European Commission

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

VP/2014/008

FOR SOCIAL POLICY INNOVATIONS SUPPORTING REFORMS IN SOCIAL SERVICES

EaSI 2014
PROGRESS AXIS

BUDGET HEADING 04.03.02.01

In view of the large number of enquiries, please do not telephone.
Questions should be sent by email only to:

EMPL-VP-2014-008@ec.europa.eu

This text is available in English, French and German. The English version is the original.

To ensure a more rapid response it would be helpful if applicants sent their queries in English or French.

Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

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TEXT OF THE CALL VP/2014/008

1. EaSI programme

The European Programme for Employment and Social Innovation "EaSI" 2014-2020[1] is a European-level financing instrument managed directly by the European Commission to support Union's objectives in terms of promoting a high level of quality and sustainable employment, guaranteeing adequate and decent social protection, combating social exclusion and poverty and improving working conditions and contribute to the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy.

2. Characteristics of the call

2.1. Policy background

The Social Investment Package (SIP)[2] published in February 2013, emphasises that social services play a pivotal role to ensure effective and efficient social protection. Social services represent a smart and sustainable investment as they do not only assist people but also have a preventive, activating and enabling function if well-designed.

The SIP stresses in particular the critical role of high quality, integrated and personalised services in developing people's skills and capabilities, in improving their opportunities and in helping them make the most of their potential throughout the life course. To do so, social services should be delivered focusing on the individual's situation and in line with the general quality principles presented in the "Voluntary European Quality Framework for Social Services".[3]

Social services are fundamental for the social investment approach and for the social protection systems as they, along with benefits, cover different types of risks that an individual can face during his life course. The Commission Communication "Implementing the Community Lisbon programme: Social services of general interest in the European Union"[4] identified two main categories of services. Besides statutory and complementary social security schemes, the concept includes services provided directly to the person such as social assistance services, employment and training services, housing support and social housing, childcare, long-term care services and healthcare.

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[1] http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1081

[2] See Commission Communication of 20.02.2013 "Towards Social Investment for Growth and Cohesion – including implementing the European Social Fund 2014-2020" and Commission Staff Working Document of 20.02.2013 "Follow-up on the implementation by the Member States of the 2008 European Commission recommendation on active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market – Towards a social investment approach.

[3] Social Protection Committee - A Voluntary European Quality Framework for Social Services (SPC/2010/10/8 final, see http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catid=794).

[4] COM(2006) 177 of 26 April 2006 (.http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2006/com2006_0177en01.pdf)

Integration of services refers to different approaches to improve coordination between services in order to enhance outcomes for service users.[5] Two types of integration can be identified:

- vertical integration which implies a stronger coordination between different levels of government;

- horizontal integration which brings together previously separated social services.

Social policy innovation plays a key role in the process of adaptation and reforms of the social welfare states in the framework of the Europe 2020 Strategy and with a view to contributing to reaching the targets agreed, in particular lifting at least 20 million people from poverty and social exclusion and ensuring an employment rate of 75% for the 20-64 year-olds till 2020.

As a tool to provide better and innovative solutions to social challenges, social policy innovation is an essential element for Member States' structural reforms in line with the social investment approach. The SIP stresses the need to embed social policy innovation in policy-making and to connect it to social priorities. Developing new responses to identified social needs in order to deliver better social outcomes means - in the specific case of social services - improving the quality, access, coverage, and affordability.

A recent OECD study on social services confirmed that better access to integrated services concerned with healthcare, childcare, housing and care for the elderly can contribute significantly to reducing inequality in society and thus reduce the level of poverty across various segments of the society.[6]

2.2. Challenges and opportunities

There has been an increasing interest in the critical role of social services to cope with new types of risks, such as ageing of population or women's participation to the labour market, and to develop a preventive approach. Besides, there has been in the last years an increase in the services diversity and complexity, also due to the empowerment of users and the request to take more complex needs into consideration.

The economic and financial crisis has played a double role in relation to social services. On one side, it has highlighted how these services cushion the impact of the crisis and help people affected by the crisis to find a new start. On the other, focus on fiscal consolidation may have an impact on the financing of social services and on citizens' financial participation to access the services.

[5] Council of Europe(2007): Integrated social services in Europe
[6] OECD-European Commission (2011): The impact of publicly provided services on the distribution of resources

Integrated approaches to service delivery can address this challenge partially by improving effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery from a financial perspective and from a user's perspective if they are designed with appropriate investment from start mobilising adequate resources and planning. In the perspective of the users, integrated services are likely to promote continuous care, avoid duplication and gaps in the delivery and reduce waiting times. Integrated services also facilitate information and knowledge sharing between professionals who play a role in identifying the needs and the adequate responses. This will have a positive impact on decision taking which can be faster and more holistic. An integrated approach improves the responses to complex needs and would better serve the citizens, especially the populations in need of priority services such as the homeless. Regarding the financial impact, integrated service delivery is likely to reduce the administrative burden of delivering support as multiple visits, and costly interventions are reduced. Some forms of structural integration could lead to savings due to mutualisation of some costs.

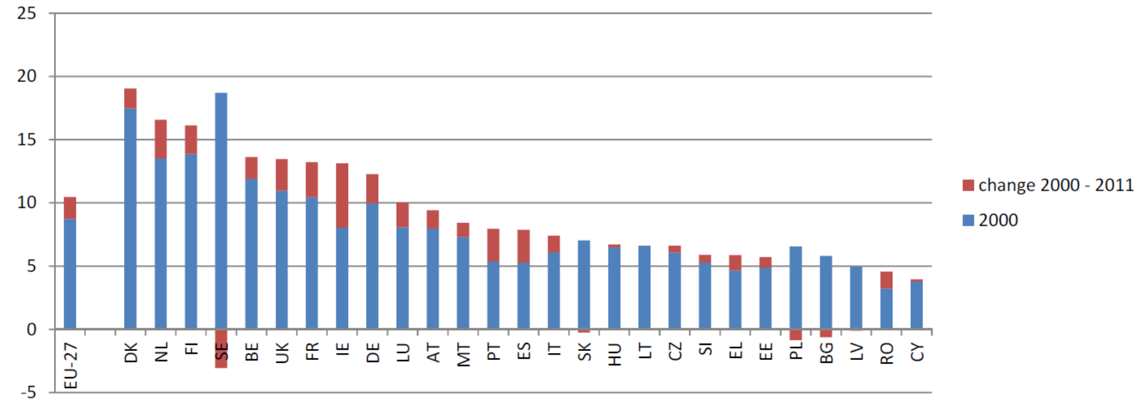
Vertical integration is an important challenge. For instance, ensuring coherence between the benefits and the provision of social services remains a challenge as they are often organised and financed through different channels. Therefore, cooperation and complementarities between the different decision and implementation levels should also be improved by promoting multi-level governance.

