CALL FOR PROPOSALS

VP/2015/011

FOR SOCIAL POLICY INNOVATIONS SUPPORTING REFORMS IN SOCIAL SERVICES

EaSI
PROGRESS AXIS

BUDGET HEADING 04.03.02.01

In view of the large number of enquiries, please do not telephone.
Questions should be sent by email only to:

EMPL-VP-2015-011@ec.europa.eu

This text is available in English, French and German. The English version is the original.

To ensure a more rapid response it would be helpful if applicants sent their queries in
English or French.

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TEXT OF THE CALL VP/2015/011

1. Introduction

1.1. European Programme for Employment and Social Innovation ("EaSI")[1]

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

2. Characteristics of the call

2.1. Policy background

The Social Investment Package (SIP)[3] published in February 2013 emphasises that **social services** play a pivotal role to ensure effective and efficient social protection. Social services represent a smart and sustainable investment as they do not only assist people and help them coping with the risks that they can face during their life course but, if well-designed, also have a preventive, activating and enabling function.

The Commission Communication "*Implementing the Community Lisbon programme: Social services of general interest in the European Union*"[4] identified two main categories of services. Besides statutory and complementary social security schemes, the concept includes services provided directly to the person such as social assistance services, employment and training services, housing support and social housing, childcare, long-term care services and healthcare. These types of services include also support services for persons with disabilities.

The Commission Recommendation on Active Inclusion[5] identifies access to social services as one of the three pillars of effective inclusion strategies together with adequate income support and inclusive labour market policies.

High quality, integrated and personalised services are important to achieve the best possible social outcomes, developing people's skills and capabilities, enhancing people's opportunities and confronting the risks and transitions in the life course as well as possible. To do so, social services should be delivered focusing on the individual's situation at the specific time and in

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[1] Regulation (EU) No 1296/2013
[2] http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1081
[3] Commission Communication of 20.02.2013 "*Towards Social Investment for Growth and Cohesion – including implementing the European Social Fund 2014-2020*" and Commission Staff Working Document of 20.02.2013 "*Follow-up on the implementation by the Member States of the 2008 European Commission recommendation on active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market – Towards a social investment approach*".
[4] COM(2006) 177 of 26 April 2006
(http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2006/com2006_0177en01.pdf).
[5] Commission Recommendation of 3.10.2008 on the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market (2008/867/EC published in the OJ L. 307/11 of 18.11.2008).

line with the general quality principles presented in the "Voluntary European Quality Framework for Social Services".[6]

The Commission will propose in the coming months a new initiative on the integration of the long-term unemployed in the labour market. This initiative builds on several identified challenges for the effective integration of the long-term unemployed in the labour market. Key elements are the fragmentation of the service delivery and the discontinuity between the employment services and the social assistance as well as the need for individualisation of support.

Social services integration aims at providing individualised and integrated support through single entry points, such as one-stop-shops, or personalised case-handlers. Integrated social service delivery can improve both the effectiveness and efficiency of social services, while also ensuring increased take-up and coverage. Integrated services are likely to promote continuous care, avoid duplication and gaps in the delivery and reduce waiting times. They also facilitate information and knowledge sharing between professionals and thus a better and quicker identification of the needs and of the adequate responses. Moreover, integrated service delivery is likely to reduce the services costs by limiting multiple interlocutors and repeated interventions. Finally, structural integration could also lead to savings due to the mutualisation of some costs. A review of integrated services in the EU commissioned by the Commission[7] identifies best practices of service integration. These include good planning beforehand, monitoring the integration process and keeping reforms manageable. A recent OECD study on social services confirmed that better access to integrated services such as healthcare, childcare, housing and care for the elderly and persons with disabilities can contribute significantly to reduce inequality in society and thus reduce the level of poverty across various segments of the society.[8]

Social policy innovation focuses on addressing social challenges by providing better and innovative responses to identified social needs, in order to deliver better social outcomes. The SIP stresses the need to embed social policy innovation in policy-making and to connect it to social priorities. Social policy innovation plays therefore a key role in the process of adaptation and reforms of the social welfare states in the framework of the Europe 2020 Strategy and with a view to contributing to reaching the targets agreed, in particular lifting at least 20 million people from poverty and social exclusion and ensuring an employment rate of 75% for the 20-64 year-olds till 2020.

In the specific case of social services developing new responses to identified social needs means providing integrated and personalised services, improving their quality, access, coverage, and affordability and enhancing their efficiency and effectiveness.

