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Contracting authority: Italian Agency for Development Cooperation
Cairo Office

EU-ZIRA3A - EU Integrated Rural Development Programme for Egypt

Guidelines
for grant applicants

Contribution Agreement ENI/2021/427-389

Reference: Call for Proposals no. 1 - “Enhancing integrated governance to improve performance of the Egyptian plant quarantine system and pesticides monitoring as well as developing and adopting a digital archiving system”.

Deadline for submission of concept note: 18th March 2024 at 03:00 PM
Cairo local time zone (Egypt, GMT+2)

NOTICE

This is a restricted call for proposals. In the first instance, only concept notes (Part A of the grant application form) must be submitted for evaluation. Thereafter, lead applicants who have been pre-selected will be invited to submit a full application. After the evaluation of the full applications, an eligibility check will be performed for those which have been provisionally selected. Eligibility will be checked on the basis of the supporting documents requested by the contracting authority and the signed 'declaration by the lead applicant' sent together with the full application.



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1. EU-ZIRA3A - EU INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR EGYPT

1.1. BACKGROUND

The EU is committed to support partner countries through external policies and instruments. With an ongoing portfolio of 1.4 billion EUR, the European Union is a key partner of Egypt. Under the EU/Egypt Partnership Priorities 2017-2020 and Single Support Framework (SSF) 2017-2020, the EU and Egypt acknowledged the importance of building a stable and prosperous Egypt with an indicative allocation of 432 to EUR 528 million. The SSF clarifies the sectors of intervention directly derived from Partnership Priorities. The three priority sectors are: 1 Economic modernization, energy, environment (40%), 2 Social development and protection (40%) and 3- Governance, enhancing stability and modern democratic state (10%). These are aligned with the key strategic government planning documents, namely the “Sustainable Development Strategy — Vision 2030”.

In November 2022, The EU delegation in Egypt and The Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) signed the contribution agreement to implement “EU-ZIRA3A”, the EU Integrated Rural Development Programme for Egypt. The Programme has been designed to support the Egyptian Government in its implementation Of the Sustainable Agricultural Development Strategy (SADS) and to support the socio-economic development in the three governorates of Assiut, Sohag and Beni Suef. EU- ZIRA3A will help to improve the livelihood of the rural communities in these governorates by providing support to the smallholder farmers, their families, their cooperatives as well as the institutional bodies in charge of agriculture and rural development both at the central and governorate level. The Programme will mainly focus on mitigating water scarcity; however, it also aims to provide eminent agricultural extension services, improve livestock wealth, and explore new and innovative solutions for generating income, notably for rural women and youth.

1.2. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME AND PRIORITY ISSUES

The overall objective of the action is to improve the living conditions and revenues of the smallholder famers and their communities in the governorates of Sohag, Assiut and Beni Suef, through a sustainable and integrated approach to rural development while addressing the issues of increasing resource scarcity in a context of quick population growth.

The **global objective** of this call for proposals is:

- ✓ Enhancing the integrated governance of rural development both at the central and the governorate levels.

The **specific objective(s)** of this call for proposals are:

- ✓ Supporting MALR for the Monitoring and Evaluation of rural development projects/programs at central and field levels to develop evidence-based policies.
- ✓ Strengthening and building the capacity of the Egyptian quarantine and promotion the sustainable use of pesticides.

The **priority(ies)** of this call for proposals are:

- ✓ Integrated governance in rural development sector.
- ✓ Capacity building of official staff of MALR at central and local levels

- ✓ The Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and protection mechanisms, food safety and economic prospects.
- ✓ Enhancing the performance of Egyptian plant quarantine including improvement tools of sampling and analysis.

The minimum number of priorities to be addressed is no. 4. All priorities mentioned above should be addressed.

1.3. FINANCIAL ALLOCATION PROVIDED BY THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY

The overall indicative amount made available under this call for proposals is EUR 1,075,000.00. The contracting authority reserves the right not to award all available funds.

Size of grants

Any grant requested under this call for proposals must fall between the following minimum and maximum amounts:

- minimum amount: EUR 1,075,000.00
- maximum amount: EUR 1,075,000.00

Any grant requested under this call for proposals must fall between the following minimum and maximum percentages of total eligible costs of the action:

- Minimum percentage: 80% of the total eligible costs of the action.
- Maximum percentage: 90% of the total eligible costs of the action (see also Section 2.1.4.).

The balance (i.e., the difference between the total cost of the action and the amount requested from the contracting authority) must be financed from sources other than the general budget of the Union or the European Development Fund¹.

¹ Where a grant is financed by the European Development Fund, any mention of European Union financing must be understood as referring to European Development Fund financing.

2. RULES FOR THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS

These guidelines set out the rules for the submission, selection and implementation of the actions financed under this call, in conformity with the practical guide, which is applicable to the present call (available on the internet at this address <https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/display/ExactExternalWiki/ePRAG>).²

2.1. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

There are three sets of eligibility criteria, relating to:

(1) the actors (2.1.1.):

- the ‘**lead applicant**’, i.e., the entity submitting the application form.
- if any, its **co-applicant(s) (where it is not specified otherwise the lead applicant and its co-applicant(s) are hereinafter jointly referred as ‘applicant(s)’)**.
- and, if any, **affiliated entity(ies)** to the lead applicant and/or to a co-applicant(s).

(2) the actions (2.1.3.):

- actions for which a grant may be awarded.

(3) the costs (2.1.4.):

- types of cost that may be taken into account in setting the amount of the grant.

2.1.1. Eligibility of applicants (i.e., lead applicant and co-applicant(s))
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Lead applicant

(1) In order to be eligible for a grant, the lead applicant must:

- be a legal person **and**
- be a specific type of organisation such as: non-governmental organisation, public sector operator, local authority, international (inter-governmental) organisation as defined by Article 156 of the EU Financial Regulation³ **and**
- be established in⁴ Member State of the European Union or in a country covered by the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI)⁵ **and**

² Note that a lead applicant (i.e., a coordinator) whose pillars have been positively assessed by the European Commission and who is awarded a grant will not sign the standard grant contract published with these guidelines, but a contribution agreement based on the contribution agreement template. All references in these guidelines and other documents related to this call to the standard grant contract shall in this case be understood as referring to the relevant provisions of the contribution agreement template.

³ International organisations are international public-sector organisations set up by intergovernmental agreements as well as specialised agencies set up by them; the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are also recognised as international organisations.

⁴ To be determined on the basis of the organisation’s statutes, which should demonstrate that it has been established by an instrument governed by the national law of the country concerned and that its head office is located in an eligible country. In this respect, any legal entity whose statutes have been established in another country cannot be considered an eligible local organisation, even if the statutes are registered locally or a ‘Memorandum of Understanding’ has been concluded.

⁵ For UK applicants: Please be aware that following the entry into force of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement* on 1 February 2020 and in particular Articles 127(6), 137 and 138, the references to natural or legal persons residing or

This obligation does not apply to international organisations.

and

- be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action with the co-applicant(s) and affiliated entity(ies), not acting as an intermediary **and**

In addition to the categories referred to in section 2.1.1, the following are however also eligible:

- Private sector operator recognised based on their statutes/articles of association as body entrusted with a public task.

For entities categorised as NGOs (non-governmental organisations): be registered with the Egyptian Ministry of Social Solidarity (MOSS) at least nine (9) months prior to the Call for Proposals.

For entities categorized public sector operator, private sector entrusted with a public task and local authority be legally entitled to implement the proposed action as shown in the articles of association/statue.

