



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Budget

Central Financial Service

Procurements, contracts, and grants

Call for proposals EAC/S36/2016

Key Action 3: Support for policy reform - Initiatives for policy innovation

Knowledge Tools for Higher Education: U-Multirank

CALL FOR PROPOSALS – EAC/S36/2016

Knowledge Hub for Higher Education – Further Development of U-Multirank

1. INTRODUCTION – BACKGROUND

The 2017 Annual Work Programme for the implementation of 'Erasmus+': the Union Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport¹, 5 September 2016 provides under section 5.3 the context for a Knowledge Tool on Ranking.

U-Multirank

U-Multirank (UMR)², an independent, international, multidimensional user-driven ranking of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) was developed through a feasibility study³ and a service contract⁴ supported by the Union.

UMR has impacted global rankings by improving transparency. It compares five broad dimensions of university activity: (1) teaching and learning, (2) research, (3) knowledge transfer, (4) international orientation and (5) regional engagement based on empirical data where institutions with similar institutional profiles (like-with-like) may be compared as opposed to the traditional one-dimensional focus on research performance and reliance on bibliometric indicators. In this way, it encompasses HEIs which have never been visible before in any other global ranking, showing their strong performance in particular dimensions or indicators, including research indicators. The UMR tool enables comparisons at the level of the HEI as a whole and at the level of specific fields of study. The UMR advisory board comprising stakeholders and experts has overseen the initiative and provided advice and guidance in the design and development of the tool.

The 2016 ranking release, the third annual global ranking release to date, contained performance information on 1304 HEIs and subject-based rankings were expanded to include electrical and mechanical engineering, business studies, physics, psychology, computer science, medicine, biology, chemistry, mathematics, history, sociology and social work/welfare. Readymade rankings on 'Research and Research Linkages and Teaching and Learning have also been published. In view of the impact UMR has had on users who may develop their own personalised rankings by selecting indicators in terms of their own preferences and HEIs whose performances are highlighted with their particular strengths and weaknesses, the Union will continue to support the further development of the tool via a mixed model of EU and other funding.

¹ C(2016) 5571 final

² <http://www.umultirank.org>

³ Contract -2009-1225/001-001 – Design and Testing the Feasibility of a Multidimensional Global University Ranking.

⁴ Contract EAC-2012-0516 – Implementation of a user-driven, multi-dimensional and international ranking for higher education institutions;

The Commission owns the intellectual property rights (IPR) in the U-Multirank concept and methodology. A description of the UMR methodology, including approach to ranking, data sources, rank group calculations and indicators is available at <http://www.umultirank.org/>. 'U-Multirank' is registered by the Commission as a trademark (IP/14/548).

In the next phase of development, the Union will continue to own IPR in UMR concept and methodology which it will license to the beneficiary to enable continued operation of the scheme. In addition, further developments in simplification of data collection, improvement in communication and visibility of the tool, raising participation levels, development of more indicators, intensification of policy messages and ensuring sustainable success and long-term independence will be pursued.

Knowledge Hub for Higher Education

The Commission has supported, and will support, a number of higher education knowledge tools⁵ with similar objectives of collecting information, via different sources and methodologies, on the profile of students and institutions with the aim of providing a detailed, comparable picture of different aspects of the higher education landscape and the performance of higher education in Europe. Given that the tools developed organically and independently over time, better harmonisation of the tools and cross analysis of these and other data sources has significant potential for enriching understanding of and in higher education.

A Knowledge Hub is, therefore, proposed to gather UMR and other complementary knowledge tools for data collection and analyses for evidence based policy making to foster high returns in terms of education and training. The Knowledge Hub will be managed by the European Commission. Different knowledge tools will be added progressively to the Knowledge Hub, in order to yield a number of gains that include:

- developing synergies and complementarities by streamlining data collection and assessing the extent to which the knowledge tools may be cross-linked with other available data sources
- strengthening capacity to get the best value out of the knowledge tools
- carrying out research and analyses to support better policy-making and modernisation of systems/institutions
- producing, disseminating and communicating higher education policy-relevant findings at European and national levels

⁵ European Tertiary Education Register - <https://www.eter-project.com/>; Eurograduate feasibility study - <http://www.eurograduate.eu/>;

2. OBJECTIVE(S) – THEME(S) – PRIORITIES

The general objective of this call for proposals is to sustain and support U-Multirank, a multi-dimensional information and ranking tool, to promote its use and identify and implement necessary improvements in the functioning of the tool and its mobile application in the context of i) an independent tool and ii) as part of the Knowledge Hub.

