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(Announcements)

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

HERCULE II

Call for proposals — OLAF/2012/D5/02

Technical support for national authorities' use of special investigative tools and methods in the fight against fraud and corruption and technical support to strengthen inspections of containers and trucks at the EU's external borders, including the fight against cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting

(2012/C 135/06)

1. Objectives and description

This notice of call for proposals is based on Decision No 878/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2007 establishing a Community action programme to promote activities in the field of the protection of the Community's financial interests (Hercule II programme), OJ L 193 of 25 July 2007.

2. Eligible applicants

This notice is aimed at national or regional administrations ('applicants') of a Member State or a country outside the European Union, as defined below, which promote the strengthening of European action to protect the European Union's financial interests.

Applicants from countries outside the European Union must reside in:

1. acceding States;
2. EFTA/EEA countries, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the EEA Agreement;
3. candidate countries associated with the European Union on the basis of the conditions stipulated in the association agreements or their additional protocols on participation in European Union programmes concluded or to be concluded with those countries.

3. Eligible actions

Eligible actions for technical assistance consist of:

- technical support for national authorities' use of special investigative tools and methods in the fight against fraud and corruption, and
- technical support to strengthen inspections of containers and trucks at the EU's external borders, including the fight against cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting.

The technical support should reinforce the Member States' capacities and logistics allocated to the technical operational support units in the fight against fraud, in particular the actions aimed at setting up, improving or upgrading of existing:

- automated container-code recognition systems,
- automated number-plate recognition systems,
- technical equipment for electronic surveillance,
- technical equipment for mobile surveillance,
- technical equipment for the acquisition and analysis of digital evidence,
- technical equipment for encrypted communications,
- equipment and devices to detect smuggled and counterfeited goods on the basis of the scent characteristics of the smuggled and counterfeited goods.

4. Award criteria

Each submitted eligible action will be assessed in the light of the following award criteria:

1. consistency of the proposal with OLAF's objectives in technical assistance field;
2. degree of preparation and organisation of the measure, and the clarity and precision of its objectives, design and planning;
3. cost-effectiveness: the project's costs should be consistent with its objectives;
4. cross-sector nature of the proposal;
5. compatibility of the project with the work carried out or planned in connection with the EU's policy priorities for preventing fraud against the EU budget (prevention, information analysis, methods of cooperation, etc.);
6. compatibility of the project with similar projects carried out in other Member States and carried out by other national law enforcement and customs agencies;
7. possibility that the results can be used (e.g. through targeted distribution) to enhance cooperation and effectiveness in the field of the fight against fraud ('mainstreaming').

If several projects have equal merit in the light of these award criteria, funding priority may be given to, in descending order:

- proposals that are international and deal with cooperation through the European Union,
- proposals that make fair geographical distribution possible,
- applicants who have not received grants in previous years for the same or a similar project.

5. Budget

The total budget available is EUR 3 750 000.

A budget of EUR 2 000 000 is available for proposals submitted before the first deadline of 31 May 2012. The remainder and the balance of the first deadline, EUR 1 750 000, will be available for the proposals submitted before the second deadline of 13 September 2012.

The financial contribution will take the form of a grant. The financial contribution awarded will not exceed 50 % of the eligible costs.

The Commission reserves the right not to allocate all the funds available.

6. Further information

The technical specifications and the application form can be downloaded from the following site:

http://ec.europa.eu/anti_fraud/about-us/funding/techn-assist/items/call_proposals_2012_en.htm

Question and/or requests for additional information in relation to this call have to be sent by e-mail to:

OLAF-FMB-HERCULE-TA@ec.europa.eu

The questions and answers may be anonymously published in the Guidelines for filling in the application form on OLAF's Internet website if they are relevant to other applicants.

7. Deadline for submission of applications

Applications must be submitted no later than **31 May 2012** (first deadline).

The second deadline is set on **13 September 2012**.

Only applications submitted by using the official application form, duly signed by the person entitled to enter into legally binding commitments on behalf of the applicant organisation, will be accepted. The sealed envelope must clearly mention:

'Application for OLAF Technical Assistance Grant Programme — (OLAF/2012/D5/02) — Hercule II 2012'

The applications (original and one copy) must be sent by post to the following address:

European Commission — European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)
For the attention of Mr Johan KHOUW
Head of Unit Hercule, Pericles & EURO Protection
Office: J-30 10/62
1049 Bruxelles/Brussel
BELGIQUE/BELGIË

An electronic copy of the grant application form and containing all necessary annexes should also be sent by electronic mail to the following mailbox:

OLAF-FMB-HERCULE-TA@ec.europa.eu