2.2 Challenges and opportunities in the social services sector

The demand for social services is increasing due to the development of new needs driven by the demographic changes, the economic and social consequences of the crisis, growing

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[6]Social Protection Committee, *A Voluntary European Quality Framework for Social Services* (SPC/2010/10/8 final). See http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catid=794.

[7] Scharle, Ágota (2015), *Literature review and identification of best practices on integrated social service delivery* (http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1169&langId=en).
On service integration see also Council of Europe (2007): *Integrated social services in Europe*

[8]OECD-European Commission (2011): *The impact of publicly provided services on the distribution of resources*.

inequalities, awareness about the rights of person with disabilities, technological developments or changing social patterns. The demand is also becoming more diverse, as the users request quality and user friendly services, addressing more complex needs.

The economic and financial crisis has played a double role in relation to social services: on one side, it has shown that these services can cushion the impact of the crisis and help people affected by the crisis to find a new start. On the other, between 2011 and 2012, when public budgets got under big pressure, budget constraints led to significant cuts in the expenditures.[9]

As mentioned above, integrated service delivery can partially address this last challenge by improving effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery, if the services are well designed and receive the appropriate level of investment from the start.

A major challenge in the delivery of services aiming at the activation in the labour market is the coordination and balancing of income support with job search and other forms of activation. This challenge can be particularly important when the two functions are delivered by different institutions. When services and benefits are delivered in an integrated way by the same agency (or closely cooperating agencies) this increases effectiveness and efficiency in the enforcement of adequate job search conditionalities. While social services are largely financed through public resources, they can be provided by both public and private entities, especially social enterprises and NGOs that are often able to offer services more adapted to the specificities of their communities. Building partnerships with these actors, especially at local level, enhances the coherence of the social service delivery and improves complementarities. This also stimulates self-entrepreneurship and community cohesion.

The Staff Working Document (SWD) on active inclusion[10] noted that access to social services needs improvement in the Member States, especially for Roma populations, migrants, and people with disabilities. Some Member States reported increased access to employment and training, mainly linked to a stronger use of activation measures, but have not improved access and coverage for other services, such as childcare, healthcare, housing and long-term care, which have a positive impact on lifting people out of poverty. At the same time, there is insufficient integration of services and not enough attention to the simplification of services' delivery.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities (UNCRPD) to which the EU and the majority of Member States are party to, indicates in article 28 that States Parties shall take effective and appropriate measures, including through peer support, to enable persons with disabilities to attain and maintain maximum independence, full physical, mental, social and vocational ability, and full inclusion and participation in all aspects of life. To that end, States Parties shall organize, strengthen and extend comprehensive habilitation and rehabilitation services and programmes, particularly in the areas of health, employment, education and social services

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[9] See "EU Employment and Social Situation Quarterly Review, Supplement December 2014 – Health and social services from an employment and economic perspective" (http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=113). It shows that real spending on social services decreased in 23 Member States.

[10] Quoted in footnote 1 above

2.3. Purpose of the call

The purpose of this call for proposals is to foster policy innovation in the organisation and delivery of social services aiming at the integration of service users in the labour market. Policy innovation should focus on the integrated delivery of this type of social services.

The call will thus support the implementation of the Recommendation on Active inclusion and of the Social Investment Package, and the forthcoming initiative on the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market.

This call supports policy innovations 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. This allows policymakers and social 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.

2.4. Policy relevance

This call will focus on the integrated delivery of social services which aim at the integration of service users in the labour market. Proposals related to the support of female participation in the labour market are strongly encouraged.

Innovation should aim at the integration of the service delivery achieved notably through strengthened partnerships between public, private and civil society stakeholders.

The challenges should be presented and tackled in accordance to the local, regional or national context. This is of particular importance as organisation of the State and the political context can favour or, on the contrary impede, successful integration of services.
Integration of services refers to different approaches to improve coordination between services in order to enhance outcomes for service users.[11] The integrated provision of social services through coordinated approaches, aiming at providing individualised and integrated support, and using delivery models such as single entry points or personalised case handlers, has a positive impact on cost efficiency, effectiveness of the delivery and capacity to tackle complex and multiple problems while ensuring increased take-up and coverage.

Single entry points

Single entry points are an advanced form of integration which comprises multi-service delivery in a single location. This form of integration can include a stronger coordination between services but it can also lead to the creation of a single body with a more or less autonomous decision making authority which implies more deep structural changes.

