



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

Call for proposals VP/2019/005 “Supporting the development of tailored learning provision in the implementation of ‘Upskilling Pathways’”

Frequently Asked Questions (updated 21.06.2019)

For any question about this call, please contact empl-vp-2019-005@ec.europa.eu.

I could not take part in the online information session of 10 April 2019; where can I find the information given there?

The link to the PowerPoint™ presentation is available on the call for proposals [webpage](#).

ELIGIBILITY OF APPLICANTS

Can my organisation apply as a mono-applicant?

Can a regional public employment service apply?

Can a city apply?

Can a company apply?

Can a VET provider apply?

The Commission cannot give a prior opinion on whether or not an applicant is eligible, because we do not have yet the supporting documents from you on which to make that judgement.

We advise you to read carefully section 6 of the Call, that states the following:

“Mono applicants must be public entities that are in charge of (meaning have the responsibility for) the definition and/or implementation of national or regional policies for upskilling/re-skilling adults (e.g. governmental authorities, public agencies, regional public authorities etc.).

Local authorities are excluded as mono applicants, but could be part of a consortium.

Lead applicants (in case of consortia) or co-applicants must be public or private entities (profit or non-profit making) in charge of – or involved in (meaning having a degree of responsibility for, or influence over) - the organisation and/or financing and/or provision of educational services to adults such as skills assessment, validation of competences, education and training, orientation and guidance.

If the lead applicant is not a public entity in charge of national or regional policies and actions for upskilling/reskilling adults, such an entity must be at least a co-applicant or associated entity in the consortium of the proposal submitted.

Please consider these questions:

- 1) Is your organisation a **public entity**?
- 2) Is your organisation in charge of the definition and/or implementation of **policies for upskilling / re-skilling adults**?
- 3) Are the above policies **applicable to a whole country or a whole region**?
- 4) Can your organisation **provide evidence** of all of the above?
 - a. **If you can answer yes to all four questions**, your organisation can submit an application on its own, as a mono applicant (without being member of a consortium);
 - b. **If you answer no to any one of these questions**, your organisation can **only** apply as part of a consortium. It can apply either as the consortium's lead applicant or as a co-applicant. In this case:
 - you must provide evidence that your organisation is an entity (public or private), (profit making or non-profit making) that is in charge of – or involved in - the organisation and/or financing and/or provision of **educational services to adults**; *and*
 - you must ensure that another member of your consortium (either a lead applicant, a co-applicant or an associate entity) **is a public entity in charge of the definition and/or implementation of national or regional policies for upskilling /re-skilling adults**.

Your entity also needs to comply with all the other eligibility criteria announced in the call.

We strongly advise you, in preparing your proposal, to **coordinate with other relevant potential applicants in your country**; this is to ensure the widest possible impact of your proposed actions.

Can an entity that is not established in an EU Member State be eligible as applicant?

As indicated in the call (section 6.1), only legal entities properly established and registered in the following countries are eligible as applicant (or as lead applicant or co-applicant in the case of a consortium):

- EU Member States;
- Iceland and Norway, in accordance with the EEA Agreement
- Albania, Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey

Your entity also needs to comply with all the other eligibility criteria announced in the call.

We want to involve an applicant who is already involved in a consortium implementing an EaSI grant from a previous call. Is it possible?

It is possible, provided that – in case your consortium is awarded with a 2019 grant - this applicant does not use the 2019 grant to implement activities foreseen to be covered by the previous year's grant and vice-versa (double-funding). You should also coordinate with this applicant to ensure the

proposal you intend to submit does not duplicate the action already implemented by the previous year's grant.

What type of consortium is the most appropriate to apply under this call?

Please refer to the section above regarding the eligibility of applicants and to the **specific rules for consortia** (section 6 of the Call):

“Lead applicants (in case of consortia) or co-applicants must be public or private entities (profit or non-profit making) in charge of – or involved in (meaning having a degree of responsibility for, or influence over) - the organisation and/or financing and/or provision of educational services to adults such as skills assessment, validation of competences, education and training, orientation and guidance”.

“If the lead applicant is not a public entity in charge of national or regional policies and actions for upskilling/reskilling adults, such an entity must be at least a co-applicant or associated entity in the consortium of the proposal submitted.”

