



Questions & Answers

*Call for proposals VP/2020/010
Competence centres for social innovation*

1. Q: Are international organisations eligible as part of the consortia?

A: This call for proposals is targeted to public and private entities in the EU Member States as members of the consortia. This interpretation is based on the stipulations of article 6.1. of the call, as well the selection criteria for lead applicant and co-applicants in the article 8.2., which specifically limits these roles to ESF managing authorities as well as to public and private entities. Consequently international organisations are eligible to participate only as “associate organisations”.

2. Q: Are universities eligible to apply as coordinators?

A: In line with article 6.1. of the Call for proposals, universities are eligible to apply as lead applicant (coordinator). However, each consortium must fulfil the requirement specified in article 6.1.c. “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 ... from the national Managing Authority confirming that it will recognise it as (part of the) competence centre for social innovation for that EU Member State.”

In addition, the lead applicant must fulfil the operational capacity as defined in article 8.2 of the call.

3. Q: Can an ESF Managing Authority itself apply or only the social innovation organisations endorsed by the National ESF Managing Authority?

A: ESF managing authority can apply itself, in case it has the requested experience on promoting social innovation, as detailed in the article 8.2.

4. Q: Is it possible that a network of organisations from one Member State (for example the ESF authority + a university + an NGO) jointly apply as the main applicant or co-applicant?

A: Involvement of a network of organisations from one country can be useful for achieving the objectives of the Call and for the functioning of the competence centre. Therefore article 6.1.c of the call explicitly mentions that “the competence centre does not have to be one single organisation but can be formed by a network of several organisations”.

Each of the organisations of such a national network can be involved in the consortium as applicant (one of them can be the lead applicant, if the country

leads the transnational consortium), as associate organisation or as affiliated entity, depending what is most suitable in the national context”.

5. Q: The call indicates the aim to “avoid multiple competing applications covering the same EU Member State” (article 6.1.c. on the “purpose of the endorsement”). Shall therefore also interested ESF Managing Authorities in a given Member State have an agreement between themselves before applying for the call?

A: It would be optimal if there would be good coordination and agreement between different ESF Managing Authorities in each Member State concerning participation in the call. While the call does not formally impose this kind of coordination, the purpose of the call is to help the creation of one competence centre for social innovation in each Member State (article 2.3.).

6. Q: How can one know who is already involved in a consortium from other countries? ?

A: While there is no formal coordination mechanism, the National ESF Managing Authorities might be in a position to advise as to which organisations are planning to participate in the call from their country.

7. Q: Can one country be part of several consortia?

A: While national coordination is encouraged, it is not excluded that multiple organisations from the same country are involved in different consortia. This might support knowledge transfer and capacity building. However, it shall not compromise the objective of the call to help the creation of one competence centre for social innovation in each Member State (article 2.3.)

8. Q: If we (as ESF Managing Authority) approach other countries, do we have to work together with the ESF MAs of that country, with the social innovation organisation which they have endorsed, or with both?

A: This depends on the approach your partner country has chosen. If a Managing Authority from that country assumes the role of the National Competence Centre, you should seek partnership with it. If the role of the Competence Centre will be assumed by an endorsed public or private entity, you should cooperate with that entity. If the two join into a national consortium, you should work with that consortium.

9. Q: Is it allowed to work with social innovation organisations in other countries which are not endorsed by the National ESF Managing Authority of that country?

A: Yes, it is allowed, provided the minimum requirement concerning the involvement of an ESF Managing Authority or an endorsed organisation is met for each country. Other organisations can be involved in the consortium on top of the minimum requirements.

10.Q: Is one partner/applicant allowed to participate in multiple project proposals under the same call? In other words :

- Is the lead-applicant allowed to submit more than one application (project) under the same call?
- Are co-applicants (partners) in a consortium allowed to participate in more than one project under the same call?

A:

- Multiple applications from the same lead applicant must be avoided. It would be in contradiction with the stipulations of article 6 c. to avoid multiple competing applications from the same Member State.
- The call does not explicitly exclude the participation of a co-applicant in multiple applications.

11. Q: Is there a maximum of participating MS in such a consortium?

A: There is no formal maximum.

12.Q: You aim for 7-9 proposals. How do you make sure that all MS participate ?

A: The participation of all MS is an explicit objective (article 2.3), but can not be formally ensured.

