



Union pour la Méditerranée  
Union for the Mediterranean  
الإتحاد من أجل المتوسط

**Contracting authority:** Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean

# UfM Grant Scheme for the Promotion of Inclusive Digital Trade

**Open Call for proposals:**  
Union for the Mediterranean

Guidelines  
for grant applicants

Reference: PRO487EDE-2024

Deadline for submission of concept note and full application:  
28/10/2024 15:00 H (Barcelona date and time)

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## NOTICE

**This is an open call for proposals**, where all documents are submitted together (concept note and full application). In the first instance, only the concept notes will be evaluated. Thereafter, for the lead applicants who have been pre-selected, the full applications will be evaluated. After the evaluation of the full applications, an eligibility check will be performed for those which have been provisionally selected. Eligibility will be checked on the basis of the supporting documents requested by the contracting authority and the signed 'declaration by the lead applicant' sent together with the full application.



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## 1. UfM Grant Scheme for the Promotion of inclusive digital trade

### 1.1. Background

Digital transformation, which has accelerated immensely during the COVID-19 pandemic, presents unprecedented opportunities as an enabling tool for economic growth and social inclusion. However, digitalization can also deepen existing gaps by generating more significant exclusion and distributive inequity. Many countries, communities, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), entrepreneurial cooperatives, and social enterprises are experiencing a widening digital gap, particularly in rural areas. Inclusive ecosystems will be necessary to allow everybody to benefit from digital transformation.

Digitalization is changing the way goods and services are traded, increasing the scale, scope, and pace of trade. It enables companies to offer new products and services worldwide to more digitally connected customers. SMEs significantly benefit from e-commerce as they can use new and innovative digital tools to reach more customers and overcome obstacles to further growth by facilitating payments, reducing delivery times, and utilizing alternative financial mechanisms.

Integrated information and communication technology services form the backbone of digital trade, providing the necessary network infrastructure and enabling the digitization of other types of services. Nowadays, it is not easy to separate the supply of services from trade in goods as there is a combination of both. Cross-border digital trade also presents challenges for the private sector and governments, ranging from logistics management, regulatory frameworks, customs controls, and revenue implications concerning collecting taxes and duties. These issues pose new challenges to how international trade and investment policy is conducted.

Smaller companies face a series of obstacles in their internationalization process that can be mitigated by using digital technologies, such as digital platforms that allow them to expand their markets through e-commerce. Stagnating productivity may require special attention to innovation and technological diffusion by promoting business networks and knowledge-sharing in specific sectors. Also, the high percentage of informality in the economies of the Southern countries of the Mediterranean (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia) suggests the need to strengthen linkages among the diverse productive sectors through digital trade. At the same time, the population's low development of digital skills can be addressed with comprehensive policies and capacity-building programs to enhance knowledge and expertise. The participation of women in innovation activities should also advance, and there must be greater inclusion of women in trade process optimization.

The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), as an intergovernmental institution that brings together 43 Member States, plays a crucial role for regional exchange and cooperation. As a platform for dialogue and knowledge-sharing for policymakers, business leaders, and civil society, it intends, inter alia, to support the creation of decent job opportunities through trade and investment.

At the same time, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) presents an unprecedented opportunity for North African countries to strengthen South-South trade.

Within the framework of the AfCFTA, the digital transformation and digital trade have an essential role to play, as they can facilitate more efficient and inclusive cross-border trade and enable more flexible and cost-effective business transactions.

The numerous trade shocks and the rapidly evolving digital landscape of recent years require solutions that enable a socio-economic recovery. Through this Grant Scheme, the UfM reaffirms its commitment to promoting trade and exports in the region as a vehicle for economic growth, with a focus on the Southern Mediterranean countries.

## 1.2. Objectives of the Grant Scheme and priority issues

The UfM Grant Scheme for the promotion of inclusive digital trade aims to support and increase the participation of relevant entities, such as SMEs, cooperatives, entrepreneurs, social enterprises, and business communities in e-commerce, with a particular focus on business organizations led and operated by women in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia. It also seeks to foster the use of digital tools. The Grant Scheme intends in particular to identify and address the challenges SMEs and other business organizations face in e-commerce through training and capacity-building measures.

The Grant Scheme is not intended to replace government approaches but rather to seek local solutions, which help to overcome challenges in digital commerce.

As a summary, the objective of the UfM Grant Scheme on the promotion of inclusive digital trade is to:

- Increase the participation of SMEs, cooperatives, social enterprises, entrepreneurs, and other business organizations in e-commerce to achieve greater market access and better integration in regional and global value chains
- Strengthen their digital, technical, and commercial capacities
- Increase their resilience, competitiveness, and innovative power
- Overcome the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on their business sectors
- Maintain employment during and after economic disruptions
- Create new jobs for various workforce segments, especially women and youth and other vulnerable groups
- Encourage the creation and development of ecosystems that give way to e-commerce, particularly for businesses in rural areas
- Expand existing training and skills measures
- Support new training and qualification measures at different levels of business management
- Foster social and environmental sustainability in their operations

This Call for Proposals is addressed to not-for-profit organizations from the UfM Member States, which are invited to submit proposals for projects falling under one or several of the priorities outlined below. It is important to note that enterprises cannot apply directly for funding under the Grant Scheme, nor can funds be forwarded to for-profit entities. However, the activities or measures to be implemented may provide capacity building for enterprises with social benefit purposes.

Applications for this call for proposals may include costs and tasks aimed at incorporating results-based methodologies and reinforcement of internal management resources, namely financial management procedures, that are intended to improve implementation, monitoring and reporting of the Action.

Implementation of the proposed projects and their respective activities should be possible to begin immediately after the acceptance of the proposal.

Only applications in which the lead applicant or at least one co-applicant are based in one of the following UfM Member States will be considered: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia.

The specific objectives and priorities of this call for proposals are:

<u>Specific Objectives</u>	<u>Priorities</u>
Supporting SMEs, cooperatives, social enterprises, business communities, and entrepreneurs to enable them to export more through e-commerce.	<p>Priority 1- Development of digital, technical, and managerial capacities to facilitate greater participation in e-commerce in the Southern Mediterranean.</p> <p>Priority 2- Enhancing the participation in e-commerce of women-led enterprises, particularly those operating in rural areas.</p>

Each priority is outlined below in terms of:

- Specific challenge
- Scope
- Expected results and impacts
- Expected duration

Priority 1- Development of digital, technical, and managerial capacities to facilitate greater participation in e-commerce in the Southern Mediterranean.

Specific challenge

E-commerce has many facets that most SMEs and small business organizations can take advantage of. By finding the best platform for them, small companies can drive sales through increased online participation, allowing customers to order their products anywhere. SMEs should see e-commerce as a world of opportunities that will enable them to grow and improve their regional and global competitiveness.

E-commerce exploded worldwide with the widespread change in doing business during the COVID-19 outbreak. Even before the pandemic, the e-commerce trend was on the rise, and now digital solutions have proven to be an optimal option for growing trade domestically and expanding into other regional and global markets.

In the Southern Mediterranean, small businesses still need adequate ecosystems and skills to integrate into digital commerce. Companies need to expand and enjoy sufficient digital knowledge to capitalize on market trends and not to be left behind. In addition, the rise of e-commerce means that customers now demand the delivery of their products at a lower price and faster than ever before. With the support of logistics service providers, SMEs can better meet these demands, increase sales and grow their business accordingly.

