

III

(Notices)

COMMISSION

CALL FOR PROPOSALS 2003 — PROGRAMME OF COMMUNITY ACTION IN THE FIELD OF PUBLIC HEALTH (2003-2008)

(2003/C 62/04)

(Text with EEA relevance)

1. Background and purpose of this call

1.1. On 23 September 2002, the European Parliament and the Council adopted a Decision on the programme of Community action in the field of public health (2003-2008) ⁽¹⁾. This programme entered into force on 1 January 2003. It replaced the previous eight public health programmes on health promotion, information, education and training; cancer; the prevention of AIDS and certain other communicable diseases; the prevention of drug dependence; health monitoring; injury prevention; rare diseases and on pollution-related diseases. These all came to an end on 31 December 2002.

1.2. The **general objectives** of the programme are:

- (a) to **improve information and knowledge** for the development of public health;
- (b) to enhance the capability of **responding rapidly** and in a co-ordinated fashion **to health threats**;
- (c) to promote health and prevent disease through **addressing health determinants** across all policies and activities.

The programme should contribute to

- (a) ensuring a high level of human health protection in the definition and implementation of all Community policies and activities, through the promotion of an **integrated and intersectoral health strategy**;
- (b) tackling inequalities in health;
- (c) encouraging cooperation between Member States in the areas covered by Article 152 of the Treaty.

⁽¹⁾ Decision No 1786/2002/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2002 adopting a programme of Community action in the field of public health (2003-2008) (OJ L 271, 9.10.2002).

1.3. The Work Plan 2003, attached to the information pack available on request (see point 6), sets out details of the priority areas for action in implementing the programme. Within this information pack is a document with details of the 'Rules, criteria and procedures for the selection and funding of actions under the Public Health Programme'.

Eligible countries

1.4. The Commission is hereby seeking proposals for action from bodies active in the field of public health to implement the priority actions defined in the programme decision.

In addition to the 15 Member States of the European Union, the call is also open to participation by the EFTA-EEA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) within the context of the Agreement on the European Economic Area.

Organisation from any of these countries can submit a project as the main contractor, or act as a partner in any project.

The call is also open to the applicant countries which will participate in the public health programme in 2003. These are Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Romania, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Turkey.

Funding of projects submitted or involving any of the countries listed above, which are not Member States of the European Union, is dependent on completion of the formal legal procedures.

Projects can also be submitted by international/intergovernmental public organisations.

Interested parties are invited to submit an application to the Commission in accordance with the procedure set out in the document on 'Rules, criteria and procedures for the selection and funding of actions under the Public Health Programme'.

1.5. The proposals selected will qualify for Community financial assistance (grants) on the basis of the shared cost principle. Applicants' attention is drawn to the fact that the Commission will give priority to funding actions which fall within the scope of the abovementioned annual Work Plan 2003 and the priorities specified in that document, taking into account the general objectives of the new public health programme. Applicants should also ensure that their projects do not duplicate work already done in the previous eight public health programmes or under other Community funding programmes, and that where appropriate, projects should build upon work already undertaken at Community level.

2. Criteria for the selection and funding of actions under the programme ⁽²⁾ (grants for projects ⁽³⁾)

Eligibility of applicants and evaluation criteria (exclusion, selection, attribution). Applicants must meet criteria set out by the Rules, Criteria and Procedures for the Selection and Funding of Actions Under the Public Health Programme' document. The Commission reserves the right to reject proposals that do not meet these criteria and procedures.

To be eligible for financial support under the 'Public health' programme, projects must serve the protection of human health and improvement of public health and contribute to achieving one or more of the objectives set out in Decision 1786/2002/EC. Eligible projects are identified following a **call for proposals** with a view to the awarding of **grants** governed by the Financial Regulation ⁽⁴⁾.

In implementing the programme, the Commission will give priority to projects which:

- provide **European added value** (activities yielding relevant economies of scale at European level, conducted in as many Member States as well as applicant countries and EFTA/EEA countries as possible and capable of being applied elsewhere),

⁽²⁾ Calls for tenders are governed by the legislation on the award of public contracts and will be launched separately in accordance with the applicable procedures (see section 1 of the document on 'Rules, criteria and procedures for the selection and funding of actions under the Public Health programme').

