



Contracting Authority: Agency for Vocational Education and Training,
Department for Financing and Contracting of IPA Programme

IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW CURRICULA

Guidelines
for grant applicants

**IPA for the Human Resources Development Component in Croatia
2007-2009**

Reference: Europeaid/128900/M/ACT/HR

Deadline for submission of proposals: 18 December 2009

NOTICE

Notice

This is an open Call for Proposals, where all documents are submitted at one stage (Concept Note and full proposal). However, in the first instance, only the Concept Notes will be evaluated. Thereafter, for the applicants whose Concept Notes have been pre-selected, evaluation of the full proposal will be carried out. Further to the evaluation of the full proposals, an eligibility check will be performed for those which are provisionally selected. This check will be undertaken on the basis of the supporting documents requested by the Contracting Authority and the signed "Declaration by the Applicant" sent together with the application.

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1. IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW CURRICULA

1.1 BACKGROUND

The *Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)*, was established by Council Regulation EC No 1085/2006 of 17 July 2006. It provides the overall framework within which pre-accession assistance will be made available to both candidate and potential candidate countries. As of 2007, the instrument as a whole is open to Croatia and should provide assistance to build institutional capacity for the efficient implementation of the *acquis communautaire* as well as to prepare for the management of the Structural and Cohesion Funds on accession (aligning as appropriate with the priorities identified under the Accession Partnership). In bringing together pre-accession assistance across a range of instruments, IPA consists of five Components.

The project “Implementation of new curricula” is developed under Operational Programme for Human Resources Development¹, Priority Axis 3, Enhancing human capital and employability; Measure 3.1 “Further development of the Croatian Qualifications Framework”. Intention of this measure is to foster modernisation and the further development of the vocational education and training (VET) system in particular in order to facilitate its adaptation to structural changes in the economy and compliance with the EU *acquis*, most notably with the ongoing VET Copenhagen process. It is also intended for this measure to effectively consolidate and implement reformed VET policy at the national level. It should establish a core network of VET establishments and pilot-centres with the capacity to meet the required modernisation of education content and delivery (most notably, new high quality curricula and relevant quality assurance activities) and providing for the necessary continuous review and adaptation of VET provision to suit particular local needs.

The VET schools in Croatia have so far been the key promoters of the VET innovations based on their own “bottom-up” interventions in compliance with specific needs at the local/regional level. However, there are a number of obstacles as regards the systemic/regular development of innovations by the VET school and the reciprocal exchange/mainstreaming of the good-practice examples. If the system is to be truly responsive to the local community and if cost effectiveness is to be achieved within the system then it is essential that schools develop a longer term view of their objectives and target. AVET began the process of developing a new system of qualifications and curricula which will be based on learning outcomes, and will reflect labour market needs. The need for pursuing a complementary top-down and bottom-up approaches in VET innovations, on one hand, as well as the new qualifications/curriculum principles, on the other, must involve wider measures based on the firm strategic framework for innovation at the national level. This also implies that the staff members of relevant line institutions, VET teachers, school principals and local partners have to be equipped with the necessary skills/know-how to master these new assignments.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME AND PRIORITY ISSUES

The **global objective** for this call for proposal is:

To facilitate the delivery of new modularised curricula based on learning outcomes, particularly in view of introducing systemic approach to relevant vocational education and training (VET) innovations in line with the changes in the labour market at the local and/or regional level and in line with new methodology and requirements of VET Act and National Framework Curriculum for preschool education and general obligatory education in elementary and high school².

The **specific objectives** of this Call for Proposal are:

¹ <http://www.strategija.hr/Default.aspx>

² <http://public.mzos.hr/Default.aspx?sec=2685>. The final version of the National Framework Curriculum is still to be adopted.

- To introduce methods and collaborative mechanisms needed for efficient planning and implementation of VET school-based innovations primarily related to the introduction of the new VET curricula;
- To enhance the capacities of VET teachers for the introduction of modern, student-centred approaches to teaching necessary for the implementation of new curricula;
- To improve the capacities of VET schools approaches related to measures for preventing early school leaving / to improve VET schools methods for VET students with behavioural disorders and for promotion and strengthening of school based VET career guidance and counselling.

1.3 FINANCIAL ALLOCATION PROVIDED BY THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY

The overall indicative amount made available under this call for proposals is EUR 4,300,000. The Contracting Authority reserves the right not to award all available funds.

Size of grants

Any grant awarded under this Call for Proposals must fall between the following minimum and maximum amounts:

- minimum amount: EUR 100,000
- maximum amount: EUR 300,000

In addition, no grant may exceed 85% of the total eligible costs of the action (see also section 2.1.4). The balance must be financed from the applicant's or partners' own resources, or from sources other than the European Community budget or the European Development Fund.

2. RULES FOR THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS

These guidelines set out the rules for the submission, selection and implementation of actions financed under this Call, in conformity with the provisions of the Practical Guide to contract procedures for EC external actions, which is applicable to the present call (available on the Internet at this address: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/implementation/index_en.htm).