Regarding horizontal integration, it should be acknowledged that services can be provided by public as well as private organisations, especially social enterprises and NGOs. Social enterprises and NGOs, generally strongly embedded in the local territories, offer specific services to local communities. Other actors, such as the work integration social enterprises (WISE), have a double function of providing social services to the community and to integrate low-skilled workers into the labour market. The challenge in this type of integration approach resides in the coordination between different public bodies but also ensure proper partnerships with the private (profit and non-for-profit) actors. Building partnerships, especially at local level, with these actors enhances the coherence of the social service delivery and improves complementarities.

The opportunities for job creation in the social services sector are important due to the development of new needs driven by the demographic changes, economic and social consequences of the crisis, growing inequalities, technological developments or changing social patterns. The special supplement on Health and Social Services of the EU Employment and Social Situation Quarterly Review[7] highlights that the social and health services continued to generate on third of the new jobs between 2000 and 2011 and that the sector was growing even during the crisis. In 2011, the number of workers in this sector aged 15 to 64 stood at 22.3 million, i.e. 10.5% of the total in all sectors, having grown by 5 million since 2000, thus accounting for more than a third of the new jobs across the economy. Therefore, developing innovative approaches in the provision of social services could also boost the EU's employment and job creation prospects.

[7] Special Supplement on Health and Social Services, EU Employment and Social Situation Quarterly Review - December 2012 (See: http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=9641&langId=en).

Employment in the human health and social work sector as a share of total employment (in %, 2000-2011)



Source: LFS

The Staff Working Document (SWD) on active inclusion,[8] which is part of the SIP, has identified that access to social services needs improvement in the Member States, especially for Roma populations, migrants, and people with disabilities. Some Member States have reported increased access to employment and training, mainly linked to a stronger use of activation measures, but have not increased access and coverage for other services, such as childcare, healthcare, housing and long-term care, which have a positive impact on lifting people out of poverty. At the same time, there is insufficient integration of services and not enough attention for the simplification of services' delivery.

While there is no overarching indicator on access to integrated services, there is information on access on four main service areas: early childhood education and care, life-long learning, housing, and healthcare (see table below). The overall picture on access to services is rather mixed. On the one hand, the Scandinavian and Western European countries are characterized by relatively high access to services (with some notable exceptions such as Austria in the case of ECEC or France as concerns life-long learning). On the other end of the spectrum are the Member States from Eastern Europe that are characterized by low access across the board.

[8] See Commission Staff Working Document of 20.02.2013 "Follow-up on the implementation by the Member States of the 2008 European Commission recommendation on active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market – Towards a social investment approach."

Indicators on access to services (2010)

	Enabling services			
	Early childcare - factor	Life-long learning	Lack of adequate housing	Unmet need for care
DK	2.8	31.6	52.8	3.7
FI	1.5	20.7	20.8	3.4
NL	0.8	16.3	29.1	0.8
SE	1.2	23.5	42.4	4.1
FR	0.9	5.0	26.1	5.9
BE	0.5	7.0	28.9	2.3
AT	-0.9	14.3	32.2	2.0
DE	-0.3	7.2	32.1	4.0
SI	0.7	15.6	34.7	0.2
IE	0.0	6.4	16.4	2.3
UK	0.0	18.6	37.9	2.0
ES	0.5	12.0	26.5	0.4
PT	0.7	7.7	20.7	3.7
CY	-0.1	7.1	12.7	7.8
CZ	-1.2	8.1	45.9	1.0
IT	-0.2	8.4	35.2	7.2
MT	-0.8	9.2	9.9	1.5
EE	-0.1	9.5	41.5	6.3
HU	-0.8	2.8	53.2	2.8
LV	-0.4	4.7	50.5	23.7
PL	-1.2	5.8	48.6	7.5
BG	-0.9	1.6	39.1	22.7
EL	-0.9	3.4	55.4	5.6
LT	-0.6	5.0	44.7	1.4
RO	-0.8	2.1	54.0	7.5
SK	-1.1	5.0	46.9	2.0
LU	0.5	12.3	27.6	1.7
	SILC	LFS	SILC	SILC

Description of the set of indicators used to describe access to services

Labour market oriented services	
Childcare up until 3 years old — factor (Eurostat, EU-LFS)	The analysis resulted in one factor (Chronbach= 0.88) on: Use of childcare for younger than 3 years old; Average hours spent in formal childcare
Life-long learning and education — average (Eurostat, EU-LFS)	The average of the sub-indicators: Participation in education and training of low, medium and high educated aged 25–64
Other services	
Health care (Eurostat, EU-SILC)	Unmet demand for medical and dental care (18–44)
Housing services — average (Eurostat, EU-SILC)	The average of the sub-indicators: Housing cost overburden rate among the at-risk-of-poverty population (18–64); Overcrowding rate among at-risk-of-poverty population (18–64)

While there is no overarching indicator on affordability of integrated services, examples from policy areas such as health, long-term care and early childhood education and care provide insights of related challenges.

Barriers to affordable access to health care can include the high cost of healthcare and low income/household means. Private payments may be required in the form of a fixed fee, a proportion of a healthcare cost being borne by the service user, or payments required up to a certain threshold. Such cost-sharing arrangements can constitute a barrier to access. The need to make even apparently small payments can have a large impact on people with low incomes and people with relatively frequent healthcare needs, such as those who are chronically ill or who have a disability.

In the EU, the most commonly reported reason for ‘unmet healthcare needs’ is that the usage of healthcare services was considered too expensive. Countries with a higher share of out-of-pocket private expenditure, paid directly by the household, generally have significantly higher proportions of people reporting difficulties due to cost.