13. Q: How can a pan-European network participate?

A: A pan-European network, formally established as a legal entity in one of the EU Member States, can participate as a co-applicant or associate organisation, notably to support knowledge transfer between Member States.

14.Q: Will the EC judge consortia with more countries than the minimum 3 (option a) or 2 (option b) as more favourable?

A: Applications are assessed against the award criteria (article 9). Geographic coverage is included in the Criterion 1. "Relevance and impact of the proposal". This does not mean that a proposal with more than the minimum number of countries covered is automatically treated more favourable than those covering the minimum. The geographic coverage dimension is assessed in relation to the overall objective and expected outcome of the Call. Notably, according to article 2.3. "The Commission will endeavour to choose the consortia in a way to ideally cover all Member States..."

15. Q: Regarding the **upscaling / replication** of a social innovation:

- Is the testing meant to be supported by all members of the consortia or just is it sufficient it to happen only in one country?
- Is the upscaling / replication of an innovation meant to be funded with the grant also?
- Are the estimated costs for the upscaling / replication of social innovation projects eligible if they occur in a country outside the partnership?

A:

- According to article 2.3. each consortia shall "prepare and test the replication or up-scaling of 1-2 social innovation project". This requirement is mandatory for the consortium as a whole.

Consequently it is not obligatory to do the “testing” in all countries covered.

- The testing shall be part of the work plan of the project and be covered by the grant.
- The aim is to build the capacity and transfer knowledge between the members of each consortium, view a view of establishing social innovation competence centres in the countries covered. Therefore, it would not be conceptually coherent, to do the testing of up-scaling or replication in countries outside of the consortium.

16. Q: How do you foresee the participation of third countries, both content-wise and in managerial terms?

A: This call focusses on establishing competence centres for social innovation in EU Member States. According to article 6.1.a) “Legal entities properly established and registered in the EU Member States are eligible as lead applicant or co-applicants, affiliated entities and associated organisations.” Consequently organisations from third countries are not eligible. However, the consortia might draw from the available knowledge and experience from third countries.

17.Q: Does the lead partner bear the full financial responsibility? Can the lead partner spend money for the other partners in other countries?

A: Each applicant (lead and co-applicant) bears financial responsibility for itself, and their respective financial engagement should be detailed in the project budget. As such, the entities financial capacity and project budget will be assessed separately. Additional information is to be found in the Financial Guidelines and in the call text.

18.Q: Article 6.1.c) of the Call states: “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.” Can you describe in more details which kind of procedure fulfils this requirement?

A: The referred article calls for a transparent procedure, while recognising that it needs to be prompt under the timeframe of the Call. Based on their knowledge of the local circumstances the National Managing Authorities shall consider which organisations come into question for being endorsed as the national competence centre. A transparent procedure could for example be a call for expression of interest directly targeted to relevant organisations, or a dialogue involving key organisations, aiming at assessing their interests and capacities based on objective criteria.

19.Q: Shall the public or private body, endorsed by the National ESF Managing Authority, have a connection to ESF or experience from ESF also in case the Member State in question would be involved as a co-applicant?

A: The endorsement by a National ESF Managing Authority is required to ensure a link with the ESF management in the country. Regarding the past experience, a public or private body involved as a co-applicant, needs to fulfil the following requirement: "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 " (Art 8.2.)

20. Q: Is the objective that the organisations involved in the projects selected under the current Call, will continue as competence centres in the Member States after the 2 years project period? How the activities are planned to be funded after the project period?

A: According to section 2.1 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.

In section 2.3 it is stated that every 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." Section 1.3 places the competence centres created under this call in the perspective of the forthcoming ESF+. It notably states the following:

"In the next programming period (2021-2027), the Commission 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."

No specific decisions concerning the possible future funding have been made.

21. Q: Can you confirm whether a public body leading a consortium needs an endorsement letter?

A: According to section 6.1. Each consortium needs to involve, from each country it covers, either

- An ESF managing authority,

or

- A public or private body, endorsed by the National ESF managing authority, confirming that it will recognise it as (part of the) competence centre for social innovation for that EU Member State.

In case a consortium involves several organisations from the same country, it is sufficient that one organisation from that country fulfils the above requirement. Consequently, a public body leading a consortium needs an endorsement letter, unless the consortium also involves an ESF managing authority from the same country.

22.Q: Does the “competence centre”, mentioned as an output of the project, need to have a specific legal and juridical nature?

