



Preparatory action "Youth Guarantee"

Supporting partnerships for activation measures targeting young people through projects in the context of Youth Guarantee schemes at national, regional or local level

Call for proposals No. VP/2012/012

Budget Heading 04.04.17

In view of the large number of enquiries, please do not telephone.
Questions should be sent by email only to:

empl-vp-2012-012@ec.europa.eu

This text is available in English, French and German. The English version is the original.

To ensure a rapid response to requests for information, applicants are invited
to send their queries in English or French, where possible.

*Employment,
Social Affairs
and Inclusion*

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1. Introduction

The effects of the economic crisis on employment have been particularly marked for the European youth. The labour market for **young people** in the European Union (EU) continues to show worrying developments: the youth unemployment rate is twice as high as for the whole working population. This is a major cause for concern as 5.5 million young people are unemployed today. Moreover, 7.5 million young people are currently neither in employment, nor in education or training (so-called NEETs). These young people are mainly early-school leavers and low skilled, often from a disadvantaged background. The term 'NEETs' covers various sub-groups of young people, with diverse needs.

In the framework of Europe 2020 and the European Employment Strategy, the "Youth on the Move" flagship initiative¹, launched in September 2010, presented a framework of policy priorities to reduce youth unemployment, with particular focus on facilitating the transition from education to work and reducing labour market segmentation. The Commission called in particular upon Member States **to ensure that all young people are in a job, further education or activation measures within four months of leaving school and to provide this as a 'Youth Guarantee'**.

In June 2011, Council Conclusions² on youth employment invited Member States to strengthen cooperation with the social partners, employment services and other labour market stakeholders, and education and training bodies to target in particular young people who are neither in employment nor in education or training (NEETs), promoting their return to education, training or the labour market, which could be achieved by developing an integrated approach similar to those already developed in a number of Member States.

In the preparation for the budget 2012, the European Parliament (EP) backed up this approach and asked the Commission to implement a preparatory action for supporting the setting-up of Youth Guarantees in Member States, for which a total budget of EUR 4 million is made available.

In response to the dramatic rise of youth unemployment in many Member States, the Commission launched the "Youth Opportunities Initiative³" (YOI) in December 2011, calling for immediate action to be taken in 2012 and 2013, both by Member States and by the Commission, including the implementation of the EP preparatory action on Youth Guarantees. The Commission presented an interim account of the measures taken under this initiative in the context of its Employment Package 'Towards a job-rich recovery'⁴.

On 29 June 2012 the European Council urged Member States to step up efforts to increase youth employment, with *"the objective that within a few months of leaving school, young people receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or a traineeship"*. It further concluded that these measures can be supported by the European Social Fund and that Member States should use the possibilities of financing temporary recruitment subsidies from the Fund.

¹ COM (2010) 1047 of 15 September 2010

² Council Conclusions 11838/11 of 17 June 2011 on promoting youth employment to achieve the Europe 2020 objectives

³ COM (2011) 933 of 20 December 2011

⁴ SWD (2012) 98 final, accompanying COM (2012) 173 of 18 April 2012

The present call for proposals is aimed at supporting partnerships for activation measures targeting young people (15-24)⁵ through projects in the context of Youth Guarantee schemes at national, regional or local level.

2. Economic and policy drivers to tackle youth unemployment in Europe

The youth (15-24) unemployment rate has jumped rapidly from 15 % in February 2008 to more than 21 % in the beginning of 2010, and has again risen to an unprecedented high level of 22.4% at the beginning of 2012. The strongest increases⁶ between 2010 and 2011 occurred in Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Portugal and Spain. Young people are particular at risk that longer unemployment spells in the current context have a more permanent scarring effect in their adult life, with an increased risk of marginalisation, poverty and social exclusion.

Young people with at most lower secondary education completed (these are the early leavers from education and training) bear the highest risk of unemployment. The most recent figures available for all 27 Member States of September 2011 indicate that while the EU average youth unemployment rate was 21.2%, it reached 27.7% for low skilled youth. The unemployment rates for youth with medium or high skills level are lower (18.5% resp. 17.9%); nevertheless there are indications that the advantage of the better skilled in entering the labour market has diminished and that young graduates are facing increasing difficulties in finding a first work experience.

Long-term unemployment is also on the rise as 28% of the young unemployed under 25 have been unemployed for more than 12 months and an increasing number of young people do not actively seek employment, leaving a too high number of them out of reach. Moreover those who have a job often find themselves in a segmented labour market as most are on temporary contracts. In May 2012, the youth unemployment rate reached a new historic high of 22.7% at EU level⁷. In some Member States, rates are as high as 50%.

Against this outset, the Europe 2020 Strategy is aimed at contributing to develop a sustainable and competitive economy based on knowledge and innovation fostering high employment and social inclusion. EU policies and instruments should contribute to achieving the target of a 75% employment rate for women and men aged between 20 and 64. Youth employment in particular is an EU policy priority enshrined in the Europe 2020 strategy.

