

**COMMUNITY PROGRAMME FOR
EMPLOYMENT
AND SOCIAL SOLIDARITY**

CALL FOR PROPOSALS VP/2013/006

**FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF 4-YEAR
FRAMEWORK PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS
WITH EU-LEVEL NGOs NETWORKS ACTIVE IN THE
PROMOTION OF SOCIAL INCLUSION AND POVERTY
REDUCTION or ACTIVE IN THE PROMOTION OF
MICROFINANCE AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE FINANCE**

Period covered: 01.01.2014 – 31.12.2017

**COMMUNITY PROGRAMME
FOR EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL SOLIDARITY**

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FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF 4-YEAR FRAMEWORK PARTNERSHIP
AGREEMENTS WITH EU-LEVEL NGOs NETWORKS ACTIVE IN THE
PROMOTION OF SOCIAL INCLUSION AND POVERTY REDUCTION
or ACTIVE IN THE PROMOTION OF MICROFINANCE AND SOCIAL
ENTERPRISE FINANCE**

I INTRODUCTION: THE PROGRAMMES

Community Programme for employment and social solidarity (PROGRESS):

PROGRESS¹ is the EU employment and social solidarity programme, set up for the period 2007-2013 to provide financial support for the attainment of the European Union's objectives in employment, social affairs and equal opportunities and of the Europe 2020 Strategy. This strategy, which has a strong social dimension, aims at turning the EU into a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy delivering high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion. The European Union needs coherent and complementary contributions from different policy strands, methods and instruments, including the PROGRESS programme, to support the Member States in delivering on the Europe 2020's goals.

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

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

More specifically, PROGRESS supports:

- The implementation of the European Employment Strategy (section 1);
- The implementation of the open method of coordination in the field of social protection and inclusion (section 2);
- The improvement of the working environment and conditions including health and safety at work and reconciling work and family life (section 3);
- The effective implementation of the principle of non-discrimination and promotion of its mainstreaming in all EU policies (section 4);
- The effective implementation of the principle of gender equality and promotion of its mainstreaming in all EU policies (section 5).

This call for proposals is issued in the context of the implementation of the 2013 annual work plan which can be consulted at <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=658&langId=fr>

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

EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI):

As PROGRESS is ending in 2013, the Commission has adopted its proposal² for a new programme on the 6th of October 2011, the Programme for Social Change and Innovation (PSCI).³ This new programme should come into effect on 1st January 2014.

The Commission's proposal on PSCI integrates and extends the coverage of three existing programmes: Progress (Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity), EURES (European Employment Services) and the European Progress Microfinance Facility. The general objectives of the programme are defined as below:

- (a) Strengthen ownership of the Union objectives in the employment, social and working conditions fields among key EU and national policy-makers, as well as other interested parties in order to bring about concrete and coordinated actions at both Union and Member State level.
- (b) Support the development of adequate, accessible and efficient social protection systems and labour markets and facilitate policy reform, by promoting good governance, mutual learning and social innovation.
- (c) Modernise Union law in line with the Smart Regulation principles and ensure that Union law on matters relating to working conditions is effectively applied.
- (d) Promote workers' geographical mobility and boost employment opportunities by developing Union labour markets that are open and accessible to all.
- (e) Promote employment and social inclusion by increasing the availability and accessibility of microfinance for vulnerable groups and micro-enterprises, and by increasing access to finance for social enterprises.

The PROGRESS axe of PSCI is foreseen to continue the current activities of PROGRESS (i.e. policy coordination, sharing of best practices, capacity-building and testing innovative policies). It would also increase its contribution to social policy experimentation and to the identification of good practices, the aim being to up-scale the most successful measures with the support of the new European Social Fund.

The European Parliament and the Council reached a political agreement regarding the new Programme on the 28 June 2013, including for a new name the "EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation" (EaSI) with a proposed budget of €15 billion for the 2014-20 period.

