

Summary of Guidelines for Applicants under a procedure for selection of project proposals with one deadline BG05M9OP001- 4.001 “Transnational and Danube partnerships for Employment and Growth” under the Operational Programme “Human Resources Development” 2014-2020

1. Features of the procedure:

Operational Programme (OP) “Human Resources Development” (HRD) 2014-2020 actively contributes to implementation of two of the objectives of the EU strategy “Europe 2020”. These are the objectives in the field of employment and fight against poverty and social exclusion.

Bulgaria and the other EU member states also formulated its own national objectives in implementation of the strategy “Europe 2020”, namely: (1) not less than 76 % of the population between 20 and 64 years of age to be employed as of 2020 and (2) reduction of the number of people in poverty by 260,000 people by 2020. The achievement of these objectives is fundamental to the vision and strategy of the HRDOP.

The analysis as of 2012 of the Partnership Agreement demonstrated the need for the next programming period Bulgaria to make substantial efforts in order to achieve the objectives set. The Employment level of the population between 20 and 64 years old is 63.0 % against the objective of 76 % and compared to the basic 2008, in 2010 the number of people in poverty has grown by over 41 thousand people.

Taking into account these challenges, the strategy of the HRDOP is based on three pillars. These are:

- (1) higher and better employment;
- (2) reducing poverty and promoting social inclusion;
- (3) modernization of public policies.

The Managing Authority of the HRDOP is the General Directorate “European Funds, International Programmes and Projects” at MLSP. The MA is responsible for the management of the HRDOP in line to the Regulation No. 1303/2013 and Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 823/21.10.2015

This procedure “Transnational and Danube partnerships for Employment and Growth” is implemented under the Priority Axis No. 4 “Transnational cooperation” of the Operational Programme. By means of the procedure measures implemented under the Operational Programme “Human Resources Development” 2007-2013 are complemented and updated.

The procedure is implemented in two components with the following territorial scope:

For Component 1 “Transnational partnerships for Employment and Growth”

On the territory of the Member States of the European Union.

For Component 2 “Danube partnerships for Employment and Growth”

On the territory of the Member States of the European Union within the region of the Danube river, according to the European strategy for the Danube region: Germany (federal provinces Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria), Austria, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Romania and Bulgaria.

Objective and rationale procedure:

The procedure aims to improve interregional and transnational cooperation between partners from member states of the EU by transfer and implementation of social innovations, best practices, and partner’s approaches to find solutions to common problems, build specific skills for partnership et al., in the following areas:

- labour market and quality of working places;
- social inclusion and fight against poverty, healthcare, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, working conditions;
- building of administrative capacity in the above areas.

Within the procedure, each project proposal must be linked to an investment priority(s). Special attention should be paid that each investment priority is characterized by specific eligible applicants/partners, specific objective and target group, and their compliance is an eligibility criteria. It is therefore very important when choosing an investment priority these features to be considered by providing a complete synergy between Applicants/Partners, investment priority, specific objective and target group.

The thematic objectives and the related with them investment priorities (IP) of the Operational Programme “Human Resources Development” 2014-2020 described below are entirely valid for both components of this procedure.

Thematic Objective 8

IP 1: Access to employment for job-seekers and inactive people, including the long-term unemployed and people far from the labour market; also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility.

IP 2: Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people, in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee (ESF) (ESF).

IP 3: Modernization of labour market institutions such as public and private employment services, and improving the matching of labour market needs, including through actions that enhance transnational labour mobility as well as through mobility and better cooperation between the institutions and the relevant stakeholders

IP 4: Self-employment, entrepreneurship and business creation including innovative micro, small and medium sized enterprises .

IP 5: Adaptation of workers, enterprises and entrepreneurs to the change.

Thematic Objective 9:

IP 7: Socio-economic integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma.

IP 8: Active inclusion including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability.

IP 9: Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high-quality services, including health care and social services of general interest.

IP 10: Promoting social entrepreneurship and vocational integration in social enterprises and the social and solidarity economy in order to facilitate access to employment

Thematic Objective 10:

IP 6: Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non-formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and

promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences

Thematic Objective 11:

IP 11: Investment in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services at the national, regional and local levels with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance

The following specific objectives corresponding to the described investment priorities are covered by both components of this procedure:

Specific objective to IP 1:

Promoting transnational cooperation in respect of exchange of experience, good practices and models of promoting employment for job-seekers and inactive people over 29 years of age.

