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Directorate-General for Communication

CALL FOR PROPOSALS COMM/2012/FPA

For the establishment of framework partnership agreements with pan-European, national, regional and local organizations active in the fields of television or radio broadcasting, internet activity and event organization for the co-financing of projects aimed at raising public awareness of the European Parliament and encouraging wide public interest in the European decisional process

Period covered: 01.10. 2012 - 30.09. 2015

Important notice: only organisations who submit an application to become partner by 15 June 2012 will be eligible for submitting proposals for the financing of projects under 2012 funding. Applications for partnership submitted after this date will only be eligible for projects financed under 2013 and 2014 funding.

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1. GENERAL OBJECTIVES AND CONTEXT OF THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

1.1. Background

The European Parliament is the only directly-elected institution of the European Union, with its Members elected once every five years in the 27 Member States to represent the over 500 million citizens of the European Union. Its powers have been steadily increasing over recent decades and, since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, it acts a co-legislator for almost all EU law. Parliament also supervises the work of the Commission and adopts the European Union's budget.

In this regard the votes taking place in this Institution shape the EU legislation directly influencing the everyday lives of European citizens. They cover issues from the food on our plates, to the quality of the air we breathe and the safety of the toys that our children play with. The European Parliament is a stern promoter and defendant of Fundamental Rights such as consumer protection, equal opportunities, environmental sustainability and human rights. As the institution representing the citizens of the European Union, it attaches great importance to ensuring the respect of the cultural diversity of the Union.

Since 2005, the European Parliament has managed an annual grants programme, co-financing projects in the Member States which aim to enhance understanding of the role and functioning of the European Parliament, encourage a wider public interest in the decisional process, and which provide a platform for those citizens to raise issues which are important to them. A wide variety of projects have been co-financed, particularly audiovisual and web based projects.

1.2 Purpose of the call for proposals

In the run up to the 2014 European elections, DG Communication is intensifying its efforts to increase awareness among European citizens as to the role and activities of the European Parliament, highlighting its political nature. It is in particular endeavouring to ensure that citizens are informed that the European Parliament is the only directly elected European institution, that its Members are the advocates of the European citizens' interests, and that, since different political parties champion different outcomes affecting European citizens in their daily life, it is the votes of the individual citizens that determine the European governance we have.

In this context, with a view to reinforcing its communication capacity, DG COMM is launching a call for proposals to identify potential beneficiaries for grants for specific projects which will focus on:

- raising awareness of the European Parliament - its role, its political nature
- disseminating information about the European Parliament and its activities
- increasing knowledge and understanding of the three pillars around which the European Parliament operates - politics, policies, values

Grant beneficiaries may be pan-European, national, regional or local organizations based in any of the Member States of the European Union.

Grants cannot be given to cover general operating costs of the organization but may be awarded for specific actions which provide a platform for the European Parliament and its Members in the field of television or radio, web-based projects or specific events. Grants may also be awarded for multimedia projects which cover more than one of these fields.

1.3 Procedure for the identification of framework partners and the award of grants for specific projects

Successful applicants responding to this call for proposals will be invited to sign a framework partnership agreement covering the three year period 1 October 2012 - 30 September 2015 and grants for specific projects will be awarded on the basis of calls for proposals for specific projects among the framework partners.

This call for proposals for establishing framework partnerships will remain open throughout the first twelve months of the period covered i.e. up to 30 September 2013. Applications can be submitted at any point up to this date and the evaluation committee will meet regularly to examine new applications. New framework partners will be invited to sign a framework agreement covering the period from the date of signing to 30 September 2015 and will then be included in all invitations to submit proposals for specific actions published subsequent to the signing of the framework partnership agreement.

1.4 Available funding

Grants for specific projects financed under 2012 funding

Attention is drawn to the fact that interested parties wishing to submit a proposal for financing of a specific project under the 2012 funding available must however reply to this call for proposals by **15 June 2012**.

The first call for specific proposals is published simultaneously with this call for proposals for establishing framework partnerships and applicants to this call for proposals who wish to propose a project to be considered for financing under the 2012 funding available are invited to also respond to this first call for specific proposals.

It should be noted that there is no obligation on organisations applying to become framework partners to submit an application for funding for 2012.

The deadline for submission of responses to the call for specific proposals for projects to be financed under 2012 funding will be **22 June 2012**. Only those proposals submitted by applicants successful in this call for proposals for establishing framework partnership agreements will be considered.

Grants for specific projects financed under 2013 and 2014 funding

All successful applicants for this call for proposals who sign framework partnership agreements with the Parliament will be invited to respond to all subsequent calls for proposals for specific projects published later in 2012, and in 2013 and 2014.

