

GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND CRITERIA FOR THE SELECTION AND FUNDING OF ACTIONS UNDER THE “PUBLIC HEALTH” PROGRAMME

This document replaces in all its effects the document “Rules, criteria and procedures for the selection and funding of actions under the “Public health” programme”.

Actions under the “Public health” programme are eligible for funding through grants for individual actions or through the award of public contracts. This document applies only to funding through grants for individual actions.

1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. The Financial Regulation¹ and its Implementing Rules² are the reference documents for the implementation of the “Public health” programme. Their provisions are binding on third parties.
2. Grants must comply with the following principles:
 - co-financing rule: external co-financing from a source other than Community funds is required, either by way of the beneficiary’s own resources or the financial resources of third parties. Exceptionally, contributions in kind from third parties may be considered as co-financing (Article 172 of the Implementing Rules).
 - non-profit rule: the grant may not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit for the beneficiary.
 - non-retroactivity rule: the expenditure eligible for financing must be incurred after the agreement is signed. In exceptional cases, it may be acceptable to consider expenditure that was incurred from the date of submission of the grant application, but not earlier (Article 112 of the Financial Regulation).
 - non-cumulation rule: only one grant may be awarded for any one specific action carried out by any one beneficiary in any one financial year (Article 111, § 1 of the Financial Regulation)³.
3. Grant applications will be evaluated on the basis of three categories of criteria:
 - exclusion criteria, to assess the applicant’s eligibility – Article 174 of the Implementing Rules;

¹ Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities, OJ L 248, 16.09.2002

² Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities, OJ L 357, 31.12.2002

³ i.e.: This means that a specific action, submitted by one applicant for a grant, can be approved for cofinancing by the Commission only once a year, regardless of the length of this action.

- selection criteria, to assess the applicant's financial and operational capacity to complete the proposed project – Article 176 of the Implementing Rules;
- award criteria, to assess the quality of the project taking into account its cost.

These three categories of criteria will be considered consecutively during the evaluation procedure. A proposal which fails to meet the requirements of one of these categories will not be considered at the next evaluation stage and will be rejected.

4. In respect of the “Public health” programme, the Commission will give priority to projects which:

- provide European added value: proposals which yield relevant economies of scale at European level, involve as many eligible countries as possible and are capable of being applied elsewhere. Proposals which offer something new in relation to the existing situation and are not of a recurrent nature;
- lead to sustainable results and outputs : proposals must be likely to make a lasting contribution both to the objectives of the programme and the annual work plan, and to the development of the Community's health strategy;
- support policy developments at Community level in the field of public health;
- devote appropriate attention to an efficient management structure, a clear evaluation process and an understandable description of the expected results.

2. EXCLUSION CRITERIA

1. Applicants will be excluded from participation in the “Public health” programme if they:

- (a) are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- (b) have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of *res judicata*;
- (c) have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can justify;
- (d) have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the contracting authority or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;

- (e) have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of *res judicata* for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity detrimental to the Communities' financial interests;
- (f) have been declared to be in serious breach of contract for failure to comply with their contractual obligations, following a grant award procedure financed by the Community budget.

Evidence: The contracting authority will accept as satisfactory evidence a declaration given by the applicant on his/her honour that he/she is not in any of the situations listed above.

2. Any proposals received after the deadline for receipt specified in the call for proposals and failing to meet the formal requirements laid down in the call for proposals will be excluded from participation in the "Public health" programme.

Evidence: The means of evidence will be explained in the call for proposals.

3. Actions which have already commenced by the date on which the grant application is registered with the Commission will be excluded from participation in the "Public health" programme.

Evidence: The scheduled commencement date and duration of the action must be specified in the grant application.

4. Any incomplete proposals and proposals which do not meet the formal requirements laid down in the call for proposals will be excluded from participation in the "Public health" programme.

Each application must be complete and contain at least the following documents:

- Administrative data on the main partner and the associated partners;
- Technical description of the project;
- Global budget of the project and the requested level of Community cofinancing.

Evidence: Application content.

5. Actions which directly or indirectly promote messages contrary to the policies of the European Union or are associated with an image contrary to that of the European Institutions will be excluded from participation in the "Public health" programme.

Evidence: Application content.

3. SELECTION CRITERIA

Only proposals which have satisfied the requirements of the exclusion criteria will be eligible to be evaluated.

1. Legal status

The applicant must provide evidence of his/her organisation's legal status.

Evidence: the organisation's articles of association and the official registration certificate must be annexed to the application.

