



Contracting Authority: Agency for Vocational Education and Training,
Department for Financing and Contracting of IPA Programme

Regional network of local learning institutions

Guidelines
for grant applicants

IPA for the Human Resources Development Component in Croatia 2007-
2009

Reference: Europeaid/129021/M/ACT/HR

Deadline for submission of proposals: 28 January 2010

NOTICE

Notice

This is an open Call for Proposals, where all documents are submitted at one stage (Concept Note and full proposal). However, in the first instance, only the Concept Notes will be evaluated. Thereafter, for the applicants whose Concept Notes have been pre-selected, evaluation of the full proposal will be carried out. Further to the evaluation of the full proposals, an eligibility check will be performed for those which are provisionally selected. This check will be undertaken on the basis of the supporting documents requested by the Contracting Authority and the signed "Declaration by the Applicant" sent together with the application.

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1. REGIONAL NETWORK OF LOCAL LEARNING INSTITUTIONS

1.1 BACKGROUND

The *Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)* was established by Council Regulation EC No 1085/2006 of 17 July 2006. It provides the overall framework within which pre-accession assistance will be made available to both candidate and potential candidate countries. As of 2007, the instrument as a whole is open to Croatia and should provide assistance to build institutional capacity for the efficient implementation of the *acquis communautaire* as well as to prepare for the management of the Structural and Cohesion Funds on accession (aligning as appropriate with the priorities identified under the Accession Partnership). In bringing together pre-accession assistance across a range of instruments, IPA consists of five Components.

In the context of the Operational Programme for Human Resources Development (HRDOP), Component IV is designed to assist the candidate countries in policy development and to prepare them for the implementation and management of the Community's Cohesion policy, in particular the European Social Fund.

This Call for Proposals falls within the (HRDOP), under Priority Axis 3: Enhancing human capital and employability, Measure 3.2: Strengthening the provision of Adult Learning, Operation: Regional network of local learning institutions.

As set out in the priority axes and measures of the OP, the intention is to improve Croatia's adult and higher education system and enable learners of all ages to acquire competencies in order to better respond to labour market needs.

The importance of the Regional network of local learning institutions Grant Scheme lies within the fact that it aims to develop an effective educational and training system that is responsive to labour market needs, primarily in the ten selected counties¹ but also across the entire territory of the Republic of Croatia. The regional network² which will be created through this Call for Proposals is crucial for the development of knowledge-based economy and for increase of the level of employment. Moreover, adult education institutions should ensure that adult learners are equipped with key and other competencies which provide a foundation for lifelong learning. This is of central importance for the improvement of competitiveness of adult learners in the labour market. This Call for Proposal also aims at promotion of equal opportunities and reduction of regional disparities.

¹ Ten selected counties are: Lika-Senj, Vukovar-Srijem, Zadar, Sibenik-Knin, Sisak-Moslavina, Požega-Slavonija, Karlovac, Virovitica-Podravina, Brod-Posavina and Osijek-Baranja county, as indicated in the Regional Competitiveness Operational Programme 2007-2009

² Under this Call regional network equally presupposes partnerships between institutions/organisations with their seats within the same county or with their seats in different counties in the Republic of Croatia.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME AND PRIORITY ISSUES

The **global objective** of this Call for Proposals is:

to improve key competencies and other competencies³ of adult learners which will enable them to participate more actively in the labour market.

The **specific objective** of this Call for Proposals is:

to modernize existing and/or to develop new short adult education programme/s, and it is obligatory for all applicants. Furthermore, the creation of a regional network is envisaged through exchange of these short adult education programme/s. This refers primarily to institutions in ten selected counties, but adult education institutions from other parts of the Republic of Croatia may also apply.

There are two priorities under this Call for Proposals:

- a) To increase the competitiveness of employees and the unemployed by adapting to labour market needs.
- b) To promote equal opportunities for access to the labour market for all.

1.3 FINANCIAL ALLOCATION PROVIDED BY THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY

The overall indicative amount made available under this Call for Proposals is EUR 3,500,000. The Contracting Authority reserves the right not to award all available funds.

Size of grants

Any grant awarded under this Call for Proposals must fall between the following minimum and maximum amounts:

- minimum amount: EUR 70,000
- maximum amount: EUR 300,000

In addition, no grant may exceed 85% of the total eligible costs of the action (see also section 2.1.4). The balance must be financed from the applicant's or partners' own resources, or from sources other than the European Community budget or the European Development Fund.

³ The key competencies are: communication in the mother tongue, communication in foreign languages, mathematical literacy and basic competencies in science and technology, ICT skills, learning –to-learn, interpersonal and civic competencies, entrepreneurship and cultural awareness as stated in the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning. Official Journal of the European Union L394. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:394:0010:0018:en:PDF>. This Call also refers to other competencies which will enable adults to participate more actively in the labour market.

2. RULES FOR THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS

These guidelines set out the rules for the submission, selection and implementation of actions financed under this Call, in conformity with the provisions of the Practical Guide to contract procedures for EC external actions, which is applicable to the present call (available on the Internet at this address: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/implementation/index_en.htm).

