



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology

Media and Data

Media Support Programmes

Call for proposals

Data-driven news production on EU affairs

1. INTRODUCTION – BACKGROUND

The Political Guidelines for the Commission "A New Start for Europe: Agenda for Jobs, Growth, Fairness and Democratic Change" presented by President Jean-Claude Juncker on 15 July 2014 to the European Parliament describe various ways of "bringing the European Union closer to citizens".

In this context, DG Connect has been entrusted the management of support for Multimedia Actions that aim at engaging citizens in the EU policy-making process by providing them with information about European issues from a pan-European point of view i.e. showing more than only a national perspective. Support is given for the production and dissemination of information and content, while respecting complete editorial independence.

Recent events across Europe show that there is room for new ways of reporting. The production of news and current affairs content is changing rapidly, and newsrooms are adapting to new consumption habits and increased competition. Journalists are also under pressure as the speed and amount of information is increasing.

Challenges are manifold, with media searching for ways to retain audiences with new business models and different forms of content. Several reports point to "big data" as one of the main opportunities, for instance to monitor news, to cater to specific audiences and to produce innovative content.¹

In this context, big data may help to increase reporting on European issues by making it easier for media companies/journalists to produce innovative and attractive content around such topics, allowing citizens to be better informed about the EU.

In line with Financing Decision C(2016)652, the current Call for Proposals aims to exploit this opportunity by supporting data-driven reporting on European issues i.e. the range of topics that are addressed by the EU.

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

Objectives

This Call aims to increase reporting on European issues, from a pan-European viewpoint and/or by comparing different viewpoints from within Europe. To do so, it stimulates the production of innovative content through data-driven research and visualisations and the distribution of such content to as many EU citizens as possible.

¹ See for instance <http://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/publication/big-data-media>

In line with this objective, applicants should describe their approach to content production (increased coverage) and to content distribution (increased reach).

Objective 1 - Content production

Today, EU affairs are arguably under-represented in printed and digital media, in spite of their actual relevance to people's daily life. Reporting on EU affairs often lacks a broader multi-national perspective, and there is scope to increase opportunities for citizens to find and share qualitative media reports on EU affairs.

To engage citizens in the EU policy-making process, it is essential to provide information on EU affairs that is characterised by independent, professional and high-quality reporting. This Call aims to increase the production of content that adheres to these principles and that uses new technologies to maximise audiences. Content can for instance make use of data research, visualise data to compare viewpoints across Europe, help audiences understand complex topics through clear and factual reporting, contextualise story timelines and/or encourage interaction with the audience.

Expected results include increased coverage of EU affairs in terms of volume and quality. The content of such "increased coverage" will depend on the editorial choice of the applicants. Proposals are free to indicate whether the focus will be on breaking news and/or on more in-depth background reporting on current affairs.

The editorial independence will be guaranteed by a charter of independence that will be part of the agreement between the European Commission and the awarded applicants.

Objective 2 – Content distribution.

To reach a maximum number of audiences, this Call aims for maximum republication of content in media outlets and social media across the EU. To do so, the content production process will need to take into account the needs of partners and potential partners from the outset.

As competition is increasing, many media outlets are looking for ways to work together with colleagues (often outside of their national markets) to bundle their research capacity and produce innovative content against minimum costs.

This Call aims to stimulate such collaboration on European topics. It aims to support proposals of media companies/journalists that aim to produce content and distribute content involving as many media/journalists and end-users across the EU as possible. It aims to support proposals that identify the needs of partners as well as potential partners across the EU and design a production process that can contribute to those needs.

Expected results include increased reporting on EU affairs by national and regional media across the EU, from a pan-European viewpoint and/or by comparing different viewpoints from within Europe.

Priorities

Priorities per activity include the following:

1. Content production

Applicants should focus on production of innovative news content around EU affairs and topics affecting multiple Member States. The editorial priorities should be established independently by a professional editorial team, with members from at least four EU Member States.

Applicants must indicate in the proposal how they intend to generate a European perspective i.e. add value to existing reporting on EU affairs by newswires and national/regional media, regardless of the topics they choose. Proposals are free to indicate whether the focus will be on breaking news and/or on more in-depth background reporting on current affairs.