The Employment Guidelines⁸, which are part of the Europe 2020 Strategy, highlight, among other objectives, the need for Member States to promote the labour market participation of young people, to establish forward-looking measures to integrate young people into the labour market and to make employment more attractive, particularly for the low-skilled ones. They should also pay particular attention to the employment of those furthest away from the labour market.

In the 2012 Annual Growth Survey⁹, the Commission describes the situation of young people as especially worrying and stresses that Member States' priorities are to

⁵ In exceptional cases, to be justified, up to 30

⁶ For the age group 25-29, the EU average unemployment increased strongly between 2008 and 2010 from 8.6 to 12.6% and has since remained at that level (12.4% in 2011q3); again the increase was concentrated on some Member States.

⁷ Monthly Labour Market Fact Sheet, July 2012

⁸ COM(2010)193 final of 27 April 2010

⁹ COM(2011) 815 final of 23 November 2011

establish strategies identifying the most urgent needs and proposing concrete actions that target young people not in employment, education or training. This includes good quality apprenticeships, traineeship contracts and entrepreneurial skills, as well as modernising education and training systems to reflect labour market skills demand while reinforcing their efficiency and quality.

Furthermore, while in the frame of the 2011 European Semester of economic governance only 10 Member States received country-specific recommendations (CSR) addressing youth unemployment, 17 Member States have received such CSRs in the 2012 exercise¹⁰.

The Employment Package emphasises that the support for transition to work, e.g. through youth guarantees, activation measures targeting young people, the quality of traineeships, and youth mobility should be prioritised and announces that the Commission will present a proposal for a Council Recommendation on Youth Guarantees by the end of 2012 and support activation measures targeting young people in the context of Youth Guarantee schemes.

3. The added value of the preparatory action

Despite repeated calls on Member States to ensure that young people are either in a job, education or (re-) training within four months of leaving school, progress is too slow: some Member States lack the culture of cooperation/partnership, know-how and/or funding that is needed to establish such schemes, others are reluctant to commit themselves on the number of months after which action should be taken. The lack of a comprehensive and systematic approach is especially problematic when it comes to reaching out to the young people who are furthest away from the labour market as they risk staying "under the radar" of any of the actors involved.

Building upon existing Youth Guarantee approaches in some Member States (in particular in Austria, Finland, the Netherlands and Sweden) and on analytical work undertaken in 2011 by the EU network of public employment services (PES)¹¹, the preparatory action will support Member States (as well as regions and local authorities) with youth unemployment rates above EU average (22.7% in May 2012) with activation measures targeting young people through projects in the context of Youth Guarantee schemes.

It is meant to help a number of Member States to establish, at national, regional or local level, the most efficient and effective partnerships that are needed in order to put in place youth guarantee schemes that will deliver at best, given the respective youth unemployment situations they are meant to tackle.

The practices developed through the preparatory action shall be continued and further developed in Member States with the support of the Structural Funds, in particular the European Social Fund, in the new financing period (2014-2020).

In this respect, the 'Elements for a Common Strategic Framework 2014 to 2020'¹² envisage that "a key action for the European Social Fund is to contribute to the sustainable integration of the NEETs into the labour market by the introduction of a 'Youth Guarantee', with a particular focus on apprenticeship-type vocational training and internships for graduates to acquire first work experience".

¹⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_en.htm

¹¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=105&newsId=1009&furtherNews=yes>

¹² SWD (2012) 61 final of 14 March 2012

4. The preparatory action "Youth Guarantee"

4.1. Legal and operational framework

The preparatory action will be implemented within the meaning of Article 49(6) of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities. A total budget of EUR 4 million has been earmarked by the EU budgetary authority for the year 2012 (budget line 04 04 17).

The preparatory action will be implemented at national, regional or local level by partnerships of relevant actors in Member States with youth unemployment rates above EU average (22.7% in May 2012).

4.2. Objectives, level of intervention and expected results

The preparatory action's **overarching priorities** are for applicant organisations/institutions to build up partnership based approaches that are meant to:

- Bridge the gap and strengthen cooperation between employment/career guidance services and schools to ensure that young people can make informed decisions about future educational or professional steps and are aware of the services available to them when leaving school.
- Empower relevant labour market actors in particular employment services, municipalities and other youth services to develop partnerships with employers aimed at boosting employment opportunities, apprenticeships and traineeship schemes for young people, whilst ensuring better alignment of active labour market policies with labour demand.
- Develop partnerships between public and private employment services in line with the PARES methodology developed by the Commission¹³, as well as other specialised youth services (NGOs, clubs, associations...) that help to smooth transitions from both unemployment and education into work.
- Ensure the involvement of representatives of youth and/or youth organisations in the design and the implementation of youth guarantee schemes to better tailor services to the needs of beneficiaries and to have them act as multipliers in awareness raising activities.

Each applicant organisation/institution will present a test case project of smaller scale to be implemented by the partnership deemed necessary to establish a Youth Guarantee scheme and will adapt the level of intervention (i.e. national, regional or local) of the envisaged partnership to the groups of young people meant to be targeted by the proposed test case project

The experience gained from the projects selected under this call for proposals will provide Member States with various schemes, patterns and practical recommendations for establishing more sustainable and larger Youth Guarantee schemes with a view to the future Union funding schemes relevant to young people and labour market integration, paving the way for future ESF action.

