



Questions and Answers Call for proposals VP/2020/012

Strengthening the role of social partners
in mitigating the economic and social
impact of the COVID-19 crisis

22 April 2021

Q1. We would like to know if a social partner organisation representing employers could apply to the present Call for proposal as a lead applicant or should only the cross industry social partner organisations at EU level be the Lead applicant? What about participating as a co-applicant or just as a third party receiving financial support?

The lead applicant must indeed be a cross industry social partner organisation at European level (see Eligibility criteria, section 6.1 c). The recognised cross industry social partner organisations at EU level can be found on the following website (please click on “list of consulted organisations”):

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=329&langId=en>

Co-applicants must be social partner organisations at European level, as defined in section 2.1 of the call document. A national social partner organisation can be eligible to receive third party support (see Section 6.2 d of the call and the Implementing Guide)

Q2. I would like to clarify/confirm one aspect for the calls: the lead applicant of a proposal can only be a cross-sector EU social partner ? So for example, a sector social partner could not lead a proposal (application for funding)?

Please see above Q1 on eligibility for the lead applicant.

Q3. When will the next call for proposals for social partners be out and will it be focused on sector social partners?

It is expected that more call for proposals specifically targeting social partners will be published in the first and second quarters of 2021. Please consult the precise eligibility criteria once published.

Q4. The Lead-applicants or co-applicants must be Social partner organisations at European level only. If there is no recognition on European level as Social partner, can we be a part of Consortia (like affiliated entities or like associate organisations?)

Please see above Q1 on eligibility for the lead applicant, and on definitions. Affiliated entities are not eligible under this call. An associate organisation can participate but may not declare eligible costs.

Q5 : Is it necessary that both Employers and Trade unions' organizations are members of the consortium to apply?

To be eligible, applicants (both lead and co-applicants) must be social partner organizations at EU level. It is not required that both sides of industry are members of the consortium. See also replies on Q 1 already published on the lead applicant.

Q6: Can organisations like universities or communication professionals be part of the consortium?

Universities or communication professionals can only participate as associate organisations, and will not be party of the grant agreement concluded with the Commission. See section 6 on eligibility criteria, and the Financial Guidelines for Applicants.

Q 7: Could you please confirm that international organizations are not eligible as applicant or co-applicant for the above proposal?

All eligibility criteria of applicants are enumerated in section 6.1 of the call document. International organisations are not eligible as lead or co-applicants.

Q 8 (NEW): With Erasmus+ / Sport - there is always a partner finding tool / event. Is that also the case for this call?

NO. There is no partner finding tool for this call. See section 6 on eligibility criteria, see also reply to Q 6 above.

Q 9 (NEW) Our international consortia was wondering if the lead applicant have to be social partner organizations at European level ?

The lead applicant must be a cross industry social partner organisation at European level, please see reply to Q 1 and Q 2 above

Q 10: Is it fine to have a national union of industrialists as applicant? **Please see reply to Q1 above on co-applicants and national partner organisations**

Q 11: Is there a minimum/max number of co-applicants for this call?

For this call, there is a requirement of a consortia, thus at least one co-applicant is required. There is no maximum number of co-applicants

Q 12: Can universities or centers working under universities be considered as "Social partner organisations"?

No, universities cannot be considered social partner organisations. The call for proposal gives a clear definition of "social partner organisation" in section 2.1 of the call text document.

Q 13 (NEW):

In the "cascading" of financial support to third parties, we intend to use a mix of the two options proposed in the implementation guide: using both "reimbursement of actual costs" and a "lump sum approach". Is this feasible? We would like to make sure that we can mix both approaches in the way we will cascade the funds concerning third party support.

In principle, the use of an hybrid form of financial support to third party that combines reimbursement of actual costs and the use of lump sums (as mentioned under point 6 of the Implementing Guide attached to the call text) is accepted. In any case, such approach must be duly described in a clear and transparent way.

