



EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Brussels, 21.6.2012
C(2012) 4158 final

COMMISSION DECISION

of 21.6.2012

concerning the anticipated adoption of the Annual Work Programme in the field of communication for 2013 regarding grants for financing the host structures of the Europe Direct Information Centres across the European Union for the period 2013-2017

COMMISSION DECISION

of 21.6.2012

concerning the anticipated adoption of the Annual Work Programme in the field of communication for 2013 regarding grants for financing the host structures of the Europe Direct Information Centres across the European Union for the period 2013-2017

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (the "Financial Regulation")¹, and in particular Articles 49(6)(d), 75 and 110 thereof,

Having regard to Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002 laying down details rules for the implementation of the Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities², and in particular Articles 90 and 166 thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) Under Article 49(6)(d) of the Financial Regulation, appropriations for one-off actions, or even actions for an indefinite duration, carried out by the Commission by virtue of tasks resulting from its prerogatives at institutional level pursuant to the EC Treaty and the Euratom Treaty other than its right of legislative initiative referred to in point (b) and under specific powers directly conferred on it by these Treaties, a list of which is given in the implementing rules, may be implemented without a basic act.
- (2) Communication is a task of the Commission resulting from its prerogatives at institutional level.
- (3) Under Article 75 of the Financial Regulation, commitments relating to operational expenditure must be preceded by a financing decision.
- (4) Under Article 110 of the Financial Regulation, grants are subject to an annual programme to be published at the start of the year.
- (5) Under Article 90 of the implementing rules, the annual work programme for contracts and grants can serve as a financing decision provided that it constitutes a sufficiently detailed framework.
- (6) Under Article 166 of the implementing rules, the annual work programme for grants is adopted by the Commission. The work programme specifies the basic act, the objectives, the schedule of calls for proposals with the indicative amount and the results expected.
- (7) The current Europe Direct Information Centres network (2009-2012) reaches the end of its mandate on 31 December 2012. In order to align the life of the network with the

¹ OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p. 1. Regulation as amended by Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1995/2006 of 13 December 2006 (OJ L 390, 30.12.2006, p. 1)

² OJ L 357, 31.12.2002, p. 1. Regulation as last amended by Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 478/2007 of 23 April 2007 (OJ L 111, 28.4.2007, p. 1).

institutional cycle and to achieve a better ratio between the resources invested in setting up and training of the network and the network output, framework agreements will be awarded for a period of five years.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

The work programme set out in the Annex to this Decision regarding grants for financing the host structures of the Europe Direct information centres across the European Union is hereby adopted by anticipation to the Annual Work Programme serving as the financing decision in the field of communication for 2013.

The implementation of this Decision is subject to the availability of the appropriations provided in the draft budget for 2013 after the adoption of the budget for 2013 by the budgetary authority or provided for in the provisional twelfths.

Article 2

As the authorising officer, the Director-General of Directorate General Communication responsible shall be responsible for the publication and implementation of this financing decision.

Changes to the allocations not exceeding 20% of the maximum contribution authorised by this Decision are not considered to be substantial provided that they do not significantly affect the nature and objective of this decision. This may include the increase of the maximum contribution authorised by this Decision up to 20%.

The authorising officer responsible may adopt such changes in accordance with the principles of sound financial management and of proportionality.

Done at Brussels, 21.6.2012

For the Commission
Viviane REDING
Vice-President

ANNEX

Work programme for 2013 as regards grants intended for financing the host structures of the Europe Direct information centres across the European Union

1. BUDGET LINE

16.03.01 – Information Outlets

2. LEGAL BASIS

Tasks resulting from the Commission's prerogatives at institutional level, as provided for in Article 49(6) of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p. 1), as amended by Regulation (EC) No 1995/2006 (OJ L 390, 30.12.2006, p. 1).

3. DESCRIPTION OF MEASURES FINANCED FROM THE BUDGET LINE

Subject matter and scope

The Europe Direct Information Centres (EDICs) network is one of the main tools of the European Union to inform European citizens about the EU, and in particular about the rights of EU citizens and the EU's priorities (notably the Europe 2020 Growth Strategy) and to promote participatory citizenship at local and regional level.

Tasks of the information centres set up by the host structures

The centres are an outreach point for all the EU institutions and cooperate with other active information partners. They complement and support the work of the European Commission Representations and European Parliament Information Offices (EPIO) at local and regional level. The Europe Direct Information Centres network is managed by the Commission.