Many challenges in access to healthcare services are unrelated to the crisis[9]. For example, waiting lists have been a longstanding problem. Nevertheless, while it can be difficult to separate its impact from other factors, the financial and economic crisis is likely to have affected healthcare services in two ways. First, it is likely to have increased demand for certain healthcare services. Second, financing has come under pressure, in particular as a result of reduced public budgets, in combination with decreased income levels among service users. Sustaining access to high quality healthcare in the context of the crisis is therefore particularly challenging for policymakers and service providers.

Across Europe, access to long-term care might be restricted by many kinds of barriers. These include lack of insurance coverage, lack of coverage/provision of certain types of care, high individual financial care costs and geographical disparities in supply. They also include lengthy waiting lists for certain treatments or in certain areas of a given country, lack of knowledge or information and complex administrative procedures.

Insufficient and unequal access to childcare is the result from various obstacles, namely the length of parental leave, the cost of childcare, the tax-benefit system, and the quality, accessibility and availability of childcare. Improving the use of childcare at national level requires a better understanding of the combination of the various obstacles. The figure below illustrates how an overall assessment of these various factors can help understand the national bottlenecks in access to childcare. It shows that, in the countries that have not yet reached the Barcelona target, the obstacles to higher use of childcare differ. In some Member States, such as Ireland, the high cost of childcare associated with significant inactivity traps for low earners are a major obstacle. Similarly, in Slovakia or the Czech Republic, many parents move to part-time employment or leave the job market due to family commitments, associated with the high costs of childcare and the low use of childcare. In other Member States such as Lithuania, Hungary or Estonia, the duration of parental leave/maternity leave appears to be a major barrier to greater use of childcare. Last, the causes of parents moving to part-time employment or leaving the job market due

[9] Eurofound (2013), Report on impacts of the crisis on access to healthcare services in the EU.

to family commitments are associated with low levels of involuntary part-time in some countries such as Austria and Germany.

Use of ECEC (under 3 years), access barriers and further context indicators

		Use of childcare age 0-2 (2011, in %)	Maternity leave, parental leave and effective parental leave 2010 (in months)	Involuntary part time (% of total part-time empl, women aged 25-49)	Part time due to familial responsibilities (women aged 25-49, in %)	Cost of childcare (% of Average Wage)	Average effective tax rate (% of Average Wage)	Main difficulty to use childcare (% of parents)			
						2 earners (both at 67% of Average Wage)	*Second Earner (at 67% of Average Wage)*	Availability	Cost	Access	Quality of care
BELOW BARCELONA	RO	2	25.81	76.0	6.6			62	74	57	47
	PL	3	4.65	33.2	17.3	7.1	43.0	61	66	51	38
	SK	4	6.51	32.1	7.8	28.0	71.6	61	71	47	38
	CZ	5	6.51	27.7	32.9	27.4	73.6	61	45	51	28
	BG	7	14.07	71.0	:		38.2	49	55	33	20
	LT	7	26.51	47.7	:		38.8	53	55	29	26
	HU	8	25.81	55.5	16.7	6.2	47.6	45	63	39	36
	MT	11	3.26	40.5	34.2		51.1	64	78	35	29
	AT	14	3.72	18.5	52.8	16.8	76.1	45	43	39	21
	LV	15	13.84	43.5	10.0		45.8	59	60	45	27
	EL	19	3.95	75.4	12.5	4.9	25.7	73	78	57	63
	EE	19	19.07	25.1	22.5			62	71	45	24
	IE	21	6.05	71.2	29.7	45.2	89.1	47	76	36	23
	CY	23	4.19	70.3	25.1		40.7	36	47	33	19
	DE	24	17.21	34.0	39.3	14.2	70.6	61	50	39	25
	IT	26	4.65	76.6	30.9			58	63	37	32
	FI	26	11.05	36.9	31.1	21.8	63.5	46	33	34	12
ABOVE BARCELONA	UK	35	1.4	49.4	61.4	27.7	85.4	54	78	39	25
	PT	35	6.98	58.1	9.7	4.7	37.4	53	63	42	36
	SI	37	12.56	13.0	27.2			70	74	46	35
	BE	39	3.95	25.0	26.6	3.8	56.3	60	42	35	18
	ES	39	4.19	73.6	23.9	8.2	25.7	53	67	44	30
	LU	44	3.72	22.0	37.9	6.1	40.8	60	37	35	17
	FR	44	4.19	43.5	48.3	9.9	48.6	72	60	50	25
	SE	51	18.6	31.1	36.1	6.7	34.6	28	11	26	18
	NL	52	3.72	16.7	61.0	8.1	50.6	46	65	19	14
	DK	74	12.09	23.6	8.3	11.2	69.3	37	43	32	20

2.3. Purpose of the call

The overall purpose of this call for proposals is to foster innovation and reforms in the social services to tackle the main challenges identified above and to develop innovative responses corresponding to national, regional and local realities and in line with the social investment approach.

This call foreseen under EaSI Progress axis promotes the social policy experimentation as a method for testing and evaluating innovative solutions with a view to up-scaling them.

The call has two objectives: 1) using social policy innovations for undertaking structural reforms in the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy, in particular the Country Specific Recommendations received by the Member States as part of the European Semester; and 2) strengthening partnerships between public, private and civil society sector to involve in awareness raising activities about the use and benefits of social policy innovation.

The SIP calls upon Member States to pursue active policies prioritising social investment and the modernisation of welfare states. Social investment relies on social policy innovations to provide solutions that produce results better than the existing solutions or the status quo. Social policy innovations can help to create efficiency gains in social policies and to improve effectiveness in addressing societal challenges as well as to facilitate investment in human capital throughout the life course.

This approach is consistent with the emphasis on good governance of the European Union, i.e. the increased need to ensure quality of public spending while responding to citizens' needs and expectations. This implies the need to test the outcomes, the adequacy and effectiveness of social reforms in particular those addressed by the Europe 2020 Country Specific recommendations before their wide-scale implementation.

This entails supporting innovative reforms of service delivery with evidence of improved outcomes, achieved through strengthened partnerships between public, private and civil society stakeholders, including social entrepreneurs and social NGOs. The proposals should present long term perspectives on how successful innovations and reforms will be designed, tested and implemented. Social policy innovation is key to support evidence-based reforms to improve the access, affordability, coverage, efficiency and effectiveness of integrated social services.

Accordingly, innovation in social services means new practices, policies or processes to meet newly emerging social needs and needs that are not sufficiently met by current practices. This may involve improving the delivery, availability, quality, affordability, effectiveness and efficiency of an existing service or creating a new service which better meet citizens' needs.

