



Questions and answers

VP/2019/016 - Call for proposals to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities”

*Update 19/05/2020
Version 24 - final*

You will find below a list of frequently asked and specific questions raised in relation to this call for proposals. The responses provided in this document are designed to assist applicants and any advice contained therein is without prejudice to any decision of the evaluation committee.

To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the Commission may not give any prior opinion on the eligibility/assessment of applicants or actions.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Q1. Is it possible to address in this call issues related to the current COVID-19 crisis and its impact on persons with disabilities?	7
Q2. We read that the main purpose of the call is: " <i>support specific activities of disability stakeholders active in the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and to support the Commission's ongoing and future disability initiatives including the implementation of the European Disability Strategy and the European Pillar of Social Rights, in particular Principles 1, 12, 17, 19 and 20</i> ". Does this mean that: (1) the applicant and co-applicant must have signed a contract proving that they implement the UNCRPD and supports European Disability Strategy and the European Pillar of Social Rights; or (2) whether the project activities have to comply with the mentioned objectives?.....	7
Q3. As regards the operational capacity, the call for proposals notably states that the lead applicant must have " <i>carried out at least 1 cooperation project at transnational level (involving at least 3 countries) on a disability-related topic of European relevance in the last 5 years (minimum value of EUR 100,000)</i> ". Is a project implemented outside the EU considered acceptable?.....	7
Q4. Is there any obligation to submit as consortia or is it acceptable for just one single organization to submit a proposal?.....	8
Q5. Is there an obligation to partner with a public institution or can the proposal be submitted by just NGOs?	8
Q6. Can the project be drafted in another language than English?.....	8
Q7. Whom is the call addressed to? In particular, we were thinking about a project directly addressed to people with disabilities (sort of workshops). Is it correct or is the call only for the improvement of health care professionals?.....	8
Q8. Countries: Can the partners come only from only two countries or is it better to cover wider EU area? If yes, how many (what is preferable)?	8
Q9. What is the rate of success of applications?	9
Q10. Is the deadline fixed? Is any prolongation of the submission deadline foreseen due to the current situation?	9
Q11. Can the same applicant submit more than one proposal? UPDATE	9
Q12. Should both objectives/priorities be addressed within the same proposal? ...	9
Q13. Regarding the Operational capacity (8.2), the call states that the lead applicant must have " <i>carried out at least 1 cooperation project at transnational</i>	

- level (involving at least 3 countries) on a disability-related topic of European relevance in the last 5 years (minimum value of EUR 100,000)". Is this selection criterion strictly mandatory with regard to the admissibility of the application and, therefore, leads to the rejection of the proposal at the first selection stage if this criterion is not complied with? 9*
- Q14. We tried finding the template documents for the preparation of our proposal (declaration on honour, letter of commitment and mandate) in SWIM, but we couldn't. Could you please send us the link so as to download them? 9
- Q15. Can you please give us information on National Contact Points of a specific country?10
- Q16. The guidance states that: (1) the online application should be submitted by the given deadline; and (2) the paper version of the application should be sent to Brussels by the given deadline. Is this still the case given the current virus situation and the challenges with post that this poses? **UPDATE**.....10
- Q17. We have several questions regarding the requirement for the lead applicant to have "*Carried out at least 1 cooperation project at transnational level (involving at least 3 countries) on a disability-related topic of European relevance in the last 5 years (minimum value of EUR 100,000)*":10
- Q18. We would like to ask for clarifications concerning the operational capacity of the lead applicant (requirement 8.2) and the following criteria: "*The lead applicant must have carried out at least 1 cooperation project at transnational level (involving at least 3 countries) on a disability-related topic of European relevance in the last 5 years (minimum value of EUR 100,000)*". Does it imply that the lead applicant must have led the cooperation project? Is it possible to apply as a lead applicant if we have participated as an affiliated entity before but not as a lead in other European projects?11
- Q19. We are a NGO active in the disability area and, if we apply, we would be the lead applicant. Can graphic design and/or video production companies be full partners in the project? Are advertising inserts in TV, radio and newspapers eligible costs? If so, which heading of the estimated budget should they be earmarked in?11
- Q20. Is a Disabled Persons Association of Bhutan, an NGO, eligible to participate in this Call for proposals?12
- Q21. Can you please confirm how/where potential lead applicants should demonstrate that they have "*carried out at least one transnational project of European relevance on the subject of disability (with at least 3 countries) in the last 5 years and with a minimum value of € 100,000.00*"? Is it by submitting a list of main projects (see CHECKLIST (doc n. 13)); or directly in the online APPLICATION FORM (section E: Operational and financial capacity - E.3: Previous grants and current grant applications)?.....12
- Q22. According to the 2020 REC Annual Work Programme where this call is forecasted I observe that the target priority groups are European networks with Framework Partnership Agreements in place. Could you please clarify if having signed such Framework Partnership Agreement is a pre-requirement to apply for this call?12
- Q23. Can the partners come from only one country?12
- Q24. Some of our core experts, who work with us on a regular basis, do invoice their services through a management company, with no employees. Would this be accepted as staff costs? **UPDATE**13