The award will be given on the basis of a proposal that covers the following specific objectives:

1. To ensure maintenance and further development of the U-Multirank tool;
2. To streamline data collection through exploitation of national/international data sources and implementation of a network of institutional coordinators;
3. To raise participation levels through promotion and raising awareness of the tool and its possibilities;
4. To carry out necessary implementation measures to improve synergies with ETER and a Pilot Graduate Tracking Survey within the context of the Knowledge Hub and other data tools and sources, where necessary
5. To ensure a governance structure comprising stakeholders and relevant expertise

The expected outputs are:

1. Continued publication of UMR annual global university rankings, subject-based and readymade rankings
2. A communication and dissemination strategy focused on outreach to a wide targeted audience base and increased participation and visibility
3. A data management plan that covers handling of data during and after the end of the project, description of data that will be collected, processed and/or generated, methodology and standards that will be applied, data sharing/open access, data curation and preservation

3. INDICATIVE TIMETABLE

	Stages	Date and time or indicative period
a)	Publication of the call	19/12/2016
b)	Deadline for submitting applications	14/02/2017– 12:00 noon CET
c)	Evaluation period	within 6 weeks of deadline
d)	Information to applicants	28/03/2017
e)	Signature of grant agreement or notification of grant decision	within 3 months of notification to applicants
f)	Starting date of the action	April – May 2017

4. BUDGET AVAILABLE

The total budget earmarked for the co-financing of projects is estimated at 1,200,000 EUR.

This amount is subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the draft budget for 2017 after the adoption of the budget for 2017 by the budgetary authority or provided for in the provisional twelfths.

Financial contribution from the EU cannot exceed **50%** of the total eligible project costs.

The maximum grant will be 1,200,000 EUR.

The Commission expects to fund one proposal.

The Commission reserves the right not to distribute all the funds available.

5. ADMISSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Applications must be sent no later than the deadline for submitting applications referred to in section 3;
- Applications must be submitted in writing (see section 15), using the application form;
- Applications must be drafted in one of the EU official languages. Applications in English will serve to expedite the evaluation process.

Failure to comply with those requirements will lead to the rejection of the application.

6. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA⁶

The proposals which comply with the criteria listed below will be subject to content evaluation. Only applications that fulfil the eligibility criteria will be considered for a further evaluation. If an application is deemed ineligible, a letter indicating the reasons will be sent to the applicant.

The eligibility criteria will be assessed on the basis of the information provided in the application form.

6.1. Eligible applicants

Eligible applicants are public and private organisations with their scope of activities in the field of education and training or organisations carrying out related cross-sectorial activities. In case of projects implemented by two or more participating organisations, one of the organisations applies on behalf of all participating organisations involved in the project.

⁶ Art. 131 FR, 201 RAP

Legal entities having a legal or capital link with applicants, which is neither limited to the action nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation, may take part in the action as affiliated entities, and may declare eligible costs as specified in section 11.2.

For that purpose, applicants shall identify such affiliated entities in the application form.

Affiliated entities, i.e. legal entities having a legal or capital link with applicants, which is neither limited to the action nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation, shall take part in the action **as applicants** in order to declare eligible costs.

Only applications from legal entities established in the following Programme countries⁷ are eligible:

- EU Member States

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom

- Non EU Programme Countries

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Turkey

By way of exception, application may be submitted by **one** applicant, whether established specifically or not for the action, provided that:

- it is formed of several legal entities complying with the eligibility, non-exclusion and selection criteria set out in this call for proposals, and implementing together the proposed action;
- the application identifies the said entities.

For the purpose of declaring eligible costs as specified under section 11.2, the entities composing the applicant shall be treated as affiliated entities.

In order to assess the applicants' eligibility, the following supporting documents are requested:

- **private entity**: extract from the official journal, copy of articles of association, extract of trade or association register, certificate of liability to VAT (if, as in certain countries, the trade register number and VAT number are identical, only one of these documents is required);
- **public entity**: copy of the resolution or decision establishing the public company, or other official document establishing the public-law entity;
- **consortium**: in addition to the supporting documents referring to their legal status, consortium members will submit letters confirming their participation to the project

The following entities will be considered as non-eligible:

⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/sites/erasmusplus/files/files/resources/erasmus-plus-programme-guide_en.pdf

- **natural persons;**
- **entities without legal personality**

6.2. Eligible activities

The activities to be financed under this call may include (not exhaustive list):

- cooperation projects;
- conferences, seminars;
- training activities;
- workshops;
- awareness and dissemination actions;
- actions aiming at the creation and improving of networks, exchanges of good practices;
- development of ICT tools (software, platforms, apps, etc.) or learning resources;
- development of other intellectual outputs;

Implementation period

Activities may not start before 01.04.2017.

