



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion DG
Directorate Skills
Unit Job creation

**European Programme for Employment and Social Innovation
(2014-2020) – PROGRESS Axis
Incubators (business support organisations) for inclusive and
social entrepreneurship**

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

VP/2019/017

Questions should be sent by email to:
empl-vp-2019-017@ec.europa.eu

To ensure a rapid response to requests for information, applicants are invited
to send their queries in English, where possible

This text is available in English.

Applicants are invited to read the present document in conjunction with the Financial
Guidelines for Applicants and the model Grant Agreement(s) published with this call as well
as the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/biblio/documents/regulations/regulations_en.cfm

Table of Contents

1.	INTRODUCTION – BACKGROUND.....	- 2 -
1.1.	Programme/Legal base.....	- 2 -
1.2.	Policy and economic background.....	- 2 -
1.3.	Main Purposes.....	- 3 -
2.	OBJECTIVE(S) – PRIORITIES – TYPES OF ACTIONS - EXPECTED RESULTS	- 5 -
2.1.	Objectives – Priorities - Definitions.....	- 5 -
2.2.	Description of the activities to be funded / Type of actions.....	- 6 -
2.3.	Expected outputs/results	- 7 -
2.4.	Monitoring	- 7 -
3.	TIMETABLE.....	- 9 -
3.1.	Starting date and duration of the projects	- 9 -
4.	AVAILABLE BUDGET AND CO-FINANCING RATE.....	- 10 -
4.1.	Available Budget	- 10 -
4.2.	Co-financing rate.....	- 10 -
5.	ADMISSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS.....	- 10 -
6.	ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	- 11 -
6.1.	Eligibility of the applicants (lead and co-applicants) and affiliated entities.....	- 11 -
6.2.	Eligible activities.....	- 12 -
7.	EXCLUSION CRITERIA	- 13 -
7.1.	Exclusion.....	- 13 -
7.2.	Remedial measures.....	- 15 -
7.3.	Rejection from the call for proposals.....	- 15 -
8.	SELECTION CRITERIA	- 15 -
8.1.	Financial capacity	- 15 -
8.2.	Operational capacity	- 17 -
9.	AWARD CRITERIA.....	- 18 -
10.	LEGAL COMMITMENTS	- 20 -
11.	PUBLICITY/SOURCES OF FUNDING.....	- 20 -
12.	DATA PROTECTION	- 22 -
12.1.	Before the grant agreement's signature:.....	- 22 -
12.2.	Once the grant agreement is signed:.....	- 22 -
13.	FINANCIAL PROVISIONS.....	- 23 -
14.	PROCEDURE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS	- 24 -
15.	COMMUNICATION	- 25 -
16.	INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PRESENTATION OF THE APPLICATION AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTS.....	- 26 -
16.1.	Instructions for the presentation of the application.....	- 26 -
16.2.	Required documents.....	- 27 -
	ANNEX I: FINANCIAL GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS.....	- 31 -
	ANNEX XX: MODEL FOR TENDER SPECIFICATIONS FOR SUBCONTRACTING EXTERNAL EXPERTISE.....	- 32 -

1. INTRODUCTION – BACKGROUND

1.1. Programme/Legal base

This call for proposals is published under Regulation (EU) No 1296/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on a European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation ("EaSI")¹ and amending Decision No 283/2010/EU establishing a European Progress Microfinance Facility for employment and social inclusion.

The 2020 annual work programme C(2019)7630 was adopted by the Commission on 30 October 2019.

This call for proposals is financed under the **European Programme for Employment and Social Innovation "EaSI" 2014-2020**² which is a European-level financing instrument managed directly by the European Commission to contribute to the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy, by providing financial support for the Union's objectives in terms of promoting a high level of quality and sustainable employment, guaranteeing adequate and decent social protection, combating social exclusion and poverty and improving working conditions.

1.2. Policy and economic background

Supporting entrepreneurship and self-employment

Entrepreneurship and self-employment help to create jobs, develop skills and give unemployed and vulnerable people an opportunity to fully participate in society and the economy. They therefore make an important contribution to “an economy that works for people” indicated in the Political Guidelines of the President of the Commission. This includes a dedicated SME strategy which should help SMEs thrive by reducing red tape and improving their access to the market, making it easier for small businesses to become large innovators. In addition, social entrepreneurship also contributes to the actions announced in the European Green Deal, in particular in relation to EU’s Industrial strategy for a clean and circular economy.

Some entrepreneurship support policies are likely to have positive effects on the creation of quality jobs. One of these is the support to under-represented and vulnerable groups to become self-employed, as an alternative to salaried employment (so-called “inclusive entrepreneurship policies”). These groups are women, migrants³, youth, seniors, the unemployed and disabled people (the first three groups are a focus of this support).

Another such policy is support to businesses which combine characteristics of traditional non-profit sector and private business. While these produce and sell services and products, their ultimate goal is not to maximise profit, but rather to contribute to social and environmental goals with a strong return to the community.

¹ EaSI: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:347:0238:0252:EN:PDF>

² Regulation (EU) No 1296/2013 <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1081>

³ Defined as third-country nationals legally residing in the EU.

These so-called “social enterprises” both create jobs and deliver common goods (care, local development, sustainable development, education and skills, civic participation etc.). Often they mobilise some atypical resources, such as voluntary work and therefore can operate in a low-profit environment, not attractive to mainstream business. Social entrepreneurship can also help to make entrepreneurship more attractive in general and amongst some of the target groups of inclusive entrepreneurship policy. Thereby the two concepts are interlinked.

EU support to these forms of entrepreneurship consists of knowledge-building, capacity-building and financial support.

Link to the European Pillar for Social Rights

The European Pillar of Social Rights is the policy compass that points the way how to address the challenge of upward convergence and promoting a fair Europe. It provides a rights-based response to the future of work. EU institutions, all levels of government, social partners and civil society share the responsibility to put the Pillar into practice. The Council Strategic Agenda 2019-2024 states that the European Pillar of Social Rights should be implemented at EU and Member State level, with due regard for respective competences. The President’s Political Guidelines announced an action plan to fully implement the European Pillar of Social Rights.

Inclusive and social entrepreneurship can contribute to the implementation of the European Pillar for Social Rights, in particular fostering equal opportunities for under-represented groups (principle #3), active support to employment, including self-employment (principle #4) and secure and adaptable employment (principle #5), inclusion of people with disabilities (principle #17) and long term care (principle #18).

1.3. Main Purposes

EU financial support to micro-enterprises and social enterprises

The main objectives of the Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship axis of EaSI (the so-called third axis) are:

- to increase access to, and the availability of, microfinance for vulnerable groups who want to set up or develop their business and micro-enterprises; and
- to support the development of social enterprises, in particular by facilitating access to finance.

The support offered under EaSI includes a Guarantee scheme, a Capacity Building instrument, grants aimed at building the finance markets for social enterprises and advisory services⁴. This is complemented by a set of pilot social impact equity instruments launched under the European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI), including a facility for financial intermediaries linked to incubators, accelerators, and/or that provide incubation services for social enterprises in their early stages and a Business Angel Facility⁵.

⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1084&langId=en>

⁵ http://www.eif.org/what_we_do/efsi/equity/call/Guidance_for_social_impact_investors.pdf

The EU support enables selected microcredit providers and social enterprise investors in the EaSI participating countries to build their capacities and to increase lending to microenterprises and social enterprises, as well as to make small risk-capital investments into social enterprises.

