



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion DG
Directorate F: Investment
Unit F.1: ESF & FEAD: Policy & Legislation

Competence centres for social innovation

(European Social Fund and European Programme for
Employment and Social Innovation)

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

VP/2020/010

Questions should be sent by email to:
empl-vp-2020-010@ec.europa.eu

**To ensure a rapid response to requests for information, applicants are invited
to send their queries in English, where possible**

This text is available in English.

**Applicants are invited to read the present document in conjunction with the Financial
Guidelines for Applicants and the model Grant Agreement(s) published with this call as well
as the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union:
http://ec.europa.eu/budget/biblio/documents/regulations/regulations_en.cfm**

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1. INTRODUCTION – BACKGROUND

1.1. Programme/Legal base

This call for proposals is published under Regulation (EU) no 1296/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on a European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (“EaSI”) and amending Decision No 283/2020/EU establishing a European Progress Microfinance Facility for employment and social inclusion, and under Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 (CPR)¹, notably its article 118.

The annual work programmes for the European Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) C(2020)2377² and for ESF operational technical assistance at the initiative of the Commission in the framework of the European Social Fund C(2020) 3758³ were published on 22 April 2020 and 12 June 2020 respectively.

This call for proposals is co-financed by ESF technical assistance at the initiative of the Commission in the framework of **the European Social Fund** and under the **European Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) 2014-2020**⁴. The latter is a European-level financing instrument to contribute to the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy, by providing financial support for the Union's objectives in terms of promoting a high level of quality and sustainable employment, guaranteeing adequate and decent social protection, combating social exclusion and poverty, as well as improving working conditions.

1.2. Policy and economic background

In a rapidly changing world, social innovation is becoming increasingly important to shape the challenges ahead in the interest and for the benefit of European citizens. The transition to a low-carbon economy, demographic changes, the shift towards an IT-based economy, the COVID-19 crisis and migration related issues have already started transforming the world of work, education, training and social services. Therefore, European policies will prioritize policies and actions:

- To help *repair the economic and social damage* brought by the coronavirus pandemic, kick-start European recovery, and protect and create jobs;
- to implement the European Green Deal, while ensuring *just transitions to the green economy*, leaving no one behind;

¹ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2013.347.01.0320.01.ENG

² <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?pager.offset=0&advSearchKey=EaSIannualworkprogramme&mode=advancedSubmit&catId=22&policyArea=0&policyAreaSub=0&country=0&year=0>

³ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?advSearchKey=&mode=advancedSubmit&catId=22&policyArea=0&policyAreaSub=0&country=0&year=0&qty=100>

⁴ REGULATION (EU) No 1296/2013 <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1081>

- to strengthen the *social dimension of economic activity* through fully implementing the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights, including a European Action plan for Social Economy to enhance social innovation;
- to make European citizens, enterprises and institutions *fit for the digital age*;
- to involve, engage and mobilise European citizens in shaping their living and working conditions, thus contributing *to a new push for European democracy*;
- to protect the European values, *built around solidarity, equality and security*, and on this basis, to further develop the European social and economic model by exploiting European diversity and creativity.

Social innovation covers activities that are social both as to their ends and their means (content and process component). Such activities are linked to the development, testing, validation and implementation and scaling-up of new (combinations of) products, services, models or practices that meet social needs and resolve societal challenges. Thereby, social innovations aim at changing the social context, empowering civil society actors and boosting their capacity to act, as well as developing new policy approaches. The concept of social innovation allows public authorities, academia, private and third sector organisations to enter into new relationships or collaborations and to tailor the innovative actions to the specific needs and opportunities of the area or to experiment in a transnational context at EU level. What is an established practice in one country or region can serve as a source of innovation elsewhere.

Social experimentation is defined in the ESF+ proposal⁵ as “policy interventions that offer an innovative response to social needs, implemented on a small scale [...] prior to being implemented in other contexts or on a larger scale, if the results prove convincing”. It should provide valuable information for policy-makers, avoiding the costs of launching large-scale programmes before being tested. Some social experimentations may also fail, being nevertheless an important source of information for policy-makers.

The **EaSI Programme** should support actions to boost social innovation in response to social needs that are not met or only met insufficiently. The Programme should also act as a catalyst for transnational partnerships and networking between public, private and third-sector actors, as well as supporting their involvement in designing and implementing new approaches, in order to tackle pressing social needs and challenges. Successfully tested ideas should be pursued on a wider scale with financial support from the **European Social Fund**. In addition, the ESF should encourage and support innovative social enterprises and entrepreneurs, as well as innovative projects promoted by non-governmental organisations and other actors within the social economy.

The **ESF+ proposal** (MFF 2021 - 2027), combining both programmes, contains a strengthened approach to social innovation. It intends to stimulate social innovation in three complementary ways:

Firstly, under **shared management**, i.e. in their national or regional ESF programmes, Member States are required to establish a funding priority **to support actions of social innovation and social experimentation** and/or strengthen bottom-up approaches based on partnerships between public authorities, the private sector and civil society (Article 13 of the

⁵ COM(2018) 382 final

European Commission proposal). The establishment of such funding priorities by Member States will be incentivised by an increased EU co-financing rate.

Secondly, the Commission intends to **carry on with piloting social experimentations in direct management under EaSI**, based on priority fields identified in its annual work programmes. Implementation will mostly happen through calls for proposals and transnational projects in EaSI participating countries⁶.

Finally, the Commission has proposed to complement the ESF+ contributions for innovative actions by a funding window of EUR 200 million for **transnational cooperation** under indirect management, i.e. by entrusting its implementation to a public law body of a Member State or an international organisation. This transnational cooperation will involve calls for transnational projects at EU level, mutual learning activities, networking and capacity building for public authorities, as well as other stakeholders and project beneficiaries.

1.3. Main purposes

The impact assessment⁷ for the ESF+ Regulation proposal showed that under the ESF (2014-2020) activities related to social innovation are concentrated in a relatively small number of countries and even when operational programmes allocate budget to social innovation, spending tends to lag behind the expectations. In addition, this impact assessment found that currently the ESF has unexploited potential for scaling-up innovative projects financed under the EaSI Programme.

One of the main reasons is that promoting social innovation requires specific capacities and knowledge, not only in communicating the concept of social innovation, but also in empowering and connecting social innovation initiatives, through the provision of suitable examples, tools and methodologies.

Therefore, the full potential of ESF+ in supporting social innovation can be better reaped if the key social innovation stakeholders, notably ESF Managing Authorities, funders and donors, intermediaries, social innovation initiators and practitioners are supported by a professional independent expertise to:

- Create an environment for inspiring, assisting, encouraging and empowering stakeholders so that they make better use of the opportunities, benefits and success factors of specific social innovations. This includes a) collecting, assessing and providing support in applying/adapting suitable tools, methods, examples, models and practices, and by b) promoting networking and mutual learning.
- Facilitate the mainstreaming of successfully tested innovative approaches (or partnerships). This involves a) assisting social innovation initiatives in validating, documenting and communicating their approach and experience, b) creating a basis to diffuse successful models funded previously under EaSI or other Union programmes

⁶ Art. 25 of the ESF+ proposed regulation states that "the following criteria shall apply for entities to be eligible: (a) legal entities established in any of the following countries: (i) a Member State or an overseas country or territory linked to it; (ii) an associated country; (iii) third country listed in the work programme under the conditions specified in paragraph 3 and 4; (b) any legal entity created under Union law or any international organisation.

⁷ European Commission the ESF support to social innovation.;written by Fondazione G. Brodolini Brussels; April 2018.. ... ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=19689&langId=en
<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8107&furtherPubs=yes>

beyond or under the ESF+ through the replication or adaption of the approach to the specific national/regional context.

This call is to finance the delivery of this **expert support** to Managing Authorities and national ecosystems for social innovation, by what is called hereafter ***“the national competence centre for social innovation”***.

The 2014-2020 ESF transnational cooperation platform, as re-established in spring 2020, will help to link the national competence centres among themselves. It will use for this its **community of practice on social innovation**, bringing together ESF managing authorities representatives of the national competence centres, and other stakeholders, in order to facilitate mutual learning, the exchange of good practices and networking.