For entities categorised as governmental organisations: be legally independent.

For entities categorized as international (inter-governmental) organisation as defined by Article 43 of the Rules of application of the EU Financial Regulation: be in the position to work in Egypt.

Note: The Contracting Authority may decide to cancel the award decision if the successful applicant/s do not obtain the required authorization to implement the proposed action within 60 calendar days from the letter of award. In no event will the Contracting Authority be liable for any damages whatsoever including, without limitation, damages for loss of profits, in any way connected with the cancellation of the grant procedure, even if the Contracting Authority has been informed of the possibility of damage. Publication of the guidelines does not commit the Contracting Authority to implement the grant contract.

- (2) Potential applicants may not participate in calls for proposals or be awarded grants if they are in any of the situations listed in Section 2.6.10.1 of the practical guide.

Lead applicants, co-applicants, affiliated entities and, in case of legal entities, persons who have powers of representation, decision-making or control over the lead applicant, the co-applicants and the affiliated entities are informed that, should they be in one of the situations of early detection or exclusion according to Section 2.6.10.1 of the practical guide, personal details (name, given name if natural person, address, legal form and name and given name of the persons with powers of representation, decision-making or control, if legal person) may be registered in the early detection and exclusion system, and communicated to the persons and entities concerned in relation to the award or the execution of a grant contract. In this respect, provisionally selected lead applicants, co-applicants and affiliated entities or those placed in the reserve list are obliged to declare that they are not in one of the exclusion situations through a signed declaration on honour (PRAG Annex A14). For grants of EUR 15 000 or less, no declaration on honour is required. See Section 2.4.

established in a Member State of the European Union and to goods originating from an eligible country, as defined under Regulation (EU) No 236/2014** and Annex IV of the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement***, are to be understood as including natural or legal persons residing or established in, and to goods originating from, the United Kingdom ****. Those persons and goods are therefore eligible under this call.

* Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community.

** Regulation (EU) No 236/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 laying down common rules and procedures for the implementation of the Union's instruments for financing external action.

*** Annex IV to the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement, as revised by Decision 1/2014 of the ACP-EU Council of Ministers (OJ L196/40, 3.7.2014)

**** including the Overseas Countries and Territories having special relations with the United Kingdom, as laid down in Part Four and Annex II of the TFEU

In Part A, Section 3 and Part B Section 8 of the grant application form ('declaration(s) by the lead applicant'), the lead applicant must declare that the lead applicant himself, the co-applicant(s) and affiliated entity(ies) are not in any of these situations.

The lead applicant may act individually or with co-applicant(s).

If awarded the grant contract, the lead applicant will become the beneficiary identified as the coordinator in Annex G (special conditions). The coordinator is the sole interlocutor of the contracting authority. It represents and acts on behalf of any other co-beneficiary (if any) and coordinate the design and implementation of the action.

Co-applicant(s)

Co-applicants participate in designing and implementing the action, and the costs they incur are eligible in the same way as those incurred by the lead applicant.

Co-applicants must satisfy the eligibility criteria as applicable to the lead applicant himself.

Co-applicants must sign the mandate in Part B Section 4 of the grant application form.

If awarded the grant contract, the co-applicant(s) (if any) will become beneficiary(ies) in the action (together with the coordinator).

- (3) In addition, please note that contracts cannot be awarded to or signed with applicants included in the lists of EU restrictive measures (see Section 2.4. of the PRAG).

Co-applicants shall also provide the financial identification from for the purposes of financial traceability.

2.1.2. Affiliated entities

The lead applicant and its co-applicant(s) may act with affiliated entity(ies). **Only the following entities may be considered as affiliated entities to the lead applicant and/or to co-applicant(s):**

Only entities having a structural link with the applicants (i.e., the lead applicant or a co-applicant), in particular a legal or capital link.

This structural link encompasses mainly two notions:

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

Entities affiliated to an applicant may hence be:

- Entities directly or indirectly controlled by the applicant (daughter companies or first-tier subsidiaries). They may also be entities controlled by an entity controlled by the applicant (granddaughter companies or second-tier subsidiaries) and the same applies to further tiers of control.
 - Entities directly or indirectly controlling the applicant (parent companies). Likewise, they may be entities controlling an entity controlling the applicant.
 - Entities under the same direct or indirect control as the applicant (sister companies).
- (ii) Membership, i.e., the applicant is legally defined as a e.g., network, federation, association in which the proposed affiliated entities also participate, or the applicant participates in the same entity (e.g., network, federation, association, ...) as the proposed affiliated entities.

The structural link shall, as a general rule, be neither limited to the action 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 action.

By way of exception, an entity may be considered as affiliated to an applicant even if it has a structural link specifically established for the sole purpose of the implementation of the action in the case of so-called ‘sole applicants’ or ‘sole beneficiaries’. A sole applicant or a sole beneficiary is a legal entity formed by several entities (a group of entities) which together comply with the criteria for being awarded the grant. For example, an association is formed by its members.

What is not an affiliated entity?

The following are not considered entities affiliated to an applicant:

- Entities that have entered into a (procurement) contract or subcontract with an applicant, act as concessionaires or delegates for public services for an applicant,
- Entities that receive financial support from the applicant,
- Entities that cooperate on a regular basis with an applicant on the basis of a memorandum of understanding or share some assets,
- Entities that have signed a consortium agreement under the grant contract (unless this consortium agreement leads to the creation of a ‘sole applicant’ as described above).

How to verify the existence of the required link with an applicant?

The affiliation resulting from control may in particular be proved on the basis of the consolidated accounts of the group of entities the applicant and its proposed affiliates belong to.

The affiliation resulting from membership may in particular be proved on the basis of the statutes or equivalent act establishing the entity (network, federation, association) which the applicant constitutes or in which the applicant participates.

If the applicants are awarded a grant contract, their affiliated entity(ies) will not become beneficiary(ies) of the action and signatory(ies) of the grant contract. However, they will participate in the design and in the implementation of the action and the costs they incur (including those incurred for implementation contracts and financial support to third parties and subcontractors) may be accepted as eligible costs, provided they comply with all the relevant rules already applicable to the beneficiary(ies) under the grant contract.

Affiliated entity(ies) must satisfy the same eligibility criteria as the lead applicant and the co-applicant(s). They must sign the affiliated entity(ies) statement in Part B Section 5 of the grant application form.

Affiliated entities shall also provide the financial identification from for the purposes of financial traceability.

2.1.3. Associates and contractors

The following entities are not applicants nor affiliated entities and do not have to sign the ‘mandate for co-applicant(s)’ or ‘affiliated entities’ statement:

- Associates

Other organisations or individuals may be involved in the action. Such associates play a real role in the action but may not receive funding from the grant, with the exception of per diem or travel costs. Associates do not have to meet the eligibility criteria referred to in Section 2.1.1. Associates must be mentioned in Part B Section 6 — ‘Associates participating in the action’ — of the grant application form.

- Contractors

The beneficiaries and their affiliated entities are permitted to award contracts. Associates or affiliated entity(ies) cannot be also contractors in the project. Contractors are subject to the procurement rules set out in Annex IV to the standard grant contract.

Associates and Contractors shall also provide the financial identification from for the purposes of financial traceability.

2.1.4. Eligible actions: actions for which an application may be made

Definition:

An action is composed of a set of activities.

Duration

The initial planned duration of an action may not be lower than 18 months nor exceed 30 months.