The proposals should also consider the specific context of the country(ies) concerned, including the country-specific recommendations (CSRs) addressed to the Member State in the context of the European Semester[10] dealing with social services such as childcare, long-term care, public employment services, training and life-long learning, healthcare, and services which confront poverty and social exclusion.

Moreover, the proposals should be in line with the above mentioned "Voluntary European Quality Framework for Social Services" adopted in October 2010 by Social Protection Committee, which serves as guidance for defining, assuring, evaluating and improving the quality of these services.

Focus areas of the call are the following: one-stop-shop approach, personalised approaches and innovative partnerships.

[10] The 2013 CSRs in employment and social policies resulting from the European Semester and to the Commission Staff Working Papers accompanying such recommendations can be consulted at the following address: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_en.htm.

1. One-stop-shop approach

One-stop-shops are an advanced form of integration which comprises multi-service delivery in a single location. This form of integration can include a stronger coordination between services but it can also lead to the creation of a single body with a more or less autonomous decision making authority which implies more deep structural changes.

The integration of social services through setting up 'one-stop-shops' has potential for cost efficiency, the effectiveness of the delivery and the capacity to tackle complex and multiple problems while also ensuring take-up and coverage[11].

This approach requires an approach in steps taking into consideration the following:

- Integration of information systems to reduce duplication, provide basis for a holistic, personalised approach to services delivery and help fight fraud.
- Integration of employment services with social assistance services and enabling services.
- Reducing the complexity of accessing services by inter alia simplifying eligibility requirements.
- Improving coordination among different levels of government (central, regional or local) to improve overall service delivery.
- Coordinating tax and benefits systems and looking at the impact of various programmes at the level of the individual.

2. Personalised approach through high quality case handlers

A case handler is a form of integrated service at the level of the individual.[12] Different types of approaches could be taken according to the role given to the case handler. For instance, in a multidisciplinary team, one team member could act as the case manager and ensure the coordination between the team members and the user. More integrated approaches rely on an intensive case management where the case manager coordinates the services for the user, especially for users facing complex and long-term needs.

The SIP points out that the social services should be comprehensive and personalised, conceived and delivered focusing on the user. Indeed, individual situations require specific social services to prevent or support. A personalised approach to social services would include working to identify the responses and their relevance to the person's situation, to develop user's capacity to receive them and to forge links with relevant services.

[11] Report on the "Integrated service delivery for vulnerable groups" OECD (2013).
[12] Council of Europe(2007): Integrated social services in Europe

The outreach, and the thus the coverage, of social services could be increased through the use and training of high quality case handlers, able to assess and provide individualised guidance to people's needs.

3. Innovative partnerships

Building-up innovative partnerships is a key element in the SIP approach and is particularly relevant in the area of the provision of social services. These partnerships could include relevant private and public entities, as well as civil society organisations. Social policy innovations in social services can take place in public, private and civil society sectors, but also at the intersection of them.

Innovative partnerships can include an increased share of information (through integrated databases) as a first step, but could also result in agreements on shared approaches or, in a more advanced form, agreement on setting up a formal governing body.

Fostering such partnerships promotes complementarities and synergies between actors, encourages further social innovations within a context of limited resources and rising costs, and creates the premises for sustainable cooperation beyond the particular intervention. Often the most fruitful sources of new idea, funding and approaches to create social value are cross-sector collaborations and strategic partnerships for the delivery of social services in innovative ways.

2.4. Methodological framework

This call for proposals promotes the social policy experimentation as a method for testing and evaluating innovative solutions with a view to up-scaling them.

Effective and efficient policy innovations require a sound and thorough evidence base that enables to plan the most appropriate course of action and to identify and avert potential negative issues. This approach is consistent with the emphasis on good governance of the European Union and to the increased need to ensure quality of public spending while responding to citizens' needs and expectations.

The grants shall be awarded to a consortium of stakeholders (lead applicant and co-applicants) that are able to design and implement schemes that allow for testing innovative social policy reforms and to assess their expected social policy outcomes. This allows policymakers and social service providers to gather robust evidence on the effects of a given policy or programme, and to determine what does and does not work. Producing objective empirical evidence on the impact/outcomes of a policy or programme is important in view of taking decisions on whether or not to pursue or scale up these policies.

The social policy experimentation is defined here by four aspects:

1. There is a new social policy innovation seeking to address relevant social needs.
2. Implemented initially at a small scale given the uncertainty of its effects.
3. Under specific conditions that enables to rigorously measure its impact/outcomes.
4. With the possibility of being scaled up or replicated if the impact/outcomes proves to be beneficial.

The objective of this section is to provide the methodological requirements that applicants should meet in planning, designing, implementing and reporting on their proposals.

The proposal has to include the following elements:

2.4.1 - Policy relevance and needs assessment

The purpose of this call is to foster social innovations and reforms in the field of social services policy design and/or delivery to tackle the main challenges and build on the opportunities identified in section 2.2.

This entails supporting innovative reforms of service delivery with evidence of improved outcomes achieved through strengthened partnerships between public, private and civil society stakeholders, including social entrepreneurs and social NGOs. The proposals should present long term perspectives on how successful innovations and reforms will be designed, tested and implemented.

Innovation in social services means new practices, policies or processes to meet known and newly emerging challenges. This may involve improving the delivery, availability, coverage, accessibility, quality, affordability, effectiveness and efficiency of an existing service or creating a new service which better meets citizens' needs, and responds to the call for policy innovation as described in section 2.

The proposals should also consider the specific context of the country(ies) concerned, including the country-specific recommendations (CSRs) addressed to the Member State in the context of the European Semester[13] dealing with the need to better integrate and innovate social services to deliver improved childcare, long-term care, employment services, training and life-long learning, healthcare, housing and services which help confront poverty and social exclusion.

Moreover, the proposals should be in line with the above mentioned "Voluntary European Quality Framework for Social Services" adopted in October 2010 by Social Protection Committee, which serves as a reference document for defining, assuring, evaluating and improving the quality of these services.

The focus areas of innovation in the call are: one-stop-shop approach, personalised approaches through high quality case handlers and innovative partnerships as described in section 2.

Applicants should describe what they propose to do, including rationale for the work, hypothesis used in deciding to undertake the project and the baseline data at the start of the intervention, what the expected outcomes will be and who will benefit from the work.