Specific objective to IP 2:

Promoting transnational cooperation in respect of exchange of experience, good practices and models of sustainable integration of young people under 29 years of age, incl. on the labour market.

Specific objective to IP 3:

Promoting transnational cooperation aimed at the improvement of the processes for policy formulation and implementation and for active labour market measures

Specific objective to IP 4:

Promoting transnational cooperation in respect of exchange of experience, good practices and models for promotion of self-employment, entrepreneurship and creation of enterprises, including innovative micro, small and medium enterprises.

Specific objective to IP 5:

Promoting transnational cooperation in respect of the exchange of experience, good practices and models for increasing the number of the covered employees in the enterprises, which have introduced new human resources development systems, practices and tools, and improving the organisation and working conditions.

Specific objective to IP 6:

Promoting transnational cooperation in exchange of experience, good practices and models for ensuring equal access of employed persons to lifelong learning.

Specific objective to IP 7:

Promoting transnational cooperation in exchange of experience, good practices and models for ensuring socio-economic integration of the marginalised communities.

Specific objective to IP 8:

Promoting transnational cooperation in exchange of experience, good practices and models for ensuring active social inclusion and promoting equal opportunities for the vulnerable groups.

Specific objective to IP 9:

Promoting transnational cooperation in respect of exchange of experience, good practices and models of long-term care for people incapable of self-care and the disabled, reduction of the number of children, youth and elderly people placed in institutions

Specific objective to IP 10:

Promoting transnational cooperation in respect of exchange of experience, good practices and models for increasing the number of persons employed in social enterprises following the support provided

Specific objective to IP 11:

Promoting transnational cooperation in respect of exchange of experience, good practices and models of increasing knowledge, skills and competences of the employees in the institutions in the area of social inclusion, healthcare, equal opportunities and non-discrimination and working conditions

Objective and rationale of Component 1:

Component 1 contributes to the transfer and introduction of social innovations, best practices, partners' approaches to find solutions to common problems, to build specific skills of partnership et al., in the fields of labour market, social inclusion, healthcare, equal opportunities and non-

discrimination, working conditions and the development of the administrative capacity in these fields .

Component 1 complements the measures in support of the transnational cooperation in the field of the labour market and social inclusion, that have been implemented under the Operational Programme “Human Resources Development” 2007-2013.

Within the Component 1, no actions financed by another project, program or any other financial scheme, resulting from the national budget, the Community budget or other donor program will be supported and the relevant check will be performed at individual project level.

Objective and rationale of Component 2:

The objective of Component 2 is to improve the welfare of human resources in the region of the Danube river by promoting of interregional and transnational cooperation between partners from different Member States of the EU in the fields of the labour market and quality of working places, social inclusion and fight against poverty, healthcare, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, working conditions and the development of the administrative capacity in these fields .

Component 2 aims at transfer and introduction of social innovations, best practices, partner's approaches to find solutions to common problems, to build specific skills of partnership etc. in the abovementioned fields.

Component 2 complements the measures in support of the transnational cooperation in the field of the labour market and social inclusion implemented under the Operational Programme “Human Resources Development” 2007 – 2013.

The results achieved under Component 2 will contribute to the implementation of the objectives of the European strategy for the Danube region and in particular in the field “Investment in people and skills”. The counties from the Danube region differ in terms of economic potential, but the region is highly interconnected with the opportunity of further integration and growth. Competitiveness of the region would be greatly improved from the joint actions in the field of SMEs, labour market policies, education and training. There is a need for improvement of the institutional capacity at all levels. The EU Strategy for the Danube region provides a solid integrated framework to enable the countries and regions to resolve issues that cannot be

considered satisfactorily in isolation, but instead require transnational strategic approaches, projects and collaboration.

In view of the territorial scope of Component 2, the measures will have a complementary effect on the activities implemented under the Programme for transnational cooperation “Danube” 2014 – 2020, as well as to the activities envisaged in the Romania – Bulgaria Cross-border Programme 2014-2020. Within the framework of both components of the operation no activities financed by another project, program or any other financial scheme, resulting from the national budget, the Community budget or other donor program will be supported and the relevant check will be performed at individual project level.