At present, SMEs are the largest segment of economic activity in the countries of the Southern Mediterranean. By achieving high percentages of sales derived from exports and having a direct or indirect presence in the recipient market, SMEs can adopt and integrate the permanent use of the most popular e-commerce platforms in the recipient market into their trading processes. Training programs to reduce time and costs associated with exporting, managing orders and sales abroad, as well as to improve pre-and post-sales services, and to increase the use of electronic payment methods, can contribute to the successful participation of SMEs in e-commerce.

The AfCFTA protocol on e-commerce envisages the support of SMEs and entrepreneurs engaging in e-commerce. To this end, the AfCFTA offers a framework that helps enterprises in North Africa to seize the

opportunities and meet the challenges presented by e-commerce. Projects under this initiative can take advantage of this momentum and devise capacity-building measures that will assist in implementing AfCFTA protocols and annexes to increase the participation of SMEs in North Africa in the e-commerce arena.

### Scope

One of the purposes of this priority is to learn from the Covid-19 recovery by building resilient digital economy ecosystems. Projects under this priority should focus on supporting women-led cooperatives, entrepreneurs, start-ups to improve their use of e-commerce opportunities. The projects should enable SMEs through capacity-building programs to export and do business regionally and internationally at lower costs and without intermediaries through e-commerce.

Project activities may include, for example, incubation programs or training programs that build the capacity of SMEs in cross-border access to e-markets, critical business thinking, business operations, and finance, among others.

This priority aims to promote and support SMEs, cooperatives, entrepreneurs, social enterprises, and start-ups, especially those in rural areas of the Southern Mediterranean through training measures, in order to obtain the knowledge, expertise, and digital skills that enable them to participate in e-commerce and thus gain access to new markets. These measures aim at a greater participation in regional and international trade, the generation of more employment opportunities and, therefore, greater socio-economic welfare for society.

### Expected Results and Impacts

- Increased access of entrepreneurs and SMEs to relevant knowledge resources to engage in e-commerce
- Strengthened digital economy ecosystems for the private sector
- Increased participation of SMEs and entrepreneurs in e-commerce to access more regional and international markets
- Enhanced knowledge of digital trading tools and digital skills development of traders and leaders of cooperatives and entrepreneurial communities, in particular in rural areas of the Southern Mediterranean countries
- Improved conditions for the development of innovative approaches to e-commerce for SMEs, entrepreneurial cooperatives, and communities to cope with changes related to disruptions at national, regional, or global level
- Strengthened knowledge among SMEs and entrepreneurs about the advantages of the AfCFTA e-commerce protocol
- Facilitated participation in e-commerce of sustainable, productive sectors
- Increased professional advice on legal compliance in e-commerce

Expected duration: up to 15 months.

Priority 2- Enhancing the participation in e-commerce of women-led enterprises, particularly those operating in rural areas.

### Specific challenge

E-commerce can be a driver of women's economic empowerment. As time and mobility constraints are more significant for women, especially those with children, specific technological changes, such as e-commerce, can substantially impact female employment. By creating job opportunities for skilled workers, trade incentivizes the familiarization with new technologies and today's digital innovations. This has great potential for women. Women play an active role in services, agriculture, and manufacturing as cross-border traders, producers, and entrepreneurs. E-commerce through online platforms can be an easy and cost-effective way for women to export regionally and globally, to access new international markets, and to leverage their entrepreneurial skills.

E-commerce as an area of business with a high networking potential has many cross-cutting themes that touch different industries and generate opportunities on many levels. It is an ecosystem that feeds on the most diverse visions. The contribution of women can open up many opportunities for economic growth for themselves and entrepreneurial partnerships such as women cooperatives and communities in the Southern Mediterranean countries, particularly those in rural areas.

In view of the Covid-19 pandemic, which decreased overall regional trade while increasing unemployment and underemployment, e-commerce can open new ways to re-incentivize exports in the Southern Mediterranean region and beyond. Projects under this priority should focus on fostering the incorporation and strengthening of e-commerce to increase regional and international trade and to make women-led SMEs and female entrepreneurs more resilient to face any future crisis.

As for the North African countries, the AfCFTA protocol on e-commerce provides for initiatives that promote and facilitate e-commerce to increase transnational trade and to make trade more inclusive. One of the main pillars of the AfCFTA is to unlock the potential for African women to grow their businesses from micro to macro enterprises. Many women traders work in the informal sector, and through e-commerce, women-led enterprises can formalize their business and expand into other markets. For instance, women and agricultural workers can benefit from initiatives that enable them to export to consumer markets abroad.

The Grant Scheme projects should provide e-commerce training to SMEs led by women, women entrepreneurs, women-led cooperatives, and communities in the Southern Mediterranean. The projects could offer, for example, mentoring and training programs for digital tools and other services that improve and increase the participation of the target groups in e-commerce.

### Scope

In the digital era, and e-commerce is key for SMEs, entrepreneurs, cooperatives, and other business communities led by women to expand to new markets. It is vital to enable these women entrepreneurs not to miss their opportunity for change and growth.

Projects under this priority aim to design and deliver specialized training programs that increase women-led businesses' knowledge and digital skills to initiate or strengthen women's participation in e-commerce. The goal is to increase regional trade between the Southern Mediterranean countries and enhance regional and international exports through e-commerce, while improving women's employment prospects in the Southern Mediterranean.

Projects in the framework of this priority should support women-led SMEs and female entrepreneurs through e-commerce training or mentoring programs. The programs can include a focus on logistics services and electronic payment solutions that enable e-commerce. Examples are the support of women's cooperatives or business communities in the creation of online platforms, the design of business plans and online marketing, as well as the development and improvement of products for online trading.

### Expected Results and Impacts

- Increased use of e-commerce to access national, regional, and international markets
- Increased awareness of the importance of e-commerce in today's business and work environment among women-led SMEs, cooperatives, entrepreneurs, and start-ups
- Enhanced knowledge of digital trading tools and digital skills for women-led cooperatives and communities, in particular in rural areas of the Southern Mediterranean countries
- Increased trade resilience of women-led SMEs, cooperatives, and start-ups to cope with national, regional, or global disruptions through e-commerce.
- Strengthened awareness among women-led SMEs and female entrepreneurs in North African countries on the advantages of correctly implementing the AfCFTA e-commerce protocol.
- Facilitating participation in e-commerce of sustainable, productive sectors
- Increased professional advice on legal compliance in e-commerce.



Expected duration: up to 15 months

Please note that proposals may address one or more of the priorities established in the call for proposals.

### **1.3. Financial allocation provided by the contracting authority**

The overall indicative amount made available under this call for proposals is EUR 1.200.000,00. The contracting authority reserves the right not to award all available funds. It is however possible that in the future supplementary resources, indicatively estimated at EUR 250.000,00, will be added to the current allocation. In this case, applicants whose proposals have been placed in the reserve list, if any, will be contacted, following the order of the reserve list, in view of possible funding.

Size of grants

Any grant requested under this call for proposals must fall between the following minimum and maximum amounts:

- Minimum amount: EUR 150.000
- Maximum amount: EUR 300.000

Any grant requested under this call for proposals must fall between the following maximum percentages of total eligible costs of the action:

- Minimum percentage: 50 % of the total eligible costs of the action.
- Maximum percentage 80 % of the total eligible costs of the action (see also Section 2.1.5).

