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PROGRAMME "PREVENTION OF AND FIGHT AGAINST CRIME"

Call for framework partners

1. INTRODUCTION

To protect the freedom and security of its citizens and society from criminal activities, the European Union must take the necessary measures to prevent, detect, investigate and prosecute all forms of crime efficiently and effectively, most particularly in cases with a trans-border element. To stimulate, promote and support related activities, the Commission has adopted a specific programme "Prevention of and Fight against Crime" within the general programme "Security and Safeguarding Liberties" for the period 2007-2013¹ with the following objectives:

- a. to stimulate, promote and develop horizontal methods and tools necessary for strategically preventing and fighting crime and guaranteeing security and public order such as the work carried out in the European Union Crime Prevention Network, public-private partnerships, best practices in crime prevention, comparable statistics, applied criminology and an enhanced approach towards young offenders
- b. to promote and develop coordination, cooperation and mutual understanding among law enforcement agencies, other national authorities and related Union bodies in respect of the priorities identified by the Council in particular as set out by the Europol's Organised Crime Threat Assessment
- c. to promote and develop best practices for the protection of and support to witnesses
- d. to promote and develop best practices for the protection of crime victims

The Commission services intend to implement certain priority areas of the programme "Prevention of and Fight against Crime" by means of framework partnerships with public bodies. Award of individual grants to framework partners is subject to the approval of the relevant annual work programmes by the Commission, having first obtained the opinion of the programme committee.

2. WHAT ARE THE FRAMEWORK PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS?

To achieve the above-mentioned objectives, the Commission intends to conclude framework partnerships with key actors in the area of prevention of and fight against crime, who are interested in working with the Commission on a regular basis in the designated areas, in order

¹ Council Decision 2007/125/JHA of 12.2.2007 establishing for the period 2007 to 2013, as part of General Programme on Security and Safeguarding Liberties, the Specific Programme 'Prevention of and Fight against Crime' – OJ L 58, 24.2.2007

to provide for a long term cooperation framework based on the provisions of Article 108 of the Financial Regulation and Article 163 of the Implementing Rules.²

Framework partnerships are foreseen in particular for those actions for which:

- **there is a need for flexibility and/or rapid action in urgent or crisis situations** due to the very nature of the action (for instance, often it is not possible to plan details of a criminal investigation in criminal matters in advance on a long term basis);
- **there is a need to work on a regular and stable basis with a network involving a certain number of beneficiaries:** a network of 'key' players to work alongside the Commission on a regular and stable basis may need to be set up in order to implement some of its policies effectively;
- **there is a need to award grants for recurring actions to a limited group of beneficiaries (or to those with a monopoly),** with the main objective of streamlining the administrative procedures for awarding grants to the beneficiaries concerned.

In the area of prevention and fight against crime, these scenarios arise particularly in regard to public bodies, such as law enforcement agencies and the responsible Ministries.

The total maximum amount for individual grants to be awarded within framework partnership agreements in 2012 is 18 770 000 €

3. ELIGIBLE ORGANISATIONS

The framework partnerships will be concluded with **public bodies or organisations** with legal personality established in the Member States. They should be interested and have the **operational capacity** to carry out at least three projects in the area of *Prevention of and fight against crime and terrorism including cross-border cooperation in law enforcement, training and other exchanges among law enforcement officers and prevention of general crime* the three years 2012-2014. Responsible Ministries (such as Ministries of Justice and/or the Interior) and law enforcement authorities are particularly invited to apply.

The future partners should have **responsibilities on a national/country level**.

Natural persons, international organisations, EU agencies or private-sector bodies are not eligible to become framework partners.

4. DURATION OF THE PARTNERSHIPS

The framework partnerships will expire on 31/12/2014.

² Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) N° 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities, OJ L 248, 16.09.2002, p.1. Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) N° 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002, laying down detailed rules for the implementation of the Financial Regulation, OJ L 357, 31.12.2002, p.1, modified by Commission Regulation 1248/2006 of 7 August 2006, OJ L 227 19.8.2006, p.3.

