



THE SEVENTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

The Seventh Framework Programme focuses on Community activities in the field of research, technological development and demonstration (RTD) for the period 2007 to 2013

GUIDANCE NOTE

for project coordinators planning a competitive call for additional beneficiaries in an ICT Integrated Project or Network of excellence

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The selection of additional beneficiaries through competitive calls¹ in ICT Integrated Projects or Networks of excellence

1. Introduction

The participants in the consortium managing an Integrated Project or a Network of excellence funded by the *Seventh Framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities contributing to the creation of the European research area and to innovation (2007-2013)* can, during their initial grant agreement negotiation with the Commission, reserve a portion of the project budget for specific tasks to be carried out by a new beneficiary or beneficiaries which will join the consortium at a later date.

These later-joining beneficiaries must be selected by means of a competitive call. The legal requirements for this selection process are described in Annex II Article 35 to your grant agreement.

It is your responsibility to publish the call for proposal, evaluate and select proposals according to the rules given in this document and subject to the approval of your Commission Project Officer.

The call may be only be for a single activity, for which only one successful proposer will be selected, or may be that it is for several activities with one or more successful proposer in each. This must be made clear to the proposers in the call information which you will prepare.

The costs to the project of managing the competitive call, like all project expenditure, are limited to those which are actual, economic and necessary². They may be claimed under the heading "Management costs".

Existing participants in the grant agreement may not respond to the call - it is assumed that funding was reserved at the original grant agreement negotiation stage for an additional partner because none of the existing participants had the necessary expertise to carry out the work.³

2. Preparation activities

The Call Announcement

You will inform your Project Officer of the call at least 30 days prior to its expected date of publication by submitting to him a draft of your Call Announcement (see Annex 1 of this document). This is a brief announcement about the call which you will publish in national newspapers and journals (see below). It contains a reference to the section of your project website where the full details are published.

The Full Call Details

You should prepare a dedicated section of your project website, which will give proposers the Full Call Details. This must contain:

- A detailed account of the task or tasks to be carried out, in particular clarifying how many proposers may be successful in each task
- Any restrictions on participation in any part of the call (e.g. only certain types of organisation are required, only organisations based in certain countries etc.)
- The funding available for the task(s)
- The Guide for applicants (a model version will be supplied to you by your Project Officer)
- The existing consortium agreement or an edited version thereof (you may remove redundant or commercially sensitive information)

¹ This procedure does not apply to the case of the straightforward replacement of an existing contractor who drops out

² Grant agreement Annex II Art 14

³ If you have by now concluded that some or all of the reserved funding could be distributed to existing partners this will have to be justified and approved by the Project Officer and be the subject of a grant agreement amendment

- The coordinates (email address and telephone number) of a help facility which you will maintain for proposers during the call.
- The deadline for proposal submission (expressed in Brussels time), the email address to which proposals should be submitted and the call identifier which will be used on these emails

You will inform your Project Officer of these Full Call Details at least 10 days before the expected date of publication of the Call Announcement

All proposers must receive fair and equal treatment. Information or facilities which you supply to any proposer must be equally available to all.

3. Publication of the call

Following the requirement of Art II.35 of your grant agreement, you will publish the Call Announcement as follows:

- with equal prominence in at least three national newspapers each located in different Member states or Associated Countries;
- in at least one international journal relevant to the objective(s) covered by the project.

You will inform the Project Officer in advance about which publications the call will be announced in, and on what dates.

The call must remain open for the submission of proposals for a period of at least five weeks from the date of the last of the publications mentioned above.

Your Project Officer will also arrange with the ICT Operations Unit to publish your Call Announcement on the ICT CORDIS website and to circulate it to the ICT National Contact Points.

4. Proposal reception

You must close the call on a Wednesday, so that your help facility is available to proposers throughout the last three days of the call, and that there are two working days after the call to deal with any unresolved problems. Close your call at 17h00 *Brussels time*.

Proposers are asked to submit their proposals by email. This can be to your address, on receipt of each proposal you will email an Acknowledgment of receipt to the proposer (see Annex 2).