The balance (i.e. the difference between the total cost of the action and the amount requested from the contracting authority) must be financed from sources other than the Union for the Mediterranean.

## 2. RULES FOR THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS

These guidelines set out the rules for the submission, selection and implementation of the actions financed under this call, in conformity with the practical guide, which is applicable to the present call (available on the internet at this address: [ePrag 2021.1.full.pdf](#)).

### 2.1. Eligibility criteria

There are three sets of eligibility criteria, relating to:

(1) the actors:

- The 'lead applicant', i.e. the entity submitting the application form (2.1.1),
- if any, its co-applicant(s) (where it is not specified otherwise the lead applicant and its co-applicant(s) are hereinafter jointly referred as 'applicant(s)') (2.1.1),
- and, if any, affiliated entity(ies) to the lead applicant and/or to a co-applicant(s). (2.1.2);

(2) the actions:

Actions for which a grant may be awarded (2.1.4);

(3) the costs:

- types of cost that may be taken into account in setting the amount of the grant (2.1.5).

#### **2.1.1. Eligibility of applicants (i.e. lead applicant and co-applicant(s))**

##### Lead applicant

(1) In order to be eligible for a grant, the lead applicant must:

- be a legal person (non-governmental organisation);

pursuant to the conditions established in the Financing Agreement between UfM and GIZ, international organisations<sup>1</sup>, government agencies, local authorities, and public sector operators are not eligible under this call. – with the exception of state dependent or publicly funded research centres and universities- **and**

- be non-profit-making<sup>2</sup> **and**
- be established in the UfM Region<sup>3</sup> **and**

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<sup>1</sup> International organisations are international public-sector organisations set up by intergovernmental agreements as well as specialised agencies set up by them; the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, European Investment Bank (EIB) and European Investment Fund (EIF) are also recognized as international organisations.

<sup>2</sup> UfM reserves the right to assess the non-profit status of the applicant and/or of the proposed project.

<sup>3</sup>**UfM Region:** Albania, Algeria, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mauritania, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, North Macedonia, The Netherlands, Palestine, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Tunisia, Türkiye

- be established in one of the following countries: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia **or** have at least one co-applicant established in one of the above-mentioned countries<sup>4</sup>
- be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action with the co-applicant(s) and affiliated entity(ies), not acting as an intermediary **and**

Fulfilment of these criteria will be determined on the basis of the organisation's statutes, which should demonstrate that it has been established by an instrument governed by the national law of the country concerned and that its head office is located in an eligible country. In this respect, any legal entity whose statutes have been established in another country cannot be considered an eligible local organisation, even if the statutes are registered locally or a 'Memorandum of Understanding' has been concluded.

- (2) Potential applicants may not participate in calls for proposals or be awarded grants if they are in any of the situations listed in Section 2.6.10.1 of the practical guide;

Potential applicants may not participate in the call for proposals or be awarded grants if shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations in the performance of a previous contract financed by the UfM, which has led to the early termination of a legal commitment or to the application of liquidated damages or other contractual penalties or which has been discovered following checks and/or audits.

Lead applicants, co-applicants, affiliated entities and, in case of legal entities, persons who have powers of representation, decision-making or control over the lead applicant, the co-applicants and the affiliated entities are informed that, should they be in one of the situations of early detection or exclusion according to Section 2.6.10.1 of the practical guide, 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 early detection and exclusion system, and communicated to the persons and entities concerned in relation to the award or the execution of a grant contract. In this respect, lead applicants, co-applicants and affiliated entities are obliged to declare that they are not in one of the exclusion situations through a signed declaration on honour ([PRAG Annex A14](#)).

The lead applicant may act individually<sup>5</sup> or with co-applicant(s)

If awarded the grant contract, the lead applicant will become the beneficiary identified as the coordinator in Annex G (special conditions). The coordinator is the main interlocutor of the contracting authority. It represents and acts on behalf of any other co-beneficiary (if any) and coordinate the design and implementation of the action.

### **Co-applicant(s)**

Co-applicants participate in designing and implementing the action, and the costs they incur are eligible in the same way as those incurred by the lead applicant.

Co-applicants must satisfy the eligibility criteria as applicable to the lead applicant himself.

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<sup>4</sup> Pursuant to the conditions established in the Financing Agreement between the UfM and GIZ, the lead applicant must be established in one of the following countries: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine or Tunisia **or** have at least one co-applicant established in one of the above-mentioned countries

<sup>5</sup> In case the Action does not include co-applicants, the lead applicant must be established in one of the following countries: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine or Tunisia

Co-applicants must sign the mandate in Part B Section 4 of the grant application form.

If awarded the grant contract, the co-applicant(s) (if any) will become beneficiary(ies) in the action (together with the coordinator).

- (3) Applicants included in the lists of EU restrictive measures (see Section 2.4. of the PRAG) at the moment of the award decision cannot be awarded the contract<sup>6</sup>.

### **2.1.2. Affiliated entities**

Affiliated entity(ies)

The lead applicant and its co-applicant(s) may act with affiliated entity(ies).

**Only the following entities may be considered as affiliated entities to the lead applicant and/or to co-applicant(s):**

Only entities having a structural link with the applicants (i.e. the lead applicant or a co-applicant), in particular a legal or capital link.

This structural link encompasses mainly two notions:

- (i) Control, as defined in Directive 2013/34/EU on the annual financial statements, consolidated financial statements and related reports of certain types of undertakings:

Entities affiliated to an applicant may hence be:

- Entities directly or indirectly controlled by the applicant (daughter companies or first-tier subsidiaries). They may also be entities controlled by an entity controlled by the applicant (granddaughter companies or second-tier subsidiaries) and the same applies to further tiers of control;
- Entities directly or indirectly controlling the applicant (parent companies). Likewise, they may be entities controlling an entity controlling the applicant;
- Entities under the same direct or indirect control as the applicant (sister companies).

- (ii) Membership, i.e. the applicant is legally defined as a e.g. network, federation, association in which the proposed affiliated entities also participate or the applicant participates in the same entity (e.g. network, federation, association,...) as the proposed affiliated entities.

The structural link shall as a general rule be neither limited to the action nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation. This means that the link would exist independently of the award of the grant; it should exist before the call for proposals and remain valid after the end of the action.

By way of exception, an entity may be considered as affiliated to an applicant even if it has a structural link specifically established for the sole purpose of the implementation of the action in the case of so-called 'sole applicants' or 'sole beneficiaries'. A sole applicant or a sole beneficiary is a legal entity formed by several

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<sup>6</sup> The updated lists of sanctions are available at [www.sanctionsmap.eu](http://www.sanctionsmap.eu).

Please note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The source of the sanctions stems from legal acts published in the Official Journal (OJ). In case of discrepancy between the published legal acts and the updates on the website it is the OJ version that prevails.

entities (a group of entities) which together comply with the criteria for being awarded the grant. For example, an association is formed by its members.

### What is not an affiliated entity?

The following are not considered entities affiliated to an applicant:

- Entities that have entered into a (procurement) contract or subcontract with an applicant, act as concessionaires or delegates for public services for an applicant,
- Entities that receive financial support from the applicant,
- Entities that cooperate on a regular basis with an applicant on the basis of a memorandum of understanding or share some assets,
- Entities that have signed a consortium agreement under the grant contract (unless this consortium agreement leads to the creation of a 'sole applicant' as described above).