Sectors or themes

- ✓ The integrated governance
- ✓ The Plant quarantine system
- ✓ Monitoring and Evaluation system
- ✓ Food safety
- ✓ Capacity building of official staff

Location

Actions must take place in Egypt in one or more of the following governorates: Cairo, Sohag, Beni Suef and Assiut.

Types of action

- ✓ Training and capacity building activities.
- ✓ Supply of materials and equipment.
- ✓ Rehabilitation of centres or units.

Establishment of digital platforms. The following types of action are ineligible:

- actions concerned only or mainly with individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences, and congresses.
- actions concerned only or mainly with individual scholarships for studies or training courses.

Types of activity

- ✓ Enhancing capacity of local government officials to adopt new information and communication technologies through develop digital archiving system.
- ✓ Capacity building of plant quarantine staff by providing trainings on digitalization transformation, coding system.
- ✓ Strengthening the Egyptian quarantine and promotion the sustainable use of pesticides.
- ✓ Improve tools of sampling and analysis for monitoring chemical residues.
- ✓ Building the capacity for Monitoring and Evaluation unit within MALR at central and field levels to develop evidence-based policies.
- ✓ Updating MAP Egypt project.
- ✓ Support the establishment of National Egyptian geodatabase platform (using Geographic Information Systems).

Financial support to third parties⁶

Applicants may not propose financial support to third parties.

Visibility

The applicants must take all necessary steps to publicise the fact that the European Union has financed or co-financed the action. Unless the European Commission agrees otherwise, actions that are wholly or partially funded by the European Union must ensure the visibility of EU financing by displaying the EU emblem in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Operational guidelines for recipients of EU funding, published by the European Commission. If applicable, communication activities may be undertaken to raise the awareness of specific or general audiences of the reasons for the action and the EU support for the action in the country or region concerned, as well as the results and the impact of this support.

All measures and activities relating to visibility and, if applicable, communication, must comply with the latest Communication and Visibility Requirements for EU-funded external action, laid down and published by the European Commission ([Communication and Visibility Requirements for EU External Actions | International Partnerships \(europa.eu\)](#)).

Number of applications and grants per applicants / affiliated entities

The lead applicant may not submit more than 1 application under this call for proposals.

The lead applicant may not be awarded more than 1 grant under this call for proposals.

The lead applicant may not be a co-applicant or an affiliated entity in another application at the same time.

A co-applicant/affiliated entity may not be the co-applicant or affiliated entity in more than 1 application under this call for proposals.

A co-applicant/affiliated entity may not be awarded more than 1 grant(s) under this call for proposals.

2.1.5. Eligibility of costs: costs that can be included

Union contributions under this call for proposals take the following form(s):

- Reimbursement of eligible costs that may be based on any or a combination of the following forms:

- (i) actual costs incurred by the beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies);
- (ii) one or more simplified cost options (see below).

Only 'eligible costs' can be covered by a grant. The categories of costs that are eligible and non-eligible are indicated below. The budget is both a cost estimate and an overall ceiling for 'eligible costs'.

Simplified cost options (SCOs) may take the form of:

- **unit costs:** covering all or certain specific categories of eligible costs which are clearly identified in advance by reference to an amount per unit.
- **lump sums:** covering in global terms all or certain specific categories of eligible costs which are clearly identified in advance.
- **flat-rate financing:** covering specific categories of eligible costs which are clearly identified in advance by applying a percentage fixed ex ante. This form is not applicable to output or result based SCOs.

⁶ These third parties are neither affiliated entity(ies) nor associates nor contractors.

Simplified costs options which can be proposed are the following:

"Output or result based SCOs": they include costs linked to outputs, results, activities, deliverables in the framework of a specific project (for example the determination of a lump sum for the organization of a conference, or for the realisation of a determined output/activity). Where possible and appropriate, lump sums or unit costs shall be determined in such a way to allow their payment upon achievement of concrete outputs and/or results. This type of SCO can be proposed by the beneficiary (no threshold is applicable) at proposal's stage (Grant application form – Full application). In case the evaluation committee and the contracting authority are not satisfied with the quality of the justification provided, reimbursement on the basis of actually incurred costs is always possible.

Please refer to Annex K for the details of the procedure to be followed depending on the type and amount of the costs to be declared as SCO.

Applicants proposing this form of reimbursement, must clearly indicate in worksheet no.1 of Annex B, each heading/item of eligible costs concerned by this type of financing, i.e., add the reference in capital letters to 'UNIT COST', 'LUMPSUM' in the Unit column (see example in Annex K).

Additionally in Annex B, in the second column of worksheet no.2, 'Justification of the estimated costs' per each of the corresponding budget item or heading applicants must:

- describe the information and methods used to establish the amounts of unit costs and/or lump sums, to which costs they refer, etc for output or result based SCO.
- clearly explain the formulas for calculation of the final eligible amount for output or result based SCO.

Where SCOs are proposed the evaluation committee and the contracting authority decide whether to accept the proposed amounts or rates on the basis of the provisional budget submitted by the applicants, by analysing factual data of grants carried out by the applicants or of similar actions. In case the evaluation committee and the contracting authority are not satisfied with the quality of the justification provided reimbursement on the basis of actually incurred costs is always possible.

No threshold is set ex-ante for the total amount of financing that can be authorised by the contracting authority on the basis of simplified cost options.

Recommendations to award a grant are always subject to the condition that the checks preceding the signing of the grant contract do not reveal problems requiring changes to the budget (such as arithmetical errors, inaccuracies, unrealistic costs, and ineligible costs). The checks may give rise to requests for clarification and may lead the contracting authority to impose modifications or reductions to address such mistakes or inaccuracies. It is not possible to increase the grant or the percentage of EU co-financing as a result of these corrections.

It is therefore in the applicants' interest to provide a **realistic and cost-effective budget**.

The grant may take the form of a single lump-sum covering the entire eligible costs of an action or a work programme.

Single lump sums may be determined on the basis of the estimated budget, which should comply with the principles of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. Compliance with these principles shall be verified ex ante at the time of evaluation of the grant application.

When authorising single lump sums the authorising officer responsible shall comply with the conditions applicable to output or result based SCOs.

When using this form of financing, the description of the action shall include detailed information on the essential conditions triggering the payment, including, where applicable, the achievement of outputs and/or results.

Eligible direct costs

To be eligible under this call for proposals, costs must comply with the provisions of Article 14 of the general conditions to the standard grant contract (see Annex G of the guidelines).

Salary costs of the personnel of national administrations may be eligible to the extent that they relate to the cost of activities which the relevant public authority would not carry out if the action were not undertaken.

If applicable, applicants shall include in the concept note a methodology for the salary costs of the personnel of national administrations explaining on how:

- i. they relate to the cost of activities (and why the relevant public authority would not carry out if the action were not undertaken).
- ii. based on the applicable regulations, they are going to be: (a) managed for the payment purposes; (b) determined in the budget at the time of the submission of the full application.

Contingency reserve

The budget may include a contingency reserve not exceeding 5% of the estimated direct eligible costs. It can only be used with the **prior written authorisation** of the contracting authority.

Eligible indirect costs

The **indirect costs** may not be claimed as eligible costs of the action.

Contributions in kind

Contributions in kind mean the provision of goods or services to beneficiaries or affiliated entities free of charge by a third party. As contributions in kind do not involve any expenditure for beneficiaries or affiliated entities, they are not eligible costs (except for personnel costs for the work carried out by volunteers under an action or an operating grant if so authorised).