A: The competence centre to be established does not need to have a specific legal or juridical nature. In line with section 6.1 (c), the competence centre does not even have to be one single organisation but can be formed by a network of several organisations. What is required, is that it fulfils the functions of the competence centre as outlined in section 2.1 of the call.

23. Q: Can partners also send the legal entity form, the VAT certificate and the financial identification at a later stage?

A: This is correct. In line with section 16.2 on “required documents” and the checklist at the end of call text (p. 32), the legal entity form, the VAT certificate and the financial identification form do not need to be submitted together with the application, but can be submitted once a proposal has been selected for funding. This is valid for both applicants and co-applicants.

24. Q: Should there be a national competence for every applicant of the consortium, or can the members establish an international competence centre among themselves?

A: As per section “2.3. Expected outputs/results”, “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 [...]”. International competence centres are not covered by the call.

25. Q: Can two entities from the same country receive the endorsement of the ESF national managing authority and become part of the same consortium together with endorsed organisations from other countries?

A: The purpose of the call is to help establish one competence centre per Member State (see also section 2.3 on results). In line with section 6.1 (c), competence centres do not have to be one single organisation, but can be formed by a network of several organisations in a given country.

In this latter case, it is sufficient if one of the organisations has an endorsement in order for the application to be eligible, but the fact that several organisations cooperating as parts of the same national competence centre have each of them a separate endorsement, does not make the application ineligible: the purpose of the endorsement is to avoid multiple competing applications covering the same EU Member State. National managing authorities are encouraged to endorse the most suitable and competent national organisation(s).

26. Q: Can an ESF intermediate body be considered as “Managing Authority of ESF” as described on page 12 of the call?

A: ESF Intermediate bodies are not ESF managing authorities, and can therefore not be considered as such in the context of this call.

27. Q: For an application in which one member of the consortium is a co-applicant and another its affiliated entity, can the operational capacity be analyzed as a whole? Article 8.2 of the call says “co-applicants must have professional competencies as well as appropriate qualifications necessary to

complete the proposed action.” Can these competencies and qualifications of the co-applicant be complemented and demonstrated with the expertise of its affiliated entity?

A: The section 8.2, specifies the requirements for the operational capacity, which must be fulfilled by the lead applicant and/or the co-applicant(s) individually. For assessing this, the capacity of their possible affiliated entities will not be taken into account.

However, in addition, the requirement “At least one expert per consortium needs to have minimum 3 years of experience in replication, transfer or mainstreaming of social innovations” is to be fulfilled by the consortium as a whole. A contribution of an affiliated entity to this requirement can be taken into account, in case an expert from the affiliated entity is specifically and explicitly engaged to fulfil this role as part of the project team.

28. Q: The call proposals says that “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 from the national Managing Authority confirming that it will recognise it as (part of the) competence centre for social innovation for that EU Member State.” Furthermore, the footnote nr. 19 states that “For the purpose of this call, the national managing authority is the entity represented by the full Member of the ESF CommitteeThe endorsement form shall be signed by the full member of the ESF Committee”. How to manage a situation, where the ESF Committee member is not entitled to sign such a letter on behalf of the entity (s)he represents?

A: In this kind of case the endorsement letter shall be signed by the official who is entitled to sign it on behalf of the entity. To ensure coordination, the transmission of the endorsement letter shall then involve the ESF Committee member.

29. Q: We did not find a definition of what it is understood by a competence centre and where we can find a list of existing competence centres.

A: Regarding the definition of competence centres, the essential element is their functions as defined in the section 2.1. of the call. Currently such competence centres do not formally exist and the purpose of this call is to fund the development and establishment of such centres.

30. Q: Does the project coordinator (as described on page 20 of the call) have to work for the Lead Applicant? Or can the project coordinator be a person from the organisation of the co-applicant or the member state of the

co-applicant? (or even an external individual who is hired by a non-lead applicant just to fill that role with their expertise, provided of course that all members of the consortium agree?)

A: The Application form asks to indicate the “person responsible for managing the action” in the section A (the lead applicant). Consequently, the project coordinator shall work for (or be engaged by) the lead applicant. A corrigendum has been published to clarify this in the text of the call (See “Annex I” on the website of the call.)

31. Q: In the check list - point 12 in the call for proposal is written to add CVs. In section A.3 of the application form there is indication only for the person (within the applicant institution) that will be responsible of the action. What about partner? How many CVs can insert a partner (co-applicant institution) and where in the application form?

