



Contracting Authority: ACP Secretariat

**ACP – Information and Communication Technologies
[@CP-ICT] Programme**

Guidelines
for grant applicants

Budget line: 9th European Development Fund

Reference: EuropeAid/127057/D/ACT/Multi

Deadline for submission of proposals: 16 September 2008

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1. ACP – INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES [@CP-ICT] PROGRAMME

1.1 BACKGROUND

The European Commission is financing a €20 million "ACP-Information and Communication Technologies [@CP-ICT] Programme" from its 9th European Development Fund. The Contracting Authority is the ACP Secretariat; and a major component of the Programme is a €5 million call for proposals.

The objective of @CP-ICT is to help ACP governments and institutions to design, implement, monitor and evaluate their ICT national, regional and continental policies towards sustainable development, by providing high-quality, globally-benchmarked but locally-relevant policy advice, training and related capacity.

The project purpose is to build sustainable capacity within regional, and sub-regional institutions in ACP regions to adapt and implement international good practice in ICT policy and regulation with effective linkages to national or regional PRSPs and increased stakeholder awareness.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME AND PRIORITY ISSUES

The overall objective of EDF funding is poverty reduction within the context of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – this will be a key priority issue of the call for proposals. Equally, the @CP-ICT Programme is designed to address intra-ACP needs, so this too should be a priority of the call for proposals.

The activities to be supported following the call for proposal will thus address intra-ACP needs, in accordance with the project purpose. Activities will be carried out by regional, sub-regional or national-level institutions to provide locally-appropriate capacity-building for ICT strategy, policy and regulation.

Within this intra-ACP context, three distinct types of initiative will be supported:

- Lot 1 – actions focusing on research, knowledge-management, knowledge-sharing and learning networks;
- Lot 2 – actions involving the ACP Parliamentary Assembly, Parliaments of ACP States, ACP regional parliamentary institutions/bodies, ACP parliamentarians and ACP local government organisations, in initiatives relating to the ICT sector; such initiatives are to be supported by no less than €3.0 million;
- Lot 3 – actions with specific highly-targeted expert interventions by international experts or international institutions, designed to address specific, complex policy and regulatory issues of urgent importance to one or more countries.

1.3 FINANCIAL ALLOCATION PROVIDED BY THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY

The overall indicative amount made available under this call for proposals is EUR 9 500 000. The Contracting Authority reserves the right not to award all available funds.

Indicative allocation of funds by lot/geographical distribution :

In the case where the minimum percentage foreseen for a specific lot cannot be used due to insufficient quality or number of proposals received, the Contracting Authority reserves the right to reallocate the remaining funds to another lot.

Size of grants

Any grant awarded under this programme must fall between the following minimum and maximum amounts:

Lot 1:

- minimum amount: EUR 500 000
- maximum amount: EUR 1 000 000

Lot 2:

- minimum amount: EUR 300 000
- maximum amount: EUR 1 000 000

Lot 3:

- minimum amount: EUR 300 000
- maximum amount: EUR 500 000

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.

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/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 non profit making **and**
- be specific types of organisations such as: non-governmental organisations, public sector operators, local authorities, international (inter-governmental) organisations as defined by Article 43 of the Implementing Rules to the EC Financial Regulation¹ **and**
- be nationals² of a Member State of the European Union and the African, Caribbean, and Pacific Group of States (ACP Group). This obligation does not apply to international organisations; **and**
- be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action with their partners, not acting as an intermediary **and**

(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/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 the situations.

2.1.2 *Partnerships and eligibility of partners*

Applicants may act individually or with partner organisations as specified hereafter. For all three lots, the nationality of each partner is determined in the same manner in which the nationality of the applicant is determined in section 2.1.1 and its footnotes.

¹ 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.

² 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 internal 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 they are registered locally or accompanied by a “Memorandum of Understanding”.

Lot 1: Applicants must act with at least one partner organisation. At least one of the partners must be an ACP national. The number of partners that are EU nationals, if any, must not exceed the number of partners that are ACP nationals.

Lot 2 and Lot 3: Applicants can but are not obliged to act with one or more partner organisations. All applications must contain at least one applicant or partner who is an ACP national. In case of a partnership, the number of partners that are EU nationals, if any, must not exceed the number of partners that are ACP nationals.

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 same eligibility criteria as applicants.

