



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion DG
Social Affairs
Social Investment Strategy

Call for proposals on social innovation

***Establishing and testing integrated interventions
aimed at supporting people in (the most) vulnerable situations***

EaSI

PROGRESS AXIS

Budget heading 2020_04.030201_78

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

VP/2020/003

Questions should be sent by email to:

empl-vp-2020-003@ec.europa.eu

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

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.	Definitions.....	- 4 -
1.4.	Main Purposes	- 5 -
2.	OBJECTIVES - TYPES OF ACTIONS - EXPECTED RESULTS	- 5 -
2.1.	Objectives.....	- 5 -
2.2.	Types of actions to be funded	- 6 -
2.3.	Monitoring.....	- 11 -
2.4.	General requirements for the activities to be funded under EaSI	- 11 -
3.	TIMETABLE.....	- 12 -
3.1.	Starting date and duration of the projects.....	- 12 -
4.	AVAILABLE BUDGET AND CO-FINANCING RATE.....	- 13 -
4.1.	Available budget	- 13 -
4.2.	Co-financing rate	- 13 -
5.	ADMISSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	- 13 -
6.	ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	- 14 -
6.1.	Eligibility of the applicants [(lead and co-applicants)].....	- 14 -
6.2.	Eligible activities.....	- 16 -
6.3.	Ineligible activities	- 16 -
7.	EXCLUSION CRITERIA.....	- 16 -
7.1.	Exclusion	- 17 -
7.2.	Remedial measures	- 18 -
7.3.	Rejection from the call for proposals	- 19 -
8.	SELECTION CRITERIA	- 19 -
8.1.	Financial capacity.....	- 19 -
8.2.	Operational capacity.....	- 21 -
9.	AWARD CRITERIA	- 21 -
10.	EVALUATION PROCEDURE	- 23 -
11.	LEGAL COMMITMENTS.....	- 24 -
12.	PUBLICITY/SOURCES OF FUNDING	- 24 -
13.	DATA PROTECTION.....	- 25 -
13.1.	Before the grant agreement's signature:	- 25 -
13.2.	Once the grant agreement is signed:.....	- 26 -
14.	FINANCIAL PROVISIONS.....	- 26 -
15.	PROCEDURE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS.....	- 26 -
16.	COMMUNICATION	- 27 -
17.	INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PRESENTATION OF THE APPLICATION AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTS.....	- 29 -
17.1.	Instructions for the presentation of the application	- 29 -
17.2.	Required documents	- 30 -
	ANNEX I: FINANCIAL GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS.....	- 34 -
	ANNEX II: MODEL FOR TENDER SPECIFICATIONS FOR SUBCONTRACTING EXTERNAL EXPERTISE.....	- 35 -

1. INTRODUCTION – BACKGROUND

1.1. Programme/Legal base

This call for proposals is financed under the **European 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 the working conditions.

The call for proposals was announced in the EaSI annual work programme **C(2019)7630** published on 30/10/2019².

1.2. Policy and economic background

While the employment and social situation in the EU has continued to benefit from the EU economy growth and improved labour market conditions in the recent years, it is evident that the Covid-19 crisis will have significant consequences in terms of worsening the economic and social situation across the continent in the coming quarters. Even in spite of unprecedented employment retention and economic stabilisation measures being put in place, more and more Europeans will find themselves in an increasingly precarious income situation. Though it is not possible to see the scale of this crisis yet, it is clear that national social safety nets will be strained across the EU.

The number of people who are at risk of poverty or social exclusion continued to steadily decline for a sixth consecutive year in 2018, while income inequality slightly increased overall in 2018 and remains at a high level compared to the pre-crisis period. Notably, not all EU citizens have benefitted from the recent economic recovery to the same extent and, while employment and social circumstances have overall improved over recent years, they still vary widely at Member State level and within regions, with significant social challenges remaining.

Long-term unemployment and inactivity are still relatively high in several EU Member States and poverty and social exclusion remain high especially for children and young adults, persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities and non-EU migrants. While the number of people living in (quasi-)jobless households is decreasing, their poverty level remain persistently high if not increasing. The stability of monetary poverty points to remaining gaps in the effectiveness of social benefits in reducing poverty, especially among particularly vulnerable households. Furthermore, people in vulnerable situations also face

¹ 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") and amending Decision No 283/2010/EU establishing a European Progress Microfinance Facility for employment and social inclusion (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:347:0238:0252:EN:PDF>)

² <http://www.cc.cec.sg/vista/home?documentDetails&DocRef=C/2019/7630&ComCat=SPINE&ticket=ST-19606017-bw7WZgmXS9sLYUDzmrRQV9W2YFeACcxu7zwUzx2ivBvVGL0fcEV1QpPNzZHoy0ZjgLhr0AuqFENMu8wrl6vSTYC-rS0vSrmBGYC9uVMazGdt1o-66FFJnlrdcXLsaxhsC9q61E9vJd18cAdyqS9RJ9SjW>

more challenges in accessing education, social services and the labour markets, which limits their upward social mobility.

The on-going developments thus make it even more urgent to make social protection and social inclusion systems as resilient as possible. This also comes in the context of growing social polarisation, both within Member States and across the Union, and an increased perception of unfairness or lack of social mobility – in spite of economic and labour market growth. The coming economic crisis and the persistence of gaps call for an integrated response at the implementation level to seal the basic social safety net for Europeans so that no one falls through and provide for some minimum level of reassurance for the population. This would also provide for a much needed political signal on fairness, solidarity and resilience. Existing policy guidance has great relevance to tackle the incoming challenges, if well coordinated and adjusted to local circumstances.