Personalised approach through high quality case handlers

A case handler is a form of integrated service at the level of the individual.[12] Different types of approaches could be taken according to the role given to the case handler. For instance, in a

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[11] Council of Europe(2007): *Integrated social services in Europe*.
[12] Council of Europe(2007): *Integrated social services in Europe*.

multidisciplinary team, one team member could act as the case manager and ensure the coordination between the team members and the user. More integrated approaches rely on an intensive case management where the case manager coordinates the services for the user, especially for users facing complex and long-term needs. High quality case handlers, able to assess and provide individualised guidance to people's needs, enhance the outreach and thus the coverage of social services.

As showed in the "Literature review and identification of best practices on integrated social service delivery"[13] reforms in the integration of social service tend to show positive results in the medium to long-term. Therefore, the reforms need to be built in a clear strategy at local, regional and national level with engagement from the public authorities to ensure sustainable commitment and a longer term policy vision.

Studies already offer a number of lessons regarding the factors that may determine the success of integration initiatives and have therefore to be taken into consideration in the policy design. First, there is a need to set clear achievable goals from the start and to keep the reform manageable. The clarity and harmonisation of goals across the cooperating agencies seems crucial which could be monitored through management techniques and quality protocols. Second, a clear division of responsibilities between agents is a prerequisite to efficiency gains. Third, a successful integration reform should include carefully designed financial or administrative incentives for cooperation. A closely related fourth lesson is that integration reforms should entail the adjustment of performance indicators to account for joint efforts in order to eliminate dysfunctional competition between service units. Fifth, when service integration at the local level entails increased autonomy and new types of tasks, this should be supported by capacity building in planning, evaluation and case management as well. Finally, the monitoring, evaluation and review of the integration process should be thought of form the start to be able to monitor the implementation and set SMART objectives to achieve.

The proposals should consider the specific context of the country(ies) concerned, including the Country Reports and the Country Specific Recommendations addressed to the Member State in the context of the European Semester, dealing with social services which aim at the integration in the labour market. Moreover, the proposals should be in line with the "voluntary European Quality Framework for Social Services" adopted in October 2010 by the Social Protection Committee, which serves as guidance for defining, assuring, evaluating and improving the quality of these services.

Applicants should describe what they propose to do, including rationale for the work, hypothesis used in deciding to undertake the project given the current situation of the intervention, what the expected outcomes will be and who will benefit from the work. Expected outcomes to be achieved should be clear, realistic and defined in measurable terms. The proposal should also clearly identify which services will be delivered in an integrated manner. When one or several partners deliver various social services, the proposal should document which services are concerned by the project, how the integration process will be carried out inside the different social services providers and how the integration of some services will interact with the other services provided.

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[13] Scharle, Ágota (2015), Literature review and identification of best practices on integrated social service delivery, published in: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1169&langId=en.

2.5   Methodological framework

This call for proposals promotes providing evidence-based use of EU funding that convincingly relates a specific intervention to its impact on clearly identified outcome measures.

Effective and efficient social policy innovation requires a sound and thorough evidence based approach that allows policymakers and social 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.

Grants shall be awarded to projects that allow for testing innovative social policy solutions for integrated social services aiming at the integration in the labour market, and for assessing their expected social policy outcomes.

The project should be of a sufficiently large scale for the intervention to reach a reasonable and representative critical mass and provide a significant evidence base.

Planned policy intervention should be "outcome driven", meaning that an innovative integrated social service is not only developed but it is also implemented and delivered through a methodological approach that should include an accurate measurement of expected outcomes based on reliable evaluation methods.

Applicants should explain clearly the aim of the policy and the target population, how the expected outcomes will be identified and measured, and notably how data will be collected and used, and with what timeframe. The scale of the project should be large enough to statistically detect intervention's effects of a reasonable size. Methodologies, such as the analysis of the Minimum Detectable Effect (MDE)[14] could possibly be used.

Applicants should present the impact evaluation method, with a clear identification of the participants (identified out of a well-defined population and, if appropriate, a control group) and with detailed and relevant indicators. The number of participants to be included in the sample should be such that the project could reach a reasonable and representative critical mass and provide a significant evidence base. The impact evaluation method should aim at identifying the change caused by the intervention, i.e. the difference between an outcome with the intervention and the outcome that would have been measured in the absence of the intervention. The control group used to evaluate the behavior with no policy change or without treatment of the group under treatment and the impact evaluation method to adopt should be adequately described.

Data and indicators used should be adequately detailed and documented in order to convince about the validity of the research design. The proposal should discuss the potential threats to the internal validity and the extent to which results of the evaluation can be extended to other populations or settings (external validity).

