



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL HOME AFFAIRS

Directorate C : Schengen

EXTERNAL BORDERS FUND 2007-2013¹

COMMUNITY ACTIONS

CALL FOR PROPOSALS 2013

Deadline for application

**The completed application and annexes must be submitted to the
Commission by**

11 October 2013 at 12:00 CET

Applications submitted after the deadline will be automatically rejected

¹ The External Borders Fund 2007-2013 was established by Decision No 574/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Objectives

On 23 May 2007, the European Parliament and the Council adopted the Decision No 574/2007/EC establishing the External Borders Fund for the period 2007 to 2013 as a part of the General Programme 'Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows'² (hereafter referred to as 'the Decision').

1.1.1. General objective

The objective of the Fund is to contribute to the development of a common European integrated border management system. It was established as a part of financial solidarity mechanisms to support Member States that endure, for the benefit of the European Union, a lasting financial burden arising from the implementation of common standards on control and surveillance of external borders and visa policy.

The bulk of resources available for the Fund will be allocated to the Member States each year (shared management), in order to support actions relating to the general objectives defined in the Article 3 of the Decision.

In accordance with Article 7(1) of the Decision, the Commission may use up to 6% of the Fund's available resources to finance "*transnational actions or actions of interest to the Community as a whole*" (hereinafter referred to as "Community Actions").

The budget for Community Actions for 2013 is **EUR 13.048.562**, of which **EUR 3.548.562** is reserved for the current call. This amount may be increased (subject to budgetary availability by the time the award decision is taken).

1.1.2. Specific objective

The amount foreseen under the present call for proposals within the framework of Community Actions for 2013 shall be used for the objective defined in Article 7(1) (a) of the Decision:

Contributing to the enhancement of the activities organised by the consular and other services of the Member States in third countries as regards the flow of third-country nationals into the territory of the Member States and the cooperation between Member States in this regard.

According to the Decision, to be eligible for funding, the actions listed above under paragraph (a) shall cover the following areas:

- (a) further Community cooperation in implementing Community law and good practices;

² Decision No 574/2007/EC, OJ L 144, 6.6.2007.

- (b) support the setting-up of transnational cooperation networks and pilot projects based on transnational partnerships between consular services from two or more Member States designed to stimulate innovation and facilitate the exchange of experience and good practice;
- (c) support studies, dissemination and exchange of information on best practices and all other aspects of the general objective of contributing to enhancement of the activities organised by the consular services of the Member States in third countries and the cooperation between Member States in this field, including on the use of state-of-the-art technology;
- (d) support projects and studies exploring the possibility of new forms of Community cooperation and Community law in this area, in particular common application centres;
- (e) support to the development and application by Member States of common statistical tools, methods and indicators for measuring policy developments in the field of visa policy and consular cooperation.

2. ACCESS TO THE PROGRAMME

This call for proposals is addressed to entities with responsibilities in the field of visa policy, external borders control and immigration controls which are registered in the Member States, i.e.:

- The 26 Member States participating in the Fund in 2013, namely: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark (as Denmark has notified by letter of 19 June 2007 that it has decided to implement Decision 574/2007/EC in its national law), Estonia, Germany, Greece, France, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Finland, Sweden;
- Schengen associated third countries (for the time being Iceland, Liechtenstein Norway, Switzerland);
- International Organisations, European Union agencies and Non-Governmental Organisations registered in the 30 countries mentioned above may also participate in the projects as partners (co-beneficiaries), provided that they all work on a strictly non-profit basis and have proven experience in the fields covered.

Participation in the projects as partners on a no cost basis (associated partners) is open to:

- Ireland and the United Kingdom as they are not participating in the Fund.

This means that the cost for their participation may not be covered by the European Union contribution and must be financed entirely by non-European Union resources.

For the purpose of this call for proposals, the term "Member States" includes the above mentioned 26 Member States as well as associated countries and excludes Ireland and the United Kingdom. Whenever reference is made to "Member States" in this call, this aforementioned group of countries is covered.

