



European Commission
Enterprise & Industry Directorate General

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Subject

**Promotion and development of world-class clusters
in Europe**

3/G/ENT/CIP/11/C/N04C011
4/G/ENT/CIP/11/C/N04C021

GRANT PROGRAMME 2011

The present call for proposals is composed of a set of Grant Submission Documents,
which form an integral part of this call:

The call for proposals,
The Guide for Submission
The Submission Set

The terms set out in the call for proposals document shall take precedence over those
in the other parts of the Grant Submission Documents.

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INTERESTED PARTIES ARE INVITED TO READ CAREFULLY THE BELOW INSTRUCTIONS, AND TO USE THE QUESTIONNAIRE PROVIDED IN CHAPTER II OF THE GUIDE FOR SUBMISSION IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT APPLICATIONS ARE COMPLETE WHEN SUBMITTED.

1. CONTEXT

Following the adoption of the **2008 Commission Communication "Towards world-class clusters in the European Union: Implementing the broad-based innovation strategy"**¹ the concept of world-class clusters has gained a lot of interest, political acceptance and widespread support from stakeholders. The political orientations and actions proposed in this Communication received strong support from Member States, as expressed in the Competitiveness Council conclusions of December 2008². In the same spirit, the Brussels European Council of March 2008³ called for "efforts towards improving the framework conditions for innovation should be better coordinated, including through [...] world-class innovation clusters and development of regional clusters and networks".

More recently, the **May 2010 Competitiveness Council Conclusions** stressed the need "to encourage the emergence and consolidation of world-class competitive clusters across Europe".⁴ Cluster policy was intensively discussed at the Informal Competitiveness Council meeting on 14-15 July 2010 in Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium.⁵ In its conceptual framework paper, the Belgian Presidency called for enhancing "the networking on European level of innovative clusters" and putting in place "pooling facilities to access resources, to exchange best practices, to professionalise the management of clusters". Moreover, a background paper entitled "Towards Sustainable Industrial Competitiveness Policy" that was prepared for the Informal Council stressed that it "is important to foster the development of internationally competitive and innovative clusters that better integrate SMEs into their strategy and activities".

Most importantly, the recent Europe 2020 Strategy⁶ explicitly mentions clusters and networks under the flagship initiative "An industrial policy for the globalisation era" as important elements to improve the business environment, especially for SMEs. This suggests that cluster policies should not only be seen as a powerful policy instrument to promote innovation but also as an integral part of industrial policy that aims at preparing Europe for global competition. As a consequence, the current debate about new cluster policies very much focuses on better ways to harmonise and streamline different cluster initiatives in order to strengthen their impact. To this end, suggestions have been made to consolidate activities towards a single European programme with the aim of facilitating the emergence of more world-class clusters in the EU. The recent Communication on the Europe 2020 flagship initiative "Innovation Union"⁷ called for more efforts "to support for the emergence of world-class clusters" in Europe and the recent Communication on the Europe 2020 flagship initiative "An industrial policy for the globalisation era" called for developing "a new strategy for globally competitive clusters and networks including specific actions to promote globally competitive clusters and networks in both traditional and emerging industries".

This aspect is also reflected in the final report and policy recommendations of the high-level **European Cluster Policy Group**⁸ that was presented at the "European Cluster Conference 2010 – World-Class

¹ COM (2008) 652 of 17.10.2008, see <http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/innovation/policy/clusters/>

² See http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/intm/104407.pdf

³ Presidency Conclusions of the Brussels European Council (13/14 March 2008) available at http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/99410.pdf

⁴ The Competitiveness Council Conclusions on "Creating an innovative Europe" of 17 May 2010 are available at <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/10/st09/st09448.en10.pdf>

⁵ Read more about the July 2010 informal Competitiveness Council meeting at <http://www.eutrio.be/pressrelease/research-and-industry-ministers-want-provide-europe-ambitious-and-integrated-strategy-r> and <http://www.eutrio.be/pressrelease/walloon-minister-economy-jean-claude-marcourt-today-chaired-informal-meeting-industry-m>, where the Belgian Presidency's conceptual framework and issue paper "Towards Sustainable Industrial Competitiveness Policy" have been made available.

⁶ See http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/index_en.htm

⁷ "Europe 2020 Flagship Initiative Innovation Union", COM(2010) 546 final.

⁸ More information about the European Cluster Policy Group is available at <http://www.proinno-europe.eu/ECPG>

Clusters Renewing European Industry” organised by the European Commission under the Belgian EU Presidency in Brussels on 29 September – 1 October 2010.⁹

The **concept of “world-class clusters”** can be defined in different ways. Making an appropriate choice mainly depends on the purpose for which the definition shall be used. From an industrial policy point of view the objective is to build on those clusters that have the greatest potential to improve the global competitiveness of European industries and to drive structural change into this direction. There is an emerging consensus¹⁰ that a definition of “world-class clusters” should cover different dimensions that are seen as success factors of clusters, including most notably,

- the existence of favourable cluster-specific framework conditions;
- the strength and dynamics of cluster firms and related actors; and
- the quality of cluster management.

On this basis, the European Cluster Observatory¹¹ will in its next phase develop a new “European Cluster Excellence Scoreboard” that takes into account the different dimensions of “world-class clusters”. In parallel, practical steps need to be taken to advance the policy agenda in this direction and to take concrete steps to further improve the excellence of clusters in Europe. The creation of **more favourable cluster-specific framework conditions** can in particular be supported by a smart(er) use of the Structural Funds, as described by the recent Communication on “Regional Policy contributing to smart growth in Europe 2020”. In this context, it should be noted that still nearly 75% of the EUR 86 billion initially planned for research and innovation, including entrepreneurship and ICT that need to be allocated to projects under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF) are still available.

The **strength and dynamics of cluster firms** strongly depends on their ability to draw from the best available knowledge and to become globally competitive. Thus, international cooperation at all levels (research, knowledge transfer, production, market access, financing) is crucial for clusters. Supporting cluster firms to access international markets and develop strategic alliances with partners abroad is a challenge to which cluster managers must react urgently and effectively. Improving **cluster management** is therefore important for developing more world-class clusters in Europe. Only high quality cluster management enables cluster firms to get the services from cluster organisations they expect.

Against this background, two different actions are launched under the present Call for proposals:

- **Strand 1: Promoting international cluster activities in the CIP participating countries (3/G/ENT/CIP/11/C/N04C011)**. This action aims at fostering European cluster cooperation in view of internationalisation strategies outside Europe, by building upon and further developing successful support schemes already implemented in some Member States.
- **Strand 2: Promoting excellence of cluster management in the CIP participating countries (4/G/ENT/CIP/11/C/N04C021)**. This action aims at improving cluster management in Europe, by building upon and further developing the efforts carried out by the European Cluster Excellence initiative.¹²

Both actions shall be implemented in close cooperation with the European Cluster Alliance and the European Cluster Excellence initiative. The European Cluster Alliance¹³, which is an open network for public authorities managing cluster programmes, shall be instrumental to prepare for proposals and to share the experience gained by the supported actions as widely as possible.

