and affiliated legal entities (see below) must all provide the required documentation by means of the *standard legal entity form* (see link to form in section 14.3) accompanied by supporting documents as in the following examples:

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

Consortium: joint proposal by co-applicants

Legal entities forming a consortium must submit their application as co-applicants (who will be defined as co-beneficiaries in case of award). Their tasks must be clearly identified and a budget statement per co-applicant (containing financial contribution and budgeted costs of each member participating in the proposal) must be submitted, together with a consolidated budget statement.

In case of award of the grant, one of the co-beneficiaries will take the role of co-ordinator and shall:

- assume the overall responsibility for the partnership vis-à-vis the Commission;
- monitor the activities of the other participating member(s);
- ensure the overall coherence and timely submission of survey results;
- centralise the signature of the agreement and deliver the agreement duly signed by all co-applicants to the Commission (mandate is mandatory – see FORM 3);
- collect supporting documents of expenditure incurred by each co-beneficiary as well as external funding and present them in a single submission.
- centralise the Commission's financial contribution and disburse payments to the co-beneficiary(ies);

Proposal by an applicant with affiliated entities with a legal or capital link

Entities that have a link with the applicant, in particular a legal or capital link, which is neither limited to the action nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation, are considered entities affiliated to the applicant. Those entities may take part in the action and may declare eligible costs. The applicant shall therefore identify such affiliated entities in the application form.

If affiliated entities take part in the action, the application form shall:

- contain the written agreement of the affiliated entities (see FORM 4);
- precise their role in the implementation of the action;
- indicate in the budget statement the expected costs to be incurred by the affiliated entities

6.2 Eligible activities

Activities directly related to providing the required survey data to the Commission are eligible for funding (e.g. administration of questionnaires, collecting, processing and sending of the data, activities linked to monitoring/improving the data quality).

Other activities can be considered eligible to the extent that they are linked to the action.

It is always for the Commission to take the final decision on the eligibility of an activity and the costs related to it, both when analysing proposals with a view to the estimated budget to be annexed to the grant agreement and when examining statements of costs actually incurred for the purpose of determining the final grant.

7. EXCLUSION CRITERIA

7.1 Exclusion from participation

Applicants will be excluded from participation in the call for proposals procedure if they are in any of the following situations:³

- a) they are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- b) they or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment of a competent authority of a Member State which has the force of *res judicata*;⁴
- c) they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can justify including by decisions of the EIB and international organizations;
- d) they are not in compliance with their obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the responsible authorising officer (RAO) or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;
- e) they or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of *res judicata* for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organization, money laundering or any other illegal activity, where such illegal activity is detrimental to the Union's financial interests;
- f) they are subject to an administrative penalty referred to in Article 109(1) of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the Union and its rules of application.

7.2 Exclusion from award

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

- a) are subject to a conflict of interests;
- b) are guilty of misrepresenting the information required by the contracting authority as a condition of participation in the procurement procedure or fail to supply that information;
- c) find themselves in one of the situations of exclusion, referred to in Section 7.1 .

The same exclusion criteria apply to affiliated entities.

³ In compliance with art. 106(1) and 107 of the Financial Regulation (FR) applicable to the general budget of the European Communities.

⁴ Points (b) and (e) of the first subparagraph shall not apply where the candidates or tenderers can demonstrate that adequate measures have been adopted against the persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them, who are subject to a judgement as referred to in points (b) or (e) of the first subparagraph.

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

7.3 Supporting documents

Applicants, co-applicants and affiliated entities must all sign a declaration on their honour certifying that they are not in one of the situations listed under sections 7.1 and 7.2, by filling in the standard declaration (FORM 4 for affiliated entities, FORM 5 for (co-)applicants).

However, when the requested total grant amount in the proposal does not exceed 60 000 EUR (hereafter referred to as 'low value grant \leq 60 000 EUR'), the requested provisions related to exclusion criteria are not required. Therefore, please fill in FORM 5a) applicable for low value grants. The same principle applies to affiliated entities to an applicant for a low value grant: part 2 of FORM 4 must not be completed by the affiliated entities.