### How to verify the existence of the required link with an applicant?

The affiliation resulting from control may in particular be proved on the basis of the consolidated accounts of the group of entities the applicant and its proposed affiliates belong to.

The affiliation resulting from membership may in particular be proved on the basis of the statutes or equivalent act establishing the entity (network, federation, association) which the applicant constitutes or in which the applicant participates.

If the applicants are awarded a grant contract, their affiliated entity(ies) will not become beneficiary(ies) of the action and signatory(ies) of the grant contract. However, they will participate in the design and in the implementation of the action and the costs they incur (including those incurred for implementation contracts) may be accepted as eligible costs, provided they comply with all the relevant rules already applicable to the beneficiary(ies) under the grant contract.

Affiliated entity(ies) must satisfy the same eligibility criteria as the lead applicant and the co-applicant(s). They must sign the affiliated entity(ies) statement in Part B Section 5 of the grant application form.]

### **2.1.3. Associates and contractors**

The following entities are not applicants nor affiliated entities and do not have to sign the 'mandate for co-applicant(s)' or 'affiliated entities' statement':

- Associates

Other organisations or individuals may be involved in the action. Such associates play a real role in the action but may not receive funding from the grant, with the exception of per diem or travel costs. Associates do not have to meet the eligibility criteria referred to in Section 2.1.1. Associates must be mentioned in Part B Section 6 — 'Associates participating in the action' — of the grant application form.

- Contractors

The beneficiaries and their affiliated entities are permitted to award contracts. Associates or affiliated entity(ies) cannot be also contractors in the project. Contractors are subject to the procurement rules set out in Annex IV and Annex X to the standard grant contract.

#### **2.1.4. Eligible actions: actions for which an application may be made**

Definition:

An action is composed of a set of activities.

##### Duration

The initial planned duration of an action may not be lower than 6 months nor exceed 15 months.

Sectors or themes

Please refer to article 1.2 "Objectives of the Programme and Priority Issues"

##### Location

Actions can only take place in one or multiple of the following UfM Member States: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia.

**Priority will be given to regional actions, i.e. involving at least 3 of the aforementioned Member States.**

##### Types of action

The following types of action are **ineligible**:

- Actions concerned only or mainly with individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences and congresses;
- Actions concerned only or mainly with individual scholarships for studies or training courses;
- Actions that involve the direct forwarding of funds.
- Actions taking place in a country other than Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia.

##### Types of activity

**The list is indicative and non-exhaustive.**

- Networking activities, (digitally) bringing together entrepreneurs from the target groups to exchange experiences and best cases on business through e-commerce
- Establishing digital platforms for target groups to access local, regional and international markets
- Facilitating information and networking on access to finance for entrepreneurs to participate in e-commerce
- Holding (digital) trainings, aimed at increasing the digital, technical, and managerial skills of the target groups to facilitate more exports through e-commerce
- Provide capacity building measures on integration into regional and international value chains by means of e-commerce.
- Produce knowledge resources and material serving the target group to better understand and participate in e-commerce

- Develop resources that support entrepreneurs and MSMEs to use digital payment methods

The **cross-cutting issues** to be integrated in the proposals include:

Gender Equality:

Gender equality is a fundamental human rights principle and a central, standalone goal in the 2030 Agenda. The design of the action should give particular attention to gender mainstreaming so as to ensure a reinforced role of women as actors of change. Women particularly are affected by time and mobility constraints due to various cultural, social and even legal patterns that deprive them from participating in the digital economy; projects are encouraged to include a special focus on them and other vulnerable focus groups.

Environment and Climate change:

Mainstreaming environment and climate change is essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Applicants are encouraged to ensure that environment and climate change considerations are mainstreamed throughout the proposal and/or to include specific results on environment and climate change.

Elements of **added value** under this call for proposals are:

- **Regional added value:** Proposals demonstrate an actual need for the UfM region and address common regional needs by providing tangible benefits for the identified target groups; expected results are achievable and sustainable through joint actions only.
- **Innovation:** proposals consider state of the art methods, techniques, international best practices and lead to innovative solutions and results for the concerned territories. This applies especially to follow-up projects, which are based on the results of previous experiences;
- **Complementarity:** proposals take into account international, national and/or regional policies and other projects, as well as other programmes in the cooperation area in order to exploit potential synergies and complementarities;
- **Impact:** foreseen impact of proposals in a medium- and long-term perspective (beyond project duration) is based on quantifiable result indicators. Benefits should potentially extend beyond the territories covered by the project proposal;
- **Sustainability:** The sustainability of project outputs and results will ensure territorial impact and long-term benefits. Sustainability has to be considered at the point of project design and be integrated into the action plan;
- **Response to climate change:** The project needs to be related to the challenges of climate change and their relation to the Mediterranean economies and labour markets. It should include a clear explanation of how the project has the potential to contribute to employment while operating sustainably and in line with climate change adaption and mitigation.
- **Experience:** The applicant should have a proven track record of working in the proposed field of action, either through individual expertise and experience, previous projects, or partnerships with experienced stakeholders.
- **Target Group:** Projects with a special focus on vulnerable target groups are preferred. This includes demographics of the (southern) Mediterranean that are already disadvantaged in their economic opportunities and are thereby even more at risk by the economic consequences of the climate change, such as women, people living in rural areas, young people struggling to enter the labour market, migrants and people with disabilities.
- **Local Context:** The initiative should clearly account for the local conditions it is to be implemented in. For example, it can be a community-driven initiative supported by local stakeholders working closely with the target groups. Alternatively, the applicant can show previous experience in implementing context-sensitive initiatives in chosen target area.

## Financial support to third parties<sup>7</sup>

Applicants may not propose financial support to third parties.

## Visibility

The applicants must take all necessary steps to publicise the fact that the Union for the Mediterranean has financed or co-financed the action. As far as possible under this Call for Proposals must incorporate information and communication activities that are designed to raise the awareness of specific or general audiences with regard to the reasons for the action and the UfM support for the action in the country or region concerned, as well as the results and the impact of this support.

Applicants must comply with the objectives and priorities and guarantee the visibility of the UfM (see Visibility Manual).

## Number of applications and grants per applicants / affiliated entities

The lead applicant may not submit more than one application(s) under this call for proposals.

The lead applicant may not be awarded more than one grant(s) under this call for proposals.

The lead applicant may be a co-applicant or an affiliated entity in another application at the same time.

A co-applicant/affiliated entity may be the co-applicant or affiliated entity in more than one application(s) under this call for proposals.

A co-applicant/affiliated entity may be awarded more than one grant(s) under this call for proposals.

### ***2.1.5. Eligibility of costs: costs that can be included***

Only 'eligible costs' can be covered by a grant. The categories of costs that are eligible and non-eligible are indicated below. The budget is both a cost estimate and an overall ceiling for 'eligible costs'.

The reimbursement of eligible costs may be based on the following form:

- actual costs incurred by the beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies);

Additional specific requirements as per financing agreement with GIZ are added as appropriate for this call for proposals or its annexes provided, they do not contravene provisions of the PRAG. Recommendations to award a grant are always subject to the condition that the checks preceding the signing of the grant contract do not reveal problems requiring changes to the budget (such as arithmetical errors, inaccuracies, unrealistic costs, and ineligible costs). The checks may give rise to requests for clarification and may lead the contracting authority to impose modifications or reductions to address such mistakes or inaccuracies. It is not possible to increase the grant or the percentage of co-financing as a result of these corrections.