- Q25. Regarding "8.2. Operational capacity", the call specifies that lead applicants must have: "Carried out at least 1 cooperation project at transnational level (involving at least 3 countries) on a disability-related topic of European relevance in the last 5 years (minimum value of EUR 100,000)". Is an ongoing project (not ended before the proposal submission) eligible for the condition above?13
- Q26. The call for proposals indicates (page 22): The annexes "description of the action and work plan" and "budget explanation" must be provided in single free-format documents." Are there any templates or structures available?13
- Q27. Is it possible for one of the members of the consortium to apply in another consortium too?14
- Q28. We see that the deadline changed from June 1 to June 2 ? Is this correct? .14
- Q29. Our organization does not have fixed staff of employees, we contract free-lance workers on specific projects. Is it possible for us to report these on eligible direct costs? - **UPDATE**14
- Q30. We would like to ask a question regarding the "cooperation project at transnational level (involving at least 3 countries)" criterion. Is a cooperation project, carried out by a transnational consortium (partners from more than 3 countries) but implemented only in one country considered transnational?15
- Q31. Could you please give information on projects funded within the same call in previous years in order to be able to evaluate the innovation of a possible project idea? Links to project websites, access to the corresponding project databases or similar sources will be very useful.15
- Q.32. We are a regional public body. We observe that the verification of financial capacity will not apply to us. However, we wonder if the operational capacity does not apply either, considering that the project can be either national or transnational. If we are not eligible for this call this year, we would appreciate if you could tell us about other calls that would be suitable for us.15
- Q33. We see under 4.1. that "the European Commission is favourable to larger scale actions", how many proposals do you expect to finance?15
- Q34. If our organization is the main applicant and the co-applicant is a European network organization who will take on the responsibility of sharing and disseminating tools and best practice, for instance by organising regular meetings and workshops, is it sufficient and would it be eligible under this proposal, or do we need a third party working in a specific country?16
- Q35. My organization started a project in September 2019, with partners from 4 countries, on disability-related topic, having the quality of a partner organization in the project, not the lead applicant, its share of the budget being less than 100.000 eur from a larger total budget. Would it be considered that my organization meets the operational capacity criteria as to be a lead applicant in a VP/2019/016 application?16
- Q36. We are a not-for-profit organisation, which type of entity should we select? And which legal entity form we would need to fill in – public law body or private company?16
- Q37. We would like to know whether the section "E. Operational and Financial capacity" concerns the lead applicant only or also the co-applicants?17
- Q.38 Regarding the operational capacity (8.2), would a project that ran from October 2013 to September 2015 be considered acceptable?17

- Q.39 Regarding the operational capacity (8.2), would a project around disabled artists be considered acceptable for the condition "disability-related topic of European relevance"?17
- Q40. Regarding the operational capacity (8.2), would a project on long-term care be considered acceptable for the condition "disability-related topic of European relevance"?17
- Q41. What kind of disabilities are in the focus in the call? Are age-related disabilities like dementia also covered?17
- Q43. We have a question about UK entities. Can you confirm that we can include them as partners in our proposed project?18
- Q43. Does an organisation have to be a registered NGO to be a partner in the project?18
- Q44. Can we use a PIC number (as for some other EU programmes)?18
- Q45. In the online form, we are requested to complete the field "E.1.4 Staff employed by each applicant organisation in the relevant field". Can you please explain what "relevant field" means?18
- Q46. Which reference should we indicate in the Declaration on Honour under "Ref: [action [insert name/reference]"/ [insert reference to the call for proposals if applicable]18
- Q47. Regarding the Operational capacity (8.2) is it mandatory to have received EU Funds for the project carried out by the lead applicant?18
- Q48. Can we apply from Kosovo?.....19
- Q49. How can I print the filled online application – once I press submit online, I will get the pdf version of the application that will need to be printed in 3 copies and posted to the Commission?19
- Q50. The call for proposals identifies that 20% of financing has to come from lead applicant and co-applicants. Can this co-financing level be in the form of staff cost? **UPDATE**.....19
- Q51. If certain activities require specialised expertise, not available in-house, does this need to be identified as sub-contracting or third party?19
- Q52. If the profile of the project manager meets all criteria listed in the operational capacity section of the call, except one (7 years of experience in project management), will our proposal still be admissible for evaluation?20
- Q53. We are interested in participating in this call but we can't apply as coordinator because we don't comply with the requirements of the operational capacity. Is it possible to have a list of partner searches and a list of previous projects?.....20
- Q54. We see that "to be eligible, actions must be fully carried out in eligible participating REC countries (EU Member State; Iceland and Liechtenstein; Serbia), shall activities taking place in the UK be eligible?20
- Q55. Shall the project's time plan of activities be made based on a normal situation and then updated considering the actual COVID-19 pandemic development in the involved countries? Or is it recommended to provide that the earliest begin of, for example, face-two-face activities cannot be planned before late spring 2021 already at the application stage?20

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- Q56. According to the financial Guidelines for Grants above 60.000 EUR: "*the Commission may require the beneficiary to provide a guarantee in advance, in order to limit the financial risk linked to the payment of the pre-financing*". Does it apply to organizations that receive more than 50% of their turnover from public funds?21
- Q57. One of the partners/co-applicants in the proposal is from Serbia. The support documents (proof of registration, statutes, etc.) are available in Serbian (Latin and Cyrillic script). Should these documents be translated?21
- Q58. Our manager has a power of attorney, can he/she sign the forms on behalf of the organisation or should they be signed by our board of directors?21
- Q59. When I make the budget entries into online system, does the total cost of the action cover only the budget for the action from the EU funding (80%)?21
- Q60. The template for the "Mandate" (German version) requires an agreement number in the header. What should we provide?21
- Q61. Is the beneficiary of an operating grant allowed to be an applicant?21

Q1. Is it possible to address in this call issues related to the current COVID-19 crisis and its impact on persons with disabilities?