2. Indicators:

Under Component 1

OUTPUT INDICATORS			RESULT INDICATORS		
Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value
Identified innovative practices	Number	280	Transferred innovative practices	Number	180

Under Component 2

OUTPUT INDICATORS			RESULT INDICATORS		
Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value
Identified innovative practices	Number	60	Transferred innovative practices	Number	50

For the respective component each Applicant shall include in section 8 in the Application Form all or these output and result indicators, which will be achieved by the implementation of the particular project.

Each indicator included in the proposal shall be quantified with a positive **target value** other than “0”.

This requirement is an eligibility criteria of the project proposal and its failure will lead to REJECTION of the project by the evaluation committee.

Under this procedure, priority is given to projects that involve more than one identified and/or transferred innovative practice

Important!

In a given project proposal, within one investment priority, there may be more than one identified and/or transferred innovative practices. In a given project proposal, one identified and/or transferred innovative practice cannot be linked to more than one investment priority. This is an eligibility criteria and in case of failure it leads to a rejection of the project proposal.

3. Total amount of the grant under the procedure:

The total amount of the grant under this procedure is 20 000 000 BGN, distributed as follows:

Under Component 1

Total amount of grants	ESF funds (total / percentage)	National co-financing (Total/percentage)
<i>15 000 000 BGN</i>	<i>14 250 000 BGN 95%</i>	<i>750 000 BGN 5%</i>

This is the total budget for provision of grant under this component. The Managing authority reserves the right not to distribute the above amount in case of an insufficient number of qualified proposals that meet the predetermined criteria.

Under Component 2

Total amount of grants	ESF funds (total / percentage)	National co-financing (Total/percentage)
<i>5 000 000 BGN</i>	<i>4 750 000 BGN 95%</i>	<i>250 000 BGN 5%</i>

This is the total budget for provision of grant under this component. The Managing authority reserves the right not to distribute the above amount in case of an insufficient number of

qualified proposals that meet the predetermined criteria.

4. Minimum and maximum amount of the grant for a specific project:

Each Applicant can apply for grant if its project proposal meets the following minimum and maximum amounts :

Under Component 1:

- Minimum amount of grant: **50 000 BGN**
- Maximum amount of grant: **200 000 BGN**

Under Component 2:

- Minimum amount of grant: **50 000 BGN**
- Maximum amount of grant: **200 000 BGN**

5. Percentage of co-financing:

Under the procedure no co-financing is required from the applicants and the Bulgarian partners.

The foreign partners provide own funds regarding their participation in the project within the activities and/or parts of the activities in which the partners participate. The funding can be from own funds or from different sources of funding from the respective Member State.

6. Eligible applicants and partners:

Applicants and Bulgarian partners under investment priorities (IP)

IP 1

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy; Employment Agency; Agency for People with Disabilities; Centre for Human Resources Development and Regional Initiatives; State Company Bulgarian-German Vocational Training Centre, the Ministry of Justice, State Enterprise “Prisons production”; organisations providing intermediary services on the labour market; education and training organisations and institutions; employers; social partners; municipalities and municipal districts; information and professional guidance centres; non-governmental organisations.

IP 2

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy; Employment Agency; Agency for People with Disabilities; Centre for Human Resource Development and Regional Initiatives; State Company Bulgarian-German Vocational Training Centre; organisations providing intermediary services on the labour market; education and training organisations and institutions; employers; social partners; municipalities and municipal districts; information and professional guidance centres; non-governmental organisations.

IP 3

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy; Employment Agency; social partners.

IP 4

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy; Employment Agency; Agency for People with Disabilities; Centre for Human Resources Development and Regional Initiatives; State Company Bulgarian-German Vocational Training Centre; Ministry of Economy and Energy; self-employed people; education and training organisations and institutions; information and professional guidance centres; entrepreneurship development centres; social partners; municipalities and municipal districts; non-governmental organisations; financial institutions, “Fund Manager of Financial instruments in Bulgaria” JSC

IP 5

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy; Employment Agency; General Labour Inspectorate Executive Agency; Centre for Human Resources Development and Regional Initiatives; State Enterprise "Bulgarian-German Vocational Training Centre"; institutions and organisations exercising control on the working conditions in the enterprises; services in support of the employers; organisations providing intermediary services on the labour market; employers; associations of employers (clusters); self-employed persons; educational and training organisations and institutions; information and professional orientation centres; social partners; non-governmental organisations.

