

V

(Announcements)

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

‘Support for information measures relating to the common agricultural policy (CAP)’ for 2017

(2016/C 401/09)

1. INTRODUCTION — BACKGROUND

This call for proposals is based on Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the financing, management and monitoring of the common agricultural policy and repealing Council Regulations (EEC) No 352/78, (EC) No 165/94, (EC) No 2799/98, (EC) No 814/2000, (EC) No 1290/2005 and (EC) No 485/2008 ⁽¹⁾.

This call for proposals is also governed by Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 ⁽²⁾, as amended (hereinafter FR) and by the Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 of 29 October 2012 on the rules of application of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union ⁽³⁾, as amended (hereinafter RAP).

This is a call for proposals for funding information measures within the meaning of Article 45 of Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 from appropriations in the 2017 budget.

An information measure is a self-contained and coherent set of information activities organised on the basis of a single budget.

2. OBJECTIVES, THEME(S) AND TARGET PUBLIC

2.1. Objectives

To build trust within the EU and among all citizens, farmers and non-farmers alike. The common agricultural policy (CAP) is a policy for all the citizens of the EU and the benefits that it provides to them must be clearly demonstrated. The key issues and messaging should be fully consistent with the Commission’s legal requirement to carry out information measures on the CAP within the meaning of Article 45 of Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013.

For the general public — the objective is to raise public awareness on the relevance of EU support to agriculture and rural development through the CAP.

For stakeholders — the objective is to engage with stakeholders (mainly farmers and other parties active in rural areas) in order to further communicate about the CAP to their constituencies, and to the wider public.

2.2. Theme

The proposal for information measures shall illustrate how the CAP contributes towards the delivery of the Commission’s political priorities.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 549.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p. 1

⁽³⁾ OJ L 362, 31.12.2012, p. 1.

The CAP is a policy for all the people of Europe and contributes to their lives in so many ways. Proposals should specifically cover the contribution that the CAP makes to:

- boosting jobs, growth and investment in rural areas and the maintenance of viable rural communities throughout the EU,
- meeting the EU's 2030 climate and energy framework, particularly in terms of the potential for farming and forestry to play in climate adaptation and mitigation measures,
- sustainable agricultural production that meets the twin requirements of ensuring food security and rural environmental protection, including with regard to water quality and quantity,
- ensuring a fair return to farmers from the agri-food chain to maintain the viability of European agricultural production and the future of the family farm model.

2.3. Target public

The target public for the theme under 2.2 is the general public (in particular young people in urban areas) and/or farmers and other parties active in rural areas.

More specifically:

- School children, teachers and university students: novel approaches should be used to engage with young people and raise their awareness of the CAP and the contribution that it makes in many areas such as the climate change challenge, food, healthy and high quality eating as a lifestyle choice, in relation also with the new EU School Scheme for Milk, Fruit and Vegetables which will enter into force as from 1 August 2017.
- General public: the focus of information on the CAP would put greater emphasis on addressing the (mis-) perceptions of European agriculture and the role of farming in society instead of the policy content. There needs to be also greater understanding of the enormous contribution the EU agri-food sector provides to the wider EU economy.
- Stakeholders: it should be ensured that there is greater awareness of the contribution that the CAP makes to the support of economic growth of rural areas, especially SMEs. The contribution that is made through the Rural Development programmes should be promoted, through which the EU is investing almost EUR 100 billion in the period 2014-2020 for the development of European rural areas. It will also be emphasised the support provided for sustainable production practices and other measures that will help to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

3. INDICATIVE TIMETABLE

	Stages	Date and time period
(a)	Publication of the call	October 2016
(b)	Deadline for submitting applications	15 December 2016
(c)	Evaluation period	February 2017
(d)	Information to applicants	March 2017
(e)	Preparation and signature of grant agreements	March-April 2017
(f)	Starting date of the measure	1 May 2017
(g)	Final report	Within 60 days of the end of the action

The information measure shall not exceed the duration of 12 months.

4. BUDGET AVAILABLE

The total budget earmarked for the co-financing of activities is estimated at EUR 3 500 000.

This amount is subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the budget for 2017.