5. AREA OF ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN WITHIN FRAMEWORK PARTNERSHIPS

Prevention of and fight against crime and terrorism including cross-border cooperation in law enforcement, training and other exchanges among law enforcement officers and prevention of general crime

Cross-Border Law Enforcement Co-operation

Background

According to Articles 67 and 87 of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union, the EU has the objective with a high level of security within an area of freedom, security and justice by preventing and combating crime through closer cooperation between Member States competent authorities such as police, customs and other specialized law enforcement services. The Stockholm Programme's prime objective is to combat forms of (organised) crime that have typically a cross-border dimension including those types of crime having a significant impact on the daily life of citizens. Effective measures to reduce the level of crime should be taken by using a multidisciplinary approach, including administrative measures. The European Commission's Internal Security Strategy³ gives guidance and defines priority areas for working towards a safer Europe.

A) OPERATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT COOPERATION

Area of activities

It is envisaged to support law enforcement cooperation, with an emphasis on policy development and operational co-operation such as investigation, prosecution, tactical and operational criminal analysis, training and case management. Financial investigation should be considered as an important source of evidence including the confiscation of criminal assets.

The activities can be carried out to prevent and fight all fields of crime, organised or otherwise. The implementation of the Stockholm Programme, the Internal Security Strategy and the EU strategy on external dimension of Justice, Liberty and Security⁴ can be carried out under identified conditions.

Type of activities

The actions should aim at promoting and developing coordination, cooperation, mutual understanding as well as the dissemination of horizontal methods and tools. In particular, their objectives should contribute to implementation of EU Strategies and Action Plans established in the JHA area of interest as well as actions in line with priorities identified in threat assessments such as OCTA reports, and of COSPOL activities and developing intelligence-

³ Document COM(2010)673 final of 22 November 2010, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council; the EU Internal Security Strategy in Action: Five steps towards a more secure Europe.

⁴ Strategy for the External Dimension of the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice, adopted in December 2005 by the Council (Doc. 14366/3/05 JAI 417 RELEX 628) on the basis of the Commission Communication COM(2005)491 of 12.10.2005. Action oriented papers were also adopted in specific areas

led law enforcement. Furthermore, the acquisition of cooperative know-how and practice from a conceptual, operational and organisational point of view, as well as progress towards the implementation of routine cooperation measures, will be promoted. In order to strengthen the role of Eurojust and Europol, cooperation of national law enforcement authorities with these organisations will also be favoured.

Preferably, operational EU or EU-regional activities should be grouped around certain law enforcement themes or subjects, taking on board relevant multidisciplinary aspects.

Further activities such as the setting up and operation of Joint Investigation Teams⁵ for criminal investigations, in accordance with the legal framework of the relevant Council Decision, and projects in cross-border regional cooperation, including the development and cooperation between joint police and customs centres and of ad hoc cooperation at major (sport) events may be supported.

Framework partners

It is envisaged to conclude framework partnership agreements with law enforcement agencies at a national level.

B) CUSTOMS COOPERATION

Area of activities

Activities should aim at preventing, detecting, investigating and prosecuting infringements of EU and national customs provisions, with particular reference to criminal offences; notably through mutual assistance and cooperation involving cross-border actions such as joint customs operations, hot pursuit, cross-border surveillance, controlled deliveries, covert investigations and joint special investigation teams. The potential of enhanced information exchange and closer cooperation between customs authorities and police authorities should in this context be explored, in order to increase efficiency for all the parties involved and fight cross-border crime more effectively. Training of customs officers and police with a view to fostering a common approach to a coordinated border management can also be considered.

Type of activities

Concrete actions such as joint customs operations at EU level and other forms of actions with the aim of sharing good practice and strengthening the mutual cooperation. The Action plan implementing the Council Resolution of 23 October 2009 on a reinforced strategy for customs cooperation⁶ should constitute guidance for those activities.

Framework partners

It is envisaged to conclude framework partnership agreements at the highest level of customs administrations in the Member States.

⁵ Council framework decision on Joint Investigation Teams - OJ L 162/1 on 20.06.2002

⁶ OJ C 260 of 30.12.2009, p.1

C) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF AVAILABILITY

Background

The Stockholm Programme will continue to give important impetus to the principle of availability. While acknowledging the need for coherence and consolidation in developing information management and exchange, the implementation of the Information Management Strategy for EU Internal Security⁷ is of high importance. The implementation of the Prüm Decisions⁸ and the further development of the use of the Swedish Framework Decision⁹ should be give priority.

Areas of Activities

The implementation of the Prüm Decision will be considered a priority. Other activities should aim at improving and facilitating the infrastructures, processes and procedures to collect, exchange, use and assess information. They should focus on technical, legal, administrative and operational aspects of information exchange making optimum use of existing systems and infrastructures, especially available at EU level.