Contributions in kind may not be treated as co-financing.

However, if the description of the action as proposed includes contributions in kind, the contributions have to be made.

Other co-financing shall be based on estimates provided by the applicant.

Ineligible costs

The following costs are not eligible:

- debts and debt service charges (interest).
- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities.
- costs declared by the beneficiary(ies) and financed by another action or work programme receiving a European Union (including through EDF) grant.
- purchases of land or buildings, except where necessary for the direct implementation of the action, in which case ownership must be transferred in accordance with Article 7.5 of the general conditions of the standard grant contract, at the latest at the end of the action.
- currency exchange losses.
- in kind contributions (except for volunteers' work).
- bonuses included in costs of staff.
- negative interest charged by banks or other financial institutions.

- credit to third parties.
- Indirect costs.

Maximum amount for the first pre-financing

The maximum amount of the first pre-financing cannot exceed 30% of the total eligible costs of the action. At the time of the submittal of the full proposal, potential applicants must abide to this limit in the formulation of the Y1 budget forecast.

2.1.6. Ethics clauses and Code of Conduct

a) Absence of conflict of interest

The applicant must not be affected by any conflict of interest and must have no equivalent relation in that respect with other applicants or parties involved in the actions. Any attempt by an applicant to obtain confidential information, enter into unlawful agreements with competitors or influence the evaluation committee or the contracting authority during the process of examining, clarifying, evaluating, and comparing applications will lead to the rejection of its application and may result in administrative penalties according to the Financial Regulation in force.

b) Respect for human rights as well as environmental legislation and core labour standards

The applicant and its staff must comply with human rights. In particular, and in accordance with the applicable act, applicants who have been awarded contracts must comply with the environmental legislation including multilateral environmental agreements, and with the core labour standards as applicable and as defined in the relevant International Labour Organisation conventions (such as the conventions on freedom of association and collective bargaining; elimination of forced and compulsory labour; abolition of child labour).

Zero tolerance for sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment

The European Commission applies a policy of 'zero tolerance' in relation to all wrongful conduct which has an impact on the professional credibility of the applicant.

Physical abuse or punishment, or threats of physical abuse, sexual abuse or exploitation, harassment, and verbal abuse, as well as other forms of intimidation shall be prohibited.

Applicants (and affiliated entities) other than (i) natural persons, (ii) pillar-assessed entities and (iii) governments and other public bodies, whose application has been provisionally selected or placed in a reserve list shall assess their internal policy against sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEA-H) through a self-evaluation questionnaire (Annex L). For grants of EUR 60 000 or less no self-evaluation is required. Such self-evaluation questionnaire is not part of the evaluation of the full application by the contracting authority but is an administrative requirement. See Section 2.5.6 of the PRAG.

c) Anti-corruption and anti-bribery

The applicant shall comply with all applicable laws, regulations and codes relating to anti-bribery and anti-corruption. The contracting authority reserves the right to suspend or cancel project financing if corrupt practices of any kind are discovered at any stage of the award process or during the execution of a contract and if the contracting authority fails to take all appropriate measures to remedy the situation. For the purposes of this provision, 'corrupt practices' are the offer of a bribe, gift, gratuity, or commission to any person as an inducement or reward for performing or refraining from any act relating to the award of a contract or execution of a contract already concluded with the contracting authority.

d) Unusual commercial expenses

Applications will be rejected, or contracts terminated if it emerges that the award or execution of a contract has given rise to unusual commercial expenses. Such unusual commercial expenses are commissions not mentioned in the main contract or not stemming from a properly concluded contract referring to the main contract, commissions not paid in return for any actual and legitimate service, commissions remitted to a

tax haven, commissions paid to a payee who is not clearly identified, or commissions paid to a company which has every appearance of being a front company.

Grant beneficiaries found to have paid unusual commercial expenses on projects funded by the European Union are liable, depending on the seriousness of the facts observed, to have their contracts terminated or to be permanently excluded from receiving EU/EDF funds.

e) Breach of obligations, irregularities, or fraud

The contracting authority reserves the right to suspend or cancel the procedure, where the award procedure proves to have been subject to breach of obligations, irregularities, or fraud. If breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud are discovered after the award of the contract, the contracting authority may refrain from concluding the contract.

2.2. HOW TO APPLY AND THE PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW

2.2.1. *Concept note content*

Applications must be submitted in accordance with the concept note instructions in the grant application form annexed to these guidelines (Annex A).

Applicants must apply in English.

Please note that:

1. In the concept note, lead applicants must only provide an estimate of the requested EU contribution as well as an indicative percentage of that contribution in relation to the eligible costs of the action. A detailed budget is to be submitted only by the lead applicants invited to submit a full application in the second phase.
2. The elements outlined in the concept note may not be modified in the full application, except for the changes described below:
 - The EU contribution may not vary from the initial estimate by more than 20%. Lead applicants are free to adapt the percentage of co-financing required within the minimum and maximum amount and percentages of co-financing, as laid down in these guidelines in Section 1.3.
 - The lead applicant may add, remove, or replace one or more co-applicant(s) or affiliated entity(ies) only in duly justified cases.

The lead applicant may adjust the duration of the action if unforeseen circumstances outside the scope of the applicants have taken place following the submission of the concept note and require such adaptation (risk of action not being carried out). In such cases, the duration must remain within the limits imposed by the guidelines for applicants. Own contributions by the applicants can be replaced by other donors' contributions at any time.

An explanation/justification of the relevant replacements/adjustments shall be included in section 2.1.1. of the full application form. Should the explanation/justification not be accepted by the evaluation committee, the proposal may be rejected on that sole basis.

3. Only the concept note form will be evaluated. It is therefore of utmost importance that this document contains ALL relevant information concerning the action. No additional annexes should be sent.

Please complete the concept note form carefully and as clearly as possible so that it can be assessed properly.

Any error or major discrepancy related to the concept note instructions may lead to the rejection of the concept note.

Clarifications will only be requested when information provided is not sufficient to conduct an objective assessment.

2.2.2. Where and how to send concept notes

The concept note and declaration by the lead applicant (to be found in **Part A Section 3** of the grant application form) must be submitted in one original and no. 1 copy in A4 size, each bound. Hand-written concept notes will not be accepted.

An electronic version of the concept note must also be submitted. A CD-ROM with the concept note in electronic format will be included, along with the paper version, in a sealed envelope as described below. The electronic file must contain **exactly the same** application as the paper version enclosed.

Where lead applicants send several different concept notes (if allowed to do so by the guidelines of the call), each one must be sent separately.

The envelope must bear the **reference number and the title of the call for proposals**, together with [the lot number and title] the full name and address of the lead applicant, and the words 'Not to be opened before the opening session' and ولا يجوز فتحه قبل تاريخ جلسة فتح المظاريف

To reduce expense and waste, we strongly recommend that you do not use plastic folders or dividers. Please also use double-sided printing if possible.

Concept notes must be submitted in a sealed envelope by registered mail, private courier service or by hand-delivery (a signed and dated certificate of receipt will be given to the deliverer) to the address below:

Postal address:

EU-ZIRA3A Programme

20th Floor, 1081 Corniche El Nile, Garden City, Cairo

Address for hand delivery:

EU-ZIRA3A Programme

20th Floor, 1081 Corniche El Nile, Garden City, Cairo

Concept notes sent by any other means (e.g., by fax or by e-mail) or delivered to other addresses will be rejected.