To that end:

¹³ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=991&langId=en>

- Their potential for replication/transferability will be assessed and formalised, through an **overall external on-going evaluation** exercise, in order to be shared within (where implemented at regional or local level) and between Member States;
- A **valorisation conference** will be organised at the end of 2013/early 2014 to present the various schemes, patterns and practical recommendations resulting from this call. National authorities should ensure that ESF managing authorities are involved in this conference in order to make sure that all results validated by this conference are taken up in the future ESF planning.

For their part, the above mentioned evaluation and valorisation exercises will be implemented through separate service orders based on the DG EMPL multiple framework contracts "Provision of support in the DEVELOPMENT AND PILOT-TESTING OF METHODS AND TOOLS for evaluations and evaluation related activities". Out of the preparatory action's total budget of EUR 4 million, an amount of **EUR 400 000** has been earmarked for that purpose.

The present call for proposals can finance **at least 15 projects**.

5. Purpose of this call for proposals

The present call for proposals is aiming at selecting and financing partnerships¹⁴ supporting the testing of:

- a) **Cooperation between relevant actors/stakeholders to carry out activation measures targeting young people** thereby piloting new Youth Guarantee schemes. Relevant stakeholders would be supported nationally, regionally or locally in providing counselling and help regarding the implementation of a Youth Guarantee scheme.
- b) **Programmes at national, regional or local level for young people at risk of leaving education too early**: to develop their skills and, in this context, put a special focus on the networking between all relevant stakeholders (such as companies, schools/vocational training centres, youth welfare services, employment services, etc.) as an important measure to improve the integration of young people into the labour market.
- c) **In regions and local areas, where youth unemployment rates are above the EU average and/or well above the national average, innovative approaches that apply to young people facing multiple barriers** (such as social exclusion, poverty or discrimination) to labour market entry, in particular those living in rural, deprived urban, remote and peripheral areas.

Given the short duration envisaged for implementing the action, the rather limited budget per action, and in order to facilitate its replication/transferability while allowing proper evaluation, project proposals should focus on **one** of these a) b) c) axes **only**.

The established partnerships are expected among others to:

- i. Identify the group(s) of young people they want to target and justify their choice(s);

¹⁴ Members to be included in such partnerships are described under point 7.3 below

- ii. Identify the needs of the targeted young people versus one of the above options a), b) and c);
- iii. Design the measures and processes that would be needed to establish youth guarantee scheme(s) corresponding to these needs, that should cover in particular¹⁵ a job offer either locally or in another region or Member State¹⁶, a traineeship, an apprenticeship or any other activation measure allowing a first work experience and provide young people with holistic personalised guidance and individual action planning;
- iv. Assess the capacity and assign the role of each member organisation/institution of the partnership in order to deliver the chosen scheme(s);
- v. Organise inter alia all necessary meetings, training sessions, awareness raising activities that will allow developing the capacity building of the respective actors;
- vi. Test the chosen scheme(s) with a group of the targeted young people;
- vii. Evaluate the results (success and failure factors) of the tested scheme(s).

The testing phase mentioned above under vi) should represent the major part of the project proposal.

Furthermore, in order for the preparatory action to feed into the next programming period of the Structural Funds, in particular of the ESF, each project should deliver results that are replicable and transferable within and between Member States; therefore each project should provide **analytical and methodological findings** (including success and failure factors), focusing in particular on the nature of the established partnership, on its ability to deliver the planned activities and to ensure the replication/transferability of the project's results.

5.1 Role of applicant organisations/institutions and partners

In order to establish the above mentioned partnerships, applicant organisations/institutions should involve in the implementation of their proposed test case/project other relevant stakeholders such as¹⁷ national, regional or local authorities, public, private or third sector employment services, ESF managing authorities, education and vocational training institutions, universities, social partners, chambers of commerce, associations of employers, youth welfare and social services, youth clubs and associations, and any other relevant community actors.

Letters of commitment from partners should specify their contribution, financial and/or otherwise to the project, as well as the nature of activities under their responsibility¹⁸.

5.2 Participation

Applicant organisations/institutions to this call cannot be individuals. Partner organisations will be from the same country, region or local area, depending on the level at which the test case/project will take place.

Additional partners can be from different regions or local areas in the same country, if their participation will bring specific expertise and can help identifying relevant

¹⁵ Non exhaustive list, to be adapted to the specific context of the project proposal.

¹⁶ In that respect, see the Commission's pilot project "Your First Eures Job": <http://ec.europa.eu/yourfirsteuresjob>

¹⁷ Non exhaustive list – each application will have to demonstrate the relevance and the quality of the proposed partnership in relation to the specific group(s) of young people they are targeting

¹⁸ See also sections 6 and 8.2 below as well as section 14 – Checklist, point 13

partnerships, or assessing the obstacles facing the established partnership and the ways to overcome these, or identifying ways to deliver efficient and effective Youth Guarantee schemes, or taking part in the production of the project's analytical and methodological findings mentioned above.