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

- Associates

Other organisations may be involved in the action. 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. This document sets out rules on nationality and origin, and determines the procedures to be followed when tendering, according to the value of the contract. The amount of the subcontracted costs (including fees, travel and accommodation costs, etc.) must not exceed 10% of project total eligible costs (that is 10% of item 9. in the table “Budget for the Action” – Annex B). Overall project management, for which the Applicant will be responsible, cannot be subcontracted. It is suggested that the involvement of subcontractors only take place if necessary for the implementation of the project and for services, which cannot be secured through the project partners. No projects should be controlled by subcontractors or be driven by commercial purposes.

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

2.1.3 <i>Eligible actions: actions for which an application may be made</i>
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Definition: An action (or project) is composed of a set of activities.

Duration

Lot 1: The planned duration of an action may not be lower than 12 months nor exceed 24 months.

Lot 2: The planned duration of an action may not be lower than 6 months nor exceed 24 months.

Lot 3: The planned duration of an action may not be lower than 6 months nor exceed 18 months.

Sectors or themes

The focus of this call for proposals is on information and communication technologies (ICT) – all actions must have ICT as their central theme. The overall objective of EDF funding is poverty reduction within the context of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – this is the context within which proposals will be judged. Finally, the @CP-ICT Programme is designed to address intra-ACP needs, so this too should be a theme of the call for proposals.

Location

Actions must take place in one or more ACP country or EU Member State. However the action must benefit directly one or more ACP country.

Types of action

The activities to be supported following the call for proposal will address intra-ACP needs, in accordance with the project purpose. Activities will be carried out by regional, sub-regional or national-level institutions to provide locally-appropriate capacity-building for ICT strategy, policy and regulation.

Within this intra-ACP context, three distinct types of action will be supported:

- Lot 1 – actions focusing on research, knowledge-management, knowledge-sharing and learning networks;
- Lot 2 – actions involving the ACP Parliamentary Assembly, Parliaments of ACP States, ACP regional parliamentary institutions/bodies, ACP parliamentarians and ACP local government organisations, in initiatives relating to the ICT sector; such initiatives are to be supported by no less than €3.0 million;
- Lot 3 – actions with specific highly-targeted expert interventions by international experts or international institutions, designed to address specific, complex policy and regulatory issues of urgent importance to one or more countries.

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.

Number of proposals and grants per applicant

An applicant, whether acting individually or as part of a partnership, may submit more than one different, distinct proposal under this call for proposals. An applicant may not however submit the same proposal more than once, whether in the same or in different lots.

An applicant, whether acting individually or as part of a partnership, may not be awarded more than two grants per Lot under this call for proposals.

<h3><i>2.1.4 Eligibility of costs: costs which may be taken into consideration for the grant</i></h3>

Only "eligible costs" can be taken into account for a grant. These are detailed below. The budget is therefore 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 apply).

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 in any case.

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 respect the provisions of article 14 of the General Conditions to the Standard Grant Contract (see Annex F).

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

Any contributions in kind, which must be listed separately in Annex B, do not represent 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

The following costs are not eligible:

- debts and provisions for losses or debts;
- interest owed;
- items already financed in another framework;
- purchases of land or buildings, except where necessary for the direct implementation of the action, in which case ownership must be transferred to the final beneficiaries and/or local partners, at the latest by the end of the action;
- currency exchange losses;
- taxes, including VAT, unless the Beneficiary (or the Beneficiary's partners) cannot reclaim them and the applicable regulations do not forbid coverage of taxes;
- credits to third parties.

2.2 HOW TO APPLY AND THE PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW

2.2.1 Application form

Applications must be submitted using the application form annexed to these Guidelines (Annex A). This form includes guidance for concept note, which must also be drafted. Applicants should keep strictly to the format of the application and fill in the paragraphs and the pages in order. Please provide budget with round figures.

Applicants must apply in English or French.

Please complete the application form carefully and as clearly as possible so that it can be assessed properly.

Any error related to the points listed in the Checklist (section V of part B of the grant application form) 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 proposal.

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 transmitted to the evaluators and assessors. It is therefore of utmost importance that these documents contain ALL relevant information concerning the action. **No supplementary annexes should be sent.**

2.2.2 *Where and how to send the Applications*

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

The Secretary-General of the ACP Group
Avenue Georges Henri, 451
1200 Brussels
Belgium

Address for hand delivery or by private courier service

The Secretary-General of the ACP Group
Avenue Georges Henri, 451
1200 Brussels
Belgium

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

Applications must be submitted in one original and two 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** proposal 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 proposals (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 title and number of the lot, the full name and address of the applicant, and the words "Not to be opened before the opening session".