The centres' mission is two-fold:

- to inform European citizens at local and regional level. They are a key partner of the "one-stop-shop" concept as a first entry point to the European Union for citizens, providing information about the EU, referring them to Your Europe or to specialised information sources and signposting to other services and networks. They give information, advice, assistance and answers to questions about the EU, and in particular about the rights of EU citizens, the EU's priorities (notably the Europe 2020 Growth Strategy), legislation, policies, programmes and funding opportunities.
- to promote participatory citizenship through various communication tools (website, social media, publications, etc.) and by interacting with local and regional stakeholders, multipliers and media. They stimulate debate through the organisation of conferences and events and channel citizens' feedback to the EU.

Geographical coverage

The aim of the call for proposals is to ensure that the EDICs are in close proximity to all EU citizens. Therefore the selection of the host structures should ensure that not only are the Centres equally spread across the EU at national level, but also provide adequate representativeness across the EU as a whole.

On basis of Member State specific shortlists of eligible proposals, the Commission will proceed with a screening aimed at ensuring the optimal level of geographical coverage and

continuity with the current term ending in December 2012. The number of grants awarded per Member State will be subject to budget availability and the number of submitted proposals eligible for funding.

Conditions for financial support to the host structures

The action grant for the host structure per centre, in form of lump sums, shall range from a minimum of EUR 15 000 per year to a maximum of EUR 25 000 per year. These amounts will be respectively EUR 12 000 and EUR 20 000 per year, for countries with adapted lump sums³.

The lump sum system is based on a modular approach as follows:

- applicants may select the modules accordingly to their action plan;
- module 1 (option a or b) of group I (“Basic information services”) is mandatory;
- selecting at least one module of group II (“Communication products”) and at least one module of group III (“Events”) is mandatory;
- modules 5a, 5c, 6, in group II and 7a, 7b and 7c in group III may be selected several times by the applicants up to the maximum limit of the grant.

The description of the modules and the minimum requirements to obtain the lump sums are summarised in the table below:

Groups	Modules	Actions	Standard lump sum (in EUR)	Adapted lump sum (Coefficient 80%) (in EUR)
I. Basic information services	M1a	Centre open minimum 20 hours/ week; Centre may be closed up to a maximum of 6 weeks per year. Outside the opening hours: message on telephone answering machine and out of office reply in e-mail both indicating opening hours and alternative services such as the Europe Direct Contact Centre (EDCC) and Your Europe for online information. Adequate signposting, premises and facilities. Providing information services. Signposting of questions outside of centre's remit to appropriate EC network or EDCC.	14 000	11 200

³ An adapted lump sum (80% of the standard lump sum) is applied in countries where the price level is less than 80% of the average of the European Union. Countries where the price level is less than 80% of the average of the European Union are: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Cyprus.

Groups	Modules	Actions	Standard lump sum (in EUR)	Adapted lump sum (Coefficient 80%) (in EUR)
		feedback upon request of the EC Representation. Production of an annual evaluation/ impact assessment of at least 50% of the activities.		
	M1b	Idem as M1a except that the minimum opening hours are reduced from 20 hours to 8 hours per week.	10 000	8 000
II. Communication products	M2 Website	Website publicizing the centre's activities and EU related topics, in particular EU citizens' rights and EU priorities adapted to local/regional audience. Links to other EU websites (Europa, EDCC, other EC networks, EC Representation, EP Information Offices , ...). Updated several times weekly.	2 000	1 600
	M3 Social Media	Management of social media (Facebook, twitter, blogs, ..). Updated several times weekly. Continuous interaction with users. Content focuses on centre's activities and/or on EU related topics, in particular EU citizens' rights and EU priorities adapted to local/regional audience.	1 000	800
	M4 E-Newsletter	Production of an electronic newsletter. Content focuses on centre's activities and on EU related topics, in particular EU citizens' rights and EU priorities adapted to local/regional audience (simple copies of existing EU articles/material will not be accepted). Published at least 6 times a year. Dispatched to at least 100 contacts.	500	400
	M5a Publications	Publication of minimum 10 pages. Minimum 500 copies. Content focuses on centre's activities and/or on EU related topics , in particular EU citizens' rights and EU priorities adapted to local/regional audience. Should be complementary to already existing material produced by the EU institutions. On-line version of the publication to be published on the centre's website.	1 000	800
	M5b Promotional material	Production of minimum 200 items (notebooks, bags, mouse pads, games, USB keys ...), as environmentally friendly as possible.	500	400
	M5c Audiovisual (AV) and other electronic	Creation and production of a video clip, e-book, interactive game or audio material on various support (CDs, DVDs, USB keys, ...). Content focuses on centre's activities and/or on EU related subjects, in particular EU	1 000	800