Please note that incomplete concept notes may be rejected. Lead applicants are advised to verify that their concept note is complete using the checklist for concept note (Part A Section 2 of the grant application form).

2.2.3. Deadline for submission of concept notes

The applicants' attention is drawn to the fact that there are two different systems for sending concept notes: one is by post or private courier service, the other is by hand delivery.

In the first case, the concept note must be sent before the date for submission, as evidenced by the postmark or deposit slip⁷, but in the second case it is the acknowledgment of receipt given at the time of the delivery of the concept note which will serve as proof.

The deadline for the submission of concept notes is 18th March 2024 as evidenced by the date of dispatch, the postmark, or the date of the deposit slip. In the case of hand-deliveries, the deadline for receipt is on 18th March 2024, before 3:00 PM Cairo local time zone (Egypt, GMT+2), as evidenced by the signed and dated receipt. Any concept note submitted after the deadline will be rejected.

⁷ It is recommended to use registered mail in case the postmark would not be readable.

The contracting authority may, for reasons of administrative efficiency, reject any concept note submitted on time to the postal service but received, for any reason beyond the contracting authority's control, after the effective date of approval of the concept note evaluation, if accepting concept notes that were submitted on time but arrived late would considerably delay the evaluation procedure) or jeopardise decisions already taken and notified (see indicative calendar under Section 2.5.2).

2.2.4. Further information about concept notes

An information session on this call for proposals will be held on 15th February 2024 from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM Cairo local time zone (Egypt, GMT+2) at EU-ZIRA3A Office - 20th Floor, 1081 Corniche El Nile, Garden City, Cairo.

Questions may be sent by e-mail no later than 21 days before the deadline for the submission of concept notes to the address below, clearly indicating the reference of the call for proposals:

E-mail address: euzira3a@aics.gov.it

The contracting authority has no obligation to provide clarifications to questions received after this date.

Replies will be given no later than 11 days before the deadline for submission of concept notes.

To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the contracting authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of lead applicants, co-applicants, affiliated entity(ies), an action, or specific activities.

No individual replies will be given to questions. All questions and answers as well as other important notices to applicants during the course of the evaluation procedure will be published on the website where the call was published: AICS Cairo website <https://ilcairo.aics.gov.it/home/opportunities/calls/> ; website of DG International Partnerships https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/funding/looking-for-funding_en or Funding & Tender opportunities (F&T Portal)

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>.

It is therefore advisable to consult the abovementioned website regularly in order to be informed of the questions and answers published.

Please note that the contracting authority may decide to cancel the call for proposals procedure at any stage according to the conditions set out in Section 6.5.9 of the PRAG.

2.2.5. Full applications

Lead applicants invited to submit a full application following pre-selection of their concept note must do so using Part B of the grant application form annexed to these guidelines (Annex A). Lead applicants should then keep strictly to the format of the grant application form and fill in the paragraphs and pages in order.

Please note that the elements outlined in the concept note may not be modified in the full application except for the changes described below:

- The EU contribution may not vary from the initial estimate by more than 20 %. Lead applicants are free to adapt the percentage of co-financing required within the minimum and maximum amount and percentages of co-financing, as laid down in these guidelines in Section 1.3.
- The lead applicant may add, remove, or replace one or more co-applicant(s) or affiliated entity(ies) only in duly justified cases.
- The lead applicant may adjust the duration of the action if unforeseen circumstances outside the scope of the applicants have taken place following the submission of the concept note and require such adaptation (risk of action not being carried out). In such cases, the duration must remain within the limits imposed by the guidelines for applicants.

An explanation/justification of the relevant replacements/adjustments shall be included in section 2.1.1. of the full application form. Should the explanation/justification not be accepted by the evaluation committee, the proposal may be rejected on that sole basis.

Lead applicants must submit their full applications in the same language as their concept notes.

Please complete the full application form carefully and as clearly as possible so that it can be assessed properly.

Any error related to the points listed in the checklist (Part B, Section 7 of the grant application form) or any major inconsistency in the full application (e.g., if the amounts in the budget worksheets are inconsistent) may lead to the rejection of the application.

Clarifications will only be requested when information provided is unclear and thus prevents the contracting authority from conducting an objective assessment.

Please note that only the full application form and the published annexes which have to be filled in (budget, logical framework) will be transmitted to the evaluators (and assessors, if used). It is therefore of utmost importance that these documents contain ALL the relevant information concerning the action. **With the full application the lead applicant also has to submit completed PADOR registration form (Annex F) for the lead applicant, each co-applicant (if any) and each affiliated entities⁸ (if any).**

Please note that the following documents should be submitted together with PADOR registration form and the full application:

1. The statutes or articles of association of the lead applicant, of each co-applicant (if any) and of each affiliated entity (if any). Where the contracting authority has recognised the lead applicant's, or the co-applicant(s)'s, or their affiliated entity(ies)'s eligibility for another call for proposals under the same budget line within 2 years before the deadline for receipt of applications, what should be submitted, instead of the statutes or articles of association, is a copy of the document proving their eligibility in a former call (e.g. a copy of the special conditions of a grant contract received during the reference period), unless a change in legal status has occurred in the meantime. This obligation does not apply to international organisations that have signed a framework agreement with the European Commission.
2. Legal entity form (see Annex D of these guidelines) duly completed and signed by each of the applicants (i.e., by the lead applicant and by each co-applicant, if any), accompanied by the justifying documents requested there. If the applicants have already signed a contract with the contracting authority, instead of the legal entity form and supporting documents, the legal entity number may be provided, unless a change in legal status occurred in the meantime.
3. A financial identification form of the lead applicant, (if any) of each co-applicant, (if any) of each affiliated entity and (if any) associates/contractors conforming to the model attached as Annex E of these guidelines, certified by the bank to which the payments will be made. This bank should be located in the country where the applicants and affiliated entities are established. If the concerned entities have already submitted a financial identification form in the past for a contract where the European Commission was in charge of the payments and intends to use the same bank account, a copy of the previous financial identification form may be provided instead.

In addition, for the purpose of the evaluation of the financial capacity, the following documents should be submitted⁹:

1. For action grants exceeding EUR 750,000.00 and for operating grants above EUR 100,000.00, the lead applicant must provide an audit report produced by an approved external auditor where it is available,

⁸ Natural persons who apply for a grant (if so allowed in the guidelines for applicants) do not have to provide an organisation data form. In this case, the information included in the grant application form is sufficient.

⁹ No supporting documents will be requested for applications for a grant not exceeding EUR 60 000.

and always in cases where a statutory audit is required by EU or national law. That report shall certify the accounts for up to the last three available financial years.

In all other cases, the applicant shall provide a self-declaration signed by its authorised representative certifying the validity of its accounts for up to the last three available financial years. Such self-declaration shall be dated and signed, either by hand or by applying a qualified electronic signature (QES)¹⁰ by an authorised representative of the signatory.

This requirement shall apply only to the first application made by a beneficiary the same contracting authority in any one financial year.

The external audit report is not required from the co-applicant(s) or affiliated entities (if any).

This obligation does not apply to pillar assessed entities.

2. For action grants not exceeding EUR 750,000.00 and for operating grants below EUR 100,000.00, a copy of the lead applicant's profit and loss account and the balance sheet for up to the last three financial years for which the accounts were closed¹¹. A copy of the latest account is neither required from the co-applicant(s) (if any) nor from affiliated entity(ies) (if any).

Documents must be supplied in the form of originals, photocopies, or scanned versions (i.e., showing legible stamps, signatures and dates) of the said originals.

