



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion DG
Employment and Social Legislation, Social Dialogue
Labour Law

BUDGET HEADING 04.03.02.01

Posting of workers: enhancing administrative cooperation and access to information

**European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation
("EaSI"- Progress Axis)
2014 - 2020**

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

VP/2015/007

In view of the large number of enquiries, please do not telephone.
Questions should be sent by e-mail only to: Empl-VP-2015-007@ec.europa.eu

To ensure a more rapid response it is helpful if applicants send their queries in English, French or German.

The English version of the call is the original.

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This call for proposals is financed by the **European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation "EaSI" 2014-2020**¹ 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. OBJECTIVES OF THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS

1.1. General background and political context

The general aim of this Call for Proposals is to fund initiatives in order to enhance the implementation, application and enforcement of Directive 96/71/EC² concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the transnational provision of services.

The Directive aims to reconcile the exercise of companies' fundamental freedom to provide cross border services under Article 56 TFEU³, on the one hand, with the appropriate protection of the rights of workers temporarily posted abroad to provide them, on the other. In order to do that it identifies the mandatory rules of general interest at EU level that must be applied to posted workers in the host country. The Directive establishes a core of clearly defined terms and conditions of work and employment for minimum protection of workers that must be complied with by the service provider in the host country. The Directive thus provides a significant level of protection for workers, who may be vulnerable given their situation (temporary employment in a foreign country, difficulty to obtain proper representation, lack of knowledge of local laws, institutions and language). The Directive also plays a key role in promoting the necessary climate of fair competition between all service providers (including those from other Member States) by guaranteeing a level playing field, as well as legal certainty for service providers, service recipients, and workers posted within the context of the provision of services.

A posted worker for the purposes of the Directive is a worker who, for a limited period, carries out his work in the territory of a Member State other than the State in which he normally works.

The Directive also lays down an obligation for cooperation between Member States and to designate a liaison office or a competent body for cooperation between the public authorities, which in accordance with national legislation are responsible for monitoring these terms and conditions of employment applicable to posted workers.

This cooperation was further reinforced in the Commission Recommendation⁴ on enhanced administrative cooperation in the context of posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services.

¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1081>

² OJ No L 18, 21.01.97, p. 1

³ Treaty on the functioning of the European Union

⁴ OJ No C 85, 4.4.2008, p. 1

Following the Commission Recommendation of 31 March 2008, a sub-group of the Expert Committee on Posting of Workers assessed the possibilities to facilitate the exchange of information by electronic means between the national authorities responsible for administrative cooperation.⁵ The recommendation of the sub-group to envisage the use of a separate application of the Internal Market Information System (IMI) was endorsed by Council conclusions on the further development of an electronic exchange system facilitating administrative cooperation within the framework of the posting of workers Directive, adopted by the EPSCO Council on 7 March 2011.⁶

The pilot project on electronic information exchange in the area of posting of workers started in IMI on 16 May 2011. Its aim has been to test in practice the use of IMI for the implementation of the administrative cooperation provisions of the Posting of Workers Directive.

Since 2011 IMI has been used to help Member States cooperate with each other by replying to reasoned requests and undertaking checks and inspections requested by another Member State. Typical situations in which IMI has been used are:

- dealing with doubts on the existence or establishment of the sending company (i.e. to fight against "letter box companies")
- doubts about the proper payment of posted workers
- doubts on the existence of the employment relationship.

On 21 March 2012, the Commission adopted a proposal for an Enforcement Directive of Directive 96/71/EC concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services⁷. Following examination by both the European Parliament and the Council, the Enforcement Directive 2014/67/EU⁸ was adopted on 15 May 2014. Its text sets out a comprehensive set of measures including *inter alia* better information for posted workers and companies and rules for cooperation between national authorities. In addition, it provides for accompanying measures to develop, facilitate, support, promote and further improve administrative cooperation and to increase mutual trust, including through financial support.

While reinforcing the administrative cooperation between the Member States and the Commission, the Enforcement Directive confirms the use of IMI as the primary channel of communication between Member States as regards the posting of workers, which had previously been subject to a pilot project and extends the use of IMI to the area of cross-border enforcement of administrative fines and penalties.