A: The section 8.2. of the call requires to enclose “the CVs of the proposed project co-ordinator and the experts fulfilling the above mentioned minimum requirements showing all their relevant professional experience”. These CVs can be enclosed in application form’s spaces for additional documents in section B (co-applicants) or in the section H (annexes).

32. Q: In the call text it is written that the maximum budget available to finance projects under this call amounts at 5 million € to finance 7 to 9 projects. Can you specify the maximum eligible budget?

A: The call does not specify the maximum eligible budget. No further information is available on this issue, but the above referred amounts help to estimate the range in which the project budgets are likely to be situated.

33. Q: We need to provide certain documents like for instance Statutes. Do we need to translate them into English (and certify those documents) or is it OK if we provide them in the language of the country?

A: The referred documents can be submitted in the language of the country (in the official languages of the EU).

34. Q: We are planning to join a consortium that is led by an institution in a different Member State. Is it correct in that the lead applicant will be the applicant from the Member State that will be leading the consortium, and all the partners who will be establishing the competence centre in our country will be co-applicants within that consortium? And shall the section A: “Applicant”

of the application form include the details of the lead member of the consortium, and the co-applicants from our country be added on at section B onwards?

A: The lead applicant will indeed be the applicant who will lead the entire consortium. The way of involvement of partners from another country can vary. As an example: If the lead applicant is from a country A and in a country B four organisations jointly will constitute the competence centre, they can all be co-applicants. But it is also possible, that only one of them is a co-applicant and the others are involved as associate organisations. It is for you choose the most suitable way of involving the relevant organisations.

A: Yes the section A of the application form is for the lead applicant and the section B for co-applicants.

35: Q : In the template provided for a letter of endorsement from the ESF Managing authority, it says that "If selected [...the organization...] will also be entrusted to act as a national competence centre for social innovation....", whereas on p.7 of the call, it clearly identifies the Competence Centre as an output, meaning the result of a 2-year process. So, since the call is made to create and establish future competence centres in each MS, how can the present selection be a final selection on the part of the ESF MA?

A: According to the section 2 of the call, the purpose is not only to fund the "development and establishment", but also the "activities" of the competence centres. The call therefore uses a "learning by doing approach" where the competence centres are simultaneously created, engage in mutual learning and start functioning. An endorsement of the participating organisations as (part of) competence centres by National Managing Authorities is required to avoid multiple competing applications from the same country and to ensure a link with the implementation of the ESF. This endorsement is meant to have immediate effect (if the project is selected) but also a forward looking perspective (See also the answer to the question nr. 20).

However, the call accommodates also a situation in which a National Managing Authority is not in a position to name an organisation (or a network) which could early on take the role of a competence centre. To this end the OPTION B (see section 6.2.) allows a situation in which organisation(s) from such a country participate in a project through a "cascading grant" in order to build capacities with a view of being endorsed as a competence centre at a later stage of the project.

36. Q: Are organisations from Bosnia and Herzegovina eligible to apply under this call?

A: Only organisations established in the EU Member States are eligible to apply under this call. (see section 6.1.a)

37. Q: The call stipulates that “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”. Shall the ESF Managing Authorities endorse the organisation(s), on the basis of the presentation of

- the national organisation(s) eligibility, financial and operational capacity as well as their particular competence in the types of activities that can be funded,
- the eligibility, financial and operational capacity of all national and transnational partners of the consortium,

A: The National Managing Authorities are encouraged to endorse a national organisation (or a grouping of them), which is the most suitable and competent to assume the functions of the social innovation competence centre, as described in the section 2.1 of the call.

The call not request Managing Authorities to check the eligibility, financial and operational capacity of potential applicants. This will be part of the Commission’s evaluation process. However, the applicants are encouraged to carefully check this criteria before submitting an application.

38. Q: EU programmes cannot be used as a co-financing source under the call. Is there any obstacle to an ESF Managing Authority providing financial support through its technical assistance budget to assist an endorsed organisation with the application process for the call? This support would be limited to the application process and would not assist with the establishment of the competence centre. Is there a facility available to inform other ESF MAs of our endorsement and the organisations selected?

A: ESF technical assistance be can in principle be used to support the endorsed organisation’s work during the phase of preparing an application.

Information on the endorsement can be published on the Annexe III of the call, by sending respective information to the functional mailbox of the call.

