

EEA FINANCIAL MECHANISM 2014-2021

GREECE

PROGRAMME II: ASYLUM & MIGRATION

OPEN CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Open accommodation centres for vulnerable asylum seekers

Annex 1

APPLICANTS GUIDELINES

Table of Contents

1 Selection Criteria.....	3
2 Submission process	5
3 Expected outputs	5
4 The workplan.....	6
5 Communication and Dissemination activities.....	7
6 The Project Budget.....	7
7 Eligibility of Expenditures.....	8
8 Procurement	11
9 Monitoring, Reporting and Payments.....	12
10 Selection Process	13
11 Clarification questions and FAQ.....	14

1 Selection Criteria

1.1 Administrative Criteria

Applicants will be requested to fill in and submit the Application in the online application portal available on the Programme's [portal.asylumandmigration-eeagrants.gr](https://www.asylumandmigration-eeagrants.gr) accessible through the Programme's website (<https://www.asylumandmigration-eeagrants.gr/>).

In case applicants face technical difficulties, they can submit their proposal via email (info@asylumandmigration-eeagrants.gr), following communication and confirmation by the FO Programme Unit.

Applications must be submitted in English by the deadline stated in the open call text in order to be considered.

The supporting documents listed in chapter 5 of the call document should be uploaded on the online application portal.

In case where one or more documents are missing, the applicant must submit a signed legal declaration, mentioning any missing documents and the justification for not submitting them. The Fund Operator shall decide whether the justification is adequate.

In case of partnerships with one or more project partners:

1. The supporting documents must be attached for each partner.
2. For foreign partners, relevant adjustments of the required documentation will be made if necessary. In all cases, documents of foreign partners must be submitted in English.
3. A Letter of Intent (LOI) on the partnership, signed by the project partners, should be submitted with the application. A Partnership Agreement/declaration between the project promoter and each partner will be signed in Greek or in English (if the partner is foreign), has to be submitted at the project contracting phase, if a project is selected.

1.2 Eligibility Criteria

All submitted applications will be reviewed by the FO (Program unit) for compliance with the administrative and eligibility criteria as set by the Program in the PIA and the "Guidelines for Applicants". By administrative and eligibility criteria we refer to the submission of complete applications, timely submission of applications and compliance with eligibility requirements of the Program (eligibility of applicants, eligibility of partners and eligibility of application):

1. Applicants must be eligible ("Eligible applicant is a non-profit voluntary organization established as a legal entity, having a non-commercial purpose, independent of local, regional and central government, public entities, political parties and commercial organizations. Political parties and religious institutions are not considered NGOs");
2. Partners must be eligible;
3. Project's activities must be eligible;
4. Project's location must be within the Greek territory;
5. Project's expenditures must be eligible;
6. The requested grant amount is within the permissible limits provided in the call;
7. The proposed implementation period is within the permissible limits provided in the call;

8. No more applications should be submitted by one project promoter or project partner than these explicitly authorized in the main text of the call for proposals.

1.3 Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation criteria	Maximum score	Eliminating criterion
Relevance	40	If below 20, the project is automatically rejected
Feasibility	20	If below 10, the project is automatically rejected
Budget/Cost efficiency	20	If below 10 the project is automatically rejected
Sustainability	15	If below 8, the project is automatically rejected
Values / Cross Cutting Issues	05	If below 3, the project is automatically rejected
Maximum	100	
Minimum score to be included in the list to be considered by the Selection Committee, also in the reserve list	55	

Analytical evaluation & selection criteria for the open call for proposals for open accommodation centres for vulnerable asylum seekers:

- **Relevance** to the call background: Methodological adequacy. Compatibility with national and international standards for the reception of vulnerable asylum seekers. Clear overview of how individualized approach of beneficiaries will be designed and implemented. Coherent operational framework that ensures the best interest of beneficiaries and the sustainability of the project.
- **Feasibility:** Implementation team competencies. Complementarity with projects already implemented by the applicant organization. Competency of partnerships (where applicable). Resource allocation tracking and control (how the funds are generated and how they are allocated). Sources of funding by category of use. Processes for ensuring effective anti-corruption policies and procedures. Considering and collaborating with others. Advocacy and public awareness campaigns. Involvement of affected stakeholders in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programmes.
- **Budget:** The budget is cost effective in relation to the quality of services offered; Budget is realistic and allocated in a way that all programmatic outcomes will be met. The applicant organization, according to its capacity, will contribute own resources to the implementation of the proposed action. Relevance of the organization's past experience of at least three years of running equivalent projects with similar outcomes and budget sizes Ability to absorb project budget.
- **Sustainability:** Financial sustainability, fundraising strategy for the last year of funding and beyond. We value a holistic approach that takes into account the continuity of a beneficiaries' pathway between

different accommodation modalities and services offered. Impact of activities on the wider community. Program for ethical fundraising. Economic and environmental sustainability of projects.

- **Values - Cross-cutting issues:** The proposal takes into account the programme cross-cutting issues, on Good governance and internal checks and controls. Particular focus should be given on the applied child safeguarding policies and policies on protecting from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), a feedback mechanism and M&E system and tools to apply during the project's life cycle. Policies for ensuring Gender equality measures to integrate gender and diversity in the project and in the applicant including the management and Board should be demonstrated, as well as measures to integrate gender and diversity into programme design and implementation.

2 Submission process

Applicant organizations must register on the online portal in order to access the online application form. Applicants should submit their applications by completing and uploading the application form digitally, and uploading all required supporting documents through the Program's portal.asylumandmigration-eeagrants.gr accessible through the Programme's website <https://www.asylumandmigration-eeagrants.gr/>. The application form in word format and the budget template in excel format is available to download in annex 4 and 3 of the Call respectively.

Supporting official legal documentation should be uploaded on the Programme application portal along with the application. In addition, physical copies stamped by the relevant authorities should be submitted to the FO only by the successful applicants. See chapter 5 of the open call main text for the full list of supporting documents needed.

3 Expected outputs

	Description	Indicators	Target
OBJECTIVE	Functional national asylum and migration management systems ensured and the right to seek asylum safeguarded		
Outcome 1 (Open Call)	Improved quality of accommodation and other services provided in open reception facilities	Open reception facilities are in line with EU Directives' minimum standards for the reception of vulnerable asylum seekers, especially un-accompanied minors (UAMs).	Yes
		Number of unaccompanied minor asylum seekers (UAMs) receiving services.	2250
		Number of non-UAM beneficiaries provided with services	750
Output 1.1	Accommodation places provided in open reception centres for vulnerable asylum seekers, in particular UAMs	Number of accommodation places provided in open reception centres.	≥300
		Number of the accommodation places reserved for UAM	225
		Average annual monthly occupancy rate in the supported centres (based	90%

		on monthly reports)	
Output 1.2	Close interaction and cooperation between non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and relevant public entities is established	Number of open reception facilities where the NGOs and public entities formally and informally cooperate (Memorandum of Understanding or common activities implemented)	>3

An indicative, but not exhaustive list of activities that applicants can consider are the following:

- Referrals Intake/case management/case finalisation activities and beneficiaries archive maintenance
- Shelter, food and provision of necessities (e.g. hygiene, clothes)
- Individual or group psychosocial support
- Recreational activities
- Primary health services and medical services and access to the public healthcare system
- Provision of interpretation
- Legal counselling and/or legal aid in the procedure for asylum applications or, other legal support towards accessing the Greek legal system.
- Prevention activities and Info sessions on rights including SGBV informative sessions for vulnerable population, trafficking, PSEA
- Skills development activities such as provision of Greek language lessons, IT literacy etc.
- Support in accessing public services with referrals or/and escorts (e.g. health, education, legal)
- Intercultural activities, co-organized both with refugee & host community's population
- Considering exiting the centre, information and support for independent living and navigation into the Greek context, activities to support social inclusion and facilitating the procedure of entering the job market
- Activities to ensure a safe exit from the centre by supporting access to other accommodation and/or integration programmes (e.g. HELIOS/ESTIA programmes)
- Info desk and facility administration
- Shelter security
- Connectivity and access to internet
- Networking and cooperation activities at local, regional or national level with public entities.