The Commission is currently providing the Member States with technical assistance in the process of transposing the Enforcement Directive, through having set up and organising meetings in a designated expert group. Its members consist of national officials responsible for the transposition.

Some initiatives with the aim to promote administrative cooperation and mutual understanding and fund initiatives relating to the application and enforcement in practice of the applicable rules, have been carried out in the past under the Pilot Projects on "Working and Living Conditions of Posted Workers" (VP/2009/015 and VP/2010/011). A similar call to this one was launched during the last years (VP/2013/008 and VP/2014/007).

Furthermore, a call for proposals for preparatory actions with a view to create information centres for migrant and posted workers was launched in 2013 (VP/2013/011) and 2014 (VP/2014/005). No similar call is planned for 2015.

⁵ Report of the subgroup on the development of an information exchange system to the Expert Committee on Posting of Workers.

⁶ Council doc. 7395/11.

⁷ COM 2012(131)

⁸ OJ L 159, 28.5.2014, p. 11–31

1.2. General objectives

The main objective of the call is to develop and fund initiatives in order to enhance the implementation, application and enforcement of the Directive 96/71/EC concerning the posting of workers in the framework of provision of services in practice and its Enforcement Directive 2014/67/EU in particular improvement of the capacity of the Commission and of the Member States to develop initiatives in the field of posting of workers and a decent work agenda.

The proper functioning of administrative cooperation among Member States and improved access to information on applicable terms and conditions of employment in a transparent and accessible manner, are essential for the correct application, implementation and enforcement of the Directive.

The general objectives are to 1) further improve transnational administrative cooperation between national competent bodies and social partners involved in the monitoring and correct application of the Posting of Workers Directive and its Enforcement Directive and 2) increase mutual trust among stakeholders, including promoting exchanges of relevant officials and training, as well as 3) developing, facilitating and promoting best practice initiatives in the area of posting of workers in the framework of temporary provision of services.

In order to achieve the objective, it is intended with this Call for Proposals to fund transnational cooperation initiatives between at least 3 eligible states' responsible authorities and/or social partners. Furthermore, there is a need to provide transparent and accessible information on national law and practices concerning rights and obligations to be respected as regards posted workers, including those laid down in collective agreements covered by the Directive and to increase the awareness of the rights to be respected.

1.3. The specific objectives

The specific objectives are the following:

- Promotion of transnational cooperation among stakeholders and dissemination of best practices, including the promotion of the use of IMI and sharing experiences and best practices in this respect.
- Increase the accessibility and transparency of the information concerning the terms and conditions of employment to be respected, including the use of websites, bodies and authorities to which posted workers and undertakings can turn to for information as well as the use of relevant initiatives by competent authorities and/or social partners aimed at improving the provision of the relevant information.
- Increase of the knowledge about and the transparency of the existing practises in the Member States to monitor and enforce the terms and conditions of employment to be respected, such as the use of appropriate measures taken to ensure compliance with these terms and conditions in subcontracting chains.
- Promotion of exchange and training of relevant officials and social partners.
- Promotion of exchange of information and best practices, such as developing or updating websites containing general or sector-specific information concerning terms and conditions of employment to be respected, including the development of a single official national website as envisaged in the Enforcement Directive, among the stakeholders.

1.4. Available Budget

The budget authority has allocated an indicative amount to the present Call for Proposals for 2015 of **€ 2 000 000** and the call will be funded by Budget Line 04 03 02 01 of the EU budget of EaSI programme under the axis PROGRESS. The Commission reserves the right not to distribute all the funds available.