Indicative maximum amount for the 3-year period

The total amount of grants to be awarded under the framework partnership agreements is currently estimated at €14,5 Mio (€4,5 Mio in 2012, €7 Mio in 2013, and €3 Mio in 2014). At the time of publication of this call for proposals, neither the 2013 nor the 2014 budget of the European Parliament has been adopted and the amounts for these years are therefore purely indicative. The amount for 2012 is based on current availability of funding earmarked for this purpose but could be revised upwards if extra funding becomes available before the award of grants under the specific call for proposals for 2012 published simultaneously with this call and open to all successful applicants to this call.

Maximum financing rate

The maximum rate of co-financing is 80%.

1.5 Provisional calendar

The closing date for responses to this call for proposals for framework partnerships is **15 June 2012 for those applicants wishing also to submit a proposal for co-financing of a specific project under 2012 funding.**

Applications for framework partnerships submitted by 15 June 2012 will be evaluated on the basis of the eligibility, exclusion and suitability criteria set out below and successful applicants invited to sign a framework partnership agreement with effect from 1 October 2012.

Where no application is made in response to the call for proposals for specific projects published simultaneously, applications for partnerships will be accepted provided they have been submitted before **30 September 2013.**

The evaluation committee will meet at regular intervals throughout the period this call remains open and all will be evaluated on the basis of the eligibility, exclusion and suitability criteria set out below and successful applicants invited to sign a framework partnership agreement covering the period remaining up to 30 September 2015.

The first call for proposals for specific projects is published simultaneously with this call and applications must be submitted by 22 June 2012. Applications will be evaluated on the basis of the selection and award criteria announced in the text of the relevant call for proposals and successful applicants will be invited to sign a specific grant agreement covering the period 1 November 2012 to 31 December 2013. Projects financed under 2012 funding must be completed by 30 June 2013.

Attention is drawn to the fact that a second call for proposals for specific projects to be financed under 2013 funding will be published at the end of October 2012 and applicants for framework partnerships wishing to be invited to respond to that call for proposals should submit their response to this call for proposals for framework partnerships by **30 September 2012.**

1.6 The framework partnership agreements

The conclusion of framework partnership agreements is aimed at ensuring a stable and structured environment which will be in the interests both of the European Parliament and the selected organizations. The multi-year period, covering the run up to the 2014 elections, the elections themselves, and the first part of the term of office of the new Parliament (eight legislative term), will not only guarantee an overall continuity and coherency in the management of the funding available, but will also ensure that the projects financed under this programme will be about what is currently happening and therefore of immediate relevance and interest to European citizens.

The framework partnerships will be implemented by two legal instruments: framework partnership agreements and specific grant agreements.

The framework partnership agreement, which will be signed with all successful applicants for this call for proposals to establish framework partnerships, 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 European Parliament to conclude any specific agreements.

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 calls for proposals launched among the framework partners. 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.

1.7 Areas of activity within the framework partnerships

Applicants must choose one or more of the following principal areas of activity:

- Television
- Radio
- Web
- Events

It should be noted that, when responding to calls for proposals for specific projects, framework partners may propose projects which include subsidiary activities outside their principal area of activity e.g. framework partners in the area of event organization may propose projects including an internet forum supporting the event or its follow-up, etc.

1.8 Types of beneficiaries sought

Within each area of activity, the following types of beneficiaries are sought:

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 organization and with proven broadcasting experience, may apply.

Radio

Radio broadcasting companies 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 organization and with proven broadcasting experience, may apply.

Web

Legally constituted organizations with an established role in the field of activity (i.e. which have been in existence for at least two years and have a proven track record of relevant on-line activity covering at least two years)

Events

Legally constituted organizations with an established role in the field of activity (i.e. which have been in existence for at least two years and have a proven track record of relevant event organization activity covering at least two years)

1.9 Types of projects sought

All areas

DG Communication is looking to co-finance innovative and creative projects (of a non-commercial nature) which provide European citizens across the Union with unbiased, accurate and up-to-date information about the European Parliament and its activities - its political nature, its role as the "Chamber of the Citizens" in the European legislative and budgetary process, the values it defends - and offer a platform for those citizens to raise issues which are important to them. The key objective of its grants programme is to reinforce its communication capacity in order to encourage wide public interest in the European decisional process, and in so doing to increase awareness of the opportunity given to each and every citizen to participate in that decisional process by exercising his or her right to vote in European elections.