In the next programming period (2021-2027), the Commission⁸ intends to set up a **European level support structure for social innovation**. This will, among other things, provide a platform for transnational cooperation, mutual learning and for thematic and methodological support to the national competence centres. The competence centres could then also integrate additional functions, such as cooperating with (or perhaps become) the then to be created EaSI National Contact Points (NCPs) within each EU Member State, to increase the synergies between the different components of the ESF+, as well as other EU and non-EU programmes.

2. OBJECTIVE(S) – PRIORITIES – TYPES OF ACTIONS - EXPECTED RESULTS

2.1. Objectives - Priorities

In view of the diverse landscape in terms of experience in promoting and scaling-up social innovation under the ESF, the high importance given to social innovation by the new Commission and the proposals for the future ESF+ Regulation, there is a need to empower social innovation initiatives and partnerships and boost the stakeholders’ capacity to act. Therefore, the objective of this call for proposals is to support the establishment, development and professionalism of organisations that do or can assume the function of a social innovation competence centre in an EU Member State. Their main functions would be:

- **Capacity building**: to build capacities of key social innovation stakeholders, notably ESF Managing Authorities, funders and donors, intermediaries, social innovation initiatives and practitioners alike. This is to be pursued, by providing professional support services ranging from design and development to assessment, upscaling and mainstreaming of social innovations through effective public policies and actions, creating a conducive environment for social innovation in a Member State.
- **Transnational transfer of knowledge**⁹ know-how, and tools for the support to social innovation from ESF Managing Authorities, social innovation competence centres and social innovation stakeholders with a long-standing and deep experience, to organisations in Member States with a shorter and less developed or less comprehensive experience and competence in this field.

⁸ Through indirect management.

⁹ In this call, the term knowledge transfer refers to the transfer of knowledge and know-how, models and examples, tools and practices.

Establishing a mentoring relationship between competence centres of both types of Member States will be instrumental in this respect.

- **Creation of synergies:** to create further synergies between the EaSI Programme and the ESF, especially in view of designing, supporting, monitoring and mainstreaming innovative actions that could be extended, enlarged and/or replicated using ESF+ funding in subsequent years.
- **Networking:** to network and cooperate with other selected competence centres, using mutual learning as well as by jointly developing, assessing, and optimising suitable tools and methods, and collecting and disseminating inspiring examples, models and practices.

2.2. Description of the activities to be funded / Type of actions

The call will fund the development and establishment of national competence centres, their activities to promote social innovation in the country (in particular by assisting stakeholders in the design, implementation and scaling up of successful innovative actions), and mutual learning, as well as mentoring of less advanced centres by more experienced ones combined with networking between the different competence centres and other key stakeholders.

The types of activities to be funded under this call for proposals may include:

- Drawing a comprehensive overview of the social innovation ecosystem synthesising the visions, needs, opportunities and priorities of relevant social innovation stakeholders and promoters, in order to produce a shared strategy and action plan for boosting social innovation in a Member State, including under the ESF+;
- Collecting, validating, mapping, and communicating suitable and successful tools and methods, approaches and models, practices and inspiring examples, through social media, web platforms, conferences and seminars;
- Organising awareness and inspirational actions for social innovation promoters;
- Providing guidance, coaching, mentoring and training in applying/ adapting suitable tools and methods and practices to social innovation promoters;
- Creating and facilitating (thematic) networks of social innovation promoters, academics and local bodies to speed up mutual learning and exchanging good practices;
- Facilitating and assisting the development of (new forms/new combinations) of community-led/citizen-controlled finance for pursuing social innovations;
- Continuously monitoring and assessing public support towards social innovation, and drafting recommendations for improving the responsiveness, effectiveness and governance of public policy towards social innovation;
- Providing guidance, coaching, mentoring and training to less experienced competence centres, and assist them in mutual learning and exchanging good practices;
- Sharing suitable and successful tools and methods, approaches and models, examples and practices and inspiring examples with other competence centres.

The applications shall detail the resources foreseen for each of the activities proposed, as well as the professional qualifications and relevant experience of the teams that will conduct those activities.

All activities shall be presented under the umbrella of a comprehensive work plan, which should detail their links with the objectives, their expected results and the milestones for achieving the results in the implementing period.

Proposals must include a work package of capacity building, knowledge transfer and mentoring to suitable organisations (i.e. future competence centres) in other Member States. This will enable each consortium (see section 6.1.) to form a cluster of competence centres that exchange knowledge, expertise, tools, methods and models among its members, and eventually allow to cover all Member States through all clusters taken together.

The grant budget for each consortium therefore must be shared between existing and (future) competence centres in several Member States in every application. There are two options for applicants to comply with this requirement (see also section 6.2 b).

The work plan shall also foresee the participation in networking activities of the transnational cooperation platform (3 meetings per year in Brussels or another place in Europe). The Commission will entrust a competent organisation to facilitate the networking and collaboration of all competence centres and to assume the functions of a network coordinator and shared platform provider. It will, in collaboration with the consortia selected, establish modalities of EU-level networking and collaboration of all competence centers.

2.3. Expected outputs/results

The Commission will endeavour to choose the consortia in a way to ideally cover all Member States to ensure that all Member States have the chance to establish and operate a social innovation competence centre. The selected applications should thus contribute to a balanced geographic coverage.

Each consortium is expected to produce at least the **following outputs for every Member State covered**:

- A competence centre for social innovation able to perform the tasks, outlined under section 2.2, is established, and recognised as a professional resource by social innovation promoters and stakeholders, academia, local social and economic development organisations. It has received a formal endorsement (see template in annex II) from the responsible national ESF Managing Authority¹⁰;
- An analysis of the strengths and weaknesses regarding social innovation and identification of areas or approaches which could serve as a source of inspiration for other territories (Policy areas/approaches could include for example, social inclusion, access to services, housing, skills, social approaches to energy management, community management of resources, persons-centred care, outreach and partnerships, etc.)

¹⁰ For the purpose of this call, the national managing authority is the entity represented by the full member of the ESF Committee. The endorsement form shall be signed by the full member of the ESF Committee. The name of ESF Committee Member for the country can be obtained from the managing authority/ies, which can be found by choosing on this website first the country in question and then the contacts: <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=45&langId=en> . Alternatively, information can be obtained via the functional mailbox of this call for proposal: empl-vp-2020-010@ec.europa.eu

- A joint blueprint by stakeholders for a strategy and action plan to support social innovation in the country, including support under ESF+;
- An established system to pursue ongoing improvements and adaptations of their tools and methodologies, resources and practices for each competence centre, to achieve a high level of quality through collaboration and networking with the other competence centres;
- A collection of social innovation initiatives initiated or scaled-up/replicated.

Each consortium is also expected to:

- Prepare and test the replication or up-scaling of 1-2 social innovation projects.

2.4. Monitoring

The Commission, with the support of an external contractor, will monitor regularly the implementation of the EaSI Programme. Therefore, beneficiaries/contractors will have to transmit qualitative and quantitative monitoring data on the results of the activities. These will include the extent to which the principles of equality between women and men has been applied, as well as how anti-discrimination considerations, including accessibility issues, have been addressed through the activities. Related templates are attached or will be provided.

The Commission will monitor the action for the EaSI programme through the information provided in the specific Annex to the Grant Agreement. The reporting template is published on the respective EaSI call page <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=629&langId=en>.

In setting up the action, beneficiaries must foresee the necessary funding for monitoring and reporting to the Commission. For events, it is important to get from participants their specific consent by a statement or by a clear affirmative action for processing and transferring their personal data also to an external contractor responsible for the monitoring of the EaSI programme. Beneficiaries/contractors should therefore inform all participants via a Privacy Statement that is not only published online, but is also provided individually to each participant (e.g. as part of the email where the beneficiary/contractor first contacts the individual concerned) that the Commission/external contractor would be processing their personal data. Beneficiaries/contractors have to be able to demonstrate that consent was obtained subject to conditions of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data (i.e. keep a record that shows how the consent was obtained and whether it was valid) and Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data.

A model privacy statement is available on the Europa website of the EaSI programme:

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1081&langId=en&furtherCalls=yes&callType=2>.