1.5 Eligible types of action are:

The following actions may be co-financed:

- Developing, facilitating and promoting exchanges and/or training (for example joint visits, joint inspections, short training actions) of officials of competent public authorities and/or relevant social partners in charge of administrative cooperation and mutual assistance in relation to posted workers in the framework of the provision of services, including the use of IMI and sharing experiences and good practices in this context.
- Developing, facilitating and promoting of exchanges and/or best practices (for example joint visits, joint inspections, short training actions) of officials of competent public authorities and/or relevant social partners in the context of the monitoring the compliance with and enforcement of the applicable rules in relation to posted workers in the framework of the provision of services.
- Developing, facilitating and promoting exchanges and best practice initiatives with respect to the improved access to information and awareness of rights, such as the development of initiatives aimed at providing more transparent information and adequate support and assistance to undertakings and posted workers on the applicable terms and conditions of employment, the use of information, exchange of experiences and good practices in that respect, as well as the the development and updating of databases or websites containing general or sector-specific information concerning terms and conditions of employment to be respected in relation to posted workers in the framework of the provision of services.
- Exchange of information and best practices (for example, seminars, conferences, round tables) and dissemination of information and best practices in this respect (for example, reports, manuals, guidelines, leaflets, newsletter, web pages, handbooks).

1.6. Requirements on how the activities shall be carried out

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/contractors 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.

1.7. Communication and dissemination plan

Adequate communication and dissemination of results is essential in ensuring the EU added value of the action and its sustainability after the funding has ended. Information-giving and awareness raising are key activities to ensure that other interested parties benefit from the project and can create new

opportunities to extend it or develop new partnerships. The proposals must therefore include a detailed plan for communication and dissemination of the projects' results. In particular, such a plan must include information on dissemination activities and targeted audiences.

At final report stage, the Beneficiary will be required to provide details about how and to whom the results, best practices and findings have been disseminated and how interested parties have been involved in the project.

1.8. Publicity and information requirements

Beneficiaries/contractors 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/index_en.htm

Every publication must include the following:

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

1.9 Reporting requirements

The Commission, with the support of an external contractor, will monitor regularly the EaSI Programme. Therefore, beneficiaries/contractors 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 annexed.

In setting up the action, beneficiaries/contractors must foresee the necessary funding for monitoring and reporting to the Commission.

2. SUBMISSION OF GRANT APPLICATIONS

2.1 Submission and implementation dates

2.1.1. Respect of deadlines – Programming

In view of the time needed to examine applications, actions may not start before the deadline given below. Applicants should note that if their project is approved, they will not necessarily receive the grant agreement prior to the action starting dates indicated and should, therefore, take this into account in programming the timing of their project.

Any expenditure incurred before the grant agreement has been signed by both parties is at the applicant's risk.

2.1.1.1.

The initial planned duration of an action may not exceed 24 months.

2.1.1.2.

Proposals which do not respect the provisions of point 2.1.1.1. and date of submission and date of starting as indicated at point 2.1.2. and/or do not comply with the rules indicated at point 4.2 hereinafter, will not be considered by the Evaluation Committee.

2.1.2. Deadline:

The **deadline** for the submission of applications is as follows:

- **18 September 2015** for actions commencing no earlier than **16 November 2015 and no later than 31 December 2015**

Applications not respecting this condition will not be considered.

2.1.4. Information on the action for which the grant is requested

When drafting the project proposal, applicants are invited to pay particular attention to the following elements:

- The proposal should provide a clear explanation of the rationale and problem definition/analysis underpinning the proposed action, as well as the specific contribution of the action to the objectives of the call for proposals and its expected impact.
- In case of recurrent related applications by the same applicant, the added value of the new project as compared to previous ones should be clearly explained.
- The choice of partners involved and countries covered should be duly explained and justified as regards their relevance towards the specific objectives of the action.
- Duplication between the SWIM application form and the "detailed work programme" should be avoided.
- Cost estimates should be reasonable, justified and comply with the principle of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency. It should be noted that the cost-effectiveness of actions will be evaluated on the basis of the proposed budget. The Commission reserves the right to make corrections and/or cut non-eligible expenditure from the proposed budget, but it will not make adjustments in order to improve cost-effectiveness of proposals.

2.2. Co-financing rate and minimum amount of EU grant

This budget heading allows support to be given to projects to which the applicants contribute at least 20 % of the total eligible costs of the action. Contributions in kind will not be taken into account.

2.2.1 The contribution to the project of at least 20% will be evidenced from the budget included in the application and, inter alia, through commitment letters stating the precise amount of financial cash contribution to the budget.