2.1 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

There are three sets of eligibility criteria, relating to:

- applicant(s) which may request a grant (2.1.1), and their partners (2.1.2);
- actions for which a grant may be awarded (2.1.3);
- types of cost which may be taken into account in setting the amount of the grant (2.1.4).

2.1.1 *Eligibility of applicants: who may apply?*

(1) In order to be eligible for a grant, applicants **must**:

- be legal persons **and**
- be VET schools **and**
- be non profit making, or, if profit making the applicant must not derive any profit from the grant and must only use it for covering the cost **and**
- be nationals³ of a Member State of the European Union or Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYROM, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey and Kosovo under UNSC Resolution 1244/99; countries that are beneficiaries of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument; Member States of the European Economic Area: Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway **and**
- be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action with their partners, not acting as an intermediary **and**
- be legally registered as an organisation or institution for at least five years **and**
- be compliant with de minimis rule as regulated by the Commission Regulation (EC) No 1998/2006 and in Government of the Republic of Croatia Decree on de-minimis aid (Official Gazette, 45/2007)⁴.

3 Such nationality being determined on the basis of the organisation's statutes which should demonstrate that it has been established by an instrument governed by the national law of the country concerned. In this respect, any legal entity whose statutes have been established in another country cannot be considered an eligible local organisation, even if the statutes are registered locally or a "Memorandum of Understanding" has been concluded.

4 This rule applies only to private enterprises/organisations. De minimis "state aid" rule allows up to 200,000 euros aid to be provided from public funds to any enterprise over a period of three fiscal years. For further information please turn to the Commission Regulation (EC) No 1998/2006 (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:379:0005:0010:EN:PDF>) or to the Government of the Republic of Croatia Decree on de-minimis aid published in Official Gazette, 45/2007 (http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2007_05_45_1487.html).

(2) Potential applicants may not participate in calls for proposals or be awarded grants if they are in any of the situations which are listed in Section 2.3.3 of the Practical Guide to contract procedures for EC external actions (available from the following Internet address:

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/implementation/index_en.htm);

In part B section VI of the grant application form (“Declaration by the applicant”), applicants must declare that they do not fall into any of these situations.

Grant applicants and, if they are legal entities, persons who have powers of representation, decision-making or control over them, are informed that, should they be in one of the situations mentioned in:

- Commission decision (2008/969/EC, Euratom) of 16 December 2008 on the Early Warning System (EWS) for the use of authorising officers of the Commission and the executive agencies (OJ, L344, 20.12.2008, p.125).
- Commission Regulation (2008/1302/EC, Euratom) of 17 December 2008 on the central Exclusion database – CED (OJ L 344, 20.12.2008, p.12).

Their personal details (name, given name if natural person, address, legal form and name and given name of the persons with powers of representation, decision making or control, if legal person) may be registered in the EWS and CED, and communicated to the persons and entities listed in the above-mentioned decision and regulation, in relation to the award or the execution of a procurement contract or a grant agreement or decision.

2.1.2 Partnerships and eligibility of partners

Applicants must act with partner organisations as specified hereafter.

At least one VET school must be a partner.

Applicants’ partners participate in designing and implementing the action, and the costs they incur are eligible in the same way as those incurred by the grant beneficiary. They must therefore satisfy the eligibility criteria as applicable on the grant beneficiary himself.

In addition to the categories referred to in section 2.1.1, the following are however also eligible as partners:

enterprises⁵ operating at the local/regional level (they must not derive any profit from the grant and must only use it for covering the costs), social partners at the local and/or regional level (chambers, professional organizations, employers organizations, trade unions), or municipalities/cities/counties. They may also be co-financers in projects but may not apply as applicants.

The following are not partners and do not have to sign the “partnership statement”:

- Associates

Other organisations may be involved in the action. Such associates play a real role in the action but may not receive funding from the grant with the exception of per diem or travel costs. Associates do not have to meet the eligibility criteria referred to in section 2.1.1. The associates have to be mentioned in Part B section IV - “Associates of the Applicant participating in the Action” of the Grant Application Form.

⁵ De minimis rule applies to private enterprises/organisations. De minimis "state aid" rule allows up to 200,000 euros aid to be provided from public funds to any enterprise over a period of three fiscal years. For further information please turn to the Commission Regulation (EC) No 1998/2006 (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:379:0005:0010:EN:PDF>) or to the Government of the Republic of Croatia Decree on de-minimis aid published in Official Gazette, 45/2007 (http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2007_05_45_1487.html).

- Subcontractors

The grant beneficiaries have the possibility to award contracts to subcontractors. Subcontractors are neither partners nor associates, and are subject to the procurement rules set out in Annex IV to the standard grant contract.

The applicant will act as the lead organisation and, if selected, as the contracting party (the "Beneficiary").

2.1.3 <i>Eligible actions: actions for which an application may be made</i>

Definition: An action (or project) is composed of a set of activities.

Duration

The planned duration of an action may not be lower than 12 months nor exceed 14 months.

Sectors or themes

N / A

Location

Actions must take place in the Republic of Croatia.