A fundamental distinction will be made between access to databases and indexation of such information in view of allowing a hit/no-hit access. In particular, the activities should focus on development of standards that provide high level of data security, on interconnecting of databases and on development of interoperability of networks.

Types of Activities

Projects should develop indexing and referencing systems at national, and/or European level, interoperable networks, software and hardware to store and retrieve information, as well as software to access and retrieve information in a multi-platform environment and secure networks (including e-mail and internet) for access and search of databases. Projects for interconnectivity solutions are encouraged to allow single searches on a variety of information collections. Training for administrators and users of the aforementioned hardware, software, networks and interconnectivity solutions will be also supported.

Framework partners

It is envisaged to conclude framework partnership agreements with police authorities, information centres and other relevant national organisations with a wide territorial scope.

⁷ Council document 16637/09/JAI 873.

⁸ Council Decision 2008/615/JHA of 23 June 2008 on the stepping up of cross-border cooperation, particularly in combating terrorism and cross-border crime and Council Decision 2008/616/JHA of 23 June 2008 on the implementation of Decision 2008/616/JHA.

⁹ Council Framework Decision 2006/960/JHA of 18 December 2006 on simplifying the exchange of information and intelligence between law enforcement authorities of the Member States of the European Union (the so-called 'Swedish Framework Decision').

Cooperation for the prevention, protection, pursuit and response to terrorism

Background

In line with the European Counter Terrorism Strategy that was adopted by the JHA Council of 1-2 December 2005, the four strands of prevention, protection, pursuit and response to terrorism, are reflected in the strategic commitment of the Member States to combat terrorism globally while fully respecting human rights, and to make Europe safer, allowing its citizens to live in freedom, security and justice.

Area of Activities

In the context of the four strands of the Counter Terrorism Strategy, framework partners will be invited to present activities related to:

- the phenomenon of radicalisation and terrorist recruitment, including through the internet, aiming at its prevention and the renunciation of violence and terrorism;
- Implementation of the EU CBRN Action Plan adopted in November 2009 and of EU Action Plan for the Enhancement of the Security of Explosives adopted in April 2008.

Types of activities

Activities may comprise training, seminars, conferences, studies, or evaluations. Relevant public and private sector stakeholders and multipliers may be involved.

Framework partners

It is envisaged to conclude framework partnership agreements with law enforcement authorities and relevant ministries and public forensic science laboratories.

Exchange of knowledge and best practice

Background

Law enforcement systems in the EU have diverse legal and cultural contexts. Equally, different standards exist in relation to law enforcement training and educational tools. Therefore, there is a need for actions aimed at exchanging knowledge about the different national approaches to the fight against crime, organised or otherwise, to crime prevention and to the maintenance of law and order, to public security, and in particular the cross-border dimensions of those problems. Such actions should help to strengthen European police co-operation by building confidence and creating a climate of mutual understanding and trust.

On the other hand, recent years have seen, both at EU level and internationally, the adoption of a number of legal instruments in the areas of crime prevention and fight against crime. It is essential that the relevant bodies in each Member State be fully acquainted with this *acquis* and make the best possible use of the opportunities for joint actions, pooling of resources and exchange of information.

Finally, it is in the interest of the security of all European citizens that the police forces in each Member State be trained to the highest possible standards. Life-long learning and efforts

to ensure and maintain a level of excellence within the services responsible for law enforcement in Europe should be encouraged.

Area of activities

Projects should include activities aimed at improving law enforcement officers' knowledge of other Member States' systems, as well as of existing international and EU instruments related to co-operation in the fight against crime, including the exchange of information and operational forms of co-operation.

The projects should in particular be targeted at trainers of national law enforcement training institutes, at senior and middle-ranking law enforcement officers in the Member States, and be based, where appropriate, on common standards and reference indicators.

Types of activities

Activities should include courses, seminars, and workshops on pooling and dissemination of expertise and sharing of best practice.

The activities may also comprise, for instance, projects on simulation exercises and analogous training events aimed at replicating real-life situations, training for trainers, and/or exchange projects. Where relevant, representatives of the judiciary may and should be included.

The development of common curricula could also help to promote the achievement of the highest training standards across senior and middle-ranking police forces.