All activities commencing after the 1st of January 2014 under this contract will have to take into consideration the changes related to the new Programme and will have to satisfy with the implementing conditions of PSCI including in term of monitoring and evaluation. The Commission might change the objectives, activities, specifications and deliverables of the contract accordingly, during the extension for 2014 and onwards.

² COM(2011) 609 final

³ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0609:FIN:EN:PDF>

II PURPOSE OF THE CALL

The purpose of this call is to establish long-term cooperation between the European Commission and European-level networks active in promoting social inclusion and poverty reduction in society as well as European-level networks active in the promotion of access to finance (microfinance or social enterprise finance). The legal bases for this call are Article 9 (c) of Decision No 1672/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity – PROGRESS (employment and social inclusion strands) and its successor for the period 2014-2020 (see above)

The EU level networks organisations play an important role in promoting changes in employment and social policies and legislation. In the current macroeconomic climate in particular, there is the need to re-build the citizens' trust in the European project and to re-gain the support of the grassroots organisations thereby creating the necessary legitimacy for a social Europe.

While the Member States have the primary responsibility for the implementation of social and employment policies, the EU can strengthen synergies with civil society organisations to help overcome challenges related to poverty, inequality, social exclusion, and unemployment.

By participating in the policy process and articulating citizens' viewpoints EU level NGO networks strengthen the ownership of European objectives in the area of employment and social policies in particular where it concerns designing and implementing policy reforms, creating stronger democracies.

Nevertheless, the achievement of the **EU 2020 Strategy and the related poverty target**⁴ is requiring stakeholders to coordinate their actions in order to meet the agreed objectives. This entails notably pulling together resources and experience from the NGO sector, social partners, social enterprise and microfinance providers as well as the business sector in order to best support the public bodies to implement the adequate reform measures. The importance of improving current partnerships between EU institutions, Member States and other European and national stakeholders is highlighted by the "**Platform against poverty and social exclusion**"⁵ which also proposes extending the dialogue to new actors.

In this respect EU level NGO networks have the capacity to create alliances with a varied range of stakeholders (EU-level and national NGOs, local authorities, social partners, etc...) and ensuring accountability for the commitment they made and the results delivered. While representing the interests of their constituency, EU networks are able to mobilise their national members to raise awareness on the main EU objectives in the social field (policies and tools). This helps to increase knowledge, to collect relevant information at grassroots level and encourage mutual learning and support evidence-based policy development. EU level NGO networks are therefore in a key position to construct coherent approaches with the relevant authorities at EU and national level since they can provide expertise and information which are relevant for policy formulation and implementation. Given the complexity of the governance system in the social policy process, it is essential to secure the quality of the input from both knowledgeable and professional organisations as the engagement and capacity of the national actors is very uneven across Europe. Furthermore budgetary pressure and reduction of costs resulting from the economic crisis can put at risk the sustainability of funding at all levels.

This call is to strengthen the capacity of the EU-level NGO networks to take part in the

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/europe-2020-in-a-nutshell/targets/index_en.htm

⁵ http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/social_inclusion_fight_against_poverty/em0046_en.htm

implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy and related policy instruments towards the achievement of the European inclusive growth priority.

Participating countries

This call is open to all PROGRESS-participating countries: EU Member States, EFTA/EEA countries (Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein), and EU candidate countries (Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey).

III AREA OF ACTIVITIES COVERED BY THE CALL

Applicants must choose one of these areas:

- 1. European level networks active in the promotion of social inclusion and poverty reduction**
- 2. European level networks active in the promotion of access to finance (microfinance and social enterprise finance).**

IV THE FRAMEWORK PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS AND SPECIFIC AGREEMENTS FOR THE ANNUAL OPERATING GRANT

The conclusion of framework partnership agreements will help to forge strong and enriching relations with a number of key EU networks whilst affording a more stable and structured environment of mutual benefit for the Commission and the selected organisations.

The multi-annual contractual period also reflects the very nature of employment and social affairs initiatives whose impact is only visible in the medium- to long-term.

Partnerships are implemented by two legal instruments: framework partnership agreements and annual specific grant agreements for an operating grant.