2.5 General requirements for the activities to be funded under EaSI

The EaSI Programme shall, in all its axes and actions, aim to:

- (a) pay particular attention to vulnerable groups, such as young people;
- (b) promote equality between women and men,
- (c) combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation;
- (d) promote a high-level of quality and sustainable employment, guarantee adequate and decent social protection, combat long-term unemployment and fight against poverty and social exclusion.

Hence, in designing, implementing and reporting on the activity, beneficiaries must address the issues noted above and will be required to provide details in the final activity report on the steps and achievements made towards addressing those aims.

3. TIMETABLE

	Stages	Date or period
a)	Publication of the call	07/2020
b)	Deadline for questions and requests for clarification	05/10/2020
c)	Deadline for submitting applications	15/10/2020 Swim, Courier and Post : 24:00 Brussels' time (CET) Hand deliveries 16:00 Brussels' time (CET)
d)	Evaluation period (indicative)	11/2020 to 01/2020
e)	Information to applicants (indicative)	01/02/2021
f)	Signature of the grant agreements (indicative)	28/02/2021
g)	Starting date of the action (indicative)	15/03/2021

3.1. Starting date and duration of the projects

The actual starting date of the action will either be the first day following the date when the last of the two parties signs the grant agreement, the first day of the month following the date when the last of the two parties signs or a date agreed upon between the parties.

Applicants should note that if their project is selected, they may receive the grant agreement after the start date of the action that they have indicatively set in the application form. It is therefore advisable to number the months in the work programme instead of indicating the name of the month or the date.

No expenditure can be incurred before the date of submission of the application. Any expenditure incurred before the signature of the Grant Agreement may be considered eligible but it will be at the applicant's risk if the applicant cannot demonstrate the imperative need for starting the action prior to signature of the agreement.

Indeed an action grant may be awarded for an action, which has already begun only where the applicant can demonstrate in the grant application the need to start the action before the grant agreement is signed.

The indicative duration of the project should be **24 months**.

4. AVAILABLE BUDGET AND CO-FINANCING RATE

4.1. Available Budget

The total budget earmarked for the EU co-financing of projects under this call is estimated at **EUR 5 million**.

The Commission expects to fund **7- 9 proposals**.

The Commission reserves the right not to distribute all the funds available.

The Commission reserves the right to increase the amount of the funds, if available, and distribute them to proposals admitted in the possible reserve list. This top-up of the budget is limited to 20% of the initial budget of the call.

4.2. Co-financing rate

Under this call for proposals, the EU grant may not exceed 80% of the total eligible costs of the action. The applicants must guarantee their co-financing of the remaining amount covered by the applicants' own resources or from sources other than the European Union budget¹¹.

Please note that other EU programmes and ESF, ERDF, EAFRD and cohesion fund programmes cannot be used as national co-financing source.

5. ADMISSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Applications must be sent no later than the deadline for submission referred to in section 3(c)
- Applications (meaning, the application form, including budget, description of the action and work plan) must be submitted using the electronic submission system available at <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/swim>, and by sending a signed, printed version of the complete application form (including all documents specified in the check-list) by post or courier service (one original dossier and two copies; see sections 14 and 16).

¹¹ Letters of commitment are required from any associate organisations and any third party providing financial contributions to the eligible costs of the action (see checklist, point 5).

Failure to comply with one of the above requirements may lead to the rejection of the application. 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. In this case, applications should be accompanied by an executive summary in English, French or German (see checklist, point 3).

6. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

6.1. Eligibility of the applicants (lead and co-applicants) and affiliated entities¹²

Please be aware that eligibility criteria must be complied with for the entire duration of the grant.

For British Applicants: Please be aware that following the entry into force of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement¹³ on 1 February 2020 and in particular Articles 127(6)¹⁴, 137¹⁵ and 138¹⁶, the references to natural or legal persons residing or established in a Member State of the European Union are to be understood as including natural or legal persons residing or established in the United Kingdom. UK residents and entities are therefore eligible to participate under this call.¹⁷

a) Place of establishment

Legal entities properly established and registered in the EU Member States are eligible as lead applicant or co-applicants, affiliated entities and associated organisations.

b) Type of entities

The lead applicants, co-applicants and affiliated entities must be legal entities.

¹² See section 2 of the Financial Guidelines for definitions.

¹³ Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community

¹⁴ Art 127 (6) Unless otherwise provided in this Agreement, during the transition period, any reference to Member States in the Union law applicable pursuant to paragraph 1, including as implemented and applied by Member States, shall be understood as including the United Kingdom (*extract*).

¹⁵ Art. 137. The United Kingdom's participation in the implementation of the Union programmes and activities in 2019 and 2020 (*extract*)

¹⁶ Art. 138 Union law applicable after 31 December 2020 in relation to the United Kingdom's participation in the implementation of the Union programmes and activities committed under the MFF 2014-2020 or previous financial perspectives (*extract*)

¹⁷ 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)

c) Consortia¹⁸

Only consortia are eligible.

To be eligible, the consortium, must include a lead applicant and at least one co-applicant (see specific requirements for option A et option B under 6.2.b). The lead applicant and the co-applicant(s) must come from at least two EU Member States.

For every EU Member State covered, the consortium must include at least one Managing Authority of the European Social Fund or a (public or private) entity with an endorsement (see annex II, checklist point 16) from the national Managing Authority¹⁹ confirming that it will recognise it as (part of the) competence centre for social innovation for that EU Member State.

The purpose of the endorsement is to avoid multiple competing applications covering the same EU Member State. National management authorities will be encouraged to endorse the most suitable and competent national organisation(s) and select these in a transparent and prompt process. Please note that the competence centre does not have to be one single organisation but can be formed by a network of several organisations.

Organisations looking for partners, in view of submitting a joint proposal, can express their interest by returning the partner search form "Annex III" attached to this call to EMPL-VP-2020-010@ec.europa.eu. The list of organisations who have expressed their interest will be published and updated on a regular basis.

d) Affiliated entities

Affiliated entities may participate in the implementation of the action. Legal entities having a legal or capital link with applicants, which is neither limited to the action nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation and which satisfy the eligibility criteria, may take part in the action as affiliated entities, and may declare eligible costs. For that purpose, applicants shall identify such affiliated entities in the application form.

e) Associate organisations²⁰.

Associate organisations are eligible. An associate organisation can participate in the action but may not declare eligible costs. A public body or a private organisation (e.g. a foundation) providing co-financing may also participate as associate organisation.

¹⁸ Letters of mandate, authorising the lead applicant to submit the proposal and to sign the Grant Agreement on their behalf must be submitted by each co-applicant. Letters of commitment must be submitted by each co-applicant, certifying that they are willing to participate in the project with a brief description of their role and indicating any financial contribution where applicable (see checklist points 5 and 6).

¹⁹ For the purpose of this call, the national managing authority is the entity represented by the full Member of the ESF Committee at the publication of the call. The endorsement will include the confirmation that it will also be entrusted to act as a national competence centre for social innovation, notably to support innovative projects and public authorities under the ESF / the ESF+. The endorsement form shall be signed by the full member of the ESF Committee. The name of ESF Committee Member for the country can be obtained from the managing authority/ies, which can be found by choosing from the following webpage first the country in question and then the "contacts": <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=45&langId=en>. Alternatively, information can be obtained via the functional mailbox of this call for proposal: empl-vp-2020-010@ec.europa.eu

²⁰ See section 2 of the Financial Guidelines for definitions

Even though the other EaSI participating countries (currently Iceland, Norway, Albania, Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey) do not benefit from ESF/ESF+ support under shared management, their participation as associated organisation is most welcome.

Conditions of rejections

If a single applicant is not considered to be eligible, the application will be rejected.

For consortia, if the lead applicant is considered not to be eligible, the application will be rejected.

If a co-applicant is considered not to be eligible, this co-applicant will be removed from the consortium. The related activities and the forecasted costs will be removed as well from the proposal. The eligibility of the modified consortium will then be re-evaluated without the said co-applicant's activities and costs. If the application is accepted for funding, the Commission would propose to award the funds with the necessary corrections and request a revised work plan and budget from the applicant to be adapted as appropriate.

6.2. Eligible activities

a) Geographical Location

To be eligible, actions must be fully carried out in the EU Member States.

b) Types of activities

The grant will finance the activities indicated in section 2.2.