Framework partners

It is envisaged to conclude framework partnership agreements with national training bodies with proven track record in law enforcement training and co-operation.

Programmes to combat organised crime through the use financial investigations and confiscation of criminal assets

Background

Promotion of financial investigation as a law enforcement technique and confiscation of criminal assets throughout the EU, regarding organised criminal activity, is vital to ensure that law enforcement services have the appropriate knowledge, know-how, analytical and other skills, notably to trace, analyse and ensure effective cooperation as regards criminal money and other asset trails moving across borders within the EU and beyond. This is closely linked to the capacity to confiscate criminal proceeds.

Area of activities

Projects should develop and promote EU wide training, standards and best practices for financial investigation and confiscation of criminal assets.

Types of activities

Any kind of training and capacity building measures may be proposed, such as conferences, seminars, exchange projects, including studies for the development of common standards.

Framework partners

It is envisaged to conclude framework partnership agreements with public bodies with expertise in the area of financial investigation and confiscation of criminal assets on a national/country level.

Cooperation in the area of fight against organised crime

Background

The Stockholm Programme and subsequently Internal Security Strategy set out the priorities in the area of combating transnational organised crime and identifying added value of the response at the European level. In line with these documents but also the art 83, par 1 of TFEU the following serious crimes with cross border dimension are of key relevance: trafficking in human beings, sexual exploitation of children, cybercrime, financial and economic crime including money laundering, fraud and corruption.

Area of Activities

Activities may comprise all measures related to prevention, reduction and fight against various forms of organised crime in particular those mentioned above including support to the victims.

Types of activities

The activities may involve exchange of information and best practice, development of innovative tools supporting investigations, studies training, seminars, conferences, and other dissemination activities. Support for cross-border operational cooperation including joint investigations teams is envisaged.

Framework Partners

It is envisaged to conclude framework partnership agreements with national authorities competent for fight against organised crime.

Prevention of General Crime (notably Juvenile, Drug, firearms related and Urban Crime)

Background

The Stockholm Programme adopted by the European Council in December 2009 re-affirmed the importance of crime prevention policies in the Union, calling Member States and the Commission to actively promote and support crime prevention measures focusing on prevention of mass criminality and cross- border crime affecting the daily life of our citizens

in accordance with Article 84 TFEU. The European Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN) set up by the Council decision of 28 May 2001.¹⁰ and has entered new phase of its activity following the Council Decision of 30 November 2009 is aimed at sharing solutions on how to prevent and reduce crime.

Area of Activities

Activities may comprise all measures intended to reduce or otherwise contribute to reducing crime and citizens' feeling of insecurity, both in quantitative and qualitative terms, either through directly deterring criminal activities or through policies and interventions designed to reduce the potential for and the causes of crime. Projects in this area should relate to the following categories of crime: juvenile crime, domestic violence, urban drug and firearms - related crime.

Types of activities

The activities may involve exchange of information and best practice, studies training, seminars, conferences, and other dissemination activities such as the creation and maintenance of websites relevant for crime prevention. Preferably, these activities should be carried out in association with the EUCPN.

Framework Partners

It is envisaged to conclude framework partnership agreements with national authorities competent for crime prevention¹¹.

6. CONDITIONS AND MODALITIES

6.1. Funding Conditions

- a) The framework partnership agreements will expire on 31/12/2014.
- b) For actions to be undertaken by framework partners, co-funding of up to 90% is foreseen. However, since these actions are of great importance for the European Union and its Member States, the maximum rate of co-financing for individual projects may be extended up to 95% of the total eligible costs. Any framework partner proposing co-funding of more than 90% will have to substantiate and justify why co-funding of greater than 90% should be granted for any individual action.

6.2. Eligibility criteria

To be eligible, applications for framework partnerships must meet the following criteria:

- a) Applicants must be **public** bodies or organisations with **legal personality** established in the Member States. Applications from natural persons, international organisations, EU agencies or private-sector bodies are not eligible. The future partners should have **responsibilities on a national/country level**.

¹⁰ OJ L 153/1 of 8.6.2001

¹¹ Article 2.3 of Council Decision of 28 May 2001 setting up a European crime prevention network (OJ. L 153 of 8.6.2001)

- b) Applications must be submitted on the **application form** for framework partners made available by the Commission in PRIAMOS system; no other form will be accepted; all sections of the form must be completed and it must be accompanied by all documents listed in Section 7.
- c) Applicants must respect the **deadline** for applications, which is 1 December 2011.