39. Q: How can we find out whether our potential partner organisation (lead applicant or co-applicant) from another Member State has the endorsement by the national ESF managing authority?

A: You can ask your potential partner to share a proof of the endorsement with you.

40. Q: Will it possible for the National Managing Authority to endorse 2 different organisations from the same country that participate in 2 different consortia at the application phase?

A: The purpose of the endorsement is to avoid multiple competing applications covering the same EU Member State (section 6.1.c. of the call). Therefore National Managing authorities must not endorse more than one organisation.

41. Q: According the eligibility criteria, co-applicants must have at least 3 years of experience in the field of social innovation. Our organisation started its work in June 2017, but was officially registered as a non-profit association in December 2017. Are we eligible as co-applicants?

A: At this stage the Commission cannot advise on the eligibility of a potential applicant.

The section 8.2 of the call requires from co-applicants, which are not ESF managing authorities, that they have "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". This does not mean "3 years of experience". It means that the demonstrable experience must be from the past three years, not older.

42. Q: Does each co-applicant of the consortium need to be endorsed by its own ESF managing authority?

A: The call requires that from each Member State covered, a consortium includes either an ESF Managing Authority, or an entity endorsed by the national ESF Managing Authority as a competence centre for social innovation in that country. (see section 6.1.c)

43. Q: is it suitable for this Call that 4 Chambers of Commerce from 4 Member States apply for this Call – to develop a joint Competence centre in order to help the employees /workers (and not public institutions) to develop their careers facing the (digital) distance learning/training in these new corona times, to guide them through a joint platform, where member companies would educate their employees?

A: The aim of this call is to create national competence centres for social innovation, one centre in each EU Member State, as stated in section 2.3. The key functions of the centres have been described in the section 2.1. Against this background the project as described in the question is not suitable for this call for proposals.

44. Q: Is it allowed that in a Member State one institution is a lead applicant of consortia (with endorsement from National Managing Authority) and other organisation (without endorsement from National Managing Authority) of the same Member State is a partner in a consortia led by another Member State?

To put it differently: whether the restriction about one institution/competence centre per Member State applies only to the lead partner and other organisations of the Member State can participate in consortia lead by other Member States?

A: The requirement is first of all per consortium: each consortium needs to involve from each Member State it covers, either an ESF managing authority or an endorsed organisation. Once this requirement is fulfilled, it is allowed that several organisations from same country participate as co-applicants. It is therefore not excluded that several organisations from the same country are involved in different consortia.

Such a situation can be illustrated by the following purely hypothetical example: In a country A, the organisations X is endorsed by the ESF national authority and participates in a consortium Y, either as lead or as co-applicant. At the same time a regional ESF managing authority Q from the country A, participates as a co-applicant in a consortium W. In addition, also an organisation Z from country A participates as a co-applicant in the consortium W.

45. Q: Can an organisation, not a Managing Authority and not endorsed, established in a country not covered by the consortia be a co-applicant, if only focusing on supporting transnational activities due to its expertise in both ESF and Social innovation? Or would its role be limited to sub-contractor?

A: An organisation in such a situation can be a co-applicant, if the consortium meets the requirement concerning involvement of organisations from countries covered by the action. (See also question nr. 13.)

46. Q: The call demands the submission of three types of CVs. For the expert with three years of experience: do we understand correctly, that more than 1 CV matching the requirements can be submitted by different organisations within the consortium? And if so, is the budget for expert days allocated to the respective applicants/co-applicants, or should expert budget be allocated to the "head" expert of this position solely, to be discretionary divided later?

A: The section 8.2 of the call states: "At least one expert per consortium needs to have minimum 3 years of experience in replication, transfer or mainstreaming of social innovations." This minimum experience requirement must be fulfilled by one person, it cannot be a combination of experience by several persons. However, more experts can be involved in the work and thus related additional CVs be supplied.

The organisation of work and division of roles between different experts and partners of the consortium, as well as the composition of the budget is a separate issue, not directly linked to the minimum experience requirement.

47. Q: Can the description of the action can be filled out in German?

A: yes

48. Q: What volume and level of Detail in the description do you expect? What size of the description do you expect?

A: As explained in the template for the description of the action, "there is no size limit for the text, but the information should be as **clear, concise and complete** as possible".

49. Q: Is there a time frame, within which the measure has to be carried out?

A: The indicative duration of the project should be 24 months (see section 3.1. of the call).