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 **16 September 2008** as evidenced by the date of dispatch, the postmark or the date of the deposit slip. In case of hand-deliveries, the deadline for receipt is at 16:00 hours Brussels time as evidenced by the signed and dated receipt. Any application submitted after the deadline will automatically be rejected.

2.2.4 Further information for the Application

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

E-mail address: kakule@acp.int

Fax. +32-(0)2-735.55.73

Replies will be given no later than 11 days before the deadline for the submission of proposals.

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

Questions that may be relevant to other applicants, together with the answers, will be published on the internet at the EuropeAid website: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/index_en.htm and the website of the ACP Secretariat: <http://www.acp.int/>

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:

(1) STEP 1: OPENING SESSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE CHECK

The following will be assessed:

- The deadline has been respected. If the deadline has not been respected the proposal will automatically be rejected.
- The Application Form satisfies all the criteria mentioned in the Checklist section V of part B of the grant application form). If any of the requested information is missing or is incorrect, the proposal may be rejected on that **sole** basis and the proposal 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, whether they have satisfied all the criteria mentioned in the checklist and whether their Application Form has been recommended for 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 to skip the evaluation of the Concept Notes whenever considered justified (for example when a less than expected number of proposals are received) and to go straight to the evaluation of the corresponding full proposals.

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.

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

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	
	Sub-score	
1. Relevance of the action	Sub-score	15
1.1 Relevance of the problems to 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 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 two times the available budget for this Call for proposals³. The Evaluation Committee will subsequently proceed with the evaluation of the full proposals of the pre-selected applicants.

(3) STEP 3: EVALUATION OF THE FULL APPLICATION

³ In order to meet the stipulations of the Financing Agreement that at least €3 000 000 should be used for Lot 2 actions, it has been decided to adopt the following procedure for selecting concept notes:

- To first select concept notes to the best-scoring applications under lot 2 until the target amount of €6 million (i.e. twice the minimum budget specified in the Financing Agreement) has been attained;
- To then select the concept notes of the best-scoring remaining applications under all three lots, until the target amount €13 million (i.e. twice the remaining budget for the call for proposals) has been attained.

An evaluation of the quality of the proposals, including the proposed budget, and of the capacity of the applicant and his 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 proposals 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 proposals which the Contracting Authority can be confident will comply with its objectives and priorities and guarantee the visibility of the EDF financing. 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.

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

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 partners have sufficient experience of project management ?	5
1.2 Do the applicant and partners have sufficient technical expertise ? (notably knowledge of the issues to be addressed.)	5
1.3 Do the applicant and 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 avoidance of duplication and synergy with other EC initiatives.)	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' level of involvement and participation in the action satisfactory? Note: If there are no partners the score will be 1 .	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
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>)?	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 Evaluation Committee will reject the proposal.

Note on Section 2. Relevance

If the total average score is less than 20 points for section 2, the Evaluation Committee will reject the proposal.

Provisional selection

Following the evaluation, a table listing the proposals ranked according to their score and within the available financial envelope will be established as well as a reserve list following the same criteria⁴.

⁴ In order to enforce the limitation in the number of grants per applicant stipulated in article 2.1.3., and the stipulations of the Financing Agreement that at least € 3 000 000 should be used for actions under Lot 2, the following procedure will be applied.

Stage 1. A first draft of the *provisional selection* table will be drawn up.

Stage 2. Grants will first be allocated to the best-scoring applications under lot 2, until the target minimum amount of €3 million specified in the Financing Agreement has been attained.

Stage 3. If an applicant – whether acting individually or as part of a partnership – has been allocated more than two grants in Lot 2, all the concerned proposals under Lot 2 to which that applicant is a party will be ranked according to the following criteria that are given in order of priority:

- i. According to their score, in decreasing order
- ii. According to their requested EC contribution, in decreasing order [.....*footnote continued on next page*]

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 proposals 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 proposal 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 proposal will be replaced by the next best placed proposal 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 PROPOSALS

iii. According to their reference number, in increasing order

Only the two highest ranking applications will be retained. All other applications in Lot 2 to which the particular applicant is party will be removed from the draft *provisional selection* table and will not be awarded a grant. Please note that a proposal will therefore be removed from the draft *provisional selection* table *even if only one* of the partners has already been allocated two grants with a higher rank in Lot 2.