Groups	Modules	Actions	Standard lump sum (in EUR)	Adapted lump sum (Coefficient 80%) (in EUR)
	material	citizens' rights and EU priorities adapted to local/regional audience. Content should be complementary to existing AV and electronic material produced by the EU institutions (copies of existing AV or other electronic material will not be accepted). Uploaded on the centre's website and on an open video sharing website.		
	M6 Local media	Publications – preferably on a regular basis - in local/regional independent media (websites of local/regional authorities are not considered as "media"). Might be articles published in printed and/or on-line media, participation in TV/ radio programmes. Content focuses on the centre's activities and/or on EU related topics, in particular EU citizens' rights and EU priorities targeted to local/regional audience. No articles advertising/covering exclusively an event organised by a centre (these should be covered by modules 7a, 7b and 7c). At least 10 publications.	1 000	800
III. Events	M7a Participation in events	Active participation in events organised by a third party (exhibition, fair, seminar, ...). Participation of the centre should focus on EU related topics, in particular EU citizens' rights and/or EU priorities targeted to local/regional audience. Involving in total a minimum of 200 participants. Minimum 3 hours of activity (not simple presence) is requested for an event.	500	400
	M7b Organisation of events for specific audiences	Organisation of conferences, debates, presentations. Event should focus on EU related topics, in particular EU citizens' rights and/or EU priorities targeted to local/regional audience. Minimum 4 events which should target in total minimum 100 people. Minimum 1 hour of activity is requested for each event.	1 000	800
	M7c Organisation of events for broad audiences	Organisation of an event (open day, 9 th of May, ..). Event should focus on EU related topics, in particular EU citizens' rights and/or EU priorities targeted to local/regional audience. Minimum 200 participants at the event Minimum 3 hours of activity is requested for an event.	2 000	1 600

The grant shall be awarded, in accordance with the Financial Regulation, on the basis of the action plan submitted by the host structure for a specific year.

For the sake of the stability of the network and the continuity of its information and communication activities, the action grant award shall be covered by a multi-annual framework agreement of five years, to be implemented through specific annual agreements.

In the context of the framework agreements to be signed with host structures, other DGs and Services can launch specific calls for proposals among selected partners and conclude specific agreements using, where appropriate, the same modules and lump sums to finance communication activities. These calls will be managed by the respective DG, under its budget and in agreement with DG COMM.

4. IMPLEMENTATION

The direct centralised management method will be applied.

4.1. Call for proposals

Calls for proposals will be launched in parallel in all 27 Member States to select the host structures for the EDICs for the period 2013-2017.

- Envisaged publication date: June 2012
- Selection of beneficiaries: November 2012
- Awarding of grants: January/February 2013

4.2. Criteria

4.2.1. Potential beneficiaries

Public or private bodies with a public-service mission that have already developed solid skills in communicating with the public.

4.2.2. Eligibility criteria

The following eligibility criteria must be met:

- (a) the applicant organisation must be legally constituted and registered in one of the 27 EU Member States,
- (b) the applicant organisation must be a proven public sector body or private law body with a public service mission,
- (c) the proposal must comply with the aim of the call, must be based on the modules and lump sums included in the call, comply with mandatory modules and not exceed the maximum of the grant allowed.

4.2.3. Exclusion criteria

Applicants shall be excluded from participation to the call if:

- (a) they are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations,

- (b) they have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of *res judicata*,
- (c) they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can justify,
- (d) they have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the contracting authority or those of the country where the action is to be implemented,
- (e) they have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of *res judicata* for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity detrimental to the Union's financial interests,
- (f) following a procurement procedure or grant award procedure financed by the budget of the Union, they have been declared to be in serious breach of contract for failure to comply with their obligations.

Action grants may not be awarded to applicants who, during the call procedure:

- (a) are subject to a conflict of interest,
- (b) are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the contracting authority as a condition of participation to the grant procedure or fail to supply this information.