REPLY: Section 2.1 on Objectives and priorities request taking account of socio economic trend and refers to the situation of persons with disabilities. The section provides a non-exhaustive list of examples. Consequently it is possible to address issues related to the current COVID-19 crisis and its impact on persons with disabilities. Issues that could be addressed include impact on the lives of persons with disabilities, needs of social, care, health and other services in the community as well as accessibility and assistive technologies issues including in relation to emergency responses.

Q2. We read that the main purpose of the call is: "support specific activities of disability stakeholders active in the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and to support the Commission's ongoing and future disability initiatives including the implementation of the European Disability Strategy and the European Pillar of Social Rights, in particular Principles 1, 12, 17, 19 and 20". Does this mean that: (1) the applicant and co-applicant must have signed a contract proving that they implement the UNCRPD and supports European Disability Strategy and the European Pillar of Social Rights; or (2) whether the project activities have to comply with the mentioned objectives?

REPLY:

The "main purpose of the call" relates to the proposal as a whole, i.e. the type of organisations implementing the action, the activities proposed, their relevance to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities/the European Disability Strategy/the European Pillar of Social Rights, the potential for added-value at European level... All the criteria (in particular the eligibility, operational capacity, award criteria) are therefore relevant and must be analysed carefully to ensure that a proposal fits that purpose.

The proposals will firstly be assessed against the admissibility, exclusion, selection and eligibility criteria. The proposals that fulfil these criteria will then be evaluated and ranked on the basis of the 5 award criteria detailed in the call for proposals. One of these criteria notably relates to the extent to which the project contributes to the innovative implementation of: (a) the UNCRPD in the EU; (b) the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights for persons with disabilities; and (c) the current and/or future European Disability Strategy.

All documents to be provided are listed throughout the call for proposals and summarised in the check-list at the end of the document. There is no specific contract/signed commitment to be provided as regards the implementation of the UNCRPD or European Pillar of Social Rights.

Q3. As regards the operational capacity, the call for proposals notably states that the lead applicant must have "carried out at least 1 cooperation project at transnational level (involving at least 3 countries) on a disability-related topic of European relevance in the last 5 years (minimum value of EUR 100,000)". Is a project implemented outside the EU considered acceptable?

REPLY: Yes, the place of implementation of that particular project is not relevant as long as all conditions of that criteria are complied with ("at least 3 countries", "disability-related topic of European relevance", ...)

Q4. Is there any obligation to submit as consortia or is it acceptable for just one single organization to submit a proposal?

REPLY: Yes, there is an obligation to submit as a consortium. As stated under "6.1. Eligibility of the applicant" point "c. Consortia": "*To be eligible, actions must have the involvement of a consortium (lead applicant and minimum one co-applicant)*". Please note that the transnational aspect of the consortium will be assessed under the award criteria 3 "European Added Value".

Q5. Is there an obligation to partner with a public institution or can the proposal be submitted by just NGOs?

REPLY: The text of the call, point "6.1. Eligibility of the applicant" states the following concerning the type of entities (6.1.b):

"To be eligible, the lead applicant and co-applicant(s) must be public entities or private organisations, or international organisations. Organisations that are profit-oriented must submit applications in partnership with public entities or private non-profit-oriented organisations "

The obligation to partner with public entities or private non-profit-oriented organisations concerns therefore profit-oriented organisations only.

Q6. Can the project be drafted in another language than English?

REPLY: As stated under point 5 "Admissibility requirement" of the call for proposals, applicants are encouraged to submit their project proposal in English in order to facilitate the treatment of the proposals and speed up the evaluation process. Proposals submitted in any of the official languages of the EU will be accepted. In this case, applications shall be accompanied by an executive summary in English (see checklist, point 3).

Q7. Whom is the call addressed to? In particular, we were thinking about a project directly addressed to people with disabilities (sort of workshops). Is it correct or is the call only for the improvement of health care professionals?

REPLY: Both activities mentioned (targeting directly people with disabilities and activities for the improvement of health care professionals) are not excluded from the scope of this call provided they respect the objectives, types of actions and expected results of the call. Eligible proposals will be evaluated against the award criteria and the proposals with the highest scores (under the conditions laid out in the call) will be selected for funding.

Please note that, as mentioned in the call, "To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the Commission will not give a prior opinion on the eligibility of applicants or affiliated entities, an action or specific activities".

Q8. Countries: Can the partners come only from only two countries or is it better to cover wider EU area? If yes, how many (what is preferable)?

REPLY: We cannot give an answer as to the ideal number of countries as it would depend upon the nature and objectives of the project. Although it is eligible to have only two countries represented in the consortium, we draw your attention to the fact that the transnational aspect of the consortium and of the action will be assessed under award criteria 3 "European Added Value".

Q9. What is the rate of success of applications?

REPLY: Unfortunately, we cannot provide any answer to that question, as it will depend upon the interest and number of eligible applications that we will receive by the submission deadline.