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[14] Applicants can get information on different impact evaluation methods in the reference documents on the call website.

2.6 Project sustainability

The proposal should include a long-term 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 organizational and financial resources needed to ensure the continuation of the intervention beyond the grant period.

Applicants must also describe 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 project's knowledge learned.

2.7. Evaluation component of the project

The evaluation component of the projects is two-fold: (1) outcome evaluation; and (2) process evaluation.

- Outcome evaluation addresses results that can be attributed to the project, as well as the extent to which the project has satisfied its objectives.

- Process evaluation addresses how the project was conducted in terms of consistency and design with the stated plan of action and the effectiveness of the various activities within the plan in accordance with the policy relevance detailed in section 2.4.

Evaluations may be conducted by an internal staff member, an evaluation firm or both.

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.

2.8. Monitoring of the project

With a view to regular monitoring the projects, the applicants shall draw up an initial report covering the first 6 months, followed by annual reports covering consecutive two or three year periods.

These monitoring reports should describe the activities undertaken, problems faced and how these were overcome, role of partners, methods used, results achieved, learning needs, plans for the next steps.

Among the key issues to be addressed and reported on are:

- How the performance of the project will be tracked in terms of achievement of the steps and milestones set in the working plan.
- How the report and the feedback received on it would lead to mid-term adjustment in the project design.
- How the project results will be assessed in terms of achieving the project's objectives.

- How the role of the partnership members in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes will be achieved.

The first monitoring report will be submitted to and discussed with the Commission likewise other regular reports.

2.9. Communication and dissemination

Adequate communication and dissemination of results is essential in ensuring the EU added value of the action and its sustainability after funding for the project comes to an end. Information sharing and awareness raising are key activities to ensure that other interested parties benefit from the project findings and can draw lessons which to apply within their own work context and develop new partnerships.

Hence, each proposed project is expected to be flexible and adaptive to arrange for a real exchange and sharing of experiences not only amongst partners, but also with Commission policy staff, Member States and other projects financed under this call for proposals.

The proposals must therefore plan for a dedicated effort for sharing of experiences and dissemination of the projects' outcomes.

The Commission will also organise two events for the beneficiaries under the 2015 call: (1) a transnational networking seminar; and (2) a final transnational peer learning conference.

Applicants should therefore ensure that costs - travel, daily subsistence allowances and accommodation for 2 persons/2 nights in Brussels for each event - are included in their proposed project budget.

Lessons learnt from these transnational peer learning events would be drawn to the attention of the highest political level.

3. EaSI – additional conditions

3.1. General requirements on issues to consider for the activities funded under the EaSI programme

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

- (a) pay particular attention to vulnerable groups, such as young people;

- (b) promote equality between women and men;

- (c) reduce discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation;

- (d) promote a high-level of quality and sustainable employment, guarantee adequate and decent social protection, combat long-term unemployment and fight against poverty and social exclusion.

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

3.2. Monitoring information

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

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

3.3. Sources of funding

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

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

The European emblem must appear on every publication or other material produced. Please see:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/services/visual_identity/pdf/use-emblem_en.pdf

Every publication must include the following:

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

4. Available budgetary allocation for this call

4.1. Budget available

The overall indicative amount made available for this call is 10.800.000 €. The grant requested must be 750.000 € minimum and 2.000.000 € maximum.

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

4.2. Co-financing rate

The European Union financial aid granted will not exceed 80% of the total eligible costs of the action.

The applicant and co-applicant(s) must guarantee the co-financing of the remaining 20% by own resources or from other sources other than the European Union budget.

Contributions in kind are not accepted as co-financing.

5. Evaluation criteria

5.1. Exclusion criteria

Applicant organisations must not be in one of the situations referred to in Article 131(4) in combination with Articles 106(1) and 107 to 109(2)(a) of the Financial Regulation (see section 12, check-list, point 3). The situations referred to include bankruptcy, compulsory winding-up, being under court administration, in an arrangement with creditors or any other similar proceedings, convictions of professional misconduct, non-fulfilment of social security or tax payment obligations, convictions of fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity, declared in serious breach of contract in relation to activities funded by the Community budget, subject to conflict of interest and guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the required information.

5.2. Eligibility criteria

5.2.1 Eligibility of the applicants

The grants shall be awarded to a consortium of stakeholders (lead applicant and co-applicants). The proposal can involve one or more co-applicants.

To be eligible, lead applicant and co-applicant organisations must be:

- public, private or not-for-profit entities.