Where such documents are not in one of the official languages of the European Union, a translation into English of the relevant parts of these documents proving the lead applicant's and, where applicable, co-applicants' and affiliated entity(ies)' eligibility, must be attached for the purpose of analysing the application.

Where these documents are in an official language of the European Union other than English, it is strongly recommended, in order to facilitate the evaluation, to provide a translation of the relevant parts of the documents, proving the lead applicant's and, where applicable, co-applicants' and affiliated entity(ies)' eligibility, into English.

If the abovementioned supporting documents are not provided by the deadline for the submission of the full application, the application may be rejected.

No additional annexes should be sent.

2.2.6. Where and how to send full applications

Full applications (i.e., the full application form, PADOR registration form the budget, the logical framework and the declaration by the lead applicant) must be submitted in a sealed envelope by registered mail, private courier service or by hand-delivery (a signed and dated certificate of receipt will be given to the deliverer) to the address below:

Postal address:

EU-ZIRA3A Programme

20th Floor, 1081, Corniche El Nile, Garden City, Cairo

Address for hand delivery:

¹⁰ Please note that only the QES within the meaning of Regulation (EU) No 910/2014 (eIDAS Regulation) will be accepted. Regulation (EU) No 910/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2014 on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market and repealing Directive 1999/93/EC.

¹¹ This obligation does not apply to natural persons who have received education support or who are in most need or in receipt of direct support, nor to public bodies and to international organisations. It does not apply either when the accounts are in practice the same documents as the external audit report already provided pursuant to Section 2.2.5, point 1.

EU-ZIRA3A Office Programme

20th Floor, 1081, Corniche El Nile, Garden City, Cairo

Applications sent by any other means (e.g., by fax or by e-mail) or delivered to other addresses will be rejected.

Applications must be submitted in one original and no. 1 copy in A4 size, each bound. The full application form, budget, and logical framework and PADOR registration form must also be supplied in electronic format (CD-ROM) in a separate and single file (i.e., the full application must not be split into several different files). The electronic file must contain **exactly the same** application as the paper version. Hand-written applications will not be accepted.

The declaration by the lead applicant (Section 8 of Part B of the grant application form) must be stapled separately and enclosed in the envelope.

Where lead applicants send several different applications (if allowed to do so by the guidelines of the call), each one must be sent separately.

The envelope must bear the **reference number and the title of the call for proposals**, together with the number and title of the lot, the full name and address of the lead applicant, and the words 'Not to be opened before the opening session' and *ولا يجوز فتحه قبل تاريخ جلسة فتح المظاريف*

Applicants are advised to verify that their application is complete using the checklist (Section 7 of Part B of the grant application form). Incomplete applications may be rejected.

2.2.7. Deadline for submission of full applications

The applicants' attention is drawn to the fact that there are two different systems for sending full applications: one is by post or private courier service, the other is by hand delivery.

In the first case, the full application must be sent before the date for submission, as evidenced by the postmark or deposit slip, but in the second case it is the acknowledgment of receipt given at the time of the delivery of the full application that will serve as proof.

The deadline for the submission of full applications will be indicated in the letter sent to the lead applicants whose application has been pre-selected.

The contracting authority may, for reasons of administrative efficiency, reject any application submitted on time to the postal service but received, for any reason beyond the contracting authority's control, after the effective date of approval of the full application evaluation, if accepting applications that were submitted on time but arrived late would considerably delay the award procedure or jeopardise decisions already taken and notified (see indicative calendar under Section 2.5.2).

Any application submitted after the deadline will be rejected.

2.2.8. Further information about full applications

Questions may be sent by e-mail no later than 21 days before the deadline for the submission of full applications to the addresses listed below, clearly indicating the reference of the call for proposals:

E-mail address: euzira3a@aics.gov.it

The contracting authority has no obligation to provide clarifications to questions received after this date.

Replies will be given no later than 11 days before the deadline for the submission of full applications.

To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the contracting authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of lead applicants, co-applicants, affiliated entity(ies), or an action.

No individual replies will be given to questions. All questions and answers as well as other important notices to applicants during the course of the evaluation procedure, will be published on the website where the call was published: AICS Cairo website <https://ilcairo.aics.gov.it/home/opportunities/calls/> ; website of DG International Partnerships: https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/funding/looking-for-funding_en or Funding & Tender opportunities (F&T Portal)

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>.

It is therefore advisable to consult the abovementioned website regularly in order to be informed of the questions and answers published.

Please note that the contracting authority may decide to cancel the call for proposals procedure at any stage according to the conditions set out in Section 6.5.9 of the PRAG.

2.3. EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications will be examined and evaluated by the contracting authority with the possible assistance of external assessors. All applications will be assessed according to the following steps and criteria.

If the examination of the application reveals that the proposed action does not meet the eligibility criteria stated in Section 2.1, the application will be rejected on this sole basis.

(1) STEP 1: OPENING & ADMINISTRATIVE CHECKS AND CONCEPT NOTE EVALUATION

During the opening and administrative check the following will be assessed:

- If the deadline has been met. Otherwise, the application will be automatically rejected.
- If the concept note satisfies all the criteria specified in the checklist in Section 2 of Part A of the grant application form. This also includes an assessment of the eligibility of the action. If any of the requested information is missing or is incorrect, the application may be rejected on that **sole** basis and the application will not be evaluated further.

The concept notes that pass this check will be evaluated on the relevance and design of the proposed action.

The concept notes will receive an overall score out of 50 using the breakdown in the evaluation grid below. The evaluation will also check on compliance with the instructions on how to complete the concept note, which can be found in Part A of the grant application form.

The evaluation criteria are divided into headings and subheadings. Each subheading will be given a score between 1 and 5 as follows: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.

Scores*

1. Relevance of the action	Sub-score	20
1.1 How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the call for proposals and to the specific themes/sectors/areas or any other specific requirement stated in the guidelines for applicants? Are the expected results of the action aligned with the priorities defined in the guidelines for applicants (Section 1.2)?	5	
1.2 How relevant is the proposal to the particular needs and constraints of the target country(ies), region(s) and/or relevant sectors (including synergy with other development initiatives and avoidance of duplication)?	5	

1.3 How clearly defined and strategically chosen are those involved (final beneficiaries, target groups)? Have their needs (as rights holders and/or duty bearers) and constraints been clearly defined and does the proposal address them appropriately?	5	
1.4 Does the proposal contain particular added-value elements (e.g. innovation, best practices)?	5	
2. Design of the action	Sub-score	30
2.1 How coherent is the overall design of the action? Does the proposal indicate the expected results to be achieved by the action? Does the intervention logic explain the rationale to achieve the expected results?	5x2**	
2.2 Does the design reflect a robust analysis of the problems involved, and the capacities of the relevant stakeholders?	5	
2.3 Does the design take into account external factors (risks and assumptions)?	5	
2.4 Are the activities feasible and consistent in relation to the expected results (including timeframe)? Are results (output, outcome and impact) realistic?	5	
2.5 To which extent does the proposal integrate relevant cross-cutting elements such as environmental/climate change issues, promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities, needs of disabled people, rights of minorities and rights of indigenous peoples, youth, combating HIV/AIDS (if there is a strong prevalence in the target country/region)?	5	
TOTAL SCORE		50

A score of 5 (very good) will only be allocated if the proposal specifically addresses more than the required minimum number of priorities as indicated in Section 1.2 (objectives of the programme) of these guidelines.