However, despite the required partnership mentioned above, the application should be submitted by **one single applicant organisation/institution** (see point 7.2 below).

This organisation/institution will sign the grant agreement with the Commission, receive and manage the grant from the Commission and be responsible for implementing and reporting to the Commission on the progress of the overall test case/project.

It will also ensure monitoring and evaluation of the project activities. In that respect, it will ensure that all members of the proposed partnership will take active part in the overall external on-going evaluation exercise as well as in the valorisation conference foreseen under point 4.2.

The Commission will deal **only** with the applicant organisation/institution.

5.3 Type of activities

In order to deliver the tasks deemed necessary to implement the Youth Guarantee schemes as described under the above point 5, the following type of activities will be eligible for EU funding:

- a) Design of a youth guarantee scheme, constitution and coordination of the partnership to deliver the chosen scheme;
- b) Management of the project, including all activities needed by the partnership and its members to deliver the chosen approach (e.g. external expertise; workshops, seminars, training sessions and any other kind of meetings; where necessary, travel and accommodation);
- c) Any activity needed to support and manage the test phase -mentioned under point 5 vii- with young people, including individualised services, travel and accommodation costs for the group of young people;
- d) In-built evaluation of the project's results and outcome, including the tested youth guarantee scheme and the corresponding partnership.

5.4 Work organisation and follow-up

The grant agreement to be set up between the Commission and the selected applicant organisations/institutions will be managed by Unit C.3 'Youth Employment, Entrepreneurship, Microfinances Facility' within the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion (DG EMPL) of the European Commission, which will be responsible for the overall implementation of the preparatory action. The Unit will nominate a co-ordinator for the whole preparatory action and project managers, whose contact details will be provided to the respective selected projects.

DG EMPL will organise co-ordination meetings for the monitoring of this preparatory action. These will include representatives of the European Commission and of the selected projects, as well as of the external evaluator. The first co-ordination meeting will take place as from the date of signature of the grant agreements.

It is planned to hold three co-ordination meetings in Brussels in the course of the implementation of the preparatory action. They will allow the examination of progress results as well as key success and failure factors. Each applicant organisation/institution should be represented by its project manager. The meetings will also provide the opportunity to exchange good practices and enhance team-building, networking and mutual learning.

5.5 Travel and subsistence costs

The costs of participation in the three above mentioned co-ordination meetings and in the valorisation conference (mentioned under point 4.2) are to be budgeted under travel and subsistence costs included in the budget proposal of each applicant organisation/institution (see also point 3.2.2 of Financial Guidelines for Applicants).

6. Recommendations for the presentation of project proposals

Your project proposal will be named "Establishing a partnership to set up a Youth Guarantee scheme in (name of country, region or local area)".

Proposals will be submitted using application forms, which are automatically produced via the SWIM submission tool (see practical details in section 13 below). While some information requested is mandatory, other forms may need to be completed and attached, usually either administrative documents or free format text descriptions (see section 14 below for a checklist of the documents needed for a complete application).

Two important SWIM annexes (section E of the SWIM application) are the '**description of the action**' and the '**work-plan**' of the project proposed. These two documents are aimed at providing complementary details on information already specified in the SWIM application and will be used to assess the proposal in accordance with the criteria laid down in the sections hereunder.

It is recommended that the applicant organisations/institutions develop the information in their project proposal according to the following structure:

a) Description of the action (see section 14, check-list, point 17).

In relation to the 'Award criteria' detailed in section 9 below, the **description of the action** should provide information on 'the relevance of the proposal to the call objectives', 'the impact of the proposal' and the 'visibility of the action'. Below is a list of items covering those criteria:

Relevance of the proposal

- i. The proposal should demonstrate the applicant organisation/institution's **understanding** of the overall objectives and priorities of the call.
- ii. The proposal should also outline the specific **objectives of the project** in relation to the purpose of the call described under point 5. It should briefly outline the envisaged partnership, what this partnership is meant to deliver (further details in the work-plan) and include, at the end of the project, a test phase with the targeted young people.
- iii. As regards the **partnership to be established**, the description should list the partners (i.e. those who have submitted a commitment letter). It should also

provide details on the role of the respective partners and on the relevance of their participation in the project proposal.

Further information on the applicant organisation/institution's intention to cooperate with other stakeholders than the above mentioned partners is also deemed necessary (see also point 13 of the above mentioned check-list).

- iv. Having regard to the **scope of the project**, the proposal should provide details on the following:
- a) the definition of the **target group(s)** to be covered by the project. Provide details and a justification of the specific groups of young people who are to be given priority. In doing so, the applicant organisation/institution should pay attention to the gender and diversity dimensions of the target group(s) and identify the corresponding specific measures that might need to be put in place to address these dimensions;
 - b) the **level of intervention** of the project, i.e. national, regional or local and a justification of the chosen level;
 - c) the strategy for identifying **gaps and missing links**, i.e. identify in the transitions from education to work, which stage(s) and which related actors will be given priority and a justification of the chosen stage(s) and related actors.