The project duration will be for 27 months.

Applications for projects scheduled to run for a longer period than that specified in this call for proposals will not be accepted.

7. EXCLUSION CRITERIA

7.1. Exclusion from participation:

An applicant will be excluded from participating in the call for proposals procedure if the legal entity is in any of the following situations:

- (a) it is bankrupt, subject to insolvency or winding up procedures, its assets are being administered by a liquidator or by a court, it is in an arrangement with creditors, its business activities are suspended or it is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for under national legislation or regulations;
- (b) it has been established by a final judgement or a final administrative decision that the applicant is in breach of its obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions in accordance with the law of the country in which it is established, with those of the country in which the authorising officer is located or those of the country of the performance of the contract;
- (c) it has been established by a final judgement or a final administrative decision that the applicant is guilty of grave professional misconduct by having violated applicable laws or regulations or ethical standards of the profession to which the applicant belongs, or by having engaged in any wrongful conduct which has an impact on its professional credibility where such conduct denotes wrongful intent or gross negligence, including, in particular, any of the following:
 - (i) fraudulently or negligently misrepresenting information required for the verification of the absence of grounds for exclusion or the fulfilment of selection criteria or in the performance of a contract, a grant agreement or a grant decision;

- (ii) entering into agreement with other persons with the aim of distorting competition;
 - (iii) violating intellectual property rights;
 - (iv) attempting to influence the decision-making process of the Commission during the award procedure;
 - (v) attempting to obtain confidential information that may confer upon it undue advantages in the award procedure;
- (d) it has been established by a final judgement that the applicant is guilty of any of the following:
- (i) fraud, within the meaning of Article 1 of the Convention on the protection of the European Communities' financial interests, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 July 1995;
 - (ii) corruption, as defined in Article 3 of the Convention on the fight against corruption involving officials of the European Communities or officials of EU Member States, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 May 1997, and in Article 2(1) of Council Framework Decision 2003/568/JHA, as well as corruption as defined in the legal provisions of the country where the authorising officer is located, the country in which the applicant is established or the country of the performance of the contract;
 - (iii) participation in a criminal organisation, as defined in Article 2 of Council Framework Decision 2008/841/JHA;
 - (iv) money laundering or terrorist financing, as defined in Article 1 of Directive 2005/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council;
 - (v) terrorist-related offences or offences linked to terrorist activities, as defined in Articles 1 and 3 of Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA, respectively, or inciting, aiding, abetting or attempting to commit such offences, as referred to in Article 4 of that Decision;
 - (vi) child labour or other forms of trafficking in human beings as defined in Article 2 of Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council;
- (e) it has shown significant deficiencies in complying with the main obligations in the performance of a contract, a grant agreement or a grant decision financed by the Union's budget, which has led to its early termination or to the application of liquidated damages or other contractual penalties, or which has been discovered following checks, audits or investigations by an Authorising Officer, OLAF or the Court of Auditors;
- (f) it has been established by a final judgment or final administrative decision that the applicant has committed an irregularity within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95;
- (g) for the situations of grave professional misconduct, fraud, corruption, other criminal offences, significant deficiencies in the performance of the contract or irregularity, the applicant is subject to:
- i. facts established in the context of audits or investigations carried out by the Court of Auditors, OLAF or internal audit, or any other check, audit or control performed under the responsibility of an authorising officer of an EU institution, of a European office or of an EU agency or body;

ii. non-final administrative decisions which may include disciplinary measures taken by the competent supervisory body responsible for the verification of the application of standards of professional ethics;

iii. decisions of the ECB, the EIB, the European Investment Fund or international organisations;

iv. decisions of the Commission relating to the infringement of the Union's competition rules or of a national competent authority relating to the infringement of Union or national competition law.

v. decisions of exclusion by an authorising officer of an EU institution, of a European office or of an EU agency or body.