3. ACTIVITIES OF THE PROGRAMME

The eligible actions for the two categories covered by this call are described below:

Category 1: Setting up and further development of regional consular co-operation programmes
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1.a Setting up and further development of common visa application centres

Policy context

Common visa application centres should provide advantages both for participating Member States and visa applicants:

- Member States will rationalize procedures and save considerable costs, by pooling and sharing their resources in such a centre, be it in a consulate or in other premises, instead of installing the necessary equipment for collecting biometric identifiers in every consular office;
- Member States will also reinforce local consular cooperation;
- Other benefits for Member States are the reduction of visa shopping; one central access makes it easier to meet data protection requirements and to ensure the security and protection of data; improvements in the implementation of common visa policy;
- For the visa applicant, such a centre facilitates the process of lodging the visa application in those third countries or regions of a third country where only a few Member States are present/ represented.

Eligible actions

- Setting up and further development of common visa application centres with effective participation of **at least two Member States** in order to receive the visa applications addressed to these Member States, where appropriate, in combination with other forms of cooperation in accordance with the principles defined in the Visa Code.

Eligible costs must be directly related to setting up and further development of the visa application centre, such as costs for premises; adaptation works to ensure building security and IT security, ICT systems and operating equipment; communication and maintenance costs; training for staff; staff costs; information campaign to create awareness of the existence of the centre in host country etc.

Eligible costs may also include expenditure related to other forms of co-operation, provided that they build upon the principle underlying the concept of a common visa application centre under the Visa code.

1.b Consular co-operation and training programmes for consular staff

Policy context

- Consular co-operation based on a regional approach should promote the exchange information on common problems and challenges, taking into account the need for a uniform and effective implementation of the European Union Code on Visas;
- It should contribute to economies of scale in the development of training and expertise on document security in a regional context.

Eligible actions

- Preparation and organization of regional training programmes involving the consular authorities of **at least three Member States**, covering **at least three third countries**.

Eligible costs must be directly related to the development of the training programmes, the preparation, organisation and costs of participation of trainers and trainees, training materials and follow up activities related to organisation of the training seminars, including IT tools.

Category 2: Regional cooperation and exchange of information on migration flows between the Member States with the possibility to connect with third countries with the aim of counteracting irregular migration

Policy context

The European Border Surveillance System (EUROSUR) is scheduled to become operational as of 2 December 2013. The Commission's proposal for a EUROSUR Regulation will be formally adopted by the European Parliament and by the Council, in autumn 2013.

The objective of EUROSUR is to strengthen the information exchange and operational cooperation between Member States as well as with the Frontex Agency in order to prevent irregular migration and cross-border crime, while also contributing to protecting and saving the lives of migrants, in particular in the Mediterranean region. For this purpose, the Member States shall establish *national coordination centres* (NCCs) for border surveillance, which shall serve as the backbone of EUROSUR. These NCCs shall *inter alia* ensure the information exchange with Frontex as well as with similar centres in the neighbouring third countries in order to counteract irregular migration.

Several Member States have applied for funding under the 2012 EBF Community Actions to facilitate the exchange of the situational picture of neighbouring external border sections between the national coordination centres of neighbouring Member States. The 2013 call for proposals is in particular addressed to those Member States which will apply EUROSUR as of the end of 2013 and which have not applied for funding under the 2012 EBF Community Actions.

Eligible actions

In order to facilitate the implementation of EUROSUR, the EBF Community Actions shall support the NCCs in facilitating the exchange of the situational picture of neighbouring external border sections between the national coordination centres of neighbouring Member States.

Eligible actions will notably include procurement and installation of equipment (hardware, software, etc.) and service works for exchanging between the national coordination centres (NCC) for border surveillance of neighbouring Member States the part of the national situational picture (NSP) which covers neighbouring external land and sea border sections. This exchange of information shall take place in line with the EUROSUR requirements³ (exchange of incidents, position of patrols and their communication codes, radar tracks, radio communication, tactical risk analysis reports etc.).