Finally, it should be noted that another complementary action on “*Promoting better policies to develop world-class clusters in Europe*” will be launched at the same time with these present strands of action but through a Call for tenders. The purpose of this call for tender is to launch additional services under the

⁹ More information about the “European Cluster Conference 2010” is available at <http://www.proinno-europe.eu/clusterconference2010>

¹⁰ See e.g. the Europa InterCluster White paper on “The emerging of European world-class clusters” at www.intercluster.eu/images/stories/white_paper/white_paper_the_emerging_of_european_world_class_clusters.pdf

¹¹ www.clusterobservatory.eu

¹² <http://www.cluster-excellence.eu/>

¹³ <http://www.proinno-europe.eu/eca>

umbrella of the European Cluster Observatory¹⁴, thus further improving the cluster-specific analysis and information provision with a view to support the development of more world-class clusters in the EU, especially in emerging industries.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE CALL

2. 1. Strand 1: Promoting international cluster activities in the EU

As a result of the **globalisation of markets**, business alliances and collaboration schemes are becoming increasingly international. Clusters and networks¹⁵ – just like small or large companies – are forced to look for and acquire complementary competences wherever they are available. In addition, access to foreign markets is an important component of the competitive advantage of a cluster and a driving factor for critical mass, especially when compared to local-focused clusters. Many clusters in the EU have now reached a certain level of maturity, and international cooperation is logically the next step towards strengthening their competitive edge. This pushes cluster managers to look internationally for business partners that will reinforce the global competitiveness of their cluster firms.

Although there is a clear case for international cluster cooperation, in practice **only relatively few clusters have strong international links** with partners outside the EU. The request for better cooperation support ranks high on the list of cluster firms for improved activities. The results of a 2007 survey among 91 cluster initiatives across EU countries conducted by the German Competence Networks ("Kompetenznetze") showed that only 10% of cluster initiatives or networks actually have an internationalisation strategy (see Figure 1).¹⁶

According to the CEE-ClusterNetwork (2009) study¹⁷, the **main objectives of international cluster cooperation** strategies are the following:

- Full exploitation of the international potential of the region's science & innovation system and the RTD and education assets (like in the UK Northwest);
- Increase of the international competitiveness of entrepreneurs;
- Development of a framework for strong research and innovation environments to work more systematically and strategically on international challenges (like the Global Links programme of VINNVÄXT, in Sweden);
- Promotion of international cooperation within the Mediterranean region on the other hand (like in France);
- Support of the intensification of international cooperation among business players (like in Upper Austria).

International cluster cooperation can be supported at different levels. For the purposes of this call, the **programme level** is the most relevant. Following the CEE-ClusterNetwork survey¹⁸ and the recommendations of the European Cluster Alliance's Task Force on fostering international cluster

¹⁴ More information about the European Cluster Observatory is available at <http://www.clusterobservatory.eu>

¹⁵ For the purpose of this call, "networks" are understood as initiatives bringing together resources and expertise and promoting cooperation among businesses, public authorities and universities that improve industrial competitiveness and innovation.

¹⁶ The study by Kompetenznetze Deutschland (2007) entitled 'Internationalisation of Networks: Barriers and Enablers – Study: empirical analysis of selected European networks' is available at: http://www.kompetenznetze.de/service/bestellservice/medien/kurzstudie_internationalisierung.pdf/view

¹⁷ CEE-ClusterNetwork (2009). European Cluster Alliance – Working Area 4: Identifying the Main Objectives and Activities of Cluster Programmes – with emphasis on the internationalization: Summary of the results regarding international cluster cooperation identified within the cluster programmes, lead by TMG Upper Austria/Clusterland, March 2009, pages 6-7, <http://www.proinno-europe.eu/eca/page/results-publications>

¹⁸ CEE-ClusterNetwork (2009). European Cluster Alliance – Working Area 4: Identifying the Main Objectives and Activities of Cluster Programmes – with emphasis on the internationalization: Summary of the results regarding international cluster cooperation identified within the cluster programmes, lead by TMG Upper Austria/Clusterland, March 2009, pages 6-7.

cooperation and its draft Handbook on cluster internationalisation¹⁹, this may include the provision of support to the following cluster activities:

- Organisation of study trips, workshops for gathering information on foreign market opportunities and trends;
- Facilitation of finding strategic partners abroad, including science-parks, techno-parks;
- Organisation of trainings for developing an international strategy for cluster managers;
- Promotion of clusters at international level and support of their linkages with similar organisations (such as act as international gateway for clusters, and provide information on international platforms/conferences);
- Institutionalisation of cluster evaluation through international panels;
- Support for setting up clusters international offices such as permanent business missions, commercial attachés, and office representatives on foreign markets;
- Support for establishing partnerships with similar organisations abroad (e.g. signing of agreements with peers where international cluster cooperation plays a central role).

Although the general focus for cluster cooperation lies without doubt within Europe, a stronger international orientation of European clusters is becoming an increasing issue and plays more and more a strategic role. The main countries outside Europe that are of particular interest for such cooperation are USA, Canada, Japan, South Korea, India, China, Malaysia, Brazil and Russia. Besides that, neighbouring countries such as the Mediterranean countries are also of great political interest.

The **objective of Strand 1** is to foster European cluster cooperation in view of internationalisation strategies outside Europe, by building upon and further developing successful support schemes already implemented in some Member States. To achieve this objective, **two approaches** may be followed:

- To provide financial incentives to regional or national public authorities/agencies (the coordinator or "host organisation"), which currently manage cluster and network programmes that support international activities in order to "add on" the possibility that cluster and network organisations from other EU countries can be invited to participate in such programmes ("invited cluster organisations");
- To provide financial incentives to regional or national public authorities/agencies (the coordinator or "host organisation"), which are committed to add an international dimension to existing cluster and network programmes or launch new pilot initiatives in this respect and offer the possibility that cluster and network organisations from other EU countries can be invited to participate in such programmes ("invited cluster organisations").

In both approaches, each selected host organisation will be responsible to coordinate a specific action that allows the participation of cluster and network organisations from other CIP participating countries in regional or national cluster actions in support of cluster internationalisation.

Expected work

It is expected that some four pilot projects will be funded under this action.