2.1 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

There are three sets of eligibility criteria, relating to:

- applicant(s) which may request a grant (2.1.1), and their partners (2.1.2);
- actions for which a grant may be awarded (2.1.3);
- types of cost which may be taken into account in setting the amount of the grant (2.1.4).

2.1.1 *Eligibility of applicants: who may apply?*

(1) In order to be eligible for a grant, applicants **must**:

- be legal persons **and**
- be specific type of organisation such as: adult education institution (primary schools, high schools, open universities, polytechnics and other institutions that are registered as institutions for adult education in the Commercial court register at the Commercial court of Croatia) as defined by the Adult Education Act, Official Gazette 17/07 and by the Institution Act, Official Gazette 76/93, 47/99, 29/97; international (inter-governmental) organisations as defined by Article 43 of the Implementing Rules to the EC Financial Regulation⁴ **and**
- be nationals⁵ of a Member State of the European Union or Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYROM, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey and Kosovo under UNSC Resolution 1244/99; countries that are beneficiaries of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument; Member States of the European Economic Area: Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway. This obligation does not apply to international organisations **and**
- have at least one eligible partner organisation **and**
- be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action with their partners, not acting as an intermediary **and**
- be registered in the AAE's database⁶ according to the By-law on Records in Adult Education Institutions **and**
- be compliant with de-minimis rule as regulated by the Commission Regulation (EC) No 1998/2006 and in Government of the Republic of Croatia Decree on de-minimis aid (Official Gazette, 45/2007)⁷.

4 International organisations are international public-sector organisations set up by intergovernmental agreements as well as specialised agencies set up by them; the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, European Investment Bank (EIB) and European Investment Fund (EIF) are also recognized as international organisations.

5 Such nationality being determined on the basis of the organisation's statutes which should demonstrate that it has been established by an instrument governed by the national law of the country concerned. In this respect, any legal entity whose statutes have been established in another country cannot be considered an eligible local organisation, even if the statutes are registered locally or a "Memorandum of Understanding" has been concluded.

6 For the registration at AAE's database, please consult the following website: <http://baza.aoo.hr>

(2) Potential applicants may not participate in calls for proposals or be awarded grants if they are in any of the situations which are listed in Section 2.3.3 of the Practical Guide to contract procedures for EC external actions (available from the following Internet address:
http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/implementation/index_en.htm);

In part B section VI of the grant application form (“Declaration by the applicant”), applicants must declare that they do not fall into any of these situations.

Grant applicants and, if they are legal entities, persons who have powers of representation, decision-making or control over them, are informed that, should they be in one of the situations mentioned in:

- Commission decision (2008/969/EC, Euratom) of 16 December 2008 on the Early Warning System (EWS) for the use of authorising officers of the Commission and the executive agencies (OJ, I.344, 20.12.2008, p.125).
- Commission Regulation (2008/1302/EC, Euratom) of 17 December 2008 on the central Exclusion database – CED (OJ L 344, 20.12.2008, p.12).

Their personal details (name, given name if natural person, address, legal form and name and given name of the persons with powers of representation, decision making or control, if legal person) may be registered in the EWS and CED, and communicated to the persons and entities listed in the above-mentioned decision and regulation, in relation to the award or the execution of a procurement contract or a grant agreement or decision.

Applicants must not derive profit from the grant i.e. the grant can only cover costs of activities.

2.1.2 Partnerships and eligibility of partners

Applicants must act with partner organisation(s) as specified hereafter.

The partnership is mandatory because capacity building through networks of institutions can contribute effectively to the improvement of individual partner institutions, to the empowerment of institutions with weaker capacities and to the strengthening of the adult education sector in general. Through regional networks⁸ institutions that do not have the capacity for individual application can also benefit from the grant scheme.

Partners

Applicants must act with at least 1 but max 5 partner organization(s). Eligible partner(s) can be adult education institution and non-governmental organizations. At least one partner has to be adult education institution.

Applicants’ partners participate in designing and implementing the action, and the costs they incur are eligible in the same way as those incurred by the grant beneficiary. They must therefore satisfy the eligibility

⁷ This rule applies only to private enterprises/organisations. De minimis "state aid" rule allows up to 200,000 EUR aid to be provided from public funds to any enterprise over a period of three fiscal years. For further information please turn to the Commission Regulation (EC) No 1998/2006 (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:379:0005:0010:EN:PDF>) or to the Government of the Republic of Croatia Decree on de-minimis aid published in Official Gazette, 45/2007 (http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2007_05_45_1487.html).

⁸ Under this Call regional network equally presupposes partnerships between institutions/organisations with their seats within the same county or with their seats in different counties in the Republic of Croatia.

criteria as applicable on the grant beneficiary himself. In addition to the categories referred to in section 2.1.1, the following are however also eligible: non-governmental organizations.

The following are not partners and do not have to sign the “partnership statement”:

- Associates

Other organisations may be involved in the action.⁹ Such associates play a real role in the action but may not receive funding from the grant with the exception of per diem or travel costs. Associates do not have to meet the eligibility criteria referred to in section 2.1.1. The associates have to be mentioned in Part B section IV - “Associates of the Applicant participating in the Action” of the Grant Application Form.