The **Recommendation on the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market** (2008)³ promoted an integrated approach linking together three strands: income support, labour market activation policies and access to quality services. It aimed to support those who were able to work with sustainable, quality employment, and those unable to work with enough resources to live in dignity. Furthermore, the Recommendation highlighted the importance of coordinating policies between local, regional and national authorities and called on all other relevant partners, including those affected by poverty and social exclusion, the social partners, non-governmental organisations and service providers, to play an active part in developing and implementing the integrated strategies.

The implementation of the Recommendation was first assessed in 2013, as part of the **Social Investment Package**⁴, and then in 2017, as part of the **European Pillar of Social Rights Package**⁵. The reforms triggered across the EU produced encouraging results in many Member States, but the overall progress in implementation had been mixed. The main obstacles include coordination difficulties at the local level, scattering of competencies across policy levels, restricted access to services, and insufficient administrative capacity to coordinate the above-mentioned three strands within or across departments.

Continued political commitment to active inclusion as a long-term structural reform is essential, in order to reap the benefits of the work already carried out so far and strive for finding innovative and more effective approaches to implement it at local/regional level. In correspondence with this notion, the **Council recommendation on the integration of the long-term unemployed (LTU) into the labour market** (2016)⁶ provided policy guidance to simplify and ensure better access to support for those out of work for long periods, by encouraging the registration of individuals with the employment service, providing them with an individual in-depth assessment of their needs and potential and offering a job integration agreement at the very latest at 18 months.

The **European Pillar of Social Rights** ('the Pillar')⁷, proclaimed on 17 November 2017, sets out key principles and rights for a renewed process of upward convergence towards better working and living conditions, including social inclusion and the right to adequate

³ OJ L 307, 18.11.2008, p. 11.

⁴ COM(2013) 83 final of 20 February 2013.

⁵ SWD(2017) 257 final.

⁶ [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32016H0220\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32016H0220(01)&from=EN)

⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights_en and https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/social-summit-european-pillar-social-rights-booklet_en.pdf

social protection. The Commission's ambition is to promote a Union striving for more when it comes to social fairness and prosperity for all. It has a strong commitment to deliver on the principles and develop a series of actions for the implementation of the Pillar. Most of the implementation tools required to deliver on the Pillar are in the hands of local, regional and national authorities, in cooperation with social partners and the civil society at large.

More specifically, in line with the active inclusion approach, **Principle 14** of the Pillar states that everyone lacking sufficient resources has the right to adequate minimum income benefits ensuring a life in dignity at all stages of life, and effective access to enabling goods and services. For those who can work, minimum income benefits should be combined with incentives to (re)integrate into the labour market.

1.3. Definitions

Social innovation and social policy experimentation

According to the EaSI Regulation:

- **'Social innovations'** are innovations that are social both as to their ends and their means and in particular those which relate to the development and implementation of new ideas (concerning products, services and models), that simultaneously meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations, thereby benefiting society and boosting its capacity to act.
- **'Social policy experimentation'** means policy interventions that offer an innovative response to social needs, implemented on a small scale and in conditions that enable their impact to be measured, prior to being repeated on a larger scale, if the results prove convincing.

Effective and efficient social policy innovation requires a sound and thorough evidence based approach that allows policymakers and service providers to gather robust evidence on the effects of a given policy on a well-defined outcome. This is crucial in order to plan the most appropriate course of action and to identify and avert potential negative effects of future similar interventions.

People in (the most) vulnerable situations

The target group of the call relates to people in **vulnerable situations and those facing the greatest barriers to social and labour market integration**. Some of them are beneficiaries of minimum income benefits or other social assistance [cash benefits] of last resort, while some others might be left out of such support. The call aims at reaching out to those furthest away from the labour market and the society and support their social inclusion through the provision of adequate income support linked with effective service provision. The call also aims at reaching out to the people in the most vulnerable situations, who are not registered or do not take up any benefits; i.e. either beneficiaries of minimum income schemes or those people in vulnerable situations who should be beneficiaries of such social safety nets but, for one reason or another, cannot reach the schemes. These people are typically confronted with complex, multiple barriers to social inclusion and require complex, coordinated interventions.

1.4. Main Purpose

This call for proposals aims to **support existing or new partnerships (see section 6.1) in testing innovative approaches supporting in particular the delivery of Principle 14 of the European Pillar of Social Rights.**

This multi-stakeholder innovative approach integrates three strands: 1) the provision of adequate minimum income benefits; 2) activation services supporting the access to employment and 3) effective access to enabling goods and services.

Effective coordination between the local, regional and national authorities, as well as cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, such as social partners, non-governmental organisations and service providers is crucial.

This call supports policy innovations and experimentations implemented at a small scale and within conditions that enable their impact to be measured, prior to being replicated on a larger scale if the results prove convincing. This allows policymakers and service providers to gather robust evidence on the effects of a given policy innovation, and to determine what does and does not work. Producing objective empirical evidence on the impact/outcomes of a social policy innovation is important in view of taking decisions on whether or not to pursue or scale up these policies either through the ESF+ or from other sources.

2. OBJECTIVES - TYPES OF ACTIONS - EXPECTED RESULTS

2.1. Objectives

The call will support **innovative and experimental local/regional-level projects** aimed at putting in place comprehensive strategies, mechanisms and services ensuring a **holistic approach to support people in (the most) vulnerable situations.**

The projects are expected to **carry on the notion of the active inclusion approach reflected by the Pillar principle 14 on minimum income and provide for the integrated delivery of the three strands:** such as the combination of adequate income support provision with [labour market] activation and effective access to enabling goods and services in an integrated way.