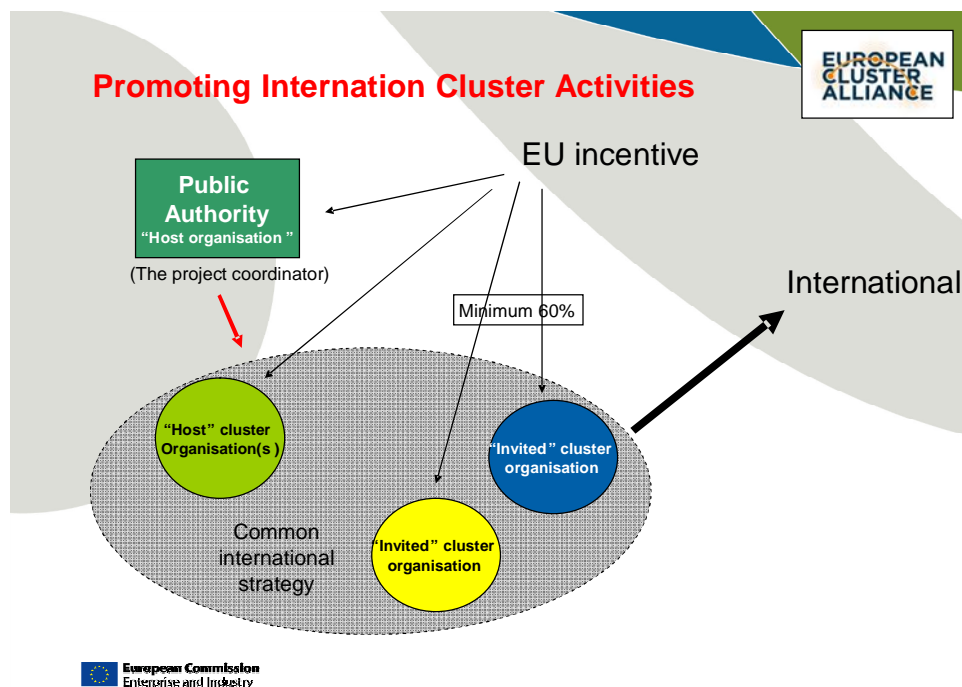
Eligible applicants in each pilot project shall be consortia that are composed of (a) one regional or national public authority/agency (the project coordinator identified as "host organisation") that manages cluster and network programmes which support international activities or are committed to add an international dimension to its existing cluster and network programme, and (b) minimum one cluster and network organisation(s) from the coordinator's country/region ("host cluster organisation") and minimum two cluster and network organisations from other CIP participating countries ("invited cluster organisations").

The "host organisation" (regional or national public authority/agency) is expected to implement and coordinate the pilot action with cluster and network organisations from other CIP countries invited to work

¹⁹ European Cluster Alliance – Task Force on international cluster cooperation – Preliminary results available at: <http://www.proinno-europe.eu/page/fostering-international-cluster-cooperation>

jointly with cluster and network organisation(s) from the host country/regions in view to develop a common international strategy and become global players. The applicants are expected to provide a **detailed description of the pilot action** to be implemented with the view to foster international cluster activities, including the objectives, implementation modalities, expected results and funding arrangements.

The maximum EU financial contribution to each co-funded pilot action of this type is EUR 600.000 and the amount of the EU contribution is further limited to 80% of the total eligible costs of the action, with minimum 60% of the EU contribution allocated to cluster and network organisations from other CIP participating countries.



In case the cluster and network programme already includes international activities, the applicants should describe these activities by providing, among other information, evidence of achievements in terms of participation of cluster members, concrete results, impact and added value of the new activities to be developed under the pilot action. In case where the applicants are committed to add an international dimension to existing cluster and network programmes or launch new pilot initiatives, the applicants should describe and justify the type of selected international activities by providing strong and convincing arguments supported by a detailed plan for action.

To maximise the benefits of the activities of the action, the project will be referenced and further valorised under the umbrella of the European Cluster Alliance. To this end, the coordinator will ensure that the action regularly (minimum on a monthly basis) contributes with relevant material, results and possible policy learning and recommendations to the European Cluster Alliance to be communicated in an online format and disseminated through dedicated European Cluster Alliance portal webpages.

Furthermore, the applicant shall provide **detailed information about the** expected outcome and impact as well as **estimated costs** and breakdown of the foreseen budget according to the different project activities, including specific audits that should be organised along the project life. For the preparation of the project plan, it should be noted that the EC contribution will be provided as follows:

- An advance payment representing 20% of the agreed EC contribution will be done upon signature of the contract with the Commission;
- An intermediary payment will be paid on the basis of a detailed statement of the costs incurred so far related to the project activities.

- A final payment covering the remaining eligible costs on the basis of a detailed statement of the costs incurred.

Projects should take the opportunities for **green procurement** into account during the implementation of their activities. This may involve, for instance, the organisation of meetings in form of videoconferences, the use of recycled and bio-based materials for printed publications or other goods used during events.

EU initiatives related to Strand 1

1. Fostering international cluster cooperation in the EU is a thematic topic which is discussed among policy makers under the framework of the **European Cluster Alliance (ECA)**.²⁰ A first report has been prepared by the INNO-Net cluster project CEEClusternetwork, entitled "*Identifying the main Objectives and Activities of Cluster Programmes*" which identifies among others a number of cluster programmes supporting international cluster activities. A handbook on the internationalisation of clusters is prepared by the ECA (TACTICS initiative) to provide guidelines on the various activities used to foster international cluster cooperation which could be used as reference document by the project participants;
2. A specific theme on international cluster cooperation has been discussed in the context of the European Cluster Policy Group²¹ and a draft report was prepared from that discussion;
3. Two EU projects are currently funded under the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme which address activities related to international cluster cooperation:

The **ABCEurope project**²² aiming at developing among others a common framework to promote the internationalisation of biotech SMEs including:

- A model for the internationalisation of an innovation voucher scheme and the setting-up of "partnerports" with supported office spaces;
- Sustainable transnational partnering and the development of a mutual cluster ambassador scheme;

The **EcoCluP project**²³ aiming at adapting, testing, validating, and implementing innovation services and tools supporting the growth and internationalisation of eco-innovative companies organised in environmental clusters across Europe.

2.2. Strand 2: Promoting excellence of cluster management in the EU

Improving **cluster and network**²⁴ **management is instrumental for developing more world-class clusters** in Europe. In fact, high quality cluster and network management is critical for raising the innovation capability of cluster firms, offering more customised services to them in a more systematic manner, improving the image of a cluster abroad, and implementing cluster policies more efficiently.

