

Call for proposals VP/2013/016 - PARES: Benchmarking between Employment Services

Answers to questions sent on the Call for proposals VP/2013/016

Version 1: 2014-01-14, questions 1-13

Version 2: 2014-01-21, questions 14-22

Version 3: 2014-02-12, questions 23-35

Version 4: 2014-02-19, question 36

Question 1: I am developing a project, but in order to better respond to the aim of the Call I would need a European partner. Have you got organizations, privates, publics or other types that are looking for a partner, that I could contact? Otherwise, are there contacts or something else where I could look to find European partners?

Answer 1: The European Commission does not provide input to applicants' proposals.

Question 2: I would like to ask question considering Progress Programme, especially PARES: Benchmarking between Employment Services. I have read general information about this programme, and because we are interested in it, I have question- if the project is funded, is the money paid before project realization, and is it paid in one tranche (I mean the whole benefit amount)?

Answer 2: See chapter 7 Payment procedures in the Financial guidelines for applicants

Question 4: Do the eligibility conditions established for applicants also apply to co-applicants? In particular, must both lead and co-applicant(s) be "public, private or third sector organisations whose main mission is the provision of employment services to jobseekers or job changers".

Answer 4: "Applicants" refers to both lead applicants and co-applicants

To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the Contracting Authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of applicants, or affiliated entity(ies), an action or specific activities.

Question 5: I read that eligible partnership for the PARES program "must include active co-applicants from participating PROGRESS countries". Is there any minimum, maximum or other requirement on the number and composition of the countries that have to be included in the partnership?

Answer 5: See chapter 5.2 for eligibility criteria.

Furthermore, the evaluation committee might take the composition of the partnership into account in the comparative assessment in accordance to the award criteria in chapter 5.4.

Question 6: According to eligibility conditions "Applicants must be legal persons properly constituted and registered in one of the EU Member States or other PROGRESS participating countries. Eligible applicants must be public, private or third sector organisations whose main mission is the provision of employment services to jobseekers or job changers." The question: is it possible to include as co-applicant a private subject for study and evaluation activities related to the action even though its core mission is not the provision of employment services?

Answer 6: See Answer 4.

Question 7: To what extent would be a subcontracted company allowed to carry out the action given that the PES would be the applicant and beneficiary?

Is there a maximum amount eligible for subcontracted activities? Would the staff costs and other direct costs (travel, catering...) used by the subcontracted company to carry out the action be eligible? Are there any operational specific criteria that the subcontracted company has to meet?

Answer 7: See 4.2.2.3, subheading Subcontracting and implementing contracts, in the Financial guidelines for applicants.

Question 8: In the proposal outline document for the abovementioned call, in point 5.2 it states that "the proposals must include active co-applicants from PROGRESS participating countries".

Could you please let me know what is meant by 'active co-applicant'?

Answer 8: Co-applicants are expected to participate throughout the project, providing human and other resources and delivering direct contributions to the activities proposed.

Question 9: The above mentioned document states that "Eligible applicants must be public, private or third sector organisations whose main mission is the provision of employment services to jobseekers or job changers." My question is: is it possible that [an organisation], whose main profile is not strictly connected with the provision of employment services, would be one of the applicants among other organisations such as Provincial Public Employment Agency etc. whose main mission is in line with the eligibility criteria? My point here is that the organisations aim to complement one another with a view to meet the target objectives.

Answer 9: See Answer 4.

Question 10: I represent [an organisation whose main mission is not the provision of employment services]. We are partners with a non-profit foundation [whose main mission is the provision on employment services]. We would like to apply to the Progress programme: PARES: Benchmarking between Employment Services. Consequently, if possible, we would like to learn more information about the conditions involved and if the partnerships

which a firm should conclude, could take place between this non-profit foundation, a school or a kindergarten.