IP 6

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy; Employment Agency; Centre for Human Resources Development and Regional Initiatives; State enterprise “Bulgarian – German vocational training centre”; National Agency for Vocational Education and Training; Ministry of Health;

employers; associations of employers (clusters); self-employed persons; educational and training institutions and organizations; social partners; non-governmental organizations.

IP 7

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and secondary budget spending units which report to the Minister of Labour and Social Policy; Ministry of Health and secondary budget spending units which report to the Minister of Health; suppliers of social and health services; social partners; employers; municipalities and districts of municipalities; organisations providing intermediary services; educational and training institutions and organizations; information and professional orientation centers; community centers; non-governmental organizations, social enterprises and cooperatives for people with disabilities; registered religious branches.

IP 8

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy; Employment Agency; Social Assistance Agency; Agency for People with Disabilities; State Agency for Child Protection; Ministry of Health; employers; municipalities and districts of municipalities; non-governmental organizations; organisations providing labour market intermediary services;; educational and training institutions and organizations; social service providers; health services providers, public medical and treatment facilities ; medical universities; registered branches of religious denominations .

IP 9

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy; Employment Agency; Social Assistance Agency; Agency for People with Disabilities; State Agency for Child Protection; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Youth and Sports; Ministry of Justice; employers; municipalities and districts of municipalities; non-governmental organizations; organisations providing labour market intermediary services ; educational and training institutions and organizations; social service providers; health service providers, public medical and treatment facilities ; medical universities; registered religious branches.

IP 10

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy; Social Assistance Agency; Agency for People with

Disabilities; social enterprises; employers; specialized enterprises and cooperatives of people with disabilities; educational and training institutions and organizations; non-governmental organizations; municipalities and districts of municipalities; social partners; social service providers.

IP 11

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Social Assistance Agency, Agency for People with Disabilities, Labour Inspectorate Executive Agency, "Working Conditions Fund", Social protection Fund; Centre for Human Resources Development and Regional Initiatives; State Agency for Child Protection; National Agency for Vocational Education and Training; Ministry of Health and the second level budget spending units to the Minister of Health ; Ministry of Youth and Sports; Commission for Protection against Discrimination; The secretariat of the National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues via the administration of the Council of Ministers; The Secretariat of the National Council for Integration of People with Disabilities through MLSP; training organizations of the state administration, municipalities and districts of municipalities; National Social Security Institute..

The foreign partners shall meet the following eligibility criteria:

1. They shall have separate legal personality and are established and registered according to the laws in force in Member States of the EU; **and**
2. They provide own funds for their participation in the project from:
 - a) own sources; **and/or**
 - b) public sources of the Member State of the EU, where they are established and registered ; **and/or**
 - c) other sources.
3. They sign Agreement between Applicant and partners (Annex to the Guidelines for Applicants) with the Applicant and all other partners at the time of submission of the project proposal.

Important!

The documents that shall verify the eligibility be attached by the foreign partners to are indicated in the present Guidelines for Applicants. .

In addition to the eligibility criteria of foreign partners described above, please note the following:

- The partnerships created for the purposes of this Call for proposals are not required to be registered in court;
- The foreign partners shall have specific skills and experience, innovative approaches in the implementation of activities, etc., that would contribute to better implementation of the project, which will be evaluated in the context of the technical and financial evaluation of the project proposal;
- The foreign partners are eligible to participate in more than one project proposal under this Call for proposals ;
- Under Component 2 it is encouraging the participation of partners established and registered in the EU Member States within the region of the Danube river according to the European Union Strategy for Danube Region – federal provinces Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria, Austria, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Romania. In case meeting the described criteria, the respective project proposal will receive bonus scores under its technical and financial evaluation;
- databases of registered relevant organizations as foreign partners can be found here:
<http://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/>

The applicant and the foreign partners shall sign **Partnership Agreement (Annex to this Guidelines for Applicants) at the time of submission of the project proposal.**

7. Activities eligible for funding:

Each project proposal shall contain the following activities:

- Activities/expenses for organization and management of the project;
- and

- Activities/expenses for information and communication.