8. SELECTION CRITERIA

8.1 Financial capacity

Applicants must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain the activity throughout the period during which the action is being carried out 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 € 60 000 EUR)

- a declaration on their honour (FORM 5a for a low value grant \leq 60 000 EUR)

b) grants ($>$ € 60 000 EUR)

- a declaration on their honour (FORM 5b for a grant higher than 60 000 EUR);
- FORM 6 containing financial key figures;
- the balance sheets and profit and loss accounts for the last two financial years for which the accounts have been closed. For newly created entities, the business plan will replace closed accounts.

On the basis of the documents submitted, if the RAO considers that the financial capacity is not satisfactory, he may:

- request further information;
- propose a grant agreement without pre-financing;
- reject the application.

Checking the financial capacity does not apply to public bodies. Public bodies are thus not requested to submit FORM 6 and the abovementioned supporting documents (balance sheets and profit and loss accounts). Only the appropriate declaration on honour (FORM 5a or 5b depending on the amount of the grant requested) must be presented.

8.2 Operational capacity

Applicants must have the professional competencies as well as appropriate qualifications necessary to complete the proposed action and must provide the appropriate supporting documentation.

The following criteria will be used to assess the applicant's operational capacity:

- proven experience of at least three years in successfully carrying out monthly or quarterly surveys in the field of application (i.e. business and/or consumer surveys). The applicant's track record in terms of experience and the qualifications of the experts and managers primarily responsible for implementing the action will be considered;
- proof of sound administrative and financial management structures, and access to the operational resources (technical, personal, management, etc.) needed to successfully complete the proposed action.

In this respect, applicants have to submit

- a declaration on their honour (FORM 5a or 5b depending on the amount of the grant requested);
- FORM 7 with detailed information regarding operational capacity;
- together with the following supporting documents:
 - a duly filled in standard list detailing previous projects and activities performed and connected to the action to be carried out
 - curriculum vitae or description of the profile of the people primarily responsible for managing and implementing the action
 - a description of the technical equipment, tools or facilities at the disposal of the applicants
 - the latest activity report (or equivalent information on survey-related activities) and the current organisational chart
 - experience of the subcontractor(s), if relevant.

9. AWARD CRITERIA

Only proposals having passed the selection criteria will be assessed at the level of the following award criteria:

- The quality of the *proposed survey methodology* with reference to (60 points):
 - sampling frame (source, survey unit, size, population coverage, updating frequency, cut-offs);
 - sampling method (random vs. purposive, use of quota, stratification, panels);
 - sample size
 - response rates
 - number of completed interviews
 - survey mode (face-to-face, CATI, email, postal, internet, etc.);
 - measures to raise/maintain response rates (advance letters, reminders, follow-up activities, incentives to respond, etc.);
 - treatment of missing data (unit non-response and item non-response);
 - weighting scheme (characteristics and updating frequency);
 - questionnaire design (preferential treatment of harmonised vs. other questions)
 - data quality control system.

- The *effectiveness of the proposed action* in terms of the organisation and workflow of activities (including any possible sub-contracting of part of the activities) with a view to delivering results of sufficient quality in time (10 points).
- Does the proposal contain specific added-value elements in terms of *using survey results for cyclical and economic analysis and research*, including analysis by sector? (10 points)
- The *efficiency of the candidate's work organisation in terms of the resources* deployed in relation to the objective envisaged. This efficiency will be assessed through the soundness of the proposed budget and its adequacy with respect to the proposed action. (20 points)

The applications will be ranked according to the total award points received. Only applications which have obtained a total of at least 50 out of 100 points will qualify for the award of a framework partnership agreement.

Subject to the award decision by the responsible authorising officer, the best ranked applicant per action (survey) in a particular country will be awarded a framework partnership agreement.

For the evaluation of the proposals in terms of the award criteria, applicants have to submit a technical proposal containing the following elements:

- duly filled in standard excel form (FORM 8) providing a detailed description of the methodology for each survey the applicant submits a proposal for and an outline of the (envisaged) questionnaire in original language;
- a detailed description of the action (work flow);
- if applicable, a description of the applicant's use of survey results for cyclical and economic analysis and research;
- a duly filled in standard form (worksheet SUBCONTRACTING in the model financial statement - Annex V of FPA) regarding subcontractors (see also point 11.1 e)) involved in the action, including a justification and a detailed description of the tasks to be subcontracted;
- a budget proposal for year 1 of the action (1st May 2016 - 30th April 2017) which must show a balanced budget (revenue/ expenditure) (Annex V of FPA).