- Subcontractors

The grant beneficiaries have the possibility to award contracts to subcontractors. Subcontractors are neither partners nor associates, and are subject to the procurement rules set out in Annex IV to the standard grant contract.

The applicant will act as the lead organisation and, if selected, as the contracting party (the "Beneficiary").

2.1.3 Eligible actions: actions for which an application may be made

Definition: An action (or project) is composed of a set of activities.

Duration

The planned duration of an action may not be lower than 10 months nor exceed 12 months.

Sectors or themes

Modernisation of existing and/or design of new short programmes is envisaged within this Call. This refers to the training and additional training programme/s that fall under one of the vocational education and training sectors¹⁰.

(1) **Training Programmes** (Croatian term: “Programi osposobljavanja”) provide acquirement of the theoretical and practical knowledge necessary for performing simple jobs of the 1st level of complexity according to the National classification of occupations.

(2) With the **Additional Training Programmes** (Croatian term: “Programi usavršavanja”), participants with completed secondary education improve and expand the acquired professional knowledge to meet labour market requirements and to gain knowledge of new techniques and technologies and their use.¹¹

⁹ Organizations such as: local Croatian Employment Service offices, local authorities (county offices for education), local public institutions (public library), private enterprises, other adult education institutions and NGOs etc. Listed institutions are only examples, other institutions can be involved as well.

¹⁰ For more information on the Decision on the Establishment of Education Sectors in Vocational Education, MoSES, 24 December 2007, please consult the following website http://www.aoo.hr/Documents/Odluka_o_uspostavi_obrazovnih_sektora_u_strukovnom_obrazovanju.pdf

¹¹ For more information on the By-law on Standards and Specifications, the Mode and Procedures for Determination of the Fulfilment of Conditions in Adult Education Institutions (Articles 26 and 33), please consult the following website:

Location

Actions must take place in the Republic of Croatia.

Types of action

Mandatory actions:

- modernisation of the existing and/or to the design of the new short programme/s. One application can contain modernisation/design of more than one short programme;¹²
- the leading adult education institution will submit the proposal for modernising existing and/or designing new short programme/s and will develop these programme/s and perform them in course of the project duration. This leading adult education institution is obliged to have at least one partner - adult education institution that will also perform these short programme/s during the project and/or non-governmental organization that will participate in the project activities as agreed. This way the exchange of programme/s, as well as setting up of the regional network, is assured. The leading adult education institution will be obliged to monitor all the activities performed by the partners;
- modernisation/design of the programme/s will have to be carried out in accordance with the Methodology for modernising existing and/or designing new short programme/s developed with the assistance of the CARDS 2004 *Adult Learning*¹³;
- verification of the new short programme/s has to take place during the duration of the project. All adult education institutions involved in the project will have to take the standard procedure for the verification of programme/s (submission of the completed programme to the Agency for Adult Education to obtain opinion and to the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports to obtain approval¹⁴). Expenses of the verification of the short programme/s cannot be covered by the grant;
- implementation of the new short programme/s (by the leading adult education institution and partner adult education institutions) for a number of participants who will receive certificate upon completion of the programme/s¹⁵. The participants will not cover the expenses of the programme/s.

Optional actions:

- actions for upgrading adult education institutions' equipment and learning materials for improved performance of modernised existing and/or new short programme/s developed under this project;
- actions providing awareness raising on the new short programme(s)/adult education/lifelong learning which will be used to attract potential participants of the programme/s;
- actions providing establishment/continuation of cooperation between all the institutions and organisations involved in the adult education, including local authorities as associates.

http://www.aoo.hr/Documents/Pravilnik_o_standardima_i_normativima_te_nacinu_i_postupku_utvrdivanja_ispunjenosti_uvjeta_u_ustanovama_za_obrazovanja_odraslih.pdf

¹² Please have in mind that programme/s have to be implemented in the course of the project and the duration of the programme/s have to be determined in accordance with that.

¹³ For more information on the Methodology for modernising existing and/or designing new short programme/s, please consult the following website http://www.aoo.hr/Documents/Upute_za_izradu_programa.pdf

¹⁴ This procedure is in accordance with Article 5 of the Adult Education Act (http://web.aoo.hr/Documents/zakon_o_obrazovanju_odraslih.pdf), that is, Article 21 of the By-law on Standards and Specifications, the Mode and Procedures for Determination of the Fulfilment of Conditions in Adult Education Institutions (http://www.aoo.hr/Documents/Pravilnik_o_standardima_i_normativima_te_nacinu_i_postupku_utvrdivanja_ispunjenosti_uvjeta_u_ustanovama_za_obrazovanja_odraslih.pdf).

¹⁵ If it is not possible for the participant to take the final exam in the course of the project, that will be made possible for him/her after the end of the project under the same conditions.