- properly constituted and registered legal persons, established in one of the EaSI-Progress Axis participating countries, i.e.:

  - EU Member States.

  - Iceland and Norway in accordance with the EEA Agreement

  - Albania, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey.

Other candidate and potential candidate countries would also participate in accordance with the general principles and the general terms and conditions laid down in the Framework Agreements concluded with them on their participation in Union programmes from 2015. However, if this is not yet confirmed, applicants from those countries should check with the secretariat of the call their eligibility.

To be eligible lead applicant organisations must be:

- either public authorities in charge of the definition and/or implementation of employment and social policies and/or the organization and/or financing and/or delivery of employment and social services at national, regional or local level,

  or

- private or not-for-profit entities including social enterprises which play a key role in employment and social policies or delivering employment and/or social services at national, regional or local level.

Lead applicants which are private or not-for-profit entities, including social enterprises, should prove an operational existence of at least 5 years in the same area.

For the purpose of this call and in line with the EaSI Regulation, 'social enterprise' means an undertaking, regardless of its legal form, which:

a) in accordance with its Articles of Association, Statutes or with any other legal document by which it is established, has as its primary objective the achievement of measurable, positive social impacts rather than generating profit for its owners, members and shareholders, and which:

   i. provides services or goods which generate a social return and/or

   ii. employs a method of production of goods or services that embodies its social objective;

b) uses its profits first and foremost to achieve its primary objective and has predefined procedures and rules covering any distribution of profits to shareholders and owners that ensure that such distribution does not undermine the primary objective; and

c) is managed in an entrepreneurial, accountable and transparent way, in particular by involving workers, customers and stakeholders affected by its business activities.

5.2.2   Eligibility of the application

To be eligible, applications must:

1 - be complete and include all the documents indicated in the check-list;

2 - be submitted by the deadline both electronically by using the online application SWIM and on paper.

5.2.3   Eligibility of the proposal

To be eligible, proposals must:

1 - be a social policy experiment relevant for the field defined in this call;

2 - seek funding for activities only in EaSI participating countries;

3 - respect the maximum limit for EU co-financing, namely maximum 80% of the total eligible costs of the action;

4 - the requested grant must be between 750.000 € and 2.000.000 €.

5.3. Selection criteria

Only proposals which comply with the requirements of the eligibility and exclusion criteria will be eligible for further evaluation. Applicants (lead and co-applicants) must have the financial and operational capacity to complete the activity for which funding is requested. Only organisations with the necessary financial and operational capacity may be awarded a grant.

5.3.1. Operational capacity

Applicants (lead applicant and co-applicants) must have the operational resources (technical, management) and the professional skills and qualifications needed to successfully complete the proposed innovative 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. Applicants must have a strong track record of competence and experience in the field and in particular in the type of action proposed. This operational capacity must be attested by the provision of the following items:

- A declaration on honour concerning the operational capacity to carry out the activity.

- A declaration signed by the lead applicant stating that the policy issue addressed is within its legal area of competence. Lead applicants which are private or not-for-profit entities should also document in this declaration their key role in employment and social policies or in delivering employment and/or social services at national, regional or local level:

  - by indicating the number of users to which they provide employment or social services, compared with the target population defined for the project as in need of support in the area;

  - by indicating whether there are other service providers in the area delivering complementary or similar services to the target population defined for the project;

  - by providing information on their relation with the relevant public authorities (including financial support).

- Detailed CVs and job specifications of the project manager and of all the persons who will receive salaries to perform the main tasks.

5.3.2. Financial capacity

Applicants (lead applicant and co-applicants) must have access to solid and adequate funding to maintain their activities for the period of the action and to help finance it as necessary. The financial capacity will be assessed on the basis of the relevant accompanying documents

indicated in the checklist (section 4.3). The verification of the financial capacity shall not apply to public bodies.

5.4. Award criteria

The award criteria relate to the relevance of the proposed intervention for the objectives of the call, the clarity of the proposed activities and expected outcomes, the appropriateness of the impact/outcomes evaluation method, as well as the sustainability and cost-effectiveness of the action.

The evaluation committee will assess the project proposals according to the criteria listed below. The maximum rating for each criterion is indicated in parentheses. The maximum total points that a proposal may obtain is 100. Proposals that do not receive 70 points will not be considered for funding.

