

## PROJECT FUNDING PREPARATION THROUGH THE EUROPEAN PROGRAMS

MANUAL FOR APPLICANTS



## PROJECT FUNDING PREPARATION THROUGH THE EUROPEAN PROGRAMS

The process of preparing projects to obtain financial support from the EU funds begins with the realization of the project proposals or drafts, continues with the collection of the necessary documents and finishes with duly completed project documentation.

### A draft of the project according to the EU guidelines

Drafting of the project is the first step in the process of obtaining funds. After completing the draft, a brief description of the project will be used when contacting relevant institutions, potential partners and sponsors. This step is useful when checking all available project financing possibilities.

### Integration of the goals and priorities of the EU in the project

It is of primary importance that the proposed project is in compliance with policies, guidelines, objectives and priorities of the European Union. This is crucial for obtaining both, grants and loans from the EU. It is necessary to think about the positive impact of the project beyond the direct interests of the project's stakeholders (for example, the impact on the environment should be assessed by the means of an expert's evaluation). In order to identify the program through which the project could be financed, it is important to highlight the added value of the project and be creative when it comes to finding activities which have more valuable benefits than the mere profit for the stakeholders of the project.

### The objectives and priorities of the European Union

#### 1. European Union priorities

EU gives priority to projects which meet the following requirements:

##### *a. Transnational Activities and Partnerships*

It is necessary to show the European dimension of action through partnerships among various EU countries or through an area of a particular project.

Furthermore, it is important to specify the seminars, the actions of mobility and comparative approach which would show the transnational understanding of the problem and the

conclusion of innovative partnerships between private and public organizations, or between profit and non profit sectors.

#### *b. Innovative actions*

Innovation can be introduced through the development of new products or in the form of new methods and new forms of partnership.

The Commission's aim is to find new methods and to test new solutions to simplify their transfer and dissemination.

There could be some discrepancies; it is possible that what is innovative in one European region, may not be that original in another. It is necessary to take into account the innovative aspect in relation to the local situation and that of partners with whom the project will be developed.

#### *c. Multiply the effect of the project*

The project results have to be lengthy or doubled.

For example: the project will create new employment opportunities in the long run.

#### *d. Sustainability*

It is necessary to explain how it is possible to ensure project's sustainability after the project has been completed and the EU funds spent.

## 2. European Union aims

The project proposal must specify the overall goals and the specific objectives of the project which should be in accordance with the objectives and priorities of the European Union. It is important to clearly describe how the project contributes to the overall objective. Through this description it will be possible to identify the specific objectives of the project.

#### *Example*

Overall objective: to encourage sustainable development

Specific objective: The project foresees a media campaign to encourage people to engage in separate waste collection.

### **Main objectives of the European Union**

The general objectives of the European Commission for the period from 2007-2013:

Supporting projects and activities that promote:

- Sustainable economic development
- Solidarity
- Security
- The role of Europe in the world

European Commission will focus its future actions on the 5 main guidelines for the period 2009-2013:

1. *Goal: to achieve sustainable growth through economic, social and environmental policies.*

1.1 *Increase competitiveness for growth and employment,*

Supporting projects that enhance and improve:

- innovation,
- education,
- training,
- transportation,
- energy,
- social policies.

1.2. *Increasing cohesion for growth and employment,*

Supporting projects that strengthen and improve

- convergence of EU member states and least developed regions with those more developed,
- sustainable development and sustainability of the prosperous regions,
- inter-regional cooperation.

1.3. *Preserving and strengthening the natural resource management*

Supporting projects that enhance and improve:

- rural development,
- local development,
- agricultural development,
- environmental protection measures,
- quality of life enhancements in the rural area,
- equality of man and woman in agriculture,
- equality in trade,
- promotion of better natural resource and waste management,
- combating the greenhouse effect and pollution.

2. *Goal: to strengthen the sense of European belongingness among the citizens*

Supporting projects that enhance and improve:

- freedom,
- judicial system,
- safety,
- access to the basic public goods,

- public transportation,
- protection of borders,
- asylum and immigration policy,
- fight against illegal immigration,
- public health system,
- consumer policy,
- health conditions,
- promotion of health and health conditions to improve overall prosperity and solidarity;
- spreading the knowledge about health and health conditions,
- culture,
- youth,
- information,
- dialogue with citizens.

*3. Goal: to build the global impact of Europe*

Supporting projects that enhance and improve:

- sustainable development,
- contributions to the safety of civilians.

More information on goals and priorities of the European Union can be found in Programs, White Paper and Action Plan.