4.2.4. *Selection criteria*

- (a) Financial capacity

Applicants must prove they have sufficient and stable financial resources to enable them to host the centre(s) throughout the whole five year period.

- (b) Operational capacity

Applicants must demonstrate their operational ability to host the centre and to adapt its mission to the EU's policy developments and priorities. In particular, they must have:

- i. at least two years' proven experience in communicating with the public preferably on issues relevant to EU policies,
- ii. human resources whose competencies and qualifications include good communication skills (orally and written), project management, sound knowledge of European affairs and proficiency in at least one of the EU's working languages (English, French and German),
- iii. technological and physical infrastructure allowing for successful implementation of the action, with due regard to location and accessibility of premises (premises must be barrier-free. If not the applicant must explain how they will comply with this requirement).

4.2.5. *Award criteria*

The award criteria, which will be given a weighting in the call for proposals, shall be as follows:

- (a) Relevance of the prospective host structure's proposal,
- (b) Profile, potential outreach and impact of the centre in the region,

- (c) Quality of the basic information services, communication products and events,
- (d) Consistency and adequacy of resources allocated to the implementation of the foreseen activities

4.2.6. *Geographical balance*

Proposals will be ranked in order of merit, on the basis of the award criteria. In order to ensure a geographically equitable spread of centres, the scores of proposals with the same geographical coverage will be compared against each other and only the better or best ones will be deemed eligible for award. Assessment of the proposal's geographical coverage will be based on the location of the prospective centre providing the basic information services and the outreach of the communication and awareness-raising activities proposed by the applicant.

Preference will be given to centres located where there is no EC Representation or EP Information Office.

5. RESULTS EXPECTED

The grants are intended to support the work of the EDICs. The host structures to be selected shall set up and manage the centres with the aim of providing a local and regional service that:

- enables citizens of the EU to obtain information, advice, assistance and answers to questions about the EU, and in particular about the rights of EU citizens, the EU's priorities (notably the Europe 2020 Growth strategy), legislation, policies, programmes, and funding opportunities,
- contributes to stimulating debate and awareness amongst citizens on EU issues, achievements and goals while at the same time channelling feedback from citizens to the EU,
- enables the EU to have a valid partner at local and regional level for its initiatives, campaigns and actions throughout the Member State,
- allows the EU to improve the dissemination of specific information tailored to local and regional needs and characteristics.

6. WRITTEN AGREEMENT

The grants awarded shall be covered by a written agreement signed between the Commission and the host structures.

7. BUDGETARY IMPACT

The budget available for the implementation of this work programme forms part of the appropriations in line 16.03.01 – Information outlets.

7.1. Overall figures

The Commission foresees for 2013 a total of EUR 11 400 000 for the financing of the action plans of the selected host structures through action grants based on lump sums.

The commitment appropriations presented in annex (Budgetary impact statement) are subject to their adoption by the budgetary authority.

7.2. Allocations per Member State

The allocation of budget per Member State will be based on the distribution of Member State seats in the European Parliament, geographical area of each Member State, as well as ensuring continuity with the current term of the Europe Direct Information Centres network which comes to an end in December 2012. The allocation also takes in consideration the maximum amount of the grant (EUR 25 000 or EUR 20 000) depending on the attribution of standard or adapted lump sums.

The maximum indicative share of available budget per Member State is defined below.

In case the indicated maximum ceiling will not be reached by one or more Member States, the Commission reserves the right to re-allocate remaining funds in order to enable maximum and optimal use of available funding.

Country	Indicative allocation for 2013 (EUR)
Belgium	275 000
Bulgaria	280 000
Czech Republic.	260 000
Denmark	175 000
Germany	1 325 000
Estonia	120 000
Ireland	200 000
Greece	375 000
Spain	1 075 000
France	1 200 000
Italy	1 150 000
Cyprus	50 000
Latvia	160 000
Lithuania	180 000
Luxembourg	50 000
Hungary	320 000
Malta	40 000
Netherlands	325 000
Austria	250 000
Poland	660 000
Portugal	375 000
Romania	580 000
Slovenia	150 000
Slovakia	200 000
Finland	450 000
Sweden	500 000
United Kingdom	675 000
Total	11 400 000

8. OTHER INFORMATION

The Commission will provide the host structures selected via the call for proposals with the following services for the staff of the EDICs: training, documentation (fact-sheets, newsletters,...), an intranet and networking opportunities.