Types of activity

The following list of activities is only indicative not exhaustive:

- activities aimed at preparation, verification and implementation of modernized existing and/or designed new short programme/s which will enable adult learners to participate more actively in the labour market;
- activities aimed at production of brochures, leaflets, other materials that promote offered short programme/s, adult education institution and regional network;
- activities aimed at awareness raising such as info days, seminars, round tables, conferences, media campaigns which will promote adult education institutions and the importance of adult education and lifelong learning;
- seminars, working groups, trainings, study visits;
- activities aimed at improving the capacities of teaching staff to conduct short programme/s such as in-service trainings;
- training of adult education institution staff in innovative career guidance (one-on-one interviews, group guidance...);
- development of learning materials (worksheets, guides, electronic materials, textbooks etc.);
- activities aimed at promoting exchange and dissemination of good practices related to development/modernization of short programme/s;
- activities that promote equal treatment of minorities, gender equality and equal treatment of other vulnerable groups.
- procurement of equipment and materials necessary for implementation of the short programme(s) developed under this project. (The value of budget item “Equipment and supplies” of any grant awarded under this Call for Proposals may in no case be greater than 30% of the total direct eligible project cost.)

Sub-granting is not allowed.

The following types of action are ineligible:

- actions concerned only or mainly with individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences, congresses;
- actions concerned only or mainly with individual scholarships for studies or training courses;
- actions linked to political parties.

Number of applications and grants per applicant

An applicant may not submit more than one (1) application under this call for proposals.

An applicant may not be awarded more than one (1) grant under this call for proposals.

An applicant may at the same time be partner in another application.

Partners may take part in more than one application.

2.1.4 Eligibility of costs: costs which may be taken into consideration for the grant

Only "eligible costs" can be taken into account for a grant. The categories of costs considered as eligible and non-eligible are indicated below. The budget is both a cost estimate and a ceiling for "eligible costs". Note that the eligible costs must be based on real costs based on supporting documents (except for subsistence costs and indirect costs where flat-rate funding applies).

Recommendations to award a grant are always subject to the condition that the checking process which precedes the signing of the contract does not reveal problems requiring changes to the budget (for instance arithmetical errors, inaccuracies or unrealistic costs and other ineligible costs). The checks may give rise to requests for clarification and may lead the Contracting Authority to impose modifications or reductions to address such mistakes or inaccuracies. The amount of the grant and the percentage of co-financing as a result of these corrections may not be increased.

It is therefore in the applicant's interest to provide a **realistic and cost-effective budget**.

Eligible direct costs

To be eligible under the Call for Proposals, costs must comply with the provisions of article 14 of the General Conditions to the Standard Grant Contract (see Annex F of the Guidelines).

Contingency reserve

A contingency reserve not exceeding 5% of the direct eligible costs may be included in the Budget of the Action. It can only be used with the **prior written authorisation** of the Contracting Authority.

Eligible indirect costs (overheads)

The indirect costs incurred in carrying out the action may be eligible for flat-rate funding fixed at not more than 7% of the total eligible direct costs.

If the applicant is in receipt of an operating grant financed from the Community budget no indirect costs may be claimed within the proposed budget for the action.

Contributions in kind

Contributions in kind are not considered actual expenditure and are not eligible costs. The contributions in kind may not be treated as co-financing by the Beneficiary.

The cost of staff assigned to the Action is not a contribution in kind and may be considered as co-financing in the Budget of the Action when paid by the Beneficiary or his partners.

Notwithstanding the above, if the description of the action as proposed by the beneficiary foresees the contributions in kind, such contributions have to be provided.

Ineligible costs

In line with the provisions of Article 34 (3) and Article 148 (2) of the IPA Implementing regulation, the following expenditure shall not be eligible for funding under the programme:

- a) taxes, including value added taxes, unless they are not recoverable by any means and it is established that they are borne by the final beneficiary;
- b) customs and import duties, or any other charges;
- c) purchase, rent or leasing of land and existing buildings, unless the rent or leasing is exclusively related to the period of co-financing of the operation, and that it is preferable to other solutions in terms of the best value for money;
- d) fines, financial penalties and expenses of litigation;
- e) operating costs, unless the operating costs relate exclusively to the period of co-financing of the operation;
- f) second hand equipment;
- g) bank charges, cost of guarantees and similar charges;
- h) conversion costs, charges and exchange losses associated with any of the component specific euro accounts, as well as other purely financial expenses;
- i) contributions in kind;
- j) maintenance and rental costs, unless the rental costs relate exclusively to the period of co-financing of the operation;
- k) depreciation costs for the infrastructure, unless the conditions in paragraph 3 of this Article are met.

2.2 HOW TO APPLY AND THE PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW

Please note that the prior registration in PADOR¹⁶ for applicants and their partners for this Call for Proposal is not obligatory.

However the applicant and partners can register their organisation data, and upload supporting documents in PADOR.

Before the deadline for presenting the concept note and full proposal, organisations must fill in, save and submit information introduced in all the fields of PADOR (including the fields written with black characters) Only data registered and submitted before the dead-line for the submission of the concept note and full proposal will be taken into account by the EC.

It is by "submitting" their data that organisations engage their responsibility on the accuracy and veracity of the data provided in PADOR.

The supporting documents requested (statuses, financial reports, audit reports) may be uploaded in PADOR after the evaluation of the Full Proposals, but before the deadline fixed in the notification letter from the European Commission. By letter from the European Commission, the applicant will be reminded that these documents will have to be loaded in PADOR for the final eligibility check. Nevertheless, we strongly advise you to upload these documents while registering in PADOR, without waiting until the final selection of proposals is carried out.