Please note that one of the award criteria is the ***"Commitment of relevant public authority/ies to exploit the results of the project in implementing the Upskilling Pathways Recommendation at regional or national level"***.

The Commission in February 2019 published a [report taking stock of Member States' proposals for implementing Upskilling Pathways](#); here you can find a wealth of information about activities undertaken or planned in your country.

What is the maximum number of partners in a consortium?

There is no maximum number of co-applicants in a consortium.

If we are an organisation based in an EaSI participating country that is not an EU Member State, do we need to involve an organisation that is based in an EU Member State in our proposal?

Entities from non-EU Member States that are eligible under the EaSI programme do not need to involve an entity from an EU Member State in their consortium in order to meet the eligibility criteria related to the place of establishment.

If you decide to apply as a transnational consortium, please remember that the **application must make clear which country will be the focus country of the project**, i.e. in which the project's activities will be concentrated (see section 6 of the call).

Do applicants need to be established and registered in the focus country?

Applicants do not need to be based in the focus country. However, it would make sense if they were, given that project activities should be concentrated in that country and that the project's main impact should be there. Applicants also need to comply with section 6.1.a) of the call (place of establishment).

On the “focus country” rule: should the proposal focus on one country/region or can it focus in two or three countries/regions provided that the competent public authorities for those two or three

countries /regions are involved in the project? If activities should be concentrated in the focus country, can we still organize activities in other countries/regions e.g. peer learning activity? Testing of project results? Promotion activities?

The purpose of the focus country rule is that EU funding is not spread too thinly across different countries involved in a transnational consortium. However, to ensure EU added value, cross-fertilisation and exchange of knowledge and good practices are encouraged. Therefore, applicants based in other countries than the focus country could be part of the consortium to bring in their expertise, and all project activities should focus on supporting the applicant(s) that are based in the focus country to implement the call for proposals' objectives in the focus country.

In case of a transnational consortium, do we need to have one public entity in charge of national or regional policies and actions for upskilling/reskilling adults per consortium or one public entity per country participating in the consortium?

In a consortium, you need to have at least one public entity in charge of national or regional policies and actions for upskilling /reskilling adults; this entity should ideally be **based in the "focus country" of your proposal.**

Note that one of the award criteria of the call is the "*Commitment of relevant **public authority/ies** to exploit the results of the project in implementing the Upskilling Pathways Recommendation **at regional or national level**" (i.e. in the region or country where the activities will take place).*

I represent an international association. Can it submit an application even if it is based in a country that is not the focus country of the project?

Eligibility of applicants and the focus country rule are two different things.

As for the eligibility of applicants, please refer to section 6 of the call, notably mentioning that "*Actions may involve consortia at regional, national or **transnational level**. **Lead applicants (in case of consortia) or co-applicants must be public or private entities (profit or non-profit making) in charge of – or involved in (meaning having a degree of responsibility for, or influence over) - the organisation and/or financing and/or provision of educational services to adults such as skills assessment, validation of competences, education and training, orientation and guidance. If the lead applicant is not a public entity in charge of national or regional policies and actions for upskilling/reskilling adults, such an entity must be at least a co-applicant or associated entity in the consortium of the proposal submitted.**"*

Your organisation would also need to comply with other eligibility criteria mentioned in the call, and notably the **geographical location** (section 6.2.).

The same section of the call says "*In the case of an action to be implemented by a transnational consortium, the application must make clear **which country will be the focus country of the project**. A focus country is the country in which each project's activities should be concentrated – and this should be clearly defined in the proposal"*.

It does not mean that all applicants in your consortium should be based in the focus country of your application.

If my country's National Coordinator for the European Agenda on Adult Learning does not join my consortium, should I go ahead with my proposal?

The European Commission cannot give a prior opinion concerning the composition of a consortium. It is for the lead applicant to ensure that the composition of the consortium submitting the application is relevant and contributes to meeting the call for proposals' award criteria. Your National Coordinator for the European Agenda on Adult learning can give you more information on matters related to Upskilling Pathways and EU adult learning policies.

Is it possible for one entity to be a co-applicant in two different consortia and submit several proposals?

Yes, an entity may be a co-applicant in more than one application.

How can I find co-applicants to build a consortium?