7.2. Exclusion from award:

An applicant will not be granted financial assistance if, in the course of the grant award procedure, the legal entity:

(a) is in an exclusion situation established in accordance with Article 106;

(b) has misrepresented the information required as a condition for participating in the procedure or has failed to supply that information;

(c) was previously involved in the preparation of procurement documents where this entails a distortion of competition that cannot be remedied otherwise.

The same exclusion criteria apply to affiliated entities.

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

7.3. Supporting documents⁸

Applicants for a grant exceeding EUR 60.000 EUR must sign a declaration on their honour certifying that they are not in one of the situations referred to in articles 106(1) and 107 to 109, filling in the relevant form attached to the application form accompanying the call for proposals and available at http://ec.europa.eu/education/calls/2016-eac-s36_en.

8. SELECTION CRITERIA⁹

8.1. Financial capacity¹⁰

The financial capacity will be assessed based on the following methodology and its annexes: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/calls/evaluation-grants-2016_en.htm

Applicants must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activity throughout the period during which the action is being carried out or the year for which the grant is awarded and to participate in its funding. The applicants' financial capacity will be assessed on the basis of the following supporting documents to be submitted with the application:

⁸ Art. 197 RAP

⁹ Art. 132 FR, 202 RAP

¹⁰ Art. 131, 132 FR, 202 RAP.

Grants with a pre-financing value of EUR 600 000 or less

For grants of this type, proof of financial capacity is constituted by a declaration on the honour by the grant applicant (see Annex 1 of the Application form).

However, in case of doubt and only for grants exceeding EUR 60 000, the assessment committee reserves the right to request supporting documents and to carry out a financial analysis as described at point 4 of the above mentioned methodology (cf. Article 131(3) of the FR)

Moreover for grants exceeding EUR 60 000, entities falling into one of the high-risk categories mentioned at point 3.1 of the methodology must provide proof of their financial capacity and are required to undergo the financial analysis provided for in point 4 of the same methodology.

*In addition in case of grants for an action \geq EUR 750 000 or operating grants \geq EUR 100 000¹¹, an **audit report** produced by an approved external auditor certifying the accounts shall be provided for the last financial year available.*

On the basis of the documents submitted, if the responsible authorising officer (RAO) considers that financial capacity is not satisfactory, he may:

- > request further information;
- > propose a grant agreement without pre-financing;
- > propose a grant agreement with a pre-financing paid in instalments;
- > propose a grant agreement with a pre-financing covered by a bank guarantee (see section 11.4 below);
- > where applicable, require the joint and several financial liability of all the co-beneficiaries;
- > reject the application.

8.2. Operational capacity¹²

The applicants should have executed at least three international projects in the last 3 years. Team expertise should cover management of complex projects, European higher education and research policy varying from comprehensive research oriented to specialized professional institutions, in particular, in the field of ranking, inside and outside the EU, appropriate methodological skills, networking and communication skills for international cooperation, interactive web-tools and web-based interfaces, awareness raising, communication and dissemination.

¹¹ Art. 131.3 FR

For these specific types of grants and in the event of an application grouping several applicants (consortium), the thresholds apply by applicants. [In the case of legal entities forming one applicant, as specified in section 6.1, the requirements apply to those entities.]

¹² Art. 131 FR, 202 RAP.

To allow an assessment of their operational capacity, applicants must include in the dedicated sections of the application form or attach to the application form:

- a description of the legal entity and its main tasks, with an explanation of how its profile matches the tasks in the proposal; curriculum vitae or description of the profile of the persons, including their gender, who will be primarily responsible for carrying out the proposed activities; a list of up to 5 relevant publications, and/or products, services (including widely used datasets or software), or other achievements relevant to the call content;
- the organisations' activity reports of the previous three years, especially those in benchmarking/ranking;
- an exhaustive list of previous projects and activities, connected to education, research, training and innovation in higher education, performed in the last 3 years

In the case of legal entities forming **one** applicant, as specified in section 6.1, the above requirements apply to those entities.