- Firstly, the **framework partnership agreement** will set out the framework conditions governing potential grants to partners on the basis of a quadrennial strategic action plan (see chapter V).

Framework partnership agreements define the respective roles and responsibilities of the Commission and the networks in implementing the partnership. They present the common objectives agreed by the networks and the Commission; the type of activities envisaged; the procedure for awarding a specific agreement for an annual operating grant; the general rights and the obligations of each party under the framework partnership agreement and the specific agreements.

This first-level agreement does not constitute an obligation for the Commission to award a specific agreement for an annual operating grant.

- Secondly, the **specific grant agreement for an operating grant**, based upon the framework partnership agreement, contains all the purely specific provisions governing the subject of the concrete annual work programme. They present the expected outputs to be achieved with EU grant and the planned activities to be carried out over the year. Specific agreements can only be signed with the organisations which have previously signed a framework partnership agreement with the Commission.

LEGAL INSTRUMENT		ASSESSMENT PROCESS	AWARD CRITERIA
Framework partnership agreement	Does not constitute an obligation for the Commission to award an annual operating grant.	Awarding of the framework partnership agreement is subject to the Commission's assessment of the quadrennial strategic action plan and the estimated budget for 4 years for the applicants satisfying the eligibility and selection criteria.	Award criteria for the framework partnership agreement : (see pg 11)
Specific agreement for an annual operating grant	Can be granted only to organisations with which a framework partnership agreement has been previously signed with the Commission.	Awarding of a specific agreement is subject to the Commission's assessment of the detailed annual work programme and detailed annual budget as well as to the availability of budgetary credits	Award criteria for the Specific agreement for the first year (see pg15)

Applicants must **submit both the quadrennial strategic action plan and their detailed annual work programme at the same time**. For this purpose, two separate templates and related budget forms are attached to the present Call.

The selection process will be in two phases:

- 1) First phase: the Commission will assess the quadrennial strategic action plan and select the EU-level networks. Selected NGO networks will be invited to sign a 4-year framework partnership agreement.
- 2) Second phase (*only for those organisations having signed a framework partnership agreement*): the Commission will assess the detailed annual work programme and corresponding annual budget. If approved, and subject to the availability of budgetary credits, the organisation will sign an annual specific agreement with the Commission.

V QUADRENNIAL STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN (2014-2017)

The 4-year strategic action plan should include elements common to the 2 areas of activities in the call (specified under point III) and aspects more specifically related to the chosen area.

V.1 Content of the strategic action plan

V 1.1 Elements common to both areas of activities as specified under point III

The strategic action plan will present the vision, the mission and the value of the organisation as well as the strategic objectives the organisation is committed to implement with the European Union's support.

It is expected that the objectives identified will create the basis for collaboration with the European Commission and other stakeholders in supporting the achievement of the EU 2020 headline targets and the implementation of the relevant policy instruments in the area of social and employment policy. This implies in particular facilitating a two-way communication between the Commission and stakeholders at European, national, regional and local levels, ensuring their constructive involvement in the formulation and implementation of EU social and employment policies.

V 1.2 Aspects specifics to each area

In addition to the priorities, outcomes and principles mentioned above, the activities carried out by EU level NGO networks in their selected area should focus on the following:

Area 1: European level networks active in promoting social inclusion and poverty reduction

Framework partnership agreements will be concluded with European-level networks of organisations involved in the promotion of social inclusion and poverty reduction, both at EU and national level.

The quadrennial strategic action plans presented will have to comply with the Commission's priorities in this field, that is to say:

1. Support the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of initiatives undertaken to support the policy objectives of Europe 2020 Strategy and in particular the Social Investment Package⁶ through the main EU driven processes such as the Open Method of Coordination (OMC)⁷ on social protection and social inclusion and the European semester.
2. Support stakeholders' involvement in the policy process: activities should in particular directly relate to the support of national member organisations in their involvement in the implementation of the main political EU-driven processes.

