**Grant Scheme for Turkey-EU Business Dialogue (TEBD)**

Call for Proposals TR2015/DG/01/A6-02

(EuropeAid/159785/ID/ACT/TR)

issued by the CFCU on 2 April 2018 with deadline of 05 June 2018

**Clarifications-I**

**Note 1:** *Most of the questions that have been received concerning this call for proposals (call) can be answered by* ***carefully reading*** *the guidelines for grant applicants (guidelines).*

**Note 2:** *Please note that in the interest of equal treatment of applicants, the Contracting Authority does not give prior opinion on the eligibility of a lead applicant, a co-applicant, an action or specific activities (Please see Section 2.2.4 of the guidelines).*

*Please further note that the replies given to the questions on the eligibility of the applicants are provided solely for the question asked without consideration of whether the other eligibility criteria stated in the guidelines (Sections 2.1.1) are fulfilled or not.*

**General Issues**

1. **Who will assess the project proposals?**

Applications will be examined and evaluated by an evaluation committee with the possible assistance of external assessors.

The evaluation is under the responsibility of the CFCU, as the Contracting Authority, and will be carried out in line with the steps explained and the evaluation grids given in the guidelines under “Section 2.3 Evaluation and Selection of Applications”.

1. **How many applications can an institution submit?**

As indicated in the guidelines under heading “Number of applicants and grants per applicants”;

* The lead applicant **may not** submit more than **one** application under this call for proposals as a lead applicant.
* The lead applicant **may** be a co-applicant in another application (only one) at the same time.
* A co-applicant **may not** be the co-applicant in more than **two** applications under this call for proposals

Please also see Important Note 5 in the guidelines.

1. **Will the accredited chambers be considered advantageous in case they apply for this call for proposals?**

No, there is no such provision in the guidelines.

**Eligibility of Applicants (i.e. lead applicants, co-applicants)**

**(Section 2.1.1 of the guidelines)**

1. **Could you please further clarify the eligibility of the applicants, is it sufficient to be a member of the institution represented by EUROCHAMBRES as indicated in the guidelines in order to become an lead applicant?**

Yes. Local/regional/national chamber or union of chambers (established in an EU Member State or an eligible country according to the IPA Regulation) represented by EUROCHAMBRES can apply as a lead applicant so long as they satisfy the other requirements stated in Section 2.1.1.

1. **We are having problems building qualified partnerships. Could you please provide us information about potential partners for this programme that we can cooperate with?**

It is the lead applicants’ responsibility to find at least one co-applicant meeting the criteria given in Section 2.1.1 of the guidelines.

Please also see Reply-4.

1. **It is stated in the guidelines that CSOs can be associates in the project. What is the definition of CSO; can producer organizations / unions be associates in the project?**

As associates do not have to meet the eligibility criteria referred in section 2.1.1, any organisations or individuals may involve in the projects as associates.

A civil society organization (CSO) is an organization:

* which is independent of the state as regards to its establishment and/or appointment of its personnel and administrators; and
* which has an autonomous and democratic structure in its financial and administrative affairs; and
* which has a non-profit legal entity.

Therefore, e.g. associations, foundations can be regarded as CSOs if they meet these criteria.

Please see section 2.1.3 in the guidelines for further details.

1. **Can applicants be a chamber from a non-EU Member State according to the IPA regulation?**

Applicants must be established in a Member State of the European Union or Turkey or an eligible country according to the IPA Regulation. If a lead applicant applies from eligible countries, except EU Member States and Turkey, the lead applicant must have at least one co-applicant which is a member organization of TOBB and at least one co-applicant which is a local/regional/national chamber or union of chambers established in EU Member States represented by EUROCHAMBRES.

Please also see footnote 3 in the guidelines.

**Eligibility of Actions**

**(Section 2.1.4 of the guidelines)**

1. **Are “… activities” eligible for this Call for Proposals?**

As stated in Section 2.2.4 of the guidelines, “to ensure equal treatment of applicant(s), the Contracting Authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of lead applicants, co-applicants, an action or specific activities”. Therefore, please carefully read Section 2.1.4 of the guidelines regarding the actions and activities for which a grant may be awarded.