Alternatively, you can offer the address of the ICT Information desk (which is ict@ec.europa.eu). In this case, please confirm with your Project Officer in advance that your chosen call close date is not a Commission holiday! After the close of call your Project Officer will forward to you all the proposal submissions, but it is still your responsibility to email the Acknowledgments of receipt to the proposers.

You cannot accept late submissions, late submitters must receive by return email a "call closed" message from you.

You should evaluate the proposals as submitted: after the close of call no additions or changes to received proposals should be taken into account.

5. Proposal evaluation and selection

Evaluation criteria

The consortium will evaluate proposals received in the light of the criteria that governed the Commission's original evaluation and selection of the project, using the attached form (see Annex 3) with the assistance of at least two experts who are independent of any member of your consortium and of any proposer. The

experts will be individuals from the fields of science, industry and/or with experience in the field of innovation and also with the highest level of knowledge, and who are recognised authorities in the relevant specialist area.

The names and brief CVs of the selected experts should be communicated to your Project Officer in advance for his approval.

The selected experts will sign with you a declaration of confidentiality concerning the contents of the proposals they read (see Annex 4). The form which they use in the evaluation also carries a declaration of freedom from conflict of interest which they agree to by signing them.

(It is a wise precaution to be prepared to bring in a “reserve” expert in case of sickness or the last-minute discovery of a conflict of interest.)

Evaluation procedure

The evaluation should take place at a maximum of two weeks from the close of the call. Note that you can only finally confirm the appointment of your experts after the close of call, when you have discovered who all the proposers are and therefore you can select your experts without risk of conflict of interest.

Each independent expert will record his/her individual opinion of each proposal on the attached evaluation form. They will then meet or communicate together to prepare a single “consensus” form for each proposal, representing opinions and scores on which both agree and which both will sign.

Proposal selection

Using the scores given on the consensus form, you will normally select the highest scoring proposal (or proposals, if the Call text foresaw more than one successful proposer) for the call (or for the different part of the call if more than one).

However, the consortium is not obliged to select the highest scoring proposal where it has objective grounds for objecting to the participant, for example commercial competition. In this case the choice may pass, with the agreement of your Project Officer, to the next-ranked proposal.

In all cases, participation and funding of the new partner(s) is subject to the normal FP7 rules concerning for example eligibility for funding, IPR sharing and legal and financial verification. The new partner(s) also must accede to the consortium agreement.

The consortium may conclude that even the highest scoring proposal is of inadequate quality, in which case it will make no selection. This conclusion is obligatory if all the proposals fall below the threshold scores given on the attached evaluation form.

In the event of no selection being made, you may re-open the call at a later date. Alternatively, you may conclude that no successful outcome can be expected and abandon the plan to hold a competitive call, redistributing the reserved budget to the existing partners. This decision would have to be justified and approved by the Project Officer and be the subject of a grant agreement amendment

6. Reporting and approval of results

Reporting

In a written report submitted within three week of the conclusion of the evaluation, you will supply the Project Officer with a brief report on the evaluation and selection process, comprising as a minimum

- A report of the call and its evaluation (including e.g. dates of call, publications used, dates of evaluation etc.), and the outcome indicating the selected proposer(s);
- A listing of proposals received, identifying the proposing organisations involved (name and address)
- The names and affiliations and a brief CV of the experts involved in the evaluation, with contact details (telephone number, email address);

- A copy of the signed individual and consensus forms used in the evaluation;
- If the proposer selected was not the highest scoring one, the report must record the objective reasons why the highest scoring one was passed over.

Within 45 days the Commission may object to the result if, for example, the required procedures have not been properly carried out.

If significant ethical issues were involved in the original project proposal, and it was subject to an ethical review before the issue of the grant agreement, your Project Officer may need to arrange a further ethical review of the successful proposal before consenting to the addition of the new partner(s). His consent is conditional on any recommendations from this new review being taken into account by the project.

Communications with proposers

When the Commission declares that it is satisfied with the eligibility of the proposer and the evaluation and selection process, you will get into contact with the successful proposer(s) to prepare their accession to the grant agreement in accordance with Article II.36 of your grant agreement.

You will communicate to the other proposers whose proposals were evaluated the information that their proposal was not successful in the call, and will enclose an *unsigned* version of the Consensus report of the evaluation of their proposal.