4 The workplan

Constructing the **workplan** is a significant part of developing a project proposal. A well-structured work plan should help a project organize its activities, having a clear and detailed understanding of the actions listed, their duration and their dependencies. In the Application Form, all projects are asked to describe their activities specifying also the involvement of the partners. The work plan defined in the Project's Application Form is structured in Outputs. Outputs enable a project to be broken down in easy to group activities according to the focus of each output.

5 Communication and Dissemination activities

Applicants shall include a **Communication Plan** in their project application, with the aim of creating awareness of the programme objectives, any bilateral cooperation with entities in Iceland, Liechtenstein and/or Norway, the implementation, results and the impact of support from the EEA Grants to the project.

The Communication Plan shall include at least the following:

- the aims and target groups, including stakeholders on national, regional and/or local levels and the general public;
- the strategy and content of the information and communication measures, including activities, communication tools and timeframe, having regard to the added value and impact of the EEA and Norway Grants' funding;
- **at least three information activities on progress**, achievements and results in the project, such as a seminar or a conference with stakeholders, a press conference or press event, including a launch activity and/or a closing activity for the project.
- **a dedicated project website with information** in English and Greek; The information of the project must be regularly updated during the project lifetime.
- information on the website shall include information about the project, its progress, achievements and results, the cooperation with entities in Iceland, Liechtenstein and/or Norway, relevant photos, contact information and a clear reference to the Programme and the EEA Grants;
- information on the administrative departments or bodies responsible for implementation of the information and communication measures, including a contact person;
- an indication of how the information and communication measures are to be evaluated in terms of visibility and awareness of the project and the EEA and Norway Grants, their objectives and impact, and the role of Iceland, Liechtenstein and/or Norway;

During the project preparation stage, it is important to plan those activities, the financial resources needed for them, as well as relevant indicators for the evaluation of the information and communication activities.

6 The Project Budget

All applicants shall submit a **project budget**, according to the relevant template (**Annex 3**) during the proposal submission process through an online application. (see the chapter 2, on submission process for further details). Project Budgeting is performed on the initial stages of project planning and usually in parallel with the development of the project schedule. The total budget must be in line with the planned activities, the duration of the project the allocation of activities between the partners involved and well-justified.

This implies that the detailed budget is always prepared in close cooperation with the partners, if any, and on the basis of the activities necessary to meet the project's objectives and the resources required to carry out these activities within the time allowed. Emphasis at the stage of the project budget formulation should be given to:

- a) the allocation of activities per output and per partner and therefore the identification of the resources needed by each partner to complete the activities,

- b) the timing of the relative cost and the forecast of the payment date,
- c) the timing of the cost and the forecast of the payment date, considering the reporting periods
- d) the organization of cost items based on the budget line

The budget submitted must be **realistic** and must be based on **plausible assumptions**. It should also include all costs exclusively related to the implementation of the project, not only the expenditure for granting and should properly reflect all projected expenditures in line with the activities financed. All expenditure submitted to the proposed budget must comply with the general principles of expenditure described in Chapter 7.1.

The budget shall contain the estimated eligible costs, broken down by category and by partner in the case of partnerships.