**this score is multiplied by 2 because of its importance.

Once all concept notes have been assessed, a list will be drawn up with the proposed actions ranked according to their total score.

Firstly, only the concept notes with a score of at least 30 will be considered for pre-selection.

Secondly, the number of concept notes will be reduced, taking account of the ranking, to the number of concept notes whose total aggregate amount of requested contributions is equal to at least 600% of the available budget for this call for proposals. The amount of requested contributions of each concept note will be based on the indicative financial envelopes for each lot, where relevant.

After the evaluation of concept notes, the contracting authority will send letters to all lead applicants, indicating whether their application was submitted by the deadline, informing them of the reference number they have been allocated, whether the concept note was evaluated and the results of that evaluation. The pre-selected lead applicants will subsequently be invited to submit full applications.

(2) STEP 2: OPENING & ADMINISTRATIVE CHECKS AND EVALUATION OF THE FULL APPLICATION

Firstly, the following will be assessed:

- If the submission deadline has been met. Otherwise, the application will automatically be rejected.
- If the full application satisfies all the criteria specified in the checklist (Section 7 of Part B of the grant application form). This also includes an assessment of the eligibility of the action. If any of the requested information is missing or is incorrect, the application may be rejected on that **sole** basis and the application will not be evaluated further.

The full applications that pass this check: they will be further evaluated on their quality, including the proposed budget and capacity of the applicants and affiliated entity(ies). They will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria in the evaluation grid below. There are two types of evaluation criteria: selection and award criteria.

The selection criteria help to evaluate the applicant(s)'s and affiliated entity(ies)'s operational capacity and the lead applicant's financial capacity and are used to verify that they:

- have stable and sufficient sources of finance to maintain their activity throughout the proposed action and, where appropriate, to participate in its funding (this only applies to lead applicants).
- have the management capacity, professional competencies and qualifications required to successfully complete the proposed action. This applies to applicants and any affiliated entity(ies).

The award criteria help to evaluate the quality of the applications in relation to the objectives and priorities set forth in the guidelines, and to award grants to projects which maximise the overall effectiveness of the call for proposals. They help to select applications which the contracting authority can be confident will comply with its objectives and priorities. They cover the relevance of the action, its consistency with the objectives of the call for proposals, quality, expected impact, sustainability, and cost-effectiveness.

Scoring:

The evaluation grid is divided into Sections and subsections. Each subsection will be given a score between 1 and 5 as follows: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.

Evaluation grid

Section	Maximum Score
1. Financial and operational capacity	20
1.1 Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient in-house experience of project management?	5
1.2 Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient in-house technical expertise? (Especially knowledge of the issues to be addressed)	5
1.3 Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient in-house management capacity? (Including staff, equipment and ability to handle the budget for the action)?	5
1.4 Does the lead applicant have stable and sufficient sources of finance?	5
2. Relevance	20
<i>Score transferred from the Concept Note evaluation</i>	
3. Design of the action	15
3.1 How coherent is the design of the action? Does the proposal indicate the expected results to be achieved by the action? Does the intervention logic explain the rationale to achieve the expected results? Are the activities proposed appropriate, practical, and consistent with the envisaged outputs and outcome(s)?	5
3.2 Does the proposal/Logical Framework include credible baseline, targets and sources of verification? If not, is a baseline study foreseen (and is the study budgeted appropriately in the proposal)?	5
3.3 Does the design reflect a robust analysis of the problems involved, and the capacities of the relevant stakeholders?	5
4. Implementation approach	15
4.1 Is the action plan for implementing the action clear and feasible? Is the timeline realistic?	5
4.2 Does the proposal include an effective and efficient monitoring system? Is there an evaluation planned (previous, during or/and at the end of the implementation)?	5
4.3 Is the co-applicant(s)'s and affiliated entity(ies)'s level of involvement and participation in the action satisfactory?	5
5. Sustainability of the action	15
5.1 Is the action likely to have a tangible impact on its target groups?	5

5.2 Is the action likely to have multiplier effects, including scope for replication, extension, capitalisation on experience and knowledge sharing?	5
5.3 Are the expected results of the proposed action sustainable? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financially (<i>e.g., financing of follow-up activities, sources of revenue for covering all future operating and maintenance costs</i>) - Institutionally (<i>will structures allow the results of the action to be sustained at the end of the action? Will there be local 'ownership' of the results of the action?</i>) - At policy level (where applicable) (<i>what will be the structural impact of the action — e.g. improved legislation, codes of conduct, methods</i>) - Environmentally (if applicable) (<i>will the action have a negative/positive environmental impact?</i>) 	5
6. Budget and cost-effectiveness of the action	15
6.1 Are the activities appropriately reflected in the budget?	5
6.2 Is the ratio between the estimated costs and the results satisfactory?	10
Maximum total score	100

If the total score for Section 1 (financial and operational capacity) is less than 12 points, the application will be rejected. If the score for at least one of the subsections under Section 1 is 1, the application will also be rejected.

If the lead applicant applies without co-applicants or affiliated entities the score for point 4.3 shall be 5 unless the involvement of co-applicants or affiliated entities is mandatory according to these guidelines for applicants.

Provisional selection

After the evaluation, a table will be drawn up listing the applications ranked according to their score. The highest scoring applications will be provisionally selected until the available budget for this call for proposals is reached. In addition, a reserve list will be drawn up following the same criteria. This list will be used if more funds become available during the validity period of the reserve list.

(3) STEP 3: VERIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY OF THE APPLICANTS AND AFFILIATED ENTITY(IES)

The eligibility verification will be performed on the basis of the supporting documents requested by the contracting authority (see Sections 2.2.5). It will by default only be performed for the applications that have been provisionally selected according to their score and within the available budget for this call for proposals.

- The declaration by the lead applicant (Section 8 of Part B of the grant application form) will be cross-checked with the supporting documents provided by the lead applicant. Any missing supporting document or any incoherence between the declaration by the lead applicant and the supporting documents may lead to the rejection of the application on that sole basis.
- The eligibility of applicants and the affiliated entity(ies) will be verified according to the criteria set out in Section 2.1.1.

Any rejected application will be replaced by the next best placed application on the reserve list that falls within the available budget for this call for proposals.

2.4. SUBMISSION OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

The lead applicant should submit the documents listed in Section 2.2.5.

In addition, a lead applicant whose application has been provisionally selected or placed on the reserve list will be informed in writing by the contracting authority. It will be requested to supply the following documents¹²:

1. Declaration on honour: the lead applicant as well as all co-applicants and affiliated entities shall fill in and sign the declaration on honour certifying that they are not in one of the exclusion situations (see Section 2.6.10.1 of the PRAG) where the amount of the grant exceeds EUR 15,000.00. The declaration on honour shall be dated and signed, either by hand or by applying a qualified electronic signature (QES)¹³ by an authorised representative of the signatory.
2. Self-evaluation questionnaire on SEA-H: the lead applicant as well as all co-applicants and affiliated entities shall fill in the self-evaluation questionnaire assessing the organisation's internal policy and procedure against sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEA-H) (Annex L) where the amount of grant exceeds EUR 60,000.00 (see Section 2.5.6 of the PRAG)¹⁴.
3. For entities categorised as NGOs (non-governmental organisations): registration within the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MOSS) at least nine (9) months prior to the Call for Proposal.
4. For entities categorized as international (inter-governmental) organisation as defined by Article 43 of the Rules of application of the EU Financial Regulation: proof to be in the position to work in Egypt.