Types of action

The actions should relate to the Specific Objectives of this Call for Proposal as stated in section 1.2 of the Guidelines. Although the intention is to clearly link the project proposal to one type of relevant action, different types of the below listed actions may be combined within a single project proposal. Relevant actions are as follows:

- Development and pilot-testing of new VET school curriculum in accordance with the Agency for Vocational Education and Training's systemic approach to VET sectors / VET curriculum methodology for better adaptation to the changes on the labour market at the local / regional level⁶;
- Introduction of innovative in-service teacher training / pilot-testing of new methods in co-operation with key stakeholders at local / regional level and to meet the needs of VET teachers and VET students with respect to the implementation of the VET school curriculum
- Introducing new features into the process of implementation of VET school curriculum / testing new school-based approaches related to measures for preventing early school leaving / improving methods for VET students with behavioural disorders⁷ as well as promoting and strengthening of the school-based VET career guidance and counselling.

Types of activity

The activities should relate to one action or (where applicable) a combination of more actions. The following list is not exhaustive and appropriate innovative activities that are not mentioned below but fall into the above mentioned types of action may also be considered for support. By way of illustration, an action could contain a range of the following activities:

- Modification of the existing VET school curricula in line with the VET curricular requirements at the national level and in close co-operation with the social partners at the local / regional level;
- Development and integration of curricular features that make a more firm bridge between theory and practice and provide adequate supply of real-world job skills, which are of immediate use to the labour market (e.g. horizontal integration of internationally recognised certifications that are developed by international companies; horizontal integration of entrepreneurial learning into the VET curriculum; etc.);
- Development of curricula with a view of improving the vertical mobility of the VET students, and prospects for post-secondary VET education, including co-operation with the higher-education / developmental institutions at the local/ regional level;
- Development and implementation of other VET-related programmes as a part of extracurricular activities in close co-operation with social partners at the local / regional level;

⁶ <http://www.aso.hr/data/2008/SRSORH.pdf> and http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2009_03_30_652.html

⁷ Behavioural disorders are type of disorders that considerably differentiate from normal behaviour of the majority of youth in certain environment. These types of behaviour are detrimental and/or dangerous for the person that acts disorderly, and for his/hers surrounding. Therefore, these type of behavioural disorders demand additional professional and/or social help, in order to socially reintegrate individual. Main criteria for identification of behavioural disorder are: deviation, adversity and need for intervention. To determine behavioural disorder it is necessary to fulfil following criteria: duration, intensity, presence of disorder in certain environment, presence of large number of disorders, sociological and cultural criteria. Signs of behavioural disorder: bullying, absence from class, lack of discipline, defiance and confronting attitude, negligence and idleness, misuse of drugs, carrying weapons and other dangerous items, gambling, inappropriate prints, low academic results. (The Handbook for bearers of the extended professional treatment in primary's and secondary's schools, Zagreb 2008., Published by: Ministry of Science, Education and Sports and Education and Teacher Training Agency, Nakladni zavod Globus)

- Introduction of new practice-based mechanisms to support the implementation of VET curricula, e.g. “VET parks” / “VET incubators” or other forms of practice-based networking at the regional and/or national level where various VET schools work together and share equipment and other resources in order to meet the needs of a given company / cluster of companies;
- Enhancing the use of intranet and relevant software / ICT solutions with a view of improving the implementation of VET curricula (overall internal communication and administration; internal monitoring and quality control of relevant implementation);
- Undertaking specific gaps and needs analysis activities aimed at improving the capacities of VET teachers for the implementation of VET school curriculum;
- Development of innovative in-service training for VET teachers for mastering (i) special VET didactics / modern pedagogical and VET student-centred teaching and learning methods as well as (ii) new technologies from the VET point of view (i.e. how they impact on the way jobs are performed) in co-operation with other VET schools, social partners and other key stakeholders (by means of e.g.: modular training, including e-learning; study-visits / peer-learning; job-shadowing / work-placement in companies / peer-teaching; participation in / organisation of conferences, round tables and other events; etc.);
- Technical assistance to VET schools for the delivery of documents related to VET school innovation approach, methodical tools and various innovative and practice-based teaching/ learning materials: textbooks, worksheets, tool-kits for teachers, manual on efficient usage of new equipment, portfolios of best-practice examples, etc.
- Support for the design and pilot-introduction of non-traditional form of student-centred methods (e.g. project);
- Training of VET teachers for relevant application of new multimedia / e-learning, education as well as relevant development / pilot-testing of the new multimedia / e-learning methods and sources at the VET schools (e.g. specialized on-line platforms and software, IT templates, virtual libraries, tool-kits, etc.);
- Introduction of cost-effective and tailor-made training methods within the VET schools that improve the foreign language skills of VET teachers (i.e. foreign language skills related to VET and specific sector / industry) so as to ensure regular development of VET curricular features in line with the standards at the EU level – relevant cost-effective activities may include e-learning, blended learning, purchase of relevant ICT aids and VET/ professional literature in foreign languages, production of glossaries of key terms in VET / specific industry, etc.;
- Horizontal integration of preventive measures to reduce behavioural disorders among VET students and/or combat early school leaving, including horizontal adaptation of VET curricula, “a second chance” type / features of VET curricula offering flexible and diverse learning paths as well as diverse extracurricular activities in co-operation with relevant stakeholders at the local / regional level;
- Training of VET school staff in innovative VET school based career guidance and counselling methods and introduction of relevant pilot-activities within a VET school or network of VET schools (innovative one-on-one interviews, group guidance around specific theme, ICT-based assistance, experience based learning in workplaces / work shadowing, use of VET school alumni, “Open Career Days” for VET students and their parents) in co-operation with social partners, employment services and enterprises active in the field of human resource development and other stakeholders at the local / regional level;
- Relevant training for VET teachers and pilot-integration of VET career guidance and counselling features into VET curriculum, including production of relevant manuals / tool-kits for VET teachers;
- Establishing virtual networks / virtual “communities of VET practitioners” among the VET schools and other key stakeholders for the purpose of sharing good-practice, exchanging views / teaching materials and undertaking joint developmental work related to the implementation of VET curricula and other aforementioned activities.