Areas to document are:

- The challenges and opportunities, and what is currently being done to meet them. The nature of the challenges (provide as much hard evidence as possible).
- The specific manner through which the challenge identified will be met.
- Relevance of the proposal to the objectives of this call to foster social innovations and reforms in the field of social services. Highlight the social innovation dimensions of the proposal as defined in section 2.
- The beneficiaries - who are they and how will they benefit.
- The resources needed, how they will be used and to what end.
- The baseline data prior to the start of the intervention.

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[13] The 2013 CSRs in employment and social policies resulting from the European Semester and to the Commission Staff Working Papers accompanying such recommendations can be consulted at the following address: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_en.htm.

2.4.2 - Activities and expected outcomes

The project should describe the specific activities envisaged as part of the social policy innovation and the expected outcomes. In particular, the project should identify and describe the different incentives, opportunities or constraints with which the targeted population will be confronted. The project should explain why these activities might help address the social need that was identified and to ensure that the targeted population will indeed be willing and able to participate.

Applicants should make certain that the activities described correlate with the proposed budget. The implementation of the activities should be carefully documented to ensure transferability if the innovation is proven to be effective.

The project should describe the set of outcomes on which the proposed activities are expected to have effects and explain how these outcomes will be measured. The expected outcomes should be realistic and defined in measurable terms as they will be used to monitor project progress.

Areas to document are:

- The activities to occur along with the related resources and staff needed to operate the project.
- How the activities interrelate, where staff will be needed and what they are expected to do, what facilities and support services are required.
- Expected measurable outcomes to be achieved through the proposed activities.
- Clear indicators for the expected outcomes and the impact of the intervention.

2.4.3 – Impact/outcomes evaluation method

The applicants have to identify the impact/outcomes evaluation method they will apply to provide evidence and to determine the expected outcomes of the proposed intervention. This method should take into account aspects like cause-effect relationship, counterfactual aspects and the potential transfer of the lessons learned. The method should identify and analyse what will change because of the intervention, i.e. the difference between an outcome with the intervention and the outcome that would have been measured in the absence of the intervention.

The project must describe the population from which the participants will be selected. The project must also discuss how many participants should be included in the sample in order to have a good chance of detecting an effect thereof.

The project should be of a sufficiently large scale of the intervention to reach a reasonable and representative critical mass and provide a significant evidence base. The project should discuss, if relevant, the potential threats to the internal validity of the method and the potential trade-offs that could arise in defining the eligible population.

Areas to document are:

- Description of method of tracking the outcomes of the intervention.
- What is expected to change following the intervention.
- Who will be affected by the change and to what degree.
- Which data need will be collected and how will these be collected and used.
- How outcomes will be identified, analysed, reported and with what timeframe.

Applicants can get information on different impact evaluation methods that can be used to measure the impact/outcomes of a social policy innovation in the reference documents on the call website.

2.4.4 - Project sustainability

The proposal should include a short-term and long-term strategy beyond the grant period. This refers to the continuation of project's objectives, activities and efforts to achieve the desired outcomes and to its ability to be implemented on a larger scale. The project must discuss how the relevant outputs of the project will be used in the policy-formulation process (e.g. up scaling, replication, re-evaluation of the proposed policy, formulation of new policy options).

Areas to document are:

- Ways to incorporate the intervention into existing policies, services or programmes.
- Build into the project design a role for each partner in developing and implementing the lessons learned after finalisation of the project.
- Recommend other services that could benefit from the project's knowledge learned.
- Identification of the organisation and financial resources needed to ensure the continuation of the intervention beyond the grant period.

2.5. EaSI programme general requirements

The EaSI Programme shall, in all its axes and actions, aim to:

(a) pay particular attention to vulnerable groups, such as young people;

(b) promote equality between women and men;

(c) reduce discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation;

(d) promote a high-level of quality and sustainable employment, guarantee adequate and decent social protection, combat long-term unemployment and fight against poverty and social exclusion.

Hence, in designing, implementing and reporting on the activity, beneficiaries/contractors must address the issues noted above and will be required to provide detail, in the final activity report on the steps and achievements made towards addressing those aims.

2.6. Participation: type and role of applicants

The social policy experimentation project has to be submitted and driven by a consortium of stakeholders involved in the process of social policy innovation. This consortium shall bring together key public, private and civil society stakeholders active in the field of social service planning and/or delivery.

Providing information pertinent to policy decisions is the primary rationale for conducting a social policy innovation project. Therefore, the lead applicant must be a public authority or a public body at national, regional or local level having a role to play in policy setting or delivering social services. The role of the public authorities consists in being actively committed to the project by ensuring strong policy leadership and steering of the project, and in securing the use of results beyond the grant period.

Broadening cooperation between the public sector, the private sector and the civil society sector could ease the way to innovation in reorienting social services and the actual provision of the services. Accordingly, the lead applicant should involve at least one co-applicant. Co-applicants must be public authorities at central, regional or local level, or bodies governed by public law, and/or civil society organisations, and/or private sector organisations. Including academic structures, research organisations or international organisations is strongly encouraged.

The proposal can involve more than one co-applicant. Thus, the consortium could be enlarged to other public authorities and public bodies relevant at national, regional and local level, private sector organisations and civil society organisations active in the field of social service policy design and/or delivery as long as the proposed activities are coordinated and consistent.

The lead applicant and co-applicants must be properly constituted and registered legal persons, established in:

- EU Member States.
- EFTA/EEA countries, in accordance with the EEA Agreement.
- Candidate and potential candidate countries, in accordance with the general principles and the general terms and conditions laid down in the framework agreements concluded with them on their participation in Union programmes.

Concerning EFTA/EEA countries, candidate and potential candidate countries, only Iceland is supposed to have finalized the agreement before the deadline for the submission of the proposals.

Therefore applicants and co-applicants from EFTA/EEA countries, candidate and potential candidate countries should check with the secretariat of the call (**empl-VP-2014-008@ec.europa.eu**) their eligibility for the 2014 call for proposals.

2.7. Evaluation

The evaluation component of the project is two-fold: (1) outcome evaluation; and (2) process evaluation.

- Outcome evaluation addresses results that can be attributed to the project, as well as the extent to which the project has satisfied its objectives.

- Process evaluation addresses how the project was conducted in terms of consistency with the stated plan of action and the effectiveness of the various activities within the plan.