An application shall be submitted by **at least two Member States**, which share a common external land and/or sea border.

Complementarity

Attention has to be paid to ensure optimal synergy with programmes carried out at Union and national level by Frontex, the Member States and International Organisations. This will require effective information sharing, so that the necessary contacts and exchanges can be made.

4. AVAILABLE BUDGET AND FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

4.1. General

The total amount foreseen for this call is **EUR 3.548.562**.

The requested amount of grant per project cannot exceed **90%** of the total eligible costs.

Project funding will be based on the principle of co-financing. The co-financing of an action under this call for proposal shall be exclusive of any other financing by another programme financed by the budget of the European Union.

For the Community Actions, the duration of projects and the minimum of **EU funding** per project are set as follows:

³ As laid down in Article 9(9) of the draft Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the European Border Surveillance System (EUROSUR), as agreed in trialogue between the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission on 29 May 2013.

Category of Community Actions	Indicative Minimum EU funding per project	Duration
Category 1 Setting up and further development of regional consular co-operation programmes Subcategory 1a: Common application centres Subcategory 1b: Training programmes	Minimum: €500.000 €150.000	Maximum: 24 months 12 months
Category 2 Regional cooperation and exchange of information on migration flows between the Member States	Minimum: €150.000	Maximum: 24 months

The above figures on the indicative minimum funding relate to the amount of grant requested from the European Union (EU funding) and not to the total cost of the project.

The Commission will determine the amounts of financial assistance to be awarded, based on the available budget.

4.2. Financial provisions for grants

As project financing will be based on the principle of co-financing, in case the amount awarded by the Commission is less than the amount requested by the applicant, it is up to the latter to provide the additional amount or to reduce the total cost of the project without major impact on its objectives or content.

The implementation will be on the basis of either a standard grant agreement for an action with a single beneficiary or a standard grant agreement for an action with multiple beneficiaries in those situations where the beneficiary will act as coordinator in collaboration with other Member States or organisations (the other co-beneficiaries).

4.3. Payment conditions

The grant shall normally be paid under the following conditions:

- Pre-financing, representing 75% of the amount of the grant awarded within 30 days from the date of signature of the grant agreement by the last of the parties or within 30 days from the starting date of the action and upon receipt of a request for pre-financing from a beneficiary;
- The balance upon receipt and approval by the Commission of the final technical and financial implementation reports, together with a request for payment,

accompanied by an certificate on the financial statements and underlying accounts for each beneficiary/co-beneficiary incurring direct eligible costs above EUR 100.000. The cost of a certificate shall be included in the project budget. The model of the certificate is annexed to the model grant agreement.

4.4. VAT

Value added tax (VAT) is an eligible cost except for:

- taxed/exempt activities with right of deduction;
- activities which are undertaken by public bodies acting as public authorities in the exercise of sovereign powers or prerogatives.

4.5. Checks and audits

Checks and audits will be carried out in accordance with the relevant articles of the grant agreement.

Beneficiaries (applicants and co-beneficiaries) are required to keep all original documents, including accounting and tax documents, or, in duly substantiated exceptional cases, certified copies of original documents relating to the agreements for a period of five years from the date of payment of the balance of amounts payable. Upon request, these documents should be made available to the Commission. In case of an audit, the applicant must have available all documents of partners.

The European Court of Auditors and the European Anti-fraud Office (OLAF) will have the same audit powers, and in particular the same rights of access, as the Commission.

5. PROJECT DURATION AND START DATE

As a general rule, the maximum project duration indicated should not exceed the period set in the Section 4.1 for individual project category. The co-financed actions shall start as soon as possible after conclusion of a grant agreement but at the latest nine months after signature of the Grant Agreement.

6. EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

6.1. Exclusion criteria

Applicants, co-beneficiaries and associated partners shall declare in their honour that they are not in one of the situations listed in Article 106 and 107 of Regulation No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012⁴ on the Financial Regulation applicable to the budget of the European Union.

⁴ OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p. 52-53.

Effective, proportionate and dissuasive administrative and financial penalties may be applied in the event of incorrect statements.

The Commission will exclude a proposal from the eligibility, selection and award procedure if any of the entities involved in the project:

- (a) is bankrupt or is being wound up, is having its affairs administered by the court, has entered into an arrangement with creditors, has suspended business activities, is the subject of proceedings concerning those matters or is in an analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- (b) has or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them have, been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment of a competent authority of a Member State which has the force of res judicata;
- (c) has been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the Commission can justify including by decisions of the EIB and international organisations;
- (d) is not in compliance with their obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which it is established or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;
- (e) has, or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them have, been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation, money laundering or any other illegal activity, where such illegal activity is detrimental to the Union's financial interests;
- (f) is subject to an administrative penalty referred to in Article 109(1) of the Financial Regulation;
- (g) is subject to a conflict of interest;
- (h) is guilty of misrepresenting the information required by the Commission as a condition of participation in the contract or grant award procedure or fails to supply that information.

6.2. Eligibility criteria

In order to be eligible, projects submitted must meet **all** the following requirements:

- a) The submission of the project proposal must respect the deadline set for the call in section 8.3;
- b) Project proposals must be presented by eligible entities from the eligible Member States as defined in section 2, which have proven experience in the categories prioritised in section 3 of this call;

- c) Within the chosen category, projects shall involve the minimum number of Member States and be in line with at least one of the eligible actions, as defined in section 3;
- d) Project proposals must contain **all** the documents defined under section 8.4 of this call. If a document appearing on the checklist is either unavailable or not relevant, please indicate and give the reason why.

Only applications that meet the above mentioned eligibility criteria will be further processed

6.3. Selection criteria

Applicants, co-beneficiaries and associated partners should have sufficient financial and operational capacity to complete the proposed action, as defined in Art. 132 of the Financial Regulation and Art. 202 of its Rules of Application.

Except for public authorities of Member States and International Organisations, entities acting as partners (co-beneficiaries / associated partners) will have to declare that they have sufficient financial capacity to finance the proposed activities by signing the declaration by the partner annexed to the Grant Application Form. The analysis of the financial capacity will be done on the basis of the signed financial statements (profit and loss account and the balance sheet for the last financial year) or other equivalent documents provided by the applicant organisation for the last available financial year.

Except for public authorities of Member States and International Organisations, co-beneficiaries and partners will have to demonstrate their operational (technical and management) capacity to complete the action to be supported and must have proven expertise in the category of activities targeted.

Only applications that meet the above mentioned selection criteria will be further processed

6.4. Award criteria

Among the projects which have passed the eligibility criteria, the Commission will select the proposals achieving the highest score following evaluation according to the award criteria set out below, taking into account the resources available:

1. **Relevance (30 points)**: the extent to which the proposed action falls within the priorities and objectives defined for 2013 in section 1 above and the clarity and pertinence of the project's objectives;
2. **Quality of the proposed action (30 points)**: the clarity, feasibility of the approach, the thoroughness, appropriateness, methodology, timeframe and organisation;
3. **Value for money (20 points)**: the adequacy of the forecast budget, sources of financing other than the European Commission, appropriateness of the amount requested as to the expected results;
4. **Impact of the project (20 points)**: the sustainability of the project and/or its results after termination of the grant (where relevant); adequacy of measures proposed to ensure follow-up of project outputs, the dissemination of results, lessons learned and acquired

know-how beyond the national level as well as the likelihood of transferability of positive results to other Member States, locations and/or regions.

To qualify for award, the proposed action must obtain at least 60 points out of a possible maximum of 100 points. Projects receiving less than 10 points for relevance will be automatically eliminated from further evaluation.

