

Directorate-General for Communication

CALL FOR PROPOSALS FOR PARTNERSHIP¹ **COMM/FPA/2016**

**FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FRAMEWORK PARTNERSHIP
AGREEMENTS² IN THE CATEGORY OF MEDIA**

PERIOD COVERED: 2018 - 2019

Application deadline for partnership (for the purpose of submitting a grant application under specific calls for proposals in the MEDIA category): **20 August 2018, midnight (CET).**

¹ Updated in January 2017, January 2018, and February 2018.

² Only successful partnership applicants (organisations selected as partners in 2016 or in 2017) or organisations having first submitted a partnership application under this call for proposals may submit a grant application under specific calls for proposals COMM/SUBV/2018/M and COMM/SUBV/2019/M.

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1. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

1.1. Background

This call for proposals is based on the European Parliament (EP)'s multi-annual work programme for grants in the area of communication (2016-2019) published at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/contracts-and-grants/en/20150201PVL00100/Grants>³

1.2. Purpose of the call for proposals

The purpose of this call for proposals is to select potential beneficiaries (partners) for the implementation of actions cofinanced by the European Union (EU) in the media category.

The EP aims at developing a multi-annual cooperation with media organisations (Cf. definition below) which are committed to communicate on the role and activities of the EP in line with the objectives set out in the multi-annual grants programme.

A network of EP partners will be established to maintain regular contacts with the EP for the purpose of the programming and implementation of the multi-annual grants programme in the media category. Selected partners will be offered a framework partnership agreement (FPA) with the EP for a period of four years maximum. The conclusion of FPA is aimed at ensuring a stable and structured environment in the context of which partners may submit high quality project proposals up to the end of the multi-annual grant programme (end of 2019). In accordance with its terms and conditions, the FPA provides a framework for mutual cooperation and exchange of information between the EP and the partner on the implementation of the partnership and subsequent projects.

The FPA will set out the general rights and obligations of each party and the conditions governing the award of grants for specific actions to partners. This first-level agreement does not constitute an obligation for the EP to award funding to the partner on the basis of specific grant agreement.

2. OBJECTIVES AND FIELDS OF APPLICATION

2.1. Objectives of the call for proposals

In line with the multi-annual work programme for grants, the objectives of this call for proposals are:

- to promote and multiply a better understanding of the identity, role and political nature of the EP as the only democratically elected EU institution,
- to communicate the EP's active involvement in fields that matter to EU citizens, and
- to disseminate information and promote dialogue about the EP's activities.

³ As last revised in January 2018 to update the section on events and the indicative timetable.

Accordingly, applicants should include in their application an action plan detailing the common objectives of the partner and of the Parliament in compliance with the above mentioned objectives and the types of activities contributing to the achievement of those objectives.

Likewise, project proposals submitted by selected partners on the basis of the forthcoming specific calls for proposals for grants shall define their own objectives in line with the objectives of the multi-annual work programme and the above mentioned action plan. The outputs and outcome of the projects cofinanced on the basis of the subsequent calls for proposals will be measured using the key performance indicators defined in the respective grant applications based (non-exclusively) on the list of key indicators provided in the specific calls for proposals, with a view to proving how and to which extent the projects contribute to the aforementioned objectives.

2.2. Fields of application

For the purpose of this call for proposals, the media category is composed of the following fields of application:

- Television,
- Radio, and/or
- Online media.

It should be noted that, when responding to the subsequent calls for proposals for grants, partners should propose projects in the same field(s) of application as the partnership application. Projects may also include subsidiary activities outside their principal field(s) of application e.g. partners in the area of media (field of application: TV) may propose a project including an online media component

3. ESTABLISHMENT OF FRAMEWORK PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

3.1. Procedure for the identification of partners and the award of subsequent grants for specific projects

Partners are selected based on eligibility, exclusion and selection criteria which set out legal and financial requirements, as well as quality standards (see sections 6 and 7). This helps ensure that partnerships are of value to both the EP and the applying organisation. The legal and financial criteria are set out in the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Union and its Rules of application⁴. All applications for partnership will be examined and evaluated by evaluation committees on the basis of these criteria.