50. Q: The call requires that "At least one organisation from the consortium per country needs an endorsement from the national managing authority".

Would a consortium be eligible if, in addition to the number of applicants from each of the four member states it covers, all applicants mandate an organisation from a fifth member state to assume the tasks of a lead applicant and provider of transnational services?

A: The lead applicant must be from a country covered by the consortium and the action. To clarify this explicitly, the following corrigendum has been published on the website of the call:

"The section 6.1.c "Consortia", is amended on page 12 as follows:

... 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 Authority confirming that it will recognise it as (part of the) competence centre for social innovation for that EU Member State. The lead applicant must be either an ESF managing authority or an endorsed entity from one of the EU Member States covered by the consortium."

See the Question/answer nr. 45. concerning involvement of a co-applicant from a country not covered by the consortium.

51. Q: May we proceed only with the electronic submission of application and avoid sending the originally signed copy of the documents due to the COVID situation?

A: If an applicant submits an application on time electronically but faces difficulties in submitting the original documents by the deadline due to the COVID-19 situation, scanned signed copies can be accepted as a temporary measure. However, the applicant will still be requested to submit the documents with original blue ink signature before the end of the evaluation phase.

Note also that the deadline for applications has been extended to 16–30 November 2020.

52. Q: Are the activities and topics (in an application form) valid for the consortium or each partner in the consortium has to develop their own topics and activities?

A: Section 2.2. of the call states : “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.” Section 2.3. explains the expected outcomes for every Member State covered by a consortium.

Consequently, the consortium shall present one overarching work plan, which however needs also to be specific regarding the objectives, activities and outcomes for the Member States covered. Please read carefully the section 16.1. of the call, which includes detailed instructions concerning the required content of the description of the action and the work plan.

53. Q: Can you clarify the request for original signed documents: does it mean signed by pen, or it is a digitally signed copy valid?

A: Original signed documents refer to documents signed by pen. See section 14 which states: “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.”

As explained in section 16.2. for documents to be submitted by co-applicants, copies of the signed documents will be accepted in most cases, but the lead applicant shall keep the originals of those documents and be in position to submit them if requested at later stage.

54. Q: What will really be the prerogatives of this competence centre in social innovation at country/member state level?

A: The call for proposals does not foresee specific “prerogatives” for the national competence centres for social innovation. The call explains their key

functions in sections 1.3 and 2.1. The expected outcomes of the project financed by this call, is described in section 2.3.

In line with these descriptions, the competence centres are expected to pull together sufficient expertise and establish the necessary links so that they can support all ESF Managing Authorities and other relevant stakeholders in promoting social innovation in the Member State in question.

55. Q: Referring to the section "F.3 PREVIOUS GRANTS AND CURRENT GRANT APPLICATIONS" in the SWIM application form, who has to complete in this part: The Applicant or also the co-applicant?

A: This information shall be provided for the applicant and for all co-applicants.

56. Q: how to calculate indicative daily salary cost for staff that does not work full-time? How many hours a work day comprises and whether we should take a fictive full-time employment as the basis for the calculation?

A: The daily salary costs shall be calculated and indicated on a full-time equivalent basis. How many hours a working day comprises should reflect the normal practise in the country and in the sector in question.

57. Q: Is it possible for a consortium to apply as a combination of Option A and B? The consortium I am writing on behalf consists of three endorsed organisations (1 experienced lead applicant (Country 1), 1 experienced co-applicant (Country 2) and 1 less experienced co-applicant (Country 3). We have included two less experienced organisations from Country 4, who have been seeking endorsement but this has been delayed. We are hoping that in addition to using Option A for the Country 3, we also use option B to include Country 4. Is this possible?

A: Yes, this kind of combination is possible. It would basically be a variation of Option B: you would have countries 1, 2 and 3 covered by endorsed applicants/co-applicants and country 4 covered by organisations benefitting from cascading grants.

58. Q: The ESF Managing Authority which has endorsed our organisation for this call, issues digital signatures in its official documents. We would kindly ask you to let us know whether we could proceed with these electronic signatures for this call, also in the light of the ongoing COVID crisis?

A: Electronic signatures may be accepted in case they comply with European or International standards "qualified signature according to the EIDAS regulation".

59. Q: Regarding the co-financing of the project: A) do we have to give to partners 20% of the grant ? B) Or they have to take care by their own budget of 20% of co-financing? C) Or the grant can cover those 20% for the partner?