In addition to the aforementioned “soft” activities, specialized didactic / ICT equipment may be purchased with a view of supporting the implementation of new curricula and/or introduction of new features into the VET school curriculum / testing new school-based approaches integration (maximum 35% of the total direct

eligible project costs, including costs related to the VET school facilities' adaptations and refurbishment that are necessary for the installation of the equipment purchased within a grant contract).

Sub-granting is not allowed.

The following types of action are ineligible:

- actions concerned only or mainly with individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences, congresses;
- actions concerned only or mainly with individual scholarships for studies or training courses;
- actions directly funding micro-credit schemes (this means that EC funding can not be used to provide loans);
- actions which consist exclusively or primarily of capital investments, such as land, buildings, vehicles;
- actions which consist exclusively or primarily of single conferences or congresses. Conferences can be financed from the grant only if they form part of a wider range of activities to be implemented during the lifetime of the action.

Number of applications and grants per applicant

An applicant may not submit more than one (1) application under this call for proposals.

An applicant may not be awarded more than one (1) grant under this call for proposals.

An applicant may at the same time be partner in another application

Partners may take part in more than one application

2.1.4 Eligibility of costs: costs which may be taken into consideration for the grant

Only "eligible costs" can be taken into account for a grant. The categories of costs considered as eligible and non-eligible are indicated below. The budget is both a cost estimate and a ceiling for "eligible costs". Note that the eligible costs must be based on real costs based on supporting documents (except for subsistence costs and indirect costs where flat-rate funding applies).

Recommendations to award a grant are always subject to the condition that the checking process which precedes the signing of the contract does not reveal problems requiring changes to the budget (for instance arithmetical errors, inaccuracies or unrealistic costs and other ineligible costs). The checks may give rise to requests for clarification and may lead the Contracting Authority to impose modifications or reductions to address such mistakes or inaccuracies. The amount of the grant and the percentage of co-financing as a result of these corrections may not be increased.

It is therefore in the applicant's interest to provide a **realistic and cost-effective budget**.

Eligible direct costs

To be eligible under the Call for Proposals, costs must comply with the provisions of article 14 of the General Conditions to the Standard Grant Contract (see Annex F of the Guidelines).

Contingency reserve

A contingency reserve not exceeding 5% of the direct eligible costs may be included in the Budget of the Action. It can only be used with the **prior written authorisation** of the Contracting Authority.

Eligible indirect costs (overheads)

The indirect costs incurred in carrying out the action may be eligible for flat-rate funding fixed at not more than 7% of the total eligible direct costs.

If the applicant is in receipt of an operating grant financed from the Community budget no indirect costs may be claimed within the proposed budget for the action.

Contributions in kind

Contributions in kind are not considered actual expenditure and are not eligible costs. The contributions in kind may not be treated as co-financing by the Beneficiary.

The cost of staff assigned to the Action is not a contribution in kind and may be considered as co-financing in the Budget of the Action when paid by the Beneficiary or his partners.

Notwithstanding the above, if the description of the action as proposed by the beneficiary foresees the contributions in kind, such contributions have to be provided.

Ineligible costs

In line with the provisions of Article 34 (3) and Article 148 (2) of the IPA Implementing regulation, the following expenditure shall not be eligible for funding under the programme:

- a) taxes, including value added taxes, unless they are not recoverable by any means and it is established that they are borne by the final beneficiary;
- b) customs and import duties, or any other charges;
- c) purchase, rent or leasing of land and existing buildings, unless the rent or leasing is exclusively related to the period of co-financing of the operation, and that it is preferable to other solutions in terms of the best value for money;
- d) fines, financial penalties and expenses of litigation;
- e) operating costs, unless the operating costs relate exclusively to the period of co-financing of the operation;
- f) second hand equipment;
- g) bank charges, cost of guarantees and similar charges;
- h) conversion costs, charges and exchange losses associated with any of the component specific euro accounts, as well as other purely financial expenses;
- i) contributions in kind;
- j) maintenance and rental costs, unless the rental costs relate exclusively to the period of co-financing of the operation;
- k) depreciation costs for the infrastructure, unless the conditions in paragraph 3 of this Article are met.

2.2 HOW TO APPLY AND THE PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW

Please note that the prior registration in PADOR⁸ for applicants and their partners for this Call for proposal is not obligatory.