Impact of the proposal

- i. The description should demonstrate how the proposal is likely to have a **tangible impact** on the target groups.
- ii. If the applicant organisation/institution is involved in other programmes, including other European actions, in particular in ESF, or other national, regional or local programmes, there should be an explanation of **how the project can capitalise on existing resources** to boost the successful and sustainable establishment of a Youth Guarantee at national, regional or local level.

Visibility of the action

- i. The description should give details of the **proposed information and communication plan** (including the publicity and dissemination aspects) as well as the role of both the applicant organisation/institution and its partners in this respect.
- ii. The description should also provide details on the measures to be taken, at all times and through different channels, by both the applicant organisation/institution and its partners, to ensure the **provision of up-to-date and quality information** to relevant stakeholders and target groups.
- iii. The text should briefly confirm the applicant organisation/institution's acceptance to **publicise the European Union** support to the project in their communication activities.

b) Work-plan of the project, timetable and budget estimate breakdown (see section 14, checklist, point 18).

In relation to the 'Award criteria', detailed in section 9 below, this document will provide information on both the 'quality of the proposal' and the 'cost/efficiency of the operation'. The document should provide a description of the following:

Quality of the proposal

- i. The applicant organisation/institution's capacity to complete the action as well as the overall **project methodology**.
- ii. **Main tasks, responsibilities, resources and management tools** of the applicant organisation/institution.
- iii. The **consistency of the partnership** and the **interaction and complementarities among partners**. The partners' roles, tasks and contribution to the project should also be clearly indicated in the work plan.
- iv. **The activities, which will be outsourced (if any)**, the reasons and the measures to ensure compliance with the call requirements.
- v. The measures to ensure adequate **monitoring and evaluation** of activities, in particular in relation with the foreseen overall external on-going evaluation exercise.
- vi. The planned **timetable** for activities.

Cost/efficiency of the operation

- i. The degree to which the proposed budget is **proportional** to the project's objectives and its expected outcomes;
- ii. The extent to which the **proposed expenditure is in line** with the project's implementation needs.

Sections 7 to 9 below outline the criteria that will be used to evaluate proposals submitted to this call. Each proposal received will be processed as follows:

- first, its eligibility will be checked using criteria from section 7 below;
- second, if eligible, selection will be checked against the criteria in section 8 below; and
- third, if the selection criteria are met, the proposal will be assessed comparatively with the other proposals and in accordance with the award criteria described in section 9 below.

7. Exclusion and Eligibility criteria

7.1. Exclusion

Applicant organisations/institutions must be in conformity with Articles 93(1), 94 and 96(2)(a) of the Financial Regulation (see section 14, check-list, point 3)¹⁹.

¹⁹ The situations referred to include bankruptcy, compulsory winding-up, being under court administration, in an arrangement with creditors or any other similar proceedings; convictions of professional misconduct; non fulfilment of social security or tax payment obligations; convictions of fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity; declared in serious breach of contract in relation to activities funded by the EU budget; subject to conflict of interest; guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the required information.

7.2. Eligible organisations/institutions

To be eligible, applicant organisations/institutions:

- must be legal persons properly constituted and registered in one of the EU Member States. In application of Article 114 of the Financial Regulation, social partner organisations without legal personality are also eligible provided that their representatives have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf and assume financial liability;
- and can be either:
 - national, regional or local authorities, or
 - social partners, or
 - public employment services.

7.3. Eligible project proposals

To be eligible for funding under this call, project proposals must:

- be linked to the objectives of the call for proposals;
- be fully carried out at national, regional or local level in one of the Member States of the EU;
- be implemented in cooperation with other relevant actors/stakeholders (such as national, regional or local authorities, ESF managing authorities, public, private or third sector employment services, education and training institutions, universities, social partners, chambers of commerce, associations of employers, youth welfare and social services, youth clubs and associations, and any other relevant community actors); each proposal should ensure the participation of **at least four** of the following types of organisations/institutions: public authorities, employment services, education sector, employment sector, youth sector²⁰, social partners, social and community services or NGOs ;
- comply with the European Union's rules for co-financing and guarantee a cash co-financing of **at least 5%** of the total eligible costs;
- demonstrate that the proposed activities are not being financed twice from two different sources within the EU budget (particularly in cases where applicant organisations/institutions are already participating in other EU programmes (see section 14, check-list, point 10).

Project proposals, which do not comply with the above criteria, are not eligible and will be rejected.

8. Selection criteria

Only organisations/institutions with the necessary financial and operational capacity may be awarded a grant.

8.1. Financial capacity

Applicant organisations/institutions must demonstrate that they have the financial capacity to carry out the action: each applicant organisation/institution must have

²⁰ Democratic, youth-led and representative organisations that are actively involved in youth employment and social inclusion issues.

access to solid and adequate funding to maintain its activities for the period of the action and to help finance it as necessary.