Q10. Is the deadline fixed? Is any prolongation of the submission deadline foreseen due to the current situation?

REPLY: The deadline of this particular call is fixed and unfortunately cannot be extended.

Q11. Can the same applicant submit more than one proposal? UPDATE

REPLY: Yes, it is possible for the same applicant to present several projects. However, we draw your attention to the requirement for applicants to have the necessary financial capacity to maintain its/their activities for the period of the action and to help finance it as necessary.

Q12. Should both objectives/priorities be addressed within the same proposal?

REPLY: A proposal could address only one or both objectives mentioned in the call for proposals..

Q13. Regarding the Operational capacity (8.2), the call states that the lead applicant must have "carried out at least 1 cooperation project at transnational level (involving at least 3 countries) on a disability-related topic of European relevance in the last 5 years (minimum value of EUR 100,000)". Is this selection criterion strictly mandatory with regard to the admissibility of the application and, therefore, leads to the rejection of the proposal at the first selection stage if this criterion is not complied with?

REPLY: Indeed, only the proposals that fulfil the admissibility requirements, all eligibility and selection criteria including the operational capacity criteria will be assessed on the basis of the award criteria.

Q14. We tried finding the template documents for the preparation of our proposal (declaration on honour, letter of commitment and mandate) in SWIM, but we couldn't. Could you please send us the link so as to download them?

REPLY: The links to the required templates are provided directly in the application form (see printscreen below):

A.1.15 Legal entity form

Please [click here](#) to download the 'Legal entity form'. Please save it on your computer, complete it and return by post, duly signed, stamped and dated, together with all other requested documents.

Attach a file: Browse...
Max. 15MB


A.1.16 Financial identification form

Please [click here](#) to download the 'Financial identification form'. Please save it on your computer, complete it and return it by post, duly signed, stamped and dated by the applicant organisation and the bank, together with all other requested documents.

Attach a file: Browse...
Max. 15MB

A.1.17 Declaration on honour *

Please [click here](#) to download the template of 'Declaration on honour'. Please save it on your computer and complete it on the official letterhead paper of the applicant organisation. Then attach it to your application by clicking the Browse button. You should also return it by post, duly signed, stamped and dated, together with all other requested documents.

Attach a file: Browse...
Max. 15MB 

Q15. Can you please give us information on National Contact Points of a specific country?

Unfortunately we are not in a position to provide National Contact Points as there are none established under this programme.

Q16. The guidance states that: (1) the online application should be submitted by the given deadline; and (2) the paper version of the application should be sent to Brussels by the given deadline. Is this still the case given the current virus situation and the challenges with post that this poses? **UPDATE**

REPLY: Applications must be submitted in SWIM by the submission deadline. However, in light of the current COVID 19, it has been decided to opt for a more flexible approach for the hard copies in order to give the potential applicants the possibility to cope with the limited means during this period.

Therefore:

- The online application (with signed and scanned copies of the required documents, see checklist) must be submitted in SWIM by the given deadline;
- The hard copy of the proposal duly signed in blue ink (including all documents listed in the checklist) must be sent either by registered post or express courier service as soon as the contingent situation allows it. In any case it shall reach the contracting authority before the end of the evaluation stage (i.e. before end August 2020).

Q17. We have several questions regarding the requirement for the lead applicant to have "Carried out at least 1 cooperation project at transnational level (involving at least 3 countries) on a disability-related topic of European relevance in the last 5 years (minimum value of EUR 100,000)":

1) Can this threshold of 100.000 EUR be reached by summing up the amount of funds received in more than one projects, or should it be reached within a single project?

REPLY: The objective of the threshold is to ensure the capacity of the lead applicant to manage larger scale projects. Therefore, this threshold must be reached with one single project.

2) Can we consider projects where the organisation was partner or only the projects where the organisation was lead partner?

REPLY: As mentioned in the criteria, this requirement applies to the lead applicant. Therefore, projects of partner organisations cannot be considered.

3) Can we count also projects that were not exclusively on the topic of disability but that dedicated some actions or deliverables specifically to this theme? Many projects have in fact different sub-actions, targeting a complex objective with coordinated and integrated actions; 4) Can we count also projects that included disability in a wider concept such as social inclusion of disadvantaged target groups, including people with disability? This is also a frequent situation, where many the solutions for equality and rights are not restricted to specific target groups but, coherently with the meaning of "Inclusion" is addressed to all categories of people with disadvantage or special needs.

REPLY: For this call, we are aiming for projects that specifically contribute to the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and support the Commission's ongoing and future disability initiatives including the implementation of the European Disability Strategy. In order to target organisations that are active and have demonstrated expertise in the disability area, it has been decided to restrict this criteria to projects of which the main topic was disability.

Other projects will therefore not be accepted.

Q18. We would like to ask for clarifications concerning the operational capacity of the lead applicant (requirement 8.2) and the following criteria: "The lead applicant must have carried out at least 1 cooperation project at transnational level (involving at least 3 countries) on a disability-related topic of European relevance in the last 5 years (minimum value of EUR 100,000)". Does it imply that the lead applicant must have led the cooperation project? Is it possible to apply as a lead applicant if we have participated as an affiliated entity before but not as a lead in other European projects?