⁸ For further information on PADOR, please consult the following website:

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/onlineservices/pador/index_en.htm

Helpdesk for questions related to the functioning of PADOR:

Europeaid-ON-LINE-REGISTRATION-HD@ec.europa.eu

However the applicant and partners can register their organisation data, and upload supporting documents in PADOR.

Before the deadline for presenting the concept note and full proposal, organisations must fill in, save and submit information introduced in all the fields of PADOR (including the fields written with black characters) Only data registered and submitted before the dead-line for the submission of the concept note and full proposal will be taken into account by the EC.

It is by "submitting" their data that organisations engage their responsibility on the accuracy and veracity of the data provided in PADOR.

The supporting documents requested (statutes, financial reports, audit reports) may be uploaded in PADOR after the evaluation of the Full Proposals, but before the deadline fixed in the notification letter from the European Commission. By letter from the European Commission, the applicant will be reminded that these documents will have to be loaded in PADOR for the final eligibility check. Nevertheless, we strongly advise you to upload these documents while registering in PADOR, without waiting until the final selection of proposals is carried out.

2.2.1 *Application form*

Applications must be submitted in accordance with the instructions on the Concept Note and the Full application form included in the Grant Application Form annexes to these Guidelines (Annex A)

Applicants must apply in English.

Any error or major discrepancy related to the points listed in the instructions on the Concept Note or any major inconsistency in the application form (e.g. the amounts mentioned in the budget are inconsistent with those mentioned in the application form) may lead to the rejection of the application.

Clarifications will only be requested when information provided is unclear, thus preventing the Contracting Authority from conducting an objective assessment.

Hand-written applications will not be accepted.

Please note that only the application form and the published annexes which have to be filled in (budget, logical framework) will be evaluated. It is therefore of utmost importance that these documents contain ALL relevant information concerning the action. No additional annexes should be sent.

2.2.2 *Where and how to send the Applications*

Applications must be submitted in one original and 3 copies in A4 size, each bound. The complete application form (part A: concept note and part B: full application form), budget and logical framework must also be supplied in electronic format (CD-Rom) in a separate and unique file (e.g. the application form must not be split into several different files). The electronic format must contain **exactly the same** application as the paper version enclosed.

The Checklist (Section V of part B the grant application form) and the Declaration by the applicant (Section VI of part B of the grant application form) must be stapled separately and enclosed in the envelope

Where an applicant sends several different applications (if allowed to do so by the Guidelines of the Call), each one has to be sent separately.

The outer envelope must bear the **reference number and the title of the call for proposals**, together with the full name and address of the applicant, and the words "Not to be opened before the opening session" and "*Ne otvarati prije sastanka odbora*".

Applications must be submitted in a sealed envelope by registered mail, private courier service or by hand-delivery (a signed and dated certificate of receipt will be given to the deliverer) at the address below:

Postal address

Agency for Vocational Education and Training
(Agencija za strukovno obrazovanje)
Department for Financing and Contracting of IPA Programme
Lastovska 23/II, HR-10000 Zagreb
Croatia

Address for hand delivery or by private courier service

Agency for Vocational Education and Training
(Agencija za strukovno obrazovanje)
Department for Financing and Contracting of IPA Programme
Lastovska 23/II, HR-10000 Zagreb
Croatia

Applications sent by any other means (e.g. by fax or by e-mail) or delivered to other addresses will be rejected.

Applicants must verify that their application is complete using the checklist (section V of part B of the grant application form). Incomplete applications may be rejected.

2.2.3 *Deadline for submission of Applications*

The deadline for the submission of applications is 18 December 2009 as evidenced by the date of dispatch, the postmark or the date of the deposit slip. In the case of hand-deliveries, the deadline for receipt is at 15:00 CET (Central European Time) on 18 December 2009 as evidenced by the signed and dated receipt. Any application submitted after the deadline will automatically be rejected.

However, for reasons of administrative efficiency, the Contracting Authority may reject any application received after the effective date of approval of the first evaluation step (i.e. Concept Note) (see indicative calendar under section 2.5.2)

2.2.4 *Further information for the Application*

An information session on this call for proposals will be held on 28 September 2009 at 10:00.

Questions may in addition be sent by e-mail or by fax no later than 21 days before the deadline for the submission of applications to the below addresse(s), indicating clearly the reference of the call for proposals:

E-mail address: defco@aso.hr
Fax: +385 1 6274 698

Contracting Authority has no obligation to provide further clarifications after this date.

Replies will be given no later than 11 days before the deadline for the submission of applications.

In the interest of equal treatment of applicants, the Contracting Authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of an applicant, a partner, an action or specific activities.

Questions that may be relevant to other applicants, together with the answers, will be published on the internet at the EuropeAid website: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome> and AVET DEFECO website: www.aso.hr. It is therefore highly recommended to regularly consult the abovementioned website in order to be informed of the questions and answers published.

