



Contracting Authority: The Secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States

ACP-EU Co-operation Programme in Higher Education (EDULINK II)

Guidelines
for Grant Applicants

Intra-ACP envelope of the 10th European Development Fund
& Budget Line 2011 21.06.02

Reference: EuropeAid/132023/D/ACT/ACPTPS

Deadline for submission of proposals: 30 July 2012

Please note that only the English version of this Call for proposals is legally binding. All other linguistic versions are provided for information only.

SUSPENSIVE CLAUSE

Please note that this Call for proposals is launched with a suspensive clause. In fact, the indicative amount of EUR 5 000 000 from the EU Budget 2011, line 21.06.02 “Relations with South Africa” (out of a total of EUR 23 300 000 made available for this Call for Proposals) is subject to the European Commission Decision which is still pending at the time of publishing this Call for Proposals.

Notice

This is an open Call for Proposals, where all documents are submitted in 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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DEFINITIONS

ACP	Africa, Caribbean and Pacific.
Action <i>or</i> Project	The set of activities the partnership proposes to carry out.
Applicant	The lead institution within the partnership that submits the proposal and, if the proposal is selected, signs the grant contract.
Associate	Organisation that has a real role in the Action but cannot receive funding from this Programme, 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.
Beneficiary	The Applicant as the contracting party with whom a grant contract will be signed, if the proposal is selected.
BUDGET	The European Union general budget.
EDF contribution	The amount of EDF grant requested by the partnership. It cannot exceed 85% of the total eligible costs and must be comprised within the minimum and maximum amounts specified in Section 1.3.
EDF	European Development Fund.
EEA	European Economic Area.
EFTA	European Free Trade Association.
Established network	A consortium of organisations existing prior to submitting an application and fulfilling a set of criteria described in Section 2.1.2.
EU	European Union.
OCT	Overseas Countries and Territories.
Own contribution	The part of the total eligible costs funded from the Applicant's or partners' own resources, or from sources other than the Budget of the European Union or the European Development Fund, subject to the specifications of Section 2.1.4.
Partner	The institution - other than the Applicant – that is a member of the partnership.
Partnership	The network of institutions, i.e., the Applicant and its partners, constituted for the purpose of submitting an application and, if successful, for implementing the Action. It does not have to exist previously, and its constitution has to be demonstrated by the signed 'Partnership Statements' required under Section III of the Application Form.
Contractors	The grant beneficiaries have the possibility to award contracts to contractors for necessary limited parts of the Action they cannot execute themselves, e.g., the supply of products, execution of works, or provision of services. They are neither partners nor associates, and are subject to the General Conditions and the Procurement Rules set out in the Annexes II and IV to the standard Grant Contract (see Annex G of these Guidelines).
Total eligible costs	The sum of the EDF (and/or Budget) contribution and own contribution, subject to the specifications of Section 2.1.4.

Other terms used in the present Guidelines are defined in the glossary to the '*Practical Guide to Contract procedures for EU external actions*' which is available at the following Internet address:
http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/documents/execution/edf_general/edf_alglossary_en.doc

1. THE EDULINK II PROGRAMME

1.1 BACKGROUND

The policy of the European Union (EU) is to provide support to Higher Education (HE) in ACP partner countries in the context of a balanced approach to investment across the education sector as a whole. The African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) States affirmed their commitment to further reinforce their higher education systems in the Brussels Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development in ACP States, the Brussels Framework for Action, and the Brussels Resolution on the Role of Education in the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The importance of higher education in the ACP development agenda is also confirmed in the Intra-ACP Strategy Paper and Multiannual Indicative Programme 2008-2013, jointly agreed between the European Commission and the ACP Group of States. The Indicative Programme earmarks funds to foster capacity building and regional integration in the field of higher education.