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

5. ADMISSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The following admissibility requirements must be complied with:

- Applications must be submitted by post (registered letter or equivalent and the postmark will serve as proof of the date of posting) or courier service (date of receipt by the courier service serving as proof of date of sending) or delivered by hand (see Section 14 for address) no later than 15 December 2016.
- Applications must be submitted in writing (see Section 14), using the application and budget forms available at <http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/grants-for-information-measures/>
- Applications must be drafted in one of the EU official languages. Nevertheless, in order to facilitate prompt processing of applications, applicants are encouraged to submit their application in English, French or German.
- Applicants (including single taxable entities) can submit only one application for this call for proposals.

Failure to comply with those requirements will lead to the rejection of the application.

6. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

6.1. Eligible applicants

The applicant (and its affiliated entities if any) shall be a legal entity established in an EU Member State.

Entities which do not have legal personality under the applicable national law may be eligible applicants, provided that their representatives have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf, and offer guarantees for the protection of the Union's financial interests equivalent to that offered by legal persons and provide evidence that they have financial and operational capacity equivalent to that of legal persons.

Supporting documents should be provided with the application form.

Natural persons, as well as entities established for the sole purpose of the implementation of an information measure within this call for proposals are not eligible applicants.

Examples of eligible organisations:

- non-profit organisations (private or public),
- public authorities (national, regional, local),
- European associations,
- universities,
- educational institutions,
- research centres,
- companies (for instance communication media companies).

Legal entities having a legal or capital link with applicants, which is neither limited to the information measure nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation (e.g. members of networks, federations, trade unions), may take part in the information measure as affiliated entities, and may declare eligible costs as specified in Section 11.2.

The legal and capital link should be neither limited to the information measure nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation. This means that the link would exist independently of the award of the grant; it should exist before the call for proposals and remain valid after the end of the information measure.

The legal and capital link defining the affiliation encompasses three notions:

- (i) Control, as defined in Directive 2013/34/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽¹⁾ on the annual financial statements, consolidated financial statements and related reports of certain types of undertakings.

Entities affiliated to a beneficiary may hence be:

— Entities directly or indirectly controlled by the beneficiary (daughter companies or first-tier subsidiaries). They may also be entities controlled by an entity controlled by the beneficiary (granddaughter companies or second-tier subsidiaries) and the same applies to further tiers of control,

— Entities directly or indirectly controlling the beneficiary (parent companies). Likewise, they may be entities controlling an entity controlling the beneficiary,

— Entities under the same direct or indirect control as the beneficiary (sister companies).

- (ii) Membership, i.e. the beneficiary is legally defined as a, e.g. network, federation, association in which the proposed affiliated entities also participate or the beneficiary participates in the same entity (e.g. network, federation, association) as the proposed affiliated entities.

- (iii) The specific case of public bodies and publicly owned entities

Publicly owned entities and public bodies (entities established as such under national, European or international law) are not always considered as affiliated entities (for example, public universities or research centres).

The notion of affiliation in the public sphere covers:

— The different levels of the administrative structure in the case of decentralised administration (e.g. national, regional or local ministries (in the case of separate legal entities) can be considered as affiliated to the State;

— A public body established by a public authority to serve an administrative purpose and which is supervised by the public authority. This condition is to be verified on the basis of the statutes or other acts establishing the public body. It does not necessarily entail that the public body is financed, in full or in part, from the public budget (e.g. national schools affiliated to the State).

The following are not entities affiliated to a beneficiary:

— Entities that have entered into a (procurement) contract or subcontract with the beneficiary, act as concessionaires or delegates for public services for the beneficiary,

— Entities that receive financial support from the beneficiary,

— Entities that cooperate on a regular basis with the beneficiary on the basis of a memorandum of understanding or share some assets,

— Entities that have signed a consortium agreement under the grant agreement,

— Entities that have signed a cooperation agreement for twinning projects.

If affiliated entities take part in the information measure, the application shall:

— identify such affiliated entities in the application form,

— contain the written agreement of the affiliated entities,

— provide the supporting documents allowing verification of their complying with the eligibility and non-exclusion criteria.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 182, 29.6.2013, p. 19.