As knowledge sharing is an important objective of the call, **the grant budget for each consortium must be shared between existing and (future) competence centres in 3 – 4 Member States** in every application. There are two options for applicants to comply with this requirement:

Option A: Consortium bringing together experienced and less experienced organisations in 3 or 4 Member States from the start (in this case requiring more than one co-applicant).

Under option A, the consortium goes beyond the minimum requirement of 2 Member States to be covered (cf. eligibility criteria specified under section 6.1): it will include as additional co-applicant(s) at least one organisation located in one additional Member State (or ideally even two organisations to cover two more Member States) that can build suitable capacities to act as (future) competence centre by receiving professional support from competent applicants or co-applicants. The (future) competence centre(s) from additional Member State(s) included in the consortium have to satisfy the eligibility requirements (see specific requirement on the endorsement from the national Managing Authority) specified under section 6.1.

Option B: Consortium covering competence centres located in minimum two Member States at the moment of the application, but which in addition engage in the **capacity building of suitable organisations in other Member States**. In this case the application will include a work package for the capacity building of organisations, which are to become social

innovation competence centres in these Member States. **These activities shall be supported through a cascading grant (i.e. so-called “financial support to third parties”).**

Under option B, the (future) competence centre benefiting from knowledge transfer and receiving financial support as third parties does not yet need to have an endorsement from the national Managing Authority at the time of application. To avoid overlaps between consortia, applications shall include at least three proposals of organisations located in different countries (including a work plan for knowledge and competence transfer and an appropriate budget to be shared through a cascading grant with those entities).

The Commission will evaluate the proposals made by applicants and eventually choose the most appropriate ones in cooperation with the grant beneficiaries, once all grant agreements have been concluded. Seeking the endorsement from the national Managing Authority/Authorities for the chosen country/countries shall be part of the work plan.

c) Core activities

The following activities are core activities and may not be subcontracted:

- Project coordination/management activities

d) Financial Support to third parties

Applicants choosing **option B** for the knowledge transfer **shall use cascading grants (i.e. so-called “financial support to third parties”)** to share an appropriate amount of the grant budget with other (future) competence centres (cf. section 6.2 (b) **option B**). For that purpose the grant application shall indicate:

- the types of activity that may receive such support, in line with the chapters 2.2 and 2.3. of this call
- the operational capacity requirements of beneficiary organisations which may receive financial support
- the criteria for awarding financial support,
- the maximum amount to be granted to each third party and the criteria for determining it. The amount can go beyond EUR 60 000 if justified for achieving the knowledge transfer objective of this call.²¹

6.3. Ineligible activities

The following types of activities are not eligible for EU funding under this call:

- Administrative costs of an ESF body related to the management of calls for innovative actions
- Volunteers’ work is accepted as an activity but volunteers’ costs in the meaning of art 181(8) and 190 (2) of the Financial Regulation are not eligible for reimbursement.

²¹ As per Article 204 of the Financial Regulation “*The threshold[...] may be exceeded where achieving the objectives of the actions would otherwise be impossible or overly difficult*”.

7. EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Applicant(s) (single applicant or lead applicant and each co-applicant) must sign a declaration on their honour signed in their name [(and on behalf of their respective affiliated entities, should they be part of the application)], certifying that they are not in one of the situations referred to in article 136 and 141 of the Financial Regulation concerning exclusion and rejection from the procedure respectively, using the relevant form attached to the application form available at

<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/swim/external/displayWelcome.do>.

7.1. Exclusion

The authorising officer shall exclude an applicant from participating in call for proposals procedures where:

- (a) the applicant is bankrupt, subject to insolvency or winding-up procedures, its assets are being administered by a liquidator or by a court, it is in an arrangement with creditors, its business activities are suspended, or it is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for under EU or national laws or regulations;
- (b) it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the applicant is in breach of its obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions in accordance with the applicable law;
- (c) it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the applicant is guilty of grave professional misconduct by having violated applicable laws or regulations or ethical standards of the profession to which the applicant belongs, or by having engaged in any wrongful intent or gross negligence, including, in particular, any of the following:
 - (i) fraudulently or negligently misrepresenting information required for the verification of the absence of grounds for exclusion or the fulfilment of eligibility or selection criteria or in the performance of a contract, a grant agreement or a grant decision;
 - (ii) entering into agreement with other applicants with the aim of distorting competition;
 - (iii) violating intellectual property rights;
 - (iv) attempting to influence the decision-making process of the Commission during the award procedure;
 - (v) attempting to obtain confidential information that may confer upon it undue advantages in the award procedure;
- (d) it has been established by a final judgment that the applicant is guilty of any of the following:
 - (i) fraud, within the meaning of Article 3 of Directive (EU) 2017/1371 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Article 1 of the Convention on the protection of the European Communities' financial interests, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 July 1995;

- (ii) corruption, as defined in Article 4(2) of Directive (EU) 2017/1371 or Article 3 of the Convention on the fight against corruption involving officials of the European Communities or officials of Member States of the European Union, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 May 1997, or conduct referred to in Article 2(1) of Council Framework Decision 2003/568/JHA, or corruption as defined in the applicable law;
 - (iii) conduct related to a criminal organisation, as referred to in Article 2 of Council Framework Decision 2008/841/JHA;
 - (iv) money laundering or terrorist financing within the meaning of Article 1(3), (4) and (5) of Directive (EU) 2015/849 of the European Parliament and of the Council;
 - (v) terrorist offences or offences linked to terrorist activities, as defined in Articles 1 and 3 of Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA, respectively, or inciting, aiding, abetting or attempting to commit such offences, as referred to in Article 4 of that Decision;
 - (vi) child labour or other offences concerning trafficking in human beings as referred to in Article 2 of Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council;
- (e) the applicant has shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations in the performance of a contract, a grant agreement or a grant decision financed by the Union's budget, which has led to its early termination or to the application of liquidated damages or other contractual penalties, or which has been discovered following checks, audits or investigations by an authorising officer, OLAF or the Court of Auditors;
 - (f) it has been established by a final judgment or final administrative decision that the applicant has committed an irregularity within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95;
 - (g) it has been established by a final judgement or final administrative decision that the applicant has created an entity in a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or any other legal obligations of mandatory application in the jurisdiction of its registered office, central administration or principal place of business;
 - (h) it has been established by a final judgement or final administrative decision that an entity has been created with the intent referred to in point (g);
 - (i) for the situations referred to in points (c) to (h) above, the applicant is subject to:
 - (i) facts established in the context of audits or investigations carried out by European Public Prosecutor's Office after its establishment, the Court of Auditors, the European Anti-Fraud Office or the internal auditor, or any other check, audit or control performed under the responsibility of an authorising officer of an EU institution, of a European office or of an EU agency or body;
 - (ii) non-final judgments or non-final administrative decisions which may include disciplinary measures taken by the competent supervisory body responsible for the verification of the application of standards of professional ethics;
 - (iii) facts referred to in decisions of persons or entities being entrusted with EU budget implementation tasks;
 - (iv) information transmitted by Member States implementing Union funds;

- (v) decisions of the Commission relating to the infringement of Union competition law or of a national competent authority relating to the infringement of Union or national competition law; or
- (vi) decisions of exclusion by an authorising officer of an EU institution, of a European office or of an EU agency or body.

7.2. Remedial measures

If an applicant declares one of the situations of exclusion listed above it must indicate the measures it has taken to remedy the exclusion situation, thus demonstrating its reliability. This may include e.g. technical, organisational and personnel measures to correct the conduct and prevent further occurrence, compensation of damage or payment of fines or of any taxes or social security contributions. The relevant documentary evidence which illustrates the remedial measures taken must be provided in annex to the declaration. This does not apply for situations referred in point (d) of section 7.1.

7.3. Rejection from the call for proposals

The Commission shall not award a grant to an applicant who:

- a. is in an exclusion situation established in accordance with Section 7.1; or
- b. has misrepresented the information required as a condition for participating in the procedure or has failed to supply this information; or
- c. was previously involved in the preparation of calls documents used in the award procedure where this entails breach of the principle of equality of treatment, including a distortion of competition that cannot be remedied otherwise.

The same exclusion criteria apply to affiliated entities of the applicant. These affiliated entities must therefore, be specified in the above-mentioned declaration(s).