2.2.1 <i>Application form</i>

Applications must be submitted in accordance with the instructions on the Concept Note included in the Grant Application Form annexes to these Guidelines (Annex A)

Applicants must apply in English.

¹⁶ For further information on PADOR, please consult the following website:

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/onlineservices/pador/index_en.htm

Helpdesk for questions related to the functioning of PADOR:

Europeaid-ON-LINE-REGISTRATION-HD@ec.europa.eu

Any error or major discrepancy related to the points listed in the instructions on the Concept Note or any major inconsistency in the application form (e.g. the amounts mentioned in the budget are inconsistent with those mentioned in the application form) may lead to the rejection of the application.

Clarifications will only be requested when information provided is unclear, thus preventing the Contracting Authority from conducting an objective assessment.

Hand-written applications will not be accepted.

Please note that only the application form and the published annexes which have to be filled in (budget, logical framework) will be evaluated. It is therefore of utmost importance that these documents contain ALL relevant information concerning the action. No additional annexes should be sent.

2.2.2 *Where and how to send the Applications*

Applications must be submitted in one original and 3 copies in A4 size, each bound. The complete application form (part A: concept note and part B: full application form), budget and logical framework must also be supplied in electronic format (CD-Rom) in a separate and unique file (e.g. the application form must not be split into several different files). The electronic format must contain **exactly the same** application as the paper version enclosed.

The Checklist (Section V of part B the grant application form) and the Declaration by the applicant (Section VI of part B of the grant application form) must be stapled separately and enclosed in the envelope.

Where an applicant sends several different applications (if allowed to do so by the Guidelines of the Call), each one has to be sent separately.

The outer envelope must bear the **reference number and the title of the call for proposals**, together with the full name and address of the applicant, and the words "Not to be opened before the opening session" and "*Ne otvarati prije sastanka odbora*".

Applications must be submitted in a sealed envelope by registered mail, private courier service or by hand-delivery (a signed and dated certificate of receipt will be given to the deliverer) at the address below:

Postal address

Agency for Vocational Education and Training
(Agencija za strukovno obrazovanje)
Department for Financing and Contracting of IPA Programme
Lastovska 23/II, HR-10000 Zagreb
Croatia

Address for hand delivery or by private courier service

Agency for Vocational Education and Training
(Agencija za strukovno obrazovanje)
Department for Financing and Contracting of IPA Programme
Lastovska 23/II, HR-10000 Zagreb
Croatia

Applications sent by any other means (e.g. by fax or by e-mail) or delivered to other addresses will be rejected.

Applicants must verify that their application is complete using the checklist (section V of part B of the grant application form). Incomplete applications may be rejected.

2.2.3 *Deadline for submission of Applications*

The deadline for the submission of applications is 28 January 2010 as evidenced by the date of dispatch, the postmark or the date of the deposit slip. In the case of hand-deliveries, the deadline for receipt is at 15:00 CET (Central European Time) on 28 January 2010 as evidenced by the signed and dated receipt. Any application submitted after the deadline will automatically be rejected.

However, for reasons of administrative efficiency, the Contracting Authority may reject any application received after the effective date of approval of the first evaluation step (i.e. Concept Note) (see indicative calendar under section 2.5.2)

2.2.4 *Further information for the Application*

An information session on this Call for Proposals will be held on 12 October 2009 at 10:00 hours

Questions may in addition be sent by e-mail or by fax no later than 21 days before the deadline for the submission of applications to the below addresse(s), indicating clearly the reference of the Call for Proposals:

E-mail address: defco@aso.hr

Fax: +385 1 6274 698

Contracting Authority has no obligation to provide further clarifications after this date.
Replies will be given no later than 11 days before the deadline for the submission of applications.

In the interest of equal treatment of applicants, the Contracting Authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of an applicant, a partner, an action or specific activities.

Questions that may be relevant to other applicants, together with the answers, will be published on the internet at the EuropeAid website: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome> and AVET DEFECO website: <http://www.aso.hr/defco>. It is therefore highly recommended to regularly consult the abovementioned website in order to be informed of the questions and answers published.

All questions related to PADOR registration should be addressed to the PADOR helpdesk:
europeaid-on-line-registration-hd@ec.europa.eu

2.3 EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications will be examined and evaluated by the Contracting Authority with the possible assistance of external assessors. All actions submitted by applicants will be assessed according to the following steps and criteria:

If the examination of the application reveals that the proposed action does not meet the eligibility criteria stated in paragraph 2.1.3, the application shall be rejected on this sole basis.

(1) STEP 1: OPENING SESSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE CHECK

The following will be assessed:

- The submission deadline has been respected. If the deadline has not been respected the application will automatically be rejected.
- The Application Form satisfies all the criteria specified in points 1-5 of the Checklist (section V of part B of the grant application form). If any of the requested information is missing or is incorrect, the application may be rejected on that sole basis and the application will not be evaluated further.

Following the opening session and the administrative check, the Contracting Authority will send a letter to all applicants, indicating whether their application was submitted prior to the deadline, informing them of the reference number they have been allocated and whether they have been recommended for further evaluation.