## Programs

To carry out its policies, the European Union has developed a variety of programs. The EU program is a plan that determines the amount of money spent by the European Commission in a specific time period in order to improve the situation in a given area. The EU program sets the priorities for the funds to be spent in that period, how it will be spent (how many calls for proposal a year, what kind of calls), who is eligible to participate, etc.

Descriptions of the EU programs can be divided into 31 area, in accordance with the division set by the EU: Civil Society, Economics and Finance, Energy, Citizenship, Humanitarian, Information, Industry, Innovation, Research, Public Administration, Culture, Media, Arts, Development, Human Rights, Youth, New Technologies, Education and Training, Environment, Small and Medium Enterprises, Agriculture and Fisheries, Justice and Security, Transport, European Union Enlargement, Social Affairs, Cooperation and Development, Telecommunications, Trade, Tourism, Services, Urban Planning, Employment, Health and other.

It is important to identify at least one EU objective from all of those listed in the description of each program that is appropriate to finance the proposed project.

## White Paper

White paper is a document which contains suggestion on how a community should act in particular sector. White Paper specifies the official attitude of the European Union towards specific political fields.

If the White Paper applicable for the proposed project is not older than one year, the use of these documents will allow you to learn the official position of the EU towards the area of your project.

There is also “Green Paper” that does not represent the official position of the EU. It mentions area that could be acceptable but are not preferred.

## Action Plans

In every economical and social area, the EU has its short term and long term plans (in most of the cases they are perennial). This plans are described on the web pages of the European Commission and can be considered as the operational objectives of the European Union.

## Identification of the Programs

There are three types of funding possibilities, as a part of the EU programs: Grants, loans and guarantees.

Grants are direct payments issued for non-commercial nature of a specific beneficiary to implement the measures or activities designed to promote certain priorities and objectives of the EU.

Loans and bank guarantees usually have specific criteria for the award.

The project must fit within a legal and political context of the European Community.

### Criteria to be followed when selecting a program:

- The project can be suitable for more than one program. It is necessary to adjust the project proposal for every program.
- Identify the exact target group for whom the project is intended.
- Identify and check whether the selected geographical territory is eligible under the chosen program.

- Verify the funding amounts and the rules of financing, which are different under every program and may influence the final decision.
- The election of the type of financial support may have some consequences on the implementation of the project (the procedures are different when it comes to grants, loans or guarantees, etc.).
- It is necessary to ensure that project partners meet the specified terms and conditions. It often takes at least 2 partners from 3 different countries.
- Pay special attention to innovative actions and multiplied project impact.
- It is important to establish contacts with responsible persons for different programs. These people are responsible for providing additional information about the program and conditions of the call for proposal.

After preparing a draft project which is structured and in accordance with the EU objectives and priorities, identifying a program which is suitable to finance the project and defining the possibilities which are available until 2013, it is necessary to study well the identified programs in order to find out the following:

- What are the financing conditions?
- When are the next deadlines for calls for proposal anticipated?
- When are the presentations of the program?
- Who are eligible partners in the project?
- Which projects have already been financed?
- What difficulties occurred in the past when applying for this particular program?

Furthermore, the crucial thing one should do in this particular stage is to get familiarized with the bidding documentation of the former projects and constantly check for any news and development within the selected program.

### Partner search

For an effective partnership search, it is necessary to add to the project draft a brief description of the project's lead organization and a description of partnership relationship that wants to be established. With this document, one can contact potential partners and the European networks, which the project encompasses, and in that way spread your project idea to all the relevant EU stakeholders.

### Why is the right approach important?

Project proposals and requests are reviewed and evaluated. First it is checked whether the submitted documentation is complete and in a proper form. After that, according to the rules known in advance, the project proposal or request for a loan or a guarantee is evaluated.

It often happens that a project applicant commits a mistake which excludes him from the competition.

Common errors can occur due to the following reasons:

- Late submission or incomplete documentation
- Lack of original documents or documents missing a signature
- Documents are not submitted in the format requested in accordance with the form set out on the relevant website
- Applicant or partner does not satisfy the criteria of eligibility
- The project is not in accordance with the objectives and priorities of the program

If the project should be submitted in English, it is very important to assure a quality translation, because imprecision could significantly reduce the clarity and quality of the idea. It is very important to carefully study the guidelines for applicants and strictly adhere to the requirements.

**It is important:**

- To invest in the development of one's capacities, since the money obtained from the EU funds is worth the effort.
- To inform one properly in order to be able to rationally choose, carefully study the necessary documentation and do all the essential steps in time.
- Work on practical skills; educate oneself, use manuals and tools which are at disposal
- Search and find quality partners, and use their value well
- Keep in mind the logic of the European funds- they do not exist solely to be used, but to contribute to the social development.