⁴ Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 (OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p. 1) as amended, and Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 of 29 October 2012 on the rules of application of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25

Framework partnership agreements and specific grant agreements will be signed with those framework partners who are awarded a grant for a specific project following one or more of the subsequent calls for proposals launched among the framework partners (category media). These specific agreements will define the precise subject of the agreement, the conditions for performance of the action covered, and the maximum amount, which will be paid.

Grants cannot be given to cover general operating costs of the organisation but may be awarded for specific actions in the media category (covering one or more of the fields of application) on the basis of the annual specific calls for proposals which will be published on the EP's website.

3.2. Type of potential beneficiaries (partners) sought

Within each field of application, the following types of potential beneficiaries are sought (see detailed criteria under section 6 and 7):

Television

Television broadcasting companies or networks broadcasting at pan-European, national or regional level in one or more Member States

Only television broadcasting companies and networks, as attested by the official statute of the applicant organisation, with proven broadcasting experience and reach capacity may apply.

Applicants must be editorially independent and with no distribution restrictions. They must be open about how and by whom they are financed.

Radio

Radio broadcasting companies or networks broadcasting at pan-European, national or regional level in one or more Member States.

Only radio broadcasting companies, as attested by the official statute of the applicant organisation, with proven broadcasting experience and reach capacity may apply.

Applicants must be editorially independent and with no distribution restrictions. They must be open about how and by whom they are financed.

Online media

Legally constituted organisations with an established role in the field of activity, i.e. means or channels of general communication and information available on the internet.

Such organisations must have been in existence for at least two years and have a proven track record of relevant on-line activity and reach capacity.

Applicants must be editorially independent and with no distribution restrictions. They must be open about how and by whom it is financed. Online media websites must have a verifiable street address and telephone number.

The majority of the website content must cover original news, commentary or analysis, and be updated at least once per week. Paper or online publications, which are communication outreach or advocacy publications of non-governmental or non-profit organisations, think tanks or interest groups do not qualify for this call for proposals.

3.3. Targeted projects (see specific calls for proposals)

The EP is looking to co-finance all types of projects in one or more fields of application aimed at providing citizens with information about the EP.

In the fields of application of television and radio, no restrictions are placed on the length or form of the broadcast(s) but the objective is to ensure that as wide a public as possible is reached. Wide outreach, broadcasting at peak viewing times, integration of slots into existing programmes with established viewing figure will be required. Collaboration with other broadcasters, originality and innovation are all elements, which will be perceived favourably.

In the field of application of online media, any means or channels of general communication and information available on the internet (publication and relaying of news, current affairs, political reporting, analysis, etc.) may be in scope, including the provision of interactive services and on-line democracy (encouragement and facilitation of engagement and participation in the European political process and the development of a European public sphere). Originality and innovation, good audience targeting and a sound strategy for distribution are all elements, which will be perceived favourably.

Partners will be given complete editorial freedom.

4. INDICATIVE TIMETABLE

DG COMM will launch in 2018 a call for proposal for partnership and two specific calls for proposals for grants: one specific call for proposals during the first semester 2018 for grants to be funded from the 2018 budget and one specific call for proposals during the second semester 2018 for grants to be funded from the 2019 budget.

<i>Partnership in the media category</i>	<i>First round</i>	<i>Second round</i>
Publication of the call for proposals:	Early February 2018	Early March 2018
Application deadline for the purpose of submitting a grant application under specific call for proposals in the media category	28 February 2018	20 August 2018
Evaluation period	March 2018	September 2018

Action Grants	<i>Grants in the media category from the 2018 budget</i>	<i>Grants in the media category from the 2019 budget</i>
Publication of the call for proposals:	15 February 2018	1 September 2018
Application deadline:	31 March 2018	15 October 2018
Evaluation period:	1 April - 10 May 2018	15 October - 30 November 2018
Information to applicants:	21 May 2018	15 December 2018
Signature of grant agreements:	31 May 2018	1 January 2019
Earliest start date of projects:	1 June 2018	1 January 2019
Latest end date of projects	30 June 2019	30 September 2019
Planned maximum duration of projects:	13 months	9 months
Evaluation of completed projects:	Final reports must be submitted by beneficiaries within 2 months following the end of the action	Final reports must be submitted by beneficiaries within 2 months following the end of the action

5. BUDGET AVAILABLE AND MAXIMUM COFINANCING RATE FOR GRANTS

Indicative budget for 2018 and 2019

The indicative budget available for grants in the media category in € 3,750,000 for both the years 2018 and 2019. In function of the number and quality of the projects submitted, the EP reserves the right not to distribute the entirety of the available budget or to allocate additional resources to the grants program.