All questions related to PADOR registration should be addressed to the PADOR helpdesk:
europeaid-on-line-registration-hd@ec.europa.eu

2.3 EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications will be examined and evaluated by the Contracting Authority with the possible assistance of external assessors. All actions submitted by applicants will be assessed according to the following steps and criteria:

If the examination of the application reveals that the proposed action does not meet the eligibility criteria stated in paragraph 2.1.3, the application shall be rejected on this sole basis.

(1) STEP 1: OPENING SESSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE CHECK

The following will be assessed:

- The submission deadline has been respected. If the deadline has not been respected the application will automatically be rejected.
- The Application Form satisfies all the criteria specified in points 1-5 of the Checklist (section V of part B of the grant application form). If any of the requested information is missing or is incorrect, the application may be rejected on that sole basis and the application will not be evaluated further.

Following the opening session and the administrative check, the Contracting Authority will send a letter to all applicants, indicating whether their application was submitted prior to the deadline, informing them of the reference number they have been allocated and whether they have been recommended for further evaluation.

(2) STEP 2: EVALUATION OF THE CONCEPT NOTE

The evaluation of the Concept Notes that have passed the first administrative check will cover the relevance of the action, its merits and effectiveness, its viability and sustainability. The Contracting Authority reserves the right not to undertake the evaluation of the Concept Notes whenever considered justified (for example when a less than expected number of applications are received) and to go straight to the evaluation of the corresponding full applications.

Please note that the scores awarded to the Concept Note are completely separate from those given to the Full Application.

The Concept Note will be given an overall score out of 50 points in accordance with the breakdown provided in the Evaluation Grid below. The evaluation shall also verify the compliance with instructions provided in the guidance for Concept Note, part A of the grant application form.

The evaluation criteria are divided into headings and subheadings. Each subheading will be given a score between 1 and 5 in accordance with the following assessment categories: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.

	Scores	
1. Relevance of the action	Sub-score	15
1.1 Relevance of the action needs and constraints of the country/region to be addressed in general, and to those of the target groups and final beneficiaries in particular.	5	
1.2 Relevance to the priorities and objectives mentioned in the Guidelines.	5(x2)*	
2. Effectiveness and Feasibility of the action	Sub-score	25
2.1 Assessment of the problem identification and analysis.	5	
2.2 Assessment of the proposed activities (practicality and consistency in relation to the objectives, purpose and expected results).	5(x2)*	
2.3 Assessment of the role and involvement of all stakeholders and, if applicable, proposed partners.	5(x2)*	
3. Sustainability of the action	Sub-score	10
3.1 Assessment of the identification of the main assumptions and risks, before the start up and throughout the implementation period.	5	
3.2 Assessment of the identification of long-term sustainable impact on the target groups and final beneficiaries.	5	
TOTAL SCORE		50

*the scores are multiplied by 2 because of their importance

Once all Concept Notes have been assessed, a list will be established with the proposed actions ranked according to their total score.

Firstly, only the Concept Notes which have been given a score of a minimum of 12 points in the category "Relevance" as well as a minimum total score of 30 points will be considered for pre-selection.

Secondly, the list of Concept Notes will be reduced in accordance to the ranking to those whose sum of requested contributions amounts to EUR 8.6 million of the available budget for this Call for proposals, taking into account the indicative financial envelopes foreseen by lot. The Evaluation Committee will subsequently proceed with the applicants whose proposals have been pre-selected.

(3) STEP 3: EVALUATION OF THE FULL APPLICATION

An evaluation of the quality of the applications, including the proposed budget, and of the capacity of the applicant and its partners, will be carried out in accordance with the evaluation criteria set out in the Evaluation Grid included below. There are two types of evaluation criteria: selection and award criteria.

The selection criteria are intended to help evaluate the applicants' financial and operational capacity to ensure that they:

- have stable and sufficient sources of finance to maintain their activity throughout the period during which the action is being carried out and, where appropriate, to participate in its funding;
- have the management capacity, professional competencies and qualifications required to successfully complete the proposed action. This also applies to any partners of the applicant.

The award criteria allow the quality of the applications submitted to be evaluated in relation to the set objectives and priorities, and grants to be awarded to actions which maximise the overall effectiveness of the call for proposals. They enable the selection of applications which the Contracting Authority can be confident will comply with its objectives and priorities and guarantee the visibility of the Community financing (see http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/visibility/index_en.htm). They cover such aspects as the

relevance of the action, its consistency with the objectives of the call for proposals, quality, expected impact, sustainability and cost-effectiveness.

Scoring:

The evaluation criteria are divided into sections and subsections. Each subsection will be given a score between 1 and 5 in accordance with the following guidelines: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.

