Good practices and templates for organizing open calls under the H2020 Financial Support to Third Parties scheme

1. INTRODUCTION

Your call should be carried out in the light of the same basic principles which govern Commission calls:

i. **Excellence.** The proposal(s) selected for funding must demonstrate a high quality in the context of the topics and criteria set out in the call;

ii. **Transparency**. Funding decisions must be based on clearly described rules and procedures, and all applicants should receive adequate feedback on the outcome of the evaluation of their proposals;

iii. **Fairness and impartiality.** All proposals submitted to a call are treated equally. They are evaluated impartially on their merits, irrespective of their origin or the identity of the applicants[1];

iv. **Confidentiality.** All proposals and related data, knowledge and documents are treated in confidence;

v. **Efficiency and speed.** Evaluation of proposals and award of the financial support should be as rapid as possible, commensurate with maintaining the quality of the evaluation, and respecting the legal framework.

2. PREPARATION ACTIVITIES

The Call Announcement

You should prepare a brief announcement about the call (you may use the model included in Annex 1 of this document) which will be published on the Horizon 2020 Participants Portal, and on the project website. It contains a link to the section on the project website where the full call details are published. In order to ensure timely publication on the Participant Portal, please provide the call announcement at least 30 days prior to its foreseen date of publication to your Project Officer.

The Full Call Details

You should prepare a dedicated section of your project's website, which will give proposers the Full Call Details. This must be in line with the specific requirements of the work programme and contain:

- A clear and exhaustive list of the types of activities that qualify for receiving financial support.
- 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.). Please note that the calls must have a clear European dimension which can be achieved either through cross border experiments or through expanding local experiments to European scale.

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[1] In the frame of any restrictions provided for in the call

- The criteria determining the award of the financial support.
- The criteria for determining the exact amount of financial support and the form that the financial support may take (e.g. a lump sum – either pre-defined or based on estimations of the grant recipient - or the reimbursement of actual costs incurred by the recipients when implementing the supported activities).
- The specific arrangements that the beneficiaries may impose on the third parties (e.g. specific reporting and feedback obligations from the third party towards the beneficiary in respect to the implementation of the supported activities; specific arrangements for providing the financial support; specific rights for the beneficiaries to access and use the results of the supported activities).
- The information needed to submit a proposal
  - The template to be used for the proposals
  - The coordinates (email address and telephone number) of a help facility which you must maintain for proposers during the call
  - The email address to which proposals should be submitted and the call identifier which will be used on these emails
  - The deadline for proposal submission, clearly specifying the local time involved (normally this is local time at the website where the proposals are received).

3.   PUBLICATION OF THE CALL

Following the requirement of the General Annex K of the Work Programme, you will publish the Full Call Details, at least, on the project's own website.

Your Project Officer will arrange to publish the Call Announcement and (a reference to) the Full Call Details on the dedicated web page of the Horizon 2020 Participants Portal.

The call must remain open for the submission of proposals for a period of at least three months. If call deadlines are changed, this must immediately be communicated to the Project Officer for updating the Call Announcement on the Horizon 2020 Participant's Portal. The Full Call Details must be updated on the project's own website and all registered applicants must be informed of the change.

> **Please make sure that all proposers receive fair and equal treatment. Information or facilities which you supply to any proposer must be equally available to all.**

4.   PROPOSAL RECEPTION

Proposals should be submitted through an electronic exchange system which allows the identification of the time of submission. On receipt of each proposal you should send an Acknowledgment of receipt to the proposer (see example in Annex 2).

You may not accept late submissions; late submitters should receive by return email a "call closed" message from you.

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

5. PROPOSAL EVALUATION AND SELECTION

Evaluation criteria and procedure

You will evaluate proposals received in the light of the criteria laid down in the Full Call Details. You may use the attached form (see Annex 3).

You remain responsible for the evaluation towards the proposers, even though you may count on the assistance of experts[1].

If you engage experts for evaluating the proposals, please ensure that they are independent from the organisations involved in the consortium and from any proposer.

The selected experts should sign a declaration of confidentiality concerning the contents of the proposals they read and they should also confirm the absence of any conflict of interest (see an example of such declaration in Annex 4).

The outcome of the evaluation will be a ranked list of all proposals, based on the scores obtained by each proposal.

Proposal selection

Whilst normally the highest ranked proposals will be selected for funding, there might be objective reasons for objecting to a specific third party, for example commercial competition. In this case the choice may pass to the next-ranked proposal.

You may conclude that even the highest scoring proposal is of inadequate quality, in which case you will make no selection. This conclusion is obligatory if all the proposals fall below the threshold scores applied at the evaluation.

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 an open call. This decision would have to be justified and be the subject of a grant agreement amendment.

6. REPORTING, DOCUMENTATION AND FEEDBACK

Reporting

Shortly after the evaluation you should publish a **public summary report** of the evaluation results on your project website within 30 days of the end of evaluation taking into account your feedback process to the proposers (i.e. the proposers should have received your individual feedback before the public summary report is published). This report should comprise an account of the call, its evaluation and its results, including dates of call, how it was published, dates of evaluation, number of proposals received, number of proposals funded, as well as a list of all selected proposers and

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[1] The selection of these experts should follow the conditions foreseen in Article 10 of the Model Grant Agreement.

their funding amounts (you may use the model included in Annex 5).

Documentation

Additionally to the summary report you have to keep your internal records on the evaluation as audit trail in case of e.g. contestations by proposers, audits, or checks by the commission. These records comprise as a minimum:

- A listing of proposals received, identifying the proposing organisations involved (name and address).
- All received proposals
- All communications with applicants before call closure and during evaluation
- The names and affiliations of the experts involved in the evaluation;
- For each proposal a copy of the filled forms used in the evaluation;
- A record of all incidents which occurred during the evaluation (e.g. how conflict of interest were handled if they were detected during the evaluation process) and any deviation from standard procedure (e.g if a proposer selected was not the highest scoring one, you must document the objective reasons why the highest scoring one was passed over)

Feedback to proposers

After the evaluation of the proposals, you will get into contact with the successful proposer(s).

You should communicate to the other proposers that their proposal was not successful in the call, and should enclose to each a summary of the evaluation result of their proposal addressing the respective award criteria.