Maximum financing rate

The maximum rate of co-financing of projects is 60% of the total eligible costs of the action.

6. ADMISSIBILITY, ELIGIBILITY AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA

The application will be formally eligible provided that all the following conditions are fulfilled. Failure to comply with at least one of the below requirements and criteria will lead to a rejection of the application.

6.1. Admissibility requirements

- Applications must be sent no later than the deadline for submitting applications referred to below in section 8.3.
- Applications must be submitted following the electronic submission procedure described below in section 8. No other method of submission of an application will be accepted.

6.2. Eligibility criteria

To be eligible for a grant, applicants must be able to demonstrate that they are:

- a legal person (public or private) constituted and registered as legal entity for at least two years at the date of application;
- based in one of the Member States of the European Union. In addition to the 28 Member States of the European Union, the call is also open to the EFTA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) and candidate countries for acceding to membership of the European Union (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey);
- media outlets as defined under section 3.2.

In order to assess the applicants' eligibility, at least one of the following supporting documents is requested:

- extract from the official journal, copy of articles of association, extract of association register or any other relevant supporting document;
- copy of the resolution or decision establishing the public company, or other official document establishing the public-law entity.

In addition, the EP reserves the right to request any complementary information concerning the nature of the applicant.

6.3. Exclusion criteria

- Exclusion from participation:

Applicants will be excluded from participating in the call for proposals procedure if they are in any of the following situations:

- (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 or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment of a competent authority of a Member State 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 including by decisions of the EIB and international organisations;
- (d) they are not in compliance with their 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 RAO or those of the country where the grant agreement is to be performed;
- (e) they or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation, money laundering or any other illegal activity, where such an illegal activity is detrimental to the Union's financial interests;
- (f) they are currently subject to an administrative penalty referred to in Article 109(1) of the Financial Regulation applicable to the EU budget.

- Exclusion from award:

Applicants will not be granted financial assistance if, in the course of the grant award procedure, they:

- (a) are subject to a conflict of interest;
- (b) are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the European Parliament as a condition of participation in the grant award procedure or fail to supply this information;
- (c) find themselves in one of the situations of exclusion, referred to above.

Administrative and financial penalties may be imposed on applicants, or affiliated entities where applicable, who are guilty of misrepresentation.

- Supporting documents

Applicants must sign a declaration on their honour certifying that they are not in one of the situations referred to in Article 106(1) and 107 to 109 of the Financial Regulation applicable to the EU budget, filling in the relevant form attached to the application form (annex 1.1.1). Omitting to sign and/or date this form will result in the exclusion of the application.

7. SELECTION CRITERIA

The application having passed the admissibility requirements and the eligibility and exclusion criteria will be assessed according to the selection criteria described below.

The EP reserves the right to contact applicants during the evaluation procedure in order to obtain additional information, documentation or clarifications on the content of the application. However this does not include any kind of negotiation. Any requests or replies do not constitute any ground to claim any expectation concerning the selection of the application.

7.1. Financial capacity

Applicants must have stable and sufficient sources of finance to maintain their activity throughout the period during which the action is being carried out and, where appropriate, to participate in its funding.

In particular, they should have an average annual turnover/income in the last two available financial years, of at least EUR 150,000 per year.

The applicant's financial capacity will be assessed on the basis of the following **supporting documentation**:

- a declaration of their honour annexed to the application form duly filled in and signed
- financial statement (including the balance sheet, the profit and loss accounts and the annexes) for the two last financial year(s) for which accounts have been closed
- financial data provided in section 2 of the application form

The EP reserves the right to request updated supported documentation from selected partners at any time during the duration of the partnership agreement in order to check if the financial capacity of the organisation still complies with the selection criteria.