After verifying the supporting documents, the evaluation committee will make a final recommendation to the contracting authority, which will decide on the award of grants.

NB: In the eventuality that the contracting authority is not satisfied with the strength, solidity, and guarantee offered by the structural link between one of the applicants and its affiliated entity, it can require the submission of the missing documents allowing for its conversion into co-applicant. If all the missing documents for co-applicants are submitted, and provided all necessary eligibility criteria are fulfilled, the above-mentioned entity becomes a co-applicant for all purposes. The lead applicant has to submit the application form revised accordingly.

¹² No supporting documents will be requested for applications for a grant not exceeding EUR 60,000.00.

¹³ Please note that only the QES within the meaning of Regulation (EU) No 910/2014 (eIDAS Regulation) will be accepted. Regulation (EU) No 910/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2014 on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market and repealing Directive 1999/93/EC.

¹⁴ Applicants, co-applicants, and affiliated entities who are (i) natural persons (ii) pillar-assessed entities and (iii) governments and other public bodies do not have to submit the self-evaluation questionnaire.

2.5. NOTIFICATION OF THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY'S DECISION

2.5.1. Content of the decision

The lead applicants will be informed in writing of the contracting authority's decision concerning their application and, if rejected, the reasons for the negative decision. Please note that the lead applicant is the intermediary for all communications between applicants and the contracting authority during the procedure.

An applicant believing that it has been harmed by an error or irregularity during the award process may lodge a complaint. See Section 2.12 of the practical guide.

Applicants and, if they are legal entities, persons who have powers of representation, decision-making or control over them, are informed that, should they be in one of the situations of early detection or exclusion, their personal details (name, given name if natural person, address, legal form and name and given name of the persons with powers of representation, decision-making or control, if legal person) may be registered in the early detection and exclusion system, and communicated to the persons and entities concerned in relation to the award or the execution of a grant contract. For more information, you may consult the privacy statement available on http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect_en.cfm

2.5.2. Indicative timetable

	DATE	TIME
1. Information meeting (if any)	15 th February 2024	From 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM
2. Deadline for requesting any clarifications from the contracting authority	26 th February 2024	03:00 PM
3. Last date on which clarifications are issued by the contracting authority	7 th March 2024	-
4. Deadline for submission of concept notes	18th March 2024	03:00 PM
5. Information to lead applicants on opening, administrative checks and concept note evaluation (Step 1)	25 th March 2024	-
6a. Invitations to submit full applications	4 th April 2024	-
6b. Deadline for submission of full applications	22 nd April 2024	-
7. Information to lead applicants on the evaluation of the full applications (Step 2)	9 th June 2024	-
8. Notification of award (after the eligibility check) (Step 3)	20 th June 2024	-
9. Contract signature	10 th July 2024	-

All times are in Cairo local time zone (Egypt, GMT+2).

This indicative timetable refers to provisional dates (except for dates 2, 3, and 4) and may be updated by the contracting authority during the procedure. In such cases, the updated timetable will be published on the web site where the call was published: AICS Cairo website <https://ilcairo.aics.gov.it/home/opportunities/calls/>; DG International Partnerships: https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/funding/looking-for-funding_en or Funding & Tender opportunities (F&T Portal)

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>.

2.6. CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION AFTER THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY'S DECISION TO AWARD A GRANT

Following the decision to award a grant, the beneficiary(ies) will be offered a contract based on the standard grant contract (see Annex G of these guidelines). By signing the application form (Annex A of these guidelines), the applicants agree, if awarded a grant, to accept the contractual conditions of the standard grant contract. Where the coordinator is an organisation, whose pillars have been positively assessed, it will sign a contribution agreement based on the contribution agreement template. In this case, references to provisions of the standard grant contract and its annexes shall not apply. References in these guidelines to the grant contract shall be understood as references to the relevant provisions of the contribution agreement.

A bank guarantee equal to the first pre-financing might be requested by the Contracting Authority. Failure to provide the bank guarantee represents a reason for the cancellation of the award decision. In no event will the Contracting Authority be liable for any damages whatsoever including, without limitation, damages for loss of profits, in any way connected with the cancellation of the grant procedure, even if the Contracting Authority has been informed of the possibility of damage. Publication of the guidelines does not commit the Contracting Authority to implement the grant contract.

Please note that the Programme "EU-ZIRA3A – EU Integrated Rural Development Programme for Egypt" (ENI/2021/427-389) obtained the tax exemption for a list of Commodities and Services, as per the official document attached (see Annex M).

Implementation contracts

Where implementation of the action requires the beneficiary(ies) and its affiliated entity(ies) (if any) to award procurement contracts, those contracts must be awarded in accordance with Annex IV to the standard grant contract.

In this context, a distinction should be made between awarding implementation contracts and subcontracting parts of the action described in the proposal, i.e., the description of the action annexed to the grant contract, such subcontracting being subject to additional restrictions (see the general terms and conditions in the model grant contract).

Awarding implementation contracts: implementation contracts relate to the acquisition by beneficiaries of routine services and/or necessary goods and equipment as part of their project management; they do not cover any outsourcing of tasks forming part of the action that are described in the proposal, i.e., in the description of the action annexed to the grant contract.

Subcontracting: subcontracting is the implementation, by a third party with which one or more beneficiaries have concluded a procurement contract, of specific tasks forming part of the action as described in annex to the grant contract (see also the general terms and conditions in the model grant contract).

All applicants, (if any) affiliated entities, (if any) associates/contractors managing the EU funds must open a dedicated bank account for the traceability of funds. Cash transactions shall be limited to EUR 500.00 per each transaction.

3. LIST OF ANNEXES

DOCUMENTS TO BE COMPLETED

- Annex A: Grant application form (Word format)
- Annex B: Budget (Excel format)
- Annex C: Logical framework (Word format)
- Annex D: Legal entity form
- Annex E: Financial identification form
- Annex F: PADOR registration form

DOCUMENTS FOR INFORMATION¹⁵

- Annex G: Standard grant contract
 - Annex G.II: general conditions
 - Annex G.IV: contract award rules
 - Annex G.V: standard request for payment
 - Annex G.VI.1: model interim narrative report
 - Annex G.VI.2: model final narrative report
 - Annex G.VI.3: model financial report
 - Annex G.VII: model report of factual findings and terms of reference for an expenditure verification of an EU financed grant contract for external action
 - Annex G.VIII: model financial guarantee.
 - Annex G.IX: standard template for transfer of ownership of assets
 - APPENDIX G.I – derogations international organisations
- Annex H: Declaration on Honour
- Annex I: Daily allowance rates (per diem), available at the following address: https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/funding/guidelines/managing-project/diem-rates_en
- Annex J: Information on the tax regime applicable to grant contracts signed under the call.
- Annex K: Guidelines for assessing simplified cost options.
- Annex L: Self-Evaluation questionnaire on SEA-H
- Annex M: EU-ZIRA3A Tax exemption approval.

Useful links:

Project Cycle Management Guidelines

https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/funding/managing-project_en

The implementation of grant contracts

A Users' Guide

<https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=48169235>

Financial Toolkit

https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/financial-management-toolkit_en

Please note: the toolkit is not part of the grant contract and has no legal value. It merely provides general guidance and may in some details differ from the signed grant contract. In order to ensure compliance with their contractual obligations, beneficiaries should not exclusively rely on the toolkit but always consult their individual contract documents.

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¹⁵ These documents should also be published by the contracting authority.