Experience so far shows that EU support aimed at making more finance available for microenterprises and social enterprises is needed, but not sufficient. Financial intermediaries often report difficulties in finding a pipeline of investees. At the same time, potential investees lack the capacity to access and manage repayable finance.

Supplementing financial support with non-financial support

The EU supply of finance to social enterprises and entrepreneurs from vulnerable backgrounds is only one source of finance for those entrepreneurs. Whatever source of finance (even internal), entrepreneurs need business development support, as well as “investment readiness” support which prepares them to access and manage repayable finance.

Specialised business development support is important to help entrepreneurs acquire the skills and knowledge they need to develop sustainable business models and to manage companies successfully. Specifically support is needed to help businesses run by people from vulnerable groups⁶ (and social enterprises) grow. They need support in dealing with challenges specific to their backgrounds and business models (e.g. social enterprises have to be able to measure, manage and report on their impact).

Evidence suggests that business incubators can be effective supports for new and growing businesses. Businesses that receive support in incubators tend to have higher survival rates, create more jobs, and generate more revenue. While there are relatively few examples of business incubators that are fully dedicated to supporting entrepreneurs from under-represented groups, there is a small body of evidence that shows similarly positive results. This suggests that there is a likely untapped potential for business incubators to be used more widely for inclusive and social entrepreneurship, see OECD/EU (2019)⁷. Broadening the scope of business incubators to social and inclusive entrepreneurship incubators can make entrepreneurship more attractive for people from vulnerable groups and people who want to run a business with a social aim.

Mobilising mainstream incubators (business support organisations) to address social and inclusive entrepreneurship

While some countries and regions choose to put in place support measures and structures specific to target groups⁸, another option is to tap into the potential of mainstream incubators.

⁶ The challenges faced by entrepreneurs from under-represented groups in establishing businesses with growth potential include a lack of growth ambitions, a lack of skills to manage a growing business, difficulties to access suitable financing and ineffective networks (OECD/EU (2019), *The Missing Entrepreneurs 2019*).

⁷ “Policy brief on incubators and accelerators that support inclusive entrepreneurship”, <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8205&furtherPubs=yes>

⁸ Support through group-specific incubators has benefits, such as the creation of a high level of trust between entrepreneurs and support providers as well as among tenant entrepreneurs. Another benefit is that support

Working with mainstream incubators could have several advantages. One is that their outreach is larger than that of dedicated incubators, and they could potentially have a larger impact in that respect.

Another advantage is cost efficiency: part of the overhead cost of the actions can be spread over different target groups (scale effect). Finally, given the growing attention paid by mainstream entrepreneurs and investors to social, environmental and governance aspects of their activities, mainstream incubators also stand to benefit from becoming aware of the specific challenges faced by entrepreneurs from vulnerable backgrounds and by social entrepreneurs and of best ways to support them. There is also untapped potential in developing collaborations between mainstream and inclusive/social businesses.

2. OBJECTIVE(S) – PRIORITIES – TYPES OF ACTIONS - EXPECTED RESULTS

2.1. Objectives – Priorities - Definitions

Inclusive and social entrepreneurship policies boost social innovation, help to create jobs, develop skills and give unemployed and vulnerable people an opportunity to fully participate in society and the economy.

The barriers to start and develop a business are higher than average for those run by underrepresented groups and social enterprises. Non-financial support by incubators can help to make the financial support given to business creation and development by underrepresented groups and social enterprises more effective. Notably, the non-financial support (consisting of training, workshops, coaching and mentoring, business advice and networking opportunities) which incubators provide is conducive to a better use of financial support, increasing the survival chances of businesses run by underrepresented groups and social enterprises.

For this reason, this call aims at mobilising existing network(s) of mainstream business incubators to expand their outreach to inclusive and social entrepreneurship. To achieve this, the supported action shall draw from the experience of support organisations and networks already targeting social entrepreneurs and (potential) entrepreneurs from underrepresented groups. Optimally, this will be combined with support for scaling and replication of social enterprise and social innovation business ideas through dissemination of knowledge and understanding of potential market opportunities in other territories. This type of knowledge transfer can be ensured by involving pertinent partners as co-applicants and/or by qualified experts directly involved in the project implementation.

The supported action needs to cover a large part of the EU Member States / EaSI participating countries including regions and cities outside of the capital area of countries. The aim is also to achieve a geographically balanced coverage of countries (North, South, East, West of Europe).

is typically more tailored to address the specific challenges faced by the target group and support is delivered through mechanisms that have been adjusted to the context of the target group. However, this approach also has the risk that incubation services provided to a segregated group may reinforce the exclusion from the mainstream business community that these individuals and businesses already face (OECD/EU (2019), *ibid.*).

For the purpose of this call,

- “Business incubators” mean support organisations of which the main purpose is to promote business creation and entrepreneurship by offering relevant services such as training, workshops, business coaching and mentoring, business advice, networking opportunities and financing for potential start-up companies and micro entrepreneurs. These bodies can support the start-up as well as the scale-up of businesses.
- “Network of business incubators” means an established network, which among its members includes organisations fulfilling the above definition of business incubator. Consequently the call is open also to networks which include multiple types of member organisations.
- “Social entrepreneurship/social enterprises” mean businesses, of which the primary objective is to achieve positive social impact. Consequently they are subject to profit distribution limits and participatory governance principles.⁹
- “Inclusive entrepreneurship” is an approach to ensure that all people, regardless of their background, have an equal opportunity to start and run their own businesses. It focusses on target groups that are under-represented in entrepreneurship, or that face greater barriers to business creation and self-employment, e.g. women, migrants, youth and the unemployed.

Through the supported action, the members of the network(s) shall gain knowledge about:

- the concepts of inclusive and social entrepreneurship and about the added value of adequately integrating these concepts in their work;
- the key challenges specific to the underrepresented target groups and social entrepreneurs (amongst others, specific barriers, communication);
- the methodologies needed to work effectively with these target groups (amongst others, target group specific working methods, communication methods, social impact measurement, knowledge of available mutual support networks and specific funding schemes);
- about European and international programmes, networks, organisations, and platforms in these fields.

As a whole, the supported project shall cover both inclusive and social entrepreneurship in a balanced way. However some activities can be specific to one of the two concepts or even specific to one of the target groups. Initiatives by public authorities (European, national, local/regional) shall be taken appropriately into account, looking after synergies and overall reinforcement of inclusive and social entrepreneurship efforts.

2.2. Description of the activities to be funded / Type of actions

Proposals must be centred around activities promoting the concepts “inclusive and social entrepreneurship” amongst all individual member organisations of the network or the consortium of networks. Activities shall notably focus on transferring knowledge and building capacities amongst the member organisations, so that they will be well equipped to

⁹ The concept of social enterprise is used in line with the European Commission’s Social Business Initiative (COM/2011/0682 final)

work with the (potential) entrepreneurs in these fields (see specific challenges and working methods in 2.1).

The types of activities which may be funded under this call for proposals can include:

- gathering, production and diffusion of relevant information materials;
- study visits and exchange of good practices;
- training activities, webinars, seminars, conferences, etc;
- developing business support services for inclusive and social entrepreneurs, including toolkits, templates, manuals and other support material;
- actions aiming at creating and improving connections to stakeholders in inclusive and social entrepreneurship;
- awareness and dissemination actions amongst the network's members and towards the wider audience.

This list is not exhaustive and applicants are encouraged to use new, innovative and experimental ways of achieving the objectives. Applications shall detail the resources foreseen for each of the activities proposed as well as the professional qualifications and relevant experience of the teams that will conduct those activities.