The classification of expenditure included in the project budget template should reflect the Program's requirements in terms of eligible expenditure. **The creation of additional categories in the project budget is not allowed.**

7 Eligibility of Expenditures

7.1. General principles

1. Eligible expenditures of projects are those actually incurred by the project promoter or the project partner, which meet the following criteria:

- a) they are incurred between the first and final dates of eligibility of a project as specified in the project contract;
- b) they are connected with the subject of the project contract and they are indicated in the detailed budget of the project;
- c) they are proportionate and necessary for the implementation of the project;
- d) they are used for the sole purpose of achieving the objective of the project and its expected outcome(s), in a manner consistent with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness;
- e) they are identifiable and verifiable, through being recorded in the accounting records of the project promoter and determined according to the applicable accounting standards and generally accepted accounting principles; and
- f) they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social security legislation,

2. Expenditures are considered to have been incurred when the cost has been invoiced, paid and the subject matter delivered (in case of goods) or performed (in case of services and works). Exceptionally, costs in respect of which an invoice has been issued in the final month of eligibility are also deemed to be incurred within the dates of eligibility if the costs are paid within 30 days of the final date of eligibility. Overheads and depreciation of equipment are considered to have been incurred when they are recorded on the accounts of the project promoter and/or project partner.

3. The project promoter's internal accounting and auditing procedures must permit direct reconciliation of the expenditures and revenue declared in respect of the project with the corresponding accounting statements and supporting documents.

7.2 Direct Expenditure

1. The eligible direct expenditures for a project are those expenditures which are identified by the project promoter and/or the project partner, in accordance with their accounting principles and usual internal rules, as specific expenditures directly linked to the implementation of the project and which can therefore be booked to it directly. The direct eligible expenditures are:

- a) the cost of personnel assigned to the project, comprising actual remuneration including social security charges and other statutory costs as applicable, provided that this corresponds to the project promoter's and project partner's usual policy on remuneration;
- b) travel and subsistence allowances for personnel and volunteers taking part in the project, provided that they are in line with the project promoter's and project partner's usual practices on travel costs;
- c) cost of new or second-hand equipment provided that it is depreciated in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles applicable to the project promoter and generally accepted for items of the same kind. Only the portion of the depreciation corresponding to the duration of the project and the rate of actual use for the purposes of the project may be taken into account by the Fund Operator. In case the Fund Operator determines that the equipment is an integral and necessary component for achieving the outcomes of the project, the entire purchase price of that equipment may be eligible;
- d) costs of consumables and supplies, provided that they are identifiable and assigned to the project;
- e) costs entailed by other contracts awarded by a project promoter for the purposes of carrying out the project, provided that the awarding complies with the applicable rules on public procurement; and
- f) costs arising directly from requirements imposed by the project contract for each project.

2. Costs related to reconstruction, renovation, or refurbishment of a real estate shall not exceed 50% of the eligible direct cost of the project.

3. Where the entire purchase price of equipment is eligible in accordance with point (c) of paragraph 1, the Fund Operator shall ensure that the project promoter:

- a) keeps the equipment in its ownership for a period of at least five years following the completion of the project and continues to use the equipment for the benefit of the overall objectives of the project for the same period;
- b) continues to use the equipment properly insured against losses such as fire, theft or other normally insurable incidents both during project implementation and for at least five years following the completion of the project; and
- c) sets aside adequate resources for the maintenance of the equipment for at least five years following the completion of the project.

The specific means for the implementation of this obligation shall be specified in the project contract. The Fund Operator may release any project promoter from the above obligations with respect to any specifically identified equipment where the Fund Operator is satisfied that, having regard to all relevant circumstances, continued use of that equipment for the overall objectives of the project would serve no useful economic purpose.

4. Where necessary to accommodate the specific circumstances of project promoters or project partners that are international organizations, or bodies or agencies thereof, the provisions on direct eligible expenditure described in this Article may be waived, in agreement with the Financial Mechanism Committee (FMC). Any such waiver shall be explicitly provided for in the project contract and/or partnership agreement.