10.LEGAL COMMITMENTS⁵

In the event of a partnership/grant awarded by the Commission, a framework partnership agreement will be sent to the beneficiary. Two copies of the original framework partnership agreement must be signed first by the beneficiary and returned to the Commission immediately. The Commission will sign it as last party and return one original. The agreements are drawn up in English.

The framework partnership agreement defines the general rights and obligations of the parties in implementing their partnership and details the procedure for concluding annual specific grant agreements in order to implement the action.

The awarding of annual grant amounts is subject to the approval and availability of the Commission's annual appropriations. Each year, the Commission will consult its partner on the basis of an invitation to submit a budget proposal in order to award and sign a specific grant agreement.

⁵ article 121 FR (Financial Regulation) and article 174 RAP (Rules of Application)

Consequently, the partner will be consulted with regard to the annual budget for the action year 2016/2017 already submitted by the partner in the context of the current call for proposals for awarding partnership agreements.

Where the Commission decides to award a specific grant, it shall propose to the partner to sign a specific annual grant agreement.

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

11.FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

11.1 General principles

a) Non-cumulative award⁶

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

In no circumstances shall the same costs be financed twice by the Union budget. To ensure this, applicants shall indicate the sources and amounts of Union funding received or applied for the same action or part of the action or for its functioning during the same financial year as well as any other funding received or applied for the same action.⁷

b) Non-retroactivity⁸

No grant may be awarded retrospectively for actions already completed. A grant may be awarded for an action which has already started but only where the applicant can demonstrate 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) Co-financing⁹

Co-financing means that the resources which are necessary to carry out the action may not be entirely provided by the EU grant. Co-financing of the action may take the form of:

- the beneficiary's own resources
- income generated by the action
- financial contribution from third parties.

d) Balanced budget¹⁰

The estimated budget of the action for year 1 (2016/2017) is to be attached to the application form. It must have revenue and expenditure in balance. The budget must be drawn up in euros. Applicants, who foresee that costs will not be incurred in euros, shall use the exchange rate published in the Official Journal of the European Union.

e) Implementation contracts/ subcontracting¹¹

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

⁶ Article 129 FR

⁷ Article 196.4 RAP

⁸ Article 130 FR

⁹ Articles 125 FR, 183 RAP

¹⁰ Article 196.2 RAP

¹¹ Article 137 FR, 209 RAP

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

Entities acting in their capacity of contracting authorities in the meaning of Directive 2004/18/EC¹² or contracting entities in the meaning of Directive 2004/17/EC¹³ shall abide by the applicable national public procurement rules.

Sub-contracting, i.e. externalisation of specific tasks or activities which form part of the action as described in the proposal, must satisfy the conditions applicable to any implementation contract (as specified above) and, in addition to them, the following conditions:

- it may only cover the implementation of a limited part of the action, i.e. the core tasks of co-ordinating the action remain with the beneficiary
- it must be justified having regard to the nature of the action and what is necessary for its implementation
- it must be clearly stated in the proposal.

f) Financial support to third parties

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

11.2 Funding forms

Mixed financing grants are calculated on the basis of a detailed estimated budget indicating clearly the costs that are eligible for EU funding. The grant amount may neither exceed the eligible costs nor the amount requested. Amounts are indicated in euros.

11.2.1 Maximum amount requested

The EU grant is limited to a maximum co-funding rate of 50% of the eligible costs for each survey. Consequently, part of the total eligible expenses entered in the estimated budget must be financed from sources other than the EU grant (see Section 11.1c). The Commission determines the percentage of the co-financing on an individual basis.

11.2.2 Eligible costs – general aspects

Eligible costs are costs actually incurred by the beneficiary of the grant which meet all the following criteria:

- they are incurred during the duration of the action or of the work programme, with the exception of costs relating to the 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, expenditure may be authorised before the grant is awarded. Under no circumstances can the eligibility period start before the date of submission of the grant application (see Section 11.1b);

- they are indicated in the estimated budget of the action;
- they are necessary for the implementation of the action which is 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

¹² Directive 2004/18/EC on the coordination of procedures for the award of public work contracts, public supply contracts and public service contracts

¹³ Directive 2004/17/EC coordinating the procurement procedures of entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors.

country where the beneficiary is established and according to the usual cost accounting practices of the beneficiary;

- they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation;
- they are reasonable, justified, and comply with the requirements of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency.