Proposals should clearly describe workflows, including editorial workflows for journalists to produce content on a regular basis, using sources from multiple countries. The editorial workflow should explain the applicants' approach to gathering different sources/viewpoints, and provide examples of how their content will address multiple viewpoints and allow the reader to form their own opinion.

Proposals should outline which formats will be used, such as for instance thematic and multimedia files, videos, audio, photos, illustrations, graphics, maps, data journalism perspectives, interactive contents and/or user-generated content. The choice of formats should be cost-effective and in line with the news consumption habits across Europe.

Proposals may include visualisation of data to compare viewpoints across Europe, navigate story timelines, illustrate policy implications of pan-European and EU topics and/or encourage interaction with the audience. Mock-ups of such visualisations may be included in the offer.

To increase the potential dissemination by other media, proposals must indicate how EU topics will be categorised and how content will be prepared to fit into "regular" non-EU reporting. Applicants are encouraged to explore a "topical approach" that can be of interest to more people than only those interested in politics.

Content should be made available on a dedicated platform that is clearly open to other media and end-users. It can for instance provide guidelines for producing/distributing content, explain the modalities of collaboration, provide raw data sets and/or provide links to multiple data streams². It may also gather useful tools to navigate "big data", to analyse news events across Europe³, to analyse public opinion across Europe and/or to do sentiment analysis. Tools to monitor social media and user-generated content may be considered if relevant for the content being produced.

Proposals should describe how a taxonomy/categorisation of topics will be established, preferably combining the user's terminology with EU terminology. The platform should

² Applicants are free to choose relevant data streams. Public data, EU news, EURlex, openlaws.eu, publicdata.eu, www.europeandataportal.eu and many others can be used if deemed relevant.

³ The European Commission has supported several multilingual media monitoring tools that may be useful in this respect (including <http://emm.newsbrief.eu> and Horizon2020 projects such as <http://europa.eu/!kj44wh>). Applicants are free to use other tools, see for instance <https://medium.com/@Journalism21s/75-tools-for-investigative-journalists-7df8b151db35> and <http://datadrivenjournalism.net/>

include search functionalities that can combine such categorisation with the metatags of different sources. It should be suitable for covering a multitude of topics in the long run, yet it is possible to start with focal topics. Apart from text search, proposals may also consider ways to search audio and video content.

Proposals should provide a mock-up to illustrate how the platform may look.

2. Content distribution

Projects should aim for maximum distribution and redistribution of their content by media across Europe, taking multilingualism into account.

Applicants are encouraged to work together with existing media companies. Applicants can aim to provide visuals and data-driven news illustrating European issues to established media companies, helping them compare viewpoints across Europe and increase critical thinking among their audience.

Applicants should therefore indicate to what extent the project can be relevant for other media outlets in Europe, which activities will be undertaken to promote the project to them, and how they will phrase the project's main business benefit to these outlets.

Proposals should contain an outreach plan, indicating how national/regional media editors will be addressed and encouraged to use the proposed materials. The outreach plan should privilege digital means such as mailings, virtual meetings, webinars or other cost-effective ways to exchange best practices. The plan should also consider other multipliers and social media to boost dissemination, and explain how the content aims to engage the target audience. The plan should include clear objectives for each of the target audiences and include mid-term and final targets.

To maximise republication of content across the EU, applicants will need to identify the needs of partners and potential partners, and take those needs into account from the outset when designing the production process. The proposal should clearly explain the workflows and the conditions for involving others. It should provide quantifiable but realistic ambitions in this regard, providing proof and/or indicators of interest from content producers as well as distributors to publish on media outlets and social media.

Objectively verifiable indicators

Proposals should include concrete deliverables and set clear, objectively verifiable and quantifiable performance indicators where possible, both for content production and content distribution activities.

Sustainability

Proposals should address sustainability and indicate whether the project can be continued independently after the requested period of EU support.

An organisational structure that allows continuation of the project will be perceived favourably. Subcontractors are allowed, but maximum 30% of costs can be subcontracted.