Administrative sanctions may be imposed on applicants, or affiliated entities where applicable, who are guilty of misrepresentation, if any of the declarations or information provided as a condition for participating in this procedure prove to be false.

8. SELECTION CRITERIA

The lead applicant and each co-applicant, must have the financial and operational capacity to complete the activities for which funding is requested.

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

8.1. Financial capacity

The lead applicant and each co-applicant must have access to solid funding (i.e. be considered as having a strong financial capacity) to maintain its/their activities for the period of the action and to help finance it as necessary.

The verification of financial capacity will NOT apply to public bodies.

The lead applicant's and each co-applicant's's financial capacity will be assessed on the basis of the following supporting documents to be submitted with the application.

The following thresholds apply to each applicant not to the consortium as a whole.

a) Low value grants (for applicants whose grant is ≤ EUR 60 000):

- Declaration on honour including declaration on financial capacity to carry out the activity (see checklist point 4);

The Commission may nevertheless request further information or documents at any stage of the procedure to proceed with verifications and take various proportional measures depending on the level of weaknesses identified. Mitigating measure 5 "bank guarantee" may not be applied for low value grants.

b) For applicants whose grant is > EUR 60 000:

- Declaration on honour including declaration on financial capacity to carry out the activity (see checklist point 4); and
- Official annual balance sheets and profit and loss accounts published for the last two financial years available (see checklist point 15);
- For newly created entities: the business plan might replace the above documents;
- Information on the financial capacity provided by the applicant and in particular the information provided in section "Financial Resources" of the SWIM application form

c) Grants for an action > EUR 750 000 per applicant

- the information and supporting documents mentioned in point b) above and
- an **audit report** produced by an approved external auditor certifying the accounts for the last two financial years where such an audit report is available or whenever a statutory audit report is required by Union or national law.

If the audit report is not available AND a statutory report is not required by law, a self-declaration signed by the applicant's authorized representative certifying the validity of its accounts for the last two financial years available. (See checklist point 16).

The financial capacity will be evaluated on the basis of the following two ratios:

- A **first ratio** between the total **assets** in the applicants' balance sheet and the total **cost** of the action of the project (single applicants) or **the part of the project budget** for which that organisation is responsible for according to the budget in the application form (lead and co-applicants). The (co)applicant is considered to have a strong financial capacity when the ratio is equal or greater than 0.70.

- **Formula for each applicant in the consortium:** applicant's own assets/part of the budget of the action corresponding to that applicant > 0.70

- A **second ratio** between the **1st prefinancing and the annual total revenue**. For each (co)-applicant the share of the 1st prefinancing is equal to his share in the total estimated budget. The co-applicant is considered to have a strong financial capacity when the ratio is equal or lower than 0.70

- Formula for each applicant in the consortium: 1^{st} prefinancing corresponding to that applicant/annual total revenue per applicant < 0.70

If as a result of the application of the two ratios, a lead applicant or co-applicant is found not to be strong on one of the two ratios while being strong on the other one, then it will be considered as not having a strong capacity.

If the lead applicant is considered not to have a strong financial capacity, the application as a whole will be rejected.

If a co-applicant is considered not to have a strong financial capacity, the case will be further analysed; this may include among others a re-evaluation of the application without the co-applicant and the foreseen activities and costs for the concerned co-applicant. If, after this re-evaluation, the application is selected without the said activities, the work plan and costs will have to be adapted.

If, after this re-evaluation, the application cannot be selected e.g. because the eligibility criteria are not fulfilled anymore, the Commission **may** propose various proportional **mitigating measures**:

1. propose a Grant Agreement without pre-financing;
2. propose a Grant Agreement with a pre-financing paid in several instalments;
3. propose a Grant Agreement with 1^{st} or total pre-financing payment(s) covered by (a) financial guarantee(s);
4. propose a Grant Agreement with joint financial liability of 2 or more applicants;
5. propose a Grant Agreement with a mix of the previous measures 2, 3 and 4.

In the case of mitigating measure 3, the Commission may request a pre-financing guarantee for up to the same amount as the 1^{st} or total pre-financing depending on the financial weakness, in order to limit the financial risks linked to the pre-financing payment (not applicable for low value grants).

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

The guarantee shall be released as the pre-financing is cleared against the payment of the balance, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the grant agreement.

8.2. Operational capacity

Lead applicants and each co-applicant must have the professional competencies as well as appropriate qualifications necessary to complete the proposed action.

Concretely, this means the following:

- The lead applicant must be either an “experienced” ESF Managing Authority, or an “experienced” private or public entity:

- An “experienced” ESF Managing Authority must have demonstrable experience, capacities and achievements in supporting social innovation projects in the programming period 2014-2020, and must have applied dedicated tools for programme and project management, including learning networks, monitoring and evaluation.
- An “experienced” private or public entity must have demonstrable competence, capacities and achievements in supporting social innovation in the past 4 years. In particular this must include experience in applying dedicated tools and methods in inspiring, mobilising, empowering, facilitating, networking, evaluating, transferring, scaling-up social innovation initiatives, or innovative social enterprises.
- The co-applicants must have experience in the promotion of social innovation or in a related area such as civil society development, social entrepreneurship, community led local social and economic development, or social finance. This means that they must have:
 - For a Managing Authority: demonstrable experience in supporting social innovation, social economy or social enterprises/social entrepreneurship in the programming period 2014-2020.
 - For public or private entity: demonstrable experience in promoting social innovation, social economy or social enterprises/social entrepreneurship, or civil society development in related areas in the past 3 years.

The project coordinator must have at least a C1 level in English and 3 years of proven transnational project management activities.

At least one expert working for the lead applicant should have a minimum of 5 years experience in the area of social innovation, from the project implementation or the policy side.

At least one expert per consortium needs to have minimum 3 years of experience in replication, transfer or mainstreaming of social innovations.

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

- A detailed description of the social innovation support activities, including the methods and tools used, by the members of the consortium carried out in the last three years (see checklist point 14);
- The **CVs of the proposed project co-ordinator and the experts** fulfilling the above mentioned minimum requirements showing all their relevant professional experience (see checklist point 12);
- Declaration on honour signed by the legal representative (including operational capacity to carry out the activity) (see checklist point 4);
- A declaration by the project manager/coordinator of the lead applicant certifying the professional competences and appropriate qualifications of the project team to carry out the required tasks (see checklist point 13).

If the lead applicant for consortia is considered not to have the required operational capacity, the application as a whole will be rejected. If a co-applicant is considered not to have the required operational capacity, this co-applicant will be removed

from the consortium and the application will be evaluated without this co-applicant²². In addition, the activities and costs of the non-selected co-applicant will be removed from the granted budget. If the application is selected, the work plan and budget will have to be adapted.

9. AWARD CRITERIA

The proposals which fulfil the eligibility and operational capacity criteria will be assessed on the basis of the following award criteria:

1. Award criterion: **Relevance and impact of the proposal in relation to the objectives of the call** (Min. 15 points, max. 30 points).

The assessment will focus on how well the proposed activities and expected outcomes would contribute to the objectives of the call, including the transnational cooperation/knowledge transfer angle and in terms of geographic coverage.

2. Award criterion: **Quality of the working methods proposed in view of reaching the objectives** (Min. 20 points, max. 40 points).

The assessment will focus on the suitability, feasibility and relevance of working methods in relation to the objectives, in particular in relation to:

- The action of competence centres in their own Member State;
- The knowledge transfer to less experienced competence centres and the replication of social innovation;
- The transnational cooperation between competence centres at EU level;

3. Award criterion: **The cost-efficiency of the action** (Min. 15 points, max. 30 points).

In this respect, particular attention will be given to:

- The coherence of the overall budget breakdown;
- The clarity and consistency of the estimated budget description and justification of costs;
- The degree to which the cost of the action is proportional to the impact of the action, taking into account its geographic coverage and the efforts of transferring knowledge.

Applications will be ranked according to the total score awarded. Taking into account the available budget, the proposals with the highest total scores will be recommended for award, **on condition that:**

- **the total score reaches at least 60% of the maximum total score**
- and**
- **the score for each criterion is at least 50% of the maximum score for that criterion**

²² This includes a re-evaluation of the eligibility of the modified consortium.