The financial capacity of each applicant organisation/institution must be confirmed by the submission in the proposal of the following items:

- declaration on honour (includes financial capacity to carry out the activities) (see section 14, check-list, point 3);
- proof of turnover in the last financial year of at least the equivalent of 100% of the grant requested (see section 14, check-list, point 14);
- annual balance sheets and profit and loss accounts available from the last financial year, for which the accounts have been closed for the applicant organisation/institution (see section 14, checklist, point 15).

The verification of financial capacity will not apply to public bodies.

8.2. Operational capacity

The applicant organisation/institution must have the operational resources (technical, management) and the professional skills and qualifications needed to successfully complete the proposed action, as well as the ability to implement it. The applicant organisation/institution must have a strong track record of competence and experience in the field and in particular in the type of action proposed.

The operational capacity of the applicant organisation/institution must be confirmed by the submission in the proposal of the following items:

- A list of the main projects carried out in the last three years relating to the objective of the call. In the case of work done for the European Commission, applicant organisations/institutions must also indicate the reference number of the contract and the department for which the contract was performed (see section 14, check-list, point 9);
- The CVs of the proposed project manager/co-ordinator and the persons who will, for the chosen partners, perform the main tasks, showing all their professional experience (see section 14, check-list, point 11);
- A declaration by the project co-ordinator certifying the competence of the team to carry out the required tasks (see section 14, check-list, point 12);
- Written confirmation from each partner that they are willing to participate in the project, with a brief description of their role and financial contribution, if any (see section 14, check-list, point 13).

Project proposals, which do not comply with the above selection criteria, will be rejected.

9. Award criteria

The project proposals, which fulfil the eligibility and selection criteria, will be assessed according to the award criteria and related key questions that follow:

- **Relevance of the project proposal to the call objectives (max. 35 points)**
Particular attention will be paid to:
 - The extent to which the proposed action meets the objectives and priorities of the call;

- The extent to which there is a clear and well-supported diagnosis of the issues addressed in the proposal, the methods used for addressing these issues and a clear indication of the proposal's contribution to the objectives of the call;
 - The quality of the proposed partnership (in particular, tasks, responsibilities, resources and management tools of the applicant organisation/institution and its partners), including the degree of commitment, at the application stage, of the different types of organisations/institutions to be involved in the implementation of the proposed action.
- **Quality of the project proposal (max. 25 points)**
Particular attention will be paid to:
- The clarity, consistency and feasibility of the proposed work plan, including timetable and methodology, and in particular its capacity to achieve the planned objectives through well-identified and well-planned activities with clear and attainable time-lines and to ensure adequate monitoring and on-going evaluation of the planned activities;
- **Impact of the project proposal (max. 15 points)**
Particular attention will be paid to:
- The extent to which the proposal has a potential for replicating/transferring the project's results to other regions/local areas of the country, and/or to other Member States with similar patterns of youth unemployment.
- **Visibility of the action (max. 15 points)**
Particular attention will be paid to:
- Quality and efficiency of the dissemination of information by the applicant organisation/institution and its partners to all concerned stakeholders and target groups.
- **The cost / efficiency of the action (max. 5 points)**
Particular attention will be paid to:
- The degree to which the level of output and impact of the project is proportional to the amount of the requested grant.
- **The overall quality, clarity, consistency and completeness of the estimated budget description (max. 5 points)**

With due consideration to the budget available for this call for proposals, the project proposals with the highest evaluation scores will be selected for the award of a grant.

10. Financial conditions

The total available budget for this call is **EUR 3 600 000**. The European Union's financial contribution will not exceed **95% of the total eligible costs** of the proposed activities.

The Commission expects to finance **at least 15 projects** (indicative) providing they reach at least 70 out of the maximum 100 award points. The Commission considers that the amount of EU grant deemed necessary to implement the action will be at least between EUR 100 000 and EUR 250 000 per beneficiary.

Sources of co-financing can be public or private. Only costs directly linked to the implementation of the action will be accepted. Contributions in kind are not eligible.

For further clarification, the **Financial Guidelines for Applicants** annexed to the present call for proposals provide more details for the applicant organisations/institutions, especially guidelines for presenting the proposal's provisional budget along with the rules governing which categories of expenditure are eligible, and which are not.

11. Starting date and duration of projects

The projects should start after signature of the grant agreements, expected within six months of the submission date. Any expenditure incurred before written confirmation that the application has been accepted is at the applicant's risk.

The duration of projects will be **12 months maximum**.

12. Date for submission

The proposals must be submitted to the Commission electronically online **and** sent by post in **three hard copies** (one original and two copies) **no later than 22/10/2012**.

Proposals, which do not respect the submission deadline, will not be considered by the Evaluation Committee.

13. Practical details

13.1. Where can the application form be found?

Information related to this call for proposals is available from the following website: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=630&langId=en>. Please check the website regularly for updates.

The compulsory on-line grant application form is an electronic form which must be completed using the Internet Web system 'SWIM' at the following internet address:

<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/swim/displayWelcome.do>

This system allows the introduction, editing, validation, printing and submission of data in the grant application form. Before starting, please read carefully the SWIM 'User's guide', which you will find at the top of the page when you enter the SWIM application ('Help on SWIM').