All activities shall be presented under the umbrella of a comprehensive work plan, which should detail their links with the objectives, their expected results, the budget breakdown and the milestones for achieving the results in the implementing period.

As part of the application documents, the applicants are requested to submit a “Key Issues paper”, of maximum 3 pages, in which they explain to the members of the involved network(s) the value added of embracing inclusive and social entrepreneurship, possibly including a visual illustration (see checklist, point 19). The Key Issues paper will be taken into consideration when the applications are assessed against the award criteria.

2.3. Expected outputs/results

The funded action is expected to mobilise as many individual member incubators of the network(s) as possible to integrate inclusive and social entrepreneurship systematically in their service offer and consequently to better address the relevant target groups (including social entrepreneurs) in their own territory.

In addition to this direct mobilisation of member incubators, the action is expected to have a lasting spill-over effect in terms of wider attention paid to the issues of inclusive and social entrepreneurship in the countries directly involved and possibly beyond these countries.

Applications shall provide quantitative targets to be achieved for the different activities proposed.

2.4. Monitoring

The Commission, with the support of an external contractor, will monitor regularly the EaSI Programme. Therefore, beneficiaries will have to transmit qualitative and quantitative monitoring data on the results of the activities. These will include the extent to which the principles of equality between women and men has been applied, as well as how anti-discrimination considerations, including accessibility issues, have been addressed through the activities. Related templates are attached or will be provided.

The Commission will monitor the action for the EaSI programme through the information provided in the specific Annex to the Grant Agreement. The reporting template is published on the respective EaSI call page <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=629&langId=en>

In setting up the action, beneficiaries must foresee the necessary funding for monitoring and reporting to the Commission. For events, it is important to get from participants their specific consent by a statement or by a clear affirmative action for processing and transferring their personal data also to an external contractor responsible for the monitoring of the EaSI programme. Beneficiaries should therefore inform all participants via a Privacy Statement that is not only published online, but is also provided individually to each participant (e.g. as part of the email where the beneficiary/contractor first contacts the individual concerned) that the Commission/external contractor would be processing their personal data. Beneficiaries have to be able to demonstrate that consent was obtained subject to conditions of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data (i.e. keep a record that shows how the consent was obtained and whether it was valid) and Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data.

A model privacy statement is available on the Europa website of the EaSI programme:

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1081&langId=en&furtherCalls=yes&callType=2>.

2.5 General requirements for the activities to be funded under EaSI

The EaSI Programme shall, in all its axes and actions, aim to:

- (a) pay particular attention to vulnerable groups, such as young people;
- (b) promote equality between women and men,
- (c) combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation;
- (d) promote a high-level of quality and sustainable employment, guarantee adequate and decent social protection, combat long-term unemployment and fight against poverty and social exclusion.

Hence, in designing, implementing and reporting on the activity, beneficiaries must address the issues noted above and will be required to provide detail, in the final activity report on the steps and achievements made towards addressing those aims.

3. TIMETABLE

	Stages	Date or period
a)	Publication of the call	02/2020
b)	Deadline for questions and requests for clarification	20/04/2020
c)	Deadline for submitting applications	30/04/2020 Swim, Courier and Post : 24:00 Brussels' time (CET) Hand deliveries 16:00 Brussels' time (CET)
d)	Evaluation period (indicative)	05-06/2020
e)	Information to applicants (indicative)	07/2020
f)	Signature of the grant agreements (indicative)	09/2020
g)	Starting date of the action (indicative)	09/2020

3.1. Starting date and duration of the projects

The actual starting date of the action will either be the first day following the date when the last of the two parties signs the grant agreement, the first day of the month following the date when the last of the two parties signs or a date agreed upon between the parties.

Applicants should note that if their project is selected, they may receive the grant agreement after the start date of the action that they have indicatively set in the application form. It is therefore advisable to number the months in the work programme instead of indicating the actual month or the exact date.

No expenditure can be incurred before the date of submission of the application. Any expenditure incurred before the signature of the Grant Agreement will be at the applicant's risk.

The indicative duration of the project should be 24 months.

4. AVAILABLE BUDGET AND CO-FINANCING RATE

4.1. Available Budget

The total budget earmarked for the EU co-financing of projects under this call is estimated at 1 300 000 EUR.

The EU grant requested should indicatively be between EUR 1 000 000 and EUR 1 300 000.

The Commission expects to fund 1 proposal.

The Commission reserves the right not to distribute all the funds available.

The Commission reserves the right to increase the amount of the funds in case of available funds and distribute them to proposals admitted in the reserve list, if any. This top-up of the budget is limited to 20% of the initial budget of the call.

4.2. Co-financing rate

Under this call for proposals, the EU grant may not exceed 80% of the total eligible costs of the action. The applicants must guarantee their co-financing of the remaining amount covered by the applicants' own resources or from sources other than the European Union budget¹⁰.

5. ADMISSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Applications must be sent no later than the deadline for submission referred to in section 3(c).
- Applications (meaning, the application form, including budget, description of the action, work plan plus a series of other required documents, see section 16.2) must be submitted using the electronic submission system available at <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/swim>, and by sending a signed, printed version of the complete application form (including all documents specified in the check-list) by post or courier service (one original dossier and one copy; see section 16).

Failure to comply with one of the above requirements may lead to the rejection of the application.

Applicants are encouraged to submit their project proposal in English in order to facilitate the treatment of the proposals and speed up the evaluation process. It should be noted, however, that proposals submitted in any of the official languages of the EU will be accepted. In this case, applications should be accompanied by an executive summary in English (see checklist, point 3).

¹⁰ Letters of commitment are required from any third party providing financial contributions to the eligible costs of the action (see checklist, point 5).

6. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

6.1. Eligibility of the applicants (lead and co-applicants) and affiliated entities¹¹

For British Applicants: please be aware that following the entry into force of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement¹² on 1 February 2020 and in particular Articles 127(6), 137 and 138, the references to natural or legal persons residing or established in a Member State of the European Union are to be understood as including natural or legal persons residing or established in the United Kingdom. UK residents and entities are therefore eligible to participate under this call.

a) Place of establishment

Legal entities properly established and registered in the following countries are eligible as single, lead applicant, co-applicants:

- EU Member States;
- Iceland and Norway in accordance with the EEA Agreement;
- Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey¹³.

b) Type of entities

To be eligible, the single, lead applicant, co-applicant and affiliated entity must be:

- a public or private entities of any type;
- legally established in one of the EaSI participating countries.
- an established formal network of business incubators with its own legal personality or representing (as a joint secretariat or officially appointed coordinator) an established formal network. A consortium of several established networks is eligible¹⁴.

To be eligible, the single applicant must:

- have members established in at least 14 EU Member States and in at least one non-EU EaSI participating country.

If a single applicant is considered not eligible, the application will be rejected.

¹¹ See section 2 of the Financial Guidelines for definitions.

¹² Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community

¹³ Other candidate and potential candidate countries would also participate in accordance with the general principles and the general terms and conditions laid down in the framework agreements concluded with them on their participation in Union programmes. However, it is not yet confirmed, therefore applicants and co-applicants from those countries should check with the secretariat of the call (empl-vp-2019-017@ec.europa.eu) their eligibility.

¹⁴ See also §2.1 for definitions of incubators and networks.

To be eligible, the consortium (lead applicant and co-applicants jointly) must:

- be established in at least 14 EU Member States and in at least one non-EU EaSI participating country. The lead applicant and each co-applicant must meet the above three criteria on entities (6.1.b) individually.

c) Consortia¹⁵

Actions may involve consortia.

For consortia:

If the lead applicant is considered not eligible, the application will be rejected.