3. TIMETABLE

	Stages	Timing
a)	Publication of the call	29/06/2016
b)	Deadline for sending applications	26/09/2016
c)	Evaluation period	October 2016
d)	Information to applicants	November 2016
e)	Signature of grant agreement or notification of grant decision	December 2016
f)	Starting date of the grant agreement	1/1/2017

4. BUDGET AVAILABLE

The total budget earmarked for the co-financing of projects is estimated at 1.950.000 Euros. The Commission intends to fund one, two or three proposals, but reserves the right not to distribute all the funds available.

5. ADMISSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Applications must be sent no later than the deadline for submitting applications referred to in section 3.
- Applications must be submitted in writing (see section 14), using the application form available at <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/newsroom/call-proposals/all>
- Applications must be drafted in one the EU official languages.

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 EU Member States are eligible.

The European Commission expects applicants to gather media producers from at least four EU Member States
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Applications may be submitted by **one** applicant, whether established specifically or not for the action, provided that:

- it is formed of several legal entities complying with the eligibility, non-exclusion and selection criteria set out in this call for proposals, and implementing together the proposed action;
- the application identifies the said entities.

For the purpose of declaring eligible costs as specified under section 11.2, the entities composing the applicant shall then be treated as affiliated entities.

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

- **private entity:** extract from the official journal, copy of articles of association, extract of trade or association register, certificate of liability to VAT (if, as in certain countries, the trade register number and VAT number are identical, only one of these documents is required);
- **public entity:** copy of the resolution 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 project,
- **entities without legal personality:** documents providing evidence that their representative(s) have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf.

Legal entities having a legal or capital link with applicants, which is neither limited to the action nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation, may take part in the action as affiliated entities, and may declare eligible costs as specified in section 11.2.

For that purpose, applicants shall identify such affiliated entities in the application form.

6.2. Eligible activities

Types of activities eligible under this call for proposals:

- research activities
- data filtering and categorisation
- organisation of collaborative digital workspaces
- content production (may include articles, visuals, video and audio content)
- editorial supervision
- content adaptation
- building/maintaining a suitable technical web-platform for publication
- webinars and virtual meetings
- activities to enlarge uptake by other media and exchange good practices
- promotion and dissemination of results to media and/or end-users

Implementation period

The grant agreement will start on 1 January 2017 with a minimum duration of one year and a maximum duration of three years. Activities should start between 1 January 2017 and 1 July 2017.

7. EXCLUSION CRITERIA

7.1. Exclusion from participation:

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

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

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 interest;
- (b) are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the Commission as a condition of participation in the grant award procedure or fail to supply this information;
- (c) find themselves in one of the situations of exclusion, referred to in section 7.1.

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

7.3. Supporting documents

Applicants must sign a declaration on their honour certifying that they are not in one of the situations referred to in articles 106(1) and 107 to 109, filling in the relevant form attached to the application form accompanying the call for proposals and available at <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/newsroom/call-proposals/all> .

8. SELECTION CRITERIA

8.1. Financial capacity

Applicants must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activity throughout the period during which the action is being carried out or the year for which the grant is awarded and to participate in its funding. The applicants' financial capacity will be assessed on the basis of the following supporting documents to be submitted with the application:

- a) Low value grants (\leq EUR 60 000):
 - a declaration on their honour.
- b) Grants \geq EUR 60 000:
 - a declaration on their honour and,

EITHER

 - the profit and loss account, the balance sheet for the last financial year for which the accounts were closed;
 - for newly created entities, the business plan might replace the above documents.

AND

 - the table provided for in the application form, filled in with the relevant statutory accounting figures, in order to calculate the ratios as detailed in the form.
- c) Grants for an action \geq EUR 750 000, in addition:
 - **an audit report** produced by an approved external auditor certifying the accounts for the last financial year available.

In the event of an application grouping several applicants (consortium), the above thresholds apply by applicants.

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

- request further information;
- propose a grant agreement without pre-financing;
- propose a grant agreement with a pre-financing paid in instalments;
- propose a grant agreement with a pre-financing covered by a bank guarantee (see section 11.4 below);
- where applicable, require the joint and several financial liability of all the co-beneficiaries;
- reject the application.