7.3 Indirect Expenditure

1. Indirect costs are all eligible costs that cannot be identified by the project promoter and/or the project partner as being directly attributed to the project but which can be identified and justified by its accounting system as being incurred in direct relationship with the eligible direct costs attributed to the project. They may not include any eligible direct costs. Indirect costs of the project shall represent a fair portion of the overall overheads of the project promoter or the project partner. They may be identified according to either of the following methods:

- a) based on actual indirect costs for those project promoters and project partners that have an analytical accounting system to identify their indirect costs as indicated above;
- b) a project promoter and project partners may opt for a flat rate of up to 25% of total direct eligible costs, excluding direct eligible costs for subcontracting and the costs of resources made available by third parties which are not used on the premises of the project promoter or project partner, subject to the calculation of the rate on the basis of a fair, equitable and verifiable calculation method or a method applied under schemes for grants funded entirely by the Beneficiary State for similar types of project and project promoter;
- c) a project promoter and project partners may opt for a flat rate of up to 15% of direct eligible staff costs;
- d) in case of projects including a research component, indirect eligible costs may be determined by applying a flat rate of 25% of the total direct eligible costs, excluding direct eligible costs for subcontracting and the costs of resources made available by third parties which are not used on the premises of the project promoter or project partner.

2. In case of project promoters or project partners that are international organizations, or bodies or agencies thereof, indirect costs may be identified in accordance with the relevant rules established by such organizations.

7.4 Rules on real estate and land

1. The cost of purchase of real estate, meaning buildings constructed or under development and the appropriate rights to the land on which they are built, and land not built on may be eligible under the following conditions, without prejudice to the application of stricter national rules:

- a) there shall be a direct link between the purchase and the objectives of the project; purchase of real estate and/or land may not represent more than 10% of the total eligible expenditure of the project, unless a higher percentage is explicitly authorized in this Agreement and set in the decision to award the project grant;
- b) a certificate shall be obtained prior to the purchase from an independent qualified evaluator or duly authorized official entity confirming that the purchase price does not exceed the market value and that it is free of all obligations in terms of mortgage and other liabilities, particularly in respect of damage related to pollution. In case of purchase of real estate, the certificate must either confirm that the building in question is in conformity with national regulations, or specify what is not in conformity with national regulations but which is to be rectified by the project promoter under the project;
- d) the real estate and/or land shall be used for the purpose and for the period specified in the decision to award the project grant. The ownership must be transferred to the project promoter, or those explicitly designated by the project promoter in the project application as recipients of the real estate and/or

land, prior to the completion of the project. The real estate and/or land cannot be sold, rented or mortgaged within five years of the completion of the project, or longer if stipulated in the project contract. The FMO may waive this restriction if it would result in an unforeseen and unreasonable burden on the project promoter.

- e) the real estate and/or land may only be used in conformity with the objectives of the project, In particular, buildings may be used to accommodate
 - f) public administration services only where such use is in conformity with the objective of the project; and
 - g) the purchase of real estate and/or land shall be explicitly approved by the Fund Operator prior to the purchase either in the project contract or by a later decision.
2. The restrictions referred to in paragraph I(d) apply also to buildings that are constructed or reconstructed through a financial contribution from the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021,
3. Expenditure on site preparation and construction which essential far the implementation of the project may be eligible.
4. The cost of real estate and/or land already owned, directly or indirectly, by the project promoter, or purchase of real estate and/or land, directly or indirectly, by the project partner or a public administration, shall not be eligible. Under no circumstances shall real estate and/or land be purchased for speculative purposes. The real estate and/or the land shall not have received a national or external donor grant in the last 10 years which could give rise to a duplication of funding.

7.5 Excluded costs

The following costs shall not be considered

- a) interest on debt, debt service charges and late payment charges;
- b) charges for financial transactions and other purely financial costs, except costs related to accounts and financial services imposed by the project contract;
- c) provisions for losses or potential future liabilities
- d) exchange losses;
- e) recoverable VAT;
- f) costs that are covered by other sources;
- g) fines, penalties and costs of litigation, except where litigation is an integral and necessary component for achieving the outcomes of the project; and
- h) excessive or reckless expenditure.