⁽³⁾ The amount of the financial contribution under the programme can, in principle, be up to 80 % of the eligible costs for the projects considered. However, this figure is a maximum, not the norm for all projects, and the Commission will determine in each individual case the maximum percentage to be awarded.

⁽⁴⁾ Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (OJ L 248, 16.9.2002).

- are **large-scale** (in content and geographical coverage), **multiannual** and **multidisciplinary** (activities which cover an issue in a broad way involving all relevant partners and disciplines, span several years and cover a wide scope of issues),

- lead to **sustainable results** and outputs (which are likely to make a lasting contribution both to the objectives of the programme and to the development of the Community's health strategy),

- support policy developments at Community level in the field of public health, as set out in the annual priorities for the achievement of the programme's objectives,

- devote appropriate attention to the **evaluation** of the process and results.

Projects to be co-funded are identified by applying three sets of evaluation criteria: **exclusion criteria** (assessment of eligibility), **selection criteria** (assessment of the applicant's capacity) and **award criteria** (assessment of quality in relation to the cost of the project).

NB: Applicants must, without fail, provide all useful information of relevance to the funding of their project, including details and outcome of any other funding applications for the same project submitted to other national or international bodies or other Community programmes. Applicants are required to forward such information throughout the duration of the project.

2.1. Exclusion criteria ⁽⁵⁾

- 2.1.1. In principle, commercial companies cannot take part in calls for proposals unless they can demonstrate that the immediate objective of the project proposed is non-commercial and absolutely non-profit-making ⁽⁶⁾.

- 2.1.2. Any application submitted by an agent on behalf of a third party will be excluded.

⁽⁵⁾ Article 115.1 of the Financial Regulation.

⁽⁶⁾ Article 109.2 of the Financial Regulation.

2.1.3. Any application submitted by an organisation to which any of the criteria for exclusion from a public contract referred to in Article 114.2 of the Financial Regulation apply will be excluded. This means organisations which ⁽⁷⁾:

- (a) are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- (b) have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of *res judicata*;
- (c) have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can justify;
- (d) have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the contracting authority or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;
- (e) have been the subject of a judgement which has the force of *res judicata* for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity detrimental to the Communities' financial interests;
- (f) following another procurement procedure or grant award procedure financed by the Community budget, have been declared to be in serious breach of contract for failure to comply with their contractual obligations.

2.1.4. Any action or stage thereof which has already been completed on the date when the funding application is registered by DG Health and Consumer Protection (SANCO) will not be eligible. A grant may be awarded for an action which has already begun only where the applicant can demonstrate the need to start the action before the agreement is signed. In such cases the provisions of Article 112 of the Financial Regulation will be applied. ⁽⁸⁾.

2.1.5. Any action which seeks to promote, either directly or indirectly, a message which runs contrary to the

policies of the European Union or which is associated with an image contrary to that of the institutions will not be eligible.

2.1.6. Any proposals received after the deadline for receipt or failing to meet the formal requirements laid down in the call for proposals will be excluded. Only applications submitted using the standard application form will be considered. All the obligatory fields in the form must be completed clearly, accurately and in full. Any incomplete or unsigned applications will automatically be eliminated from the selection procedure.

Any applications which do not meet the following eligibility criteria will be disregarded:

- applications must be submitted by a body legally established and registered in a Member State, or in one of the countries mentioned in Article 10 of Decision 1786/2002/EC, provided that the official agreements have been signed between the governments of these countries and the Community concerning their participation in the programme ⁽⁹⁾,
- projects must relate to an action under the scope of the 'Public health' programme as defined in Decision 1786/2002/EC and the annual plans of work,
- the budget presented must show a balance between expenditure and income and clearly state the costs eligible for funding from the Community budget.

2.2. Selection criteria ⁽¹⁰⁾

2.2.1. The paper version of the form is the authentic one. All applications must also be submitted in electronic form on CD-ROM or diskette, preferably in one of the following formats: HTML (hypertext mark-up language), Word, Excel, PDF, TIF or JPG; failing that, in RTF (rich text format) or TXT (unicode text).

2.2.2. Only legally established organisations are eligible for funding. In order to prove legal status, the following supporting information must be enclosed with the application (unless the application is submitted by a recognised public authority):

- (a) the organisation's articles of association and a copy of the registration certificate,

⁽⁷⁾ Basis: declaration on the applicant's honour, attached to the funding application form.