It has now been 20 years since the creation of the citizenship of the European Union through the Treaty of Maastricht and 2013 will mark the European Year of Citizenship. While this concept is mainly associated with the freedom of movement and of residence within the EU, there are several other political rights that also derive from this notion such as:

- the right not to be discriminated against on grounds of nationality,
- a right to vote and stand in elections to the European Parliament, in any EU member state,
- a right to protection by the diplomatic or consular authorities of other Member States when in a non-EU Member State
- right to vote and stand in local elections in an EU state other than their own,
- a right to access to European Parliament, Council, and Commission documents,
- the right to apply to the EU institutions in one of the official languages and to receive a reply in that same language,
- the right to petition the European Parliament

The Charter of Fundamental Rights guarantees all EU citizens a level of protection regarding privacy, freedom of speech, gender equality, human rights, to name a few, unparalleled in the world.

Furthermore, over the years, EU citizens enjoy many additional rights and benefits such as cheaper travel costs, hassle-free border crossings, package holiday guarantees, and access to healthcare systems or cheaper calls when phoning home. Under this perspective, there is a clear added-value to actions and legislation developed at EU level which is often left unseen because of the delays in transposition of the legislation into national law or because no real effort is put at national level in explaining where these rights originate from.

EU-Added Value and Citizens' Rights have been identified by the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission as common communication priorities, and proposals for projects should aim at highlighting these priorities, giving particular emphasis to the role played by the European Parliament as democratically elected representative of European citizens across the 27 Member-States.

When considering specific projects for the award of grants, DG COMM will be not only assessing the creativity displayed and the planning carried out, but will also be looking to see evidence of proper targeting, potential for significant outreach and/or media impact, and potential to promote enduring networks.

Television

The European Parliament is looking to co-finance all types of television programmes aimed at providing citizens with information about the European Parliament as described above. 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 figures, collaboration with other broadcasters are all elements which will be perceived favourably. The framework partners will be given complete editorial freedom; though they will have to commit to respecting the editorial charter (annexed) guaranteeing impartial, balanced and open debate.

Radio

The European Parliament is looking to co-finance all types of radio programmes aimed at providing citizens with information about the European Parliament as described above. 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 listening times, integration of slots into existing programmes with established audiences figures, collaboration with other broadcasters are all elements which will be perceived favourably. The framework partners will be given complete editorial freedom; though they will have to commit to respecting the editorial charter (annexed) guaranteeing impartial, balanced and open debate.

Web

The European Parliament is looking to co-finance web-based projects in the field of on-line media (publication and relaying of news, current affairs, political reporting, analysis, etc,) including the provision of interactive services and in the field of 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 are looked for and project proposals should demonstrate good audience targeting and a sound strategy for distribution.

Events

The European Parliament is looking to co-finance all types of events (of a non-political nature) - seminars, conferences, debates, discussion fora, exhibitions, competitions, cultural or sporting activities - aimed at providing a communication platform for presenting the European Parliament to the citizens across the 27/28 Member States.

Proposals should show evidence of proper targeting and potential for significant outreach. Projects with potential for substantial media impact and projects with potential to lead to the creation of enduring networks will be favourably viewed.

2. EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF PARTNERS

All applications for partnership agreements will be examined and evaluated by the evaluation committee. The selection of partners is carried out on the basis of precise eligibility, exclusion and suitability criteria. These have been established taking into account legal and financial requirements, in particular those enshrined in the Financial Regulation applicable to the budget of the European Union, as well as the necessary operational capacity.

The European Parliament reserves the right to contact applications 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.

The evaluation committee will evaluate the application for partnership following the approach below:

- a) assessing the formal eligibility of the application (eligibility and exclusion criteria);

- b) assessing the financial viability and the operational capacity of the application (suitability criteria).

2.1 Eligibility and exclusion criteria

A framework partnership agreement may be signed with applicants which fulfils all of the following conditions:

- a legal person (public or private) constituted and registered as legal entity for at least two years;
- based in one of the Member States of the European Union;
- which are not in a situation mentioned listed in Articles 93 (1), 94 and 96(2) of the Financial Regulation. The applicants will have to sign a declaration on oath that there organisation is not in any of situations mentioned in these articles (see list of documents to be submitted in annex). Omitting to sign and/or date this form will result in the exclusion of the application.
- which will not pursue general objectives directly or indirectly contrary to the policies and values of the European Union or be associated with disreputable projects and images.

2.2. Suitability criteria

The application having passed the opening and the eligibility and exclusion criteria will be assessed according to the selection criteria, which are intended to help evaluate the applicants' financial and operational capacity to ensure that they:

- 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;
- have the management capacity, professional competencies and qualifications required to successfully carry out the type of projects envisaged in section 1 of this call for proposals

The issues that will be considered by the Evaluation Committee include:

- Does the applicant have sufficient experience of project management in at least one of the areas of activities concerned (television, radio, web, events);
- Does the applicant have sufficient technical expertise in one of those areas concerned?
- Does the applicant have sufficient management capacity? (including staff, equipment and ability to handle the budget for the actions)?