8 Procurement

- 1. National and European Union law on public procurement shall be complied with at any level in the implementation of the Programmes and the projects.
- 2. Notwithstanding provisions of national law that exempt NGOs from public procurement, any procurement procedures related to amounts above the European Union thresholds for procurement shall be undertaken in accordance with the applicable laws on procurement without regard for such an exemption.

3. In cases where contracts concluded as part of the implementation of the Programmes fall below the national or European Union thresholds set for public procurement or outside the scope of the applicable public procurement laws, the awarding of such contracts (including the procedures prior to the awarding) and the terms and conditions of such contracts shall comply with best economic practices, including accountability, allow fair competition between potential providers, for example by way of effective price comparison, and ensure the optimal use of resources from the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021. To this end, and in the absence of stricter national laws, in cases of purchases related to an amount of EUR 5,000 or higher but below the relevant European Union thresholds, the project promoter shall invite at least three suppliers/service providers to submit offers.
4. The highest ethical standards shall be observed during the procurement and execution of contracts. The Fund Operator shall ensure the application of adequate and effective means to prevent illegal or corrupt practices. No offer, gifts, payments or benefit of any kind, which would or could, either directly or indirectly, be construed as an illegal or corrupt practice, e.g. as an inducement or reward for the award or execution of procurement contracts, shall be accepted.

9 Monitoring, Reporting and Payments

The Project Promoters are expected to design and follow their internal M&E frameworks and indicators plan to ensure that the project meets its objectives. During the project implementation, at quarterly basis and at the end of the project, Project Promoters are expected to submit to the Fund Operator interim progress and financial reports on the project progress and results and expenses using the templates the Fund Operator shall provide.

In addition, the FO will develop an annual monitoring plan pertaining the regular monitoring of the projects. The monitoring framework developed by the FO will focus on the compliance of the projects with the financial and governance procedures and policies applied for the project implementation as well as in the fulfilment of quality standards of shelters operation as defined by EASO, EU and EKKA guidelines. Quarterly monitoring is foreseen. Administrative checks and desk review of the documentation submitted through the interim progress reports compose the first phase of monitoring review. As a second step, monitoring reviews will be facilitated, in principle, through on-the-spot project verification visits to monitor in issues regarding the physical aspects of the project, and through regular communication (skype calls, emails etc.). In the former, experts appointed by the DPP (UDI) will participate in the regular or random visits, as often as it is feasible.

Moreover, annual quality monitoring reviews will be a priority for the projects funded under EEA grants and will be executed as a specific exercise by the FO in tandem with UDI as the DPP. This activity will be part of the FO's monitoring and evaluation framework aiming to ensure that quality standards as defined by EASO, EU directives and EKKA guidelines are followed during the project implementation. EASO's monitoring tools will be primarily used for this effort.

Upon the completion of a monitoring reviews (regular or yearly), the FO will share a monitoring report with the findings and recommendations for action to the Project Promoter giving a short deadline for response (e.g. 10 working days) and e.g. 1 month for compliance.

Failing to comply with the FO recommendations may have implications on the payment flow and continuity of the project implementation. The same will be the case as regards flagging findings during the on-the-spot verification visit that relate with the quality standards on the service provision or/and the overall project performance.

Payments of the project grant shall take the form of advance payments, interim payments and a final payment. The amount of advance payment to projects shall be set out in the project contract as a percentage of the total grant amount.

- a) Advance payments - of up to 20% of the grant - are to be paid within 15 working days after the last signature of the project contract
 - b) Interim payments - of up to 70% of the grant - are to be paid within 20 working days after the date of approval of the interim financial report.
 - c) Payments of the final balance of the remaining eligible amount are to be paid within 30 working days from the submission of all the required information.
- Final payment will be approved upon the successful completion of the yearly quality monitoring of the last year of the project.