9. AWARD CRITERIA¹³

The proposals received will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

- Relevance of the proposal in view of continued full operation of, and strategy for further development of the U-Multirank tool (30 points)
- Quality of the project design and implementation in view of takeover, hosting, maintaining and handover of the tool; streamlining of data collection; raising the awareness of, and number of participants in U-Multirank; a coherent data management plan and identification of potential areas of U-Multirank that could contribute to the Knowledge Hub to enhance the evidence base impacting higher education policy (25 points)
- Quality of project management in view of the roles and responsibilities of the proposed team and of the different economic operators distributed for each task; allocation of time and resources to the project and to each task or deliverable and whether this allocation is appropriate for the work; and cooperation arrangements (25 points)
- Impact in view of continued and increased participation of HEIs; increased use of the webtool and mobile application; communication and dissemination in view of outreach to students, parents, HEIs and HEI leadership, policy-makers, stakeholders and the general public; and sustainability of the tool (20 points)

A minimum quality threshold of 50% of the maximum possible mark for each of the award criteria and an overall threshold of 60% will apply. Applications falling below these thresholds shall be rejected.

¹³ Art. 132 FR, 203 RAP

10. LEGAL COMMITMENTS¹⁴

In the event of a grant awarded by the Commission, a grant agreement drawn up in euro and detailing the conditions and level of funding will be sent to the beneficiary as well as the procedure in view to formalise the obligations of the parties.

The 2 copies of the original agreement must be signed first by the beneficiary on behalf of the consortium and returned to the Commission immediately. The Commission will sign it last.

Please note that the award of a grant does not establish an entitlement for subsequent years.

11. FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

11.1. General Principles

a) Non-cumulative award¹⁵

Action grants:

An action may only receive one grant from the EU budget.

In no circumstances shall the same costs be financed twice by the Union budget. To ensure this, applicants shall indicate the sources and amounts of Union funding received or applied for the same action or part of the action or for its functioning during the same financial year as well as any other funding received or applied for the same action.¹⁶

b) Non-retroactivity¹⁷

No grant may be awarded retrospectively for actions already completed.

Action grants:

A grant may be awarded for an action which has already begun only where the applicant can demonstrate the need to start the action before the grant agreement is signed or the grant decision is notified.

In such cases, costs eligible for financing may not have been incurred prior to the date of submission of the grant application

c) Co-financing¹⁸

Co-financing means that the resources which are necessary to carry out the action or the work programme may not be entirely provided by the EU grant.

Co-financing of the action or of the work programme may take the form of:

- the beneficiary's own resources,
- income generated by the action or work programme,
- financial contributions from third parties.

¹⁴ Art. 121 FR, 174 RAP.

¹⁵ Art. 129 FR

¹⁶ Art. 196.4 RAP.

¹⁷ Art. 130 FR

¹⁸ Art. 125 FR, 183 RAP.

Co-financing may also take the form of in-kind contributions from third parties, i.e. non-financial resources made available free of charge by third parties to the beneficiary or to the consortium.¹⁹ The corresponding costs are not eligible.

d) Balanced budget²⁰

The estimated budget of the action or work programme is to be attached to the application form. It must have revenue and expenditure in balance.

The budget must be drawn up in euros.

Applicants which foresee that costs will not be incurred in euros, are invited to use the exchange rate published in the Official Journal of the European Union on the Infor-euro website available at http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuro/inforeuro_en.cfm.

e) Implementation contracts/subcontracting²¹

Where the implementation of the action or the work programme requires the award of procurement contracts (implementation contracts), the beneficiary must award the contract to the bid offering best value for money or the lowest price (as appropriate), avoiding conflicts of interests and retain the documentation for the event of an audit.

In the event of procurement exceeding € 60 000, the beneficiary must abide by special rules as referred in the grant agreement annexed to the call. Moreover the beneficiary is expected to clearly document the tendering procedure and retain the documentation for the event of an audit.

Entities acting in their capacity of contracting authorities in the meaning of Directive 2014/24/EU²² or contracting entities in the meaning of Directive 2014/25/EU²³ shall abide by the applicable national public procurement rules.

Sub-contracting, i.e. the externalisation of specific tasks or activities which form part of the action/work programme as described in the proposal must satisfy the conditions applicable to any implementation contract (as specified above) and in addition to them the following conditions:

- it may only cover the implementation of a limited part of the action;
- it must be justified having regard to the nature of the action and what is necessary for its implementation;
- it must be clearly stated in the proposal.

¹⁹ Art. 127 FR

²⁰ Art. 196.2 RAP

²¹ Art. 137 FR, 209 RAP

²² Directive 2014/24/EU on public procurement and repealing Directive 2004/18/EC

²³ Directive 2014/25/EU on procurement by entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors and repealing Directive 2004/17/EC

11.2. Funding forms²⁴

Mixed financing

Mixed financing grants are calculated on the basis of a detailed estimated budget indicating clearly the costs that are eligible for EU funding. The grant amount may neither exceed the eligible costs nor the amount requested. Amounts are indicated in euros.