According to the European Cluster Observatory, there are approximately 1000 cluster organisations in the EU having, however, different levels of experience, ambition, public or private support, and quality of services designed and offered to cluster firms. As part of its efforts to contribute to the development of more world-class clusters and raise the professionalism of cluster organisations, the Commission launched in 2009 the **European Cluster Excellence (ECE)** initiative under CIP, with three main strategic objectives:

- To identify quality criteria for good management of cluster organisations;

²⁰ Further information can be found at: <http://www.proinno-europe.eu/eca>

²¹ <http://www.proinno-europe.eu/ecpg>

²² www.europe-innova.eu/ABCEurope

²³ www.europe-innova.eu/EcoCluP

²⁴ For the purpose of this call, "networks" are understood as initiatives bringing together resources and expertise and promoting cooperation among businesses, public authorities and universities that improve industrial competitiveness and innovation.

- To benchmark the excellence of cluster management across EU countries;
- To improve the cooperation between cluster organisations within the EU.

The **objective of Strand 2** is to raise the level of excellence of cluster and network management in the EU by further exploiting the results of the ECE initiative. To achieve this, regional and national authorities are invited to launch specific actions that build upon the work of this initiative and adapt it to regional or national specificities. Such actions could be built in particular on the following ECE deliverables that are expected to be available from 2011 onwards:

- **Training tools**, aiming to offer an integral set of teaching materials such as manuals, case studies, teaching notes, and audiovisual materials that are self explanatory so that they can be used by qualified instructors across Europe; these instructors will be trained and certified as a pilot action by the ECE initiative. The teaching materials will be provided in English and their translation to another language as well as the participation in the “train of trainers” scheme can be an eligible activity under the present action;
- **A benchmarking tool**, aiming to benchmark the performance of cluster and network organisations on the basis of indicators such as assessment of their typology and governance structure, diversity and output of the services offered, financial support, international orientation and visibility, and finally achievements and reputation. This action will contribute to the development of a European portfolio of cluster and network organisations that are willing to participate in benchmarking cluster management excellence across EU countries;
- **A collaboration platform**, aiming to facilitate communication between cluster and network organisations by centralising relevant information about cluster and network organisations and their members into one single place, presenting cluster and network organisations and their members based on specific profiles that will ensure an easy, cost-effective, international visibility of these actors, and by offering user-friendly online communication tools for platform users. The user-friendliness will include the possibility of presenting information also in multiple languages with the help of an online translator (for example Google translator), besides the overall tool-language which is English.

More information about the available products and methodologies developed by the ECE can be obtained under: <http://www.cluster-excellence.eu/>

Expected work

The applicants should provide in their proposal a **detailed description of the pilot action** that will build upon and further valorise the ECE products and methodologies referred to above. This could include a regional or national training programme for cluster and network managers, incentives for the participation in Pan-European benchmarking exercises and the facilitation of the participation of cluster and network organisations in the ECE cooperation platform.

Eligible partners shall be regional or national public authorities/agencies that manage cluster and network programmes from at least 3 different CIP participating countries. The maximum EU financial contribution to each co-funded project is EUR 400.000 and the amount of the EU contribution is further limited to 95% of the total eligible costs of the action. Each co-funded project should include all following activities:

- To customise training modules provided by the ECE initiative such as manuals, case studies, teaching notes, and audiovisual materials, including the participation in the ECE “train the trainers” activities and the certification by ECE professionals in view to roll out the programme at a wider scale at a later stage. However, further training courses given by the certified trainers to other staff will not be considered as an eligible activity;
- To collect statistical information from at least 20 cluster and network organisations per project willing to participate in the benchmarking exercise and organising interviews with the cluster managers on the basis of a specific questionnaire provided by the ECE initiative. The collected information will be communicated to the ECE initiative which will evaluate the performance of each cluster and network organisation through the benchmarking tool. The authority/agency should communicate the evaluation report to the cluster and network organisations and discuss actions for improvement. Further information about the composition of the participating cluster and network organisations, the type of their members and their activities as well as opportunities for cooperation will also be collected to introduce their profile in the European Cluster

Collaboration Platform. The authority/agency may also add any other relevant information such as other regional assets, studies on framework conditions and marketing materials to provide a more complete picture of the local business environment of the cluster and network organisations.

- To foster the mobility of at least 20 cluster and network managers to participate in study visits of minimum 3 days in cluster and network organisations from other CIP participating countries. The mobility scheme should aim at stimulating mutual learning and raising skills in cluster management. It should be used to conduct peer reviews on the quality of cluster management in order to give feedback on potential points to be improved and services to further develop. It should also contribute to identify complementarities and joint business opportunities among the cluster and network members, and at developing joint innovation projects between the clusters and networks. Costs of invited participants and host organisations should be considered.

To maximise the benefits of the activities of the action, the project will be referenced and further valorised under the umbrella of the European Cluster Excellence Initiative. To this end, the coordinator will ensure that the action regularly (minimum on a monthly basis) contributes with relevant material, results and possible policy learning and recommendations to the European Cluster Excellence Initiative to be communicated in an online format and disseminated through dedicated European Cluster Excellence Initiative portal webpages.

The applicant shall provide **detailed information about the expected outcome as well as the estimated costs** and breakdown of the foreseen budget according to the different project activities, including specific audits that should be organised along the project life. For the preparation of the project plan, it should be noted that the EC contribution will be provided as follows:

- An advance payment representing 20% of the agreed EC contribution will be done upon signature of the contract with the Commission;
- An intermediary payment will be paid on the basis of a detailed statement of the costs incurred so far related to the project activities;
- A final payment covering the remaining eligible costs on the basis of a detailed statement of the costs incurred.

Projects should take the opportunities for **green procurement** into account during the implementation of their activities. This may involve, for instance, the organisation of meetings in form of videoconferences, the use of recycled and bio-based materials for printed publications or other goods used during events.

EU initiatives related to Strand 2

As a follow up of the Communication on world-class clusters, the Commission launched in Sept 2009 the **European Cluster Excellence initiative**, a 3-year project funded under the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP). The project aims at identifying and developing a meaningful set of quality indicators and peer-assessment procedures for the evaluation and documentation of cluster management excellence. Special training materials and modules will support cluster managers to achieve higher level of excellence in their work. Furthermore, the project is establishing a European Club of Cluster Managers to further promote cluster management excellence in the EU. Further information can be found at: <http://www.cluster-excellence.eu/>

Furthermore, the **European Cluster Observatory**, also funded under the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme, has applied a statistical methodology to identify all statistically significant industrial clusters located in 32 European and associated countries and operating in 38 manufacturing and service sectors. By the end of 2011, it is expected that this work is later on complemented by additional services such as an analysis of cluster-specific framework conditions that facilitate the development to world-class clusters in a number of “emerging industries”, and the establishment of a European Cluster Excellence Scoreboard identifying world-class clusters on the basis of excellence of cluster management, strength of cluster firms and excellence of cluster-specific framework conditions. Further information can be found at: <http://www.clusterobservatory.eu/>

3. TIMETABLE

Scheduled **start-up date** for the action:

- November 2011 for strand 1
- September 2011 for strand 2.