10. LEGAL COMMITMENTS

In the event of a grant being awarded by the Commission, a Grant Agreement/, drawn up in euro and detailing the conditions and level of funding, will be sent to the beneficiary/partner, or to the coordinator in the case of multi-beneficiary Grant Agreements.

The two copies of the original agreement must be signed by the beneficiary/partner, or the coordinator for multi-beneficiary Grant Agreements, and returned to the Commission immediately. The Commission will sign them last.

The Commission may have made relevant corrections and deletion of ineligible costs or activities in the Grant Agreement sent to the applicant – therefore the applicant should carefully read the whole agreement before signing and returning the copies to the Commission.

The model Multi-Beneficiary Grant Agreement is published on the Europa website:
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=629&langId=en>.

There is no alternative to this/these model(s) in the context of this call. In specific cases, international agreements conditions may apply (except for the co-financing requirement).

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

11. PUBLICITY/SOURCES OF FUNDING

By the beneficiaries

Beneficiaries/contractors must acknowledge in writing that the project has been supported by the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation ("EaSI") 2014-2020 and the European Social Fund. In practice, all products (publications, brochures, press releases, videos, CDs, posters and banners, and especially those associated with conferences, seminars and information campaigns) must state the following:

"This (publication, conference, video, <xxx>) has received financial support from the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) (2014-2020) and the European Social Fund. For further information please consult: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/easi> and <http://ec.europa.eu/esf>".

The European emblem must appear on every publication or other material produced. Please see: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/services/visual_identity/pdf/use-emblem_en.pdf

When displayed in association with another name or logo, the name and emblem of the European Commission must have appropriate prominence.

Any communication or publication by the beneficiary/ies related to the action, in any form and using any means, including the Internet, shall indicate that it reflects only the author's view and that the Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

Every publication must therefore include the following:

"The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the official position of the European Commission."

In addition to these minimum requirements, references specified in the text of the call for proposals must also be specified.

If these requirements are not fully complied with, the beneficiary's grant may be reduced in accordance with the provisions of the grant agreement.

By the Commission²³

With the exception of scholarships paid to natural persons and other direct support paid to natural persons in most need, all information relating to grants awarded in the course of a financial year shall be published on an internet site of the European Union institutions no later than the 30 June of the year following the financial year in which the grants were awarded.

By signing the grant agreement for an action, the beneficiary/ies authorises the Commission to publish the following information in any form and medium, including via the Internet site of the EU²⁴:

- name of the beneficiary;
- address/es of the beneficiary when the latter is a legal person, region when the beneficiary is a natural person, as defined on NUTS 2 level²⁵ if he/she is domiciled within the EU or equivalent if domiciled outside the EU;
- subject of the grant;
- amount awarded.

With a view to disseminating all results obtained and outputs delivered under the grant agreement, the Executive Summary sent with the Implementation Report will be posted on the website of the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

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

12. DATA PROTECTION

12.1. Before the grant agreement's signature:

The reply to any call for proposals involves the recording and processing of personal data (such as name, address and CV). Such data will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2018/1725²⁶. Unless indicated otherwise, the applicant's replies to the questions and any

²³ Articles 38 & 189 FR

²⁴ Article 189 2. FR

²⁵ Commission Regulation (EC) No 105/2007 of 1 February 2007 amending the annexes to Regulation (EC) No 1059/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a common classification of territorial units for statistics (NUTS), OJ L39, 10.2.2007, p.1.

²⁶ Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies,

personal data requested that are required to evaluate the application in accordance with the call for proposal, will be processed solely for that purpose by the Head of Unit F.4 – Programme Management and Implementation, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. Details concerning the processing of your personal data and on model privacy statements are available at the following website:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/data-protection-public-procurement-procedures_en.

Personal data may be registered in the Early Detection and Exclusion System by the Commission, should the beneficiary be in one of the situations mentioned in Articles 136 and 141 of Financial Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046²⁷. For more information see the Privacy Statement on: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/library/explained/management/protecting/privacy_statement_ede_s_en.pdf

12.2. Once the grant agreement is signed:

Beneficiaries must process personal data in compliance with the applicable EU and national law on data protection in accordance with the Regulation (EU) 2016/679²⁸.

Any personal data included in the Agreement must be processed by the Commission in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 2018/1725²⁹.

Such data must be processed by the data controller identified in Article I.7.1 solely for implementing, managing and monitoring the Agreement or to protect the financial interests of the EU, including checks, audits and investigations in accordance with Article II.27.

Please refer to Article II.7 of the General Conditions of the model grant agreements.

13. FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

Details on financial provisions are laid out in the Financial Guidelines for Applicants and the model Grant Agreement, both published on the Europa website under the relevant call: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=629&langId=en>.

Implementation contracts/subcontracting

Where the implementation of the action requires the award of procurement contracts (implementation contracts intended to cover the purchase of services and/or goods, equipment etc. **necessary for the implementation of the action**), the beneficiary may award the contract

offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC

²⁷ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32018R1046>

²⁸ Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC, OJ L 119, 4.5.2016, p. 1, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2016.119.01.0001.01.ENG

²⁹ Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC

in accordance with its usual purchasing practices provided that the contract is awarded to the tender offering best value for money or the lowest price (as appropriate), avoiding conflicts of interests.

The beneficiary must clearly document the tendering procedure and retain the documentation in the event of an audit.

Entities acting in their capacity as contracting authorities within the meaning of Directive 2014/24/EU³⁰ or contracting entities within the meaning of Directive 2014/25/EU³¹ must comply with the applicable national public procurement rules.

Beneficiaries may also subcontract **tasks forming part of the action**. If they do so, they must ensure that, in addition to the above-mentioned conditions for “implementing contracts” including best value for money and absence of conflicts of interests, the following conditions are also complied with:

- a) subcontracting does not cover core tasks of the action;
- b) recourse to subcontracting is justified because of the nature of the action and what is necessary for its implementation;
- c) the estimated costs of the subcontracting are clearly identifiable in the estimated budget;
- d) any recourse to subcontracting, if not provided for in description of the action, is communicated by the beneficiary and approved by the Commission. The Commission may grant approval:
 - (i) before any recourse to subcontracting, if the beneficiaries requests an amendment
 - (ii) after recourse to subcontracting if the subcontracting:
 - is specifically justified in the interim or final technical report and
 - does not entail changes to the grant agreement which would call into question the decision awarding the grant or be contrary to the equal treatment of applicants;
- e) the beneficiaries ensure that certain conditions applicable to beneficiaries, enumerated in the grant agreement (e.g. visibility, confidentiality, etc.), are also applicable to the subcontractors.

14. PROCEDURE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

The procedure to submit proposals electronically is specified in point 14 of the "Financial Guidelines for Applicants". Before starting, please read carefully the SWIM user manual:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/calls/pdf/swim_manual_en.pdf

Once the application form is filled in, applicants must submit it both electronically and in hard copy, by the deadline set in section 3 c).

The SWIM electronic application form is available until midnight (Brussels time) on the day of the submission deadline. Since the applicants must first submit the form electronically, and then print, blue ink sign and send it by post service or hand delivery by the submission

³⁰ Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on public procurement and repealing Directive 2004/18/EC (OJ L 94, 28.3.2014, p. 65-242)

³¹ Directive 2014/25/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on procurement by entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors and repealing Directive 2004/17/EC (OJ L 94, 28.3.2014, p. 243-374)

deadline, it is the **applicant's responsibility to ensure that the appropriate postal or courier services are locally available on the day of the deadline.**

The hard copy of the proposal must be duly blue ink signed and sent in 3 copies (one marked "original" and two marked "copy"), including all documents listed in section 16, by the deadline set in section 3(c), either by registered post, express courier service or hand delivery.

Address for registered post or express courier service:

European Commission
(NOT TO BE OPENED BY CENTRAL MAIL SERVICES)
Call for proposals VP/2020/010 – DG EMPL
CAD J-27 00/120
B-1049 Bruxelles - BELGIUM

Evidence of posting or express courier deposit slip should be kept as it could be requested by the European Commission in cases of doubt regarding the date of submission.