2.2.2 Any application which requests a grant of more than 80 % will be excluded automatically from the selection.

2.2.3. Depending on the quality of the received applications, the Commission expects to fund around 6 proposals with an average of 350.000 Euro as EU contribution per proposal.

2.2.4. The Union funding per project will not be less than EUR 150.000.

3 EVALUATION CRITERIA

3.0 Exclusion criteria

Applicants (lead and co-applicants) must be in conformity with Articles 106(1) and 107 to 109⁹ of the Financial Regulation¹⁰.

3.1 Eligibility criteria

3.1.1. General rule of eligibility

This call for proposals is intended to finance specific transnational cooperation projects. Therefore grants are not intended to finance the normal operation or meetings of bodies representing management or labour (the social partners); they are intended only to cover additional expenditure linked directly to projects.

3.1.2. Eligible applicants

a) Applicants (lead and co-applicants) must be properly constituted and registered legal entities, having their registered office established in:

- one of the Member States of the European Union;
- one of the EFTA/EEA countries, in accordance with the EEA Agreement, participating in the EaSI Progress Axis 2015 (Iceland and Norway);
- In derogation from the requirement with regard to legal entities and pursuant to Article 131 of the Financial Regulation, the organisations of social partners without legal personality under the applicable national law are also eligible provided that the conditions of the Financial Regulation¹¹ related thereto are met.

b) Applicants (lead and co-applicants) must fall in one of the following categories: public authorities, social partners, international organisations, non-profit organisations, research centres and institutes, universities and civil societies' organisations.

3.1.3. Eligible applications

To be eligible, applications must:

a) Be sent by the deadline indicated in section 2.1.2;

⁹ The situations referred to include bankruptcy, compulsory winding-up, being under court administration, in an arrangement with creditors or any other similar proceedings; convictions of professional misconduct; non-fulfilment of social security or tax payment obligations; convictions of fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity; declared in serious breach of contract in relation to activities funded by the EU budget; subject to conflict of interest; guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the required information.

¹⁰ Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 (OJ L298, 26 October 2012); http://ec.europa.eu/budget/biblio/documents/regulations/regulations_en.cfm.

¹¹ Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 (OJ L298, 26 October 2012); <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=OJ:L:2012:298:TOC>

b) Be submitted according to the requirements listed below and in accordance with the provisions requested at point 4.2 hereinafter;

c) Be complete, detailed and include all the documents and elements indicated in the table below at point 3.1.3.1;

3.1.3.1 Applications lacking one or more of the documents and/or elements requested hereinafter will be considered **not eligible and therefore will not be examined** by the Evaluation Committee.

1	Official covering letter of the application: quoting the reference of the call for proposals, with the original signature of the lead applicant's legal representative.
2	Print-out of the duly completed and submitted on-line application form (https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/swim): dated and with the original signature of the lead applicant's legal representative. NOTE: The on-line form <u>must be electronically submitted before printing</u> . After the electronic submission no further changes to the application are possible.
3	A declaration on honour from the lead applicant and each co-applicant. This must be written on the official letterhead paper of the applicant organisations and have the original signature of the legal representative, certifying that the applicant organisation is not in one of the situations listed in Articles 106(1) and 107 to 109 of the Financial Regulation and that it has the financial and operational capacity to complete the activity for which funding is requested.
4	A letter of mandate from each co-applicant. This must be written on the official letterhead paper of the organisation, following the template provided and bearing the original signature of the legal representative. It must also be submitted electronically in annex to the on-line application form
5	For each affiliated entity (if any), a document providing proof of the legal and/or capital link with the lead applicant or a co-applicant.
6	"Financial identification" form of the lead applicant organisation duly completed with the original signature of the account holder and the original signature and stamp of the bank. The financial identification form can be found at: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/financial_id/financial_id_en.cfm