With regard to the first criterion, the Commission reserves the right to conclude a single framework partnership agreement if more than one application is received from subordinate parts of the same legal entity.

6.3. Exclusion criteria

Applicants shall be excluded from participating in this call for proposals if they are in one or more of the situations listed in Articles 93 and 94 of the Financial Regulation.¹²

6.4. Selection criteria

The applicants must have the **operational capacity** to carry out at least three projects in the area of Prevention of and fight against crime and terrorism including cross-border cooperation in law enforcement, training and other exchanges among law enforcement officers and prevention of general crime during the three years 2012-2014. Responsible Ministries (such as Ministries of Justice and/or the Interior) and law enforcement authorities are particularly invited to apply.

The applicants must prove that they have the operational capacity to conduct proposed activities on the basis of relevant professional training and/or experience for their staff. Applicants must also demonstrate that they have the operational means and resources to complete the project and show, if applicable, references relating to participation in other actions financed by the European Commission. The assessment will be based on the curricula vitae of their staff, the annual activity reports of the Applicant and other documents submitted by the latter. In the case of government or law enforcement organisations, evidence that the project falls within their statutory area of responsibility may be submitted to establish their operational and technical competence.

Proposals for framework partnerships shall be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

- (a) **operational responsibilities** of the applicant organisation, with a particular view to its statutory responsibilities and their conformity with the objectives of the programme and the area of activity described in Section 5 of this call.
- (b) **professional capacity of the applicant organisation** required for a long-term cooperation with the Commission and for completing a considerable number of relevant actions;
- (c) **"action plan"** included with the application form: conformity and impact of the planned future activities with the objectives of this specific programme and the political programmes adopted by the EU, such as the Stockholm Programme and Internal Security Strategy.

¹² Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) N° 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities, OJ L 248, 16.09.2002, p.1.

The following aspects will also be assessed:

- (d) **experience with transnational projects in the last 5 years**, particularly in the context of the EU;
- (e) **geographical scope of competencies** and of the activities, which the applicant intends to carry out. Wide geographical responsibility, on national level or beyond, will be an asset. Applicants operating only at the regional or local level shall not be given the status of a framework partner.

Framework partners will be selected on the basis of the information in the application form and annexed documents provided by the applicant.

In the interest of efficiency and effectiveness, it is envisaged to conclude partnership agreements with about 60-80 partners.

Signature of the framework agreement by the parties shall not give rise to any obligation on the Commission to award a grant. It shall be without prejudice to the partner's participation in other calls for proposals with a view to the award of grants outside the action plan set out in the Annex to the framework partnership agreement which may be concluded following this call for framework partners. Individual grant agreements will be concluded with framework partners for individual grants in the areas of interest. Such individual grants will be awarded under the procedures described in Section 6.5.

6.5. Award procedure for the individual grants

This section relates to the procedures for the award of individual grants under the framework partnerships and has been included for information.

(a) Procedure

Individual grants will be awarded to framework partners according to one *or* more of the following procedures:

- **a call for proposals, restricted** to framework partners for whom the type of the planned action is contained in the action plan annexed to the framework partnership agreement. This restricted call for proposals may take the form of a letter to be sent to all framework partners and/or may be published on the DG Justice, Freedom and Security webpage;
- **the direct submission of proposals to the Commission by partners**, notably in cases where they work in a network with pre-selected partners, provided that one of the exceptions laid down in Article 168 (1) of the IR¹³ applies (e.g. monopoly for the type of action envisaged, identification in the basic act as recipient of a grant);

¹³ Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) N° 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002, laying down detailed rules for the implementation of the Financial Regulation, OJ L 357, 31.12.2002, p.1, modified by Commission Regulation 1248/2006 of 7 August 2006, OJ L 227 19.8.2006, p.3.

- **a call for proposals, open to all applicants** who meet the required criteria: in this case, grants are awarded either to partners under individual agreements or to beneficiaries by means of "classic" grant agreements, following an assessment of the proposals.

These procedures will be further defined in the framework partnership agreements and/or annual work programmes.

(b) Types of projects

Framework partnerships may be concluded with bodies interested in undertaking **transnational** projects, taking into account the following conditions:

Individual **transnational projects** carried out subsequently under the framework partnership agreement must involve at least one partner from a Member State other than their own. While in the application to become framework partners, applicants are not required to nominate their future partners; their later applications for individual transnational projects must identify the partners involved in such projects.