- a) registered post evidence : postmark
- b) express courier service evidence : deposit slip of express courier service

Hand-delivered proposals must be received by the European Commission by 16.00 (Brussels time) of the date indicated in section 3c) at the following address:

European Commission
Service central de réception du courrier
(NOT TO BE OPENED BY CENTRAL MAIL SERVICES)
Call for proposals VP/2020/010 – DG EMPL.F1
Avenue du Bourget, 1
B-1140 Evere

At that time the European Commission's Central Mail Service will provide a signed and dated proof of receipt which should be conserved as evidence of delivery.

If an applicant submits more than one proposal, each proposal must be submitted separately.

Additional documents sent by post, by fax or by electronic mail after the deadlines mentioned above will not be considered for evaluation unless explicitly requested in writing by the European Commission (see section 13).

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

15. COMMUNICATION

The information contained in the present call document together with the Financial Guidelines for Applicants provides all the information you require to submit an application. Please read it carefully before doing so, paying particular attention to the priorities of the present call.

The Commission may, on its own initiative, inform the public of any, error, inaccuracy, omission or clerical error in the text of the call for proposals on the mentioned Europa website.

The Commission therefore advises you to consult this website regularly in order to be informed of updates and of the questions and answers published. It is the applicant's responsibility to check for updates and modifications regularly during the submission period.

At the request of the applicant, the Commission may provide additional information solely for the purpose of clarifying the nature of the call.

Contacts between the Commission and potential applicants can only take place in certain circumstances and under the following conditions only:

Before the final date for submission of proposals

Any requests for additional information must be made by e-mail only to the coordinates stated below.

All enquiries must be made by e-mail only to:

empl-vp-2020-010@ec.europa.eu

For any technical issues please contact: empl-swim-support@ec.europa.eu

The Commission has no obligation to reply to requests for additional information received after the deadline for questions and clarifications set in Section 3(b).

Replies will be given no later than 5 days before the deadline for submission of proposals. To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the Commission will not give a prior opinion on the eligibility of applicants, or affiliated entity(ies), an action or specific activities.

No individual replies to questions will be sent but all questions together with the answers and other important notices will be published (FAQ in EN) at regular intervals on the Europa website under the relevant call:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=629&langId=en>.

After the deadline for submission of proposals

No modification to the proposal is allowed once the deadline for submission has elapsed.

If clarification is requested or if obvious clerical errors in the proposal need to be corrected, the Commission may contact the applicant by email provided that the terms of the proposal are not modified as a result.

It is the applicant's responsibility to provide a valid e-mail address and contact details and to check this e-mail address regularly. In case of any change of contact details, please send an e-mail with the application VP reference and the new contact details to (**empl-vp-2020-010@ec.europa.eu**).

In the case of consortia, all communication regarding an application will be done with the lead applicant only, unless there are specific reasons to do otherwise.

Applicants will be informed in writing about the results of the selection process. Unsuccessful applicants will be informed of the reasons for rejection. No information regarding the award procedure will be disclosed until the notification letters have been sent to the applicants.

16. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PRESENTATION OF THE APPLICATION AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

16.1. Instructions for the presentation of the application

The application comprises an application form including the budget, a description of the action and work plan plus a series of other required documents (see section 16.2).

The description of the action and work plan must be written using the template available in SWIM. All the information related to the description of the action and the work plan must be presented in one single document. The budget must be presented using the application form in SWIM.

In the description of the action, the role of all applicants and affiliated entities or associate organisations must be clearly explained.

In case of subcontracting of any tasks of the action (see the Financial Guidelines), the description of the action in the proposal must provide details on these tasks to be subcontracted and the reasons for doing so and these tasks must be clearly identified in the budget in separate lines. Core activities as defined in section 6.2(c) of the call cannot be subcontracted.

The Description of the action and work plan (which will become Annex I to the Grant Agreement) should cover the following elements (see template for the Description of the action = point 10 of the checklist):

Relevance and impact

- a. *How are the proposed action and the expected outcomes relevant to the objectives of the call (including the transnational cooperation/knowledge transfer angle)? Which Member States will be covered?*

The reply should also indicate the choice of option A and/or B for the transfer of knowledge (cf. section 6.2).

- b. *For option B (use of cascading grants), the application should cover the points mentioned under a) for at least three proposals of organisations located in different countries to which knowledge could be transferred (with the understanding that the Commission in cooperation with the beneficiaries will choose one of them after the grants have been awarded in order to cover as many Member States as possible altogether and to avoid any overlaps between the consortia).*

Methodology

- c. *What is the approach suggested to*
- *the action of competence centres in their own Member State?*
 - *the transfer of knowledge to less experienced competence centres? The reply to this question should take into account the option(s) chosen (A and/or B). For option B, the reply should also outline the approach to getting the endorsement for the less experienced competence centres from their national managing authority.*
 - *the transnational cooperation between competence centres at EU level?*

Please also see sections 1.3 and 2.2 above in relation to the coordination via the transnational cooperation platform.

For all three elements, the reply should clarify how the relevant co-applicants, affiliated entities, associate organisations, stakeholders are involved (including a clear definition of the respective roles), how the monitoring and evaluation of the planned activities is foreseen and if there is a quality assurance plan.

d. *What is your work plan?*

In this context, please be reminded that the attendance of 3 meetings of the transnational cooperation platform in Brussels (or another place) is a requirement. The corresponding expenditure should be foreseen in the budget estimate.

16.2. Required documents

The table in annex includes the documents that must be provided, including the documents mentioned in 16.1. Except for Legal entity form, VAT Certificate and Financial identification form which can be submitted later only for successful applications, please note that all other documents are necessary either for the admissibility (see section 5) or for the analysis of the eligibility (see section 6) or selection criteria (see section 8). It also indicates where originals are required. We recommend that applicants use this table as a **checklist** in order to verify compliance with all requirements.

While some information must be supplied using the templates available in the SWIM, other documents may need to be completed and/or attached electronically, usually either administrative documents or free format text descriptions. The SWIM application indicates in each section where SWIM templates must be used as well as which and where free format documents can be uploaded electronically.

Copies of the signed originals will be accepted for most of the documents to be submitted by the co-applicants. However, the lead applicant shall keep the original signed versions for its records, because **originals** may have to be submitted for certain documents at a later stage. **If the lead applicant fails to submit these original documents within the deadline given by the Commission, the proposal may be rejected for lack of administrative compliance.**

Regarding the compilation of the application file, it is recommended to:

- 1) follow the order of documents as listed in the checklist (and attach a ticked checklist as below to the proposal);
- 2) print the documents double-sided;
- 3) use 2-hole folders (do not bind or glue; stapling is acceptable).

CHECKLIST for required documents at application stage

This table includes the documents that must be provided for the proposal and where originals are required. We strongly recommend using the table as a checklist in order to verify compliance with all requirements. **Notes:** highlighted documents do not need to be provided by public entities and international organisations. All the listed documents must be provided in SWIM.

No.	Document	Specification and content	The document must be provided by each				Originally signed?	Checkbox
			Lead applicant	Co-applicant	Affiliated entity	Associate organisation/ third		
1	Official cover letter of the application	This letter must quote the reference of the call for proposals, be originally signed and dated by the authorised representative and include the proposal reference number generated by SWIM (e.g. VP/2020/010/xxxx) – free format.	✓	--	--	--	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Signed SWIM application form submitted online + hard copies	The SWIM application form submitted online must be printed and dated and signed by the authorised legal representative and send by hard copies as foreseen in Section 14. <i>Note: the online form must be electronically submitted before printing. After electronic submission, no further changes to the proposal are permitted.</i>	✓	--	--	--	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Executive summary (if necessary)	Executive summary in EN/FR/DE (maximum 2 pages) – free format	✓	--	--	--	--	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Declaration on honour	The template is available in SWIM and must be written on the official letterhead of the organisation, bearing the original signature of the authorised legal representative [and include the application's reference number generated by SWIM (VP/2017/0XX/XXXX)]. This declaration must also cover any affiliated entity. Where applicable, the relevant documentary evidence which illustrates the remedial measures taken for applicants who declared one of the situations of exclusion listed in the declaration. <i>Copies of the original signed declaration of co-applicants are accepted at the submission of the application; originals to be submitted upon request.</i>	✓	✓	--	--	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Letter of commitment	The template is available in SWIM and must explain the nature of the organisation's involvement (for associate organisations) and specify the amount of any funding provided (for third parties). The letter must be written on the official letterhead of the organisation and bear the original signature of the legal representative. <i>Copies of the original signed letters of commitment are accepted at the submission of the application; originals to be submitted upon request.</i>	--	✓	--	✓	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Letter of mandate	The template is available in SWIM and must be written on the official letterhead of the organisation, dated and signed by the authorised legal representative.	--	✓	--	--	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Legal/capital link with lead or co-applicant	Affiliated entities are required to provide proof of the legal and/or capital link with the lead applicant or co-applicant.	--	--	✓	--	--	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	Proof of registration	A certificate of official registration or other official document attesting the establishment of the entity (for public bodies: the law, decree, decision etc. establishing the entity). Exclusively in the case of social partner organisations without legal personality : a signed letter of the legal representative certifying his/her capacity to undertake legal obligations on behalf of the organisation.	✓	✓	--	--	--	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Statutes	The articles of association/statutes or equivalent proving the eligibility of the organisation.	✓	✓	--	--	--	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Description of the action and work plan	The template is available in SWIM which must be duly completed and submitted electronically together with the online submission form and on paper as well. The paper version must be identical to the electronic version of the	✓	--	--	--	--	<input type="checkbox"/>