In order to assess the applicants' eligibility, the following supporting documents are requested for the applicant and its affiliated entities:

Document	Description	Observations
Document A	a copy of the articles of association/founding act/statutes or equivalent	
Document B	a copy of the certificate of official registration or other official document attesting the establishment of the entity	
Document C (where relevant)	a document certifying a capital or legal link with the applicant.	For affiliated entities

Entities without legal personality should submit the documents listed above. Where the documents listed above cannot be provided, they must be substantiated by any document deemed relevant.

In addition, they must provide a document certifying that their legal representatives have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf.

6.2. Eligible activities and implementation period under this call for proposals

The eligible activities shall be those necessary to carry out the information measure and realise the intended outputs/results, in accordance with the objectives, theme and target public listed in Section 2 of this call.

A. The information measures should be implemented:

- at multiregional or national level;
- at European level (with impact in several Member States).

B. The information measures should include one or several activities and tools having an innovative character with a view to attaining the objectives, cover the themes and reach the target public as foreseen in the measure, in line with Section 2 of this call.

C. The following activities are not eligible:

- measures required by law,
- measures receiving EU financing under another budget line,
- general or statutory meetings,
- activities implemented at local level.

D. Indicative implementation period of the information measures

- 1 May 2017-30 April 2018.

E. Expected outputs/impacts

Activities under an information measure must achieve concrete outputs within the measure's duration. Information measure must identify at application stage the relevant outputs (see Application Form 3).

A list of relevant indicators (qualitative/quantitative) to measure the expected outputs/impacts of the information measure must be included in the proposal (see Application Form 3).

7. EXCLUSION CRITERIA ⁽¹⁾

7.1. Exclusion from participation

1. Applicants, including affiliated entities, will be excluded from participation in the call for proposals if they are in any of the following situations:

- (a) the economic operator is bankrupt, subject to insolvency or winding-up procedures, where its assets are being administered by a liquidator or by a court, where it is in an arrangement with creditors, where its business activities are suspended, or where it is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for under national laws or regulations;
- (b) it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the economic operator is in breach of its obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions in accordance with the law of the country in which it is established, with those of the country in which the contracting authority is located or those of the country of the performance of the contract;
- (c) it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the economic operator is guilty of grave professional misconduct by having violated applicable laws or regulations or ethical standards of the profession to which the economic operator belongs, or by having engaged in any wrongful conduct which has an impact on its professional credibility where such conduct denotes wrongful intent or gross negligence, including, in particular, any of the following:
 - (i) fraudulently or negligently misrepresenting information required for the verification of the absence of grounds for exclusion or the fulfilment of selection criteria or in the performance of a contract;
 - (ii) entering into agreement with other economic operators with the aim of distorting competition;
 - (iii) violating intellectual property rights;
 - (iv) attempting to influence the decision-making process of the contracting authority during the procurement procedure;
 - (v) attempting to obtain confidential information that may confer upon it undue advantages in the procurement procedure;
- (d) it has been established by a final judgment that the economic operator is guilty of any of the following:
 - (i) fraud, within the meaning of Article 1 of the Convention on the protection of the European Communities' financial interests, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 July 1995;
 - (ii) corruption, as defined in Article 3 of the Convention on the fight against corruption involving officials of the European Communities or officials of Member States of the European Union, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 May 1997, and in Article 2(1) of Council Framework Decision 2003/568/JHA ⁽²⁾, as well as corruption as defined in the law of the country where the contracting authority is located, the country in which the economic operator is established or the country of the performance of the contract;
 - (iii) participation in a criminal organisation, as defined in Article 2 of Council Framework Decision 2008/841/JHA ⁽³⁾;
 - (iv) money laundering or terrorist financing, as defined in Article 1 of Directive 2005/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽⁴⁾;
 - (v) terrorist-related offences or offences linked to terrorist activities, as defined in Articles 1 and 3 of Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA ⁽⁵⁾, respectively, or inciting, aiding, abetting or attempting to commit such offences, as referred to in Article 4 of that Decision;
 - (vi) child labour or other forms of trafficking in human beings as defined in Article 2 of Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽⁶⁾;

⁽¹⁾ References to 'contracting authority' have to be understood as references to the responsible authorising officer and, where applicable, to his or her services; references to 'procurement procedure' have to be understood as encompassing also the grant award procedure; references to 'performance of the contract' have to be understood as encompassing also the implementation of the grant agreement or the grant decision.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 192, 31.7.2003, p. 54.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 300, 11.11.2008, p. 42.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ L 309, 25.11.2005, p. 15.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ L 164, 22.6.2002, p. 3.