Under the current Call for proposals a range of compulsory and complementary activities are eligible for financing:

Compulsory activities that shall be included in each project proposal:

- Adaptation and/or validation of social innovations, which may be based on innovative models, practices, services, products from other countries and/or pilot implementation of developed innovative approaches and models;
- Increasing the capacity of the partners and the stakeholders in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of best practices and innovative approaches through the organization of seminars, workshops and trainings to promote the exchange of experience, exchange of information, best practices and innovative approaches between partners and other stakeholders ;
- Results' evaluation activities in terms of the applicability of the project's innovative features.

Important!

The evaluation of the results will follow the logical connection between what is planned in the application form and its actual implementation.

The evaluation will follow in practice the following parameters:

- Tracking the achievement of the objectives and results of the project and their link to the satisfaction of the needs of the target group;
- Features in the implementation of the planned activities and their link to the objectives and results achieved by the project;
- Effectiveness and efficiency of the planned expenses in regards to the objectives, activities and the results achieved.

This activity shall be performed necessarily after tender procedure for selecting a contractor in accordance with the applicable Bulgarian legislation. This provision is subject to verification by the evaluation committee at the stage of technical and financial evaluation of the project proposal.

- Activities for dissemination of the results (positive and/or negative) other than the activities described above for information and communication.

In addition to the described compulsory activities the Applicant and partners may choose any or all of these additional activities which shall be linked to achievement of the objectives of the project:

- Preparation of specific analyses and studies of the experience of other Member States;
- Building up and/or inclusion in networking, twinning.

Important methodological notes on the description of the activities:

- **Under Component 2:** It is encouraging at least one of the required project activities to be implemented in any of the regions at NUTS 2 level in Bulgaria along the Danube river, namely Northeast, North Central and Northwest.

Under this Call for Proposals the concept of “social innovation” is considered in the light of the ESF Regulation 1304/2013¹ and can be defined as development and implementation of new ideas (products, services and models) that meet social needs and create new social relations or co-operations. The social innovations are new answers to the urgent social demands, which affect the process of social interaction. The social innovations are directed to improvement of the people’s welfare. The social innovations are not only good for society but also for individuals, because improve their capacity for action². **For the purposes of this Call for Proposals “social innovation” and “innovative practices” are equivalent concepts.** When choosing a social innovation the Applicant may choose among the following approaches identified in the European Union that shall be adapted to the targeted regions of this Call for Proposals :

The innovations shall be:

- oriented to processes - development of new methods and/or approaches;

¹ <http://www.eufunds.bg/archive/documents/1420630479.pdf>

² European Commission, Guide to Social Innovation, February 2013, page 6
[http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/20182/84453/Guide to Social Innovation.pdf](http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/20182/84453/Guide%20to%20Social%20Innovation.pdf)

or

- oriented to objectives - work with different target groups, sectors and at different levels;

or

- oriented to content - new organization of training, networking and dissemination.

The innovations shall be based on:

- completely new methods;

or

- Existing approaches are used with new target groups and/or in new context;

or

- New combinations of existing approaches.

In introducing social innovation the stages are as follows³:

- Study of the social innovation;
- Prototyping and piloting of the social innovation;
- Application / implementation of the social innovation;
- Sustainability assessment in order to determine the potential impact of the innovation.

8. Categories of expenses, eligible for funding:

The eligible expenses under this Call for Proposals are related only to the Applicant and Bulgarian partners.

The foreign partners shall provide their own funding for participation in the project in accordance with item 11.3 of the Guidelines for Applicants.

9. Eligible target groups:

The eligible target groups are allocated to the investment priorities of this procedure as

³ European Commission, Guide to Social Innovation, February 2013, page 9

follows:

IP 1

The focus on certain groups within the specific objectives does not exclude a wider range of the target groups covered by this investment priority, namely: inactive people who are not in education or training, including discouraged ones, job-seekers and disadvantaged groups on the labour market.

IP 2

Economically inactive young people who are not in education or training, at the age of 15 to 29.

IP 3

Administrative staff involved in the area on the labour market, job-seekers, employers.

IP 4

People who wish to start their own business; self-employed people; micro-enterprises established by the indicated as target groups natural persons, including self-employed persons; employees in micro-enterprises supported by the program.

IP 5

Employed persons, including employed and self-employed persons; employers.

IP 6

The focus on certain groups within the specific objectives will also include a wider range of the target groups covered by this investment priority, namely: employed persons, including employed and self-employed, post-graduate students and health professionals.