> Maximum amount requested

The EU grant is limited to a maximum co-funding rate of 50% of **eligible costs** [*taking into account the maximum grant amount referred to in section 4*].

Consequently, part of the total eligible expenses entered in the estimative budget must be financed from sources other than the EU grant (see section 11.1c).

> Eligible costs²⁵

Eligible costs are costs actually incurred by the beneficiary of a grant which meet all the following criteria:

- ✓ they are incurred during the duration of the action or of the work programme, with the exception of costs relating to final reports and audit certificates;

The period of eligibility of costs will start as specified in the grant agreement or the grant decision.

If a beneficiary can demonstrate the need to start the action before the agreement is signed, expenditure may be authorised before the grant is awarded. Under no circumstances can the eligibility period start before the date of submission of the grant application (see section 11.1b).

- ✓ they are indicated in the estimated budget of the action or work programme;
- ✓ they are necessary for the implementation of the action or of the work programme which is the subject of the grant;
- ✓ they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular being recorded in the accounting records of the beneficiary and determined according to the applicable accounting standards of the country where the beneficiary is established and according to the usual cost accounting practices of the beneficiary;
- ✓ they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation;
- ✓ they are reasonable, justified, and comply with the requirements of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency.

The beneficiary's internal accounting and auditing procedures must permit direct reconciliation of the costs and revenue declared in respect of the action/project with the corresponding accounting statements and supporting documents.

The same criteria apply to the affiliated entities.

Eligible direct costs

²⁴ Art. 123 FR, 181 RAP.

²⁵ Art. 126 FR

The eligible direct costs for the action/ work programme are those costs which, **with due regard for the conditions of eligibility set out above**, are identifiable as specific costs directly linked to the performance of the action or the work programme and which can therefore be booked to it directly, such as :

- *the costs of personnel working under an employment contract with the applicant or equivalent appointing act and assigned to the action, comprising actual salaries plus social security contributions and other statutory costs included in the remuneration, provided that these costs are in line with the applicant's usual policy on remuneration. Those costs may include additional remuneration, including payments on the basis of supplementary contracts regardless of their nature, provided that it is paid in a consistent manner whenever the same kind of work or expertise is required and independently from the source of funding used;*
- *costs of the personnel of national administrations to the extent that they relate to the cost of activities which the relevant public authority would not carry out if the project concerned were not undertaken;*
- *subsistence allowances (for meetings, including kick-off meetings where applicable, conferences etc) provided that these costs are in line with the beneficiary's usual practices,*
- *costs of travel (for meetings, including kick-off meetings where applicable, conferences etc), provided that these costs are in line with the beneficiary's usual practices on travel,*
- *depreciation cost of equipment (new or second-hand): only the portion of the equipment's depreciation corresponding to the duration of the action/project and the rate of actual use for the purposes of the action may be taken into account by the Commission,*
or if the call does not follow the above general rule, indicate on what basis the depreciation cost of equipment will be accepted.
- *costs of consumables and supplies, provided that they are identifiable and assigned to the action/project;*
- *costs entailed by implementation contracts awarded by the beneficiaries for the purposes of carrying out the action/project, provided that the conditions laid down in the grant agreement or grant decision are met;*
- *costs arising directly from requirements linked to the implementation of the action/project (dissemination of information, specific evaluation of the action, translations, reproduction);*
- *costs relating to a pre-financing guarantee lodged by the beneficiary of the grant, where required;*
- *costs relating to external audits where required in support of the requests for payments; value added tax ("VAT") is not eligible.*

Eligible indirect costs (overheads)²⁶

²⁶ Indirect costs do not apply to operating grants.

- a flat-rate amount of 7% of the total eligible direct costs of the action, is eligible under indirect costs, representing the beneficiary's general administrative costs which can be regarded as chargeable to the action/project.

Indirect costs may not include costs entered under another budget heading.

Applicants's attention is drawn to the fact that in the case of organisations receiving an operating grant, indirect costs are not eligible under specific actions.

➤ **Ineligible costs**

- return on capital;
- debt and debt service charges;
- provisions for losses or debts;
- interest owed;
- doubtful debts;
- exchange losses;
- costs of transfers from the Commission charged by the bank of a beneficiary;
- costs declared by a beneficiary and covered by another action receiving a European Union grant. In particular, indirect costs shall not be eligible under a grant for an action awarded to a beneficiary who already receives an operating grant financed from the Union budget during the period in question;
- contributions in kind;
- excessive or reckless expenditure.
- others (in accordance with the relevant legal base).