Q 14 (NEW):

For national organisations to "apply" for a financial support under this project, we intend to publish a call for proposals asking them to define and submit their capacity-building workplans (according to clear criteria, eligible activities, etc, as defined in the call for proposals to be published by the lead applicant) and to propose a budget estimate on the basis of the activities foreseen in these workplans. These call for proposals will clearly mention that some budget categories (travel and subsistence costs, services such as interpretation, translations, expertise, production of dissemination material) are to be reimbursed on the basis of actual

costs incurred. These costs will therefore have to be reported upon and documented by invoices.

But we also intend to use simplified cost options (the “lump sum approach”) for some specific activities/events, to cover cost categories which will be more “burdensome” to manage (ie: which will create an excessive administrative burden, both for the lead applicant to process and for the national beneficiaries to produce). These cost categories would be staff costs and small administration costs (such as zoom licenses for online meetings) related to the specific activities/events in question. For the sake of transparency and equal treatment of all potential national beneficiaries, our call for proposals will clearly define and indicate:

- the different kinds of activities/events/outcomes which will be reimbursed on the basis of a lump sum**
- the actual lump sum estimated for each kind of activity/event/outcome (it will be a reasonable amount, estimated on the basis of average costs incurred in past projects for similar types of operations)**
- the costs which the “lump sum” will – and will not – cover (to avoid potential double funding)**
- the requirements in terms of reporting and documentation/proof that the activity/event/outcome was delivered.**

Concerning the questions related to the use of **lump sums**, please see Section 6 of the implementing guide. Applicants should be able to demonstrate in their proposal that their proposed lump sum amount is based on a reasonable estimate of actual costs necessary to carry out the activities to be financially supported. In that regard, lump sums should cover standard “packages” of activities followed by required outputs and measurable results.

The method for determining such lump sums (e.g. statistical data, historical data, usual cost accounting practices etc.) shall be described in the Budget Explanation for the Project (see also Section 10 of Implementing Guide). It should be based on the costs necessary to carry out those packages of activities.

Those costs must be comprehensive and estimated in a clear and transparent way, *but the type of costs that should be subject to a lump sum cannot be described further as this will depend upon the package of activities applicants*

intend to define and support. *It is also pointed out* that the clarity, completeness and cost effectiveness of the lump sum mechanism applicants intend to set up (e.g. expected outputs and/or results with targets and milestones) will be an important element for assessing the overall quality of the proposal.

We also *take note of your intention* to launch a call for proposal or call for interest with a view to identify *the organisations which might receive* support. With a view to keep a clear audit trail of the entire process, we would also recommend to keep track and document the various phases of the procedure (publication, evaluation, award, payment, evaluation of the results).

Defining unit costs or lump sums based on outputs/results

The total costs baseline value necessary to carry on the standard package of activity will serve as a basis for defining unit costs or lump sums whose payment will be triggered by outputs or results.

Example: in the case of a training activity, the value of such unit costs may be obtained by dividing the total cost baseline value for the training organization (comprehensive of staff costs, travel costs, daily allowances, software licenses, other costs) by the number of participants expected to successfully complete a training (output indicator).

Before triggering the payment to the third party, beneficiaries should be able to assess the expected outputs and/or results and the resulting unit costs or lump sum, and will define the final amount due performing a proper check of the lump sum and unit costs declared.

Contributions based on lump sum and unit costs, will be paid in full provided the corresponding part of the action is implemented properly (with the required quality, fully and on time). If the corresponding part of the action is not properly implemented, the payment of the lump sum should not happen or be reduced proportionately.

In addition, the fulfilment of those conditions may be subject to ex post controls. The recipients of financial support to third party will not be required to report on the costs actually incurred for the implementation. Payment of the grant on the basis of lump sums or unit costs does not affect the right of access to the statutory records of the beneficiaries for the purposes of:

- Reviewing them for future grants or

- Protection of the Union financial interests, e.g. detection of fraud, irregularities or breach of obligations