IP 7

The main target groups are the representatives of the Roma community; people with a foreign background; people at risk and / or victims of discrimination; people living in areas with low population density, rural and isolated areas, parts of populated areas where there is a concentration of problems creating risk of poverty, social exclusion and marginalisation (high level of unemployment, low income, limited access to public services, spatial segregation, spatial isolation, etc.).

Although the activities are aimed primarily to the representatives of the Roma community and to the citizens with a foreign background, they will not exclude the support of other marginalised groups with similar characteristics and needs.

In view of the specificity of the activities under the investment priority, the eligible target

groups will include employees of organisations and institutions related to the socio-economic integration of the marginalised communities.

IP 8

People with disabilities and their families; families with children, including with disabilities; children and adults at risk; employees of providers of social and health services;

IP 9

People with disabilities; people over 65 incapable of self-care; families with children, including with disabilities; children and adults at risk; children, youth and elderly people, including with disabilities placed in specialized institutions and their families; the staff of specialized institutions; employees in organisations and institutions engaged with the process of deinstitutionalisation; employees of social and health service providers; public employees engaged with the implementation of the reform in the youth justice.

IP 10

People with disabilities; disadvantaged people on the labour market and other socially excluded persons; representatives of different communities employed in social enterprises, co-operatives and specialized enterprises for people with disabilities; people employed in social entrepreneurship institutions and organisations.

IP 11

Employees in the administrations of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the second level budget spending units to the Minister of Labour and Social Policy; officials in the administrations of the Ministry of Health and the second level budget spending units to the the Minister of Health; employees at the Commission for Protection against Discrimination and employees in the Secretariat of the National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues (NCCEII); experts on ethnic and integration issues in the regional and municipal administrations, officials in the Secretariat of the National Council for Integration of People with disabilities through MLSP; employees of the public administration units, providing social and health services; employees of providers of social and health services; representatives of the social partners; representatives of organizations and institutions engaged in the implementation of the policies in the field of social inclusion, health, equal opportunities and non-discrimination and working conditions.

Double funding of the same target group from different sources for the one and the same

activity is not allowed.

In the project proposal the Applicant has to indicate specific target group(s) towards which the project's activities will be directed. It is necessary to analyse the target groups' needs and problems, as well as to solving which of them the Project is directed. The target group included in the proposal should be described by its specific characteristics in line with Guidelines for Applicants as well as quantified - how many representatives of the target group will be involved.

10. Minimum and maximum time limit for implementation of the project:

The duration of the activities under both components of this Call for Proposals shall be completed by 31.12.2018.

11. Order for assessment of project proposals:

All project proposals submitted by the deadline shall be evaluated in line with the described criteria under Guidelines for Applicants. The criteria will not be changed during the performance of the evaluation procedure. The evaluation is performed in the system UMIS 2020 and is documented by filling of the evaluation tables. The evaluation of project proposals includes:

1. Assessment of the administrative compliance and eligibility;
2. Technical and financial evaluation.

STAGE 1: ASSESSMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLIANCE AND ELIGIBILITY

Commission appointed by order of the Head of the Managing Authority will assess the administrative compliance and eligibility of Project proposals subject to the following requirements:

In accordance with the provisions of art. 34, para. 2 of the LMFESIF⁴ when at the assessment of the administrative compliance and eligibility it is ascertained lack of documents and/or discrepancy, the Commission shall send a notification letter to the applicant for the ascertained discrepancies and shall set a reasonable deadline for their correction. This deadline may not be less than one week. The notification letter indicates that if the discrepancies are not corrected on

⁴ Law on Management of Funds under European Structural and Investment Funds, as of Dec 22nd 2015

time it can result in termination of proceedings in relation to the Applicant.

The correspondence with the Applicant will be carried out through system UMIS 2020 through the profile of the Applicant.

Failure to correct the discrepancies on time can lead to termination of the proceedings in respect to the Applicant! The Applicant cannot submit to the Commission other documents except the missing ones and those for correction of discrepancies. The correction of discrepancies cannot lead to improved quality of the project proposal.

STAGE 2: TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL EVALUATION

“Technical and financial evaluation” means an evaluation of the merits of the project proposals carried out in accordance with the quality evaluation criteria.

In order a project proposal to be proposed for financing, the total final evaluation of the stage of the technical and financial evaluation should be equal to or greater than 70 points.