If a co-applicant is considered not eligible, this organisation will be removed from the consortium and their costs/activities will be removed from the budget/project. The eligibility of the modified consortium will then be re-evaluated without them. If the application is accepted for funding, the work plan and budget will have to be adapted as appropriate.

d) Affiliated entities

Legal entities having a legal or capital link with applicants, which is neither limited to the action nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation and which satisfy the eligibility criteria, may take part in the action as affiliated entities, and may declare eligible costs.

For that purpose, applicants shall identify such affiliated entities in the application form.

Sole applicant

Where several entities satisfy the criteria for applying for a grant and together form one legally constituted entity, that entity may be treated by the authorising officer responsible as sole (single) applicant, provided that the application identifies the entities involved in the proposed action or work programme as affiliated entities of the applicant.

For that purpose, applicants shall identify such affiliated entities in the application form.

6.2. Eligible activities

a) Geographical Location

To be eligible, actions must be fully carried out in eligible participating EaSI countries (see section 6.1).

b) Types of activities

The grant will finance the activities indicated in section 2.2.

c) Core activities

¹⁵ Letters of mandate, authorising the lead applicant to submit the proposal and to sign the Grant Agreement on their behalf must be submitted by each co-applicant. Letters of commitment must be submitted by each co-applicant, affiliated entity, certifying that they are willing to participate in the project with a brief description of their role and indicating any financial contribution where applicable (see checklist points 5 and 6).

The following activities are core activities and may not be subcontracted:

- Project coordination/management activities;
- actions aiming at creating and improving connections to stakeholders in inclusive and social entrepreneurship, exchanging good practices.

7. EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Applicant(s) (single applicant or lead applicant and each co-applicant) must sign a declaration on their honour signed in their name (and on behalf of their respective affiliated entities, should they be part of the application), certifying that they are not in one of the situations referred to in article 136 and 141 of the Financial Regulation concerning exclusion and rejection from the procedure respectively, using the relevant form attached to the application form available at <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/swim/external/displayWelcome.do>.

7.1. Exclusion

The authorising officer shall exclude an applicant from participating in call for proposals procedures where:

- (a) the applicant is bankrupt, subject to insolvency or winding-up procedures, its assets are being administered by a liquidator or by a court, it is in an arrangement with creditors, its business activities are suspended, or it is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for under EU or national laws or regulations;
- (b) it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the applicant is in breach of its obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions in accordance with the applicable law;
- (c) it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the applicant is guilty of grave professional misconduct by having violated applicable laws or regulations or ethical standards of the profession to which the applicant belongs, or by having engaged in any wrongful intent or gross negligence, including, in particular, any of the following:
 - (i) fraudulently or negligently misrepresenting information required for the verification of the absence of grounds for exclusion or the fulfilment of eligibility or selection criteria or in the performance of a contract, a grant agreement or a grant decision;
 - (ii) entering into agreement with other applicants with the aim of distorting competition;
 - (iii) violating intellectual property rights;
 - (iv) attempting to influence the decision-making process of the Commission during the award procedure;
 - (v) attempting to obtain confidential information that may confer upon it undue advantages in the award procedure;
- (d) it has been established by a final judgment that the applicant is guilty of any of the following:

- (i) fraud, within the meaning of Article 3 of Directive (EU) 2017/1371 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Article 1 of the Convention on the protection of the European Communities' financial interests, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 July 1995;
 - (ii) corruption, as defined in Article 4(2) of Directive (EU) 2017/1371 or Article 3 of the Convention on the fight against corruption involving officials of the European Communities or officials of Member States of the European Union, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 May 1997, or conduct referred to in Article 2(1) of Council Framework Decision 2003/568/JHA, or corruption as defined in the applicable law;
 - (iii) conduct related to a criminal organisation, as referred to in Article 2 of Council Framework Decision 2008/841/JHA;
 - (iv) money laundering or terrorist financing within the meaning of Article 1(3), (4) and (5) of Directive (EU) 2015/849 of the European Parliament and of the Council;
 - (v) terrorist offences or offences linked to terrorist activities, as defined in Articles 1 and 3 of Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA, respectively, or inciting, aiding, abetting or attempting to commit such offences, as referred to in Article 4 of that Decision;
 - (vi) child labour or other offences concerning trafficking in human beings as referred to in Article 2 of Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council;
- (e) the applicant has shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations in the performance of a contract, a grant agreement or a grant decision financed by the Union's budget, which has led to its early termination or to the application of liquidated damages or other contractual penalties, or which has been discovered following checks, audits or investigations by an authorising officer, OLAF or the Court of Auditors;
 - (f) it has been established by a final judgment or final administrative decision that the applicant has committed an irregularity within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95;
 - (g) It has been established by a final judgement or final administrative decision that the applicant has created an entity in a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or any other legal obligations of mandatory application in the jurisdiction of its registered office, central administration or principal place of business;
 - (h) it has been established by a final judgement or final administrative decision that an entity has been created with the intent referred to in point (g);
 - (i) for the situations referred to in points (c) to (h) above, the applicant is subject to:
 - (i) facts established in the context of audits or investigations carried out by European Public Prosecutor's Office after its establishment, the Court of Auditors, the European Anti-Fraud Office or the internal auditor, or any other check, audit or control performed under the responsibility of an authorising officer of an EU institution, of a European office or of an EU agency or body;
 - (ii) non-final judgments or non-final administrative decisions which may include disciplinary measures taken by the competent supervisory body responsible for the verification of the application of standards of professional ethics;

- (iii) facts referred to in decisions of persons or entities being entrusted with EU budget implementation tasks;
- (iv) information transmitted by Member States implementing Union funds;
- (v) decisions of the Commission relating to the infringement of Union competition law or of a national competent authority relating to the infringement of Union or national competition law; or
- (vi) decisions of exclusion by an authorising officer of an EU institution, of a European office or of an EU agency or body.

7.2. Remedial measures

If an applicant declares one of the situations of exclusion listed above it must indicate the measures it has taken to remedy the exclusion situation, thus demonstrating its reliability. This may include e.g. technical, organisational and personnel measures to correct the conduct and prevent further occurrence, compensation of damage or payment of fines or of any taxes or social security contributions. The relevant documentary evidence which illustrates the remedial measures taken must be provided in annex to the declaration. This does not apply for situations referred in point (d) of section 7.1.

7.3. Rejection from the call for proposals

The Commission shall not award a grant to an applicant who:

- a. is in an exclusion situation established in accordance with Section 7.1; or
- b. has misrepresented the information required as a condition for participating in the procedure or has failed to supply this information; or
- c. was previously involved in the preparation of calls documents used in the award procedure where this entails breach of the principle of equality of treatment, including a distortion of competition that cannot be remedied otherwise.

The same exclusion criteria apply to affiliated entities of the applicant. These affiliated entities must therefore, be specified in the above-mentioned declaration(s).

Administrative sanctions may be imposed on applicants, or affiliated entities where applicable, who are guilty of misrepresentation, if any of the declarations or information provided as a condition for participating in this procedure prove to be false.

8. SELECTION CRITERIA

The single applicant or lead applicant and each co-applicant must have the financial and operational capacity to complete the activities for which funding is requested. Only organisations with the necessary financial and operational capacity may be considered for a grant.

For sole applicants, the selection criteria will also apply to the affiliated entities (not only to the sole applicant).

8.1. Financial capacity

The single applicant or lead applicant and each co-applicant must have access to solid funding (i.e. be considered as having a strong financial capacity) to maintain its/their activities for the period of the action and to help finance it as necessary.