Policy relevance of the proposal (30 points)

This criterion values the extent to which the proposal is consistent with the purpose of the call and with the policy relevance (as described in section 2.4). It will assess the importance of the selected services, in line with the objectives of the Active Inclusion recommendation, the Europe 2020 strategy and the SIP, the pertinence of the consortium for the achievement of the expected results, the soundness of the integration approach, how innovative such approach is and whether the success factors of service integration have been duly taken into account.

Clarity of activities and expected outcomes (20 points)

This criterion values the extent to which the specific activities envisaged as part of the intervention and the expected outcomes of the project are thorough, precise and easy to understand. It will assess the extent to which the activities and means proposed are appropriate and consistent with the expected outcomes, the expected outcomes are realistic and defined in measurable terms and the proposal contains clear indicators for the outcomes and the impact of the intervention.

Appropriateness of the impact/outcomes evaluation method (20 points)

This criterion values the extent to which the proposal uses a sound evaluation method that is suitable for its purposes and appropriate to provide evidence and to determine the expected outcomes (as described in section 2.5). This criterion also values the accuracy of the foreseen evaluation plan.

Sustainability of the project (10 points)

This criterion values the extent to which the proposed intervention is sustainable beyond the grant period and in particular whether the proposed short-term and long-term strategy is appropriate to ensure the continuation of the project's objectives, activities and efforts to achieve the desired outcomes. This criterion also assesses the extent to which the proposed intervention could be implemented on a larger scale. Finally this criterion values the adequacy of the communication and dissemination plan (as described in section 2.9)

Cost-efficiency of the proposal and organizational aspects (20 points)

This criterion values the cost-efficiency of the proposal taking into account:

- 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.

6.   Starting date and duration of projects

The projects should start after signature of grant agreements, expected within six months of the date of submission. The indicative planned duration of the project should be between 24 and 36 months.

Applicants should note that if their project is selected, they will not necessarily receive the grant agreement prior to the action starting date indicated and should, therefore, take this into account in programming the timing of their project. Any expenditure incurred before the signature of the grant agreement is at the applicant's risk.

7.   Deadline for submission of proposals

The proposals must be submitted electronically online and sent by post or by personal delivery in one original to the European Commission, by 16/11/2015 at the latest.

Proposals which do not respect the date of submission will not be considered by the evaluation committee.

8.   Practical details

8.1.   Where can the application form be found?

Applicants are invited to fill in the application form online, on the SWIM secure website: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/swim/displayWelcome.do. Annexes, which are compulsory, must also be filled in and uploaded online. Before starting, please read carefully the "User's guide" that can be found at the top of the page ("Help on SWIM"). The electronic application in the online application SWIM must be "validated". Invalid electronic applications are automatically excluded from further evaluation.

8.2.   Where to send the application?

After filling in the form, applicants must submit it both electronically and in hard copy:

- Electronic submission: in order to validate the application, click on the "send" button. This step is irreversible and must be carried out before the deadline.

- Hard copy submission: a duly completed application accompanied by the annexes and all the required documentary proof should also be sent to the addresses below by the deadline (their submission date will be taken as the date of dispatch, as evidenced by the postmark or the express courier receipt date).

a) By post to the following <u>postal address</u>:
       European Commission
       DG EMPL D1
       Call for proposals VP/2015/011
       B-1049 Brussels
       Belgium

b) Or by <u>personal delivery</u> against an acknowledgement of receipt from the Commission's central mail service by 16.00 hours on the last day for submission at the latest to the following address:

       European Commission
       DG EMPL D1
       Call for proposals VP/2015/011
       Central Courier Service
       Avenue du Bourget, 1
       B-1140 Evere
       Belgium

The applicant is requested to number the accompanying documents to be submitted with the application as shown in the check-list in point 10 and send <u>one original.</u> Documents will be printed double-sided, if possible. Only two-hole folders will be used. The dossier should not be bound or glued.

Please do make sure that the full set of the application form and all accompanying documents are included in your sending by post by the deadline. The absence of any of these documents invalidates the application as specified in section 5.2.2.

If an organisation wants to submit more than one proposal, each application must be submitted separately.

8.3.   Evaluation of proposals and notification of applicants

Applications are assessed by an evaluation committee. The work of the evaluation committee consists in assessing the applications against the exclusion, eligibility, selection and award criteria. The applications which are not submitted both on line and in hard copy by the deadline will automatically be rejected.

After the deadline for submission of projects, the European Commission may contact the applicant in writing (usually by e-mail) during the evaluation procedure to provide clarification or additional information. It is entirely the responsibility of applicants to ensure that all contact information provided is accurate and functioning. In case of any change of contact details, please send an e-mail with the application VP reference and the new contact details to <u>EMPL-VP-2015-011@ec.europa.eu.</u>

Failure to reply to the clarification request will invalidate the application. If any document listed in the check-list is missing, incorrect or open to further interpretation or negotiation, the application may be rejected on that sole basis.