8.2. Operational capacity

Applicants must have the professional competencies as well as appropriate qualifications necessary to complete the proposed action or work programme. In this respect, applicants have to submit a declaration on their honour, and the following supporting documents:

- curriculum vitae or description of the profile of the people primarily responsible for managing and implementing the operation (accompanied where appropriate, like in the field of research and education, by a list of relevant publications);
- the organisations' activity reports;
- an exhaustive lists of previous projects and activities performed and connected to the policy field of a given call or to the actions to be carried out;
- a description of the technical equipment, tools or facilities and patents at the disposal of the applicant, if relevant for the execution of the proposed project;
- an inventory of natural or economic resources involved in the project.

9. AWARD CRITERIA

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

The relevance of the project and its expected results to the objectives of the call, concerning:

- Relevance and European added value (this criterion evaluates the relevance of the proposed activities to the objectives of this Call, including the topics covered, the added value to existing initiatives across Europe, and number of countries/languages covered)
- Quality of the proposed methodologies (this criterion evaluates the effectiveness of the proposed methodologies to reach the objectives of this Call, including methods for content production, mechanism to ensure editorial independence and methods to build technical solutions)
- Organisation of the project team (this criterion evaluates the efficiency of the team composition to reach the objectives of this Call, as well as the quality of the proposed coordination mechanisms, quality control systems and arrangements to manage risks)
- Quality of the outreach plan (this criterion evaluates the quality of the outreach plan to maximise reach at local, regional, national and European levels, beyond those directly involved in the project. Particular attention will be paid to the identification of needs among other media, the expected reach per target audience across the EU and the proposed measures to monitor progress)
- Efficient use of financial resources (this criterion evaluates cost-effectiveness, taking into account costs as well as expected results)
- The potential sustainability of the proposed model (this criterion evaluates the feasibility of continuing the project beyond the requested period of EU support).

- a) Relevance and added value of activities: maximum score 20, minimum threshold 10
- b) Quality of the proposed methodologies: maximum score 16, minimum threshold 8
- c) Organisation of the project team: maximum score 16, minimum threshold 8
- d) Outreach plan and expected reach: maximum score 16, minimum threshold 8
- e) Cost-effectiveness: maximum score 16, minimum threshold 8
- f) Sustainability: maximum score 16, minimum threshold 8

10. LEGAL COMMITMENTS

In the event of a grant awarded by the Commission, a grant agreement, drawn up in euro and detailing the conditions and level of funding, will be sent to the beneficiary, as well as the procedure in view to formalise the obligations of the parties.

The 2 copies of the original agreement must be signed first by the beneficiary, on behalf of the consortium if applicable, and returned to the Commission immediately. The Commission will sign it last.

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

11. FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

11.1. General Principles

a) Non-cumulative award

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

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

b) Non-retroactivity

No grant may be awarded retrospectively for actions already completed.

A grant may be awarded for an action which has already begun only where the applicant can demonstrate the need to start the action before the grant agreement is signed or the grant decision is notified.

In such cases, costs eligible for financing may not have been incurred prior to the date of submission of the grant application

c) Co-financing

Co-financing means that the resources which are necessary to carry out the action or the work programme may not be entirely provided by the EU grant.

Co-financing of the action or of the work programme may take the form of:

- the beneficiary's own resources,
- income generated by the action or work programme,
- financial contributions from third parties.

Co-financing may also take the form of in-kind contributions from third parties, i.e. non-financial resources made available free of charge by third parties to the beneficiary or to the consortium. The corresponding costs are not eligible.

d) Balanced budget

The estimated budget of the action or work programme 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, are invited to use the exchange rate published on the Infor-euro website available at http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuro/inforeuro_en.cfm.

e) Implementation contracts/subcontracting

Where the implementation of the action or the work programme requires the award of procurement contracts (implementation contracts), the beneficiary must award the contract to the bid offering best value for money or the lowest price (as appropriate), avoiding conflicts of interests and retain the documentation for the event of an audit.

In the event of procurement exceeding € 60 000, the beneficiary must abide by special rules as referred in the grant agreement annexed to the call. Moreover the beneficiary is expected to clearly document the tendering procedure and retain the documentation for the event of an audit.

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

Sub-contracting, i.e. the externalisation of specific tasks or activities which form part of the action/work programme 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;
- 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.

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.

➤ **Maximum amount requested**

The EU grant is limited to a **maximum co-funding rate of 75 % of eligible costs** taking into account the maximum grant amount referred to in section 4.