A: The maximum EU funding is 80 % of the eligible costs. The remaining co-financing may take the form of: a) the beneficiary's/beneficiaries own resources (for example, staff costs, ...) b) income generated by the action or work programme; c) financial contributions from third parties.

The co-financing is calculated at the level of the entire project and its overall budget. The applicants/co-applicants can contribute to the co-financing by different degrees, depending what is agreed between them. Their contributions shall be indicated in the project budget."

60. Q: In relation to Q&A 51, could you please confirm that it is enough to submit all the documents through the SWIM form and that the paper versions can be submitted at a later stage "before the end of the evaluation phase", the latter phrase meaning by 15 March 2021?

A: No, the answer provided to question 51 means that the applicant still has to submit the application by the deadline (extended to 30 November 2020) both through SWIM and by paper version (post, courier service or hand delivery). However, the paper version could include temporarily "scanned signed copies" for documents which normally shall be original signed versions. These would then need to be replaced by original documents at later stage.

61. Q: If we would like an organisation to be an affiliated partner in the application, is it sufficient legal ties if the director of that organisation is a (paying) member of our organisation?

A: As expressed in section 6.1. of the call, affiliated entities are legal entities having a legal or capital link with applicants. Consequently, the link must exist between organisations as legal entities. The example you give does not constitute such a link: it only includes a link between one organisation and a staff member of another.

62. Q: How shall it be documented in the SWIM application, if an associate organisation provides also a financial contribution?

A: In such a case, the organisation shall be entered both as "associate organisations" (Section D) and as "third parties" (Section E). The letter of commitment qualifying them as "associate organisations", and specifying both the tasks to be performed and the amount of the financial contribution will have to be uploaded twice.

63. Q: In relation to Article 8.1 of the Call, could you please confirm that, as to ratio 1, by "part of the budget of the action corresponding to that applicant" (which represents the denominator of the ratio), the sum of grant plus co-financing is meant?

A: Article 8.1 in relation to ratio 1 reads "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 ..."

This means that each (co)-applicant's total assets are divided by this co-applicant's total costs proposed to carry out the action. For example: If a co-applicant's proposed costs to carry out the action is € 80.000 then this amount shall be considered for calculation of the ratio (while the total proposed costs of the action is higher).

64. Q: In relation to Article 8.1 of the Call, could you please confirm that, as to ratio 2, by "1st pre-financing [...] For each (co)-applicant the share the share of the 1st pre-financing is equal to his share in the total estimated budget" (which represents the numerator of the ratio), only the grant (and NOT also the co-financing amount) shall be considered for the calculation of the ratio for each applicant?

A: Article 8.1 in relation to ratio 2 reads "A second ratio between the 1st pre-financing and the annual total revenue. For each (co)-applicant the share of the 1st pre-financing is equal to his share in the total estimated budget."

The co-financing is calculated on basis of the grant amount (see also point 7 of the Financial Guidelines).

For example: the total costs proposed to carry out the action is € 200.000 (costs € 120.000 main applicant + costs € 80.000 co-applicant), the co-financing rate is 80 % which gives a total maximum grant of € 160.000. Duration of the project is 24 months, thus, the 1st pre-financing would be 40 % of the grant amount (in accordance with point 7 of the Financial Guidelines)

- Main applicant's share of 1st pre-financing: € 120.000 costs x 80% co-financing rate = 96.000 grant x 40% 1st pre-financing rate = 38.400

- Co-applicant's share of 1st pre-financing: € 80.000 x 80% = 64.000 x 40 % = 25.600

Thus, in this example the amount of € 38.400 is considered for calculation of ratio 2 of the main applicant; the amount of € 25.600 is considered for calculation ratio 2 of the co-applicant.

65. Q: Regarding the endorsement letter from the national Managing Authority: The template includes the following sentence: "herewith endorses the application of xxx [in cooperation with ...] for the call on competence centres for social innovation (VP 2020/010)." What shall be included in the [in cooperation with ...] ?

A: The [in cooperation with ...] shall include partners with whom the applicant constitutes the competence centre in its own country, if applicable. It does not refer to the partners of the international consortium.

66. Q: With regard to the deadline for submitting applications, when delivering the application by courier or post, 30th November must be the delivery date on the envelope or the date you physically receive the application?

A: As explained in section 14 of the call, the submission date is the date when the envelop is submitted to post or courier service, evidenced as follows:

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