Only projects which satisfy the exclusion and eligibility criteria will be evaluated further against selection and award criteria. The evaluation committee will deliver an opinion recommending a number of proposals for funding. The list will take into consideration the results of the evaluations within the remains of the budget available.

All applicants will receive a written notification of the outcome as well as feedback on the evaluation of their application. This could take several weeks. Requests concerning the progress of dossiers sent prior to the conclusion of this time period will not be answered.

Selected applications

Successful applicants will receive two original copies of the grant agreement detailing the conditions and level of funding for acceptance and signature. Both copies must be sent back to the European Commission which will return one to the applicant once it has been signed by both parties.

8.4. Indicative timetable

Stages	Date or indicative period
Publication of the call	**14/08/2015**
Deadline for submitting applications	16/11/2015
Evaluation period	November - May 2016
Information to applicants	June 2016
Signature of grant agreements	July 2016

8.5. Communication with applicants

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

Before the final date for submission of proposals, at the request of the applicant, the European Commission may provide additional information solely for the purpose of clarifying the nature of the call. Any requests for additional information must be made in writing to:

EMPL-VP-2015-011@ec.europa.eu

In the interest of equal treatment of applicants, the Commission cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of an applicant, a co-applicant or an action or on the outcome of the call before the official publication of results.

The Commission may, on its own initiative, inform interested parties of any error, inaccuracy, omission or other clerical error in the text of the call for proposals. Any additional information including that referred to above will be published on the internet in concordance with the various call-for-proposals documents.

Contact coordinates for the call:

ENQUIRIES SHOULD BE SUBMITTED BY E-MAIL ONLY TO

EMPL-VP-2015-011@ec.europa.eu

Questions may be sent by to the above address no later than 10 days before the deadline for the submission of proposals. The Contracting Authority has no obligation to provide clarifications to questions received after this date. Replies will be given no later than 5 days before the deadline for submission of proposals. To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the Contracting Authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of applicants an action or specific activities.

The questions together with the answers and other important notices in the course of the evaluation procedure will be published on the DG employment website: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=629&langId=en
It is therefore advisable to consult the above mentioned website regularly in order to be informed of the questions and answers published.

Applicants are hereby informed that in the interest of transparency and equal treatment of applicants, no queries will be dealt with by telephone.

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9. FINANCIAL CONDITIONS

For more detailed information on the financial and administrative aspects of the call please see Annex I which is available on the call website:

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

Only eligible costs can be taken into account for determining the amount of grant. The categories of costs considered as eligible and non-eligible are indicated in the section 4.2 of the Financial Guidelines.

In addition to costs specified in article 4.2.4 of the Financial Guidelines following costs are ineligible for funding under the present call:

- Direct financial support to the participants in the target groups.

- Acquisition of immovable property and/or vehicles.

Before awarding a grant, the Commission will check whether the budget does not contain problems such as arithmetical errors, inaccuracies, unrealistic costs or other ineligible costs. The check may give rise to a request for clarification and may lead the European Commission to ask for modifications or reductions of some budget items before delivering the grant. The amount of the grant and the percentage of EU co-financing should never be increased as a result of these corrections.

10. CHECKLIST OF REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

The following table includes the documents that must be provided for the application to be eligible. It also indicates where originals are required. We recommend that applicants use the table as a checklist in order to verify compliance with all requirements.

Proposals must be submitted using application forms which are automatically produced via the SWIM submission tool (see practical details in section 8 above).

While some information must be supplied via the SWIM application (SWIM forms, hereinafter designated as 'SWIM templates'), other documents may need to be completed and attached electronically, usually either administrative documents or free format text descriptions (hereinafter designated as 'Free format' documents or annexes). The SWIM application indicates in each section which and where free format documents can be uploaded electronically.

Regarding the filling of the application file, it is recommended that the applicant:

- attach a ticked checklist as below to the application;

- follow the order of documents as listed in the checklist;

- print documents double-sided, where possible;

- use only double-hole folders (please do not bind or glue).

Checklist of documents to be submitted

The table below includes the documents that must be provided for the application to be eligible 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. Documents marked with * are obligatorily to be attached online in SWIM as well.