⁶ The Social Investment Package comprises a Communication on "Social Investment for Growth and Cohesion" (COM(2013)83), a Recommendation on 'Investing in Children' (C(2013)778), and staff working documents covering different areas of social policy. The Social Investment Package (SIP) supports MS in their implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy and achievement of its targets and gives guidance on making their social policies more efficient and effective in response to the significant challenges they currently face. The Communication sets out a policy framework, concrete actions to be taken by Member States and the Commission, and guidance on the use of EU funds to support reforms.

⁷ The integration of the social OMC into the Europe 2020 strategy provides a stronger basis for the EU to meet its social goals. The instruments and tools that have been developed under the Social OMC are being adapted to the governance architecture of Europe 2020, to best serve the purposes of the new strategy. The EU-level networks supported under this call would be expected to engage with the OMC and the relevant strands of the Europe2020 strategy.

In addition, EU-level networks should encourage cooperation with other civil society organisations and social partners organisations both at EU, national, regional and local levels.

3. Strengthen the capacity of EU-level NGO networks and their national members, to support implementation of EU priorities as indicated under point 1 including their knowledge of relevant EU matters.
4. Providing data and strong evidence base on policy developments and trends as well as collection of relevant information about citizens' concerns and good practices (using the knowledge bank⁸) in the social policy field in the Member States, so as to contribute to better policy making.

Area 2: European level networks active in the promotion of access to finance (microfinance or social enterprise finance).

Framework partnership agreements will be concluded with European-level networks of organisations active in the promotion of access to finance (microfinance or social enterprise finance).

The quadrennial strategic plans presented will have to fit with the Commission's priorities in this field, that is to say:

1. Support the Commission in its outreach activities at EU, national and local level with the aim of ensuring the implementation of European policies in the relevant area (e.g. Programme for Employment and Social Innovation, European Social Fund, Social Business Initiative etc.).⁹
2. Reinforcing the capacity of the network's members, including through offering a platform for the exchange of good practices in the relevant field, and raising awareness about relevant EU policies.
3. Voicing the concerns and expectations of organisations facilitating access to finance to (potential) entrepreneurs from disadvantaged and underrepresented groups / social enterprises.
4. Providing data / research on developments in the field and on priority topics

Applicants from both areas must present a 4-year strategic action plan in their proposal for this call by means of the attached Strategic Plan templates.

V.2 Quadrennial budgetary estimation

Applications must include a budgetary estimation for the four-year period, with a twofold

⁸ The Social Investment Package announced in particular the establishment of a knowledge bank to facilitate the exchange of good practice. The knowledge bank should allow experts, stakeholders and policy makers to define social policy challenges, propose solutions and discuss their strengths, weaknesses, limitations and transferability. The Commission will establish such a tool which should also be widely used by the EU-level networks supported under this call.

⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/social_business/index_en.htm

purpose:

- The estimated budget of the framework partnership agreement (for running cost subsidies) should provide information on the estimated income and expenditure related to the 4-year strategic plan and be presented in Euro. Partner organisations established in countries outside the Euro zone should be aware that they fully carry any exchange rate risk.
- In addition to the estimated budget for running cost subsidies linked to the implementation of the framework partnership agreement, the applicant organisation should also provide the Commission with a 4-year overview of its global income and expenditure.

Organisations should therefore fill in both pages of the quadrennial budgetary estimation form ("Estimated budget for a framework partnership agreement" and "global estimated quadrennial budget of the applicant organisation").