7.2. Operational capacity

Applicants must:

- have experience in project management in the field(s) of application concerned; and ability to handle the budget for the actions;
- the professional competencies as well as appropriate qualifications necessary to successfully implement actions cofinanced by the EU in the selected field(s) of application;
- the capacity to reach at least the following audience in the country(ies) of activity for each of the field(s) of application:

For television:

a) either 2% of the national audience (average daily reach calculated on the basis of data gathered on a yearly basis or equivalent) using its own channel or in cooperation with one or more TV channels established in the same Member State

b) or 1,000,000 unique viewers, (average daily reach, calculated on the basis of data gathered on a yearly basis or equivalent) provided that the applicant demonstrates the capacity to reach trans-border audience (e.g. on the basis a cooperation agreement with one or more TV channels established in another Member State)

c) or be among the 2 major televisions at regional level in terms of audience, (after the national TV) (based on average daily reach, calculated on the basis of data gathered on a yearly basis or equivalent). The list of EU regions is available at: <http://cor.europa.eu/en/regions/pages/europe-in-my-region.aspx>

b) For radio:

a) either 1% of the national audience (average daily reach calculated on the basis of data gathered on a yearly basis or equivalent) using its own channel or in cooperation with one or more radio established in the same Member State

b) or 1,000,000 unique listeners (average daily reach, calculated on the basis of data gathered on a yearly basis or equivalent), provided that the applicant demonstrates the capacity to reach trans-border audience (e.g. on the basis of a cooperation agreement with one or more radio established in another Member State)

c) For online media:

a) either 2% of the national internet users (average daily unique visitors calculated on the basis of data gathered on a yearly basis or equivalent)

b) or 1,000,000 average daily unique visitors calculated on the basis of data gathered on a yearly basis or equivalent, provided that the applicant demonstrates the capacity to reach trans-border audience (e.g. on the basis of a cooperation agreement with one or more media established in another Member State)

The reach criteria must be respected for all the fields of application.

In line with section 2.2, the field(s) of application of the subsequent grant application should be in line with the field(s) of application of the partnership application. Therefore, in case of multi-media projects, the main field(s) of application for the grant should have been accepted as field(s) of application for the partnership and therefore pass the reach criteria for the concerned field(s) of application.

The contact person of the applicant in charge of the relation with the relevant services of the EP for the implementation of the framework partnership agreement should have a prominent role in the editorial and decision making process of the submitting media (equivalent to the Editor in Chief -2 in the organisational chart) and be directly involved in the development and realisation of the subsequent projects.

The fulfilment of these criteria will be verified by the EP through relevant **supporting documents**⁵ provided by the applicant organisation, such as:

- The annual activity report of the applicant for the last two fully revolved years, if available;
- Any documentation demonstrating the experience, operational capacity and technical expertise in relation to the field(s) of application (television, radio, online media) including at least a traceable record of coverage of the EU (number of articles, broadcasts, etc.) in the last two years,
- A detailed description of the organisational structure including as a minimum: a staffing chart, a description of the roles and responsibilities of senior and key staff members;
- Names, functions and CV's of the key staff that will be a) contact person, and b) in charge of organising and running future projects. Please ensure that the CV's provided include a clear detail of the person concerned, their qualifications and experience and their work history. It is of utmost importance that the name and address of the current employer of the person concerned is clearly stated on the CV;
- Reach capacity calculated on the basis of data gathered on a yearly basis (Year N-1) or equivalent backed up by the national monitoring authority or a third party monitoring body (e.g. Eurobarometer, TNS, IPSOS, GFK, Reuters, Nielsen, médiamétrie, Kantar, Gallup, CIM, AGF, Google analytics, Estudio General de Medios or equivalent) divided by the total population;
- if available, information from other sources, such as other European Union services or national authorities of the partners country of registration.

If considered as necessary, verification missions could be carried out by EP staff on the organisation's premises

8. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

8.1. Application Form

Applications must be submitted electronically using the partnership application form annexed to this call for proposals.

8.2. Supporting documents

The supporting documents may be submitted in any EU official languages. Applicants are not required to provide translated documents, however in order to speed-up the evaluation process, supporting documents aimed at demonstrating the financial and operational

⁵ Supporting documents aimed at demonstrating the operational capacity of the applicant may be submitted in any official language. Documents not drafted in English must be submitted together with a summary in English.

capacity of the applicant, should be submitted together with a summary in English (see above sections 7.1 & 7.2).