It is therefore in the applicants' interest to provide a **realistic and cost-effective budget**.

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<sup>7</sup> These third parties are neither affiliated entity(ies) nor associates nor contractors.



### Eligible direct costs

To be eligible under this call for proposals, costs must comply with the provisions of Article 14 of the general conditions to the standard grant contract (see Annex G of the guidelines).

The applicants (and where applicable their affiliated entities) agree that the expenditure verification(s) referred to in Article 15.7 of the general conditions to the standard grant contract (see Annex G of the guidelines) will be carried out by the contracting authority through specific audit firm (or one out of a pool) that has been previously selected in respect of the applicable procurement rules.

Salary costs of the personnel of national administrations may be eligible to the extent that they relate to the cost of activities which the relevant public authority would not carry out if the action were not undertaken.

### Contingency reserve

The budget may include a contingency reserve not exceeding 5 % of the estimated direct eligible costs. It can only be used with the **prior written authorisation** of the contracting authority.

### Eligible indirect costs

The indirect costs incurred in carrying out the action may be eligible for flat-rate funding, but the total must not exceed 7% of the estimated total eligible direct costs. Indirect costs are eligible provided that they do not include costs assigned to another budget heading in the standard grant contract. The lead applicant may be asked to justify the percentage requested before the grant contract is signed. However, once the flat rate has been fixed in the special conditions of the grant contract, no supporting documents need to be provided.

If any of the applicants or affiliated entity(ies) is in receipt of an operating grant financed by the EU, it may not claim indirect costs on its incurred costs within the proposed budget for the action.

### Contributions in kind

Contributions in kind mean the provision of goods or services to beneficiaries or affiliated entities free of charge by a third party. As contributions in kind do not involve any expenditure for beneficiaries or affiliated entities, they are not eligible costs.

### **Contributions in kind may not be treated as co-financing.**

Other co-financing shall be based on estimates provided by the applicant.

### Ineligible costs

The following costs are not eligible:

- debts and debt service charges (interest);
- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- costs declared by the beneficiary(ies) and financed by another action or work programme receiving a UfM grant;
- purchases of land or buildings, except where necessary for the direct implementation of the action, in which case ownership must be transferred in accordance with Article 7.5 of the general conditions of the standard grant contract, at the latest at the end of the action;
- in kind contributions
- bonuses included in costs of staff;
- simplified cost options;

- currency exchange losses;
- credit to third parties
- salary costs of the personnel of national administrations

## Ethics clauses and Code of Conduct

### a) Absence of conflict of interest

The applicant must not be affected by any conflict of interest and must have no equivalent relation in that respect with other applicants or parties involved in the actions. Any attempt by an applicant to obtain confidential information, enter into unlawful agreements with competitors or influence the evaluation committee or the contracting authority during the process of examining, clarifying, evaluating and comparing applications will lead to the rejection of its application and may result in administrative penalties according to the EU Financial Regulation and UfM code of conduct, antifraud and anticorruption policy in force.

### b) Respect for human rights as well as environmental legislation and core labour standards

The applicant and its staff must comply with human rights. In particular and in accordance with the applicable act, applicants who have been awarded contracts must comply with the environmental legislation including multilateral environmental agreements, and with the core labour standards as applicable and as defined in the relevant International Labour Organisation conventions (such as the conventions on freedom of association and collective bargaining; elimination of forced and compulsory labour; abolition of child labour).

#### **Zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and sexual abuse:**

The UfM applies a policy of 'zero tolerance' in relation to all wrongful conduct which has an impact on the professional credibility of the applicant.

Physical abuse or punishment, or threats of physical abuse, sexual abuse or exploitation, harassment and verbal abuse, as well as other forms of intimidation shall be prohibited.

### c) Anti-corruption and anti-bribery

The applicant shall comply with all applicable laws and regulations and codes relating to anti-bribery and anti-corruption, notably UfM code of conduct, antifraud and anticorruption policy in force. The UfM reserves the right to suspend or cancel project financing if corrupt practices of any kind are discovered at any stage of the award process or during the execution of a contract and if the contracting authority fails to take all appropriate measures to remedy the situation. For the purposes of this provision, 'corrupt practices' are the offer of a bribe, gift, gratuity or commission to any person as an inducement or reward for performing or refraining from any act relating to the award of a contract or execution of a contract already concluded with the contracting authority.

### d) Unusual commercial expenses

Applications will be rejected or contracts terminated if it emerges that the award or execution of a contract has given rise to unusual commercial expenses. Such unusual commercial expenses are commissions not mentioned in the main contract or not stemming from a properly concluded contract referring to the main contract, commissions not paid in return for any actual and legitimate service, commissions remitted to a tax haven, commissions paid to a payee who is not clearly identified or commissions paid to a company which has every appearance of being a front company.

Grant beneficiaries found to have paid unusual commercial expenses on projects funded by the European Union are liable, depending on the seriousness of the facts observed, to have their contracts terminated or to be permanently excluded from receiving UfM funds.

e) Breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud

The contracting authority reserves the right to suspend or cancel the procedure, where the award procedure proves to have been subject to breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud. If breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud are discovered after the award of the contract, the contracting authority may refrain from concluding the contract.

## 2.2. How to apply and the procedures to follow

### 2.2.1. *Application forms*

Applications must be submitted in accordance with the instructions on the concept note and the full applications in the grant application form annexed to these guidelines (Annex A). Lead applicants should then keep strictly to the format of the grant application form and fill in the paragraphs and pages in order.

#### **Applicants must apply in English.**

Please complete the full application form carefully and as clearly as possible so that it can be assessed properly.

Any error or major discrepancy related to the points listed in the instructions on the concept note or any major inconsistency in the application e.g. if the amounts in the budget worksheets are inconsistent) may lead to the rejection of the application.

Clarifications will only be requested when the information provided is unclear and thus prevents the Contracting Authority from conducting an objective assessment.

Hand-written applications will not be accepted.

Please note that only the grant **application form** and the published annexes which have to be filled in (**budget, logical framework**) will be evaluated. It is therefore of utmost importance that these documents contain ALL the relevant information concerning the action.

Please note that the following documents should be submitted together with the application form:

1. The statutes or articles of association of the lead applicant, (if any) of each co-applicant and (if any) of each affiliated entity. Where the contracting authority has recognised the lead applicant's, or the co-applicant(s)'s, or their affiliated entity(ies)'s eligibility for another call for proposals under the same budget line within 2 years before the deadline for receipt of applications, it should be submitted, instead of the statutes or articles of association, a copy of the document proving their eligibility in a former call (e.g. a copy of the special conditions of a grant contract received during the reference period), unless a change in legal status has occurred in the meantime<sup>8</sup>.
2. Legal entity form (see Annex D of these guidelines) duly completed and signed by each of the applicants (i.e. by the lead applicant and by each co-applicant and affiliated entities, if any), accompanied by the justifying documents accrediting registration requested there. If the applicants have already signed a contract with the contracting authority, instead of the legal entity sheet and supporting documents, the legal entity number may be provided, unless a change in legal status occurred in the meantime.
3. A financial identification form of the lead applicant (not from co-applicant(s)) conforming to the model attached as Annex E of these guidelines, certified by the bank to which the payments will be made. This bank should be located in the country where the lead applicant is established. If the

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<sup>8</sup> Only valid where the eligibility conditions have not changed from one call for proposals to the other.

lead applicant has already submitted a financial identification form in the past for a contract where the Union for the Mediterranean was in charge of the payments and intends to use the same bank account, a copy of the previous financial identification form may be provided instead.