7	<p>"Legal entity" form of the lead applicant and each co-applicant duly completed with the original signature of the legal representative. The legal entity form can be found at: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm</p> <p>Applicants must also provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a copy of the certificate of official registration or other official document attesting to the establishment of the entity (where this exists); • a copy of the articles of association/statutes or equivalent, proving the eligibility of the organisation; • a copy of a document confirming the applicant's tax or VAT number, if available; • exclusively in the case of social partner organisations without legal personality, a signed letter of the legal representative certifying his/her capacity to undertake legal obligations on behalf of the organisation. <p>Organisations of EFTA/EEA are requested to provide a translation in English, French or German of the required documents.</p>
8	<p>A detailed work programme for the project. This is a separate document in addition to 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 detailed work programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It should provide a detailed and structured overview of the different project activities, the foreseen timing and the role and responsibility of each partner organisation (<i>not</i> individual staff members) in the implementation of these activities, as well as, to the extent possible, draft agendas of the main project events. • Where appropriate, risk factors as regards implementation and/or impact of the activities should be identified and mitigating measures defined. • It offers an opportunity to develop further the rationale and problem analysis underpinning the action. <p>All other information on the action should in principle be given in the SWIM application form. The detailed work programme is therefore expected not to be much longer than 5 pages, with an absolute maximum of 10 pages.</p> <p>The detailed work programme should be submitted in English, French or German.</p>

9	<p>A budget explanation for the project. This is a separate 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 all items in 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> <p>The budget explanation should be submitted in English, French or German.</p>
10	<p>Letters of commitment</p> <p>A signed letter of commitment from each co-applicant¹² and any affiliated entity named in the application form, and from any associate organisation or third party playing a major role in or making a financial contribution to the action, should be provided, explaining the nature of the partner's involvement and specifying the amounts of any funding provided.</p> <p>The letters of commitment should be submitted in English, French or German.</p>
11	<p>A Curriculum vitae of the person responsible for managing the action (named in section A.3 of the application form) and of other persons undertaking major tasks indicating clearly the current employer(s) with whom there exists either a permanent or temporary contract of employment. The CV should be submitted in English, French or German.</p>
12	<p>In the case of subcontracting for external expertise, the completed form "Contracts for implementing the action" provided in the on-line application¹³.</p> <p>Applicants wishing to recruit the services of external experts must provide the detailed information regarding the tasks involved, the reasons for subcontracting these tasks and the selection procedure that will be followed to award the contract¹⁴. The form should be submitted in English, French or German.</p> <p>Applicants should note that subcontracting external expertise is only admissible if the staff of the applicant organisations and affiliated entities do not have the skills required. It is not permissible to subcontract the project management of the action.</p>

¹² Not required for the lead applicant.

¹³ In this context, interpretation and translation tasks are not considered as external expertise. The general rules and principles regarding the conclusion of external contracts included in Annex I do nevertheless fully apply (e.g. the obligation for the beneficiary to "seek competitive tenders from potential contractors and award the contract in writing to the bid offering the best value for money").

¹⁴ Where the value of the procurement contract exceeds EUR 60 000, the beneficiary, in addition, must provide a copy of the draft tender specifications. To assist applicants, a model for tender specifications is included in Annex II to this call. Important additional information concerning subcontracting can be found in Annex I. The draft tender specifications should be submitted in English, French or German.

In addition, the applicants must be able to prove, if requested, that they have sought bids – by registered letter – from at least five different tenderers, including proof that they have posted the call for tender or invitation to tender at least on their website and provide a detailed description of the selection procedure.

This requirement does not apply to public authorities which are already governed by a system of public procurement rules; however, where applicable, this should be indicated.

13	<p>The most recent profit and loss accounts and balance sheet of the lead applicant and all co-applicant organisations which are not public bodies or international organisations. The balance sheets, by definition, must include assets and liabilities. The applicants should specify which currency is being used in the balance sheet. The Commission reserves the right to request balance sheets from previous years, if necessary.</p> <p>Organisations that are not required by law to establish an official balance sheet must nevertheless provide information on their assets and liabilities.</p>
14	<p>Profit and loss accounts and balance sheet summary which must follow the template provided and must be signed by the legal representative of the applicant and all co-applicants which are not public bodies or international organisations</p>
15	<p>For grant requests over EUR 750 000: an external audit report produced by an approved auditor, certifying the accounts of the applicant organisation for the last financial year available (not necessary for public bodies and international organisations). The threshold applies to each of the co-applicants in line with their share of the action budget. The external audit report should be submitted in English, French or German.</p>