Applicant organisations/institutions are invited to fill in the application form and submit their project proposals preferably in **English, French or German**, in order to facilitate early completion of the evaluation process. Please note, however, that proposals in other EU Community languages will be accepted.

Once the application is submitted electronically, a printed copy has to be signed by the legal representative of the applicant organisation/institution and sent to the Commission together with all the other documents specified in section 14. The application should be submitted as described below.

Please note that the electronic submission via SWIM must be completed before printing the final version of the application and then no further changes to the application will be possible.

13.2. Where to send the application?

Please send your cover letter and all the documents listed in the checklist, **as signed originals** together with **two copies of all these documents (in total: three sets of documents)**.

The hard copies must be sent to the addresses cited below **by 22/10/2012** (their submission date will be taken to be the date of dispatch, as per the postmark or the express courier receipt date) either:

- a) by post to the following address:

European Commission
Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion DG
Unit C.3- Youth Employment, Entrepreneurship, Microfinances Facility –
Call for proposals VP/2012/012
Archives-Courier service J27 0/115
B-1049 Brussels (Belgium)

- b) or by personal delivery (direct or through any authorised representative of the applicant organisation/institution, including private messenger service etc.) against a signed receipt from the Commission's central mail service to arrive by **16.00 on 22/10/2012** to the following address:

European Commission
Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion DG
Unit C.3- Youth Employment, Entrepreneurship, Microfinances Facility
Call for proposals VP/2012/012
Central Courier Service
Avenue du Bourget, 1
1140 Evere (Belgium)

In case of hand-delivery, please keep the receipt as proof of submission, signed and dated by the official in the Commission's central mail department who takes delivery. This department is open from 08.00 to 17.00 from Monday to Thursday and from 08.00 to 16.00 on Fridays. It is closed on Saturdays, Sundays and on Commission holidays. Please note that for security reasons, hand deliveries (including courier services) are not accepted in other Commission buildings.

Regarding the presentation of the application file, please follow the recommendations set out in section 14 below. As mentioned above, applications must be submitted electronically with the SWIM facility and by post in **three hard copies (one original and two identical copies)**.

Please make sure that the **completed application form and all accompanying original documents, dated and signed** are included in your surface mail posted by the closing date. **The applicant organisation/institution is requested to number the accompanying documents to be submitted with the application (please attach a ticked list as provided in section 14).**

Failure to submit the application by post and online by 22/10/2012 will render the application for subsidy ineligible. Documents sent by post, by fax or by electronic mail, after the deadline mentioned above will not be considered for

evaluation. Unsigned application forms, hand-written forms and those sent by fax will not be taken into consideration.

The information contained herein together with the **Financial Guidelines for Applicants** provides all the guidance required to submit an application. Please read these documents carefully before doing so, paying particular attention to the priorities that have been set for the call.

All enquiries must be made by e-mail only to :

empl-vp-2012-012@ec.europa.eu

- Please do not telephone -

13.3. Evaluation of proposals and notification of applicant organisations/institutions

Applications will be examined by an Evaluation Committee, which will meet at the earliest possible date following the deadline for submission indicated in sections 12 and 13.2. Only proposals, which satisfy the eligibility and the selection criteria, will be assessed against the award criteria. The Evaluation Committee will draw up a list of proposals recommended for funding.

Rejected applications

The Commission will notify unsuccessful applicant organisations/institutions in writing after the conclusion of the work by the Evaluation Committee. Requests concerning the progress of dossiers sent prior to the conclusion of this time period will not be answered.

Selected applications

Successful applicant organisations/institutions will also be notified in writing. They will receive by separate mail two original copies of the grant agreement for acceptance and signature. Both of these copies must be sent back to the Commission, which will then return one copy to selected applicant organisations/institutions when they have been signed by both parties.

14. Checklist of required application documents

After submission of the application and its annexes **electronically via SWIM**, please send the documents listed hereinafter **in duplicate** (one original + one copy) before the deadline set out in section 12 above.

N.B: the electronic form must be submitted on-line via SWIM before you can print the final version. After electronic submission, no further changes can be made to the application.

Regarding the filling of the application file, it is recommended that the applicant organisations/institutions:

- attach a ticked checklist (using the below template) to their application;
- follow the order of documents as listed in the checklist;
- print documents double-sided, where possible;
- use only double-hole folders (please no binding nor glue);
- submit the **originals** of any signed documents (from both the applicant organisation/institution and partners)