(2) STEP 2: EVALUATION OF THE CONCEPT NOTE

The evaluation of the Concept Notes that have passed the first administrative check will cover the relevance of the action, its merits and effectiveness, its viability and sustainability. The Contracting Authority reserves the right not to undertake the evaluation of the Concept Notes whenever considered justified (for example when a less than expected number of applications are received) and to go straight to the evaluation of the corresponding full applications.

Please note that the scores awarded to the Concept Note are completely separate from those given to the Full Application.

The Concept Note will be given an overall score out of 50 points in accordance with the breakdown provided in the Evaluation Grid below. The evaluation shall also verify the compliance with instructions provided in the guidance for Concept Note, part A of the grant application form.

The evaluation criteria are divided into headings and subheadings. Each subheading will be given a score between 1 and 5 in accordance with the following assessment categories: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.

	Scores	
1. Relevance of the action	Sub-score	15
1.1 Relevance of the action needs and constraints of the country/region to be addressed in general, and to those of the target groups and final beneficiaries in particular.	5	
1.2 Relevance to the priorities and objectives mentioned in the Guidelines.	5(x2)*	
2. Effectiveness and Feasibility of the action	Sub-score	25
2.1 Assessment of the problem identification and analysis.	5	
2.2 Assessment of the proposed activities (practicality and consistency in relation to the objectives, purpose and expected results).	5(x2)*	
2.3 Assessment of the role and involvement of all stakeholders and, if applicable, proposed partners.	5(x2)*	
3. Sustainability of the action	Sub-score	10
3.1 Assessment of the identification of the main assumptions and risks, before the start up and throughout the implementation period.	5	
3.2 Assessment of the identification of long-term sustainable impact on the target groups and final beneficiaries.	5	
TOTAL SCORE		50

*the scores are multiplied by 2 because of their importance

Once all Concept Notes have been assessed, a list will be established with the proposed actions ranked according to their total score.

Firstly, only the Concept Notes which have been given a score of a minimum of 12 points in the category "Relevance" as well as a minimum total score of 30 points will be considered for pre-selection.

Secondly, the list of Concept Notes will be reduced in accordance to the ranking to those whose sum of requested contributions amounts to EUR 7,000,000 the available budget for this Call for proposals, taking into account the indicative financial envelopes foreseen by lot. The Evaluation Committee will subsequently proceed with the applicants whose proposals have been pre-selected.

(3) STEP 3: EVALUATION OF THE FULL APPLICATION

An evaluation of the quality of the applications, including the proposed budget, and of the capacity of the applicant and its partners, will be carried out in accordance with the evaluation criteria set out in the Evaluation Grid included below. There are two types of evaluation criteria: selection and award criteria.

The selection criteria are intended to help evaluate the applicants' financial and operational capacity to ensure that they:

- have stable and sufficient sources of finance to maintain their activity throughout the period during which the action is being carried out and, where appropriate, to participate in its funding;
- have the management capacity, professional competencies and qualifications required to successfully complete the proposed action. This also applies to any partners of the applicant.

The award criteria allow the quality of the applications submitted to be evaluated in relation to the set objectives and priorities, and grants to be awarded to actions which maximise the overall effectiveness of the call for proposals. They enable the selection of applications which the Contracting Authority can be confident will comply with its objectives and priorities and guarantee the visibility of the Community

financing (see http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/visibility/index_en.htm). They cover such aspects as the relevance of the action, its consistency with the objectives of the call for proposals, quality, expected impact, sustainability and cost-effectiveness.

Scoring:

The evaluation criteria are divided into sections and subsections. Each subsection will be given a score between 1 and 5 in accordance with the following guidelines: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.

Evaluation Grid

Section	Maximum Score
1. Financial and operational capacity	20
1.1 Do the applicant and, if applicable, partners have sufficient experience of project management ?	5
1.2 Do the applicant and, if applicable partners have sufficient technical expertise ? (notably knowledge of the issues to be addressed.)	5
1.3 Do the applicant and, if applicable, partners have sufficient management capacity ? (including staff, equipment and ability to handle the budget for the action)?	5
1.4 Does the applicant have stable and sufficient sources of finance ?	5
2. Relevance	25
2.1 How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and one or more of the priorities of the call for proposals? Note: A score of 5 (very good) will only be allocated if the proposal specifically addresses at least one priority . Note: A score of 5 (very good) will only be allocated if the proposal contains specific added-value elements, such as promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities...	5 x 2
2.2 How relevant to the particular needs and constraints of the target country/countries or region(s) is the proposal? (including synergy with other EC initiatives and avoidance of duplication.) Note: Taking into consideration regional disparity, maximum score of 5 (very good) can be awarded only to projects where an applicant or majority of partners are located within 10 selected counties ¹⁷ .	5
2.3 How clearly defined and strategically chosen are those involved (final beneficiaries, target groups)? Have their needs been clearly defined and does the proposal address them appropriately?	5 x 2
3. Methodology	25
3.1 Are the activities proposed appropriate, practical, and consistent with the objectives and expected results?	5
3.2 How coherent is the overall design of the action? (in particular, does it reflect the analysis of the problems involved, take into account external factors and anticipate an evaluation ?)	5
3.3 Is the partners' and/or other stakeholders' level of involvement and participation in the action satisfactory?	5
3.4 Is the action plan clear and feasible?	5
3.5 Does the proposal contain objectively verifiable indicators for the outcome of the action?	5