⁽⁶⁾ OJ L 101, 15.4.2011, p. 1.

- (e) the economic operator has shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations in the performance of a contract financed by the budget, which has led to its early termination or to the application of liquidated damages or other contractual penalties, or which has been discovered following checks, audits or investigations by an authorising officer, OLAF or the Court of Auditors;
- (f) it has been established by a final judgment or final administrative decision that the economic operator has committed an irregularity within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95⁽¹⁾. The same exclusion criteria from participation apply to affiliated entities.

2. In the absence of a final judgment or, where applicable, a final administrative decision in the cases referred to in points (c), (d) and (f) of paragraph 1, or in the case referred to in point (e) of paragraph 1, the contracting authority shall exclude an economic operator on the basis of a preliminary classification in law of a conduct referred to in those points, having regard to established facts or other findings contained in the recommendation of the panel referred to in Article 108 of FR.

The preliminary classification referred to in the first subparagraph does not prejudice the assessment of the conduct of the economic operator concerned by the competent authorities of the Member States under national law. The contracting authority shall review its decision to exclude the economic operator and/or to impose a financial penalty on it without delay following the notification of a final judgment or a final administrative decision. In cases where the final judgment or the final administrative decision does not set the duration of the exclusion, the contracting authority shall set this duration on the basis of established facts and findings and having regard to the recommendation of the panel referred to in Article 108.

Where such final judgment or final administrative decision holds that the economic operator is not guilty of the conduct subject to a preliminary classification in law, on the basis of which it has been excluded, the contracting authority shall, without delay, bring an end to that exclusion and/or reimburse, as appropriate, any financial penalty imposed.

The facts and findings referred to in the first subparagraph shall include, in particular:

- (a) facts established in the context of audits or investigations carried out by the Court of Auditors, OLAF or internal audit, or any other check, audit or control performed under the responsibility of the authorising officer;
- (b) non-final administrative decisions which may include disciplinary measures taken by the competent supervisory body responsible for the verification of the application of standards of professional ethics;
- (c) decisions of the ECB, the EIB, the European Investment Fund or international organisations;
- (d) decisions of the Commission relating to the infringement of the Union's competition rules or of a national competent authority relating to the infringement of Union or national competition law.

7.2. Exclusion from award

Applicants, including affiliated entities, will not be granted financial assistance if, in the course of the grant award procedure, they:

- (a) are in one of the situations of exclusion, referred to in Section 7.1;
- (b) have misrepresented the information required as a condition for participating in the procedure or has failed to supply that information;
- (c) were previously involved in the preparation of procurement documents where this entails a distortion of competition that cannot be remedied otherwise.

7.3. Supporting documents

Applicants and affiliated entities must sign a declaration on their honour certifying that they are not in one of the situations referred to in Articles 106(1)(2) and 107 (1) of the Financial Regulation, filling in the relevant form attached to the application form accompanying the call for proposals and available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/grants-for-information-measures/>

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 312, 23.12.1995, p. 1.

8. SELECTION CRITERIA

8.1. Financial capacity

Applicants must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activity throughout the period during which the information measure is being carried out or the year for which the grant is awarded and to participate in its funding. The applicants' financial capacity will be assessed on the basis of the following supporting documents to be submitted with the application:

- financial capacity overview form,
- the profit and loss account, the balance sheet for the last financial year for which the accounts were closed or for newly created entities, a business plan might replace the above documents,

Entities without legal personality must provide evidence that they have financial capacity equivalent to that of legal persons.

The verification of financial capacity shall not apply to public bodies. Therefore the above mentioned documents should not be provided if the applicant is a public body.

On the basis of the documents submitted, if the AOSD (Authorising Officer by Subdelegation) considers that financial capacity is not satisfactory, he may:

- request further information,
- reject the application.

8.2. Operational capacity

Applicants must have the professional competencies as well as the appropriate qualifications necessary to complete the proposed information measure.