Supporting documents must be clearly titled and numbered as per the checklist for applicants (See Annex 1.2).

The EP may ask applicants to complete any application which is incomplete or illegible or which is not formatted as requested.

8.3. Ways of submission and deadline

Applications must be submitted electronically by **20 August 2018, midnight (CET)**. The date and time of submission will be the date and time of sent applications, as registered by the EP's server.

In order to register a partnership application, the applicant must download the application form available on the EP's website at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/aboutparliament/en/00beb2559e/Grants.html> following the guidelines and instructions provided in the form. The form must be saved on a local drive (computer) before being completed. .

The form may be filled offline, edited and saved several times (if necessary).

In order to be registered, the application form must be submitted by email:

- either by pressing on "Submit by Email" at the bottom of the form: by clicking on "Submit by email", the form will be automatically attached to an email addressed to the EP, or
- by attaching the application form to an email addressed to dgcomm-egrants@ep.europa.eu.

. Requested supporting documentation (see checklist for applicants annexed to the application form) must be manually attached to the same email before sending it to the EP. The e-mail body may be filled in with comments relevant to the application if necessary.

Paper applications or electronic applications on data carriers (CD Rom, USB Stick) will not be accepted. Applicants should note however that an original application in paper may be requested by the EP in the course of the evaluation and the award process.

It is highly recommended to submit your application before the above mentioned deadline in order to avoid potential delays which might be caused by a large number of simultaneous applications.

8.4. Information during the procedure and notification of results

DG Communication will notify receipt of applications, by e-mail only, to the contact person referred to in the application form. It is the applicant responsibility to provide a valid e-mail address for its contact person and to check this e-mail address regularly.

Upon submission of their application, applicants will receive information on the selection process in 3 steps:

- 1- Acknowledgement of receipt stating the date and time of application. In case the applicant would not receive an acknowledgement of receipt within 30 calendar days following the submission of the application, he/she should contact the EP at dgcomm-subvention@ep.europa.eu within 20 calendar days after the deadline for application in order to confirm receipt of the application. **The EP shall not be held liable in case of any technical issue preventing the registration of an application**. If the applicant cannot provide a proof of submission, the application will not be considered by the EP.
- 2- Email confirming the status of the application:
 - Confirmation that the application is under assessment and communication of the partnership ID (to be reminded in all correspondence with the EP), **or**
 - Information to the applicant that the application cannot be considered for evaluation (notably in case of mistaken, incomplete or duplicate application)
- 3- Notification of the results of the evaluation (selected or rejected partnership applications).

9. CONTACT AND REQUEST FOR COMPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

Questions of clarification may be sent by e-mail to: dgcomm-subvention@ep.europa.eu.

Questions drafted in English or French will receive a reply within 5 working days. It should be noted that this time-limit could be extended in case a translation from any EU official language to English or French would be required. Replies will be provided in English or in French.

10. DATA PROTECTION

Regulation 45/2001 (herein after "the Regulation") applies to the processing of personal data carried out by the EP.

Further to Article 11 and Article 12 of this Regulation, the EP provides the data subjects with the following information:

The controller is the EP Directorate General for Communication Unit Finance.

E-mail: dgcomm-subvention@ep.europa.eu

The purpose of the processing is to manage contacts with applicants and assess applications for grants.

Your replies to the questions in this form are necessary in order to assess your application.

The categories of data collected and used for the processing operations are administrative data, contact details and career related data (CV) of relevant staff representing and working for the applicant.

The recipients of the data are the members of the evaluation committees, the Court of Auditor, the Court of Justice and the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) when applicable.

Data subjects have the right of access and the right to rectify the data concerning them by contacting the Finance Unit.

The legal basis of the processing operation at stake is Article 121(4) of regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the EP and of the Council on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union.

The time limits for storing the data are 10 years.

Data subjects have the right to have recourse at any time to the EP Data Protection Officer at data-protection@ep.europa.eu and to the European Data Protection Supervisor at edps@edps.europa.eu.

11. LIST OF ANNEXES

Annex 1: Application form for partnership and annexes thereof:

- 1.1- Declaration of honour
- 1.2- Checklist for applicants

Annex 2: Model Framework partnership agreement