⁽⁸⁾ The eligible costs cannot have occurred prior to the date of submission of the proposal.

⁽⁹⁾ EFTA/EEA countries, associated central and eastern European countries, Cyprus, Malta and Turkey.

⁽¹⁰⁾ See Article 115.1 of the Financial Regulation.

- (b) if not appended to the Articles of Association, a list of the members of the board,
- (c) all the information required in the application form (business name, VAT number, etc.).

2.2.3. Only organisations able to ensure their functioning can be awarded a grant. To back up the application, the applicant must enclose a copy of the organisation's annual accounts (or the annual budget in the case of a public body) for the last financial year finalised before the submission of the application. The signatures of the partners contributing to project funding or a declaration signed by the coordinator confirming that he or she is authorised to submit the proposal and that this has been approved by the partners must also be enclosed. Moreover, the forward budget for the project must be balanced in terms of income and expenditure. For actions where the cost to be financed exceeds EUR 300 000, the application must be accompanied by an external auditor's report ⁽¹¹⁾. In the case of agreements linking the Commission and a number of beneficiaries, these thresholds shall apply to each beneficiary.

2.2.4. Only organisations with the necessary operational resources, skills and professional experience may be awarded a grant. To this end, the following information must be enclosed in support of the application:

- (a) the organisation's most recent annual activity report
- (b) the CV of the project coordinator and/or project leader
- (c) any references concerning participation in activities funded by the European Community or the conclusion of contracts with the Commission, other international organisations or Member States.

2.3. Award criteria ⁽¹²⁾

After the exclusion and selection criteria have been applied, a list of the proposed actions responding most

closely to the following two criteria will be drawn up: **quality of the proposed action and cost-effectiveness of the project**. For evaluation purposes, these two criteria will be analysed on the basis of the following sub-criteria: *conformity with the Commission's predefined objectives; Community added value; dissemination of results and visibility of the Community action; results likely to be taken into consideration; relevance of the methods and quality of the proposed management; effectiveness of partnerships; consistency of the funding plan.*

2.3.1. Quality of the proposed action

2.3.1.1. *Conformity with the Commission's predefined objectives:*

- (a) Good understanding of the issues at stake in the Community: the project must meet the needs identified in Decision 1786/2002/EC and the annual plans of work. The applicant must offer evidence of the links between the proposed project and the priorities. The applicant must, for example, explain if and how the project contributes to strengthening solidarity and cohesion within the Community, responds to needs arising out of conditions and structures established through Community action in other fields, takes account of new developments, new threats and new problems, or brings together activities undertaken in relative isolation and with limited impact at national level by complementing them.

- (b) Clear description of the proposed project, compliance with specific requirements: scale of the project (in terms of content and geographical coverage), multiannual and multi-disciplinary character.

2.3.1.2. *Community-added value:*

- (c) Extent to which the project can contribute to health protection and/or the improvement of public health, so contributing to the resolution of problems at Community level: the applicant must describe the benefits of project implementation at European level. For example, projects will be taken into consideration if they contribute to the comparability of data and methods between Member States, contribute to uniformity and consensus between Member States, provide expertise for the definition of new approaches, identify the scale of public health problems common to the Member States, contribute to the exchange of best practices between Member States, or identify effective methods of intervention with regard to health threats and health determinants.

⁽¹¹⁾ This report shall certify the accounts for the last financial year available and give an assessment of the viability of the body. See Articles 173(4) and 176(2) of the implementing rules for the Financial Regulation; Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (OJ L 357, 31.12.2002).

⁽¹²⁾ Article 115.2 of the Financial Regulation.

- (d) European added value of the partnership(s): taking account of the objectives pursued, the applicant must describe the complementarity of the skills available in the various organisations participating at European level.
- (e) Originality, innovative nature and progress compared with the state of the art: the applicant must compare the project with the existing situation in the Member States and at Community level.
- (f) Analysis of synergies: in evaluating the project, account will be taken of the activities undertaken by other Commission departments, European agencies, and/or national and international organisations, so as to avoid overlapping, foster synergy and promote consistency and complementarity of approaches. On the basis of the available information, the applicant must place the project in the appropriate context:
- (i) complementarity of the project compared with other projects already developed in the field
- (ii) connection with projects developed in the context of other Community policies
- (iii) connection with projects developed in the context of other international or national organisations
- (iv) **REMINDER: Applicants must, without fail, provide all useful information of relevance to the funding of their project, including details and outcome of any other funding applications for the same project submitted to other national or international bodies or other Community programmes. Applicants are required to forward such information throughout the duration of the project.**
- (g) Number of Member States as well as applicant countries and EFTA/EEA countries involved: priority will be given to large-scale projects involving as many Member States, applicant countries and EFTA/EEA countries as possible, taking account of the specific features of the project under consideration. The applicant