7. VISIBILITY OF EUROPEAN UNION FINANCING

The beneficiaries, whose projects are selected for funding, should undertake to ensure adequate visibility of the operation financed by the Union. Specific reference should always be made to the fact that a project is co-financed by the European Union under the External Borders Fund – Community Actions 2013. Any communication or publication by the beneficiary, in any form and medium, shall indicate that sole responsibility lies with the author and that the Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

During each operation the beneficiary shall do whatever necessary to bring the support and financing given by the Union to the attention of the general public and the media. Evidence of implementation of activities undertaken in compliance with this requirement will have to be provided in the final reports. The beneficiary shall ensure that:

- a) all documents, including any attendance or other certificate, concerning the project include a statement indicating that the project is co-financed by the Fund;
- b) equipment and any other material co-financed by the Union display the EU logo, which should be of the same size and have the same prominence as the logo of the beneficiary;
- c) a permanent prominent poster of significant size is put up on all infrastructure co-financed by the Union, stating the type and the name of the project and displaying the EU logo.

The EU logo can be found at:

<http://publications.europa.eu/code/en/en-5000100.htm>

http://europa.eu/abc/symbols/emblem/graphics1_en.htm

8. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

8.1. Language of the application

In order to minimise translation delays, applicants are strongly encouraged to submit applications in either English or French. However, applications may be submitted in any of the official languages of the European Union.

8.2. How to submit a grant application

This call is managed via PRIAMOS, a system for the submission of the applications, which requires applicants to fill in an on-line Grant Application form and to attach to it all required annexes.

The completed application and annexes must be submitted to the Commission by the deadline indicated in the call for proposals via the PRIAMOS system.

The PRIAMOS system will not accept any application after the deadline. Applications submitted by any other method than the PRIAMOS system will be automatically rejected.

In order to access the system applicants first need to register (this involves applicants providing some basic data about themselves and their organisations). It should be done as soon as a decision is taken to participate in this call. Subsequently, applicants shall receive a password to be used to access the system.

Applications must be submitted, in their entirety, through PRIAMOS. **No applications (partial or entire) submitted on paper, fax or e-mail will be considered. Please note that although the PRIAMOS system is able to deal with a lot of applications at the same time, it is advisable NOT to wait until the last moment to register and submit your application.**

If the applicant submits more than one version of the grant application form or any annex, only the latest version of such document(s) will be taken into consideration for the evaluation.

Applicants should make sure that all electronic files are readable and are not corrupted and that their applications are complete.

If the applicant submits more than one application in the framework of this call, it should make sure that each of its applications receives a different registration number in PRIAMOS system.

Information and guidance on how to register and submit your application on PRIAMOS can be found on:

http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/funding/borders/funding_borders_en.htm.

8.3. Deadline for submitting applications

Applications have to be submitted electronically via the PRIAMOS system

by 11 October 2013 at 12:00 CET

It is responsibility of an applicant to complete the on-line application before the deadline.

We strongly advise you not to wait until the last few days before applying since heavy Internet traffic or a problem with the Internet connection could lead to your on-line session being interrupted before you complete your application there by obliging you to repeat the whole process and you may miss the deadline.

8.4. Content of applications

Each proposal must include the following documents:

- Application (electronic document, available only in PRIAMOS)
- Annex I – Project Description and Implementation
- Annex II – Budget Form
- Annex III – Financial Identification Form (to be down-loaded: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/financial_id/financial_id_en.cfm)
- Annex IV – Legal Entity Form (for all partners involved in the project, accompanied by evidence of legal status) (to be down-loaded: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm)
- Annex V – Partner/Associated Partner Declaration Form/Co-financing third party declaration (if relevant)
- Annex VI – VAT declaration
- Annex VII – Curriculum vitae of key staff performing the work in connection with the project (not required from public bodies and International Organisations)
- Annex VIII – Financial statements of applicant organisation (profit and loss account and the balance sheet for the last financial year). The financial statements should be accompanied by an external audit report if the amount of grant sought exceeds €750.000. (Financial statements are not relevant for public bodies and International Organisations.)