¹⁷ Ten selected counties are: Lika-Senj, Vukovar-Srijem, Zadar, Sibenik-Knin, Sisak-Moslavina, Požega-Slavonija, Karlovac, Virovitica-Podravina, Brod-Posavina and Osijek-Baranja county, as indicated in the Regional Competitiveness Operational Programme 2007-2009

4. Sustainability	15
4.1 Is the action likely to have a tangible impact on its target groups?	5
4.2 Is the proposal likely to have multiplier effects ? (including scope for replication and extension of the outcome of the action and dissemination of information.)	5
4.3 Are the expected results of the proposed action sustainable : - financially (<i>how will the activities be financed after the funding ends?</i>) - institutionally (<i>will structures allowing the activities to continue be in place at the end of the action? Will there be local “ownership” of the results of the action?</i>) - at policy level (where applicable) (<i>what will be the structural impact of the action — e.g. will it lead to improved legislation, codes of conduct, methods, etc?</i>)? - environmentally (if applicable) (<i>will the action have a negative/positive environmental impact?</i>)	5
5. Budget and cost-effectiveness	15
5.1 is the ratio between the estimated costs and the expected results satisfactory?	5
5.2 Is the proposed expenditure necessary for the implementation of the action?	5 x 2
Maximum total score	100

Note on Section 1. Financial and operational capacity

If the total average score is less than 12 points for section 1, the application will be rejected.

Note on Section 2. Relevance

If the total average score is less than 20 points for section 2, the application will be rejected.

Provisional selection

Following the evaluation, a table listing the applications ranked according to their score and within the available financial envelope will be established as well as a reserve list following the same criteria.

Note: The scores awarded in this phase are completely separate from those given to the concept note of the same application.

(4) STEP 4: VERIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY OF THE APPLICANT AND PARTNERS

The eligibility verification, based on the supporting documents requested by the Contracting Authority (see section 2.4) will only be performed for the applications that have been provisionally selected according to their score and within the available financial envelope.

- The Declaration by the applicant (Section VI of part B the grant application form) will be cross-checked with the supporting documents provided by the applicant. Any missing supporting document or any incoherence between the Declaration by the applicant and the supporting documents may lead to the rejection of the application on that sole basis.
- The eligibility of the applicant, the partners, and the action will be verified according to the criteria set out in sections 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and 2.1.3.

Following the above analysis and if necessary, any rejected application will be replaced by the next best placed application in the reserve list that falls within the available financial envelope, which will then be examined for the eligibility of its applicant and the partners.

2.4 SUBMISSION OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS FOR PROVISIONALLY SELECTED APPLICATIONS

Applicants who have been provisionally selected or listed under the reserve list will be informed in writing by the Contracting Authority. They will be requested to supply the following documents in order to allow the Contracting Authority to verify the eligibility of the applicants and their partners:

1. The statutes or articles of association of the applicant organisation¹⁸ and of each partner organisation. Where the Contracting Authority has recognized the applicant's eligibility for another call for proposals under the same budget line within 2 years before the deadline for receipt of applications, the applicant may submit, instead of its statutes, copy of the document proving the eligibility of the applicant in a former Call (e.g.: copy of the special conditions of a grant contract received during the reference period), unless a change in its legal status has occurred in the meantime.¹⁹ This obligation does not apply to international organisations which have signed a framework agreement with the European Commission. A list of the relevant framework agreements is available at the following address:
http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/implementation/international_organisations/index_en.htm
2. Copy of the applicant's latest accounts (the profit and loss account and the balance sheet for the previous financial year for which the accounts have been closed)²⁰.
3. Legal entity sheet (see annex D of these Guidelines) duly completed and signed by the applicant, accompanied by the justifying documents which are requested therein. If the applicant has already signed a contract with the Contracting Authority, instead of the legal entity sheet and its supporting documents the legal entity number may be provided, unless a change in its legal status occurred in the meantime.
4. A financial identification form conforming to the model attached at Annex E of these Guidelines, certified by the bank to which the payments will be made. This bank must be located in the country where the applicant is registered. If the applicant has already signed a contract with the European Commission or where the European Commission has been in charge of the payments of a contract, a copy of the previous financial identification form may be provided instead, unless a change in its bank account occurred in the meantime.

¹⁸ Where the applicant and/or (a) partner(s) is a public body created by a law, a copy of the said law must be provided

¹⁹ To be inserted only where the eligibility conditions have not changed from one call for proposals to the other.

²⁰ This obligation does not apply to natural persons who have received a scholarship, nor to public bodies nor to international organisations. It does not apply either when the accounts are in practice the same documents as the external audit report already provided pursuant to section 2.4.2.

5. In case that private body is applicant and/or partner following documents should be provided:

1. De-minimis statement (as enclosed) signed only by private entities (either applicant or partners).

6. In case when Adult Education Institution is an applicant and/or partner, the following document as proof of registration in the database of Agency for Adult Education should be provided:

- print screen from the database²¹ of Agency for Adult Education under the category: “ustanova”, subcategory: “opći podaci”.