➤ **Calculation of the final grant amount**

The final amount of the grant to be awarded to the beneficiary is established after completion of the action or work programme, upon approval of the request for payment containing the following documents²⁷:

- a final report providing details of the implementation and results of the action/work programme ;
- the final financial statement of costs actually incurred,
- *where applicable, a certificate on the financial statements of the action or the work programme and underlying accounts*²⁸.

EU grants may not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit within the framework of the action or the work programme of the beneficiary. **Profit shall be defined as a surplus of the receipts over the eligible costs incurred by the beneficiary**, when the request is made for payment of the balance. In this respect, where a profit is made, the Commission shall be entitled to recover the percentage of the profit corresponding to the Union contribution to the eligible costs actually incurred by the beneficiary to carry out the action or work programme.

²⁷ Art. 135 FR

²⁸ Art. 207.3 RAP

11.3. Payment arrangements²⁹

A pre-financing payment³⁰ corresponding to 30% of the grant amount will be transferred to the beneficiary within 30³¹ days either of the date when the last of the two parties signs the agreement, or of the notification of the grant decision, provided all requested guarantees have been received.

One interim payment³² shall be paid to the beneficiary. The interim payment is intended to cover the beneficiary's expenditure on the basis of a request for payment when the action has been partly carried out. For the purpose of determining the amount due as interim payment, the reimbursement rate to be applied to the eligible costs approved by the Commission shall be 50%.

The interim payment shall clear 100% of the amount of the pre-financing previously paid;

The interim payment shall not exceed 40% of the maximum grant amount.

The Commission will establish the amount of the final payment to be made to the beneficiary on the basis of the calculation of the final grant amount (see section 11.2 above). If the total of earlier payments is higher than the final grant amount, the beneficiary will be required to reimburse the amount paid in excess by the Commission through a recovery order³³.

11.4. Pre-financing guarantee³⁴

Subject to a risk analysis, the authorising officer may, on a case by case basis, require a pre-financing guarantee for up to the same amount as the pre-financing in order to limit the financial risks linked to the pre-financing payment.

The financial guarantee, in euro, shall be provided by an approved bank or financial institution established in one of the Member State of the European Union. When the beneficiary is established in a third country, the authorising officer responsible may agree that a bank or financial institution established in that third country may provide the guarantee if he considers that the bank or financial institution offers equivalent security and characteristics as those offered by a bank or financial institution established in a Member State. Amounts blocked in bank accounts shall not be accepted as financial guarantees.

The guarantee may be replaced by a joint and several guarantee by a third party or by a joint guarantee of the beneficiaries of an action who are parties to the same grant agreement

The guarantee shall be released as the pre-financing is gradually cleared against interim payments or payments of balances to the beneficiary, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the grant agreement.

²⁹ Art. 90, 135 FR, 207 RAP.

³⁰ Art. 109, 110 RAP

³¹ Art. 92 FR

³² Art. 109, 110 RAP

³³ Art. 109, 110 RAP

³⁴ Art. 134 FR, 206 RAP

12. PUBLICITY

12.1. By the beneficiaries

Beneficiaries must clearly acknowledge the European Union's contribution in all publications or in conjunction with activities for which the grant is used.

In this respect, beneficiaries are required to give prominence to the name and emblem of the European Commission on all their publications, posters, programmes and other products realised under the co-financed project.

To do this they must use the text, the emblem and the disclaimer available at http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/services/visual_identity/pdf/use-emblem_en.pdf

If this requirement is not fully complied with, the beneficiary's grant may be reduced in accordance with the provisions of the grant agreement.

12.2. By the Commission³⁵

With the exception of scholarships paid to natural persons and other direct support paid to natural persons in most need, all information relating to grants awarded in the course of a financial year shall be published on an internet site of the European Union institutions no later than the 30 June of the year following the financial year in which the grants were awarded.

The Commission will publish the following information:

- name of the beneficiary
- address of the beneficiary when the latter is a legal person, region when the beneficiary is a natural person, as defined on NUTS 2 level³⁶ if he/she is domiciled within EU or equivalent if domiciled outside EU,
- subject of the grant,
- amount awarded.