- Several documents, which are marked in checklist annexed to the call, must be provided as originally signed papers. However, these documents may exceptionally be submitted as copies only (being signed), provided that they only concern co-applicants, affiliated entities and associate partners. The lead applicant shall keep the originals because they may have to be submitted to the Commission at a later stage. If the lead applicant fails to submit these original documents within the deadline given by the Commission, the application will be rejected for lack of compliance with the eligibility criteria. Please note that documents to be provided by the lead applicant must in any case be provided in their original version.

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No.	Document	Specification and content	The document must be provided by each			Originally signed	Checkbox
			Lead applicant	Co-applicant	Partner/ third party		
1	Official cover letter of the application	This letter must quote the reference of the call for proposals, be originally signed by the authorised representative and include the proposal reference number generated by SWIM (e.g. VP/2015/011/xxxx)	✔	--	--	✔	☐
2	Signed SWIM application form submitted online	The SWIM application form submitted online must be printed and bear the original signature of the authorised legal representative. *Note: the online form must be electronically submitted before printing. After electronic submission, no further changes to the application are permitted.*	✔	--	--	✔	☐
3	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, certifying that the applicant organisation is not in one of the situations listed in Articles 106(1) and 107 to 109 of the Financial Regulation and that it has the financial and operational capacity to complete the activity for which funding is requested. Each declaration must indicate the total amount of the requested grant as indicated in the SWIM application form.	✔	✔	--	✔	☐
4	Letter of mandate*	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.	--	✔	--	✔	☐
5	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 by the legal representative.	✔	✔	--	✔	☐
6	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).	✔	✔	--	--	☐
7	Statutes	The articles of association/statutes or equivalent proving the eligibility of the organisation.	✔	✔	--	--	☐
8	VAT certificate	A document showing the identification number for tax purposes or the VAT number, if applicable.	✔	✔	--	--	☐
9	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 by the account holder and with the original signature and stamp of the bank.	✔	--	--	✔	☐
10	Letters of commitment*	The template is available in SWIM and must explain the nature of the organisation's involvement and specify the amount of any funding provided. The letter must be written on the official letterhead of the organisation and bear the original signature of the legal representative.	✔	✔	✔	✔	☐
11	Contracts for implementing the action	In case of subcontracting for external expertise. The template is available in SWIM. (English, French or German).	✔	✔	--	--	☐
12	Description of the action	This document must be provided as an annex to the online application form by using the mandatory structure for proposals (available in SWIM). The description of the action as reflected in this compulsory template intends to provide extensive information which would not fit into the application form and other annex. It will be used to assess the application against the criteria mentioned in the text of the call for proposals.	✔	--	--	--	☐
13	Deliverables/Outputs	Summary of Quantitative Information on Planned Deliverables Outputs. The template is available in SWIM.	✔	--	--	--	☐
14	Declaration on	A declaration signed by the lead applicant stating that the policy issue addressed is within its legal area of	✔	--	--	✔	☐

	competence	competence.					□
		Lead applicants which are private or not- -for-profit entities should also document in this declaration its key role in the definition and/or implementation of employment and social policies within the national, regional and local context, i.e.:					
		• by indicating the number of users to which they provide employment or social services, compared with the target population defined for the project as in need of support in the area;					
		• by indicating whether there are other service providers in the area delivering complementary or similar services to the target population defined for the project;					
		• by providing information on their relation with the relevant public authorities (including financial support).					
15	Balance sheet & profit and loss accounts	The most recent balance sheet and profit & loss accounts, including assets and liabilities, specifying the currency used (not necessary for public bodies and international organisations). The Commission reserves the right to request balance sheets from previous years, if necessary.	✔	✔	--	--	□
16	Simplified balance sheet & profit and loss accounts	The template is available in SWIM and must be signed by the authorised legal representative	✔	✔	--	✔	□
17	Curricula vitae of key staff	**CVs of the person responsible for managing the action** (named in section A.3 of the online application form) and **the persons who will perform the main tasks** (named under "Management/Coordination" under "Heading 1 – Staff costs" of the budget in the on-line application form). The CVs should indicate clearly the current employer.	✔	✔	--	--	□
18	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 **and other than those already indicated** in the SWIM online application form. In case of work done for the Commission, applicants must also include the reference number of the contract and department for which the contract was performed.	✔	✔	--	--	□
19	Audit report	For grant requests of over EUR 750,000: an external audit report produced by an approved auditor, certifying the accounts for the last financial year available. The threshold applies to each co-applicant in line with their share of the action budget. The report should be submitted in English, French or German.	✔	✔	--	--	□