Evaluation Grid

Section	Maximum Score
1. Financial and operational capacity	20
1.1 Do the applicant and, if applicable, partners have sufficient experience of project management ?	5
1.2 Do the applicant and, if applicable partners have sufficient technical expertise ? (notably knowledge of the issues to be addressed.)	5
1.3 Do the applicant and, if applicable, partners have sufficient management capacity ? (including staff, equipment and ability to handle the budget for the action)?	5
1.4 Does the applicant have stable and sufficient sources of finance ?	5
2. Relevance	25
2.1 How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and one or more of the priorities of the call for proposals? Note: A score of 5 (very good) will only be allocated if the proposal specifically addresses at least one priority . Note: A score of 5 (very good) will only be allocated if the proposal contains specific added-value elements; such as promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities...	5 x 2
2.2 How relevant to the particular needs and constraints of the target country/countries or region(s) is the proposal? (including synergy with other EC initiatives and avoidance of duplication.) Note: Maximum score of 5 points can be awarded only to projects where an applicant is located within the ten counties listed in the Regional Competitiveness Operational Programme 2007 - 2009 ⁹	5
2.3 How clearly defined and strategically chosen are those involved (final beneficiaries, target groups)? Have their needs been clearly defined and does the proposal address them appropriately?	5 x 2
3. Methodology	25
3.1 Are the activities proposed appropriate, practical, and consistent with the objectives and expected results?	5
3.2 How coherent is the overall design of the action? (in particular, does it reflect the analysis of the problems involved, take into account external factors and anticipate an evaluation ?)	5
3.3 Is the partners' and/or other stakeholders' level of involvement and participation in the action satisfactory?	5
3.4 Is the action plan clear and feasible?	5
3.5 Does the proposal contain objectively verifiable indicators for the outcome of the action?	5
4. Sustainability	15

⁹ The selected counties are: Lika -Senj, Vukovar-Srijem, Zadar, Šibenik-Knin, Sisak-Moslavina, Požega-Slavonija, Karlovac, Virovitica-Posravina, Brod-Posavina, Osijek-Baranja.

4.1 Is the action likely to have a tangible impact on its target groups?	5
4.2 Is the proposal likely to have multiplier effects ? (including scope for replication and extension of the outcome of the action and dissemination of information.)	5
4.3 Are the expected results of the proposed action sustainable : - financially (<i>how will the activities be financed after the funding ends?</i>) - institutionally (<i>will structures allowing the activities to continue be in place at the end of the action? Will there be local “ownership” of the results of the action?</i>) - at policy level (where applicable) (<i>what will be the structural impact of the action — e.g. will it lead to improved legislation, codes of conduct, methods, etc?</i>)? - environmentally (if applicable) (<i>will the action have a negative/positive environmental impact?</i>)	5
5. Budget and cost-effectiveness	15
5.1 is the ratio between the estimated costs and the expected results satisfactory?	5
5.2 Is the proposed expenditure necessary for the implementation of the action?	5 x 2
Maximum total score	100

Note on Section 1. Financial and operational capacity

If the total average score is less than 12 points for section 1, the application will be rejected.

Note on Section 2. Relevance

If the total average score is less than 20 points for section 2, the application will be rejected.

Provisional selection

Following the evaluation, a table listing the applications ranked according to their score and within the available financial envelope will be established as well as a reserve list following the same criteria.

Note: The scores awarded in this phase are completely separate from those given to the concept note of the same application.

(4) STEP 4: VERIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY OF THE APPLICANT AND PARTNERS

The eligibility verification, based on the supporting documents requested by the Contracting Authority (see section 2.4) will only be performed for the applications that have been provisionally selected according to their score and within the available financial envelope.

- The Declaration by the applicant (Section VI of part B the grant application form) will be cross-checked with the supporting documents provided by the applicant. Any missing supporting document or any incoherence between the Declaration by the applicant and the supporting documents may lead to the rejection of the application on that sole basis.
- The eligibility of the applicant, the partners, and the action will be verified according to the criteria set out in sections 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and 2.1.3.

Following the above analysis and if necessary, any rejected application will be replaced by the next best placed application in the reserve list that falls within the available financial envelope, which will then be examined for the eligibility of its applicant and the partners.

2.4 SUBMISSION OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS FOR PROVISIONALLY SELECTED APPLICATIONS

Applicants who have been provisionally selected or listed under the reserve list will be informed in writing by the Contracting Authority. They will be requested to supply the following documents in order to allow the Contracting Authority to verify the eligibility of the applicants and their partners:

1. The statutes or articles of association of the applicant organisation¹⁰ and of each partner organisation. Where the Contracting Authority has recognized the applicant's eligibility for another call for proposals under the same budget line within 2 years before the deadline for receipt of applications, the applicant may submit, instead of its statutes, copy of the document proving the eligibility of the applicant in a former Call (e.g.: copy of the special conditions of a grant contract received during the reference period), unless a change in its legal status has occurred in the meantime.¹¹
2. Copy of the applicant's latest accounts (the profit and loss account and the balance sheet for the previous financial year for which the accounts have been closed)¹².
3. Legal entity sheet (see annex D of these Guidelines) duly completed and signed by the applicant, accompanied by the justifying documents which are requested therein. If the applicant has already signed a contract with the Contracting Authority, instead of the legal entity sheet and its supporting documents the legal entity number may be provided, unless a change in its legal status occurred in the meantime.
4. A financial identification form conforming to the model attached at Annex E of these Guidelines, certified by the bank to which the payments will be made. This bank must be located in the country where the applicant is registered. If the applicant has already signed a contract with the European Commission or where the European Commission has been in charge of the payments of a contract, a copy of the previous financial identification form may be provided instead, unless a change in its bank account occurred in the meantime.
5. In case that private body is applicant and/or partner following document should be provided:

¹⁰ Where the applicant and/or (a) partner(s) is a public body created by a law, a copy of the said law must be provided

¹¹ To be inserted only where the eligibility conditions have not changed from one call for proposals to the other.