VI EXCLUSION, ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION CRITERIA for the Framework Partnership Agreement

a) Exclusion criteria

Applicants must be in conformity with Articles 106(1) and 107 to 109 of the Financial Regulation.

b) Eligibility criteria

Eligibility of the applicant

The applicant organisations must be European-level organisations:

- (a) properly constituted and registered legal entity established in one of the PROGRESS participating countries for at least three years;
- (b) non-governmental, non-profit-making, and independent of industry, commercial and business or other conflicting interests, whose members are mainly non-profit organisations;
- (c) whose mission falls under the objectives and scope of the priorities established under each relevant section of the call, namely
 - they should be active in the field of promoting social inclusion and poverty reduction (area 1)
 - or
 - they should be networks of financial intermediaries active in the promotion of access to finance (microfinance or social enterprise finance) (area 2);
- (d) whose main purpose is to contribute to promoting greater social inclusion and job creation and strengthening social protection;

- (e) which have national member organisations in at least fifteen Member States of the European Union;
- (f) which are mandated by their members, through a Management Board or other administrative forum, to represent these members at the EU level and to be responsible for the activities of the network;
- (g) not pursuing general objectives directly or indirectly contrary to the policies of the Union or be associated with disreputable projects or images.

Eligibility of the application:

The 4 years strategic action plan must fit in with the activities under the PROGRESS Programme and the future Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) and the objectives of this Call.

c) Selection

The selection criteria will enable the Commission to assess the applicant organisation's financial and operational capacity to complete the proposed quadrennial work programme.

Only organisations with the necessary financial and operational capacity may be considered for award.

- Financial capacity: applicants must have access to solid and adequate funding to maintain their activities for the four-year period and to help finance them as necessary. As evidence of this, the applicant must:
 - attach a copy of the organisation's annual full accounts for the two last financial years preceding the submission of the application after the accounts have been closed.
 - specify all contributions made by donors other than by the Union including by the members.
 - attach an external audit report produced by an approved auditor certifying the accounts for the two last financial years available.

- Operational capacity: applicants must have a sound administrative and financial management structure, the operational resources (technical, management, etc.) and the professional skills and qualifications needed to successfully complete the proposed work programme, as well as the ability to implement it. The applicants must have a strong track record of competence and experience in the field. To this end, the following information must be enclosed in support of the application:
 - the organisation's organisational structure: capacity of staff, budget control and financial management, a description of the roles and responsibilities of each staff

member, the curricula vitae of senior staff members as well as a list of the members of the management board;

- any references relating to participation in actions financed by the European Union, conclusion of grant agreements and/or contracts with the Commission or other international organisations and Member States over the last 3 years.

VII AWARD CRITERIA for the Framework Partnership Agreement

Applications from European level organisations which satisfy the above eligibility and selection criteria will then be assessed according to the following award criteria:

1. Quality of the proposal (60 points)

The quality will be judged by the extent to which the quadrennial strategy:

- is in line with the objectives set out in the Decision establishing the PROGRESS programme and the Regulation establishing the future Programme for Employment and Social Innovation; (4 points)
- corresponds to EU policy objectives in one of the areas covered by the call. A clear link should be made with the most recent EU strategic documents; (4 points)
- is clear, realistic and detailed, in particular as regards the definition of the objectives and their potential to achieve the desired results (see points V.1.2), and this in a 4 year perspective; (12 points)
- explains its potential impact on EU and national policy-shaping and implementation of legislation and policies; (16 points)
- proves its potential to voice the public's concerns from different regions of Europe (including in EFTA and candidate countries) and to promote them in all EU and national policies; (14 points)
- includes awareness raising and knowledge-enhancement activities of EU and national policies and detailed solid and concrete actions to disseminate the results of their work; (5 points)
- comprises appropriate means for monitoring and evaluating the activities of the organisation. (5 points)

2. Effective and efficient organisation of work (40 points)

The effective and efficient organisation of work will be judged by the extent to which the applicant:

- outlines its relations with its national members, including arrangements to ensure involvement of member organisations in policy development and policy statements, goal-orientation and planning practices, reporting methods (12 points)
- demonstrates its ability to interact with external actors, including key institutions, other NGO networks and relevant constituents when designing and implementing each activity envisaged (10 points)
- shows the organisation's ability to encourage cooperation and membership in PROGRESS participating countries(8 points)
- demonstrates its ability to render its achievements in advancing EU objectives and priorities both visible and transferable. (10 points)

In order to be considered for signing a Framework Partnership Agreement, the proposal must obtain a minimum of 70% of the total available points.