REPLY: As mentioned in the criteria, this requirement applies indeed to the lead applicant. Therefore, projects where the lead applicant participated under another status (e.g. co-applicant, affiliated entity...) cannot be considered.

Q19. We are a NGO active in the disability area and, if we apply, we would be the lead applicant. Can graphic design and/or video production companies be full partners in the project? Are advertising inserts in TV, radio and newspapers eligible costs? If so, which heading of the estimated budget should they be earmarked in?

REPLY: As mentioned in the text, the main purpose of this call for proposals is to "support specific activities **of disability stakeholders**". The call allows for the inclusion of profit-oriented organisations in a consortium but this is meant for such organisations that are essentially active in the disability field, therefore organisations providing services such as independent consultants, conference organisers, advertising or media firms shall not take part in the action as full partners.

However, other forms of participation required to implement the action (i.e. "implementing contracts" or "subcontracting parts of the action") might be envisaged as explained in the Financial Guideline (Annex I) under the chapter 4.2.2.3 "Costs of Services". Please, note that implementing contracts and subcontracting are subject to the procurement rules mentioned in the Financial Regulations.

Q20. Is a Disabled Persons Association of Bhutan, an NGO, eligible to participate in this Call for proposals?

REPLY: No, it is not possible for an organisation from that country to take part in this call for proposals. Please see the call text part 6.1.a (Eligibility of the applicants - Place of establishment).

Q21. Can you please confirm how/where potential lead applicants should demonstrate that they have "carried out at least one transnational project of European relevance on the subject of disability (with at least 3 countries) in the last 5 years and with a minimum value of € 100,000.00"? Is it by submitting a list of main projects (see CHECKLIST (doc n. 13)); or directly in the online APPLICATION FORM (section E: Operational and financial capacity - E.3: Previous grants and current grant applications)?

REPLY: The call text page 14 (under 8.2 Operational Capacity) mentions:

"The operational capacity of the lead applicant and co-applicant(s) to complete the proposed action must be confirmed by the submission of the following supporting documents:

A list of the main projects relating to the subject of the call carried out in the last five years (see checklist point 13)."

It is the above free-format document that should be used to demonstrate operational capacity in this regard (checklist point 13).

The section "E.3 Previous grants and current grant applications" of the online form is foreseen to declare other EU grants or applications for grants. It is notably used to assess the risk of double-funding.

Q22. According to the 2020 REC Annual Work Programme where this call is forecasted I observe that the target priority groups are European networks with Framework Partnership Agreements in place. Could you please clarify if having signed such Framework Partnership Agreement is a pre-requirement to apply for this call?

REPLY: No it is not. The call VP/2019/016 is not part of the 2020 REC Work Programme but of the 2019 REC Work Programme (see reference in the call text p2 under point 1.1. Programme/Legal Base).

Q23. Can the partners come from only one country?

REPLY: Although it is eligible to have only one country represented in the consortium, we draw your attention to the fact that the transnational aspect of the consortium and of the action will be assessed under award criteria 3 "European Added Value."

Q24. Some of our core experts, who work with us on a regular basis, do invoice their services through a management company, with no employees. Would this be accepted as staff costs? UPDATE

REPLY: These costs could be reported either under staff costs or under external expertise. It will depend upon the specificities of the work relationship.

We invite you to read the Financial Guidelines (Annex I) carefully and in particular chapter "4.2.2.1 Staff Costs" and "4.2.2.3 Costs of services" to determine under which category (staff or external expertise) these costs should be reported.

We draw in particular your attention to the paragraph under 4.2.2.1:

The costs of natural persons working under a contract with the beneficiary other than an employment contract or who are seconded to the beneficiary by a third party against payment may be assimilated to such costs of personnel, provided that the following conditions are fulfilled:

- (i) the person works under conditions similar to those of an employee (in particular regarding the way the work is organised, the tasks that are performed and the premises where they are performed);*
- (ii) the result of the work belongs to the beneficiary; (unless exceptionally agreed otherwise); and*
- (iii) the costs are not significantly different from the costs of staff performing similar tasks under an employment contract with the beneficiary.*

Conversely, the cost of any work to be performed by external experts must not be included in staff costs but under services (see Heading 3).

Q25. Regarding "8.2. Operational capacity", the call specifies that lead applicants must have: "Carried out at least 1 cooperation project at transnational level (involving at least 3 countries) on a disability-related topic of European relevance in the last 5 years (minimum value of EUR 100,000)". Is an ongoing project (not ended before the proposal submission) eligible for the condition above?

REPLY: No, only projects that have been carried out (and completed) will be considered to verify the compliance of a proposal with this criteria.

Q26. The call for proposals indicates (page 22): The annexes "description of the action and work plan" and "budget explanation" must be provided in single free-format documents." Are there any templates or structures available?

REPLY: No, there is no template or imposed structure. Given the scope of the call and possible types of actions proposed, it was decided that there will be no one-size-fits-all template.

Section 16.1. provides indication of what is expected for the application. In a nutshell, it comprises:

- an online application form that is the basis of the application. It can be kept rather succinct as it is complemented by the following two annexes;
- an annex with the description of the action and work plan that must provide additional information to the online form (see the relevant paragraph under 16.1, including the three bullet points);

- an annex with budget explanation that must provide information that explains and justifies the budget submitted in the online form (see further detail in 16.1).
- plus a series of other required documents (see section 16.2).