Consequently, part of the total eligible expenses entered in the estimative budget must be financed from sources other than the EU grant (see section 11.1c).

➤ Contributions in kind

The external co-financing may be made up of contributions in kind in order to cover other costs necessary to carry out the project. Such contributions must not exceed:

- either the costs actually borne and duly supported by accounting documents;
- or, in the absence of such documents, the costs generally accepted on the market in question.

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

In-kind contributions shall comply with national tax and social security rules.

➤ Eligible costs

Eligible costs are costs actually incurred by the beneficiary of a 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 final reports and audit certificates;

The period of eligibility of costs will start as specified in the grant agreement or the grant decision.

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 or work programme;
- ✓ they are necessary for the implementation of the action or of the work programme which is the subject of the grant;
- ✓ they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular being recorded in the accounting records of the beneficiary and determined according to the applicable accounting standards of the country where the beneficiary is established and according to the usual cost accounting practices of the beneficiary;
- ✓ they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation;
- ✓ they are reasonable, justified, and comply with the 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/project with the corresponding accounting statements and supporting documents.

Eligible direct costs

The eligible direct costs for the action/ work programme are those costs which, **with due regard for the conditions of eligibility set out above**, are identifiable as specific costs directly linked to the performance of the action or the work programme and which can therefore be booked to it directly, such as :

- *the costs of 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 whenever 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 (for meetings, including kick-off meetings where applicable, conferences etc) provided that these costs are in line with the beneficiary's usual practices,*
- *costs of travel (for meetings, including kick-off meetings where applicable, conferences etc), provided that these costs are in line with the beneficiary's usual practices on travel,*
- *depreciation cost of equipment (new or second-hand): only the portion of the equipment's depreciation corresponding to the duration of the action/project and the rate of actual use for the purposes of the action may be taken into account by the Commission,*
- *costs of content, consumables and supplies, provided that they are identifiable and assigned to the action/project;*
- *costs entailed by implementation contracts awarded by the beneficiaries for the purposes of carrying out the action/project, provided that the conditions laid down in the grant agreement or grant decision are met;*

- *costs of financial support to third parties provided that the conditions laid down in the grant agreement or grant decision are met;*
 - *costs arising directly from requirements linked to the implementation of the action/project (dissemination of information, specific evaluation of the action, translations, reproduction);*
 - *costs relating to a pre-financing guarantee lodged by the beneficiary of the grant, where required;*
 - *costs relating to external audits where required in support of the requests for payments;*
- Value added tax ("VAT") is not eligible.⁴

Eligible indirect costs (overheads)

- a flat-rate amount of 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/project.

Indirect costs may not include costs entered under another budget heading.

Applicants's attention is drawn to the fact that for those organisations that already receive an operating grant, indirect costs are not eligible under this Call.

Overhead costs must cover, among others, the following categories:

- a) **Premises and related expenses** (e.g. rent, insurance, administration and management costs...)
- b) **Office expenses and consumables** (e.g. telephone, postal services, photocopies, goods or equipment)

➤ **Ineligible costs**

- 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 a beneficiary;
- costs declared by a beneficiary and covered by another action receiving a European Union grant. In particular, indirect costs shall not be eligible under a grant for an

⁴ The recipient of a grant cannot charge VAT on the proposed activities. As regards the recipient's own costs and expenditure, two situations may arise:

- the recipient is liable to VAT under the national laws of his country: in that event, they may deduct VAT from purchases made in performance of the agreement with the Commission. In this case the VAT is not considered to be an eligible cost and will not be refunded to the recipient;
- the recipient is not subject to VAT under the national laws of his country: in that event, they may not deduct VAT from purchases made in performance of the agreement with the Commission and they must bear all amounts of VAT involved.

action awarded to a beneficiary who already receives an operating grant financed from the Union budget during the period in question;

- contributions in kind;
- excessive or reckless expenditure.

➤ **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 or work programme, upon approval of the request for payment containing the following documents *including relevant supporting documents where appropriate*:

- a final report providing details of the implementation and results of the action/work programme ;
- the final financial statement of costs actually incurred,
- where applicable, a certificate on the financial statements of the action or the work programme and underlying accounts.