The latest communication on EU Development policy adopted by the College on the 12th October 2011 "Increasing the impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change" underlines the necessity to *enhance the EU support for quality education to give young people the knowledge and skills to be active members of an evolving society.*

Moreover, the mentioned latest communication also acknowledges the relevance of the **energy and agriculture** sectors as drivers of poverty eradication:

*In **agriculture**, the EU should support sustainable practices, including the safeguarding of ecosystem services, giving priority to locally-developed practices and focusing on smallholder agriculture and rural livelihoods, formation of producer groups, the supply and marketing chain, and government efforts to facilitate responsible private investment. The EU will continue working on strengthening nutritional standards, food security governance and reducing food price volatility at international level.*

*In **energy**, the EU should offer technology and expertise as well as development funding, and should focus on three main challenges: price volatility and energy security; climate change, including access to low carbon technologies; and access to secure, affordable, clean and sustainable energy services.*

Since its launch in 2006, the EDULINK Programme has set up co-operation projects involving 139 ACP Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) from ACP States. The projects have been financed from a € 35 M total budget under the 9th European Development Fund (EDF).

The current Call for Proposals is designed to continue fostering co-operation in the field of Higher Education between the countries of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP States) and the European Union. EDULINK will improve the effectiveness, management, visibility and hence the impact of ACP-EU co-operation in the field of higher education. The Programme aims at promoting innovation in HEIs in the ACP States and, hence, at ensuring their competitiveness in the global environment.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME AND PRIORITY ISSUES

This Call for Proposals will select project proposals focused exclusively on the following target areas:

Energy access and efficiency

Agriculture and food security

Objectives and expected results

The **global objectives** of the EDULINK II Programme are:

- To foster capacity building and regional integration in the field of higher education through institutional networking; and
- To support higher education of quality, that is efficient and relevant to the needs of the labour market and consistent with the ACP regions' and member countries' socio-economic development priorities.

The **specific objective** of the EDULINK II Programme and of this Call for Proposals is to strengthen the capacity of ACP HEIs at two levels:

- Management/administration;
- Academic.

The **expected results** of implementing the EDULINK II Programme are:

- Enhanced contribution to national and regional policies and development plans for cooperation in higher education;
- Increased inter-institutional networking between HEIs in the ACP and with EU HEIs, including institutions offering teacher training, degrees and diplomas contributing to regional solutions to teacher shortages;
- Improved management and financial administration of ACP HEIs;
- Upgraded qualifications of academic staff of ACP HEIs;
- Improved institutional frameworks to pursue academic programmes and academic excellence in ACP HEIs.
- Increased mobility of postgraduate students and teaching staff through the provision of joint programmes;
- Delivered study programmes in high level skills required by the national and regional labour markets;
- Relevant national or regional quality assurance standards of study programmes are met.

1.3 FINANCIAL ALLOCATION PROVIDED BY THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY

The overall indicative amount made available for this Call for Proposals is EUR 23 300 000

- European Development Fund (EDF) : EUR 18 300 000; and
- Development Co-operation Instrument: Relations with South Africa: EUR 5 000 000.

The Contracting Authority reserves the right not to award all available funds.

This Call for Proposals is divided into 2 Lots, one for each of the above mentioned funding sources, with different eligibility rules but identical objectives, results and activities. Information on the eligibility of applicants, their partners, types of actions and costs is provided in Section 2.1 of these Guidelines for Applicants.

Lot 1 – EDF – concerns the EUR 18 300 000 EDF contribution

Lot 2 – BUDGET – concerns the EUR 5 000 000 EU Budget line 21.06.02 contribution

Applicants have to clearly specify in the first page of the Grant Application Form for which lot they are applying. Each proposal may be submitted under only one lot.

In the case where the above amount foreseen for a specific lot cannot be used due to insufficient quality or number of proposals received, the Contracting Authority reserves the right to reallocate the remaining funds to another lot.

Size of grants

Grants requested to support **a) Energy access and efficiency** and **b) Agriculture and food security** must fall between the following minimum and maximum amounts:

- Minimum amount: EUR 200 000
- Maximum amount: EUR 500 000

Any grant awarded under this Call for Proposals must be limited to 85% of the estimated total accepted costs.

The balance (i.e. the difference between the total cost of the action and the amount requested from the Contracting Authority) must be financed from the applicant's or partners' own resources, or from sources other than the European Union Budget or the European Development Fund¹.

¹ Where a grant is financed by the European Development Fund, any mention of European Union financing must be understood as referring to European Development Fund financing.

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 EU 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).