Whilst not repeating the information provided online, these annexes should provide additional details (text) and structured information (graph, tables, charts...) where relevant/necessary. The applicant must assess what additional information is necessary to allow understanding and evaluating the project.

Q27. Is it possible for one of the members of the consortium to apply in another consortium too?

REPLY: Yes, it is possible for the same applicant to be part of several consortia. However, we draw your attention to the requirement for applicants to have the necessary financial capacity to maintain its/their activities for the period of the action and to help finance it as necessary (see financial capacity in the call).

Q28. We see that the deadline changed from June 1 to June 2 ? Is this correct?

REPLY: Yes indeed. The new deadline is Tuesday the 2nd of June. It was moved by one day only because Monday the 1st of June is a bank holiday. The deadline for this call will not be extended.

Q29. Our organization does not have fixed staff of employees, we contract free-lance workers on specific projects. Is it possible for us to report these on eligible direct costs? - UPDATE

REPLY: These costs would be eligible and could be reported either under staff costs or under external expertise. It will depend upon the specificities of the work relationship.

We invite you to read the Financial Guidelines (Annex I) carefully and in particular chapter "4.2.2.1 Staff Costs" and "4.2.2.3 Costs of services" to determine under which category (staff or external expertise) these costs should be reported.

We draw in particular your attention to the paragraph under 4.2.2.1:

The costs of natural persons working under a contract with the beneficiary other than an employment contract or who are seconded to the beneficiary by a third party against payment may be assimilated to such costs of personnel, provided that the following conditions are fulfilled:

- (i) the person works under conditions similar to those of an employee (in particular regarding the way the work is organised, the tasks that are performed and the premises where they are performed);*
- (ii) the result of the work belongs to the beneficiary; (unless exceptionally agreed otherwise); and*
- (iii) the costs are not significantly different from the costs of staff performing similar tasks under an employment contract with the beneficiary.*

Conversely, the cost of any work to be performed by external experts must not be included in staff costs but under services (see Heading 3).

Q30. We would like to ask a question regarding the "cooperation project at transnational level (involving at least 3 countries)" criterion. Is a cooperation project, carried out by a transnational consortium (partners from more than 3 countries) but implemented only in one country considered transnational?

REPLY: No, it is not. The cooperation project itself must have a transnational dimension (at least three countries).

Q31. Could you please give information on projects funded within the same call in previous years in order to be able to evaluate the innovation of a possible project idea? Links to project websites, access to the corresponding project databases or similar sources will be very useful.

REPLY: There was no recent call for proposals for action grants in the REC programme focusing on the rights of persons with disabilities.

However, you may consult the different projects that addressed issues related to disability by consulting the database "Publigrant" (Link: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1035&langId=en#/>). It contains the results of grant-financed actions in the social and employment areas. You may use the "advanced search" function and filter on the "ultimate target groups".

The programmes in the research area (Horizon and previous programmes) have also financed grants tackling issues related to disability (Link to the database: <https://cordis.europa.eu/projects/en>).

Q.32. We are a regional public body. We observe that the verification of financial capacity will not apply to us. However, we wonder if the operational capacity does not apply either, considering that the project can be either national or transnational. If we are not eligible for this call this year, we would appreciate if you could tell us about other calls that would be suitable for us.

REPLY: The requirement for operational capacity does apply whatever the type of lead applicant. Although national projects are eligible, we draw your attention to the fact that the transnational aspect of the consortium and of the action is assessed under award criteria 3 "European Added Value". Funds managed directly by the European Commission do usually address actions having a European dimension.

For projects at regional or national level, we recommend you to explore the possibilities offered by the European Social Fund (<https://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=45&langId=en>) or the European Regional Development Fund (https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/atlas/managing-authorities) through the national managing authorities.

Q33. We see under 4.1. that "the European Commission is favourable to larger scale actions", how many proposals do you expect to finance?

REPLY: As indicated on page 6 of the call: the European Commission is favourable to larger scale actions; the budget available for this call is limited (EUR 1.320.000); and projects should indicatively be between EUR 250.000 and 500.000. Therefore, according to those figures it could be expected to fund only 3 to 5 proposals.

Q34. If our organization is the main applicant and the co-applicant is a European network organization who will take on the responsibility of sharing and disseminating tools and best practice, for instance by organising regular meetings and workshops, is it sufficient and would it be eligible under this proposal, or do we need a third party working in a specific country?

REPLY: As indicated in the call, to ensure equal treatment of applicants, the Commission may not give a prior opinion on the eligibility of applicants or affiliated entities, an action or specific activities.

As regards the composition of the consortium, we underline that the main purpose of this call for proposals is to “*support specific activities of disability stakeholders...*”. It is not possible to reply to such specific questions without entering into the specifics of the evaluation process.

Some points of attention are:

- The transnational aspect of the consortium and of the action will be assessed under award criteria 3 “European Added Value”;
- The Commission does not consider it appropriate to include companies like independent consultants, conference organisers, advertising or media firms as project partners. Such services should be the object of procurement contracts. We invite you to read the Financial Guidelines (Annex I) carefully and in particular chapter 4.2.2.3 Costs of services where a distinction is made between implementation contract (Information dissemination; Translations; Reproductions and publications; Specific evaluation; Interpretations) and the subcontracting of tasks forming part of the action (external expertise).