The verification of financial capacity will NOT apply to public bodies.

The single applicant's or lead applicant's and each co-applicant's financial capacity will be assessed on the basis of the following supporting documents to be submitted with the application:

- Declaration on honour including declaration on financial capacity to carry out the activity (see checklist point 4); and
- Annual balance sheets and profit and loss accounts for the last financial year available (see checklist point 16);
- For newly created entities: the business plan might replace the above documents;
- Summary balance sheet and profit and loss accounts using the template provided in SWIM (see section 14) and signed by the legal representative (see checklist point 17);
- Information on the financial capacity provided by the applicant and in particular the information provided in section "Financial Resources" of the SWIM application form;
- An **audit report** produced by an approved external auditor certifying the accounts for the last two financial years available where such an audit report is available or whenever a statutory audit report is required by Union or national law.

If the audit report is not available AND a statutory report is not required by law, a self-declaration signed by the applicant's authorized representative certifying the validity of its accounts for the last two financial years available. (See checklist point 18).

In the event of an application grouping several applicants (consortium), the above thresholds apply to each applicant not to the consortium as a whole.

In the case of legal entities forming **one** applicant (the "sole applicant"), as specified in section 6.1, the above requirements apply to each one of those affiliated entities.

The ratio between the total assets in the applicant's (lead and co-applicant's) balance sheet and the total budget of the project or the part of the project budget for which that organisation is responsible for, according to the budget in the application form would be considered **strong if it is equal or greater than 0.70**.

Formula in the case of single applicant: own assets/total cost of the action > 0.70

Formula for each applicant in the case of consortia: applicant's own assets/part of the cost of the action corresponding to that applicant > 0.70

If the single applicant or the lead applicant is considered not to have a strong financial capacity, the application as a whole will be rejected.

If a co-applicant or several co-applicants is/are considered not to have a strong financial capacity, the Commission may also take into account any other relevant information on the financial capacity provided by the applicant, in particular the information provided in section "Financial Resources" of the SWIM application form.

Where applicable, the Commission may nevertheless request further information at any stage of the procedure and proceed to further verifications.

After this further analysis, the Commission may take various proportional measures depending on the level of weaknesses identified, which may be to:

1. reject the whole application;
2. remove the co-applicant from the consortium and re-evaluate the proposal without this co-applicant;
3. propose a grant agreement without pre-financing;
4. propose a grant agreement with a pre-financing paid in several instalments;
5. propose a grant agreement with pre-financing payment(s) covered by (a) financial guarantee(s); (*not applicable for low value grants*)
6. propose a grant agreement with joint financial liability of 2 or more applicants/co-applicants;
7. propose a grant agreement with a mix of the measures 4, 5 and 6;
8. for sole applicants : request the affiliates to act as guarantors.

In the case of mitigating measure 5, the Commission may request a pre-financing guarantee for up to the same amount as the pre-financing in order to limit the financial risks linked to the pre-financing payment.

The financial guarantee, in euro, shall be provided by an approved bank or financial institution established in one of the EU Member States. When the beneficiary is established in a third country, the Commission may agree that a bank or financial institution established in that third country may provide the guarantee if it considers that the bank or financial institution offers equivalent security and characteristics as those offered by a bank or financial institution established in a Member State. Amounts blocked in bank accounts shall not be accepted as financial guarantees.

The guarantee shall be released as the pre-financing is cleared against the payment of the balance, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the grant agreement.

8.2. Operational capacity

Single applicants or lead applicants, or, in the case of a consortium, lead applicant and co-applicants jointly, must have the professional competencies as well as appropriate qualifications necessary to complete the proposed action. In particular, they must have:

- demonstrable experience (in all countries covered) of business incubation/support over the last three years (see checklist point 14);
- demonstrable experience or capacity to identify and use relevant expertise on inclusive and social entrepreneurship (see checklist point 15);
- demonstrable experience in mobilising members or partner organisations in the covered countries to participate in a joint project or to deliver jointly defined outputs (see checklist point 14);
- the necessary operational resources (management, administration) to carry out the action;
- capacity to produce professional reports in English: C1 level in English and a university degree or equivalent for the coordinator;
- 3 years of proven international project management activities for the coordinator.

The operational capacity of the single applicant or lead applicant and co-applicant(s) to complete the proposed action must be confirmed by the submission of the following supporting documents:

- A detailed description of the business incubation activities by the members of the networks which will participate in the project (see first bullet above) carried out in the last three years (see checklist point 14);
- Proof concerning expertise on social and inclusive entrepreneurship:
 - A detailed description of tailored incubation support provided by members of the network(s) to social entrepreneurs, as well as to entrepreneurs from vulnerable backgrounds by the members in the last three years
 - OR
 - detailed description of how the applicant(s) will identify and use the necessary expertise on social and inclusive entrepreneurship (see checklist point 15);
- The CVs of the proposed project co-ordinator and of the persons who will perform the main tasks, showing all their relevant professional experience (see checklist point 12);
- Declaration on honour signed by the legal representative (including operational capacity to carry out the activity) (see checklist point 4);
- A declaration by the project manager/coordinator of the lead applicant certifying the professional competences and appropriate qualifications of the team to carry out the required tasks (see checklist point 13).

If the single applicant or lead applicant for consortia is considered not to have the required operational capacity, the application as a whole will be rejected. If a co-applicant is considered not to have the required operational capacity, this co-applicant will be removed from the consortium and the application will be evaluated without this co-applicant¹⁶. In addition, the activities and costs of the non-selected co-applicant will be removed from the granted budget. If the application is selected, the work plan and budget will have to be adapted.

9. AWARD CRITERIA

The proposals which fulfil the eligibility and selection criteria will be assessed on the basis of the following award criteria:

1. Award criterion: **Relevance of the proposal to the objectives of the call** (Max. 30 points)

In this respect, the assessment will focus on how well the proposed activities and expected outcomes would contribute to the objectives of the call. This includes an assessment of:

- how well the proposal will contribute to the promotion of both inclusive and social entrepreneurship in the countries covered;
- how well the proposal will contribute to supporting the scaling and replication of social enterprise and social innovation business ideas.
- how well the Key Issues paper, which is part of the application, demonstrates the value added of working with inclusive and social entrepreneurship.

¹⁶ This includes a re-evaluation of the eligibility of the modified consortium.

2. Award criterion: **Quality of the working methods and activities proposed in view of reaching the objectives** (Max. 30 points)

In this respect, the assessment will focus on the quality of the working methods, as well as on the feasibility of the activities, their coherence and relevance for the objectives and how likely the activities are to trigger the expected outcomes. This includes an assessment of:

- to what extent the proposed activities follow an overall clear and coherent work plan in which the individual activities benefit from synergies and knowledge transfer;
- how well the proposal demonstrates that the proposed activities will lead to the acquisition and use of the expertise on inclusive and social entrepreneurship by the participating organisations;
- to what extent the proposal includes relevant innovative approaches to reach the objectives.

3. Award criterion: **Impact of the proposal and sustainability potential** (Max. 20 points)

In this respect, the assessment will focus on:

- the geographical balance of the countries covered;
- to what extent the impact of the action is likely to be sustainable beyond the grant period (e.g. how likely it is that, after the action, the involved network of incubators will integrate social and inclusive entrepreneurship in their permanent work);
- the number of incubators targeted by the action and the extent to which the impact is likely to go beyond the network of incubators directly involved in the project (spill-over effect in the countries covered and to other countries).