<i>2.1.1 Eligibility of applicants: who may apply?</i>
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(1) In order to be eligible for a grant, applicants **must**:

- Be legal persons **and**
- Be registered for a minimum period of three years at the time of publication of the present Call **and**
- Be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action with their partners, not acting as an intermediary **and**
- be established in ²:
 - **Lot 1 – EDF**: one of the countries listed in Annex I for "Lot 1 – EDF"
 - **Lot 2 – BUDGET**: one of the countries listed in Annex I for "Lot 2 – BUDGET "
- **And** be a public or private³ **HEI**⁴ (or **an Entity within such an institution** with a legal status that allows it to apply on its own behalf), a network⁵ of HEI, or a **Regional Institutions of Higher Education** not belonging to any national system, but formally recognised by one of the eligible countries.

2 To be 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.

3 Please note that the grant can under no circumstances result in a profit for itself and that it must be limited to the amount required to balance income and expenditure for the Action (article 17.3 of the general conditions of the grant contract)

4 In order to be eligible as a Higher Education Institution, applicants must provide courses at the undergraduate and/or graduate level of higher education leading to a qualification recognised by the competent authorities in their own country. They may be called a "University" or bear another relevant name ("Polytechnic", "College", "Institute", etc).

5 Please note that an established network acts as an entity and corresponds to only one member within a partnership.

- (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 EU external actions (available from the following Internet address: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/implementation/index_en.htm);

In Part B section 7 of the grant application form (“Declaration by the applicant”), applicants must declare that they do not fall into any of these situations.

Please note that:

- Organisations (including NGOs) from countries that are not in the list of eligible countries can nevertheless participate in projects as “**associates**”, under the conditions established in section 2.1.2 of these Guidelines.
- Independent **Research Institutes** (RI), as such, are not eligible. A RI can be an associate, under the conditions established in section 2.1.2 of these Guidelines.

2.1.2 <i>Partnerships and eligibility of partners</i>

Applicants must act with partner organisations as specified hereafter:

- The partnership must involve **at least 3 partners**, including the applicant. There is no upper limit to the number of HEIs included;
- The partnership must involve partners from **at least 2 different ACP States⁶ as defined in annex I**;
- **HEIs that have campuses in different countries are considered as one entity**. They cannot use their campuses as partners, but must create a partnership with other independent HEIs. However, more than one campus of a particular entity can be involved in the same project;
- The **number of institutions from the ACP States must always be greater** than the number of institutions from the EU or from other regions (non-ACP);
- The Application must include a **Partnership Statement** signed by each partner, confirming that they are familiar with the contents of the application and understand their role and responsibilities in the proposed action. Each member of a partnership must have a precise and clearly identified role in the project;
- **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.

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 5 - “Associates of the Applicant participating in the Action” of the Grant Application Form.

⁶ See annex I for the list of ACP States

- **Contractors:** the grant beneficiaries have the possibility to award contracts. Contractors 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 *Eligible actions: actions for which an application may be made*

Definition:

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

Duration

The initial planned duration of an action may not be less than **12 months** nor exceed **42 months**.

When determining the duration of the project, applicants should consider a start-up (inception) phase (e.g. recruitment of staff, installation of infrastructures, etc.) and an exit strategy (activity wrap-up, results dissemination, sustainability plan, etc.).

Sector: Higher Education

Within the framework of the modernisation agenda of Higher Education in ACP States, EDULINK II projects selected within this Call for Proposals will aim at supporting HEIs in ACP States to create new and upgrade existing curricula and teaching methods, reinforce links between teaching, modern technologies, lifelong learning and research, as well as strengthening their management and administration capacity.

The proposed projects must exclusively address the target areas indicated in section 1.2. Within this framework, the **thematic fields of study** may include:

Energy access and efficiency

- Innovative solutions to improve access to energy;
- Use of modern technologies;
- Renewable energies;
- Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions;
- Policies and strategies to cleaner, stable electricity services (e.g. to households and businesses);
- Improved infrastructures.

Agriculture and food security

- Value chains efficiency;
- Regional agricultural and food markets;
- Nutrition/malnutrition issues;
- Veterinary sciences
- Sustainable fishing and monitoring systems;
- Improved infrastructures.

Please note that the above list is not exhaustive.

Linkages with relevant ACP countries' national and/or regional development strategies and EDF indicative programmes⁷ should be identified.