The Commission cannot support you in your search for co-applicants. You can use the partner search tool of EPALE, the European online platform for adult learning: <https://ec.europa.eu/epale/en/partner-search>

ELIGIBILITY OF ACTIVITIES

Can the application focus on specific skills, for instance those that are considered most important in my region/country?

The Commission cannot give a prior opinion on proposals of activities by potential applicants. The focus of the Upskilling Pathways Recommendation and the call for proposals is on **basic skills – literacy, numeracy and digital skills - (and if possible wider skills)** and low-skilled/low-qualified adults. If your application focuses on only one or two basic skill(s) and/or specific wider skills, you will need to justify this fully.

Note that section 1.2.2 of the call states that provision should also be as much as possible “*aligned to local and regional labour market needs*”.

Can the call finance the provision of services?

Can the call finance the production of learning content?

Can the call finance the evaluation of a curriculum?

Can the call finance the piloting or testing of training schemes?

The Commission cannot give a prior opinion on proposals of activities by potential applicants. Section 2.2 of the call provides a list of type of eligible activities.

You will find a list of all eligible expenses in the financial guidelines on the call for proposals webpage and in its Annex 1.

Are the activities funded under this call limited to the second step of Upskilling Pathways (tailored learning) or can they also cover the two other steps (skills assessment and validation of skills)?

The core compulsory activities for this call cover the second step of Upskilling Pathways: tailored learning (see sections 1.1.2, 2.1 and 2.2 of the call). This call is **not meant to support, as main actions, those actions that focus on the implementation of the two other steps of Upskilling Pathways**. However, given that Upskilling Pathways are intended to be seamless and coherent from the point of view of the adult learner, activities funded under this call should be shown to be connected to the two other steps.

As section 2.2. of the call states: *“In general, proposals must be centred around activities ensuring that the three Upskilling Pathways steps are available to low skilled and /or low qualified adults, including priority groups as defined by countries, where relevant. Therefore, **skills assessment and mechanisms for validation of skills, appropriately linked to the tailored offer of learning, are essential to the design of the activities to be funded.**”*

TARGET GROUP

What is the definition of “low-skilled adult” and “low-qualified adult”?

Please refer to the glossary of terms in Annex II.

What is the definition of “basic literacy, numeracy and digital skills”?

For the definition of basic skills, please refer to the glossary of terms in Annex II of the call.

There is no universal definition of literacy, numeracy and digital skills; the definition varies from one country to the other. To help you acquire a broad understanding, you can refer to the [2018 Council Recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning](#).

Is there an age definition of adults?

The Upskilling Pathways Recommendation targets *“adults with a low level of skills, knowledge and competences who are not eligible for support under the Youth Guarantee”*; the age limit for eligibility under the Youth Guarantee differs from Member State to Member State. Taking into account that young people not in employment, education and training (NEETs) benefit from the Youth Guarantee implementing measures, **the proposals under this call should not focus on this target group** (section 2.2 of the call).

Can we focus our proposed action on disabled adults /unemployed adults / prisoners?

The target group of the “Upskilling Pathways” Recommendation, and of this call, is low-skilled/low-qualified adults. Within this broad group, some Member States may have decided as a first priority to target certain sub-groups. Where the proposal focuses on specific sub groups of low-qualified and/or low-skilled adults, it should provide the rationale of focusing on that specific sub-group and/or refer to the national priorities for the implementation of the Upskilling Pathways.

We advise you to seek further information from the authority/ies in charge of implementing the Upskilling Pathways Recommendation in your country as **your proposal must be consistent with the overall approach they have adopted**. You may find it helpful to consult your [National Coordinator for the implementation of the European Agenda for Adult Learning](#) as a first point of contact.

The Commission in February 2019 published a [report taking stock of Member States' proposals for implementing Upskilling Pathways](#); here you can find a wealth of information about activities undertaken or planned in your country.

We already have a project funded by the EU; may we apply for funding under this call to upscale it?

You may **not fund the same activity/ies with grants from different EU sources** (such as the Erasmus+ programme or the European Social Fund). However, your proposed activity could complement activities funded by those sources.

AWARD CRITERIA

Is the award criterion “Cost-efficiency” assessed in correlation with the “Expected impact and sustainability” criterion?

Proposals are assessed against each award criterion individually, the ‘cost-efficiency’ out of 10 points and the ‘expected impact and sustainability’ out of 30 points..