Maximum duration of Actions is: 24 months for both strands.

However, if after the signing of the agreement and the start of the project it becomes impossible for the beneficiary, for fully justified reasons beyond his control, to complete the project within the scheduled period, an extension to the eligibility period may be granted. A **maximum extension of six additional months** will be granted, if requested before the deadline specified in the agreement. The maximum duration will then be 30 months.

The intention is to inform applicants of the outcome of the award procedure no later than the month of June 2011 for stage 1 and October 2011 for stage 2 of strand 1, and August 2011 for strand 2.

The period of eligibility of costs will start on the day the contract is signed by the last of the parties. If a beneficiary can demonstrate the need to start the action before the agreement is signed, expenditure may be authorised before the agreement is signed. Under no circumstances can the eligibility period start before the date of submission of the grant application.

4. EU FINANCING

The **maximum budget** allocated from the CIP-EIP Work Programme 2011 (ENT/CIP/11/C/N04C011 & 021) financing decision for this call for proposals is: EUR 4.000.000

Breakdown by individual objectives:

- for Strand 1: up to a maximum of EUR 2.400.000
- for Strand 2: up to a maximum of EUR 2.000.000

with a maximum of EUR 4.000.000 for the two strands. The Commission services reserve the right to allocate the budget between the two strands based on the results of the evaluation.

Indicative number of projects/average size (if pertinent):

- for Strand 1: maximum 4 projects
- for Strand 2: maximum 5 projects

Maximum EU co-financing rate of eligible costs:

For Strand 1:

- The maximum EU financial contribution to each co-funded pilot action is EUR 600.000 and the amount of the EU contribution is further limited to 80% of the total eligible costs of the action, with minimum 60% of the EU contribution allocated to cluster and network organisations from other CIP participating countries..

For Strand 2:

- The maximum EU financial contribution to each co-funded project is EUR 400.000 and the amount of the EU contribution is further limited to 95% of the total eligible costs of the action. The project management activities costs²⁵ are limited to 10% of the total eligible costs of the action and indirect costs are eligible for flat-rate funding of maximum 7% of the total direct eligible costs.

²⁵ Same as in footnote 26. .

Proposals with an EU co-financing beyond any of the above two maxima will be ineligible.
Please refer to section 5 below.

- Please note that one action may give rise to the award of only one grant from the European Union budget to any one beneficiary.
- EU financing can never cover 100 % of the costs of an action.
- The Commission reserves the right to award a grant of less than the amount requested by the applicant. In such a case, beneficiaries proposed for award will be proposed either to increase their co-financing, propose other co-financing means or to decrease the total costs without altering the substance of the proposal. Grants will not be awarded for more than the amount requested.
- The publication (on the Internet site and/or in the Official Journal) does not guarantee the availability of funds for the above action.
- The Commission grant may not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit for the beneficiary. Profit is defined as a surplus of receipts over costs. The amount of the grant will be reduced by the amount of any surplus.

4.1. CO-FINANCING AND JOINT AND SEVERAL RESPONSIBILITY

The beneficiary shall supply evidence of the co-financing provided. It can be provided either by way of own resources, or in the form of financial transfers from third parties, [or by contribution in kind]. For this call for proposals, the Commission accepts co-financing in kind, if considered necessary or appropriate. In such cases the value of such contributions cannot cover all the necessary co-financing. Please refer to the Guide for Submission, chapter IV for further details.

In case where a multi-beneficiary agreement is possible or required, all partners shall agree upon appropriate arrangements between themselves for the proper performance of the action.

In particular, they shall accept the joint and several responsibility for any amount due to the Commission by anyone of them as stipulated in article II.18 of the grant agreement.

The final grant agreement shall be signed by each participating co-beneficiary unless a power of attorney is conferred to the appointed co-ordinator (Form A/4 of the submission set).

4.2. SUBCONTRACTING

Subcontracting does not limit the responsibilities of beneficiaries.

Please note that the beneficiary (-ies) has (have) to have the necessary capacity to perform the project. Only tasks that are not core business can be sub-contracted to consultants.

Please refer to the guide for submission (page 28) for further details on subcontracting.

4.3. PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The draft grant agreement annexed to this call for proposals specifies the payment arrangements in article I.4 for single beneficiary agreements and I.5 for multiple beneficiary agreements. The agreement is attached for information only, and should not be submitted with the proposal.

Your attention is in particular drawn to part B of the General Conditions, article II.14, where the eligibility of costs is described. These costs are also further explained in chapter VI of the Guide for Submission.

In case of grants exceeding EUR 750.000, when the cumulative amounts of request for payment is at least EUR 325.000, an auditor has to certify that the costs are real, accurately recorded and eligible in accordance with the grant agreement.

5. ELIGIBILITY

APPLICATIONS MUST COMPLY WITH ALL OF THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA SET OUT IN THIS SECTION.

5.1. GEOGRAPHICAL ELIGIBILITY

Applications from legal entities established in one of the following countries are eligible:

- | | |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (1) | - EU Member States |
| (2) | - EFTA and EEA countries: Switzerland, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway |
| (3) | - Candidate countries: Croatia, FYROM, Turkey |

The Commission may select proposals from applicants in EFTA/EEA countries or candidate countries, provided that, on the date of selection, agreements have been signed setting out the arrangements for the participation of those countries in the programme established by the Decision referred to under point 1 of this call.

For Strands 1 and 2, the transnational nature of the project must be demonstrated by submitting form A/4 to the submission set duly filled in and signed from the partner organisations in order to confirm their participation (original signatures required).

5.2. LEGAL STATUS ELIGIBILITY

In what follows “partners” are to be understood as any potential co-signatory of the future grant agreement subject to this call, and as proposed by the applicant co-ordinator.

- | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Applicants must act in consortium with partner organisations.2. Partner organisations must satisfy the same eligibility criteria as those for applicants; the applicant will be the coordinator. <p>The following rules do not apply to the partners:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Applications must be submitted by a legal person.4. Corporate bodies must be properly constituted and registered under the law. If a body or organisation is not constituted under the law, a physical person must be designated to provide the legal responsibility. |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Further to the provisions set out in chapter II.3 on “Targeted proposers and experience required”, consortia will have to comply with the following dispositions.

For Strand 1:

The minimum number of participants in each pilot project in Strand 1 has been set at four independent legal entity established in minimum three CIP participating countries.

Eligible applicants in each pilot project shall be consortia that are composed of (a) one regional or national public authority/agency (the project coordinator identified as "host organisation") that manages cluster and network programmes which support international activities or are committed to add an international dimension to its existing cluster and network programme, and (b) minimum one cluster and network organisation(s) from the coordinator's country/region ("host cluster organisation") and minimum two cluster and network organisations from other CIP participating countries ("invited cluster organisations").