In addition, for the purpose of the evaluation of the financial capacity, the following documents should be submitted:

- A copy of the lead applicant's profit and loss account and the balance sheet for up to the three last financial years for which the accounts were closed. A copy of the latest account is neither required from the co-applicant(s) (if any) nor from affiliated entity(ies) (if any).

Documents must be supplied electronically in the form of originals, photocopies or scanned versions (i.e. showing legible stamps, signatures and dates) of the said originals.

Where such documents are not in English, a translation into English of the relevant parts of these documents proving the lead applicant's and, where applicable, co-applicants' and affiliated entity(ies)' eligibility, must be attached for the purpose of analysing the application.

**If the abovementioned supporting documents are not provided by the deadline for the submission of the application form, the application may be rejected.**

No additional annexes should be sent.

### **2.2.2. *Where and how to send applications***

The complete application form (Part A: concept note and Part B: full application form), budget and logical framework must be supplied in **electronic format<sup>9</sup>** by:

Email called "Complete Application" including:

- the **reference number and the title of the call for proposals**, together with
- the full name and address of the lead applicant,
- the words in core text of the Email 'Not to be opened before the opening session' and
- **separate and single file/attachment** (i.e. the application must not be split into several different files)

to be sent to the following address:

E-mail address: **callforproposals@ufmsecretariat.org**

Files shall be included in protected folders or at least in compressed folder(s) or through protected IT hyperlinks to file hosting service. Where passwords, encryptions or any other IT means used to protect the confidentiality of the submitted offers, decryption key or equivalent shall be sent by the applicant.

In addition, a separate e-mail with the passwords of the folders sent in e-mails called "Complete Application" is required.

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<sup>9</sup> Additional information will be required later on in the evaluation process for applicants placed in the shortlist or reserve list, namely: hard copies with blue-ink manuscript signatures of the declarations and forms requiring signature. Additionally, they shall be required to submit the documents listed in Section 2.4.

Lead applicants must verify that their application is complete<sup>10</sup> using the checklist (Section 7 of Part B of the grant application form). Incomplete applications may be rejected.

### **2.2.3. Deadline for submission of applications**

The deadline for the submission of applications/full proposals is the 28<sup>th</sup> of October 2024 at 15:00 (Barcelona), as evidenced by the date and time of email reception, or the date and time of delivery receipt.

Any application submitted after the deadline will automatically be rejected.

### **2.2.4. Further information about applications**

Questions may be sent by e-mail no later than 21 days before the deadline for the submission of applications to the below address(es), indicating clarifications, followed by the reference of the call for proposals in the subject of the email:

E-mail address: [callforproposals@ufmsecretariat.org](mailto:callforproposals@ufmsecretariat.org)

The contracting authority has no obligation to provide clarifications to questions received after this date.

Replies will be given no later than 11 days before the deadline for the submission of applications.

To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the contracting authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of lead applicants, co-applicants, affiliated entity(ies), an action or specific activities.

Questions that may be relevant to other applicants, together with the answers, will be published on the website of Union for the Mediterranean Secretariat: <https://ufmsecretariat.org/ufm-grant-schemes/>, as the need arises. It is therefore advisable to consult the abovementioned website regularly in order to be informed of the questions and answers published.

## **2.3. Evaluation and selection of applications**

Applications will be examined and evaluated by the contracting authority with the possible assistance of external assessors. All applications will be assessed according to the following steps and criteria.

If the examination of the application reveals that the proposed action does not meet the eligibility criteria stated in Section 2.1, the application will be rejected on this sole basis.

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<sup>10</sup> Submission of a complete application is the sole responsibility of the lead applicant. The Contracting Authority shall not be held responsible nor be required to review any missing, damaged, or incomplete files submitted after the deadline for application. Failing to submit the totality of the requested documentation within the established deadline may result in the rejection of the application by the Contracting Authority.

## (1) STEP 1: OPENING & ADMINISTRATIVE CHECKS AND CONCEPT NOTE EVALUATION

During the opening and administrative check the following will be assessed:

- If the deadline has been met. Otherwise, the application will be automatically rejected.
- If the application] satisfies all the criteria specified in the checklist in: Section 7 of Part B of the grant application form. This includes also an assessment of the eligibility of the action. If any of the requested information is missing or is incorrect, the application may be rejected on that sole basis and the application will not be evaluated further.

The concept notes that pass this check will be evaluated on the relevance and design of the proposed action.

The concept notes will receive an overall score out of 50 using the breakdown in the evaluation grid below. The evaluation will also check on compliance with the instructions on how to complete the concept note, which can be found in Part A of the grant application form.

The evaluation criteria are divided into headings and subheadings. Each subheading will be given a score between 1 and 5 as follows: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.

Scores\*

1. Relevance of the action	Sub-score	20
1.1 How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the call for proposals and to the specific themes/sectors/areas or any other specific requirement stated in the guidelines for applicants? Are the expected results of the action aligned with the priorities defined in the guidelines for applicants (section 1.2)? Do the proposals demonstrate regional added value and an actual need for UfM Mediterranean cooperation and address common regional needs by providing tangible benefits for the identified target groups; expected results are achievable and sustainable through joint actions only?	5	
1.2 How relevant is the proposal to the particular needs and constraints of the target country(ies) and/or relevant sectors (including synergy with other development initiatives and avoidance of duplication)?  How many beneficiaries from different eligible countries are tackled by the proposed Action?  Does the proposed Action include a replicability component in other countries? Number of target countries. <i>(For the regional added-value component of this check, proposals tackling 3 or more of the 8 identified target countries or with scale-up or replicable activities in 3 or more of the aforementioned countries will automatically be granted 3 additional points, up to a maximum of 5).</i>	5	
1.3 How clearly defined and strategically chosen are those involved (final beneficiaries, target groups)? Have their needs (as rights holders and/or duty bearers) and constraints been clearly defined and does the proposal address them appropriately?	5	
1.4 Does the proposal contain particular added-value elements (e.g. innovation, best practices)? Does the proposal comply with the regional dimension priority? and the other additional elements indicated under 1.2. of the guidelines for applicants. (Proposals encompassing 3 or more of the 8 target countries will automatically be awarded 3	5	

additional points on this check up to a maximum of 5)		
<b>2. Design of the action</b>	Sub-score	<b>30</b>
2.1 How coherent is the overall design of the action? Does the proposal indicate the expected results to be achieved by the action? Does the intervention logic explain the rationale to achieve the expected results?	5x2**	
2.2 Does the design reflect a robust analysis of the problems involved, and the capacities of the relevant stakeholders?	5	
2.3 Does the design take into account external factors (risks and assumptions)?	5	
2.4 Are the activities feasible and consistent in relation to the expected results (including timeframe)? Are results (output, outcome and impact) realistic?	5	
2.5 To which extent does the proposal integrate relevant cross-cutting elements such as environmental/climate change issues, promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities, needs of disabled people, rights of minorities and rights of indigenous peoples, youth, combating HIV/AIDS (if there is a strong prevalence in the target country/region)?	5	
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>		<b>50</b>

\* Note: A score of 5 (very good) will only be allocated if the proposal specifically addresses more than the required minimum number of priorities as indicated in Section 1.2 (objectives of the programme) of these guidelines.

