

**Contracting Authority: European
Commission**

**Cross-border programme Albania – Kosovo*¹ under the
Instrument of Pre-accession Assistance (IPA III)**

Guidelines for grant applicants

Reference:

EuropeAid/184245/DD/ACT/AL - Cross-border programme 2021-
2027 Albania and Kosovo*, 1st call for proposals

Deadline for submission² of full applications:

13 March 2026 at 18:00hrs (Brussels date and time)

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**This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.*

² Online submission via PROSPECT is mandatory for this call for proposals (see Section 2.2.2). In PROSPECT all dates and times are expressed in Brussels time. Applicants should note that the IT support is open Monday to Friday from 08:30 to 18:30 Brussels time (except during European Commission public holidays in Belgium as published in the Official Journal). Applicants should take note of the weekly maintenance hours mentioned in the PROSPECT user manual.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question 1) In the guidelines, it is specified (only when applicable) that an external auditor must have certified the financial reports for the last 3 years of the lead applicant. In the case of NGO/Foundations/etc, is that necessary?

Answer 1) Yes, if the NGO/Foundation/etc is a lead applicant.

Question 2) What is meant by certified auditor? EU requirements or national requirements can work as well? What is considered an approved auditor?

Answer 2) An approved external auditor is a professional accountant or auditing firm that has been authorised or certified by a relevant regulatory body or authority to conduct audits of an organisation's financial statements. These auditors are independent from the organisation they audit, ensuring objectivity and impartiality in their assessments. The approval or certification typically involves meeting specific qualifications, adhering to standards of practice, and maintaining a high level of competence and integrity.

Question 3) In line with EU grant principles of transparency, equal treatment, and non-discrimination, the beneficiary guesthouses are planned to be selected only after contract signature through an open, transparent, and competitive call managed by the Activity. This approach was described in the Concept Note. However, during the information session on preparing the Full Application, it was indicated that applicants should specify the exact beneficiary facilities, provide ownership certificates and permits, and present detailed procurement planning at the application stage. This appears to conflict with the planned open and competitive selection procedure, as it would imply beneficiary pre-selection.

We would therefore kindly request clarification on the following points:

1. Is it acceptable, for small-scale private infrastructure interventions such as guesthouse upgrades, to identify beneficiaries after contract signature through an open and transparent selection process?
2. Would the required ownership documentation, permits, and detailed technical designs be acceptable if submitted after beneficiary selection and prior to the start of works?

We would appreciate your written clarification to ensure full compliance with the Programme rules while maintaining a transparent and non-discriminatory beneficiary selection process.

Answer 3.1. As per section 2.1.3 of the Guidelines for grant applicants “Financial Support to Third Parties”, In compliance with the present guidelines and notably of any conditions or restrictions in this Section, the lead applicant should define mandatorily in Section 2.1.1 of the grant application form:

1. the **overall objectives, the specific objective(s) and the outputs**³ (i.e. the results) to be achieved with the financial support
2. the different **types of activities eligible for financial support**, on the basis of a fixed list
3. the **types of persons or categories of persons** which may receive financial support
4. the **criteria** for selecting these entities and giving the financial support
5. the criteria for determining the **exact amount of financial support for each third entity**, and
6. the **maximum amount** which may be given.

Answer 3.2. There is a distinction between execution of infrastructure works as part of the action and financial support to third parties. If the action foresees execution of works, the list of documents indicated under bullet point 4 and 5 under section 2.2.5 of the guidelines for grant applicants, should be submitted together with the full application.

In case the action foresees financial support to third parties, the lead applicant will define the requirements as indicated in the Answer 3.1 above.

Question 4) Financing Not Linked to Costs (FNLC): During the info session, it was mentioned at one point that the FNLC section in the logframe and budget is not required for this call, while at another moment it seemed that FNLC might still be applicable. Could you please clarify **whether FNLC is allowed or not** under this call?

Answer 4) Financing Not Linked to Costs (FNLC) is not allowed under this Call for Proposals.

Question 5) Outputs, Outcomes, and Impact tables (Section 2.11 – Description, max. 13 pages):

During the info session, it was suggested that the **Outputs, Outcomes, and Impact tables may be completed, but might not be strictly required**, given the page limit. Could you please confirm:

- whether these tables are **mandatory or optional**, and
- if optional, **in which cases they should or should not be included?**

Answer 5) The tables are mandatory. You need to delete the row that is specific for financing not linked to costs.

Question 6) Visibility costs: Could you please confirm whether there is **any maximum percentage limit for visibility and communication costs** under this call?

³ As per OECD DAC definition, the term ‘results’ includes ‘impact’ (overall objective), ‘outcome(s)’ (specific objective(s) and ‘output(s)’.

Answer 6) There is no fixed percentage requirement for visibility activities. However, recipients of EU funding are obliged to acknowledge the source of the funds and ensure appropriate visibility for any EU support received. The costs allocated to visibility and communication must remain proportionate to the overall budget of the project.