Evaluations may be conducted by an internal staff member, an evaluation firm or both.

The applicants should clarify the information they want to collect, plan adequate evaluation time and budget, state the methods for appropriate data collection and analysis, and explain how they will communicate and use the results.

2.8. Monitoring

With a view to regular monitoring the projects and to making the adjustments needed to the call objectives, the applicants shall draw up an initial report covering the first 6 months, followed by annual reports covering consecutive two or three year periods.

These monitoring reports should describe the activities undertaken, problems faced and how these were overcome, role of partners, methods used, results achieved, learning needs, plans for the next steps.

Among the key issues to be addressed and reported on are:

- How the performance of the project will be tracked in terms of achievement of the steps and milestones set in the working plan.
- How the report and the feedback received on it would lead to mid-term adjustment in the project design.
- How the project results will be assessed in terms of achieving the project's objectives.
- How the role of the partnership members in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes will be achieved.

The first monitoring report will be submitted to and discussed with the Commission likewise other regular reports. Following these discussions adjustments in the project design can be requested by the Commission.

2.9. Communication and dissemination

Adequate communication and dissemination of results is essential in ensuring the EU added value of the action and its sustainability after funding for the project comes to an end. Information sharing and awareness raising are key activities to ensure that other interested parties benefit from the project findings and can draw lessons which to apply within their own work context and develop new partnerships.

Hence, each proposed project is expected to be flexible and adaptive to arrange for a real exchange and sharing of experiences not only amongst partners, but also with Commission policy staff, Member States and other projects financed under this call for proposals.

The proposals must therefore plan for a dedicated effort for sharing of experiences and dissemination of the projects' outcomes.

The Commission will also organise two events for the beneficiaries under the 2014 call: (1) a transnational networking seminar; and (2) a final transnational peer learning conference.

Applicants should therefore ensure that costs - travel, daily subsistence allowances and accommodation for 2 persons/2 nights in Brussels for each event - are included in their proposed project budget.

Lessons learnt from these transnational peer learning events would be drawn to the attention of the highest political level.

The Commission, with the support of an external contractor, will monitor regularly the EaSI Programme. Therefore, beneficiaries/contractors will have to transmit qualitative and quantitative monitoring data on the results of the activities. These will include the extent to which the principles of equality between women and men has been applied, as well as how anti-discrimination considerations, including accessibility issues, have been addressed through the activities. Related templates are provided in annex.

In setting up the action, beneficiaries/contractors must foresee the necessary funding for monitoring and reporting to the Commission.

2.10. Budget and timeframe

The overall indicative amount made available for this call is 9 200 000 €. The grant requested must be 750 000 € minimum and 2 000 000 € maximum.

The European Union financial aid granted will not exceed 80% of the total eligible costs of the action. The consortium members must guarantee the co-financing in cash of the remaining 20%. Contributions in kind are not accepted as co-financing.

The duration of the project must be between 24 months and 36 months.

2.11. Origins of the funding

Beneficiaries/contractors must acknowledge in writing that the project has been supported by the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation ("EaSI") 2014-2020. In practice, all products (publications, brochures, press releases, videos, CDs, posters and banners, and especially those associated with conferences, seminars and information campaigns) must state the following:

> *This (publication, conference, video, xxx) has received financial support from the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation "EaSI" (2014-2020). For further information please consult: http://ec.europa.eu/social/easi*

The European emblem must appear on every publication or other material produced. Please see:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/services/visual_identity/pdf/use-emblem_en.pdf

Every publication must include the following:

> *The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the official position of the European Commission.*

3. Exclusion, eligibility, selection and award criteria

3.1. Exclusion and eligibility criteria

a) Exclusion criteria

The applicant should certify that they are not in one of the situations listed in the articles 106(1) and 107 to 109 of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities[14].

[14] http://ec.europa.eu/budget/biblio/documents/regulations/regulations_en.cfm. The situations referred to include bankruptcy, compulsory winding-up, being under court administration, in an arrangement with creditors or any other similar proceedings; convictions of professional misconduct; non-fulfilment of social security or tax payment obligations; convictions of fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity; declared in serious breach of contract in relation to activities funded by the European Union's budget; subject to conflict of interest; guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the required information.

b) Eligibility criteria

Eligibility of the applicants

1 - The social policy experimentation project has to be submitted by a consortium of stakeholders involved in the process of social policy innovation. The lead applicant must be a public authority or a public body at national, regional or local level having a role to play in policy setting or delivering social services. Proposals must be submitted by the legal representative of the lead-applicant on behalf of all applicants.

2 - The proposal should include at least one co-applicant. Co-applicants must be public authorities at central, regional or local level, or bodies governed by public law, and/or civil society organisations, and/or private sector organisations. Including academic structures, research organisations or international organisations is strongly encouraged.

3 - Lead applicants and co-applicants must be properly constituted and registered legal persons, established in one of the EaSI Progress Axis 2014 participating countries (according section 2.6).

4 - Lead applicants and co-applicants need to confirm by commitment letters their participation in the project.

Eligibility of the application

1 - The application must be complete and submitted in the online application SWIM before the deadline.

2 - The application must be submitted on paper and sent by post or notified by personal delivery in one original before the deadline.

Eligibility of the proposal

1 - The proposal must be a social policy experiment relevant for the field defined in this call (section 2.4).

2 - The proposal must seek funding for activities only in EaSI participating countries. 2. The requested grant must be between 750 000 € and 2 000 000 €.

3 - The proposal must respect the maximum limit for EU co-financing, namely maximum 80% of the total eligible costs of the action.

4 - The duration of the project must be between 24 months and 36 months.

3.2. Selection criteria

Only proposals which comply with the requirements of the eligibility and exclusion criteria will be eligible for further evaluation. Applicants (lead and co-applicants) must have the financial and operational capacity to complete the activity for which funding is requested. Only organisations with the necessary financial and operational capacity may be awarded a grant.

1. <u>Operational capacity to complete the proposed action</u>: applicants (lead applicant and co-applicants) must have the operational resources (technical, management) and the professional skills and qualifications needed to successfully complete the proposed innovative action. Applicants must bring together the right skills, experiences and competences to manage the overall social innovation process including the underlying diagnosis, implementation, reporting and dissemination of the action. Applicants must have a strong track record of competence and experience in the field and in particular in the type of action proposed. This operational capacity must be attested by the provision of the following items:
    - A declaration on honour concerning the operational capacity to carry out the activity.
    - A declaration on honour signed by the applicant stating that the policy issue addressed is within its legal area of competence.
    - Detailed CVs and job specifications of the project manager and of all the persons who will receive salaries to perform the main tasks.