The project coordinator (i.e. "host organisation") must demonstrate that he is involved in financing or managing a cluster and network programme or initiatives on behalf of a public authority. In order to prove the fulfilment of this condition, the forms enclosed in Annex IIIa and IIIb should be filled in by funding bodies and/or bodies mandated to manage a cluster and network programme on behalf of a public authority. Please note that in the absence of such a legitimate declaration, proposals might be considered insufficient during the selection phase of the evaluation. In case that the requirement of the partner(s) financing or managing innovation programmes is evidently not met, the proposal will not pass the eligibility phase. Furthermore, the project coordinator (i.e. "host organisation") should be registered as member of the European Cluster Alliance²⁶ to pass the eligibility phase.

For Strand 2:

The minimum number of participants in each pilot project in Strand 2 has been set at three independent legal entities established in minimum three different CIP participating countries.

Eligible applicants in each pilot project shall be consortia that are composed of regional or national public authorities/agencies that manage cluster and network programmes from at least 3 different CIP participating countries. Preference will be given to those CIP participating countries and/or regions that demonstrate the clear additionality of the proposal in reinforcing cluster management in the proposed countries/regions. The applicants should clearly indicate whether initiatives promoting excellence of cluster management have been launched previously and in this case, what would be the added value of the proposal taking into account previous and/or existing initiatives.

Consortium partners must demonstrate that they are involved in financing or managing a cluster and network programme or initiatives on behalf of a public authority. In order to prove the fulfilment of this condition, the forms enclosed in Annex IIIa and IIIb should be filled in by funding bodies and/or bodies mandated to manage a cluster and network programme on behalf of a public authority. Please note that in the absence of such a legitimate declaration, proposals might be considered insufficient during the selection phase of the evaluation. In case that the requirement of the partners financing or managing innovation programmes is evidently not met, the proposal will not pass the eligibility phase. Furthermore, applicants should be registered as member of the European Cluster Alliance²⁷ to pass the eligibility phase.

For Strands 1 and 2, participants in the project representing cluster and network organisations should comply with the definition given in the section 5.8 of the "*Community Framework for State Aid for Research and Development and Innovation*"²⁸. Each cluster and network organisation has to be involved in offering or channelling cluster and network support services to businesses and should be identified on the basis of a legal identity. Cluster and network organisations participating in the project should also become members of the European Club of Cluster Managers established under the European Cluster Excellence initiative²⁹.

5.3. EXCLUSION CRITERIA

By using the "Exclusion Criteria Form" (form D attached to the "Submission Set) applicants shall declare on their honour that they are not in one of the situations referred to in Articles 93 and 94 of the Financial Regulation.

Please note that, according to articles 96 and 114 of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities and according to article 134b of the Commission Regulation (EC,

²⁶ See Further details on the European Cluster Alliance and application procedure at: <http://www.proinno-europe.eu/page/how-join-eca>

²⁷ See Further details on the European Cluster Alliance and application procedure at: <http://www.proinno-europe.eu/page/how-join-eca>

²⁸ See at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2006:323:0001:0026:EN:PDF>

²⁹ See at: <http://www.proinno-europe.eu/cluster-excellence>

Euratom) n° 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002³⁰ laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) n° 1605/2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities³¹, administrative and financial penalties may be imposed by the Commission on applicants who are excluded in relation to points a) to h) of the form in question.

5.4. ELIGIBLE PROPOSALS

Applications must comply with the following conditions in order to be eligible for a grant:

1. Applications must be signed, dated and complete, using the standard submission set. All forms must be submitted in their original form with original signatures.
2. Applications must be submitted timely, in conformity with the specifications for the submission of proposals (see point 8 below).
3. Only projects that are strictly non-profit-making and/or whose immediate objective is non-commercial shall be eligible.
4. Applications must respect the maximum EC contribution as laid out in section 4.
5. Applications must respect the maximum duration of projects (see section 4).
6. Applications must be in line with respect to the maximum start date (see section 4).

In this context, any project that is directly or indirectly contrary to EU policy or against public health, human rights, citizen's security or freedom of expression will be rejected.

Applicants for Strands 1 and 2 shall act in consortium with partner organisations. All partners must satisfy the same eligibility criteria as those for applicants. Strands 1 and 2 require that the applicant and/or partner organisations representing regional or national public authorities/agencies are registered as member of the European Cluster Alliance³².

All proposals that fulfil the eligibility criteria will be evaluated in the selection phase in order to determine their financial and technical capacity.

6. SELECTION

The following sets out the basis for the evaluation of applicants' capacities in relation to the action. Please refer also to chapter IV of the Guide for Submission for further details.

6.1. APPLICANTS' FINANCIAL CAPACITY TO COMPLETE THE PROPOSED ACTION

Applicants must show they have stable and sufficient sources of funding to ensure the continuity of their organisation throughout the project and, if necessary, to play a part in financing it.

The obligation to provide the supporting documents serving as proof of financial capacity does not apply to applications for grants with a EU co-financing rate of less than EUR 25.000 (this threshold refers to the total of grants received by a single beneficiary during one financial year). However, the applicants in question shall submit a declaration on honour for the purpose of proving the financial and technical capacity.

³⁰ As amended by Commission Regulation 1261/2005 of 20 July 2005, Commission Regulation 1248/2006 of 7 August 2006 and Commission Regulation 478/2007 of 23 April 2007

³¹ As amended by Council Regulation 1995/2006 of 13 December 2006

³² The European Cluster Alliance is an open platform for policy actors on cluster policy development in Europe. Membership is based on open and simple procedures and requires no membership fees. Registration can be processed during the application phase of this call. See Further details on the European Cluster Alliance and application procedure at: <http://www.proinno-europe.eu/page/how-join-eca>

6.2. EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS

For actions where the cost to be financed exceeds EUR 500 000 and for operating grants of over EUR 100 000, the application shall be accompanied by an external audit report produced by an approved auditor. This report shall certify the accounts for the last year available and provide the possibility for an assessment of the financial viability of the applicant.

The authorising officer responsible may, depending on his analysis of management risks, waive that obligation for grants for, secondary and higher education establishments and beneficiaries who have accepted joint and several liability in the case of agreements with a number of beneficiaries.

6.3. APPLICANTS' OPERATIONAL CAPACITY TO COMPLETE THE PROPOSED ACTION

Applicants must show they have the operational (technical and management) capacity to complete the operation to be supported and must demonstrate their capacity to manage scale activity corresponding to the size of the project for which the grant is requested. In particular, the team responsible for the project/operation must have adequate professional qualifications and experience.