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

The same criteria apply to the affiliated entities.

11.2.3 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 can therefore be booked to it directly, such as:

- Costs of the personnel working under an employment contract with the applicant or equivalent appointing act and assigned to the action, comprising actual salaries plus social security contributions and other statutory costs included in the remuneration, provided that these costs are in line with the applicant's usual policy on remuneration. Those costs may include additional remuneration, including payments on the basis of supplementary contracts regardless of their nature, provided that it is paid in a consistent manner wherever the same kind of work or expertise is required and independently from the source of funding used;
- costs of the personnel of national administrations to the extent that they relate to the cost of activities which the relevant public authority would not carry out if the project concerned were not undertaken;
- subsistence allowances (e.g. for meetings, including kick-off meetings where applicable, workshops) provided that these costs are in line with the beneficiary's usual practices;
- costs of travel (e.g. for meetings, including kick-off meetings, where applicable, conferences), provided that these costs are in line with the beneficiary's usual practices on travel;
- costs of consumables and supplies, provided that they are identifiable and assigned to the action;
- costs entitled by implementation contracts awarded by the beneficiaries for the purposes of carrying out the action, provided that the conditions laid down in the grant agreement are met;
- costs arising directly from requirements linked to the implementation of the action (dissemination of information, specific evaluation of the action, translations, reproduction);
- value added tax ('VAT')

11.2.4 Eligible indirect costs

A flat-rate amount of maximum 7% of the total eligible direct costs of the action is eligible under indirect costs, representing the beneficiary's general administrative costs which can be regarded as chargeable to the action. Indirect costs may not include costs entered under another budget heading. The exact flat rate percentage provided in the budget estimates will be laid down in the specific grant agreement and will be the rate applied at the final payment stage. Applicant's

attention is drawn to the fact that in the case of organisations receiving an operating grant, indirect costs are not eligible under specific actions.

11.2.5 Non-eligible costs

- costs declared by the beneficiary and covered by another action receiving a European Union grant. In particular, indirect costs shall not be eligible under a grant for an action awarded to a beneficiary who already receives an operating grant financed from the Union budget during the period in question;
- contributions in kind;
- costs connected with the purchase of new or second-hand equipment and costs of the equipment's depreciation;
- costs not provided for in the projected budget;
- return on capital;
- debt and debt service charges;
- provisions for losses or debts;
- interest owed;
- doubtful debts;
- exchange losses;
- costs of transfers from the Commission charged by the bank of the beneficiary;
- excessive and reckless expenditure;
- deductible VAT.

11.2.6 Calculation of the final grant amount

The final amount of the grant to be awarded to the beneficiary is established after completion of the action, upon approval of the request for payment containing the following documents including relevant supporting documents where appropriate:

- a final technical report in English providing details of the implementation and results of the action together with copies of the questionnaire used during the grant period, any written instructions given to respondents interviewed and an overview of the sample size over the duration of the action;
- the final financial statement including a detailed list of costs actually incurred;
- the declaration on actual costs.

The request for payment of the balance shall be preceded by the timely submission of the survey data.

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

The verification of the non-profit rule does not apply to low value grants ($\leq \text{€ } 60\,000$).¹⁴

¹⁴ Art. 125 FR, 184 RAP

11.2.7 Payment arrangements

A pre-financing payment corresponding to 40% of the grant amount will be transferred to the beneficiary within 30 days of the date when the last of the two parties signs the grant agreement.

The Commission will establish the amount of the final payment to be made to the beneficiary on the basis of the calculation of the final grant amount (see Section 11.2 Funding forms). If the total of the pre-financing payment 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.

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.

To do this they must use the text, the emblem and the disclaimer available at

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/services/visual_identity/pdf/use-emblem_en.pdf.

If this requirement is not fully complied with, the beneficiary's grant may be reduced in accordance with the provisions of the grant agreement.

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 (legal persons)
- subject of the grant
- amount awarded.

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

13.DATA PROTECTION

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

Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs. Details concerning the processing of personal data are available in the privacy statement at:

http://ec.europa.eu/dataprotectionofficer/privacystatement_publicprocurement_en.pdf

Personal data may be registered in the Early Warning System (EWS) only or both in the EWS and Central Exclusion database (CED) by the Accounting Officer of the Commission, should the beneficiary be in one of the situations mentioned in:

- the Commission Decision 2008/969 of 16.12.2008 on the Early Warning System (for more information see the Privacy Statement on:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/library/contracts_grants/info_contracts/privacy_statement_en.pdf

or

- the Commission regulation 2008/1302 of 17.12.2008 on the Central Exclusion Database (for more information see the Privacy Statement on:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect_en.cfm).