	Document	Check
1	Free format: cover letter of application , <u>original, duly signed and dated by the legal representative of the applicant organisation/institution</u> . The letter should have the letterhead of the organisation, quote the reference of the proposal number to the call VP/2012/012/xxx and specify the following subject: " Establishing a partnership to set up a Youth Guarantee scheme in (name of country, region or local area) ".	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Print-out of the online SWIM Application form (https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/swim) duly completed, <u>original</u> dated and <u>signed by the legal representative</u> of the applicant organisation/institution. Note: The electronic form must be submitted before printing . After the electronic submission, no further changes to the application are possible.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Print-out of the SWIM Annex: Declaration on honour/declaration by the applicant organisation/institution attesting compliance with Articles 93(1), 94 and 96(2)a of the Financial Regulation and financial and operational capacity, etc. duly filled in, <u>original</u> dated and <u>signed by the legal representative</u> of the applicant organisation/institution.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Print-out of the SWIM Annex: Legal entity form : <u>original</u> duly filled in and <u>signed by the legal representative</u> of the applicant organisation/institution - Exclusively in case of social partner organisations without legal personality, a signed letter of the representative expressing her/his capacity to undertake legal obligations must also be provided.	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Document	Check
5	Copy of the official registration certificate or any other official document attesting to the legal establishment of the organisation (<i>not necessary for public bodies</i>).	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Copy of articles of association/statutes or equivalent , proving the eligibility of the applicant organisation/institution.	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Copy of a document confirming the applicant organisation/institution's tax or VAT number, if available	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	Print-out of the SWIM Annex: Financial identification form duly filled in, <u>original</u> dated and <u>signed by the applicant organisation/institution account holder</u> and either bearing the bank stamp and signature of the bank representative or with a copy of a recent bank statement attached – The Financial identification form must correspond to the Legal entity form (see above point 4).	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Free-format: a list of the main projects carried out in the last three years relating to the objective of the call and proving the necessary operational capacity. In the case of work done for the Commission, applicant organisation/institutions must also indicate the reference number of the contract and the department for which the contract has been performed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Free format: declaration of no double financing proving the eligibility of the applicant organisation/institution, i.e. that the proposed activities are not being financed twice from two different sources within the EU budget (particularly in cases where applicant organisation/institutions are already participating in preparatory actions or other EU programmes or networks). <u>The declaration (original) must be dated and signed</u> by the legal representative of the applicant organisation/institution.	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	Free format: detailed CVs (educational and professional qualifications) and job specification of the proposed project manager/co-ordinator and of persons who will perform the main tasks, with a brief description of their outputs related to the subject of the proposal. <u>The job specification (original) must be dated and signed by the legal representative of the applicant organisation/institution.</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	Free format: declaration of the project manager certifying the competence of the team to carry out the required tasks and demonstrating operational capacity. <u>The declaration (original) must be dated and signed.</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	Print-out of SWIM Annex(es) (one per organisation/institution): letters of commitment from the applicant organisation/institution and from each partner in the project: original(s) signed by the legal representative(s) of each organisation/institution, specifying the contribution (financial and/or other) and the specific tasks to be undertaken by each organisation/institution, as well as the agreement that "the Commission publishes the name and address of each partner with the names and addresses of the beneficiary and all other partners involved, the reference of the call for proposals, the title and a description of the project".	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Document	Check
14	Free format: proof of turnover such as a letter <u>original, dated and signed by the legal representative of the applicant organisation/institution</u> mentioning the amount of the turnover in the last financial year and stating that it is at least equivalent to 100% of the grant requested (<i>not necessary for public bodies</i>).	<input type="checkbox"/>
15	Copy of the annual balance sheet and profit and loss accounts for the last financial year, duly dated and signed by the legal representative of the applicant organisation/institution (<i>not necessary for public bodies</i>).	<input type="checkbox"/>
16	For grant requests over EUR 500 000 or for organisations subject to statutory audits of their annual accounts, an external audit report must be submitted from an approved auditor, certifying the last accounting exercise (<i>not necessary for public bodies</i>).	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	Free format SWIM annex : detailed description of the action	<input type="checkbox"/>
18	Free format SWIM annex: detailed work-plan of the project , including a timetable linking months to activities and outputs, as well as a budget estimated breakdown.	<input type="checkbox"/>
19	Print-out of SWIM annex: contract for implementing the action, in case of subcontracting where the value of the external contract exceeds EUR 5 000, tasks to be subcontracted and justification to do so, as well as information about the selection procedure of the sub-contractor must be included in Annex "Contracts for implementing the action" of the online Application form. Applicants wishing to recruit the services of external experts for an amount above EUR 60.000 must provide a copy of their draft tender specifications. It does not apply to public authorities, which are already governed by a system of procurement rules. To assist applicants, a model of tender specifications is included in Annex I of this call.	<input type="checkbox"/>
20	Free format: any additional/optional annexes , which the applicant organisation/institution may wish to add.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Annex I: MODEL FOR TENDER SPECIFICATIONS FOR SUBCONTRACTING
EXTERNAL EXPERTISE

Tender Specifications –

Background

Purpose of the Contract

Tasks to be performed by the Contractor

- 1. Description of tasks**
- 2. Guidance and indications on tasks execution and methodology**

Expertise required

Time schedule and reporting

Payments and standard contract

Price

Selection criteria

Award criteria

(option 1)

The contract will be awarded to the tenderer whose offer represents the best value for money - taking into account the following criteria:

-
-
-

It should be noted that the contract will **not** be awarded to a tenderer who receives less than 70% on the Award Criteria.

(option 2)

The contract will be awarded to the tenderer whose offer represents the lowest price.

Content and presentation of the bids

- 1. Content of the bids**
- 2. Presentation of the bids**