3.1.4. Eligibility of actions:

To be eligible, actions must:

- **A.** Comply with the rules related to dates of starting of the actions as stated in point 2.1.2;
- **B.** Be linked to at least one of the objectives stated at point 1 above;
- **C.** Be fully carried out in the following EaSI participating countries: the Member States of the European Union, Iceland, and Norway;
- **D.** Comply with the rules on subcontracting and external expertise set above;
- **E.** Comply with the European Union co-financing percentage of maximum 80 % as set at point 2.2 above;
- **F.** Be carried out in at least 3 different eligible countries.

3.2. Selection criteria

Applicants (lead and co-applicants) must have the financial and operational capacity to complete the activity for which funding is requested. Only organisations with the necessary financial and operational capacity may be awarded a grant.

– **Financial capacity** to carry out the action: applicants must have access to solid and adequate funding to maintain their activities for the period of the action and to help finance it as necessary¹⁵.

The verification of the financial capacity does not apply to public bodies or international organisations.

¹⁵ The financial capacity of the applicant (lead and co-applicants) is assessed based on the analysis of the supporting documents listed in positions 2, 3, 13 and 14 in the table in section 3.1.3 "Eligible applications" and by calculating the ratio between the total assets in the applicant's balance sheet and the total budget of the project or the part of the project budget for which that organisation is responsible according to the budget in the application form (the ratio should be greater than 0.70). In addition, the Commission will take into account any other relevant information on financial capacity provided by the applicant.

– **Operational capacity** to complete the proposed action: applicants must have the operational resources (technical, management) and the professional skills and qualifications needed to successfully complete the proposed action, as well as the ability to implement it. It is therefore not permissible to subcontract the project management of the action. Applicants must have a strong track record of competence and experience in the field and in particular in the type of action proposed.

The operational capacity of the applicant (lead and co-applicant) is assessed based on the analysis of the supporting documents listed in positions 2, 3 and 11 in the table in section 3.1.3 "Eligible applications".

3.3. Award criteria

Proposals which fulfil the eligibility and selection criteria indicated above will be assessed according to the following award criteria:

- i. The extent to which the action meets the objectives of this call for proposals;
- ii. The extent to which the action has a genuine transnational dimension;
- iii. The quality of the consortium, i.e. the degree of involvement and commitment at the application stage of the stakeholders in the action (meaning the coordinator, co-applicants, and/or affiliated entities);
- iv. The cost-effectiveness of the action;
- v. The overall quality, clarity and comprehensiveness of the proposal, including the budgetary aspects and the arrangements to publicise the action, including aspects related to the European Union funding, and dissemination methods envisaged.

When assessing the proposals according to the above-mentioned award criteria, the following method will be applied:

- Applications with a score below 50% for criteria i or ii will not be considered for award.
- Applications with an average overall score of less than 60% will not be considered for award.
- Taking account of the budget available for this call for proposals, the proposals with the highest evaluation scores will be selected for award.

3.4. Timetable

The indicative timetable for the various stages of the procedure is:

	Stages	Date or indicative period
a)	Publication of the call for proposals	May 2015
b)	Deadline for submitting applications	18 September 2015
c)	Evaluation period	Until end-November 2015
d)	Information to applicants, signature of grant agreements	From end-November 2015
e)	Starting date of the action/ work programme	Between 16 November and 31 December 2015

4. PRACTICAL PROCEDURES

4.1. Where can the application form be found?

The compulsory on-line grant application form is an electronic form which must be filled by using the Internet Web system "SWIM" at the following internet address:

<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/swim/external/displayWelcome.do>

This system allows the introduction, edition, validation, printing and submission of the grant application form. Once the application is submitted electronically, a print out of an exemplar has to be signed by the legal representative submitting the proposal and be sent to the Commission as per point 4.2.below. After electronic submission of the application no changes are possible.

Other requested forms and different useful documents can also be found at the above quoted web site.