The aim is to **establish and enhance cooperation among various organisations** (authorities and non-governmental organisations) (a) providing cash benefits, (b) delivering personalised social services and other general services and (c) providing labour market activation measures and to test its implementation. Examples of these organisations are: governmental entities, including central, regional or local municipal departments, public and private employment offices, public social services, private and non-for-profit social service providers. Examples for benefit and service provisions include: various social assistance schemes such as minimum income, family and childcare benefits, disability benefits, etc.; social services such as childcare, long-term care, housing schemes; targeted social services, such as advise and counselling, crisis centres, family protection services, services for persons with disabilities and chronic illnesses, services for victims of domestic violence, services for ex-offenders; labour market related services; other services of general interest, such as education, healthcare and essential services.

In line with the active inclusion approach, *Principle 14* of the Pillar states that everyone lacking sufficient resources has the right to adequate minimum income benefits ensuring a

life in dignity at all stages of life, and effective access to enabling goods and services. For those who can work, minimum income benefits should be combined with incentives to (re)integrate into the labour market. The effective delivery of this principle calls for an integrated approach, combining adequate income support, inclusive labour markets and access to quality services (as described above). EU Member States have been undertaking reforms aimed at introducing or enhancing such integrated support; nevertheless, there is still room for improvement or for testing new innovative solutions in terms of the depth and breadth of the integrated interventions. Delivery on the ground can be especially challenging, therefore innovative approaches should provide a boost for stepping up its effectiveness. While access to minimum income benefit is considered as an individual right, the composition and the need of the household is to be taken into account, thus it requires a multi-dimensional, multi-stakeholder approach that encompasses a wide range of policies.

Access to services comprises a broad range of different services, from general services such as health and education, to social services and essential services. Social services comprise mainstream and personal targeted services. Mainstream social services respond to the dependency needs (such as young or old age or disability) and provide universal care. Personal targeted social services are typically needs-based services supporting social inclusion and eventual labour market integration. They help with the caring obligations, disability and chronic illness, crises, skills for the labour market, social exclusion and other ad hoc problems, such as indebtedness. Essential services, on the other hand, are those fulfilling basic needs, such as energy, water, sanitation, transport, banking and digital services. While some of these services could be delivered in an integrated way, ensuring access to the others is a key element of the integrated approaches⁸.

The Call aims to allow social experimentation with the view to **increase the effectiveness, coverage and impact of the integrated approaches** and does not focus on a particular single mechanism integrating the three strands of active inclusion.

2.2. Types of actions to be funded

The project should describe the specific activities envisaged to implement the proposed social policy experimentation. The project should describe the set of expected outcomes and explain how they will be measured. The expected outcomes should be realistic and defined in measurable terms as they will be used to monitor the project progress.

Applicants should make certain that the activities described correlate with the proposed budget. The implementation of the activities should be carefully documented to ensure transferability and/or up-scaling if the innovation is proven to be effective.

Note that **minimum income cash benefits as such (as defined by the legislative framework within the EaSI Participating Countries) are not to be funded under the call.**

⁸ As specified in the Commission ‘Study on integrated delivery of social services aiming at the activation of minimum income recipients in the labour market — success factors and reform pathways’ (<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8148&furtherPubs=yes>), there are no one-size-fits-all solutions with regards to the integrated delivery of services. The reforms can be placed on a continuum of integrated services, which ranges from very loose cooperation via institutionalised cooperation to formal mergers of previously separated services, and depend on institutional conditions, political cultures and ambitions with the integrated services.

Areas to document are:

- The activities along with the related resources and staff needed to operate the project.
- How the activities interrelate, where staff will be needed and what it is expected to do, what facilities and support services are required.
- Expected measurable outcomes to be achieved through the proposed activities.
- Indicators for the expected outcomes.
- Expected results and impacts of the intervention.

The proposals **should focus on the following set of activities, while allowing for flexibility in the design.** The activities must be reflected in the budget proposal accordingly.

1. Setting up the necessary structures and capacity building

Unless structures delivering an integrated support to (the most) vulnerable people already exist at the local/regional level, the first set of actions should aim at **developing and setting up new structures and systems** ensuring the integrated delivery of the three strands of the Pillar principle 14 approach. This type of action will improve the outreach to both types of potential households in need, *i.e.* those already captured by the social protection system and those eligible for social protection, but not yet benefiting of the latter.

Examples of these kinds of structures or systems may include: structures delivering formalized needs assessment, evaluation and follow-up, case management based services, common platforms, partnerships to deliver support through single entry points or any other models. Concerning the effective access to enabling services, coordination and cooperation between a broad range of social services should be considered, in particular personal targeted social services⁹.

If such structures have already been set up and are effectively working, the project should **describe them, but does not need to plan any activity**, apart from further capacity-building. (Please note that no costs linked to the previous setting-up of the system will be eligible.)

Capacity building is to be understood both internally (within the organisations) and externally (between the participating organisations). Importantly, the objective for the capacity building should be clearly defined. In other words, which problems are to be addressed through this action. The development of sustainable and innovative multi-level partnership models encompasses the coordination mechanisms between the various actors, the development of integration strategies across actions and the exchange of information, as well as of good practices through trainings and seminars.

Expected results

⁹ Providing support with care, physical or mental disabilities, crises, social exclusion, ad hoc problems (such as indebtedness), or supporting labour market integration.

- ✓ Multi-level multi-stakeholders partnerships are in place and exchange of information and procedural arrangements are developed and mutually agreed.
- ✓ The established partnerships facilitate and regularly evaluate the newly tested implementation of services.
- ✓ The partnerships work towards common goals jointly defined, such as addressing particular problems, reaching out to or empowering particular target groups.

2. Reaching out to the persons/households in need

This intervention area should aim at **testing innovative outreach and holistic approaches with a view to increase the take up of benefits, and to provide effective referral and cooperation mechanisms, including to the family household members of the beneficiaries when needed.** Cooperation among various organisations (general service providers, like health care, school, child care, etc., local municipalities and benefit provider authorities) should facilitate an [early] warning system for recognizing the demand for in cash or in kind support of households in a vulnerable situation.