The details and the explanations concerning the annexes to be provided by the applicant are available in the **Guide for Applicants 2013**. Therefore, please read carefully the guide for details and explanations concerning compulsory documents and annexes to be uploaded in PRIAMOS as a complete application package. The forms necessary for the grant application, its annexes, the guide for applicants and the relevant links can be accessed from the External Borders Fund website at the following address:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/financing/fundings/migration-asylum-borders/external-borders-fund/transnational-actions/index_en.htm

The Commission may contact applicants to request additional information at any time prior to taking its decision. Failures to respond to such requests by the deadline set may lead to disqualification of the application. Applicants must take the necessary steps to ensure that they can be contacted rapidly up to the end of the selection process. Where the Commission contacts an applicant, this should not be regarded as a pre-selection of the proposal on the part of the Commission.

9. FURTHER INFORMATION

9.1. Where to find the necessary information

The Funding possibilities page on the DG HOME website (http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/financing/fundings/index_en.htm) is updated whenever relevant information becomes available; therefore, applicants are advised to check it regularly.

Any questions related to the content of the call should be sent to the following address:

HOME-EXT-BORDERS-FUND@ec.europa.eu

It should be noted that in an interest of equal treatment of applicants, the Commission cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of an applicant, a partner or action.

Contact at the European Commission

The Commission service responsible for implementing the External Borders Fund is Unit C4 of Directorate General Home Affairs - HOME.

E-mail: HOME-EXT-BORDERS-FUND@ec.europa.eu

Mailing address:

European Commission
DG Home Affairs
Unit C4 - EBF
LX 46 8/101,
B-1049 Brussels
Fax (+32 2) 297 9590

All applicants will be informed of the Commission's decision concerning their grant application as soon as possible. It is envisaged that the Commission will complete its selection procedures in the first quarter of 2014.

10. DATA PROTECTION

Data concerning the grant beneficiaries, their partners, the amount, rate of grant, and purpose of each grant and the summary of the results of the projects will be published on the internet site of DG HOME.

The grant application will be processed by computer. All personal data (such as names, addresses, CVs, etc.) will be processed in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data⁵. If, at any stage of the administrative treatment of grant applications, the persons or entities concerned consider that they have been affected by an instance of maladministration, they may, irrespective of any other means of redress, make a complaint to the European Ombudsman in accordance with Article 195(1) of the EC Treaty and as provided by the Parliament Decision of 9 March 1994 on the regulations and general conditions governing the performance of the Ombudsman's duties published in Official Journal of the European Communities L 113 of 4 May 1994.

⁵ OJ L 8 of 12.1.2001, p. 1.

Grant applicants and, if they are legal entities, persons who have powers of representation, decision-making or control over them, should be informed that, should they be in one of the situations mentioned in:

- the Commission Decision of 16.12.2008 on the Early Warning System (EWS) for the use of authorising officers of the Commission and the executive agencies (OJ, L 344, 20.12.2008, p. 125), or

- the Commission Regulation of 17.12.2008 on the Central Exclusion Database – CED (OJ L 344, 20.12.2008, p. 12),

their personal details (name, given name if natural person, address, legal form and name and given name of the persons with powers of representation, decision-making or control, if legal person) may be registered in the EWS only or both in the EWS and CED, and communicated to the persons and entities listed in the above-mentioned Decision and Regulation, in relation to the award or the execution of a procurement contract or a grant agreement or decision.

11. MEANS OF REDRESS

If, at any stage of the administrative treatment of grant applications, the persons or entities concerned consider that they have been affected by an instance of maladministration, they may, irrespective of any other means of redress, make a complaint to the European Ombudsman in accordance with Article 228(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and as provided by the Parliament Decision of 9 March 1994 on the regulations and general conditions governing the performance of the Ombudsman's duties published in Official Journal L 113 of 4 May 1994.