In the event that two or more project proposals have the same general final evaluations the projects will be sorted in descending order according to the following criteria:

- **Higher result indicators :**
 - Number of transferred innovative practices.
- **The final score of Section 3 Methodology and organization;**
- **The final score of Section 4 Budget.**
- **Order of registration in UMIS.**

If the total score obtained for sections 1 and 2 is less than 20% of the maximum scores for the particular section, the project proposal is proposed to be rejected .

If the total score obtained for each of the sections 3 and 4 is less than 35% of the maximum scores for the particular section, the project proposal is proposed to be rejected .

Quality Evaluation Criteria:	Maximum scores
1. Operational capacity	15
1.1 Experience of the applicant and all partners in project management and/or experience in the implementation of activities, such as those included in the project proposal during the last five years.	10
1.1.A <u>Experience of the applicant in project management and/or experience in the implementation of activities, such as those included in the project proposal during the last five years.</u>	
1.1. B <u>Experience of all partners in project management and/or experience in the implementation of activities, such as those included in the project proposal⁵ during the last five years.</u>	
1.2. <u>Experience of the project manager in organization, management/implementation of projects and/or activities such as those included in the project proposal and/or managerial experience.</u>	5
2. Conformity	20
2.1 Description and rationale of <u>the project objectives.</u>	10
2.2 Description of the project's target groups and their needs.	10
3. Methodology and organization	45
3.1. Compliance of the activities with the objectives and the expected results.	25
3.2. Implementation clarity of the activities.	20
4. Budget and expenses effectiveness - efficiency, effectiveness and economy of the expenses and budget structuration.	20
Total, maximum scores	100

⁵ In case more than one partner is included, the assessment is formed as an arithmetic average of the scores of each partner.

12. List of documents to be submitted by foreign partners at application stage:

The foreign partners under this Call for Proposals must submit the following documents by attaching them in UMIS 2020:

1. Annex VI: Agreement between applicant and partners;
2. Certificate for current legal status of the foreign partner or other relevant document issued not earlier than three months before the deadline of this Call for proposal, scanned and attached in UMIS 2020. From this document it shall be clear that the foreign partner is eligible as well as which are the persons that legally represent partner's organization. The document shall be presented as a translation in Bulgarian Language.

Important general notes on the procedure:

In case the Applicant has not submitted any of the documents for the Applicant/partner or has submitted them, but not in the required form, they can be requested further by the Evaluation committee. The deadline for submission of the requested documents will not be shorter than one week.

The Evaluation committee may at any time verify the declared data by the Applicants/partners as well as to request clarification regarding the documents submitted in accordance with item 21 of the Guidelines for Applicants.

The information and documents presented in any case and under no circumstances shall change the original conditions of the proposals presented and/or lead to improvement of their quality.

13. Deadline for submission of the project proposals:

The deadline for submission of the project proposals is 05.04.2017, 17:30.

Each project proposal that is submitted after the deadline will be rejected and will not be considered under this Call for Proposals.

14. Additional requirements:

Each Applicant may submit only one project proposal under this Call for Proposals. If the Applicant has submitted more than one project proposal, only the first one by time of submission will be allowed to assessment unless it has been withdrawn by the Applicant.

One partner may participate in more than one project proposals in case it has sufficient capacity to implement project activities.

At the internet address indicated below, where the number of the Call for Proposals is clearly indicated, **questions and further clarifications can be asked**, *within three weeks before the deadline for submission of proposals, i.e. up to 15.03.2017 (including)*:

tnd@mlsp.government.bg

Written clarifications will be given *within two weeks before the deadline for submission of proposals, i.e. up to 22.03.2017 (including)*.

In order to ensure equal treatment of applicants, the MA will not give clarifications that contain statement on the quality of a particular project proposal. Clarifications will be given in terms of application requirements which are mandatory for all applicants.

The questions and clarifications will be posted on the following web pages: www.esf.bg and <https://eumis2020.government.bg> to the documents of the procedure.

15. Annexes to the Guidelines for Applicants concerning the foreign partner:

Documents that shall be submitted at the time of application:

- Annex VI: Agreement between Applicant and partners.

Documents that shall be submitted at the time of signing of the Administrative Agreement:

- Annex IX: Declaration of irregularities.