1. **Can we procure new equipment as part of the project in order to improve our service as a part of the project?**

Yes. As stated Section 2.1.5 of the guidelines, purchase (new) or rental (new or used) costs for equipment and supplies specifically dedicated to the purposes of the action, provided they correspond to market rates are eligible costs.

However, please note that projects essentially focused on the purchase of equipment will not be considered eligible as stated in the Section 2.1.4 of the guidelines.

**Eligibility of Costs (Section 2.1.5 of the guidelines) and**

**Financial Issues**

1. **Could you please explain the conditions of minimum and maximum percentages that can be requested as grant under this call for proposals?**

As stated in the Section 1.3 of the guidelines that any grant requested under this call for proposals must fall between the following minimum and maximum percentages of total eligible costs of the action:

* Minimum percentage: **50 %** of the total eligible costs of the action.
* Maximum percentage: **90 %** of the total eligible costs of the action (see also section 2.1.5) for the Chambers that **did not receive** grant as “applicant” during the ETCF-I or ETCF-II.
* Maximum percentage: **80%** of the total eligible costs of the action (see also Section 2.1.5) for the Chambers that **received** grant as “applicant” during the ETCF-I and/or ETCF-II.

1. **We were partner in the previous grant programmes. What is the maximum percentage that we can request as grant under this call for proposals?**

Those who were not “applicant” in the previous grant programmes (ETCF-I or ETCF-II) can request up to **90%** of the total eligible cost as grant.

1. **What is the distinction between technical and administrative staff?**

There are separate subheadings for technical and administrative/support staff in the budget template (Annex B of the guidelines).

In general, the “*technical staff*” includes, experts, seminar lecturers etc. The “*administrative staff*” includes a project coordinator, assistant, project secretary etc, which are included in the project implementation.

1. **What is the maximum working hours in the scope of the project, is there any restriction on this?**

As stated in the General Conditions Article 14.1-e (Annex G-II of the guidelines), beneficiaries must comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislations.

Please note that the question is related to the implementation period and after the signature of the grant contract, training for the project implementation, including financial/legislative issues, will be held to support the Beneficiaries.

1. **What kind of permissions are needed for the staff to be employed in the scope of the project and what kind of rights will be bestowed?**

Beneficiaries must comply with the requirement of the related legislation or practice of their institutions about employment/permission of the staff who will work for the project.

Please note that the question is related to the implementation period and after the signature of the grant contract, training for the project implementation, including financial/legislative issues, will be held to support the Beneficiaries.

Also, please see Important Note 6 of the guidelines for the permission of civil servants.

1. **Is it possible to offset the commission expenses from the project budget on payments made from the budget to the co-applicants in the EU within the scope of the project activities? Under which budget line can be covered?**

Yes, the grant beneficiary decides how to do budgeting with due respect to the instructions given in the guidelines and Article 14 of the General Conditions, since the action and its results belongs to it.

Applicants should decide for the allocation of the relevant costs under appropriate budget item or heading by considering the template budget document (Annex B of the guidelines) and following instructions provided on the template budget and explanations included in Section 2.1.5 of the guidelines.

1. **How will the co-financing be realised? Can the staff costs, office costs etc. of the lead applicant or co-applicant be considered as co-financing?**

Amount of co-financing should be provided from the own resources of the lead applicant or its co-applicant(s) or from another resource other than European Union budget or the European Development Fund.

Co-financing can be realised either by depositing the amount directly or in intervals to the project account or covering some of the costs indicated in the project budget in accordance with the General Conditions of the standard grant contract (Annex G-II of the guidelines).