VIII PROVISIONAL CALENDAR FOR THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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| • DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS: | 6 September 2013 |
| • DECISION ON AWARD OF PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS | November 2013 |
| • CONCLUSION OF PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS | December 2013 |

The Commission will register proposals, which have been submitted on a properly completed standard form electronically and on a hard copy, **by the Friday 6 September 2013** (postmark will serve as proof) as detailed in section XV below.

The Commission will assess the proposals against the exclusion, eligibility and selection criteria and then the award criteria listed under points VI and VII of the present call.

The Commission will inform each applicant of the final decision taken, including reasons for rejection or non-eligibility.

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

Signature of the framework partnership agreements with the selected organisations should take place before end of 2013. The framework partnerships will be concluded for a period of four years, for the period running from 1st January 2014 to 31st December 2017.

Signature of the framework partnership agreement by the parties shall not give rise to any obligation on the Commission to award a specific agreement for an annual operating grant.

IX INDICATIVE GLOBAL AMOUNT FOR THE 4-YEAR PERIOD

Financial support may be awarded for part of the operating costs of European organisations active in the areas detailed in point III above. For the first year, the financial support under the PROGRESS programme covers an indicative maximum amount of EUR 11 000 000. For the subsequent years the financial support will be awarded under the new EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) and the annual financial support will remain indicatively the same.

X THE ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME for 2014

All applicants responding to the present call are requested to submit an annual work programme and the corresponding detailed budget for the first year completing the template provided for this purpose. Following the signature of the framework partnership agreement with the selected organisations, the Commission will proceed to the assessment of their annual work programmes together with the detailed annual budget.

Specific grant agreement for an operating grant for 2014 will be signed as soon as possible after the assessment of the annual work programme.

An adjustment of the budget and related work programme could be proposed by the Commission. Specific agreements for an annual operating grant will then be signed with successful organisations, within the limits of available budgetary credits.

X.1 Content of the annual work programme

Area 1: European level networks active in the field of combating poverty and social exclusion

In their annual work programme applicants can request funds for one or both of the following modules:

Module 1: Facilitation of joint actions	<p>Under this module, the applicant proposes to facilitate the cooperation between EU level NGO networks in social policy areas of common interest¹⁰ and in which the promotion of joint actions can be envisaged over the year.</p> <p>The aim is for the different EU level networks to find synergies in their actions and to promote an efficient working system coupled with better use of available resources.</p> <p>Cooperation between EU level networks could be developed in the context of the</p>
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¹⁰ In line with the policy objectives indicated under section V.1.2

	<p>Europe 2020 strategy such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -under the EU semester process -in the implementation of the Social Investment Package -in the implementation of the Platform against poverty and social exclusion <p>A single network per joint action selected will receive funding for this activity. An applicant may request funding for only one joint action. When proposing a joint action, the applicant NGO should present the explicit consent of its leadership from a reasonable number of other NGOs participating in this joint action.</p>
<p>Module 2: Individual actions</p>	<p>Under this module, in line with the policy priorities indicated above (chapter V), the applicant proposes actions covering the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of initiatives undertaken to support the policy objectives of Europe 2020 Strategy and in particular the Social Investment Package; support to the Commission in its outreaching activities at European, national, regional and local level; collection of relevant information about citizens' concerns at the national/local level, awareness and peer learning activities; strengthening the network's financial independence and managerial capacity, development of communication tools for the network, training of staff or of national members etc.</p>

Area 2: European level networks active in the promotion of access to finance (microfinance or social enterprise finance).

There are no modules to choose for Area 2

X.2 Award criteria for the Specific agreement for an annual operating grant for the first year.