The applicants should explain clearly the **aim of the policy** and the **target population** (with the definition of sub-groups, underpinned with the necessary contextual explanations, based on the relevant local/regional/national strategies), how the expected outcomes will be identified and measured, and notably how data will be collected and used, and within which timeframe.

The first set of actions should be based on a **robust preliminary assessment of the needs and number** of the persons/households (potentially) eligible for income and in kind support described at sufficient detail in the project proposal. In particular, the project should identify and describe the different incentives, opportunities or constraints with which the targeted population will be confronted. The project should explain why these activities might help to address the social need that was identified and to ensure that the targeted population will indeed be willing and able to participate.

The project should be of a **sufficiently large scale** (involving **at least 300 clients** per project) for the intervention to reach a reasonable and representative critical mass and provide a significant evidence base.

The projects are expected to aim at reaching out to the groups which had **not previously been targeted**/for which **previous actions had failed**/or **had not brought the required effect**.

The proposal should present the **methodology for assessing the challenges** faced by the households (or a particular group of households) in a vulnerable situation. More specifically, the description should cover the following aspects:

- The identification of barriers that the households (or a homogenous group/s of households) face with regards to social inclusion and/or labour market integration;
- Previous activities aimed at addressing these barriers and their lack of effectiveness;
- The estimate for the size of the concerned households or group/s to reach out;
- Technics for approach and engage these concerned households;
- Methodologies for identifying effective support structures, ensuring referral to concerned services.

Following up on the outreach to the target group, the concrete delivery of services and support will take place. For those people who are ready for immediate take up of work, such services and support should aim at the **labour market inclusion through active labour market policy measures, providing employment opportunities, job search, trainings and re-qualification, accompanied by empowerment and personalized support**. For people facing multiple and complex barriers and **not ready for labour market participation**, services and support should target their **social inclusion, as well as improved empowerment and activation**. Such services can include skill and competence development, training, psychological support, [health] rehabilitation, integration into community activities, etc.

Expected results:

- ✓ A social innovation model on the delivery of Pillar Principle 14 on minimum income through integrated active inclusion approaches - that interlink the provision of income, enabling services, in particular social services and those supporting access to employment – will be put in place.
- ✓ Integrated support and services will be effectively and successfully delivered to (the most) vulnerable groups.
- ✓ Methodology to assess the activation (into society and into labour market) of the vulnerable population.
- ✓ Over 80% of the clients will be a) in employment, training or other activation measures if considered to be ready for labour market participation at the beginning of the intervention or b) socially included through various other activation measures if considered not readily employable at the beginning of the intervention. Given the experimentation nature of the project, this target is indicative.

3. Evaluation of the impact of the project activities

A **comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan of the impact of the intervention, including a clear and fully developed methodology** identifying the relevant results and outcome indicators, must be included. The evaluation should include both the design and implementation stages and it should be adequately timed.

The evaluation component of the projects is two-fold:

- a. The outcome evaluation addresses results that can be attributed to the project, as well as the extent to which the project has reached its objectives.
- b. The process evaluation addresses how the project was conducted in terms of consistency and design with the stated plan of actions and the effectiveness of the various activities of the plan in accordance with the policy relevance detailed in section 2.4.

The evaluations should be conducted by outside experts.

The applicants should clarify the information they want to collect, plan adequate evaluation time and budget, state the methods for appropriate data collection and analysis, and explain how they will communicate and use the results.

4. Mainstreaming/dissemination and up-scaling

Each proposal must include a **detailed mainstreaming/dissemination and up-scaling plan** to promote at the local/regional/national and European levels the results of the action, including at least two dissemination events at the local/regional/national levels and at least one such event at the European level.

The description of these activities must be based on a **solid preliminary assessment of the potential future avenues** and will form an important part of the evaluation of the project proposal, given that the philosophy of the EaSI Programme PROGRESS Axis is to give way for social experimentation in view of the mainstreaming and upscaling of the results. **Particular attention should be paid here to the (early) involvement in this process of the ESF and ESF+ managing authorities, as well as the relevant policy-making experts at all levels (local, regional, national).**

Moreover, the application should provide a **comprehensive description of a long-term sustainability strategy**, showing how the objectives, activities and efforts to achieve the desired outcomes will continue beyond the grant period and whether and how the project could be implemented on a larger scale. This strategy should indicate *inter alia* how the lessons learned after the finalisation of the project will be implemented. It should also identify the organisational and financial resources needed to ensure the continuation of the intervention beyond the grant period.

The applicants must also describe here **how the relevant outputs of the project will be used in the policy-formulation process** (*e.g.* up-scaling, replication, re-evaluation of the proposed policy, formulation of new policy options). They should indicate whether and how other services could benefit from the knowledge acquired.

5. Transnational cooperation

This set of actions will play a particular role as it aims at the fostering of **knowledge- and experience- sharing between the different EaSI Participating Countries including: surveys, data collection, development of guidelines and practical tools, seminars and peer reviews.**

Each project beneficiary will be expected to organise at least one experience sharing event with the other beneficiaries of this call, as well as at least two study trips to other similar structures/cooperation mechanisms already in place in other **EaSI Participating Countries** (here specific attention should be paid to a wide geographical coverage).

The projects should aim at proposing a wider coverage of EaSI Participating Countries.

Please note that – due to the uncertainties – the meetings might have to take place through web-streaming (subject to an agreement of the European Commission).

6. Management of the project

The project management and coordination of activities are core activities and may not be sub-contracted.

In view of the above described transnational activities, the partners in the consortia will need to have a good command of the English language.