¹² This obligation does not apply to natural persons who have received a scholarship, nor to public bodies nor to international organisations. It does not apply either when the accounts are in practice the same documents as the external audit report already provided pursuant to section 2.4.2.

1. De-minimis statement (as enclosed) signed only by private entities (either applicant or partners).

Where the requested supporting documents are not uploaded in PADOR they must be supplied in the form of originals, photocopies or scanned versions (i.e. showing legible stamps, signatures and dates) of the said originals. However, the Legal entity sheet and the financial identification form must always be submitted in original.

Where such documents are not in one of the official languages of the European Union or in Croatian, a translation into English of the relevant parts of these documents, proving the applicant's eligibility, must be attached and will prevail for the purpose of analysing the application.

Where these documents are in an official language of the European Union other than English, it is **strongly** recommended, in order to facilitate the evaluation, to provide a translation of the relevant parts of the documents, proving the applicant's eligibility, into English.

If the abovementioned supporting documents are not provided before the deadline indicated in the request for supporting documents sent to the applicant by the Contracting Authority, the application may be rejected.

Based on the verification of the supporting documents by the Evaluation Committee it will make a final recommendation to the Contracting Authority which will decide on the award of grants.

2.5 NOTIFICATION OF THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY'S DECISION

2.5.1 Content of the decision

Applicants will be informed in writing of the Contracting Authority's decision concerning their application and, in case of rejections, the reasons for the negative decision.

Applicants believing that they have been harmed by an error or irregularity during the award process may file a complaint. See further section 2.4.15 of the Practical Guide.

2.5.2 Indicative time table

	DATE	TIME*
Information meeting (if any)	28 September 2009	10:00
Deadline for request for any clarifications from the Contracting Authority	27 November 2009	15:00
Last date on which clarifications are issued by the Contracting Authority	7 December 2009	-
Deadline for submission of Application Form	18 December 2009	15:00
Information to applicants on the opening & administrative check (step 1)	25 February 2010*	-
Information to applicants on the evaluation of the Concept Notes (step 2)	1 April 2010*	-
Information to applicants on the evaluation of the Full Application Form (step 3)	1 June 2010*	-
Notification of award (after the eligibility check) (step 4)	15 July 2010*	-
Contract signature	30 August 2010*	-

***Provisional date.** All times are in the time zone of the country of the Contracting Authority

2.6 CONDITIONS APPLICABLE TO IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION FOLLOWING THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY'S DECISION TO AWARD A GRANT

Following the decision to award a grant, the Beneficiary will be offered a contract based on the Contracting Authority's standard contract (see Annex F of these Guidelines). By signing the Application form (Annex A of these Guidelines), the applicant declares accepting, in case where it is awarded a grant, the Contractual conditions as laid down in the Standard Contract.

Implementation contracts

Where implementation of the action requires the Beneficiary to award procurement contracts, it must award the contract to the tenderer offering the best value for money, that is to say, the best price-quality ratio, in compliance with the principles of transparency and equal treatment for potential contractors, care being taken to avoid any conflict of interests. To this end, the Beneficiary must follow the procedures set out in Annex IV to the Contract.

3. LIST OF ANNEXES

DOCUMENTS TO BE COMPLETED

ANNEX A: GRANT APPLICATION FORM (WORD FORMAT)

ANNEX B: BUDGET (EXCEL FORMAT)

ANNEX C: LOGICAL FRAMEWORK (EXCEL FORMAT)¹³

ANNEX D: LEGAL ENTITY SHEET (EXCEL FORMAT)¹⁴

ANNEX E: FINANCIAL IDENTIFICATION FORM

DOCUMENTS FOR INFORMATION

ANNEX F: STANDARD CONTRACT

- ANNEX II: GENERAL CONDITIONS APPLICABLE TO EUROPEAN COMMUNITY-FINANCED GRANT CONTRACTS FOR EXTERNAL ACTIONS
- ANNEX IV: CONTRACT AWARD PROCEDURES
- ANNEX V: STANDARD REQUEST FOR PAYMENT
- ANNEX VI: MODEL NARRATIVE AND FINANCIAL REPORT
- ANNEX VII: MODEL REPORT OF FACTUAL FINDINGS AND TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR AN EXPENDITURE VERIFICATION OF AN EC FINANCED GRANT CONTRACT FOR EXTERNAL ACTIONS
- ANNEX VIII: MODEL FINANCIAL GUARANTEE

ANNEX G: DAILY ALLOWANCE RATES (PER DIEM), available at the following address:

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/implementation/index_en.htm

PROJECT CYCLE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/multimedia/publications/publications/manuals-tools/t101_en.htm

¹³ Optional where the total amount of the grants to be awarded under the call for proposals is EUR 100 000 or less.

¹⁴ Only applicable where the European Commission is the Contracting Authority or will make the payments under the contracts to be signed.