2. Financial capacity

The applicant must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain his/her activity throughout the period during which the activity is being carried out and to participate in its funding.

Evidence: The profit and loss account and the balance sheets for the past two complete financial years must be annexed to the application.

The verification of financial capacity will not apply to public bodies, nor to international public organisations created by inter-governmental agreements or to specialist agencies created by the latter.

3. Operational capacity

The applicant must have the professional competencies and qualifications required to complete the proposed action.

Evidence: The organisation's most recent annual activity report and the curricula vitae of all relevant professional staff in all the organisations involved in the project must be annexed to the application.

4. Additional documents supplied at the request of the Commission

If so requested by the Commission, the applicant must be able to supply an external audit report produced by an approved auditor, certifying the accounts for the last financial year available and giving an assessment of the applicant's financial viability.

4. AWARD CRITERIA

Only proposals which have satisfied the requirements of the exclusion criteria and the selection criteria will be eligible for further evaluation (award criteria). These proposals will be evaluated on the basis of points awarded according to five criteria (see paragraphs 1 to 5 below). The call for proposals will specify the maximum number of points attributable to each of these criteria. A threshold score will be established for each criterion, below which the proposal will be rejected. The call for proposals will specify the threshold score for each criterion.

1. Technical content

(a) Conformity of the action with the annual work plan's objectives

The applicant must clearly demonstrate that the project's specific objectives conform with the objectives described in the "Public health" programme and the annual work plan.

Applications which do not fall under the scope of the “Public health” programme and the annual work plan will be attributed a score strictly below the threshold for this criterion and will be rejected.

(b) Quality of project management

The applicant must clearly describe the project management including the roles and relationships among the different partners. He/She must describe the management structure of the project. He/She must describe the complementarity of the various project partners.

2. Methodology

(a) Relevance of the methodology

The applicant must describe as comprehensively and as exhaustively as possible the methodology to be used in pursuit of the results. This methodology must be described in terms of tasks.

(b) Realistic nature of the timetable

The applicant must supply a timetable covering the various stages of the project and its “milestones”. He/she must describe verifiable and quantifiable indicators for each stage, in order to allow proper monitoring of the project. Each indicator must be consistent with the project’s specific objectives.

(c) Analysis of the risks

The applicant must provide an analysis of the risks which might endanger the implementation of the project as originally conceived. The applicant must identify the risks, rank them in order of importance and in each case suggest alternative ways of achieving the objectives pursued.

3. Relevance of the proposed budget

Applications which do not clearly specify the global amount of the action and the requested amount of Community cofunding will be awarded a score strictly below the threshold for this criterion and will be rejected.

(a) Overall budget: Appropriateness of the budget compared to the objectives

The applicant must ensure that the global amount of the project is relevant to the objectives pursued.

The budget must be balanced: the total foreseen expenditure must equal the total expected income.

(b) Detailed budget: Relevance of the detailed budget

The applicant must ensure that the budget is coherent:

- Between the budget headings: the different budget headings (staff expenses, travel and subsistence, administrative expenses, etc.) must be coherent with the specific objectives of the project;
- Between the partners: Resources allocated to each partner must be coherent with the tasks of each partner.

4. Community added value

(a) Pertinence of the geographical coverage

The applicant must ensure that a geographical coverage of the project is sufficient with regard to its objectives (number of eligible countries, role of the partners from these countries, etc.).

Proposals involving only a regional or national dimension (i.e. which involve only one eligible country) will receive a score strictly below the threshold for the criterion “Community added value” and will be rejected.

(b) Progress in relation to the current situation / Innovative nature of the project

The applicant must relate the project with the current situation in the countries involved in the project and/or participating in the “Public health” programme, and at Community level.

The applicant must clearly identify the progress his/her project intends to accomplish within the field, in comparison with the current situation.

(c) Analysis of synergies

The applicant must ensure that there will be neither duplication nor inappropriate overlap, whether partial or total, between the project and activities carried out at European and international level.

The applicant must describe the complementarity of his/her project compared with other projects in the field. He/she must describe the connections with the legal framework and other actions developed in the context of other Community policies and/or other international and/or national organisations.

5. Community visibility

(a) Dissemination strategy of the results

The applicant must provide a detailed description of how and to whom the results of the action will be disseminated. The applicant must specify the different target audiences of the action and justify their choice.

(b) Visibility of Community co-financing

The applicant must describe the way in which the project will acknowledge the Community co-funding it has received.