Cost of applicants’ (lead applicant and, if any, co-applicant(s)) own staff assigned to the action could be included in the budget and may be regarded as co-financing. Actual gross salaries including social security charges and other remuneration-related costs of the staff assigned to the action are eligible costs on the condition that salaries and costs shall not exceed those normally borne by the applicants unless it is justified by showing that it is essential to carry out the action. Please see General Conditions (Annex G-II of the guidelines).

Field office costs are also considered as eligible costs of the action if incurred in accordance with Article 14 of the General Conditions (Annex G-II of the guidelines).

Please also see the Article 7.1.3 of the Special Conditions (Annex G of the guidelines).

1. **We will assign our own staff for the project and we want to show his/her payroll as co-financing. Can a personal receive payment from the project budget in return of his/her working after the co-finance amount is completed?**

Requested payment should not exceed the co-financing amount.

1. **Which documents will be needed as financial documentation for the staff to be assigned as co-finance?**

Necessary financial documents will be; assignment letter indicating that chamber personnel will work for the project activities (in details stating the position of the personnel, period of assignment and dates of the interval); time sheets, salary payroll and bank receipt of the salary payment. Necessary documents may not be limited those.

Please note that the question is related to the implementation period and after the signature of the grant contract, training for the project implementation, including financial/legislative issues will be held to support the Beneficiaries.

1. **Which documents are needed as financial documentation of the payments to the personnel to be assigned to the project by the EU chamber co-applicants?**

Necessary documents are; work contract (in case of employing a new employee) or assignment letter (in case chamber personnel works for the project), time sheets, salary payrolls, documents, indicating that social and tax liabilities have been fully undertaken. Necessary documents may not be limited to those. Please see Articles 2.1, 15.7 and 16.1 of the General Conditions for further explanation.

Please note that the question is related to the implementation period and after the signature of the grant contract, training for the project implementation, including financial/legislative issues will be held to support the Beneficiaries.

Please also see the Reply-17.

1. **From which budget (chamber/project) should the social security payments being deposited to TOBB retirement fund be paid?**

All human resources costs needs to be under the “Human Resources” budget heading (Annex B of the guidelines). In case chamber personnel assigned to the project, all the costs included in his/her salary payroll are paid from the chamber budget and in conformity with the assignment corresponding percentage of the salary amount is declared as the co-finance contribution. Total cost of the staff (employer’s share, employee’s share, salary etc.) to be employed outside the chamber are covered from the project budget.

1. **What are the examples of simplified cost option?**

Please see Annex K of the guidelines for examples.

1. **Is there a limit on the budget to be allocated for co-applicants?**

No, there is no such limit.

1. **Can salaries be paid to the academicians?**

Academicians, instructors, lecturers, research assistants etc. who work in the institutions falling under the scope of the High Education Law No. 2547 may work in the projects without prejudice to the provisions of the Law they are subject to and the regulations of High Education Institution in which they work for. If they are employed in scope of the projects, they will be requested to submit the legal basis and necessary supporting documents, showing the appropriateness of their employment. Therefore, when preparing the budget and setting the fees/salaries for the academicians, all associated costs must be taken into account (such as revolving funds cuts - if it is the case).

**How to Apply and the Procedures to Follow**

**(Section 2.2 of the guidelines)**

1. **Should the partnership documents be original?**

No. Documents can be supplied in the form of originals, photocopies or scanned versions (i.e. showing legible stamps, signatures and dates) of the said originals.

1. **Is it necessary to submit the evidence on the fulfilment of fiscal/tax obligations taken from the relevant tax authorities for the lead applicant and each co-applicant?**

As stated in Section 2.4 of the guidelines, for the applicants whose applications have been provisionally selected, evidence on the fulfilment (including restructuring etc.) of fiscal/tax obligations taken from the relevant tax authorities for the lead applicant and each co-applicant obtained after the date of Contracting Authority’s request should be submitted. If the lead applicant and/or the co-applicant(s) are tax exempted, documentary proof regarding their status should be provided.

1. **Is there an online system to upload our applications?**

No. The applications must be submitted as hard copies in line with the instructions indicated under Section 2.2 of the guidelines.