Each proposal and their budget must include the participation in **two events** (a kick-off meeting, as well as a final networking and experience sharing meeting) to be organised

in Brussels by the European Commission (max. two nights, two people), as well as the organisation of **at least two coordination meetings with all members of the consortium**.

Please note that – due to the uncertainties – the meetings might have to take place through web-streaming (subject to an agreement of the European Commission).

2.3. Monitoring

The Commission - with the support of an external contractor - will regularly monitor the EaSI Programme. Therefore, the 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 have been applied, as well as how anti-discrimination considerations, including accessibility issues, have been addressed through the activities. Related templates are attached.

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>.

The beneficiary shall submit each year an annual technical and financial report, along the lines of the final technical report (see above).

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/contractors 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 e-mail where the beneficiary/contractor first contacts the individual concerned) that the Commission/external contractor would be processing their personal data. Beneficiaries/contractors 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>.

2.4. 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, inactive, long-term unemployed, single parents, people with migrant background, among others,
- 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	25/06/2020
b)	Deadline for questions and requests for clarification	08/10/2020
c)	Deadline for submitting applications	15/10/2020 Swim, Courier and Post: 24:00 Brussels' time (CET) Hand deliveries: 16:00 Brussels' time (CET)
d)	Evaluation period (<i>indicative</i>)	16/10/2020 - 31/01/2021
e)	Information to applicants (<i>indicative</i>)	28/02/2021
f)	Signature of the grant agreements (<i>indicative</i>)	31/03/2021
g)	Starting date of the action (<i>indicative</i>)	01/04/2021

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 date.

No expenditure can be incurred before the signature of the beneficiary's grants. Any expenditure incurred before the signature of the Grant Agreement will be at the applicant's risk.

The indicative duration of the project is expected to be **30 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 **10 000 000 EUR**.

The Commission expects to fund **around 8** proposals.

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 on 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.

Although, International Organisations¹¹ may be entitled to different co-financing provisions under their bilateral agreements with the EU, it must be noted that the rule of the Call will prevail for proposals submitted by an International Organisation.

5. ADMISSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Applications must be sent **no later than the deadline** for submission referred to in *section 3*.
- Applications (meaning the application form, including the budget, the description of the action and work plan) 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 15*).

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

Only one proposal shall be submitted by one applicant, in order to ensure diversity.

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 associate organisations and] any third party providing financial contributions to the eligible costs of the action (see checklist, point 5).

¹¹ According to the meaning of Article 156 of the Financial Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046.

6. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

6.1. Eligibility of the applicants [(lead and co-applicants)]¹²

For British Applicants: Please be aware that following the entry into force of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement¹³ on 1 February 2020 and in particular Articles 127(6)¹⁴, 137¹⁵ and 138¹⁶, 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 call¹⁷.

a) Place of establishment

Legal entities properly established and registered in the following countries are eligible as applicants:

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

Bearing in mind the need for a balanced geographical coverage in this call, a **maximum of 2 projects proposed by lead applicants from the same country** can be selected for funding.

b) Type of entities

To be eligible, the lead applicant and co-applicants must be one of the following:

- public authority or public agency expressly mandated in writing by the competent public authorities to assume responsibility for the implementation of the action;
- non-profit organisation (private or public);
- research centres / institutes / higher education establishments;
- civil society organisations¹⁸;
- social partner organisation at European¹⁹, national or regional level (in application of Article 197 2. I of the Financial Regulation, social partner organisations without

¹² See section 2 of the Financial Guidelines for the definitions.

¹³ Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community.

¹⁴ Art 127 (6) Unless otherwise provided in this Agreement, during the transition period, any reference to Member States in the Union law applicable pursuant to paragraph 1, including as implemented and applied by Member States, shall be understood as including the United Kingdom (*extract*).

¹⁵ Art. 137. The United Kingdom's participation in the implementation of the Union programmes and activities in 2019 and 2020 (*extract*).

¹⁶ Art. 138 Union law applicable after 31 December 2020 in relation to the United Kingdom's participation in the implementation of the Union programmes and activities committed under the MFF 2014-2020 or previous financial perspectives (*extract*).

¹⁷ On the basis of the Withdrawal Agreement, the United Kingdom is to be treated as a Member State during and after the transition period for actions which implement Union programmes and activities committed under the current Multiannual Financial Framework (2014-2020).

¹⁸ All organised society structures outside of government, such as organisations representing social and economic players; non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (such as youth or family associations and religious communities).

¹⁹ These include the European social partner organisations that are consulted in accordance with Article 154 TFEU (an up-to-date list of these organisations can be found under "List of consulted organisations" on

legal personality are also eligible provided that the conditions of the Financial Regulation related thereto are met²⁰).

c) Consortia²¹

The grant shall be awarded to a **consortium of stakeholders** (lead applicant and co-applicants), based on the following eligibility criteria:

- i. The lead applicant must be a public authority at central, regional or local level, or a body governed by the public law.
- ii. The lead applicant and co-applicants must together cover the following three:
 - (i) body responsible for granting or administering minimum income benefits (or similar social safety net cash benefits),
 - (ii) body delivering active labour market policy measures, namely public or private employment services,
 - (iii) body delivering social services and/or enabling goods and services, namely various public and non-profit organisations providing in-kind benefits²² and support services²³ to vulnerable households.
- iii. At least one of the co-applicants shall be a non-governmental organisation.
- iv. At least one co-applicant shall be from another EaSI Participating Country than the main applicant. (Such partner must be a body fulfilling the criteria under point b.)

d) Affiliated entities

Affiliated entities to the applicant(s) are NOT eligible to receive funding under this call for proposals.

e) Associate organisations²⁴

An associate organisation can participate in the action, but may not declare eligible costs.

webpage <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=329&langId=en>), as well as other European-level social partner organisations that are not included in this list, but who are for example involved in the preparation and launch of European social dialogue at sector level.