14.PROCEDURE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Proposals must be submitted in accordance with the formal requirements and by the deadline set out under **Section 5. ADMISSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**.

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 for the correction of clerical mistakes, the Commission may contact the applicant for this purpose during the evaluation process.

Applicants will be informed in writing about the results of the selection process according to the estimated calendar indicated in Section 3. TIMETABLE.

14.1 Submission on paper

The application form and its annexes are available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/economy_finance/procurement_grants/grants/proposals/index_en.htm

Applications shall be submitted on the correct application form, duly completed, dated and signed. Proposals must be submitted in 3 copies (one original clearly identified as such, plus 2 copies), and signed by the person authorised to enter into legally binding commitments on behalf of the applicant organisation.

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

Applications must be sent as follows: an outside envelope bearing the address below, containing a sealed inner envelope with the proposal marked "**Call for proposals 2015 ECFIN 016/A4 – not to be opened by the internal mail department**".

The evidence of the date of sending shall be constituted by the postmark or the date of the deposit slip of the courier service or by means of a dated and signed receipt issued by the receiving official in the Commission central mail department. The department is open from 08.00 to 17.00 Monday to Thursday, and from 8.00 to 16.00 on Fridays. It is closed on Saturdays, Sundays and Commission holidays.

Address:

<u>By post:</u> Call for proposals Ref. 2015 ECFIN 016/A4 European Commission Directorate General ECFIN Unit ECFIN/R3– Mr J.VERHAEVEN Office CHAR 13/056 B – 1049 Brussels Belgium	<u>By courier or by hand:</u> Call for proposals Ref. 2015 ECFIN 016/A4 European Commission Directorate General ECFIN Unit ECFIN/R3– Mr J.VERHAEVEN Office CHAR 13/056 Avenue du Bourget 1 B-1140 Brussels (Evere) Belgium
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Applications sent by fax or e-mail will not be accepted with the exception of the *budget proposal and the descriptions of survey methodology* for which the electronic versions (Excel files: model financial statement - Annex V of the FPA and FORM 8) must also be submitted to the following address: ECFIN-BCS-CALL-Budgets-Methodology@ec.europa.eu.

14.2 Contacts

If you have any question about the call you can send a request for information by e-mail to the following address: ECFIN-BCS-CALL-Questions@ec.europa.eu.

The deadline for asking questions is set out in Section 3. TIMETABLE.

The most relevant questions and answers will be published at:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/economy_finance/procurement_grants/grants/proposals/index_en.htm. The website will be updated regularly and it is your responsibility to check for updates during the validity period of the call.

14.3 Annexes

Annexes can be found on:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/economy_finance/procurement_grants/grants/proposals/index_en.htm.

- Grant application form containing compulsory standard forms (unless otherwise indicated that free format documents are to be submitted):
 - Form 1 Application letter
 - Form 2 Administrative information
 - Form 3 Consortium (joint proposal): mandate for co-ordinating applicant
 - Form 4 Affiliated entity's statement
 - Form 5a declaration on honour (for grants ≤ 60 000 EUR)
 - Form 5b declaration on honour (for grants > 60 000 EUR)
 - Form 6 financial capacity – financial key figures
 - Form 7 operational capacity – details
 - Technical proposal (free format)
 - Form 8 description of the survey methodology (separate excel sheet)
 - Financial proposal (separate excel sheet – use Annex V to FPA)
 - Checklist of documents to be provided

- Model framework partnership agreement (FPA) and its annexes:
 - Annex I Action plan
 - Annex II General conditions
 - Annex III Model specific grant agreement (SGA) (see below)
 - Annex IV Model technical report
 - Annex V Model financial statement
 - Annex IX Declaration on actual costs

- Model specific grant agreement (SGA) and its annexes:
 - Annex I Description of the action
 - Annex II Estimated budget (see Annex V of FPA)

- Guidelines for applicants for financial management of grants

- Standard legal entity form to be downloaded:
http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm

- Standard financial identification form to be downloaded:
http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/financial_id/financial_id_en.cfm