The overall plan on the monitoring reporting and payments plan is summarized in the following table:

Interim Progress & Financial Reports				
Reporting Period	Deadline for submission	Assessment & quality monitoring	Payment confirmation	Payment Deadline
1 January – 31 March	15 April	15-May	15-June	20 working days from the acceptance of the interim progress & financial reports
1 April - 30 June	15 July	15-August	15 September	20 working days from the acceptance of the interim progress & financial reports
1 July - 31 September	15 October	15-November	15 December	20 working days from the acceptance of the interim progress & financial reports
1 October – 31 December	15 January	15 February	15 March	20 working days from the acceptance of the interim progress & financial reports
Final Progress & Financial Reports				
Reporting Period	Deadline for submission	Assessment	Payment Deadline	
Duration of Project	1 month after the submission of the last interim progress & financial report	1 month after submission	30 working days from the acceptance confirmation of the interim progress & financial reports	

10 Selection Process

The FO has established a Selection Committee, the role of which is to suggest to the FMO which projects should be funded. The Selection Committee consists of at least three (3) persons with relevant sector experience, proposed by the FO and approved by the FMO.

The FMO, the Donor Program Partner, the National Focal Point, and Royal Norwegian Embassy shall be invited to participate in the meetings of the Selection Committee as observers. Further observers to the meetings of

the Selection committee can be invited by the FO, upon request from the FMO. FO shall keep minutes of the Selection Committee meetings and provide a copy to the FMO no later than two (2) weeks after each meeting.

The Selection Committee shall operate in an open, transparent, and accountable manner, and its composition must ensure that due attention is paid to possible areas of conflict of interest.

The Selection Process will be implemented according to the Non-Conflict of Interest Policy.

Project selection process will take place in 4 stages.

First stage: FO will review the project applications regarding administrative and eligibility criteria, as listed in the call text. If the submitted proposals do not meet the administrative criteria and the eligibility criteria set, they will be rejected, without being eligible for inclusion in the second evaluation phase. The FO will inform applicants for the reasons for the rejection and will give reasonable time to appeal for the rejection. All other proposals will proceed to the second stage of the evaluation.

Second stage: This stage concerns the evaluation of proposals, based on pre-defined evaluation criteria, which will be announced in the text of the call. The evaluation will be carried out by independent experts (scorers), impartial from the FO. Each application for funding would be assessed by two experts, and where the difference in experts' scores is above 30% of the higher score, a third expert shall assess the application. In the case of a third expert scorer, the average score of the two closest scores will count for the ranking. Experts shall justify in writing the scores for each criterion, they will evaluate. Once this stage of the evaluation is complete, the FO shall produce a ranking list of proposals on the basis of their average scores.

Third stage: the FO will provide the Selection Committee with the ranking list of project applications, including the name of the applicants, the title of the project and their average score.

The Selection Committee should review the ranked list of project applications and would ask questions if needed to the assessors of the administrative and eligibility criteria of the FO and the external experts' evaluators and / or conduct interviews with applicants if necessary. It may modify the ranking in justified cases based on transparent criteria. The justification for the modifications should be detailed and documented in the minutes of the meetings of the selection committee. The Selection Committee may decide to approve a project application under conditions. These conditions could relate to reducing the budget, obtaining clarifications, etc.

All Selection Committee sessions and decisions shall be duly recorded on relevant minutes.

The final recommendation of the selection committee for projects to be funded will be sent to the FMO for the final approval. This is the last stage of the selection process and it has to be mentioned that the FO in justified cases may modify the list of supported projects.

All applicant shall be duly informed about the final decision concerning their application

11 Clarification questions and FAQ

The FO Programme Unit will be available to answer the queries from potential applicants regarding the Programmes and the application process received by email within 3 days. Answers to specific questions related to the application process for the Programme's open call will be uploaded on the Programme's website (FAQ section) to be available for all interested applicants and will be updated by the FO Programme Unit on a regular basis. It is therefore advisable to consult the website regularly.