2. <u>Financial capacity to carry out the action</u>: applicants (lead applicant and co-applicants) must have access to solid and adequate funding to maintain their activities for the period of the action and to help finance it as necessary (the verification of financial capacity will not apply to public bodies). The financial capacity will be assessed on the basis of the relevant accompanying documents indicated in the checklist (section 4.3). The verification of the financial capacity shall not apply to public bodies.

3.3. Award criteria

The award criteria relate to the relevance of the proposed intervention for the objectives of the call, the clarity of the proposed activities and expected outcomes, the appropriateness of the method, as well the sustainability and cost-effectiveness of the action.

The evaluation committee will assess the project proposals according to the criteria listed below. The maximum rating for each criterion is indicated in parentheses. The maximum total points that a proposal may obtain is 100. Proposals that do not receive 70 points will not be considered for funding.

Policy criteria (70 points)

1 - Policy relevance of the proposal (20 points)

This criterion values the extent to which the proposal is consistent with the objectives of the call and with the expected results (as described in section 2.4.1). It will assess the extent to which the applicants describe the objectives of the proposal, including the rationale for the work, the hypothesis used in formulating the proposal, the social innovation dimension of the proposal, the baseline data at the start of the intervention, the expected outcomes and the target group.

2 – Clarity of activities and expected outcomes (20 points)

This criterion values the extent to which the specific activities envisaged as part of the intervention and the expected outcomes are thorough, precise and easy to understand (as described in section 2.4.2). It will assess the extent to which the activities and means proposed are appropriate and consistent with the expected outcomes, the expected outcomes are realistic and defined in measurable terms, and the proposal contains clear indicators for the outcomes and the impact of the intervention.

3 - Appropriateness of the impact/outcomes evaluation method (20 points)

This criterion values to which extent the proposal uses a sound method that is suitable for its purposes (as described in section 2.4.3) and to what extent the proposed method is appropriate to provide evidence and to determine the expected outcomes. It will also assess the extent to which this method takes into account aspects like cause-effect relationship, counterfactual aspects and the potential transfer of the lessons learned. It will also assess the understanding of the concept of social policy experimentation and quality of the proposed method for supporting such initiatives.

4 - Sustainability of the project (10 points)

This criterion assess to which extent the proposed intervention is sustainable beyond the grant period and its ability to be implemented on a larger scale (as described in section 2.4.4). It will assess the extent to which the proposed short-term and long-term strategy beyond the grant period is appropriate to ensure the continuation of project's objectives, activities and efforts to achieve the desired outcomes in line with the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy and the SIP.

Organisational criteria (15 points)

1 - Relevance of the consortium proposed for the achievement of the expected results (5 points).

2 - Quality of the evaluation plan of the project (5 points).

3 - Quality of the communication and dissemination plan (5 points).

Financial criteria (15 points)

1 - Adequacy of the human and financial resources to the planned activities (cost-effectiveness) (10 points).

2 - Overall quality, clarity and completeness of the budget (5 points).

4. Submission of grant applications

4.1. Start and duration of projects

The projects should start after signature of grant agreements, expected within six months of the date of submission. The planned duration of the project may not be less than 24 months nor exceed 36 months. In view of the time required to evaluate applications, actions should not start before the deadline as set out in section 4.2 below.

Applicants should note that if their project is selected, they will not necessarily receive the grant agreement prior to the action starting date indicated and should, therefore, take this into account in programming the timing of their project. Any expenditure incurred before the signature of the grant agreement is at the applicant's risk.

4.2. Deadline for submission of proposals

The proposals must be submitted electronically online and sent by post or by personal delivery in one original to the European Commission, by **30 July 2014** at the latest.

Proposals which do not respect the date of submission will not be considered by the evaluation committee.

4.3. Rules of submission

Applicants are invited to fill in the application form online, on the SWIM secure website: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/swim/displayWelcome.do. Annexes, which are compulsory, must also be filled in and uploaded online. Before starting, please read carefully the "User's guide" that can be found at the top of the page ("Help on SWIM"). The electronic application in the online application SWIM must be "validated". Invalid electronic applications are automatically excluded from further evaluation.

After filling in the form, applicants must submit it both electronically and in hard copy:

- Electronic submission: in order to validate the application, click on the "send" button. This step is irreversible and must be carried out before the deadline.
- Hard copy submission: a duly completed application accompanied by the annexes and all the required documentary proof should also be sent to the addresses below by the deadline (their submission date will be taken as the date of dispatch, as evidenced by the postmark or the express courier receipt date).

  a) By post to the following postal address:

  European Commission
  DG EMPL D1
  Call for proposals VP/2014/008
  B-1049 Brussels
  Belgium

  b) Or by personal delivery against an acknowledgement of receipt from the Commission's central mail service by 16.00 hours on 13 June 2014 at the latest to the following address:

  European Commission
  DG EMPL D1
  Call for proposals VP/2014/008
  Central Courier Service
  Avenue du Bourget, 1
  B-1140 Evere
  Belgium

The applicant is requested to number the accompanying documents to be submitted with the application as shown below and send one original and one copy. Documents will be printed double-sided, if possible. Only two-hole folders will be used. The dossier should not be bound or glued.

Please do make sure that the full set of the application form and all accompanying documents are included in your sending by post by the deadline. The absence of any of these documents invalidates the application as specified in section 4.4.