²⁰ For organisations without legal personality, a signed letter of the legal representative certifying his/her capacity to undertake legal obligations on behalf of the organisation must be submitted (see checklist point 8).

²¹ 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, 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. Letters of commitment are also required from any associate organisations (participation on a no-cost and no financial contribution basis).

²² In kind benefits can be food or meal delivery, hygienic and pharmaceutical packages, clothing, household goods, including vouchers (non exhausting list).

²³ Support services can be health and mental rehabilitation, family counselling, child welfare service, community service, etc. (non exhausting list).

²⁴ See section 2 of the Financial Guidelines for the definitions.

6.2. Eligible activities

a) Geographical Location

To be eligible, actions must be fully carried out in the EaSI Participating Countries (see 6.1.a.)

b) Types of activities

The grant will finance inter alia the activities indicated in section 2.2.

c) Core activities

The project management and coordination of activities are core activities and may not be sub-contracted.

6.3. Ineligible activities

The following types of activities are not eligible for EU funding:

In addition to the ineligible costs specified in section 4.2.4 of the Financial Guidelines, the following types of activities are not eligible for EU funding under this Call:

- lobbying
- purchases of land and/or acquisition of immovable property and/or vehicles
- building construction
- minimum income cash benefits or other type of social assistance cash benefits (as governed by that legal framework in an EaSI Participating Country).

Conditions of rejections

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

For consortia, if the lead applicant is considered not to be eligible, the application will be rejected.

If a co-applicant is considered not to be eligible, this organisation will be removed from the consortium. The related activities and costs of the removed applicant will be removed as well from the proposal. 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.

7. EXCLUSION CRITERIA

The applicants (lead applicant and each co-applicant) must sign a declaration on their honour signed in their name, 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.

Administrative sanctions may be imposed on applicants 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 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.

8.1. Financial capacity

Applicants [lead and co-applicant(s)] must have access to solid and adequate funding to maintain 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 applicant's (lead and co-applicant) financial capacity will be assessed on the basis of the following supporting documents to be submitted with the application:

- Declaration on honour (including financial capacity to carry out the activity) (*see checklist point 4*);
- Annual balance sheets and profit and loss accounts for the last financial year available (*see checklist point 14*);
- For grants exceeding EUR 750 000, an **audit report** produced by an approved external auditor certifying the accounts for the last 2 financial years available where such an audit report is available or whenever a statutory audit report is required by Union or national law (*see checklist point 15*).

In addition, the Commission will take into account any other relevant information on financial capacity provided by the applicant and in particular the information provided in section F.2 of the SWIM application form.

The financial capacity will be evaluated on the basis of the following two ratios:

- A **first ratio** between the total **assets** in the applicants' balance sheet and the total **cost** of the action of the project (single applicants) or **the part of the project budget** for which that organisation is responsible for according to the budget in the application form (lead and co-applicants). The (co)applicant is considered to have a strong financial capacity when the ratio 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 budget of the action corresponding to that applicant > 0.70

- A **second ratio** between the **1st prefinancing and the annual total revenue**. For each (co)-applicant the share of the 1st prefinancing is equal to its share in the total estimated budget. The co-applicant is considered to have a strong financial capacity when the ratio is equal or lower than 0,70.

- **Formula in the case of single applicant and each applicant in case of consortia:** 1st prefinancing corresponding to that applicant/annual total revenue per applicant < 0.70

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

If a co-applicant is considered not to have the required financial capacity, this co-applicant may be removed from the consortium and the application will be evaluated without this co-applicant²⁵. In addition, the costs that were allocated to the removed co-applicant will be removed from the project and its budget. If the application is selected, the work plan may have to be slightly adjusted. If a co-applicant or several co-applicants are considered not to have a strong financial capacity, the Commission will also take into account any other relevant information on the financial capacity provided by the applicant and in particular the information provided in section "Financial Resources" of the SWIM application form.

If, in case of removal of a co-applicant with weak capacity, the application would happen not to comply with the eligibility criteria any longer, then the Commission **may** take various proportional **mitigating measures** depending on the level of weaknesses identified, which may be to:

1. propose a Grant Agreement without pre-financing;
2. propose a Grant Agreement with a pre-financing paid in several instalments;
3. propose a Grant Agreement with the 1st or the total pre-financing payment(s) covered by (a) financial guarantee(s);
4. propose a Grant Agreement with joint financial liability of 2 or more applicants;
5. propose a Grant Agreement with a mix of measures 2, 3 and 4.

In case of mitigating measure 3, the Commission may request a pre-financing guarantee for up to the same amount as the 1st or total 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.

²⁵ This includes a re-evaluation of the eligibility of the modified consortium.

8.2. Operational capacity

Applicants [lead and co-applicant(s)] must have the professional competencies, as well as the appropriate qualifications necessary to complete the proposed action. Applicants must bring together the right skills, experiences and competences to manage the overall social innovation process including the underlying diagnosis, implementation, reporting and dissemination of the action.

In particular, applicants must have:

- Carried out projects covering the areas targeted in this call for proposals in the last three years;
- The necessary operational resources (technical, management, human) to carry out the action;
- A very good command (C1 level) of English, at least 8 years of experience in project and team management and at least 8 years of experience in the area relevant for the call are required for the coordinators of both the lead and co-applicants.