In this respect, applicants have to submit the following supporting documents:

- curriculum vitae or description of the profile of the people primarily responsible for managing and implementing the information measure. This profile should include for each persons at minimum: educational background, work experience, languages and other relevant skills (maximum 1 page per person),
- the organisation's activity reports of the last two years (if applicable),
- a list of previous projects and activities performed and connected to the policy field of the call or to the activities that have been carried out in the last two years (maximum 4 projects/activities).

Entities without legal personality must provide evidence that they have operational capacity equivalent to that of legal persons.

The Commission may request further supporting documents to confirm the operational capacity.

In order to assess whether the applicant has the technical capacity to undertake the information measure, the manager of the project should have at least 5 years' experience in similar projects.

9. AWARD CRITERIA

The different communication tools and activities included in the information measure should be interconnected, clear in their conceptual approach and in the results to be achieved. They should also have a significant impact that can be measured through relevant indicators referred to in Section 11.4.

Applications will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

1. The relevance of the measure: the *ex ante* analysis of the needs and the specific, measurable, attainable and relevant objectives and its innovative character. (25 points; minimum required 12,5 points)
2. The effectiveness of the measure: theme, messages and target public, detailed programme, timetable and *ex post* evaluation methodology. (25 points; minimum required 12,5 points)
3. The efficiency of the measure: the cost-effectiveness in terms of the proposed resources. (25 points; minimum required 12,5 points)
4. The quality of the project management: the quality of the procedures and of the allocation of tasks in view of implementing the various activities of the proposed measure. (25 points; minimum required 12,5 points)

A maximum of 100 points will be awarded for the quality of the proposal. The required minimum overall score is 60 points and a minimum score of 50 % is required for each criterion.

Only the proposals meeting all thresholds will be put onto the ranking list. Reaching the threshold doesn't imply automatic co-financing.

10. LEGAL COMMITMENTS

In the event of a grant awarded by the Commission, a grant agreement, drawn up in euros and detailing the conditions and level of funding, will be sent to the beneficiary, as well as the procedure in view to formalise the obligations of the parties.

The two copies of the original grant agreement must be signed first by the beneficiary and returned to the Commission immediately. The Commission will sign it last.

Please note that the award of a grant does not establish an entitlement for subsequent years.

11. FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

11.1. General Principles

(a) *Non-cumulative award*

An information measure may only receive one grant from the EU budget.

In no circumstances shall the same costs be financed twice by the Union budget. To ensure this, applicants shall indicate the sources and amounts of Union funding received or applied for the same information measure or part of the information measure or for its functioning during the same financial year as well as any other funding received or applied for the same information measure.

(b) *Non-retroactivity*

No grant may be awarded retrospectively for activities already completed.

A grant may be awarded for an information measure which has already begun only where the applicant can demonstrate the need to start the information measure before the grant agreement is signed.

In such cases, costs eligible for financing may not have been incurred prior to the date of submission of the grant application

(c) *Co-financing*

Co-financing means that the resources which are necessary to carry out the activities may not be entirely provided by the EU grant.

Co-financing of the information measure may take the form of:

- the beneficiary's own resources,
- income generated by the information measure,
- financial contributions from third parties.

(d) *Balanced budget*

The estimated budget of the information measure is to be attached to the application form.

It must:

- Be drawn up in euros. Applicants which foresee that costs will not be incurred in euros, are obliged to use the exchange rate published on the Infor-euro website available at http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuro/inforeuro_en.cfm
- Have revenue and expenditure in balance,
- Be drawn up using a detailed estimate of costs and the relevant explanations in the column 'comments'; no flat-rate amounts (except for the flat rates mentioned in Section 11.2) or lump sums will be accepted,
- Respect the maximum amounts established by the Commission for certain kinds of expenditure (see the relevant documents available in <http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/grants-for-information-measures/>),

- Be presented exclusive of VAT if the applicant is subject to and entitled to deduct VAT or if the applicant is an institution under public law,
- Enter on the income part the direct contribution from the applicant, the requested Commission funding, and (if applicable) details of any contributions from other fund providers, as well as any revenue generated by the project, including, where appropriate, the fees required of participants.

(e) *Implementation contracts/subcontracting*

Where the implementation of the information measure requires the award of procurement contracts (implementation contracts), the beneficiary must award the contract to the bid offering the best value for money or the lowest price (as appropriate), avoiding conflicts of interests and retain the documentation in the event of an audit.