must specify how these countries are to be involved in or concerned by the project. The balance between the scale of the project (number of Member States, applicant countries and EFTA/EEA countries involved) and its characteristics will be evaluated by the Commission assisted by the Public Health Committee as part of the procedure described in section 3(A) of the document 'Rules, Criteria and Procedures for the Selection and Funding of Actions Under the Public Health Programme'.

2.3.1.3. *Dissemination of results and visibility of the Community action*

- (h) The project must include the dissemination and exploitation of the results, using suitable dissemination strategies (choice of target groups, etc.). The applicant must describe in detail the dissemination plan, covering all the levels envisaged (international, national, local), and must state how the Community nature of the project will be brought to bear.

2.3.1.4. *Results likely to be taken into consideration*

- (i) The project must define specific and realistic objectives, with the aim of producing lasting results conducive to the realisation of the programme's objectives. The applicant must state the specific objectives pursued and their link with the programme's objectives.
- (j) The project must set verifiable and quantifiable objectives. The applicant must specify how the results are to be measured. The project must include suitable evaluation measures. The applicant must describe the envisaged evaluations in detail, in terms of both procedures and results.

2.4. *Cost-effectiveness of the project*

2.4.1. Relevance of the methods and quality of the proposed management:

- (k) The applicant must explain the basis for adopting the proposed methods and must provide information allowing an assessment of the clarity and feasibility of the proposed timetable for implementation, the coherence of tasks and the tools to be used to monitor the project. The applicant must provide an analysis of risks which might hinder the implementation of the project as originally intended and suggest alternative ways of achieving the objectives pursued.

2.4.2. Effectiveness of partnerships:

- (l) The applicant must describe the multiplier effects expected from the development of the project, and must explain the complementarity of the resources available and the economics of scale generated under the project.

tionally in the light of the difference between the actual cost of the project and the estimated cost. If expenditure is higher than the estimated total cost, the Commission will pay, at the most, the sum equivalent to the percentage granted on the basis of the initial budget annexed to the contract.

2.4.3. Consistency of the funding plan:

- (m) The applicant must provide evidence of the appropriateness of the planned budget in relation to the expected results: *in particular, he must describe the nature of the work to be undertaken by each person involved in implementing the project and provide an estimate of the workload of each person involved as a result of this work (detailed justification of the number of working days proposed in the project budget and the relevant costs).*

— Priority will be given to multiannual projects. In principle, contracts will be made for a period of up to three years' duration, except in exceptional cases where the Commission agrees that a longer period is justified by the nature of the project.

- 3.2. Eligible and non-eligible costs: without prejudice to the more detailed provisions contained in the documents of the information pack, the main categories of eligible and non-eligible expenditure are as follows:

3. Financial provisions

The Financial Regulation adopted on 25 June 2002⁽¹³⁾ by the Council lays down the rules to be applied with a view to ensuring that the procedures for protecting Community funds are complied with. This regulation and the associated implementing rules⁽¹⁴⁾ constitute reference documents for all financial measures necessary for the implementation of the 'Public health' programme, and their provisions are binding in all Member States.

- (a) Eligible costs are: staff costs; travel, accommodation and subsistence expenses; equipment; charges for certain financial services; costs of consumable and supplies; costs of services relating to eligible costs; subcontracting (only if mentioned in the grant agreement); information dissemination costs;

- 3.1. The following extracts from the main financial provisions applying to projects are given for guidance:

The eligible costs mentioned above cannot have occurred prior to the date of submission of the proposal.