7. Timeline

Minus 30 days: Communicate Call announcement text to Project Officer

Minus 10 days: Communicate Full Call Details to Project Officer

Inform PO of details (newspapers/dates) of publication of Call Announcement

Publish Call announcement in newspapers and journal; Open dedicated call section of project website

Plus 5 weeks: close call

Week 6, 7 finalise evaluation preparations, communicate names of experts to Commission PO, conduct evaluation

Week 10: submit evaluation report to Project Officer

Week 17 (maximum delay) Project Officer approves selection of successful proposer(s); you communicate the result of each proposal to the proposer

Annex 1 – Call announcement format

Your announcement published in at least three national newspapers and a technical journal should include at least the following information. The example shown is for a single new partner, it can be expanded as appropriate for more complex cases.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF A COMPETITIVE CALL FOR AN ADDITIONAL PROJECT PARTNER

The following project currently active in the *Seventh Framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities contributing to the creation of the European research area and to innovation (2007-2013)* requires the participation of a new partner to carry out certain tasks within the project. Please note that the Seventh Framework programme offers part-funding not full-funding of research activities.

Project grant agreement number -
Project acronym -
Project full name -
Brief summary of task(s) requested –

Call identifier -
Language in which the proposal should be submitted –
Date of close of call – 17h00 Brussels time on (date)

Internet address for further information and address for submitting proposals – <http://XXX>

Annex 2 - Acknowledgment of receipt

Acknowledgement of receipt

Dear XXX,

Thank you for submitting your proposal for consideration as an additional partner in the ICT project XXX.

This evaluation will take place in the next few weeks. You will be notified as soon as possible after this of whether your proposal has been successful or not.

On behalf of my colleagues in the project I would like to thank you for your interest in our activities.

Yours sincerely,

Annex 3 – Evaluation form

Individual evaluation/Consensus (delete as appropriate)

Proposal No. :	Acronym :
<p>1. Scientific and/or technological excellence (relevant to the topics addressed by the call) <i>Note: when a proposal only partially addresses the topics, this condition will be reflected in the scoring of this criterion</i></p>	<p>Score: <i>(Threshold 3/5; Weight 1)</i></p>
<p>2. Quality and efficiency of the implementation and the management</p>	<p>Score: <i>(Threshold 3/5; Weight 1)</i></p> <p><i>For the purposes of any subsequent negotiation, an above-threshold score for this criterion is regarded as an indication that the proposer(s) has the operational capacity to carry out the work</i></p>

0 The proposal fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information; *1* Poor The criterion is addressed in an inadequate manner, or there are serious inherent weaknesses; *2* Fair While the proposal broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses; *3* Good The proposal addresses the criterion well, although improvements would be necessary; *4* Very good The proposal addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are still possible; *5* Excellent The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor.

3. Potential impact through the development, dissemination and use of project results	Score: <i>(Threshold 3/5; Weight 1)</i>
Remarks	Overall score: <i>(Threshold 10/15)</i>

Does this proposal contain ethical issues that may need further attention ?

NO

YES

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge, I have no direct or indirect conflict of interest in the evaluation of this proposal

Name	
Signature	
Date	

Name	
Signature	
Date	

0 The proposal fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information; 1 Poor The criterion is addressed in an inadequate manner, or there are serious inherent weaknesses; 2 Fair While the proposal broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses; 3 Good The proposal addresses the criterion well, although improvements would be necessary; 4 Very good The proposal addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are still possible; 5 Excellent The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor.

Annex 4 – Confidentiality and conflict of interest declaration

I the undersigned declare that, in participating as an independent expert in the evaluation of proposals received in the competitive call of the ICT project XXX

I undertake to treat as confidential all information contained in the proposals which I am asked to evaluate, both during the evaluation and afterwards.

I will not reveal to any third party the identity or any details of the views of my fellow evaluator(s), neither during the evaluation nor afterwards

I do not, to the best of my knowledge, have any interest in any of the proposals submitted in this call, I have not been involved in their preparation and I do not benefit either directly or indirectly from the eventual selection. Should I discover a conflict of interest during the evaluation, I undertake to declare this and to withdraw from the evaluation.

Name	
Signature	
Date	