Specific grant agreement for an operating grant for 2014, based upon the framework partnership agreements, will be signed following an assessment of the proposals based on the below-mentioned criteria:

- Coherence of the annual work programme with the Framework Partnership Agreement; (12 points)
- The extent to which the proposed programme takes into consideration the objectives laid down in the PROGRESS programme and the Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) and respond to actual needs relevant for the period concerned; (12 points)
- The added value and relevance at European level of the programme proposed as well its dissemination and availability to all countries involved in the PROGRESS and EaSI Programmes; (22 points)
- The clarity and feasibility of the programme and each of its modules, including timetable and methodology and in particular its capacity to achieve the planned objectives; (22 points)
- The quality, efficiency and feasibility of the work organisation including a clear description of the allocation of human resources in relation to the individual tasks or activities; (16 points)
- The financial quality of the programme, including the existence of a clear, detailed, and reasonable budget which is coherent with the actions proposed . (16 points)

In order to be considered for signing a Specific Agreement, the proposal must obtain a minimum of 70% of the total available points.

X.3 Available budget and co-financing rate

For 2014 the indicative amount for the specific annual grant agreements will be:

- **A total of EUR 10 000 000 altogether for the EU level NGO networks active in the promotion of social inclusion and poverty reduction.**
- **A total of EUR 1 000 000 altogether for European level networks of organisations active in the promotion of access to finance (microfinance or social enterprise finance).**

As a general rule, EU support under the PROGRESS Programme is limited to 80% of the total eligible costs. This will be the applicable maximum co-financing rate for the specific operating grants covering the 2014 budgetary year of the partners.

Specific operating grants covering subsequent budgetary years of the partners will be awarded to successful organisations in accordance with the budget available and the co-financing rate indicated under the Programme for Employment and Social Innovation and subject to the availability of budgetary credits.

For area 1:

A budget for module 1 could be granted between EUR 100.000 and EUR 300.000 per

year and per network. An applicant may request funding for only one joint action.

A budget for module 2 could be granted between €100.000 and €1.000.000 per year and per network.

For area 2:

The minimum amount of the annual grant that an applicant can request is EUR 100.000 and the maximum amount is EUR 1.000.000.

XI COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION PLAN FOR 2014

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

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

XII. REQUIREMENTS ON HOW THE ACTIVITIES SHALL BE CARRIED OUT FOR 2014

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

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

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

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

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

XIII PUBLICITY AND INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS FOR 2014

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

XIV REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR 2014

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

The Commission regularly monitors the effect of PROGRESS supported initiatives and considers how they contribute to PROGRESS outcomes as defined in the Strategic Framework. In this context, the Beneficiary will be asked to dedicatedly work in close cooperation with the Commission and/or persons authorised by it to define the expected contribution and the set of performance measures which this contribution will be assessed against. As a direct contribution to the PROGRESS Annual Performance Monitoring Report, the Beneficiary will be asked to submit a short quantitative questionnaire on the outputs

produced over the course of a given calendar year. At the end of the action, the Beneficiary will also be asked to report on its own performance to the Commission and/or persons authorised by it against a template which will be annexed to the grant agreement

XV PROCEDURE FOR SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

1. Application form:

The compulsory online application form is an electronic form which must be filled by using the Internet Web System SWIM at the:

<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/swim>

This system allows the introduction, editing, validation, printing and submission of the application form. Once the application is submitted electronically, a print out of a copy has to be signed by the legal representative of the organisation submitting the proposal and be sent to the Commission as explained below. After submission of the application electronically, no changes are possible.

2. Submission formalities:

1) All the required documents as listed in the following check-list must be submitted via the Swim application

http://applicationservers.cc.cec.eu.int:8085/employment_social/swim/displayWelcome.do

2) Please send your cover letter of application together with all required documents in one original and two copies to the address below by Friday 6 September 2013 (their submission date will be taken as the date of dispatch, as evidenced by the postmark or the express courier receipt date).

a) by post to the **following postal address:**

**European Commission
DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
UNIT EMPL D.2: Call for Proposals VP/2013/006
Application for area (see point III): 1-2
J-27 01/
CAD Service
B-1049 Brussels
Belgium**

b) or by **express courier service** to the following **delivery address:**

**European Commission
DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
Unit EMPL.D.2: Call for proposals VP/2013/006 –
Application for Area (see point III): 1-2
Service central de réception du courrier
Avenue du Bourget 1
B-1140 Brussels
Belgium**

Proposals may also be delivered personally against a signed and dated receipt to address (b) above, by 16h00, on Friday 6 September 2013.