⁷ Reference documents: EDF National and Regional Indicative programmes/strategy papers (http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/finance/edf_en.htm)

Applicants should make sure that proposed activities do not overlap with those eligible under other Programmes implemented within the ACP-EU agreement (e.g. Intra-ACP mobility scheme, Energy Facility, ACP programmes in support of research).

Cross-Cutting Issues

While addressing the above-referred priority areas and objectives, and taking into consideration the overall development policies' objectives, such as the eradication of poverty and the promotion of economic growth and inclusiveness, the issues below shall be addressed by the Programme and hence by the project applications:

- Good governance;
- Environmental sustainability;
- HIV/AIDS;
- Gender equality.

Higher education systems in ACP countries commonly present a gender imbalance. As a result, applicants are invited to submit proposals that focus on gender equality and how to decrease the existing gender divide in terms of access to higher education and labour markets.

All applicants are required to address gender issues related to their proposals.

Location

Actions should take place in one or more of the ACP Member States as listed in Annex I.

Types of action

The actions which may be financed under this call are projects of institutional and academic co-operation, concerning the applicants and its partner-organizations, aimed at:

- **Institutional capacity building** of the ACP HEIs in support of policy, management, planning and administrative capacity;
- Improving **academic quality** and relevance in the regional or sub-regional context.

Supported actions will aim at achieving concrete and innovative results in the field of higher education relevant to the socio-economic development priorities of the ACP countries and/or regions as well as to promote, demonstrate and disseminate the results achieved.

These actions should be implemented in the areas identified in section 1.2 above:

Energy access and efficiency

Agriculture and food security.

Types of Activity

All projects must include project management activities (e.g. Management of meetings between partners; participation at stakeholders meetings) and a detailed description of such activities. The non-exhaustive list below shows some types of activities that may be financed for each proposed action:

- **Management/administration capacity of the ACP HEIs:** establishment or strengthening international relations units within HEIs; capacity building to support student and staff mobility activities; creating or increasing the capacity of planning and evaluation units within the HEIs; internationalisation of campuses; establishing new or developing existing quality assurance units within

HEIs; enhancing mechanisms for communication and dissemination of results from EDULINK projects; short and/or medium term study visits.

- **Academic capacity of the ACP HEIs:** developing and implementing new curricula; developing capacities for postgraduate student exchanges, joint development of curricula, joint degrees/diplomas; academic staff exchanges; regional courses/seminars for training academic staff; teacher training courses for HEI academic staff; postgraduate student and/or staff mobility; developing and implementing credit transfer processes; the promotion, dissemination and demonstration of project results and/or best practices, e.g. web pages, drafting documents, studies, dissemination events.

Sub-granting

Sub-granting is not allowed under this Call for Proposals.

Visibility

Note that the applicant must comply with the objectives and priorities and guarantee the visibility of the EU-financing (see the Communication and Visibility Manual for EU external actions laid down and published by the European Commission at (see http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/visibility/index_en.htm).

Ineligible actions

The following types of action are ineligible:

- Actions concerned only or mainly with individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences, congresses;
- Actions that foresee individual scholarships for studies or training courses.

Number of applications and grants per applicant

An applicant may submit more than one application under this Call for Proposals if the majority of the partners are different for each application and if the proposals are for projects that are clearly different in content or geographical coverage. Please note that, in this case, each proposal must be submitted individually and separately.

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

Partners may take part in more than one application.

Applicants to whom a grant was awarded under one or more of the previous EDULINK I Calls for Proposals may introduce a new project proposal under this EDULINK II call. Consortia that have been awarded a grant under EDULINK I may apply with the same partnership composition provided the new project proposal is clearly different from their proposals funded under previous calls.

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 the EU 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**.

Claimed costs must be duly justified, and in particular, it should be noted that the financing of items such as equipment and travels should be limited to the minimum necessary for the implementation of the action

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 G of the Guidelines).

Note that taxes, including VAT will only be accepted as eligible costs when the Beneficiary (or, where applicable, its partners) can show it cannot reclaim them. Taxes shall in such case be included in the Budget of the Action under each heading. Information on taxes can be found in Annex J to these Guidelines.