\*\*this score is multiplied by 2 because of its importance

Once all concept notes have been assessed, a list will be drawn up with the proposed actions ranked according to their total score.

Firstly, only the concept notes with a score of at least 30 will be considered for pre-selection.

Secondly, the number of concept notes will be reduced, taking account of the ranking, to the number of concept notes whose total aggregate amount of requested contributions is equal to 200% of the available budget for this call for proposals. The amount of requested contributions of each concept note will be based on the indicative financial envelopes for each lot, where relevant.

After the evaluation of concept notes, the contracting authority will send letters to all lead applicants, indicating whether their application was submitted by the deadline, informing them of the reference number they have been allocated, whether the concept note was evaluated and the results of that evaluation. The evaluation committee will then proceed with the lead applicants whose proposals have been pre-selected.

## (2) STEP 2: EVALUATION OF THE FULL APPLICATION

Firstly, the following will be assessed:

- If the full application satisfies all the criteria specified in the checklist (Section 7 of Part B of the grant application form). This includes also an assessment of the eligibility of the action. If any of the requested information is missing or is incorrect, the application may be rejected on that **sole** basis and the application will not be evaluated further.

The full applications that pass this check will be further evaluated on their quality, including the proposed budget and capacity of the applicants and affiliated entity(ies). They will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria in the evaluation grid below. There are two types of evaluation criteria: selection and award criteria.

**The selection criteria** help to evaluate the applicant(s)'s and affiliated entity(ies)'s operational capacity and the lead applicant's financial capacity and are used to verify that they:

- have stable and sufficient sources of finance to maintain their activity throughout the proposed action and, where appropriate, to participate in its funding (this only applies to lead applicants);
- have the management capacity, professional competencies and qualifications required to successfully complete the proposed action. This applies to applicants and any affiliated entity(ies).

**The award criteria** help to evaluate the quality of the applications in relation to the objectives and priorities set forth in the guidelines, and to award grants to projects which maximise the overall effectiveness of the call for proposals. They help to select applications which the contracting authority can be confident will comply with its objectives and priorities. They cover the relevance of the action, its consistency with the objectives of the call for proposals, quality, expected impact, sustainability and cost-effectiveness.

*Scoring:*

The evaluation grid is divided into Sections and subsections. Each subsection will be given a score between 1 and 5 as follows: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.



## Evaluation grid

Section	Maximum Score
<b>1. Financial and operational capacity</b>	<b>20</b>
1.1 Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient in-house experience of project management?	5
1.2 Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient in-house technical expertise? (especially knowledge of the issues to be addressed)	5
1.3 Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient in-house management capacity? (Including staff, equipment and ability to handle the budget for the action)?	5
1.4 Does the lead applicant have stable and sufficient sources of finance?	5
<b>2. Relevance</b>	<b>20</b>
<i>Score transferred from the Concept Note evaluation</i>	
<b>3. Design of the action</b>	<b>15</b>
3.1 How coherent is the design of the action? Does the proposal indicate the expected results to be achieved by the action? Does the intervention logic explain the rationale to achieve the expected results? Are the activities proposed appropriate, practical, and consistent with the envisaged outputs and outcome(s)?	5
3.2 Does the proposal/Logical Framework include credible baseline, targets and sources of verification? If not, is a baseline study foreseen (and is the study budgeted appropriately in the proposal)?	5
3.3 Does the design reflect a robust analysis of the problems involved, and the capacities of the relevant stakeholders?	5
<b>4. Implementation approach</b>	<b>15</b>
4.1 Is the action plan for implementing the action clear and feasible? Is the timeline realistic?	5
4.2 Does the proposal include an effective and efficient monitoring system? Is there an evaluation planned (previous, during or/and at the end of the implementation)?	5
4.3 Is the co-applicant(s)'s and affiliated entity(ies)'s level of involvement and participation in the action satisfactory?	5
<b>5. Sustainability of the action</b>	<b>15</b>

5.1 Is the action likely to have a tangible impact on its target groups?	5
5.2 Is the action likely to have multiplier effects, including scope for replication, extension, capitalisation on experience and knowledge sharing?	5
5.3 Are the expected results of the proposed action sustainable?: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Financially (<i>e.g. financing of follow-up activities, sources of revenue for covering all future operating and maintenance costs</i>)</li> <li>- Institutionally (<i>will structures allow the results of the action to be sustained at the end of the action? Will there be local 'ownership' of the results of the action?</i>)</li> <li>- At policy level (where applicable) (<i>what will be the structural impact of the action — e.g. improved legislation, codes of conduct, methods</i>)</li> <li>- Environmentally (if applicable) (<i>will the action have a negative/positive environmental impact?</i>)</li> </ul>	5
<b>6. Budget and cost-effectiveness of the action</b>	<b>15</b>
6.1 Are the activities appropriately reflected in the budget?	/ 5
6.2 Is the ratio between the estimated costs and the results satisfactory?	/ 10
<b>Maximum total score</b>	<b>100</b>

If the total score for Section 1 (financial and operational capacity) is less than 12 points, the application will be rejected. If the score for at least one of the subsections under Section 1 is 1, the application will also be rejected.

If the lead applicant applies without co-applicants or affiliated entities the score for point 4.3 shall be 5 unless the involvement of co-applicants or affiliated entities is mandatory according to these guidelines for applicants.

#### *Provisional selection*

After the evaluation, a table will be drawn up listing the applications ranked according to their score. The highest scoring applications will be provisionally selected until the available budget for this call for proposals is reached. In addition, a reserve list will be drawn up following the same criteria. This list will be used if more funds become available during the validity period of the reserve list.

### **(3) STEP 3: VERIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY OF THE APPLICANTS AND AFFILIATED ENTITY(IES)**

The eligibility verification will be performed on the basis of the supporting documents requested by the contracting authority (see Section 2.4). It will by default only be performed for the applications that have been provisionally selected according to their score and within the available budget for this call for proposals.

- The declaration by the lead applicant (Section 8 of Part B of the grant application form) will be cross-checked with the supporting documents provided by the lead applicant. Any missing supporting document or any incoherence between the declaration by the lead applicant and the supporting documents may lead to the rejection of the application on that sole basis.
- The eligibility of applicants and the affiliated entity(ies) will be verified according to the criteria set out in Sections 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and 2.1.3.

Any rejected application will be replaced by the next best placed application on the reserve list that falls within the available budget for this call for proposals.

## 2.4. Submission of supporting documents for provisionally selected applications

A lead applicant whose application has been provisionally selected or placed on the reserve list will be informed in writing by the contracting authority. In addition to the documents listed under section 2.2.1 it will be requested to supply the following documents in order to allow the contracting authority to verify the eligibility of the lead applicant, (if any) of the co-applicant(s) and (if any) of their affiliated entity(ies) :

1. Declaration on honour: the lead applicant as well as all co-applicants and affiliated entities shall fill in and sign the declaration on honour certifying that they are not in one of the exclusion situations (see Section 2.6.10.1 of the PRAG) where the amount of the grant exceeds EUR 15 000. The declaration on honour shall be dated and signed by hand or by an authorised representative of the signatory.
2. Self-evaluation questionnaire on SEA-H: the lead applicant as well as all co-applicants and affiliated entities shall fill in the self-evaluation questionnaire assessing the organisation's internal policy and procedure against sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEA-H) (Annex L).