- After appropriate consultation and selection of projects the Commission will determine the amount of financial assistance to be granted, on the basis of budget availability.
- Projects are financed under the shared cost principle. If the amount granted by the Commission is lower than the assistance sought by the applicant, it is up to the latter to find supplementary financing or to cut down on the total cost of the project without diluting either the objectives or the content.
- The Commission grants a percentage of the estimated total cost of the project, up to 80 % of the eligible costs. However, this figure is a maximum, not the norm for all projects, and the Commission will determine in each individual case the maximum percentage to be awarded. If the actual expenditure is lower than the estimated total cost, the Commission's contribution will be reduced propor-

- (b) Non-eligible costs are: fixed capital costs; general provisions; debts owed; interest paid; doubtful debts; exchange losses; extravagant expenditure; contributions in kind.

4. Financial Framework

- 4.1. The financial envelope of the programme for the period 2003-2008 is EUR 312 million. The budget available for 2003 will be up to EUR 45,472 million for financial intervention (grants and calls for tenders).

- 4.2. As far as the allocation of resources is concerned, a balance between the programme's different objectives will be maintained.

5. Procedures

- 5.1. Proposals shall comply with the requirements set out below; otherwise they will not be taken into consideration:

- they shall be drawn up using the form and the summary sheet obtainable from the address shown below;

⁽¹³⁾ Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (OJ L 248, 16.9.2002).

⁽¹⁴⁾ Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (OJ L 357, 31.12.2002).

— they shall be submitted by post, courier or hand delivered, in triplicate, by **16 May 2003**, to the following address:

**European Commission
Health and Consumer Protection Directorate-
General
Directorate G — Public Health
Financial Cell
EUFO 4295
Bâtiment Jean Monnet
Rue Alcide de Gasperi
L-2920 Luxembourg**

Proposals received by the Commission after the deadline will be accepted if clearly postmarked before or on the deadline, or if delivered by hand or by courier up to 17.00 on the above date (Luxembourg time).

After the deadline of 16 May 2003, an estimated period of five months will be necessary in order to carry out consultations and internal procedures leading to the Commission decision on projects to be co-financed. On this basis, the planned date for closing the award procedure would be 30 September 2003. Therefore the earliest possible date for the start-up of the actions would be 30 November 2003 ⁽¹⁵⁾ ⁽¹⁶⁾.

All correspondence concerning this call for proposals must state the reference number GHP/2003 (corresponding to the section 2.1 in the Work Plan 2003) or HI/2003 (corresponding to the section 2.2 in the Work Plan 2003), or HT/2003 (corresponding to the section 2.3 in the Work Plan 2003), or HD/2003 (corresponding to the section 2.4 in the Work Plan 2003).

Applicants are requested to use only one of the above methods to submit proposals, to submit proposals in one single step, and to submit only one version (in triplicate) of any given proposal.

5.2. NB:

- Submission by fax or electronic mail will not be accepted.
- Proposals must be typewritten and duly signed; all applications should also be submitted in electronic

form on a diskette or a CD ROM in one of the following formats: HTML, WORD, EXCEL, PDF, TIF, JPG, RTF or TXT.

- In submitting a proposal, applicants accept the procedures and conditions as described in this call and in the documents to which it refers.
- In all correspondence relating to this call (e.g. when requesting information, or submitting an application), reference shall clearly be made to this specific call. Once a registration number has been attributed by the Commission services to a proposal received, the applicant shall use this code in all subsequent correspondence.
- Requests for the information pack and application form for funding sent before the publication of the present call for proposals will not be considered.

6. Information pack

An information pack containing all the documents needed for submitting an application can be obtained by:

- written request (letter or fax: (352) 430 13 80 19) from the address shown in section 5,
- downloading from the website: http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/index_en.html

The information pack contains:

- (a) the decision of the European Parliament and the Council establishing a programme of Community action in the field of public health,
- (b) the annual work plan 2003 indicating the priorities for that year,
- (c) the rules, criteria and procedures for the selection and funding of projects,
- (d) the application form, including a summary sheet,
- (e) other relevant information, where appropriate.

⁽¹⁵⁾ If the award procedure is unexpectedly delayed, the Commission reserves the right to modify the dates for closing the award procedure and the start-up of actions accordingly. In this case the new dates will be announced on the Commission web-site: http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/index_en.html

⁽¹⁶⁾ According to Article 112 of the Financial Regulation, a grant may be awarded for an action which has already begun only where the applicant can demonstrate the need to start the action before the agreement is signed.