The operational capacity of the applicants (lead and co-applicant) to complete the proposed action must be confirmed by the submission in the proposal of the following:

- A list of the main projects relating to the subject of the call carried out in the last three years (*see checklist point 13*);
- The Europass CVs of the proposed project co-ordinator and of the persons who will perform the main tasks (CVs are required to indicate the tasks the person(s) will carry out during the project), showing all their relevant professional experience and their current employer (*see checklist point 11*);
- Declaration on honour signed by the legal representative (including operational capacity to carry out the activity) (*see checklist point 4*).

If the lead applicant 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 could be removed from the consortium and the application will be evaluated without this co-applicant²⁶. In addition, the costs that are allocated to the non-selected co-applicant would be removed from the budget. If the application is, after the removal, accepted, the work programme may have to be slightly adjusted.

9. AWARD CRITERIA

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

1) **Relevance to the objectives and expected results of the call** (10 points)

This criterion measures the extent to which the proposal ensures the integration of the three strands of the Pillar/Principle 14 approach: cash benefits, employment activation, supporting social services.

²⁶ This includes a re-evaluation of the eligibility of the modified consortium.

It also measures the extent to which the project proposal contributes to the objectives of the call and to the expected results.

2) **Overall design of the action** (10 points)

This criterion refers to the consistency of the overall design of the action and of the intervention logic. It also measures the extent to which the action is feasible and consistent in relation to the objectives and expected outcomes. It also relates to the extent to which the specific activities envisaged as part of the intervention are concrete and have a practical dimension, how thorough, precise and easy to understand they are.

3) **Methodology, activities and expected outcomes** (40 points)

This criterion measures the extent to which the activities and means proposed are appropriate and consistent with the expected outcomes, are sufficiently and clearly detailed, with a specific focus on the situation analysis and on a clear definition of the target group. This criterion focuses on the organisation and methodology of the proposal, including the work plan. It also relates to the planned scale of the project, *i.e.* the number of people targeted.

The relevance of the consortium for the proposed project, as well as the role and responsibility of its members will also be assessed under this criterion.

It will also measure the extent to which the actions are innovative compared both to current national practices, as well as approaches in other EaSI Participating Countries.

The transnational element, *i.e.* the knowledge-sharing activity to other EaSI Participating Countries resulting in a wide geographical coverage will also be assessed here.

The following criteria will be used in particular when allocating the points:

- ✓ Target more people;
- ✓ Reach out to the groups which had not previously been targeted/for which previous actions had failed/or had not brought the required effect;
- ✓ Reach out to more EaSI Participating Countries;
- ✓ Provide for a higher level of innovation.

4) **Appropriateness of the impact/outcomes evaluation method** (10 points)

This criterion measures the extent to which the proposal includes a sound and detailed impact evaluation method that is suitable for its purposes and appropriate to provide evidence and to determine the expected outcomes. The accuracy of the evaluation methodology, the relevance of indicators, and the monitoring elements will be assessed under this criterion.

5) **Sustainability of the project** (15 points)

This criterion measures the extent to which the proposed intervention is sustainable beyond the grant period and in particular whether financial means are envisaged to pursue the action. In concrete terms, it will assess whether the proposed long-term strategy is appropriate to ensure the continuation of the project activities and objectives. The transferability of the intervention and the extent to which the latter could be implemented on a larger scale will also be assessed under this criterion. The adequacy and quality of the mainstreaming/up-scaling/dissemination plan will also be assessed here.

The following criterion will be used in particular when allocating the points:

- ✓ Demonstrate a higher level of sustainability through the involvement of policy makers at the local/regional/national level right from the planning phase.

6) Cost-efficiency of the proposal (15 points)

The cost-efficiency of the proposal means whether the costs of the proposed action are adequate to the activities and proportionate to the expected results. The assessment of the proposal under this criterion includes:

- The adequacy of the human and financial resources to the planned activities,
- The clarity and pertinence of the allocation of tasks and managerial responsibility,
- The overall clarity and completeness of the budget.

Award criteria assessment		Maximum Score
1.	Relevance to the objectives and expected results of the call	10
2.	Overall design of the action	10
3.	Methodology, activities and expected outcomes	40
4.	Appropriateness of the impact/outcomes evaluation method	10
5.	Sustainability of the project	15
6.	Cost-efficiency of the proposal	15
Total		100

Applications will be ranked according to the total score awarded and taking into account that a **maximum of 2 projects from the country (of the lead applicant) can be selected**. Taking into account the available budget, the **proposals with the highest total scores** will be recommended for award, on the condition that:

- the total score reaches at least 70% of the maximum total mark;
- the score for each criterion is at least 60% of the maximum mark for that criterion.

10. EVALUATION PROCEDURE

The composition of applications is detailed under *section 17*.

The applications will be examined and assessed by an evaluation committee with the possible assistance of external experts following the below procedure:

I. Assessment of the eligibility and exclusion criteria

If the examination of the application reveals that it does not meet the eligibility and exclusion criteria stated in *sections 6 and 7*, the application will be rejected on this sole basis.

II. Assessment of the selection criteria

The pre-selected applications will be evaluated against the selection criteria (i.e. financial and operational capacity of the applicants (*see section 8*)) and only those which satisfy these criteria will be further assessed.

III. Assessment of the application against the award criteria

The application will be assessed against the award criteria (*see section 9*).

11. 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 coordinator in the case of multi-beneficiary grant agreements.

The two copies of the original agreement shall be signed by the coordinator for the multi-beneficiary Grant Agreement, 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 is published on the Europa website:

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

There is no alternative to this model 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.

12. PUBLICITY/SOURCES OF FUNDING

By the beneficiaries

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, etc.) 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 present 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 Commission²⁷

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 EU²⁸:

- 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 level²⁹ 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 concerned as protected by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union or harm the commercial interests of the beneficiaries.

13. DATA PROTECTION

13.1. Before the signature of the grant agreement:

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

²⁷ Articles 38 & 189 FR

²⁸ Article 189 2. FR

²⁹ 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.