The **selection criteria** specific to each Strand are as follows:

Strand 1: Promoting international cluster cooperation

The applicant consortia must demonstrate the extent to which:

(a) the project coordinator has experience in:

- managing cluster and network programmes, which currently support international activities, and are committed to “add on” the possibility so that cluster and network organisations from other EU countries can be invited to participate in such programmes;

OR

- managing cluster and network programmes, which do not support international activities, but are committed to add an international dimension into them or launch new pilot initiatives in this respect;

(b) the other beneficiaries have experience in offering or channelling cluster and network support services to businesses³³.

A strong interest in transnational cooperation and international strategies is considered to be an asset.

Strand 2: Promoting excellence of cluster management

The applicant consortia must demonstrate the extent to which they have experience in implementing and managing cluster and network programmes or initiatives.

A strong interest in transnational cooperation and cluster management excellence is considered to be an asset.

7. AWARD

An evaluation of the quality of proposals, including the proposed budget, will be carried out in accordance with the evaluation criteria set out in **Annex 3 for Strand 1 and Annex 4 for Strand 2** below to this call for proposals.

³³ Participants in the project representing cluster and network organisations should comply with the definition given in the section 5.8 of the “Community Framework for State Aid for Research and Development and Innovation” (See at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2006:323:0001:0026:EN:PDF>).

The complete selection and evaluation procedure is described in chapter IV of the Guide for Submission in annex 2.

8. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Please note that electronic submissions are not allowed for this call.

Please consult chapter I of the Guide for Submission for the modalities of preparing the proposal. In addition to the proposal submission forms, the applicants are invited to provide an estimate of the project management activities costs³⁴ as a percentage of the total eligible costs in view to assess the cost-effectiveness of the project management. This estimate will be assessed in the context of the award criteria relating to budget and cost-effectiveness (see annex 3 and 4). Past experiences have shown that a threshold of maximum 10% was sufficient in this respect and would therefore be recommended.

Applicants shall indicate on the envelope for which strand of this call for proposals they apply.

Please note that the submission process is different for the two strands of this call. For strand 1, a two-stage submission process is used, whereas for strand 2, a one-stage submission process is used.

Strand 1: Two-stage submission

§ Stage 1 for the submission of proposals under strand 1: The concept note

At stage 1, the coordinator (i.e. the "host organisation") is invited to present in a concept note of maximum 5 pages its planned work to implement the pilot action with the view to foster international cluster activities. The concept note must include a description of the objectives, main activities, implementation modalities, list of other beneficiaries (sufficient to satisfy the eligibility criterion on minimum participation provided in section 5.2 above), expected results and funding arrangements. This concept note will be evaluated against a limited range of criteria (see annex 3). The elements assessed on the basis of the concept note may not be modified by the applicant in the full proposal.

In the concept note, the coordinator must only provide an estimate of the costs and funding arrangements of the action together with the amount of contribution and percentage requested from the European Commission. Only the applicants invited to submit a full application in the second phase will be required to present a detailed budget. The EU contribution may not vary from the initial estimate by more than 20% and cannot exceed the maximum EU financial contribution to each co-funded pilot action mentioned in section 4 above.

For a given proposal, the coordinator acts as the single point of contact between the applicants and the Commission. The coordinator is responsible for the overall planning of the proposal and for building up the consortium that will implement the action. Only the coordinator is formally involved in the submission process at stage 1. Letters confirming the intention of all other beneficiaries to participate in the proposal's consortium should be attached as annexes.

The stage 1 evaluation of the concept note will be based on:

- § the concept note (maximum 5 pages on A4 format drafted in English);
- § the proposal submission forms A/1 completed including the list of all beneficiaries;
- § the Exclusion Form D signed (see in the call submission set); and
- § the letters confirming the intention of all other beneficiaries to participate in the proposal's consortium.

³⁴ Project management activities costs shall include: - the eligible costs of obtaining audit certificate(s) by each partner; - the eligible costs of obtaining any financial security such as bank guarantees when requested by the Commission; the eligible costs of producing the periodic reporting documents; - the maintenance of the consortium agreement. Only the coordinator may include in its management activities costs: - the eligible costs of compiling and delivering periodic reporting documents to the Commission for the whole consortium; - eligible costs related to formal contacts and correspondence with the Commission. Project management activities can not be sub-contracted.

Please note that only the concept note will be evaluated. It is therefore of utmost importance that this document contains all of the relevant information concerning the action. No other annexes should be sent except the above mentioned documents.

The deadline for submission of the concept note (with annexed documents) is:

10/05/2011

§ Stage 2 for the submission of proposals under strand 1: The full proposal

A maximum of 10 applicants with the highest scores for the evaluation criteria at stage 1 and respecting the threshold mentioned in Annex 3 are then invited to submit a full proposal based on the initial concept note by a date specified by the Commission. This date allows at least two months for the preparation of the full proposal.

The objectives of the full proposal must be consistent and in accordance with the successful concept note, extending it by providing full details about the approach, the specific work-plan, the budget, etc.

The stage 2 evaluation of the full proposal is an evaluation against each of the criteria for that submission. It is not a complementary evaluation. Scores achieved by the stage 1 proposal are not taken into account at the stage 2 evaluation.

Strand 2: One-stage submission

The deadline for submission of full proposals is:

10/06/2011

Applicants shall observe precisely the indications below in order that concept notes (for Strand 1) and proposals (for both Strands) can reach their precise destination in due time.

Concept notes (with annexed documents) and **full proposals** may be:

a) either sent by registered mail, (date of postmark serving as evidence of timely delivery); to the following address:

European Commission
Enterprise and Industry Directorate-General
**Call for proposals No: 3/G/ENT/CIP/11/C/N04C011 &
4/G/ENT/CIP/11/C/N04C021**
Support for Industrial Innovation, Unit D.2
Administrative address BREY 06/171
B-1049 Brussels, BELGIUM
Fax: (+32-2)-2981018

b) or sent by courier services (date of deposit slip serving as evidence of timely delivery), to the address below,

c) **or delivered by hand**, in person or by an authorised representative (date of acknowledgement of receipt by the Commission serving as evidence of timely delivery) to the following address:

European Commission
Enterprise and Industry Directorate-General
**Call for proposals No: 3/G/ENT/CIP/11/C/N04C011 &
4/G/ENT/CIP/11/C/N04C021**
Support for Industrial Innovation, Unit D.2
BREY 06/171
Service central de réception du courrier
Avenue du Bourget, 1-3
B-1140 Brussels,
BELGIUM

How to reach avenue du Bourget 1-3 :
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/calls/hand_delivery.html

In case of hand-delivery, a receipt must be obtained as proof of submission, signed and dated by the official in the Commission's central mail department who took delivery. This department is open from 08.00 to 17.00 from Monday to Thursday and from 08.00 to 16.00 on Friday; it is closed on Saturdays, Sundays and Commission holidays.

Please note that for security reasons hand deliveries (including courier services) are not accepted in other Commission buildings.