4. Award criterion: **The cost-efficiency of the action** (Max. 20 points)

In this respect, the following aspects will be assessed:

- the coherence of the overall budget breakdown;
- the clarity and pertinence of the allocation of human and financial resources to the different activities of the proposal;
- the clarity and consistency of the estimated budget description and justification of costs;
- the degree to which the cost of the action is proportional to the impact of the action, taking into account its geographical coverage and the number of incubators expected to be mobilised.

Applications will be ranked according to the total score awarded. Taking into account the available budget, the proposal with the highest total score will be recommended for award, **on condition that:**

- **the total score reaches at least 60% of the maximum total mark;**
- **the score for each criterion is at least 50% of the maximum mark for that criterion.**

10. LEGAL COMMITMENTS

In the event of a grant being awarded by the Commission, a Grant Agreement, drawn up in euro and detailing the conditions and level of funding, will be sent to the beneficiary/partner, or to the coordinator in the case of multi-beneficiary grant agreements.

The two copies of the original agreement shall be signed by the beneficiary/partner, or the coordinator for multi-beneficiary Grant Agreements, and returned to the Commission immediately. The Commission will sign them last.

The Commission may have made relevant corrections and deletion of ineligible costs or activities in the Grant Agreement sent to the applicant – therefore the applicant should carefully read the whole agreement before signing and returning the copies to the Commission.

The model Multi-Beneficiary Grant Agreement and Mono-Beneficiary Grant Agreement are published on the Europa website: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=629&langId=en>.

There is no alternative to this/these model(s) in the context of this call. In specific cases, international agreements conditions may apply (except for the co-financing requirement).

Please note that the award of a grant does not establish an entitlement for subsequent years.

11. PUBLICITY/SOURCES OF FUNDING

By the beneficiaries

Beneficiaries must acknowledge in writing that the project has been supported by the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation ("EaSI") 2014-2020. In practice, all products (publications, brochures, press releases, videos, CDs, posters and banners, and especially those associated with conferences, seminars and information campaigns) must state the following:

*“This (publication, conference, video, <xxx>) has received financial support from the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation "EaSI" (2014-2020). For further information please consult:
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/easi>”*

The European emblem must appear on every publication or other material produced. Please see: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/services/visual_identity/pdf/use-emblem_en.pdf

When displayed in association with another name or logo, the name and emblem of the European Commission must have appropriate prominence.

Any communication or publication by the beneficiary/ies related to the action, in any form and using any means, including the Internet, shall indicate that it reflects only the author's view and that the Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

Every publication must therefore include the following:

"The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the official position of the European Commission"

In addition to these minimum requirements, references specified in the text of the call for proposals must also be specified.

If these requirements are not fully complied with, the beneficiary's grant may be reduced in accordance with the provisions of the grant agreement.

By the Commission¹⁷

With the exception of scholarships paid to natural persons and other direct support paid to natural persons in most need, all information relating to grants awarded in the course of a financial year shall be published on an internet site of the European Union institutions no later than the 30 June of the year following the financial year in which the grants were awarded.

By signing the grant agreement for an action, the beneficiary/ies authorises the Commission to publish the following information in any form and medium, including via the Internet site of the EU¹⁸:

- name of the beneficiary;
- address/es of the beneficiary when the latter is a legal person, region when the beneficiary is a natural person, as defined on NUTS 2 level¹⁹ if he/she is domiciled within the EU or equivalent if domiciled outside the EU;
- subject of the grant;
- amount awarded.

With a view to disseminating all results obtained and outputs delivered under the grant agreement, the Executive Summary sent with the Implementation Report will be posted on the website of the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

Upon a reasoned and duly substantiated request by the beneficiary, the publication shall be waived if such disclosure risks threatening the rights and freedoms of individuals

¹⁷ Articles 38 & 189 FR

¹⁸ Article 189 2. FR

¹⁹ Commission Regulation (EC) No 105/2007 of 1 February 2007 amending the annexes to Regulation (EC) No 1059/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a common classification of territorial units for statistics (NUTS), OJ L39, 10.2.2007, p.1.

concerned as protected by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union or harm the commercial interests of the beneficiaries.

12. DATA PROTECTION

12.1. Before the grant agreement's signature:

The reply to any call for proposals involves the recording and processing of personal data (such as name, address and CV). Such data will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2018/1725. Unless indicated otherwise, the applicant's replies to the questions and any personal data requested that are required to evaluate the application in accordance with the call for proposal, will be processed solely for that purpose by the Head of Unit F.4 – Programme Management and Implementation, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. Details concerning the processing of your personal data are available on the privacy statement at:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/data-protection-public-procurement-procedures_en

Personal data may be registered in the Early Detection and Exclusion System by the Commission, should the beneficiary be in one of the situations mentioned in Articles 136 and 141 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046²⁰. For more information see the Privacy Statement on:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/library/explained/management/protecting/privacy_statement_eds_en.pdf

12.2. Once the grant agreement is signed:

Beneficiaries must process personal data in compliance with the applicable EU and national law on data protection in accordance with the Regulation (EU) 2016/679²¹

Any personal data included in the Agreement must be processed by the Commission in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 2018/1725²²

Such data must be processed by the data controller identified in Article I.7.1 solely for implementing, managing and monitoring the Agreement or to protect the financial interests of the EU, including checks, audits and investigations in accordance with Article II.27.

Please refer to Article II.7 of the General Conditions of the model grant agreements.

²⁰ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32018R1046>

²¹ Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC, OJ L 119, 4.5.2016, p. 1, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L .2016.119.01.0001.01.ENG>

²² Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC

13. FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

Details on financial provisions are laid out in the Financial Guidelines for Applicants and the model Grant Agreement, both published on the Europa website under the relevant call: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=629&langId=en>.

Where the implementation of the action requires the award of procurement contracts (implementation contracts intended to cover the purchase of services and/or goods, equipment etc. **necessary for the implementation of the action**), the beneficiary may award the contract in accordance with its usual purchasing practices provided that the contract is awarded to the tender offering best value for money or the lowest price (as appropriate), avoiding conflicts of interests.

The beneficiary must clearly document the tendering procedure and retain the documentation in the event of an audit.

Entities acting in their capacity as contracting authorities within the meaning of Directive 2014/24/EU²³ or contracting entities within the meaning of Directive 2014/25/EU²⁴ must comply with the applicable national public procurement rules.

Beneficiaries may also subcontract **tasks forming part of the action**. If they do so, they must ensure that, in addition to the above-mentioned conditions for “implementing contracts” including best value for money and absence of conflicts of interests, the following conditions are also complied with:

- a) subcontracting does not cover core tasks of the action;
- b) recourse to subcontracting is justified because of the nature of the action and what is necessary for its implementation;
- c) the estimated costs of the subcontracting are clearly identifiable in the estimated budget;
- d) any recourse to subcontracting, if not provided for in description of the action, is communicated by the beneficiary and approved by the Commission. The Commission may grant approval:
 - (i) before any recourse to subcontracting, if the beneficiaries requests an amendment
 - (ii) after recourse to subcontracting if the subcontracting:
 - is specifically justified in the interim or final technical report and
 - does not entail changes to the grant agreement which would call into question the decision awarding the grant or be contrary to the equal treatment of applicants;
- e) the beneficiaries ensure that certain conditions applicable to beneficiaries, enumerated in the grant agreement (e.g. visibility, confidentiality, etc.), are also applicable to the subcontractors.