Q35. My organization started a project in September 2019, with partners from 4 countries, on disability-related topic, having the quality of a partner organization in the project, not the lead applicant, its share of the budget being less than 100.000 eur from a larger total budget. Would it be considered that my organization meets the operational capacity criteria as to be a lead applicant in a VP/2019/016 application?

REPLY: No, it does not:

- It is the lead applicant that must have carried out the project;
- Only projects that have been carried out (and completed) will be considered to verify the compliance of a proposal with this criteria.

Q36. We are a not-for-profit organisation, which type of entity should we select? And which legal entity form we would need to fill in – public law body or private company?

REPLY: “Not for profit organisation” is a form of association under private law. You should complete the form “Private Companies” and select “Non for profit” under “organisation type”.

Q37. We would like to know whether the section “E. Operational and Financial capacity” concerns the lead applicant only or also the co-applicants?

REPLY: The whole section is addressed to “each applicant” or “the applicants”. It encompasses both the lead and the co-applicants.

Q.38 Regarding the operational capacity (8.2), would a project that ran from October 2013 to September 2015 be considered acceptable?

REPLY: Projects that have been carried out (and completed) by the lead applicant in the last 5 years (preceding the submission deadline) will be considered to verify the compliance of a proposal with this criteria (all conditions must be complied with “*at least 3 countries*”, “*disability-related topic of European relevance*”, ...)

Q.39 Regarding the operational capacity (8.2), would a project around disabled artists be considered acceptable for the condition “*disability-related topic of European relevance*”?

REPLY: As indicated in the call, to ensure equal treatment of applicants, the Commission may not give a prior opinion on the eligibility of applicants or affiliated entities, an action or specific activities. It is not possible to provide a reply to this specific question.

In general, please note that it would depend whether disability was the main focus of the project. This call aims to support activities of disability stakeholders that specifically contribute to the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and support the Commission’s ongoing and future disability initiatives including the implementation of the European Disability Strategy. Therefore, in order to target organisations that are active and have demonstrated expertise in the disability area, it has been decided to restrict this criteria to projects of which the main topic was disability.

Q40. Regarding the operational capacity (8.2), would a project on long-term care be considered acceptable for the condition “*disability-related topic of European relevance*”?

REPLY: Please see question 39 that provides a detailed answer. A project on long-term care would be acceptable only if its main topic related directly to disability.

Q41. What kind of disabilities are in the focus in the call? Are age-related disabilities like dementia also covered?

REPLY: This call uses the concept of disability enshrined in article 1 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD): “Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”.

That includes disabilities related to dementia and other illnesses. However, it is important to note that the call deals with actions addressing disability that contributes to the implementation of the UNCRPD. It does not target actions on possible illnesses or diseases that could be at the cause of the impairments.

Q43. We have a question about UK entities. Can you confirm that we can include them as partners in our proposed project?

REPLY: Indeed, this is possible. As explained under point 6, on the basis of the Withdrawal Agreement, the United Kingdom is to be treated as if it was a Member State during and after the transition period for actions which implement Union programmes and activities committed under the current Multiannual Financial Framework (2014-2020).

Q43. Does an organisation have to be a registered NGO to be a partner in the project?

REPLY: No, it does not. Please note some of the important elements as regards the nature of the partners:

- The main purpose of this call for proposals is to “*support specific activities of disability stakeholders*”;
- Point 6.1.b. details which types of entity are eligible;
- As regards organisations that are profit-oriented, please also note the reply to question 19.

Q44. Can we use a PIC number (as for some other EU programmes)?

REPLY: The PIC number is for the moment not used for the calls under this programme.

Q45. In the online form, we are requested to complete the field “E.1.4 Staff employed by each applicant organisation in the relevant field”. Can you please explain what “relevant field” means?

REPLY: This concerns the staff that will be involved in the different phases of the project.

Q46. Which reference should we indicate in the Declaration on Honour under “Ref: [action [insert name/reference]”/ [insert reference to the call for proposals if applicable]

REPLY: Please indicate the following information: Ref: Action “Title of your action” (VP/2019/016/xxx)”

Q47. Regarding the Operational capacity (8.2) is it mandatory to have received EU Funds for the project carried out by the lead applicant?

REPLY: No it is not. The origin of the funding is not relevant as long as all conditions of that criteria are complied with (“at least 3 countries”, “disability-related topic of European relevance”...).

On the topic of the topic of the project, please note the reply that was provided to some of the questions above:

This call aims to support activities of disability stakeholders that specifically contribute to the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and support the Commission’s ongoing and future disability initiatives including the implementation of the European Disability Strategy. In

order to target organisations that are active and have demonstrated expertise in the disability area, it has been decided to restrict this criteria to projects of which the main topic was disability.

Other projects will therefore not be accepted.

Q48. Can we apply from Kosovo?

REPLY: No, it is not possible for an organisation from that country to take part in this call for proposals. Please see the call text part 6.1.a (Eligibility of the applicants - Place of establishment).

Q49. How can I print the filled online application – once I press submit online, I will get the pdf version of the application that will need to be printed in 3 copies and posted to the Commission?

REPLY: Yes indeed. You will have the possibility to save the pdf of your proposal at the end of the submission process.