The reference of the call for proposals and relevant area must be indicated on the envelope.

In case of hand-delivery, please keep the receipt signed and dated by the official in the Commission's central mail department who took delivery as proof of submission. This department is open from 08:00 to 17:00 from Monday to Thursday, from 08:00 to 16:00 on Friday, it is closed on Saturdays, Sundays and on Commission holidays.

Failure to submit the application by post and via SWIM application by 6 September 2013 to the Commission will render the application inadmissible.

Complementary documents sent by fax will not be considered for evaluation unless requested by the European Commission. Any document sent after the deadline will not be accepted unless requested by the European Commission.

The applicant's attention is drawn to the fact that incomplete or unsigned forms, hand-written forms and those sent by fax or e-mail will not be taken into consideration.

3) Questions related to the current call

Questions concerning the present Call shall be addressed to the following mail-boxes:

Questions of general nature: empl-vp-2013-006@ec.europa.eu

XVI CHECK-LIST OF THE DOCUMENTS TO ACCOMPANY YOUR APPLICATION

Please number the documents as shown and send in the following supporting documents **in triplicate (original + two copies or three copies where original is not required)**.

Order	Document	Download SWIM
1	Original cover letter formally submitting the application for funding (please quote the call VP/2013/006 and the area for which you are applying for) duly signed and dated by the legal representative of the applicant organisation.	
2	Original of the application form – generated by the SWIM application dated and signed by the legal representative at the bottom of this part	YES
3	Original declaration - signed by the legal representative of the network on his/her honour that the organisation is not in one of the situations listed in Article 106(1) and Article 107 to 109 of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities.	YES
4	Original legal entity form duly filled in and signed – along with the official statutes and official proof of existence (see item 5 below).	YES

5	<p>The "Legal entity" form - should be returned together with:</p> <p>* a copy of any official document (e.g. official gazette, register of companies, etc.) showing the partner organisation's name and address and the registration number given to it by the national authorities;</p> <p>* a copy of the VAT registration document if applicable and if the VAT number does not appear on the official document referred to above.</p>	
6	Original of the financial identification form - to be signed and stamped by the bank and dated and signed by the legal representative of the applicant.	YES
7	The most recent activity reports or annual reports or a list of the main activities carried out in the last two years.	
8	The curricula vitae of all European-level senior staff members as well as a list of members of the management board.	
9	Copy of the signed original audit report produced by an approved external auditor certifying the accounts for the two last financial years available	
10	Original of the annex to the application form : "Quadrennial strategic action plan" by using the mandatory structure for proposals. The legal representative must date and sign the form.	YES
11	Original of the annex to the application form: "Quadrennial budgetary estimation" by using the mandatory structure for proposals. The legal representative must sign and date the form.	YES
12	<p>Annex 1</p> <p>Original of the application form: "Annual work programme 2014" by using the mandatory structure for proposals. The legal representative must sign and date the form.</p>	
13	<p>Annex 2</p> <p>Original of the application form: "Annual detailed budget form for 2014" by using the mandatory structure for proposals. The legal representative must sign and date the form.</p>	
14	A copy of the organisation's annual full accounts for the two last financial years preceding the submission of the application after the accounts have been closed.	

15	A letter of commitment specifying all financial contributions made by donors other than by the Union including by members.	
16	External audit report produced by an approved auditor certifying the accounts for the two last financial years available.	
17	The organisation's organisational structure: capacity of staff, budget control and financial management, a description of the roles and responsibilities of each staff member.	
18	Any references relating to participation in actions financed by the European Union, conclusion of grant agreements and/or contracts with the Commission or other international organisations and Member States over the last 3 years.	
19	For applications under area 1 proposing a joint action under module 1: letters indicating the explicit consent of the leadership from the other NGOs participating in this joint action.	