APPLICATION FORM

In the “operational and financial capacity” section – parts F.1.1 and F.1.2, what should be indicated?

In the "operational and financial capacity" tab, in the F.1.1 section, you should indicate the main objectives and activities of each applicant organisation, not specifically their objectives and activities for this proposal. Of course, these objectives and activities should be connected with the objectives of this call as this section is meant to prove your operational capacity to implement them.

In section F.1.2 you should indicate the staff employed by each applicant in the relevant field but in the same way, not necessarily the precise staff who will work on the proposed action.

Is section G of the application form “Information on the action for which the grant is requested” the same as the Description of Action and Workplan?

No. You need to fill in both section G and the Description of Action and Workplan that you will find in section H “Annexes”.

The checklist of documents at the end of the call and section 8.2 of the call contradict each other in terms of what the co-applicants have to provide for the evaluators to assess their operational capacity.

The checklist prevails.

Co-applicants like the lead applicant in the case of a consortium have to provide (as well as what is stated in section 8.2):

- A free-format text justifying of the experience of the applicant (and co-applicants in case of consortium) in the adult learning sector, including a list of the main projects relating to the subject of the call carried out in the last three years (see section 14, checklist);
- The CVs of the proposed project manager and of the persons who will perform the main tasks, showing that they have demonstrable and relevant professional experience in the adult learning sector or in project management (see section 14, checklist);
- Declaration on honour signed by the legal representative (including operational capacity to carry out the activity) (see section 14, checklist).

DESCRIPTION OF ACTION AND WORKPLAN

In the workplan – work packages tables, what do “person-days”, “foreseen implementation time” and “duration” mean? Should the number of “person-days” correspond to the “duration” of the activity?

"Person-days" means the total number of days spent by the staff of an applicant on that work package. Use one line for each co-applicant.

"Foreseen implementation time" is the month when you plan to implement the activity, e.g. January 2019.

"Duration" is the total length of the activity, e.g. 18 months.

The staff days do not have to correspond to the duration of the activity. For instance if your work package is about testing a newly deployed skills assessment, this might last for two months (invite participants to undertake the assessment, analyse results, etc.) but only require 20 days of staff work.

FINANCES/BUDGET

How can the co-financing be provided?

More information on co-financing can be found in the financial guidelines (Annex 1 of the call).

If we decide to implement activities in several regions of the focus country, can the budget be allocated by region?

It is for the applicant to decide where the activities will take place and how to structure the budget. Activities should be described in the form of coherent work packages meeting the objectives of the call for proposals. **The budget should** reflect the different costs needed for each activity. Please refer to the online application form to see the budget structure by headings (staff costs, travel costs, etc.).

In the budget section – part I.1, what do the terms “incurred by” and “name of the organisation” mean?

You should mention in the "incurred by" column the applicant for which the cost is declared in this specific budget line (automatically proposed to you via a drop down menu); similarly, the name of the organisation should be the name of the applicant for which the cost is declared.

We are planning some travel and daily allowance costs for adult learners participating in our activities. Where should this be indicated in the budget and how to calculate these costs?

Travel, accommodation and daily allowance for beneficiaries of activities should be declared in heading 2 of the proposal's budget. Financial guidelines can help with the calculation (Annex 1 of the call).

We plan to purchase software and office furniture for the proposed action. Where should it appear in the budget?

Software and office furniture should be declared in Heading 4 – admin costs, respectively "depreciation for purchase of equipment" and "other admin costs". Office furniture is part of heading 5 – overheads, as specified in the financial guidelines.

LANGUAGES

Should we translate all supporting documents in English?

Section 5 of the call states that *"Applicants are encouraged to submit their project proposal in English, French or German in order to facilitate the treatment of the proposals and speed up the evaluation process. It should be noted, however, that proposals submitted in any of the official languages of the EU will be accepted. If the application is submitted in a language other than English, French or German, it should be accompanied by an executive summary in English, French or German."*

This concerns as well supporting documents.

OTHER

Is there a list of public authorities in charge of the implementation of Upskilling Pathways in each Member State?

No. Member States have not informed the European Commission about which body/ies will be responsible for the implementation of the Upskilling Pathways Recommendation. You may wish to contact your Ministry of Education or of Labour or your [National Coordinator for the European Agenda on Adult Learning](#).