²³ Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on public procurement and repealing Directive 2004/18/EC (OJ L 94, 28.3.2014, p. 65-242)

²⁴ Directive 2014/25/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on procurement by entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors and repealing Directive 2004/17/EC (OJ L 94, 28.3.2014, p. 243-374)

14. PROCEDURE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

The procedure to submit proposals electronically is specified in point 14 of the "Financial Guidelines for Applicants". Before starting, please read carefully the SWIM user manual:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/calls/pdf/swim_manual_en.pdf

Once the application form is filled in, applicants must submit it **both electronically and in hard copy**, by the deadline set in section 3 c).

The SWIM electronic application form is available until midnight on the day of the submission deadline. Since the applicants must first submit the form electronically, and then print, blue ink sign and send it by post service or hand delivery by the submission deadline, it is the **applicant's responsibility to ensure that the appropriate postal or courier services are locally available on the day of the deadline**.

The hard copy of the proposal must be duly blue ink signed and sent in two sets of documents (one marked "original" and one marked "copy"), including all documents listed in section 16, by the deadline set in section 3 c), either by registered post, express courier service or hand delivery.

Address for registered post or express courier service:

European Commission
(NOT TO BE OPENED BY CENTRAL MAIL SERVICES)
Call for proposals VP/2019/017 – DG EMPL
CAD J-27 00/120
B-1049 Bruxelles - BELGIUM

Evidence of posting or express courier deposit slip should be kept as it could be requested by the European Commission in cases of doubt regarding the date of submission.

- a) registered post evidence : postmark
- b) express courier service evidence : deposit slip of express courier service

Hand-delivered proposals must be received by the European Commission by 4 p.m. of the date indicated in section 3 c) at the following address:

European Commission
Service central de réception du courrier
(NOT TO BE OPENED BY CENTRAL MAIL SERVICES)
Call for proposals VP/2019/017 – DG EMPL.E1
Avenue du Bourget, 1
B-1140 Evere

At that time the European Commission's Central Mail Service will provide a signed and dated proof of receipt which should be conserved as evidence of delivery.

If an applicant submits more than one proposal, each proposal must be submitted separately.

Additional documents sent by post, by fax or by electronic mail after the deadlines mentioned above will not be considered for evaluation unless explicitly requested in writing by the European Commission (see section 13).

The applicant's attention is also drawn to the fact that incomplete or unsigned forms, handwritten forms and those sent by fax or e-mail will not be accepted.

15. COMMUNICATION

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

Before the final date for submission of proposals

Any requests for additional information must be made by e-mail only to the coordinates stated below.

The information contained in the present call document together with the Financial Guidelines for Applicants provides all the information you require to submit an application. Please read it carefully before doing so, paying particular attention to the priorities of the present call.

All enquiries must be made by e-mail only to:

empl-vp-2019-017@ec.europa.eu

For any technical issues please contact: empl-swim-support@ec.europa.eu

The Commission has no obligation to reply to requests for additional information received after the deadline for questions and clarifications set in Section 3 b).

Replies will be given no later than 5 days before the deadline for submission of proposals. To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the Commission will not give a prior opinion on the eligibility of applicants, or affiliated entity(ies), an action or specific activities.

No individual replies to questions will be sent but all questions together with the answers and other important notices will be published (FAQ in EN) at regular intervals on the Europa website under the relevant call:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=629&langId=en>.

At the request of the applicant, the Commission may provide additional information solely for the purpose of clarifying the nature of the call.

The Commission may on its own initiative, inform of any error, inaccuracy, omission or clerical error in the text of the call for proposals on the mentioned Europa website.

The Commission therefore advises you to consult this website regularly in order to be informed of updates and of the questions and answers published. It is the applicant's responsibility to check updates and modifications regularly during the submission period.

After the deadline for submission of proposals

No modification to the proposal is allowed once the deadline for submission has elapsed.

If clarification is requested or if obvious clerical errors in the proposal need to be corrected, the Commission may contact the applicant by email provided that the terms of the proposal are not modified as a result.

It is the applicant's responsibility to provide a valid e-mail address and contact details and to check this e-mail address regularly. In case of any change of contact details, please send an e-mail with the application VP reference and the new contact details to (empl-vp-2019-017@ec.europa.eu).

In the case of consortia, all communication regarding an application will be done with the lead applicant only, unless there are specific reasons to do otherwise.

Applicants will be informed in writing about the results of the selection process. Unsuccessful applicants will be informed of the reasons for rejection. No information regarding the award procedure will be disclosed until the notification letters have been sent to the applicants.

16. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PRESENTATION OF THE APPLICATION AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

16.1. Instructions for the presentation of the application

The application comprises an application form including the budget, a description of the action and work plan plus a series of other required documents (see section 16.2).

The description of the action and work plan must be written using the template available in SWIM. All the information related to the description of the action and the work plan must be presented in one single document. The budget must be presented using the application form in SWIM.

The application should concisely explain the key actions and expected outputs/results. In line with the template available in SWIM, proposals also should include, inter alia, the following information in the description of the action (and foresee the corresponding expenditures in the budget estimate):

- a description of the deliverables, assumptions, risks and how these will be managed;
- the role of each applicant and affiliated entity;
- an indication of how the proposal is planning to use the existing knowledge and experience at EU and/or national level (e.g. already tested tools, methodologies, templates). Alternatively, an indication of the innovative elements that the action is planning to test;
- in case of subcontracting of any tasks of the action (see the Financial Guidelines): details on the tasks to be subcontracted and the reasons for doing so. These tasks must be clearly identified in the budget in separate lines. Core tasks as defined in section 6.2(c) of the call cannot be subcontracted.

In addition, the following information must be included in the description of the action:

- a short needs assessment of the business incubator situation by country covered, including estimates of the number / share of specialist (target-group / social enterprise) business incubators. If possible, the assessment is expected to also include an estimate / assessment of support for target-groups / social enterprises by mainstream business incubators;

- a description of the strategy and action plan for reaching out to target-group / social enterprises in the different countries covered;
- a description of actions related to communication and transnational dissemination of practices, experience and lessons learnt.

The preparation of proposals and of activities included in the work plan should take into account the Better Entrepreneurship online tool. The use of the tool with an appropriate selection of policy-makers and stakeholders has the potential to indicate country-specific (even region- and city-specific) gaps in business development support for target-group / social enterprises.

16.2. Required documents

The table in annex includes the documents that must be provided, including the documents mentioned in 16.1. Except for Legal entity form, VAT Certificate and Financial identification form which can be submitted later only for successful applications, please note that all other documents are necessary either for the admissibility (see section 5) or for the analysis of the eligibility (see section 6) or selection criteria (see section 8). It also indicates where originals are required. We recommend that applicants use this table as a **checklist** in order to verify compliance with all requirements.

While some information must be supplied using the templates available in the SWIM, other documents may need to be completed and/or attached electronically, usually either administrative documents or free format text descriptions. The SWIM application indicates in each section where SWIM templates must be used as well as which and where free format documents can be uploaded electronically.

Copies of the signed originals will be accepted for most of the documents to be submitted by the co-applicants. However, the lead applicant shall keep the original signed versions for its records, because **originals** may have to be submitted for certain documents at a later stage. **If the lead applicant fails to submit these original documents within the deadline given by the Commission, the proposal may be rejected for lack of administrative compliance.**

Regarding the compilation of the application file, it is recommended to:

- 1) follow the order of documents as listed in the checklist (and attach a ticked checklist as below to the proposal);
- 2) print the documents double-sided;
- 3) use 2-hole folders (do not bind or glue; stapling is acceptable).

CHECKLIST for required documents at application stage

This table includes the documents that must be provided for the proposal and where originals are required. We strongly recommend using the table as a checklist in order to verify compliance with all requirements. **Notes:** highlighted documents do not need to be provided by public entities. All the listed documents must be provided in SWIM.