Upon a reasoned and duly substantiated request by the beneficiary, the publication shall be waived if such disclosure risks threatening the rights and freedoms of individuals concerned as protected by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union or harm the commercial interests of the beneficiaries.

13. DATA PROTECTION

The reply to any call for proposals involves the recording and processing of personal data (such as name, address and CV). Such data will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data. Unless indicated otherwise, the questions and any personal data requested are required to evaluate the application in accordance with the specifications of the call for proposal will be processed solely for that purpose by the Head of Unit, Directorate B–Unit B1 Higher education, Directorate-General for Education and Culture, European Commission). Details concerning the processing of personal data are available on the

³⁵ Art. 35, 128.3 FR, 21, 191 RAP.

³⁶ European Union Official Journal L 39, of 10 February 2007.

privacy statement at:
http://ec.europa.eu/dataprotectionofficer/privacystatement_publicprocurement_en.pdf.
Personal data may be registered in the Early Detection and Exclusion System (EDES) if you are in one of the situations mentioned in Article 106 of the Financial Regulation³⁷. For more information, see the Privacy Statement on http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect_en.cfm.

14. PRE-EXISTING RIGHTS AND OWNERSHIP AND USE OF THE RESULTS (INCLUDING INDUSTRIAL AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS)

The word "results" must be understood as "any intended outcome of the action, whatever its form or nature". A result may, in addition to materials produced by the beneficiaries, also include pre-existing materials.

14.1. Pre-existing rights

The Commission licenses to the beneficiaries and/or their affiliated entities all the rights to use any pre-existing materials to develop the tasks as described in this call for proposals. This includes the IPR in the concept, methodology and materials developed by the starting date of implementation of the action. This also includes the U-Multirank trademark³⁸.

14.2. Ownership of the results by the Union

The expected results of this grant include and are not limited to:

- new developments in methodology and rank group calculations
- indicators
- database
- annual global university rankings, subject and readymade rankings
- newsletters
- U-Multirank news
- the U-Multirank webtool
- the U-Multirank mobile application
- reports
- other documents related to the ranking tool

In view of the Union's continued support for the ranking, the beneficiaries agree that the Union shall have continued ownership of intellectual property rights, and use of, all results of this grant as set out in the draft grant agreement.

In order to achieve the Knowledge Hub for Higher Education and to make the most of synergies between the knowledge tools and with other relevant data collection exercises, the Union shall have access to all data produced as a result of this action.

³⁷ Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 (OJ L 298 of 26.10.2012, p. 1) as amended.

³⁸ Community trademark application No. 014180781

15. PROCEDURE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Proposals must be submitted in accordance with the formal requirements and by the deadline set out under section 5.

No modification to the application is allowed once the deadline for submission has elapsed. However, if there is a need to clarify certain aspects or for the correction of clerical mistakes, the Commission may contact the applicant for this purpose during the evaluation process³⁹.

Applicants will be informed in writing about the results of the selection process.⁴⁰

➤ Submission on paper

Application forms are available at http://ec.europa.eu/education/calls/2016-eac-s36_en.

Applications shall be submitted on the correct form, duly completed, dated, showing a balanced budget (revenue/expenditure), submitted in 3 copies (one original clearly identified as such, plus 2 copies) plus a copy on CD or USB stick, and signed by the person authorised to enter into legally binding commitments on behalf of the applicant organisation.

Where applicable, all additional information considered necessary by the applicant can be included on separate sheets.

Applications must be sent

- by post, date as postmark, or by courier service, date of receipt by the courier service, to the following address⁴¹:

*European Commission
Directorate-General for Education and Culture
Call for proposals EAC/S36/2016
Sophia Eriksson Waterschoot
J-70
Rue Joseph II 70
B-1049 Brussels
Belgium*

- or hand-delivered in person, date as receipt, at the following address (opening hours: Monday to Friday, 08.30 – 17.00)

*European Commission
Avenue du Bourget 1
B-1140 Brussels
Belgium*

Applications sent by fax or e-mail will not be accepted.

³⁹ Art. 96 FR

⁴⁰ Art. 133 FR, 205 RAP

⁴¹ Art. 195.3 RAP

➤ Contacts

The contact point for any questions:

- EAC-UNITE-B1@ec.europa.eu

- *FAQ*: http://ec.europa.eu/education/calls/2016-eac-s36_en#faqs

➤ Annexes:

- Application form and its annexes
- Checklist of documents to be provided
- Model agreement