4.2. Where does the application need to be sent?

4.2.1 The applicant shall mandatorily send the covering letter of application, together with all the applicable documents listed in section "3.1.3. *Eligible applications*" above as signed originals as well as one copy of all these documents (in total: 2 sets of documents) by the deadline indicated at point 2.1.2 above, to the following address:

<p><i>Call for proposals VP/2015/007</i> <i>European Commission</i> <i>Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion DG</i> <i>Unit EMPL/B/2 (Labour Law)</i> <i>Rue de Spa 3 – DG EMPL CAD</i> <i>B 1049 Brussels (Belgium)</i></p>

Please send your application by registered mail or express courier service only. The date of post office on the stamp on the envelope or express courier stamp or slip on the envelope indicating the sending date will be considered as a proof of the date of sending.

Hand-delivered applications must be received at the latest by the European Commission on the last day for submission. The address for hand deliveries of documents for the European Commission is: Avenue du Bourget n° 1, B-1140 Evere, Belgium (although in any case, the package must be labelled with the DG EMPL address above). Proof of delivery is a signed receipt from the Commission's Central Mail Service stamped with the date of the last day for submission or earlier. This department is open from 08:00 to 17:00 from Monday to Thursday and from 08:00 to 16:00 on Fridays. It is closed on Saturdays, Sundays and on Commission holidays. Please note that for security reasons, hand deliveries (including courier services) are not accepted in other Commission buildings.

Please note that the SWIM electronic application form is available until midnight on the day of the submission deadline. However, as candidates must first submit the form electronically, and then print, sign and send it by post 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.

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

- Follow the order of documents as listed in the table under section 3.1.3 "Eligible applications";
- Print the documents double-sided, where possible;
- Use only 2-hole folders (please do not bind or glue).

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

4.2.2 When the applicant, requested to prove with the above quoted documents the date of sending of the application, is not able to prove it, the application will be considered as not delivered and therefore not eligible.

4.2.3 -----ALL ENQUIRIES MUST BE MADE BY E-MAIL ONLY AT:

Empl-VP-2015-007@ec.europa.eu

PLEASE DO NOT TELEPHONE

Questions may be sent to the above address no later than 10 days before the deadline for the submission of proposals. The Contracting Authority has no obligation to provide clarifications to questions received after this date. Replies will be given no later than 5 days before the deadline for submission of proposals. To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the Contracting Authority cannot 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 in the course of the evaluation procedure, will be published on the Europa website: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=629&langId=en>. It is therefore advisable to consult the abovementioned website regularly in order to be informed of the questions and answers published.

4.3. What next? Accepted and rejected applications

An Evaluation Committee will examine the applications.

Applications will be examined and selected taking account of the criteria laid down in this document. The entire evaluation procedure is expected to take around 2-3 months.

Evaluation process and Notification of applicants

All communication regarding an application will be done with the lead applicant only, unless there are specific reasons to do otherwise.

The European Commission will notify applicants once the evaluation procedure is completed. **Requests for information concerning the progress of dossiers sent prior to the end of the evaluation procedure will not be answered.**

The Commission may contact applicants during the procedure to request additional information. This is generally done by e-mail. It is entirely the responsibility of applicants to ensure that all contact information provided is accurate and functioning. 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-2015-007@ec.europa.eu.

The partial or total withholding by the applicant of any information that may have an impact on the Commission's final decision concerning the application will entail the automatic disqualification of the application or, if discovered at a later stage, will entitle the Commission to terminate the agreement and demand the full repayment of all sums received by the beneficiary under it.

Rejected applications

Unsuccessful applicants will receive a letter stating the reasons for rejection.

Selected applications

Successful applicants will receive two original copies of the grant agreement for acceptance and signature. Both these copies must be sent back to the Commission, which will then return one of them once it has been signed by both parties.

5. PUBLICITY

5.1 In order to achieve a wider dissemination of project results, the Commission may publish on the Internet site of the European Commission elements provided by the beneficiary in the Final Report concerning, inter alia, the project description, results and methodology

5.2 Beneficiaries accept to post the results of the project on their web-site for at least one year. They shall clearly state on the website that the project has received funding from the European Commission.

ANNEX I: FINANCIAL GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

Annex I is available on the call website:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=630&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

9. Award criteria

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

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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