Where the requested supporting documents are not uploaded in PADOR they must be supplied in the form of originals, photocopies or scanned versions (i.e. showing legible stamps, signatures and dates) of the said originals. However, the Legal entity sheet and the financial identification form must always be submitted in original.

Where such documents are not in one of the official languages of the European Union or in Croatian, a translation into English of the relevant parts of these documents, proving the applicant’s eligibility, must be attached and will prevail for the purpose of analysing the application.

Where these documents are in an official language of the European Union other than English, it is **strongly** recommended, in order to facilitate the evaluation, to provide a translation of the relevant parts of the documents, proving the applicant’s eligibility, into English.

If the abovementioned supporting documents are not provided before the deadline indicated in the request for supporting documents sent to the applicant by the Contracting Authority, the application may be rejected.

Based on the verification of the supporting documents by the Evaluation Committee it will make a final recommendation to the Contracting Authority which will decide on the award of grants.

²¹ <http://baza.aoo.hr>

2.5 NOTIFICATION OF THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY'S DECISION

2.5.1 Content of the decision

Applicants will be informed in writing of the Contracting Authority's decision concerning their application and, in case of rejections, the reasons for the negative decision.

Applicants believing that they have been harmed by an error or irregularity during the award process may file a complaint. See further section 2.4.15 of the Practical Guide.

2.5.2 Indicative time table

	DATE	TIME*
Information meeting (if any)	12 October 2009	10:00
Deadline for request for any clarifications from the Contracting Authority	7 January 2010	15:00
Last date on which clarifications are issued by the Contracting Authority	15 January 2010	-
Deadline for submission of Application Form	28 January 2010	15:00
Information to applicants on the opening & administrative check (step 1)	30 March 2010*	-
Information to applicants on the evaluation of the Concept Notes (step 2)	14 May 2010*	-
Information to applicants on the evaluation of the Full Application Form (step 3)	30 July 2010*	-
Notification of award (after the eligibility check) (step 4)	30 August 2010*	-
Contract signature	15 October 2010*	-

***Provisional date.** All times are in the time zone of the country of the Contracting Authority

2.6 CONDITIONS APPLICABLE TO IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION FOLLOWING THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY'S DECISION TO AWARD A GRANT

Following the decision to award a grant, the Beneficiary will be offered a contract based on the Contracting Authority's standard contract (see Annex F of these Guidelines). By signing the Application form (Annex A of these Guidelines), the applicant declares accepting, in case where it is awarded a grant, the Contractual conditions as laid down in the Standard Contract.

If the successful applicant is an international organisation, the model Contribution Agreement with an international organisation or any other contract template agreed between the international organisation concerned and the Contracting Authority will be used instead of the standard grant contract provided that the international organisation in question offers the guarantees provided for in article 53d (1) of the Financial Regulation, as described in Chapter 7 of the Practical Guide to contract procedures for EC external actions.

Implementation contracts

Where implementation of the action requires the Beneficiary to award procurement contracts, it must award the contract to the tenderer offering the best value for money, that is to say, the best price-quality ratio, in compliance with the principles of transparency and equal treatment for potential contractors, care being taken to avoid any conflict of interests. To this end, the Beneficiary must follow the procedures set out in Annex IV to the Contract.

3. LIST OF ANNEXES

DOCUMENTS TO BE COMPLETED

ANNEX A: GRANT APPLICATION FORM (WORD FORMAT)

ANNEX B: BUDGET (EXCEL FORMAT)

ANNEX C: LOGICAL FRAMEWORK (EXCEL FORMAT)²²

ANNEX D: LEGAL ENTITY SHEET (EXCEL FORMAT)²³

ANNEX E: FINANCIAL IDENTIFICATION FORM

DOCUMENTS FOR INFORMATION

ANNEX F: STANDARD CONTRACT

- ANNEX II: GENERAL CONDITIONS APPLICABLE TO EUROPEAN COMMUNITY-FINANCED GRANT CONTRACTS FOR EXTERNAL ACTIONS
- ANNEX IV: CONTRACT AWARD PROCEDURES
- ANNEX V: STANDARD REQUEST FOR PAYMENT
- ANNEX VI: MODEL NARRATIVE AND FINANCIAL REPORT
- ANNEX VII: MODEL REPORT OF FACTUAL FINDINGS AND TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR AN EXPENDITURE VERIFICATION OF AN EC FINANCED GRANT CONTRACT FOR EXTERNAL ACTIONS
- ANNEX VIII: MODEL FINANCIAL GUARANTEE

ANNEX G: DAILY ALLOWANCE RATES (PER DIEM), available at the following address:
http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/implementation/index_en.htm

ANNEX H: STANDARD CONTRIBUTION AGREEMENT, applicable in case where the beneficiary is an International organisation

PROJECT CYCLE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/multimedia/publications/publications/manuals-tools/t101_en.htm

²² Optional where the total amount of the grants to be awarded under the call for proposals is EUR 100 000 or less.

²³ Only applicable where the European Commission is the Contracting Authority or will make the payments under the contracts to be signed.