Staff costs

Staff cost shall mean any payment made to a person working on a regular or recurrent basis for the project, whether as staff member of a participant HEI or as sub-contracted professional.

Staff costs shall be calculated on the basis of the normal salary paid by the HEI to the concerned staff member, for the number of months/days to be spent on the project (i.e. no special "international project" rate should be used). This calculation shall include all the normal charges paid by the employer, such as social security contributions and related costs, but shall exclude any bonus. The salary claimed should be justified by including a copy of the HEI's salary schedule and/or copies of the latest monthly pay slips of the individual staff members.

Specific funds in the budget should be dedicated to the management of the project and to enhance the project management expertise of partners. In addition, and with the purpose of avoiding weak reporting (and in particular financial reporting), the project application should include the necessary provisions to allocate a staff member with the appropriate administrative / accounting know-how to the tasks of document keeping and reporting, in particular financial reporting.

A specific budget allocation for "Administrative/support staff (bookkeeping & financial reporting)" must be entered under 1.1.3. Annex B, Budget for the Action.

For other personnel engaged in the project, the unit rates must be actual local market rates and must be explained in the budget justification.

Participation in stakeholder meetings

For stakeholder meetings organised by the Contracting Authority, an amount of EUR 10,000 must be entered under the budget heading 'Travel costs'.

Contingency reserve

A contingency reserve not exceeding 5% of the estimated 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 estimated total eligible direct costs. Indirect costs are eligible provided that they do not include costs assigned to another heading of the budget of the standard grant contract. The applicant may be asked to justify the requested percentage before contracting. However, once the flat-rate has been fixed in the special conditions of the standard grant contract, no supporting documents need to be provided.

If the applicant is in receipt of an operating grant financed from the EU, 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.

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

The following costs are not eligible:

- debts and debt service charges
- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- interest owed;
- costs declared by the beneficiary and covered by another action or work programme;
- purchases of land or buildings, except where necessary for the direct implementation of the action, in which case ownership must be transferred to the final beneficiaries and/or local partners, at the latest by the end of the action;
- currency exchange losses;
- credit to third parties.

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 Proposals is not obligatory. **Information in PADOR will not be drawn in the present Call.**

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 or in French.

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 worksheets are inconsistent) 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 two 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 6 of Part B the grant application form) and the Declaration by the applicant (Section 7 of Part B of the grant application form) must be stapled separately and enclosed in the envelope

Where an applicant sends several different applications, 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 title and number of the lot, the full name and address of the applicant, and the words "Not to be opened before the opening session".

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

EDULINK
Programme Management Unit
c/o GOPA-Cartermill
Rue de Trèves, 45
B1040 Brussels

Address for hand delivery or by private courier service

EDULINK
Programme Management Unit
c/o GOPA-Cartermill
Rue de Trèves, 45
B1040 Brussels

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

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 6 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 30 July 2012 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 16:00 local time 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*

Questions may be sent by e-mail no later than 21 days before the deadline for the submission of applications to the below address, indicating clearly the reference of the Call for Proposals:

E-mail address: Call2012@acp-edulink.eu

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 EuropeAid (<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome>) and EDULINK (www.acp-edulink.eu) websites. It is therefore highly recommended to regularly consult the abovementioned websites in order to be informed of the questions and answers published.

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 & ADMINISTRATIVE CHECKS AND CONCEPT NOTE EVALUATION

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 6 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.

The evaluation of the Concept Notes that have passed the administrative check will cover the relevance and design of the action.

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.

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	30
1.1 How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the Call for Proposals?	5x2*	
1.2 How relevant to the particular needs and constraints of the target country(ies) or region(s) is the proposal? (including synergy with other EU initiatives and avoidance of duplication)	5x2*	
1.3 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	
1.4 Does the proposal contain specific added-value elements, such as environmental sustainability, good governance, promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities, needs of disabled people, rights of minorities and rights of indigenous peoples, or innovation and best practices	5	
2. Design of the action	Sub-score	20
2.1 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 relevant stakeholders?	5x2*	
2.2 Is the action feasible and consistent in relation to the objectives and expected results?	5x2*	

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.

First, only the Concept Notes which have been given a score of a minimum 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 46 600 000, taking into account the indicative financial envelopes foreseen by lot.