EU grants may not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit within the framework of the action or the work programme 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 or work programme.

11.3. Payment arrangements

A pre-financing payment corresponding to 30% of the grant amount will be transferred to the beneficiary within 30 days either of the date when the last of the two parties signs the agreement, or of the notification of the grant decision, provided all requested guarantees have been received.

One interim payment(s) shall be paid to the beneficiary at the mid-term of the action, in accordance with the provisions of the grant agreement. The interim payment(s) is intended to cover the beneficiary's expenditure on the basis of a request for payment when the action has been partly carried out. For the purpose of determining the amount due as interim payment, the reimbursement rate to be applied to the eligible costs approved by the Commission shall be 75%.

The total amount of pre-financing and interim payment shall not exceed 70% of the maximum grant amount.

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 above). If the total of earlier payments is higher than the final grant amount, the beneficiary will be required to reimburse the amount paid in excess by the Commission through a recovery order.

11.4. Pre-financing guarantee

In the event that the applicant's financial capacity is not satisfactory, a pre-financing guarantee for up to the same amount as the pre-financing may be requested in order to limit the financial risks linked to the pre-financing payment.

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

The guarantee may be replaced by a joint and several guarantee by a third party or by a joint guarantee of the beneficiaries of an action who are parties to the same grant agreement.

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

12. PUBLICITY⁵

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.

The EU is not responsible for the views displayed in the publications and/or in conjunction with the activities for which the grant is used.

12.2. By the Commission

All information relating to grants awarded in the course of a financial year shall be published on an internet site of the European Union institutions no later than the 30 June of the year following the financial year in which the grants were awarded.

The Commission will publish the following information:

- name of the beneficiary
- address of the beneficiary when the latter is a legal person, region when the beneficiary is a natural person, as defined on NUTS 2 level⁶ if he/she is domiciled within EU or equivalent if domiciled outside EU,
- subject of the grant,
- amount awarded.

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

⁵ Ownership and use of results is also addressed under the EC's General Conditions for grant agreements (see model grant agreement in annex)

⁶ European Union Official Journal L 39, of 10 February 2007.

13. DATA PROTECTION

The reply to any call for proposals involves the recording and processing of personal data (such as name, address and CV). Such data will be processed pursuant to Regulation (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 application in accordance with the specifications of the call for proposal will be processed solely for that purpose by DG Connect. Details concerning the processing of personal data are available on 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 2014/792 of 13.11.2014 on the Early Warning System (for more information see the Privacy Statement on: 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 (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.

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.

➤ Submission on paper

Application forms are available at <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/newsroom/call-proposals/all>.

Applications shall be submitted on the correct form, duly completed, dated, showing a balanced budget (revenue/expenditure), submitted in *five* copies (one original clearly identified as such, plus *four* copies), and signed by the person authorised to enter into legally binding commitments on behalf of the coordinator.

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

Applicants are encouraged to include an electronic format of the proposal (e.g., USB flash drive or CD) with the printed original and copies requested. However, electronic submission is not mandatory.

Applications must be sent to the following address:

*European Commission
Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content & Technology
Directorate Media and Data – Media Support Programmes (Unit G6)
For the attention of the Head of Unit (BU25 05/130)
1049 Brussels, Belgium*

- **by registered post, date as postmark;**
- **in person, date as receipt,**
- **by courier service, date of receipt by the courier service.**

Applications sent by fax or e-mail will **not** be accepted, but please send an email to Cnect-multimedia-actions@ec.europa.eu to inform us about your submission on paper.

➤ Contact

Questions and requests for clarification may be sent **until 15 September 2016** to:

Cnect-multimedia-actions@ec.europa.eu

Questions drafted in English will receive a reply within 5 working days. This delay can be longer if a translation is needed from any EU official language. Replies will be provided in English.

Questions will be gathered and published, anonymously, on:

<https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/newsroom/call-proposals/all>

➤ Annexes:

- Application form
- Checklist of documents to be provided
- Estimated budget form
- Legal entities form, available on ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal-entities_en.cfm
- Financial identification form, available on ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/financial_id/financial-id_en.cfm
- Declaration on honour
- Financial viability check tool
- Model grant agreement