Answer 10: See Answer 4

**Question 11: We would like to ask you about if a public foundation of [a university] can participate in the call VP-2013-016.
We have got as partners a Private enterprise and another University.**

Answer 11: See Answer 4

**Question 12: As a Local Public Authority, employment services are within our area of competence.
We want to know if the partnership can be local or it must involve more countries.
If so, how many countries and/or partners can participate?**

Answer 12: See Answer 5

Question 13: Can [an organisation], authorized by the Ministry of labour to be actor in the area of employment intermediation [...] be considered eligible, even if this is not obviously their "main" mission?

Answer 13: See answer 4

Question 14: Can I write the application form on line with the documents in [language] and to present this application in [language]?

Answer 14: See Section 6a Rules of submission in the Call for proposal

Question 15: I want to know also some information about which kind of activity are financed by European Union and which the budget available from EU

Answer 15: Question not related to this call.

Information can be found at http://europa.eu/about-eu/funding-grants/index_en.htm

Question 16: I would like to ask whether companies /organizations (private or public) active in placement in labour market programs for gaining work experience or responsible for apprenticeships can be included in this proposal. Or are we talking about employment in the traditional sense of the word.

Answer 16: See answer 4

Question 17: Can we have a combination of partners including PES, municipalities offering employment advice and career counselling and VET running placement programs or apprenticeships?

Answer 17: See Answer 4

Question 18: Please explain in detail what do you mean with the term employment services.

Of course finding a job to a job applicant is an employment service. However are placement programmes employment services? How about career counselling to people that want to change their jobs or to start their career? How about consulting to companies related to employment (employment law, issues of equality, identifying best practices in employment in association with the ministry of labour). Additionally if a Vocational institute is owned by a Public Employment Service and prepares people for the employment market are they eligible?

Answer 18: Public Employment Services are responsible for implementing active labour market policies and providing employment services in the public interest. They are part of relevant ministries, public bodies or (non for profit) corporations falling under public law.

Private and third sector employment services are any natural or legal person, independent of the public authorities, which provides one or more of the following labour market services:

- (a) services for matching offers of and applications for employment, without the employment service becoming a party to the employment relationships which may arise therefrom;
- (b) services consisting of employing workers (including jobseekers) with a view to making them available to a third party, who may be a natural or legal person which assigns their tasks and supervises the execution of these tasks;
- (c) other services relating to jobseeking, determined by the competent authority after consulting the most representative employers and workers organizations, such as the provision of information, that do not set out to match specific offers of and applications for employment.

Question 19: The call says that the proposals must include active co-applicants from PROGRESS participant countries. Is there any limitation on the minimum number of countries that must be involved in the partnership that applies to the call?

Answer 19: See Answer 5

Question 20: How many partners have to participate at the projects?

Answer 20: See Answer 5

Question 21: I'd like to know if you have been contacted by employment services looking for partners.

Answer 21: See Answer 1.

Question 22: I am interested in speaking with someone at your organisation about potential EU funding for [something not related to this call].

Please could you recommend the best person to speak with?

Answer 22: Question not related to this call.

The Europe Direct Contact Centre will answer your requests for information and documentation on activities covered by DG "Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion"

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=2&langId=en&acronym=contact>

Question 23: When it is said that "eligible applicants must be public, private or third sector organisations whose main mission is the provision of employment services" this refers strictly to the organisation's mission written in the statutes? [We] work ... in the area of youth employment... However, the mission written in our statutes is broader, not referring specifically to the provision of employment services. Can we be considered an eligible applicant or co-applicant?

Answer 23:

To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the Contracting Authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of applicants, or affiliated entity(ies), an action or specific activities.

Question 24: Sorry, but I find a contrast in the call: at the beginning it says:

"Besides the traditional role played by the public employment services, other actors such as private and third sector employment services, municipalities, universities as well as voluntary and community organisations are increasingly active in providing a broad range of client services."

Then it says: "Eligible applicants must be public, private or third sector organisations whose main mission is the provision of employment services to jobseekers or job changers"

As no University in Europe has got as "main" mission the provision of employment services, can the Universities be among the applicants or not?