Documents must be supplied in the form of originals, photocopies, or scanned versions (i.e. showing legible stamps, signatures and dates) of the said originals.

Where such documents are not in English, a translation into English of the relevant parts of these documents proving the lead applicant's and, where applicable, co-applicants' and affiliated entity(ies)' eligibility, must be attached for the purpose of analysing the application.

If the abovementioned supporting documents are not provided before the deadline indicated in the request for supporting documents sent to the lead applicant by the contracting authority, the application may be rejected.

After verifying the supporting documents, the evaluation committee will make a final recommendation to the contracting authority, which will decide on the award of grants.

If the application is selected for awarding, at the request of the Contracting Authority, the supporting documents must also be submitted in a sealed envelope by registered mail, private courier service or by hand-delivery to the following postal address:

The Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean  
Finance and Contracts Department  
Palacio de Pedralbes - C/ Pere Duran Farell, 11  
08034 Barcelona (Spain)

NB: In the eventuality that the contracting authority is not satisfied with the strength, solidity, and guarantee offered by the structural link between one of the applicants and its affiliated entity, it can require the submission of the missing documents allowing for its conversion into co-applicant. If all the missing documents for co-applicants are submitted, and provided all necessary eligibility criteria are fulfilled, the above-mentioned entity becomes a co-applicant for all purposes. The lead applicant has to submit the application form revised accordingly.

## 2.5. Notification of the Contracting Authority's decision

### 2.5.1. Content of the decision

The lead applicants will be informed in writing of the contracting authority's decision concerning their application and, if rejected, the reasons for the negative decision.

An applicant believing that it has been harmed by an error or irregularity during the award process may lodge a complaint. See further Section 2.12 of the practical guide.

Applicants and, if they are legal entities, persons who have powers of representation, decision-making or control over them, are informed that, should they be in one of the situations of early detection or exclusion, 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 early detection and exclusion system, and communicated to the persons and entities concerned in relation to the award or the execution of a grant contract.

For more information, you may consult the privacy statement available on [http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect_en.cfm)

### 2.5.2. Indicative timetable

	DATE	TIME
1. Information meeting (if any)	Not applicable	Not applicable
2. Deadline for requesting any clarifications from the contracting authority	07/10/2024	
3. Last date on which clarifications are issued by the contracting authority	17/10/2024	11:00
4. Deadline for submission of applications	28/10/2024	15:00
5. Information to lead applicants on opening, administrative checks and concept note evaluation (Step 1)	14/01/2025	-
6. Information to lead applicants on the evaluation of the full applications (Step 2)	25/02/2025	-
7. Notification of award (after the eligibility check) (Step 3)	25/04/2025	-
8. Contract signature	26/05/2025	-

All times are in the time zone of the country of the contracting authority (**Barcelona date and time**).

This indicative timetable refers to provisional dates (except for dates 2, 3, and 4) and may be updated by the contracting authority during the procedure. In such cases, the updated timetable will be published on the web site of UfM <https://ufmsecretariat.org/ufm-grant-schemes/>

## 2.6. Conditions for implementation after the contracting authority's decision to award a grant

Following the decision to award a grant, the beneficiary(ies) will be offered a contract based on the standard grant contract (see Annex G of these guidelines). By signing the application form (Annex A of these guidelines), the applicants agree, if awarded a grant, to accept the contractual conditions of the standard grant contract. Where the coordinator is an organisation whose pillars have been positively assessed, it will sign a contribution agreement based on the contribution agreement template. In this case references to provisions of the standard grant contract and its annexes shall not apply. References in these guidelines to the grant contract shall be understood as references to the relevant provisions of the contribution agreement.

### Implementation contracts

Where implementation of the action requires the beneficiary(ies) and its affiliated entity(ies) (if any) to award procurement contracts, those contracts must be awarded in accordance with Annex IV to the standard grant contract.

In this context, a distinction should be made between awarding implementation contracts and subcontracting parts of the action described in the proposal, i.e. the description of the action annexed to the grant contract, such subcontracting being subject to additional restrictions (see the general terms and conditions in the model grant contract).

Awarding implementation contracts: implementation contracts relate to the acquisition by beneficiaries of routine services and/or necessary goods and equipment as part of their project management; they do not cover any outsourcing of tasks forming part of the action that are described in the proposal, i.e. in the description of the action annexed to the grant contract.

Subcontracting: Subcontracting is the implementation, by a third party with which one or more beneficiaries have concluded a procurement contract, of specific tasks forming part of the action as described in annex to the grant contract (see also the general terms and conditions in the model grant contract).

### 3. LIST OF ANNEXES

NOTE THAT ALL ANNEXES MUST BE ADAPTED AS FORESEEN TO THE CALL AND PUBLISHED TOGETHER WITH THE GUIDELINES

#### DOCUMENTS TO BE COMPLETED

- Annex A: Grant application form (Word format)
- Annex B: Budget (Excel format)
- Annex C: Logical framework (Excel format)
- Annex D: Legal entity sheet
- Annex E: Financial identification form

#### DOCUMENTS FOR INFORMATION<sup>11</sup>

- Annex G: Standard grant contract
  - Annex I: Special Conditions
  - Annex II: General conditions
  - Annex III: Standard Request for Payment
  - Annex IV: Contract award rules
  - Annex V: Model interim and final narrative report
  - Annex VI: Model financial report
  - Annex VII: Model report of factual findings and terms of reference for an expenditure verification of an EU financed grant contract for external action
  - Annex VIII: Model financial guarantee
  - Annex IX: Standard template for transfer of ownership of assets
- Annex H: Declaration on Honour
- Annex I: Daily allowance rates (per diem), available at the following address:  
[https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/funding/guidelines/managing-project/diem-rates\\_en](https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/funding/guidelines/managing-project/diem-rates_en)  
(as all necessary information is available via the link the publication of the annex is optional)
- Annex J: Information on the tax regime applicable to grant contracts signed under the call.
- Annex L: Self-evaluation questionnaire on sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEA-H).

#### Useful links:

##### Project Cycle Management Guidelines

[https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2020-09/methodology-aid-delivery-methods-project-cycle-management-200403\\_en.pdf](https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2020-09/methodology-aid-delivery-methods-project-cycle-management-200403_en.pdf)

##### The implementation of grant contracts

##### A Users' Guide

<https://intpa-econtent-public.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/eCompanion/14.0/eCompanion-en-14.0.pdf>

##### Financial Toolkit

[https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/funding/guidelines/financial-management-toolkit-recipients-eu-funds-external-actions\\_en](https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/funding/guidelines/financial-management-toolkit-recipients-eu-funds-external-actions_en)

Please note: The toolkit is not part of the grant contract and has no legal value. It merely provides general guidance and may in some details differ from the signed grant contract. In order to ensure compliance with their contractual obligations beneficiaries should not exclusively rely on the toolkit but always consult their individual contract documents.

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<sup>11</sup> These documents should also be published by the contracting authority.

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