Implementation contracts are intended to cover the purchase of services and/or goods, etc. necessary for the management of the information measure. Implementation contracts do not involve any externalisation of tasks or activities forming part of the information measure, as described in the proposal.

They may include for example translations of documents, print work, etc.

In the event of procurement exceeding EUR 70 000, the beneficiary must abide by special rules as referred to in the grant agreement annexed to the call. Moreover the beneficiary is expected to clearly document the tendering procedure and retain the documentation in the event of an audit.

Entities acting in their capacity of contracting authorities in the meaning of Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽¹⁾ or contracting entities in the meaning of Directive 2014/25/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽²⁾ shall abide by the applicable national public procurement rules.

Sub-contracting, i.e. the implementation by a third party with which a beneficiary has concluded a procurement contract of specific tasks or activities which form part of the information measure as described in the proposal, must satisfy the conditions applicable to any implementation contract (as specified above) and in addition to them the following conditions:

- it may only cover the implementation of a limited part of the information measure,
- it must be justified having regard to the nature of the information measure and what is necessary for its implementation,
- it must be clearly stated in the application
- it may not cover project management and coordination
- it may not be implemented by an affiliated entity
- it must be identifiable in the estimated budget of the action.

Subcontracting may include for example:

- external speakers/experts;
- website design and IT support;
- external event organisation;

(f) *Financial support to third parties*

The applications may not envisage provision of financial support to third parties.

11.2. Funding

Funding shall take the form of a mixed financing composed of:

- a reimbursement of 60 % of the eligible costs actually incurred,
- a flat-rate contribution of 7 % of the eligible direct costs to cover the indirect costs, representing the beneficiary's general administrative costs which can be regarded as chargeable to the information measure.

In the case of organisations receiving an operating grant for the period of the implementation of the information measure, indirect costs are not eligible.

The same is valid for the cost of personnel already covered by an operating grant.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 94, 28.3.2014, p. 65.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 94, 28.3.2014, p. 243.

Grant amount

The grant amount (including the flat-rate for indirect costs) will be minimum EUR 70 000 and maximum EUR 500 000.

The grant amount may neither exceed the eligible costs nor the amount requested.

The above implies that part of the total eligible expenses of the information measure must be financed from sources other than the EU grant.

(see Section 11.1(c)).

Eligible costs

Eligible costs are costs actually incurred by the beneficiary of a grant which meet all the following criteria:

— they are incurred during the duration of the information measure, with the exception of costs relating to final reports. The period of eligibility of costs will start as specified in the grant agreement.

If a beneficiary can demonstrate the need to start the information measure before the agreement is signed, expenditure may be authorised before the grant is awarded. Under no circumstances can the eligibility period start before the date of submission of the grant application (see Section 11.1b),

- they are indicated in the estimated budget of the information measure,
- they are necessary for the implementation of the information measure which is the subject of the grant,
- they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular being recorded in the accounting records of the beneficiary and determined according to the applicable accounting standards of the country where the beneficiary is established and according to the usual cost accounting practices of the beneficiary,
- they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation,
- they are reasonable, justified, and comply with the requirements of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency.

The beneficiary's internal accounting and auditing procedures must permit direct reconciliation of the costs and revenue declared in respect of the information measure with the corresponding accounting statements and supporting documents.

The same criteria apply to the affiliated entities.

Eligible direct costs

The eligible direct costs for the information measure are those costs which, with due regard for the conditions of eligibility set out above, are identifiable as specific costs directly linked to the performance of the information measure and which can therefore be booked to it directly, such as:

- the costs of personnel working under an employment contract with the applicant or equivalent appointing act and assigned to the information measure, comprising actual salaries plus social security contributions and other statutory costs included in the remuneration, provided that these costs are in line with the applicant's usual policy on remuneration. Those costs may include additional remuneration, including payments on the basis of supplementary contracts regardless of their nature, provided that it is paid in a consistent manner whenever the same kind of work or expertise is required and independently from the source of funding used. Costs of personnel of national administrations are also eligible to the extent that they relate to the costs of activities which the relevant public authority would not carry out if the project concerned were not undertaken,
- costs of travel (for meetings, including kick-off meetings where applicable, conferences etc.), provided that these costs are in line with the beneficiary's usual practice on travel,
- costs entailed by implementation contracts awarded by the beneficiaries for the purposes of carrying out the information measure, provided that the conditions laid down in the grant agreement are met,
- costs arising directly from requirements linked to the implementation of the information measure (dissemination of information, specific evaluation of the information measure, translations, reproduction)
- VAT in relation to eligible direct costs where it is not recoverable/deductible by the beneficiary.