Following the Concept Note evaluation, 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 the Concept Note were evaluated and the results of that evaluation.

The Evaluation Committee will subsequently proceed with the applicants whose proposals have been pre-selected.

(2) STEP 2: EVALUATION OF THE FULL APPLICATION

First, it will be assessed if the full application form satisfies all the criteria specified in points 1-8 of the Checklist (Section 6 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.

An evaluation of the quality of the applications, including the proposed budget, and of the capacity of the applicant and its partners, will be subsequently 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. 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 of the action	30
<i>Score transferred from the Concept Note evaluation</i>	
3. Effectiveness and feasibility of the action	20
3.1 Are the activities proposed appropriate, practical, and consistent with the objectives and expected results?	5
3.2 Is the action plan clear and feasible?	5
3.3 Does the proposal contain objectively verifiable indicators for the outcome of the action? Is evaluation foreseen?	5
3.4 Is the partners' level of involvement and participation in the action satisfactory?	5
4. Sustainability of the action	15
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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 of the action	15
5.1 Are the activities appropriately reflected in the budget?	5x2*
5.2 Is the ratio between the estimated costs and the expected results satisfactory?	5
Maximum total score	100

*the scores are multiplied by 2 because of their importance

Note on Section 1. Financial and operational capacity

If the score is less than 12 points for section 1, 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.

(3) STEP 3: 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 7 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 organisation⁹ 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.
2. Where the grant requested exceeds EUR 500 000, an external audit report produced by an approved auditor, certifying the applicant's accounts for the last financial year available.

This obligation does not apply to public bodies.

3. 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)¹⁰.
4. 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.
5. 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.

This bank account must yield interest or equivalent benefits. If the costs for opening and/or maintaining such an account equals or exceeds the expected interest, applicants may be exempted from this obligation by submitting a declaration of honour to this fact.

⁹ 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

¹⁰ 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.

6. The name, complete address and contact details of the audit firm that will carry out the verification referred to in Art. 15.6 of the General Conditions. Please note that the selected audit firm must be a member of an internationally recognised supervisory body for statutory auditing.
7. A document by the competent national authorities (e.g. Ministry of Education) that certifies that the HEI and its partners are recognised and their diplomas accredited.

The requested supporting documents must be supplied in the form of originals, photocopies or scanned versions (i.e. showing legible stamps, signatures and dates) of the said originals.

Where such documents are not in one of the official languages of the European Union, a translation into English or French 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 or French, 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 or French.

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*
Deadline for request for any clarifications from the Contracting Authority	9/07/2012	16:00
Last date on which clarifications are issued by the Contracting Authority	19/07/2012	-
Deadline for submission of Application Form	30/07/2012	16:00
Information to applicants on the opening & administrative checks and concept note evaluation (step 1)	22/10/2012*	-
Information to applicants on the evaluation of the Full Application Form (step 2)	10/12/2012*	-
Notification of award (after the eligibility check) (step 3)	28/01/2013*	-
Contract signature	25/03/2013*	-

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

This indicative timetable may be updated by the Contracting Authority during the procedure. In such case, the updated timetable shall be published on internet at the EuropeAid web site <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome> and at the EDULINK Programme web site: www.acp-edulink.eu

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 grant contract (see Annex G 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 grant 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 standard grant 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)

ANNEX D: LEGAL ENTITY SHEET

ANNEX E: FINANCIAL IDENTIFICATION FORM

DOCUMENTS FOR INFORMATION

ANNEX G: STANDARD GRANT CONTRACT

- ANNEX II: GENERAL CONDITIONS APPLICABLE TO EUROPEAN UNION-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 EU FINANCED GRANT CONTRACT FOR EXTERNAL ACTIONS
- ANNEX VIII: MODEL FINANCIAL GUARANTEE
- ANNEX IX: STANDARD TEMPLATE FOR TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP OF ASSETS

ANNEX H: DAILY ALLOWANCE RATES (PER DIEM), available at the following address:
http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/implementation/index_en.htm

ANNEX I: LIST OF ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES

ANNEX J: INFORMATION ON THE TAX REGIME APPLICABLE TO GRANT CONTRACTS SIGNED UNDER THE CALL.

PROJECT CYCLE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

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