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) 2018/104630. For more information see the Privacy Statement on:
http://ec.europa.eu/budget/library/explained/management/protecting/privacy_statement_eds_en.pdf

13.2. 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) 2016/679³¹

Any personal data included in the Agreement must be processed by the Commission in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 2018/1725³².

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.

14. 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>.

15. PROCEDURE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

The procedure to submit proposals electronically is specified in point 13 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 the timetable (*see section 3*).

The SWIM electronic application form is available until 24:00 (Brussels time) 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 **one original**, including all documents listed in *section 17*, by the deadline set in the timetable (*see section 3*) either by registered post, express courier service or hand delivery.

³⁰ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32018R1046>

³¹ 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

³² 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

Address for registered post or express courier service:

European Commission
(NOT TO BE OPENED BY CENTRAL MAIL SERVICES)
Call for proposals VP/2020/003 – DG EMPL C1
CAD J-27 00/120
B-1049 Bruxelles - BELGIUM

Evidence of posting or express courier deposit slip must 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 16.00. (Brussels time) of the date indicated in set in the timetable (*see section 3*) at the following address:

European Commission
Service central de réception du courrier
(NOT TO BE OPENED BY CENTRAL MAIL SERVICES)
Call for proposals VP/2020/003 – DG EMPL.C1
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 must be conserved as evidence of delivery.

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.

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

16. 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

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.

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. At the

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

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

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

`empl-vp-2020-003@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 the timetable (*see section 3*).

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>. 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.

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.

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-2020-003@ec.europa.eu`).

In 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 evaluation. 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.

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

17.1. Instructions for the presentation of the application

The application shall include an application form including the budget, a description of the action and work plan, plus a series of other required documents (*see section 17 - checklist*).

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 and a separate budget explanation must also be provided (*see checklist, point 10*).

Proposals should include inter alia the type of activities (*see section 2.2*) in the description of the action and the work plan and foresee the corresponding expenditure in the budget estimate.

In the description of the action, the role of all applicants must be clearly explained.

In case of subcontracting any tasks comprising part of the action (see the Financial Guidelines), the description of the action must provide details on the tasks to be subcontracted and the reasons for doing so and these tasks must be clearly identified in the budget. Core tasks as defined in section 6.2(c) of the call cannot be subcontracted.

Description of the action:

1. *How is the proposed action relevant to the objectives of the call?*
2. *What is the diagnosis of the issues addressed in the proposal and the approach suggested to address these issues (methodology).*
3. *How are the relevant co-applicants involved? Are they involved in the work programme? Are the respective roles clearly defined? Please describe the task with the corresponding planning using any appropriate tool (e.g. Gantt chart)*
4. *How is the monitoring and evaluation of the planned activities foreseen?*
5. *Is there a quality assurance plan?*
6. *How do you plan to ensure cost-effectiveness?*
7. *What is the added value of the proposed action in light of similar previous or existing actions?*
8. *How do you plan to ensure the sustainability of the action?*
9. *What is your Work plan?*
10. *In case of subcontracting please provide detailed information on the tasks to be subcontracted and the reasons for doing so. Please note that core tasks as defined in section 6.2 (c) of the call cannot be subcontracted.*

17.2. Required documents

The attached checklist includes the documents that must be provided, including the documents mentioned in 17.1. Except for the 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*), the exclusion (*see section 7*), 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 the 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 and international organisations]. 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 (VP/2020/003/xxxx) – template	✓	--	--	--	✓	☐
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 copies as foreseen in Section 5. <i>Note: the online form must be electronically submitted before printing. After the electronic submission, no further changes to the proposal are permitted.</i>	✓	--	--	--	✓	☐
3	Executive summary	Executive summary in EN (maximum 2 pages) – free format	✓	--	--	--	--	☐
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/2020/003/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 must be provided as well. <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>	✓	✓	--	--	✓	☐
5	Letter of commitment	The template is available in SWIM and must explain the nature of the organisation's involvement (for associate organisations) and specify the amount of any funding provided (for third parties). 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>	--	✓	--	✓	✓	☐
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.	--	✓	--	--	✓	☐
7	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). 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.	✓	✓	--	--	--	☐
8	Statutes	The articles of association/statutes or equivalent proving the eligibility of the organisation.	✓	✓	--	--	--	☐
9	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. <i>See Section 5.</i>	✓	--	--	--	--	☐
10	Budget Explanation for	This is a separate free-format document in addition to the budget section of the on-line application form and it	✓	--	--	--	--	☐

	the project	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. 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. The Commission may request applicants to submit additional justifications of proposed eligible costs during the evaluation procedure.						
11	Curricula vitae of key staff	Detailed EU CVs of the project coordinator (named in section A.3 of the online application form) and the persons who will perform the main tasks . The EU CVs should indicate clearly the current employer.	✓	✓	✓	--	--	□
12	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	✓	--	--	--	--	□
13	List of main projects	A list of the main projects carried out, if any, in the last three years relating to the subject of the call other than those already indicated in the SWIM online application form (section D.3) – free format	✓	✓	--	--	--	□
14	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 per applicant below 60,000.00 EUR, neither for public entities.)	✓	✓	--	--	--	□
15	Audit report	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. 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. In case of a 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. Not applicable for public entities or for applicants receiving a grant below 60,000.00 EUR.	✓	✓	--	--	--	□
16	Draft tender specifications	In case of subcontracting where the value of the contracts exceeds EUR 60 000, a copy of the draft tender specifications must be submitted. A model is included in Annex II of this call.	✓	--	--	--	--	--
17	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.	--	--	✓	--	--	□

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 <u>account holder</u> and bearing the bank stamp and signature of the bank representative (or a copy of a 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