No.	Document	Specification and content	The document must be provided by each				Originally signed?	Checkbox
			Lead applicant	Co-applicant	Affiliated entity	Associate organisation/ third party		
1	Official cover letter of the application	This letter must quote the reference of the call for proposals, be originally signed and dated by the authorised representative and include the proposal reference number generated by SWIM (e.g. VP/2019/017/xxxx) – free format	✓	--	--	--	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Signed SWIM application form submitted online + hard copies	The SWIM application form submitted online must be printed and dated and signed by the authorised legal representative and sent by hard copy as foreseen in Section 14. <i>Note: the online form must be electronically submitted before printing. After electronic submission, no further changes to the proposal are permitted.</i>	✓	--	--	--	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Executive summary (if necessary)	Executive summary in EN[/FR/DE] (maximum 2 pages) – free format	✓	--	--	--	--	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Declaration on honour	The template is available in SWIM and must be written on the official letterhead of the organisation, bearing the original signature of the authorised legal representative and include the application's reference number generated by SWIM (VP/2019/017/XXXX). This declaration must also cover any affiliated entity. Where applicable, the relevant documentary evidence which illustrates the remedial measures taken for applicants who declared one of the situations of exclusion listed in the declaration. <i>Copies of the original signed declaration of co-applicants are accepted at the submission of the application; originals to be submitted upon request.</i>	✓	✓	--	--	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Letter of commitment	The template is available in SWIM and must explain the nature of the organisation's involvement. The letter must be written on the official letterhead of the organisation and bear the original signature of the legal representative. <i>Copies of the original signed letters of commitment are accepted at the submission of the application; originals to be submitted upon request.</i>	✓	✓	✓	--	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Letter of mandate	The template is available in SWIM and must be written on the official letterhead of the organisation, dated and signed by the authorised legal representative.	--	✓	--	--	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Legal/capital link with lead or co-applicant	Affiliated entities are required to provide proof of the legal and/or capital link with the single applicant, lead applicant or co-applicant.	--	--	✓	--	--	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	Proof of registration	A certificate of official registration or other official document attesting the establishment of the entity (for public bodies: the law, decree, decision etc. establishing the entity).	✓	✓	--	--	--	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Statutes	The articles of association/statutes or equivalent proving the eligibility of the organisation.	✓	✓	--	--	--	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Description of the action and work plan	The template is available in SWIM which must be duly completed and submitted electronically together with the online submission form and on paper as well. The paper version must be identical to the electronic version of the detailed work programme. Applicants are encouraged to submit the document in English, French or German. See Section V.	✓	--	--	--	--	<input type="checkbox"/>

11	Budget Explanation for the project	<p>This is a separate free-format document in addition to the budget section of the on-line application form and it must also be submitted electronically in annex to the on-line application form. The paper version must be identical to the electronic version of the budget explanation.</p> <p>The budget explanation must provide additional information to explain and justify items of the proposed budget. It should in particular explain: how the number of working days of staff involved in the implementation of the action has been fixed; how average travel costs were calculated; unless this is self-explanatory, how costs of services and administration costs were defined.</p> <p>The Commission may request applicants to submit additional justifications of proposed eligible costs during the evaluation procedure.</p>	✓	--	--	--	--	□
12	Curricula vitae of key staff	Detailed CVs of the person responsible for managing the action (named in section A.3 of the online application form) and the persons who will perform the main tasks . The CVs should indicate clearly the current employer.	✓	✓	✓	--	--	□
13	Declaration certifying the competence of the project team	Declaration of the project manager/coordinator certifying the competence of the complete project team to carry out the required task and demonstrating operational capacity. It should include a job specification of the project manager and the persons (from lead applicant, co-applicants and affiliated entities) performing the main task, with a brief description of their outputs related to the subject of the proposal. – free format	✓	--	--	--	--	□
14	Description of business incubation experience	<p>This is a separate free-format document which demonstrates the experience in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - business incubation/support over the last three years, - mobilising members or partner organisations in the covered countries to participate in joint project or to deliver jointly defined outputs. 	✓	✓	--	--	--	□
15	Proof concerning expertise on social and inclusive entrepreneurship	<p>This is a separate free-format document which should contain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A detailed description of tailored incubation support provided by members of the network(s) to social entrepreneurs, as well as to entrepreneurs from vulnerable backgrounds by the members in the last three years OR • A detailed description of how the applicant(s) will identify and use the necessary expertise on social and inclusive entrepreneurship 	✓	✓	--	--	--	□
16	Balance sheet & profit and loss accounts	The most recent balance sheet and profit & loss accounts, including assets and liabilities, specifying the currency used. (not applicable for grants below 60,000.00 EUR)	✓	✓	--	--	--	□
17	Summary balance sheet & profit and loss accounts	The template is available in SWIM and must be signed by the authorised legal representative (not applicable for grants below 60,000.00 EUR)	✓	✓	--	---	✓	□
18	Audit report	<p>For grants of EUR 750 000 or more per applicant or affiliated entity, an audit report produced by an approved external auditor certifying the accounts for the last financial year available, where such an audit report is available or whenever a statutory audit report is required by Union or national law.</p> <p>If the audit report is not available AND a statutory report is not required by law, a self-declaration signed by the applicant's authorized representative certifying the validity of its accounts for the last financial year available.</p> <p>In case of consortium, the threshold applies to each co-applicant in line with their share of the action budget. Applicants are encouraged to submit the document in English, French or German. See Section V.</p>	✓	✓	--	--	--	□
19	Key Issues paper	In this document (max. 3 pages), the applicants are requested to explain to the members of the involved network(s) the value added of embracing inclusive and social entrepreneurship, possibly including a visual illustration (See Section 2.2) – free format	✓	✓	--	--	--	□

CHECKLIST for required documents for the proposals selected for funding

This table includes the documents that must be provided for the proposals selected for funding and where originals are required.

No.	Document	Specification and content	The document must be provided by each				Originally signed?
			Lead applicant	Co-applicant	Affiliated entity	Associate organisation/ third party	
1	Legal entity form	The template is available in SWIM and online (http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm) and must be duly signed and dated by the legal representative.	✓	✓	--	--	✓
2	VAT certificate	A document showing the identification number for tax purposes or the VAT number, if applicable.	✓	✓	--	--	--
3	Financial identification form	The template is available in SWIM and online (http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/financial_id/financial_id_en.cfm) and must be duly signed and dated by the account holder and bearing the bank stamp and signature of the bank representative (or a copy of recent bank statement attached).	✓	--	--	--	✓

ANNEX I:

FINANCIAL GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

Annex I is available on the Europa website under the relevant call:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=629&langId=en>

**ANNEX II: MODEL FOR TENDER SPECIFICATIONS FOR SUBCONTRACTING
EXTERNAL EXPERTISE**

Tender Specifications –

1. Background
2. Purpose of the Contract
3. Tasks to be performed by the Contractor
 - 3.1. Description of tasks
 - 3.2. Guidance and indications on tasks execution and methodology
4. Expertise required
5. Time schedule and reporting
6. Payments and standard contract
7. Price
8. Selection criteria related to the financial and technical capacity of the bidders
9. Award criteria related to the quality of the bids received

The contract will be awarded to the tenderer whose offer represents the best value for money - taking into account the following criteria:

.....
.....
.....

It should be noted that the contract will not be awarded to a tenderer who receives less than [70%] on the Award Criteria.

10. Content and presentation of the bids
 - 10.1. Content of the bids
 - 10.2. Presentation of the bids