Order	Documents composing the paper application	Available in SWIM
1	**Cover letter** of application quoting the reference number of the call (VP/2014/008), signed and dated by the legal representative of the applicant organisation.	YES (compulsory template)
2	**Submitted online application form**. The print-out should be dated and signed by the legal representative. The online form must be electronically submitted before printing. Once the electronic application is submitted, no further changes will be possible.	YES (compulsory template)
3	**Declarations on honour from the lead applicant and each co-applicant.** This must be written on the official letterhead paper of the applicant organisations and have the original signature of the legal representative, certifying that the applicant organisation is not in one of the situations listed in Articles 106(1) and 107 to 109 of the Financial Regulation and that it has the financial and operational capacity to complete the activity for which funding is requested.	YES (compulsory template)
4	**Letters of mandate from each co-applicant.** This must follow the template provided, be written on the official letterhead paper of the organisation and have the original signature of the legal representative. It must also be submitted electronically in annex to the on-line application form.	YES (compulsory template)
5	**Letters of commitment from the lead applicant and each co-applicant entity.** This must explain the nature of their involvement and specifying the amount of their financial contribution when relevant following the template provided to the on-line application form.	YES (compulsory template)
6	**Legal entity form** completed and signed by the legal representative of the lead-applicant and each co-applicant organisation.	YES (compulsory template)
7	**The lead applicant and each co-applicant must provide a copy of the articles of association/statutes or equivalent,** proving the eligibility of the organization – not necessary for public authorities or international organizations who have signed a framework agreement with the European Commission.	NO, but please upload
8	**The lead applicant and each co-applicant must provide a copy of the certificate of official registration** or other official document attesting to the establishment of the entity (for public bodies, a copy of the law, decree or decision establishing the entity in question) - not necessary for international organizations who have signed a framework agreement with the European Commission.	NO, but please upload
9	The lead applicant and each co-applicant must also provide **a copy of a document confirming the applicant's tax or VAT number**, if applicable.	NO, but please upload

10	**Financial identification form** duly completed and signed by the account holder of the lead-applicant organisation and bearing the stamp and signature of the bank. It is also possible to attach a copy of **a recent bank statement** to the financial identification form, in which event the stamp of the bank and the signature of the bank's representative are not required. The signature of the account holder is obligatory in all cases.	YES (compulsory template)
11	Document "**Contracts for implementing the action**" in case of subcontracting for external expertise.	YES (compulsory template)
12	**Declarations of the lead applicant** that the policy issue addressed is within its legal area of competence quoting specific provisions of law/statutes or equivalent	NO, but please upload
13	Document "**Description of the action**". This document must be provided as an annex to the online application form by using the mandatory structure for proposals (available online together with this document). The description of the action as reflected in this compulsory template intends to provide extensive information which would not fit into the application form and other annex. It will be used to assess the application against the criteria mentioned in the text of the call for proposals.	YES (compulsory template)
14	**The most recent balance sheet** of all co-applicant organisations which are not public bodies. The balance sheets, by definition, must include assets and liabilities. The co-applicant should specify which currency is being used in the balance sheet. The Commission reserves the right to request balance sheets from previous years, if necessary.	NO, but please upload
15	**Profit and loss accounts and balance sheet summary** which must follow the the template provided and must be signed by the legal representative of all co-applicants which are not public bodies.	YES (compulsory template)
16	**Detailed CVs** (educational and professional qualifications) and job specifications of the project manager and of all the persons who will perform the main tasks.	NO, but please upload
17	**For grant requests over EUR 750 000:** an external audit report produced by an approved auditor, certifying the accounts of the applicant organisation for the last financial year available. This obligation does not apply to public bodies. In the case of proposals submitted by a consortium the threshold mentioned in the first paragraph shall apply to each of the applicants.	NO, but please upload

If an organisation wants to submit more than one proposal, each application must be submitted separately.

4.4. Evaluation process

Applications are assessed by an evaluation committee. The work of the evaluation committee consists in assessing the applications against the exclusion, eligibility, selection and award criteria. The applications which are not submitted both on line and in hard copy by the deadline will automatically be rejected.

After the deadline for submission of projects, the European Commission may contact the applicant to provide clarification. Failure to reply to the clarification request will invalidate the application. If any document listed in section 4.3 of the call is missing, incorrect or open to further interpretation or negotiation, the application may be rejected on that sole basis.

Only projects which satisfy the exclusion and eligibility criteria will be evaluated further against selection and award criteria. The evaluation committee will deliver an opinion recommending a number of proposals for funding. The list will take into consideration the results of the evaluations within the remains of the budget available.

All applicants will receive a written notification of the outcome as well as feedback on the evaluation of their application. This could take several weeks.

Successful applicants will receive two original copies of the grant agreement detailing the conditions and level of funding for acceptance and signature. Both copies must be sent back to the European Commission which will return one to the applicant once it has been signed by both parties.

4.5. Indicative timetable

Deadlines	Date
Deadline for submitting the applications	30 July 2014
Evaluation period	August - October 2014
Notification of results	November 2014
Signing of grant agreements	December 2014

4.6. Contact

Contacts between the contracting authority and potential applicants can only take place in certain circumstances and under the following conditions:

Before the final date for submission of proposals, at the request of the applicant, the European Commission may provide additional information solely for the purpose of clarifying the nature of the call. Any requests for additional information must be made in writing to **empl-VP-2014-008@ec.europa.eu**.

In the interest of equal treatment of applicants, the Commission cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of an applicant, a co-applicant or an action or on the outcome of the call before the official publication of results.

The Commission may, on its own initiative, inform interested parties of any error, inaccuracy, omission or other clerical error in the text of the call for proposals. Any additional information including that referred to above will be published on the internet in concordance with the various call-for-proposals documents.

Contact coordinates for the call:

ENQUIRIES SHOULD BE SUBMITTED BY E-MAIL ONLY, CLEARLY INDICATING THE REFERENCE VP/2014/0008, TO: empl-vp-2014-008@ec.europa.eu

Applicants are hereby informed that in the interest of transparency and equal treatment of applicants, no queries will be dealt with by telephone.

5. FINANCIAL GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

For more detailed information on the financial and administrative aspects of the call please see Annex I which is available on the call website:

http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=630&langId=en

Only eligible costs can be taken into account for determining the amount of grant. The categories of costs considered as eligible and non-eligible are indicated in the section 4.2 of the above Guidelines.

In addition to costs specified in article 4.2.4 of the Financial Guidelines following costs are ineligible for funding under the present call:

- Direct financial support to the participants in the target groups.
- Acquisition of immovable property and/or vehicles.

Before awarding a grant, the Commission will check whether the budget does not contain problems such as arithmetical errors, inaccuracies, unrealistic costs or other ineligible costs. The check may give rise to a request for clarification and may lead the European Commission to ask for modifications or reductions of some budget items before delivering the grant. The amount of the grant and the percentage of EU co-financing should never be increased as a result of these corrections.

Annex II - Model grant agreement

For more detailed information on payment arrangements, general legal and administrative provisions please see the model grant agreement which is available on the call website.

http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=629