		detailed work programme. Applicants are encouraged to submit the document in English, French or German. See Section V.						
11	Budget Explanation for the project	This is a separate free-format document in addition to the budget section of the on-line application form and it must also be submitted electronically in annex to the on-line application form. The paper version must be identical to the electronic version of the budget explanation. The budget explanation must provide additional information to explain and justify items of the proposed budget. It should in particular explain: how the number of working days of staff involved in the implementation of the action has been fixed; how average travel costs were calculated; unless this is self-explanatory, how costs of services and administration costs were defined. The Commission may request applicants to submit additional justifications of proposed eligible costs during the evaluation procedure.	✓	--	--	--	--	☐
12	Curricula vitae of key staff	Detailed CVs of the person responsible for managing the action (named in section A.3 of the online application form) and the persons who will perform the main tasks . The CVs should indicate clearly the current employer.	✓	✓	✓	--	--	☐
13	Declaration certifying the competence of the project team	Declaration of the project manager/coordinator certifying the competence of the complete project team to carry out the required task and demonstrating operational capacity. It should include a job specification of the project manager and the persons (from lead applicant, co-applicants and affiliated entities) performing the main task, with a brief description of their outputs related to the subject of the proposal. – free format	✓	--	--	--	--	☐
14	List of social innovation support activities	A list of the social innovation support activities, including the methods and tools used, by the members of the consortium in the last three years – free format	✓	✓	--	--	--	☐
15	Balance sheet & profit and loss accounts	The most recent balance sheet and profit & loss accounts, including assets and liabilities, specifying the currency used. (not applicable for grants below 60,000.00 EUR)	✓	✓	--	--	--	☐
16	Endorsement from the national managing authority	At least one organisation from the consortium per country needs an endorsement from the national managing authority (see also section 6.1). A template for the endorsement form is provided in annex II.	✓	✓	--	---	✓	☐
17	Audit report	For grants of EUR 750 000 or more per applicant or affiliated entity, an audit report produced by an approved external auditor certifying the accounts for the last financial year available, where such an audit report is available or whenever a statutory audit report is required by Union or national law. If the audit report is not available AND a statutory report is not required by law, a self-declaration signed by the applicant's authorized representative certifying the validity of its accounts for the last financial year available. In case of consortium, the threshold applies to each co-applicant in line with their share of the action budget. Applicants are encouraged to submit the document in English, French or German. See Section V.	✓	✓	--	--	--	☐
18	Draft tender specifications	In case of subcontracting for external expertise where the value of the contracts exceeds EUR 60 000, a copy of the draft tender specifications must be submitted. A model is included in Annex IV of this call.	✓					

CHECKLIST for required documents for the proposals selected for funding

This table includes the documents that must be provided for the proposals selected for funding and where originals are required.

No.	Document	Specification and content	The document must be provided by each				Originally signed?
			Lead applicant	Co-applicant	Affiliated entity	Associate organisation/ third	
1	Legal entity form	The template is available in SWIM and online (http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm) and must be duly signed and dated by the legal representative.	✓	✓	--	--	✓
2	VAT certificate	A document showing the identification number for tax purposes or the VAT number, if applicable.	✓	✓	--	--	--
3	Financial identification form	The template is available in SWIM and online (http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/financial_id/financial_id_en.cfm) and must be duly signed and dated by the <u>account holder</u> and bearing the bank stamp and signature of the bank representative (or a copy of recent bank statement attached).	✓	--	--	--	✓

ANNEX I:

FINANCIAL GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

Annex I is available on the Europa website under the relevant call:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=629&langId=en>

ANNEX II – TEMPLATE LETTER OF ENDORSEMENT FROM NATIONAL MANAGING AUTHORITY

[name of the national managing authority] herewith endorses the application of xxx [in cooperation with ...] for the call on competence centres for social innovation (VP 2020/010).

If selected by the European Commission, [Name of the national organization that has joined the applying consortium as lead applicant/co-applicant] will also be entrusted to act as a national competence centre for social innovation, notably to support innovative projects and public authorities under the ESF / the ESF+, through offering information, knowledge and know-how, through providing advice, guidance and training, and through organising networking and mutual learning at national and European levels.

Signature [ESF Committee Member for the Country]

ANNEX III LIST OF ORGANISATIONS LOOKING FOR PARTNERS

The following organisations have expressed an interest in cooperating with other organisations to submit a joint proposal.

Important disclaimer: The European Commission has not analysed the eligibility of these organisations to participate on this call for proposals. The eligibility of all organisations will be verified as part of the evaluation of proposals that are submitted.

Organisation	Type of organisation, country, expertise	Contact³²	Already has an endorsement from the national managing authority (yes/no)	Looking for (type of organisation, country, expertise ...)

³² Only organisation's contact details, not personal details. In case the concerned organisations want to publish personal data, they will have to sign and send as well the form "Protection of your person data" attached to this document.



European Commission
Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
Investment

PROTECTION OF YOUR PERSONAL DATA

Applicants who may be interested in expressing an interest in cooperating with other organisations and submitting a joint proposal Consent to the processing of personal data

The European Commission (hereafter ‘the Commission’) is committed to protect your personal data and to respect your privacy. The Commission collects and further processes personal data pursuant to [Regulation \(EU\) 2018/1725](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data (repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001).

Personal data (name and email address) is collected to be published on the Europa website for the purpose of expressing interest in cooperating with other organisations in order to submit a joint proposal under call for proposals VP/2020/010.

We request you to express your consent to the processing of this personal data under Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018, on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, **by marking your agreement in the return email.**

All of the personal data are managed by DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. The Controller responsible for the processing of the data is the Head of the Unit F1 of DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, EMPL-F1-UNIT@ec.europa.eu.

You can withdraw the present consent at any time, without compromising the lawfulness of the processing based on the consent given before that withdrawal, by writing to this email address: EMPL-VP-2010-010@ec.europa.eu.

You may also contact us at any time if you have any questions regarding the processing of your data.

The Data Protection Officer (DPO) of the Commission can be contacted at: DATA-PROTECTION-OFFICER@ec.europa.eu

Complaints should be addressed to the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS): edps@edps.europa.eu.

- I give my consent for the publication of the sensitive data provided in this form on the Europa website

Signature:

**ANNEX IV: MODEL FOR TENDER SPECIFICATIONS FOR SUBCONTRACTING
EXTERNAL EXPERTISE**

Tender Specifications –

- 1. Background
- 2. Purpose of the Contract
- 3. Tasks to be performed by the Contractor
 - 3.1. Description of tasks
 - 3.2. Guidance and indications on tasks execution and methodology
- 4. Expertise required
- 5. Time schedule and reporting
- 6. Payments and standard contract
- 7. Price
- 8. Selection criteria related to the financial and technical capacity of the bidders
- 9. Award criteria related to the quality of the bids received

The contract will be awarded to the tenderer whose offer represents the best value for money - taking into account the following criteria:

.....
.....
.....

It should be noted that the contract will not be awarded to a tenderer who receives less than [70%] on the Award Criteria.

- 10. Content and presentation of the bids
 - 10.1. Content of the bids
 - 10.2. Presentation of the bids