Answer 24: The initial quote refers to the context in which the call for proposals is launched. See Call for proposals, page 5.

The eligibility criteria are specific to the call. Furthermore, see Answer 4

Question 25: I understand that affiliated entity named in the application form should have a legal or capital link to one of the applicant. Can you confirm this ?

Answer 25: See Financial guidelines for applicants, page 4-5, for a definition of affiliated entities.

Question 26: The application can include: "associate organization" or "third parties" to play a role in or making a financial contribution to the action. Is it enough for them only to sign the letter of commitment or do they have to produce other documents?

Can they manage part of the budget or should we include them in the subcontracting if we want to externalize to them, for instance, the external evaluation or a specific report or the whole communication package?

Answer 26: See Financial guidelines for applicants, page 5, for definitions of associate organisations and third parties.

See Financial guidelines for applicants, page 5-6, for documents to be provided by associate organisations and third parties, respectively.

See Financial guidelines for applicants, pages 11-12, for rules on subcontracting.

Question 27: Declaration of Honour Form, the amount to be indicated in EUR, is the total grant requested to the EC (of the project) or total grant requested by of each co-applicant (which should sign its corresponding grant)?

Answer 27: Total grant requested for the project.

Question 28: Which is the role of an affiliated entity? Does it have budget?

Answer 28: See Answer 25.

Question 29: For "Contracts for implementing the action" 5.000€ is for the total amount of external expertise or for each co-applicant's external expertise?

Answer 29: See Financial guidelines for applicants, pages 11-12, for rules on subcontracting. The form at the point 17 of the checklist is mandatory for every external expertise exceeding € 5,000 irrespective of the applicants.

Question 30: For "Letter of Commitment", what does "cash contribution to the action" mean? Are they expenses incurred for the implementation of activities duly justified through invoices?

Answer 30: The cash contribution refers to the amount to be provided by each entity participating in the project. See Financial guidelines for applicants, section 4.3 for a definition of contribution in cash.

Question 31: Where is the Annex E.8 Budget explanation?. At least it is how is expressed in checklist point n°18. It is a Form or a free format?

Answer 31: Free format.

Please note that the reference E8 in the call for proposal is incorrect. The document should be uploaded under Annexes, "supplementary space for additional documents (if needed)"

Question 32: According to the Tender Specifications, we assume that the same entity/company can participate in the above mentioned call playing under different roles, as lead applicant of a proposal and as co- applicant for another one. Could you please confirm?

Answer 32: Participation is not limited to one application.

Question 33: [Description of organisation] Does this make us an eligible/a non-eligible applicant??

Answer 33: To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the Contracting Authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of applicants, or affiliated entity(ies), an action or specific activities.

Question 34: As "affiliated entity", is it necessary that the main mission is always the provision of employment services to jobseekers or job changers?

Answer 34: To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the Contracting Authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of applicants, or affiliated entity(ies), an action or specific activities.

Please note that, as indicated in the Financial Guidelines published with the call, the same eligibility criteria apply to affiliated entities as to lead applicants and co-applicant.

Question 35: Does it make sense that an NGO would lead a proposal in this call? I am aware of the shortage of funds and not so many projects will be selected. So seems more recommendable to look for a stronger partnership with Public Employment Services in the lead, where [the NGO] would bring its experience with its target people.

Answer 35: See Answer 1.

Question 36: According to p. 11 "Subcontracting and implementing contracts" of the Financial Guidelines, the lead applicant can use subcontracting only in case of contracts that exceed the threshold of 5000 euro. What are the general rules you are referring to?

Answer 36: As per the guidelines at page 11 and according to the general rules on subcontracting, the beneficiary may subcontract parts of the project tasks when duly

justified. In the case of subcontracted tasks over the threshold of EUR 5,000.00, they should be declared via the electronic application form "Contracts for implementing the action". For all the cases of subcontracting, please refer to the implementation rules on the same page.