Q50. The call for proposals identifies that 20% of financing has to come from lead applicant and co-applicants. Can this co-financing level be in the form of staff cost? UPDATE

REPLY: We invite you to read the financial guidelines available on the call webpage. You will notably find information on the co-financing under section 4.1 that specifies the following:

Co-financing of the eligible costs of the action may take the form of:

- *the beneficiary's own resources (for example, staff costs, ...);*
- *income generated by the action or work programme;*
- *financial contributions from third parties.*

Contributions in kind (i.e. non financial resources made available free of charge by third parties to the beneficiaries) are not accepted for the co-financing of the eligible costs.

When co-financing takes the form of staff costs, these costs must be recorded in the accounting records of the beneficiary and determined according to the applicable accounting standards. As for staff costs in general, the following supporting documents should be available if requested by the Commission: the methodology used for calculation of daily staff costs, salary slips and timesheets (see the financial guidelines section "4.2.2.1. General criteria for eligibility of costs" and section "4.2.2.1. staff costs" for further details).

Q51. If certain activities require specialised expertise, not available in-house, does this need to be identified as sub-contracting or third party?

REPLY: Hiring an expert would fall within the category of subcontracting.

We invite you to carefully read:

- the text of the call for proposals section 13 "Financial Provisions" and section 16.1 "Instructions for the presentation of the application", and;
- the financial guidelines section "4.2.2.3. Cost of Services").

In the submission phase, you must notably:

- tick the box indicating that sub-contracting is foreseen in the online application form;
- provide detailed information on the tasks to be subcontracted and the reasons for doing so in the annex "description of the action and work plan";
- provide the estimated cost of subcontracting in the budget.

Q52. If the profile of the project manager meets all criteria listed in the operational capacity section of the call, except one (7 years of experience in project management), will our proposal still be admissible for evaluation?

REPLY: Unfortunately, it would not. In respect of the principle of equality of treatment, the criteria of the call have to be implemented consistently and without interpretation. Only proposals that fulfil all eligibility and operational capacity criteria will be assessed on the basis of the award criteria.

Q53. We are interested in participating in this call but we can't apply as coordinator because we don't comply with the requirements of the operational capacity. Is it possible to have a list of partner searches and a list of previous projects?

REPLY: Unfortunately we have no such portal allowing to search for partners and there was no recent call for proposals for action grants in the REC programme focusing on the rights of persons with disabilities.

You may consult the grants that addressed issues related to disability in the social and employment area by consulting the database "Publigrant" (Link: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1035&langId=en#/>). You may use the "advanced search" function and filter on the "ultimate target groups".

The programmes in the research area (Horizon and previous programmes) have also financed grants tackling issues related to disability (Link to the database: <https://cordis.europa.eu/projects/en>).

Q54. We see that "to be eligible, actions must be fully carried out in eligible participating REC countries (EU Member State; Iceland and Liechtenstein; Serbia), shall activities taking place in the UK be eligible?

REPLY: Yes they are eligible, provided that there is no change to the present situation (for example as regards the freedom of movement). Please note that eligibility criteria must be complied with for the entire duration of the grant.

Q55. Shall the project's time plan of activities be made based on a normal situation and then updated considering the actual COVID-19 pandemic development in the involved countries? Or is it recommended to provide that the earliest begin of, for example, face-two-face activities cannot be planned before late spring 2021 already at the application stage?

REPLY: It is difficult to reply at this stage. We would suggest to plan activities based on a normal situation and update the work plan later if required. To avoid numerous amendments, we recommend, as indicated under section "16.1. Instructions for the presentation of the application", to use numbers for the months "Month 1; Month 2..."

in the planning (not names of the months). This is more flexible in case the project does not start on 1 January 2021 (as this date is only indicative).

Q56. According to the financial Guidelines for Grants above 60.000 EUR: "the Commission may require the beneficiary to provide a guarantee in advance, in order to limit the financial risk linked to the payment of the pre-financing". Does it apply to organizations that receive more than 50% of their turnover from public funds?

REPLY: As indicated in the call text under section 8.1., the financial capacity is assessed for all organisations except public bodies or international organisations. All other organisations will be assessed against the two ratios detailed in the call.

Q57. One of the partners/co-applicants in the proposal is from Serbia. The support documents (proof of registration, statutes, etc.) are available in Serbian (Latin and Cyrillic script). Should these documents be translated?

REPLY: These documents will be accepted in Serbian at the application stage. The Commission may contact the applicant at a later stage if required.

Q58. Our manager has a power of attorney, can he/she sign the forms on behalf of the organisation or should they be signed by our board of directors?

REPLY: The forms should be signed by the official legal representative of the organisation, not by the board of directors.

Q59. When I make the budget entries into online system, does the total cost of the action cover only the budget for the action from the EU funding (80%)?

REPLY: The online budget must include the total cost of the action: the 80% of EU funding and the 20% of co-financing.

Q60. The template for the "Mandate" (German version) requires an agreement number in the header. What should we provide?

REPLY: You may indicate the number of your proposal provided by the online portal VP/2019/016/xxxx.

Q61. Is the beneficiary of an operating grant allowed to be an applicant?

REPLY: It is possible for beneficiaries from operating grants to apply for action grants as long as the principle of non-cumulative award and prohibition of double funding is respected.

We invite you to read the financial guidelines sections "4.2.3. Eligible Indirect costs" and "4.2.4. Ineligible costs" where limitations and requirements are detailed.