Annex V to the draft grant agreement attached to the present call provides a list of supporting documents for eligible costs and the supporting documents required with the final report.

Eligible indirect costs (overheads)

A flat-rate amount of 7 % of the total eligible direct costs of the information measure, is eligible under indirect costs, representing the beneficiary's general administrative costs which can be regarded as chargeable to the information measure.

Indirect costs may not include costs entered under another budget heading.

Ineligible costs

The following costs shall not be considered eligible:

- contributions in kind,
- costs connected with the purchase of new or second-hand equipment,
- meals and catering,
- subsistence allowances,
- costs relating to the depreciation of equipment,
- VAT, unless beneficiaries prove that they cannot recover it under the relevant national legislation. However, VAT paid by bodies governed by public law is not eligible,
- return on capital,
- debt and debt-service charges,
- provision for losses or debts,
- interest owed,
- dubious debts,
- costs of transfers from the Commission charged by the bank to the beneficiary,
- exchange losses,
- costs declared by the beneficiary and covered by another information measure receiving an EU grant,
- excessive or reckless expenditure.

Calculation of the final grant amount

The final amount of the grant to be awarded to the beneficiary is established after completion of the information measure, upon approval of the request for payment containing the following documents including relevant supporting documents where appropriate:

- a final technical report providing details of the implementation and results of the information measure with relevant supporting documents,
- the final financial statement of costs actually incurred with relevant supporting documents (see Annex V to the draft grant agreement attached to this call).

EU grants may not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit within the framework of the information measure of the beneficiary.

Profit shall be defined as a surplus of the receipts over the eligible costs incurred by the beneficiary, when the request is made for payment of the balance. In this respect, where a profit is made, the Commission shall be entitled to recover the percentage of the profit corresponding to the Union contribution to the eligible costs actually incurred by the beneficiary to carry out the information measure.

11.3. Reporting periods and payment arrangements

Sole reporting period from the starting date of the action to the end of the period set out in Article I.2.2 of the grant agreement.

There shall be no pre-financing and no interim payment. The Commission will establish the amount of the final payment to be made to the beneficiary on the basis of the calculation of the final grant amount (see Section 11.2 above).

Final technical report and final statement of costs accompanied by supporting documentation are to be sent to the Commission both electronically as well as in paper form. Reports must be submitted in English, French or German using the available reporting template.

In case deliverables are not available in the above mentioned languages, the applicant should provide a short summary in one of above mentioned languages together with the corresponding deliverable. All the annexes have to have a number and a title in English, French or German.

12. PUBLICITY

12.1. By the beneficiaries

Beneficiaries and their affiliated entities must clearly acknowledge the European Union's contribution in all publications or in conjunction with activities for which the grant is used. In addition, beneficiaries must use a disclaimer stating that the EU is not responsible for the views expressed in the publications and/or in conjunction with the activities for which the grant is used.

In this respect, beneficiaries and its affiliated entities are required to give prominence to the name and emblem of the European Union on all their publications, posters, programmes and other activities realised under the co-financed information measure.

To do this, they must use the text and the emblem of the European Union and the disclaimer, all of them available at <http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/grants-for-information-measures/>

If this requirement is not complied with, the beneficiary's grant may be proportionally reduced, in accordance with the provisions of the grant agreement.

12.2. By the Commission

All information relating to grants awarded in the course of a financial year shall be published on an internet site of the European Union institutions no later than the 30 June of the year following the financial year in which the grants were awarded.

The Commission will publish the following information:

- name of the beneficiary,
- address of the beneficiary,
- subject of the grant,
- amount awarded.

Upon a reasoned and duly substantiated request by the beneficiary, the publication shall be waived if such disclosure risks threatening the rights and freedoms of individuals concerned as protected by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union or harms the commercial interests of the beneficiaries.