(c) Eligibility criteria

The proposals for the individual projects submitted by framework partners must comply with the following eligibility criteria:

- Projects' initial duration can be maximum two years;
- Projects cannot be already completed and cannot have begun before the application for the individual project has been submitted.
- Budget must be in Euro, balanced in income and expenditure.
- The maximum rate of co-financing for individual projects is 95% of the total eligible costs. However, any framework partner proposing co-funding of more than 90% will have to substantiate and justify why co-funding of greater than 90% should be granted for a particular action.
- The transnational projects must involve at least one partner from a Member State other than their own.
- Subsequent calls for proposals may provide for additional eligibility criteria.
- Subcontracting is not allowed within the Partnership, neither to Applicant nor to Partners, and cannot exceed 30% of the total eligible costs. As an exception, the percentage of the amount of the grant that can be subcontracted **can be higher than 30%**. The Commission will be free to approve, reduce or reject the proposed higher rate of subcontracting after the assessment of the justification provided in the application. The applicant has to provide offers justifying requested amount at the moment of submission of the application.
- Contributions in kind shall not be considered as eligible costs nor as a part of co-financing to be secured by the Beneficiary
- Exchange rate applicable for the conversion of currencies into euro: any conversion of actual costs into euro shall be made by the Beneficiary at the

monthly accounting rate established by the Commission and published on its website on the day when the cost was paid

(d) Award criteria

The Commission will conduct an evaluation of the proposals for individual projects submitted on the basis of the award criteria as defined in the annual work programme each year.

7. PRACTICAL INFORMATION ABOUT SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

Applications for framework partnerships must be submitted with the application form which is available in PRIAMOS system:

Registration: [https://ec.europa.eu/priamos/register\(bD1mciZjPTEwMA==\)/start.htm](https://ec.europa.eu/priamos/register(bD1mciZjPTEwMA==)/start.htm)

Long-on to the system: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/priamos/toto/bc/bsp/sap/crm_ui_frame/

7.1. Documents to be submitted

The following documents must be submitted:

- the application form for framework partnerships
- the legal entities form, dated and signed by the applicant;
- an organisation chart and a description of the tasks of the staff responsible for carrying out the activities specified in the application for framework partnerships;
- a copy of the resolution, law, decree or decision establishing the entity in question and laying down its (statutory) responsibilities;
- or, failing that, any other official document attesting the establishment of the entity.

Applicants are free to provide any other documentation which they consider appropriate in support of their application.

7.2. Deadline for submitting applications

Applications must be submitted via PRIAMOS not later than **1 December 2011**.

Any application received after the deadline or not submitted via PRIAMOS will be automatically rejected.

Following the opening of proposals, the Commission will send an acknowledgement of receipt to all applicants, indicating whether or not the application was received prior to the deadline and informing them of the reference number of their application.

7.3. Further information

Questions may be sent by e-mail or by fax to the address or number listed below, indicating clearly the reference of the Call for Framework Partners:

e-mail address: HOME-ISEC@ec.europa.eu

Fax: + 32 2 299 82 15

The Commission shall reply according to the code of good administrative behaviour within 15 working days from the receipt of the question.

7.4. Examination of applications

The Commission may contact applicants to request additional information at any time prior to taking its decision. Failure to respond to such requests by the deadline set may lead to disqualification of the application. Applicants must take the necessary steps to ensure that they can be contacted rapidly up to the end of the selection process. Where the Commission contacts an applicant, this does not in any way constitute or reflect a pre-selection of the proposal on the part of the Commission.

The Commission expects to offer framework partnerships to successful applicants by February 2012.

7.5. Ex-post Publicity

All grants awarded to framework partners in the course of a financial year must be published on the Internet site of the Community institutions during the first half of the year following the closure of the budget year in respect of which they were awarded. The information may also be published by any other appropriate medium, including the Official Journal of the European Union. The following will be published with the agreement of the beneficiary:

1. the name and address of the beneficiaries
2. the subject of the grant
3. the amount awarded and rate of funding of the costs of the project

The European Commission may waive the above obligations if publication of the information could threaten the safety of the beneficiaries or harm their business interests. Beneficiaries of grants must clearly display acknowledgement of the support received from the EU.