The fulfilment of these criteria will be verified by the European Parliament through:

- relevant supporting documents provided by the applicant organisation;
- 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 carried out by the European Parliament staff on the organisation's premises

3. HOW TO APPLY AND THE PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW

3.1 Application Form

Applications must be presented on the Application Form for Partnership annexed to this call for proposals. The format, titles and footnotes may not be changed or removed; additional pages may be added where necessary. The application form must be submitted in English. The supporting documents, such as the official accounts and statute of the applicant organisation should be a copy of the original documents, and will therefore be in the language of the country concerned. We do not require translated documents.

3.2. Where and how to sent applications

Applications must be submitted in A4 format, in triplicate (one original version of all documents + two other copies), and in paper form (please note that the pages of your application should not be bound together in any way as we need to be able to remove individual pages easily, a simple ring binder (2 holes) is the preferred format).

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

Delivery adress

European Parliament

Central Mail Service

Altiero Spinelli Building (ASP 0 F 156)

Attn.: Directorate-General Communication

(Finance Unit, MOY 05 T 072 - Call for proposals partnership 2012)

Rue Wiertz, 60

B-1047 Brussels

BELGIUM

Applicants must ensure that the date on the stamp made by the post office is on or preferably before the deadline date mentioned under point 1.4 in case they want submit proposals for actions under the 2012 funding and that the date is clearly visible and readable.

It is highly recommended to post your application before the actual closing date and not to wait until the last minute. The services of DG Communication will not follow up individual cases where the postmark is not dated or where it is not clearly visible. Please be aware that some postal services do not necessarily date envelopes, the responsibility rests with the applicant to ensure that a date is clearly stamped on the envelope.

In case of submission by private courier/delivery service or hand delivery please note that opening hours are Monday to Thursday between 9 a.m. and 12 noon and 2 p.m. and 5 p.m., and Friday between 9 a.m. and 12 noon. The handing-in of a proposal **will be attested by a receipt**, to be issued immediately, signed by a Central Mail Service official and giving the date and exact time of submission.

Please do not contact services of DG Communication directly to deliver the proposal by hand to staff within the service. Applications must be transmitted via the Central Mail service.

The private courier/express delivery company must indicate clearly on the envelope or package the date on which they take receipt of the application, even if it is not the same day that they actually deliver the application.

Again the applicant is responsible for ensuring that the date the courier company receives the envelope/package for sending, is marked and clearly visible on the packaging - this is extremely important as your proposal will be rejected if the reception date of the package is not on or before this closing date or if there is no mentioned date of receipt. Please be aware that courier services often omit to mark the date of receipt on the package and we often receive proposals without this essential information. Again, the services of DG Communication are not able to follow up individual cases where the package is not dated or where it is not clearly visible.

The postmark, the date and time of delivery by hand with acknowledgement of receipt dated and signed by the responsible official, or the proof of receipt by the courier service, will serve as proof of the date of submission of the application. Faxes, electronic mail, incomplete dossiers, or dossiers sent in several parts will not be accepted.

The applicant is responsible for ensuring that the postmark issued is legible and, in the case of private courier service that the exact address and reference and date of submission to the courier service is clearly indicated on the outside of any packaging.

3.3 Deadline for submission of applications

As stated in point 1.5 Provisional calendar, the following deadlines apply:

- Applicants who have submitted an application to become partner before 15 June 2012 can submit a proposal for co-financing of a specific project under funding for the years 2012, 2013 and 2014;
- Applicants who have submitted an application to become partner before 30 September 2012 can submit a proposal for co-financing of a specific project under funding for the years 2013 and 2014;
- Applicants who have submitted an application to become partner before 30 September 2013 can submit a proposal for co-financing of a specific project under funding for the year 2014;

3.4 Further information for the applications

Questions of clarification may be sent by e-mail to dgcomm-subvention@europarl.europa.eu. Replies will be provided within 5 working days. Once an application has been received and registered by the Parliament, an acknowledgment of receipt will be dispatched to the applicant.

DG Communication will notify receipt of applications, by e-mail only, to the contact person named on the application form.

Applicants will be informed in writing of the Parliaments decision concerning their application.

4. LIST OF ANNEXES

Annex 1: Application form for partnership

Annex 2: List of documents to be provided

Annex 3: Editorial Charter

Annex 4 : Financial guidelines