13. DATA PROTECTION

The reply to any call for proposals involves the recording and processing of personal data (such as name, address and CV). Such data will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽¹⁾ on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the EU institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data. Unless indicated otherwise, the questions and any personal data requested are required to evaluate the application in accordance with the specifications of the call for proposal will be processed solely for that purpose by the Commission. Details concerning the processing of personal data are available on the privacy statement at: <http://ec.europa.eu/dpo-register/download?metalId=1462358>

The personal data may be registered in the Early Detection and Exclusion System (EDES) if the applicant is in one of the situations mentioned in Article 106 of the Financial Regulation⁽²⁾. For more information, see the Privacy Statement on http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect_en.cfm

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 8, 12.1.2001, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 (OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p. 1) as amended.

14. PROCEDURE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Proposals must be submitted in accordance with the formal requirements and by the deadline set out under Section 5.

No modification to the application is allowed once the deadline for submission has elapsed. However, where, due to an obvious clerical error on the part of the applicant, the applicant omits to submit evidence or to make statements, the Commission shall ask the applicant to provide the missing information or clarify supporting documents during the evaluation process. Such information or clarification shall not substantially change the proposal.

Applicants will be informed in writing about the results of the evaluation process concerning their application.

The proposals shall be submitted on *paper*

Application forms and relevant documents are available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/grants-for-information-measures/>

Applications shall be submitted on the correct form, duly completed, dated, showing a balanced budget (revenue/expenditure), and signed by the person authorised to enter into legally binding commitments on behalf of the applicant organisation.

Where applicable, all additional information considered necessary by the applicant can be included on separate sheets.

Applications must be sent in a sealed envelope to the following address:

European Commission Unit AGRI. E.5
Call for proposals 2016/C 401/09
To the attention of Head of Unit
L130 4/149
1049 Bruxelles/Brussel
BELGIQUE/BELGIË

- by post (registered letter, see point 5, admissibility requirements), date of receipt by the post indicated by the postmark,
- delivered by hand (by the applicant in person or by an agent) or by courier service, date of receipt by the courier service indicated.

Hand delivery/Express mail:

European Commission
Central Mail Service
Avenue du Bourget, n° 1/Bourgetlaan 1
1140 Bruxelles/Brussel
BELGIQUE/BELGIË

The admissibility of applications will be evaluated on the basis of submission on paper.

In case of hand delivery by the applicant, a receipt must be obtained as proof of submission, signed and dated by the official in the Commission's central mail department who takes delivery. The department is open from 8.00 to 17.00 from Monday to Thursday, and from 8.00 to 16.00 on Fridays. It is closed on Saturdays, Sundays and Commission holidays.

In addition to the submission on paper, the applicant is requested to submit an electronic copy of the proposal and all its annexes on a CD-ROM or USB stick in the same envelope as the paper version. The paper copy takes precedence.

Contacts

If you have any questions about the call, you can send them by email to agri-grants@ec.europa.eu. The deadline for the submission of questions is the 29 November 2016 at 24.00.

The most relevant questions and answers will be published in: <http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/grants-for-information-measures/>

15. EVALUATION PROCEDURE

Applications having complied with the admissibility requirements will be examined in the light of the different criteria:

- eligibility criteria (see Section 6 of the call).
- exclusion criteria (see Section 7 of the call);
- selection criteria (see Section 8 of the call);
- award criteria (see Section 9 of the call);

Applications must score minimum 60 % in total and minimum 50 % for each criterion. Applications that do not reach the minimum quality thresholds will be rejected.

Following the evaluation of applications, the Commission will establish a ranking list including all applications with a qualifying score.

From the list above, the Commission will draw up a list of applications for possible funding, and eventually a reserve list depending on the budget available for this call.

16. ANNEXES

- Application form (with the checklist of documents to be provided), available at <http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/grants-for-information-measures/>
- Model of grant agreement, available at <http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/grants-for-information-measures/>
- Legal entity form

All applicants must fill in the 'Legal entity form' available at the following address: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm

- Financial identification form

The 'Financial identification form' available at the following address shall be completed only by applicants: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/financial_id/financial_id_en.cfm