9. CONTACTS

Contacts between the contracting authority and potential applicants can only take place in certain circumstances and under the following conditions only:

- Before the final date for submission of proposals, at the request of the applicant, the Commission may provide additional information solely for the purpose of clarifying the nature of the call.

Any requests for additional information must be made in writing only to the coordinates stated below.

The Commission may, on its own initiative, inform interested parties of any error, inaccuracy, omission or other clerical error in the text of the call for proposals.

- After the deadline for submission of proposals:
 - If clarification is requested or if obvious clerical errors in the proposal need to be corrected, the Commission may contact the applicant provided the terms of the proposal are not modified as a result.
 - If the authorising officer finds that those proposals, which have been listed for award needs limited adaptations to their proposal. In such case, these applicants will receive a formal letter setting out the requested modifications. Any such modifications must stay within the limits of the request. This phase will not lead to a re-evaluation of the proposals, but a proposal might be rejected if refusing to ensure a positive follow-up to the request.

Contact coordinates for the call:

European Commission
Enterprise and Industry Directorate-General
Support for Industrial Innovation, Unit D.2
E-mail address: ENTR-CFP-11-03-04-clusters@ec.europa.eu
Office address: BREY 06/171, B-1049 Brussels, Belgium

Please note that the above-mentioned functional e-mail address will not be checked after 1 month following notification of the applicants of the Commission's decision concerning their application.

10. ANNEX 1 SUBMISSION SET

The Submission Set can be downloaded from the following page:
<http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/contracts-grants/calls-for-proposals/>

11. ANNEX 2 GUIDE FOR SUBMISSION

The Guide for Submission can be downloaded from the following page:
<http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/contracts-grants/calls-for-proposals/>

12. ANNEX 3 EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR STRAND 1

See Annex 3 below to this call for proposals.

13. ANNEX 4 EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR STRAND 2

See Annex 4 below to this call for proposals.

14. ANNEX 5 DRAFT GRANT AGREEMENT

See Annex 5 below to this call for proposals.

Annex 3 - Evaluation Criteria for Strand 1

When assessing the below evaluation criteria, the evaluation committee generally pays attention to the elements indicated below each criterion. Please note that these elements, which are indicative and non-exhaustive, are given on the basis of transparency and in order to help applicants to improve their applications.

Stage 1: The concept note

EVALUATION CRITERIA AND KEY ELEMENTS LIKELY TO BE ASSESSED BY THE EVALUATION COMMITTEE		MAX. SCORE
1. Relevance		15
How relevant is the proposal to the objectives of the published theme to promote world-class clusters in the EU through international cooperation?		
How clearly are defined and strategically chosen the proposed actions in this respect and those involved (other beneficiaries)?		
2. Impact		10
What is the expected outcome and potential impact and added value of the project and what can be the multiplier effect of the project to further promote international cluster cooperation in the EU?		
3. Quality		10
How coherent is the overall design of the action and ambitious is the proposed work plan and to what extent does it cover the activities described in the Call text?		
4. Budget		5
To what extent is the budget estimates consistent and necessary to implement all project activities planned?		
Maximum total score		40

If a total score lower than 20 points or a score lower than 50% for any of the above five criteria is obtained, the proposal will not be evaluated further.

Stage 2: The full proposal

EVALUATION CRITERIA AND KEY ELEMENTS LIKELY TO BE ASSESSED BY THE EVALUATION COMMITTEE		MAX. SCORE
1. Relevance		20
How relevant is the proposal to the objectives of the published theme to promote world-class clusters in the EU through international cooperation?		
How clearly are defined and strategically chosen the proposed actions in this respect and those involved (other beneficiaries)?		
2. Visibility		15
To what extent the proposal describes the awareness activities related, notably, to the Call for proposals that will be organised by the project?		
To what extent the proposal describes the dissemination activities to reach as many as possible relevant stakeholders willing to develop similar actions in this area in the future?		

3. Impact	20
What is the expected outcome and potential impact and added value of the project and what can be the multiplier effect of the project to further promote international cluster cooperation in the EU?	
Does the proposal describe how to measure the impact of the obtained results on the basis of specific indicators?	
4. Quality	30
How coherent and ambitious is the proposed work programme and to what extent does it cover the activities described in the Call text?	
To what extent the work plan is clearly presented including milestones, deliverables and a sound project management structure?	
5. Budget and Cost-effectiveness	15
To what extent is the budget clear enough and necessary to implement all project activities planned?	
To what extent is the budget allocation justified per partner and per activities? Do the project management activities costs respect the recommended maximum threshold of 10% of total eligible costs?	
Maximum total score	100

If a total score lower than 70 points or a score lower than 50% for any of the above five criteria is obtained, the proposal will not be evaluated further.

Annex 4 - Evaluation Criteria for Strand 2

When assessing the below evaluation criteria, the evaluation committee generally pays attention to the elements indicated below each criterion. Please note that these elements, which are indicative and non-exhaustive, are given on the basis of transparency and in order to help applicants to improve their applications.

EVALUATION CRITERIA AND KEY ELEMENTS LIKELY TO BE ASSESSED BY THE EVALUATION COMMITTEE		MAX. SCORE
1. Relevance		20
How relevant is the proposal to the objectives of the published theme to promote world-class clusters in the EU through cluster management excellence taking into account the additionality of the proposal to reinforce cluster management in the countries/regions covered based on information provided by the applicants?		
How relevant are the proposed actions in view to valorise the results of the European Cluster Excellence initiative?		
2. Visibility		15
To what extent the proposal describes how to mobilise as many as possible cluster organisations to participate in all 3 groups of project activities?		
To what extent the proposal describes the dissemination activities to reach as many as possible relevant stakeholders willing to develop similar actions in this area in the future?		
3. Impact		20
What is the potential impact of the project to promote excellence of cluster management in the EU and reinforce cluster management in the specific countries/regions covered based on the information provided by the applicants, and to what extent is provided a follow up strategy?		
Does the proposal describe how to measure the impact of the project in terms of well defined impact indicators?		
4. Quality		30
How coherent and ambitious is the proposed work programme, and to what extent it covers all 3 groups of activities described in the Call text?		
To what extent the consortium represents a high level of competence to carry out this work and to what extent the work plan is clearly presented including milestones, deliverables and a sound project management structure?		
5. Budget and Cost-effectiveness		15
To what extent is the budget clear enough and necessary to implement all project activities?		
To what extent is the budget allocation justified per partner and per activities planned? Do the project management activities costs respect the recommended maximum threshold of 10% of total eligible costs?		
Maximum total score		100

If a total score lower than 70 points or a score lower than 50% for any of the above five criteria is obtained, the proposal will not be evaluated further.

Annex 5 Draft Grant Agreement

- [Grant agreement for an action with multiple beneficiaries](#)