Stage 4. If as a result of stage 3 the total amount allocated to applications under Lot 2 falls below €3 million, the next best placed proposal under Lot 2 will be allocated a grant and submitted to the test of stage 3.

Stage 5. All proposals that have been allocated a grant at the end of this procedure make up a list that constitutes the minimum necessary to comply with the stipulations of the Financing Agreement. As such, proposals included in this list will not be removed as a result of the remainder of the procedure described below.

Stage 6. Grants will then be allocated to the best-scoring remaining applications under all three lots until the total budget of the Call for Proposals has been awarded.

Stage 7. If an applicant – whether acting individually or as part of a partnership – has been allocated more than two grants in Lot 1, the procedure described under stage 3 will be applied *mutatis mutandis*.

Stage 8. If an applicant – whether acting individually or as part of a partnership – has been allocated more than two grants in Lot 3, the procedure described under stage 3 will be applied *mutatis mutandis*.

Stage 9. Any application that has to be removed from the draft *provisional selection* table a result of stage 7 and stage 8 will be replaced by the next best placed proposal in the draft of the *provisional selection* table that falls within the available financial envelope, irrespective of the Lots for which it was submitted. That proposal will be submitted to the test of stage 3, 7, or 8 accordingly.

Stage 10. A *provisional selection* table will be drawn up that includes the proposals that have been allocated a grant following Stage 5 and Stage 9.

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:⁵

1. The statutes or articles of association of the applicant organisation⁶ 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.⁷ 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/index_en.htm.

2. Where the grant requested exceeds EUR 500 000 (EUR 100 000 for an operating grant), an external audit report produced by an approved auditor, certifying the accounts for the last financial year available.

This obligation does not apply to international organisations, nor to public bodies.

3. 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)⁸.

4. Legal entity sheet (see annex D) 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.

5. A financial identification form conforming to the model attached at Annex E, 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.

The supporting documents requested must be supplied in the form of originals or photocopies 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, a translation into one of the language(s) of the call for proposals of the relevant parts of these documents, proving the applicant's eligibility, must be attached and will prevail for the purpose of analysing the proposal.

Where these documents are in an official language of the European Union other than one of the language(s) of the call for proposals, 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 one of the language(s) of the call for proposals.

If the supporting documents are not provided before the set deadline (15 calendar days from the receipt of the letter sent 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.

5 No supporting document will be requested for applications for a grant not exceeding EUR 25 000.

6 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

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

8 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.

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 the reasons for the decision.

Applicants believing that they have been harmed by an error or irregularity during the award process may petition to the Contracting Authority directly. The Contracting Authority must reply within 90 days of receipt of the complaint.

Where the European Commission is informed of such a complaint, it must communicate its opinion to the Contracting Authority and do all it can to facilitate an amicable solution between the complainant (applicant) and the Contracting Authority. If this procedure fails, the applicant may have recourse to procedures established under the recipient's national legislation.

2.5.2 Indicative time table

	DATE	TIME*
Information meeting (if any)	Not applicable	Not applicable
Deadline for request for any clarifications from the Contracting Authority	26/08/2008	16:00
Last date on which clarifications are issued by the Contracting Authority	05/09/2008	-
Deadline for submission of Application Form	16/09/2008	16:00
Information to applicants on the opening & administrative check	22/10/2008*	-
Information to applicants on the evaluation of the Concept Notes	20/11/2008*	-
Information to applicants on the evaluation of the Full Application Form	19/12/2008*	-
Notification of award (after the eligibility check)	23/01/2009*	-
Contract signature	05/02/2009*	-

*Provisional date. All times are in the time zone of Belgium.

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). By signing the Application form (Annex A), 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 FILL IN

ANNEX A: GRANT APPLICATION FORM (WORD FORMAT)

ANNEX B: BUDGET (EXCEL FORMAT)

ANNEX C: LOGICAL FRAMEWORK (EXCEL FORMAT)⁹

ANNEX D: LEGAL ENTITY SHEET (EXCEL FORMAT)¹⁰
http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/index_en.htm

ANNEX E: FINANCIAL IDENTIFICATION FORM

DOCUMENTS FOR INFORMATION

ANNEX F: STANDARD CONTRACT

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

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

⁹ Optional where the total amount of the grants to be awarded under the call for proposals is EUR 100 000 or less.

¹⁰ Only applicable where the European Commission is the Contracting Authority or will make the payments under the contracts to be signed.