



Pilot Project

Call for proposals document

Satellite Broadband Internet Access for Educational Multimedia Content to
Unconnected Schools

Version 1.1
31 July 2019



HISTORY OF CHANGES

Version	Publication Date	Change	Page
1.0	22.07.2019	▪ Initial version	1
1.1	31.07.2019	▪ Updated timetable	6



CONTRACTING AUTHORITY: RESEARCH EXECUTIVE AGENCY

Call for proposals: BBSat – 4 – Educ (PP-SBIAS-2019)

BUDGET LINE: 02.027740

Deadline for submission of Proposals: 05/11/2019

CALL FOR PROPOSALS: **BBSat – 4 – Educ**

PILOT PROJECT - SATELLITE BROADBAND INTERNET ACCESS FOR EDUCATIONAL MULTIMEDIA CONTENTS TO UNCONNECTED SCHOOLS

1. INTRODUCTION – BACKGROUND

When adopting the 2019 Union Budget, the Council and the European Parliament decided to finance a pilot project, within the meaning of point a) of Article 58(2) of the Financial Regulation, and entitled “Satellite Broadband internet access for educational multimedia contents to unconnected schools” (BBSat – 4 – Educ).

The European Commission adopted a Decision¹ on 5 March 2019, including this pilot project, on “the Work Programme for 2019 and on the financing for the implementation of certain pilot projects and preparatory actions relating to the competitiveness of enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises (COSME), the internal market for goods and service, Horizon 2020”.

The general policy objective is to promote the use of ICT in education, training and learning systems. One of the pre-conditions to integrate it is to increase availability and quality of connectivity to broadband Internet services for schools and classrooms, especially in rural and low population density areas, through the adoption of dedicated measures.

In its Communication² on “Opening up Education: Innovative teaching and learning for all through new Technologies and Open Educational Resources”, the Commission underlined that enhancing local ICT infrastructure (broadband, content, tools) is still needed in some parts of Europe and that Member States are investing in upgrading their national educational infrastructure (ICT, digital educational resources, broadband) but fragmentation and incoherence among EU Member States persists³. Innovating in the education sector remains a key priority for the Commission in its Communication on “Connectivity for a Competitive Digital Single Market – Towards a European Gigabit Society”⁴.

The European Parliament Resolution⁵ on internet connectivity for growth, competitiveness and cohesion: European Gigabit society and 5G, welcomed the ambitious plan to provide ultra-fast internet in primary and secondary schools, universities and libraries by 2025, in line with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. It also stressed that faster and better connectivity provides huge opportunities to enhance teaching methods, to foster research and to develop high quality educational services online as well as to create better opportunities for distance learning. The European Parliament also emphasised that, in order for the Gigabit target to have its full impact on our economy and not to miss opportunities, it is important to close the digital divide and prevent the opening of new divides. To this end, funding opportunities

¹ C(2019) 1646 of 5.3.2019

² COM(2013) 654 of 25.9.2013

³ On average, 93% of EU students access the internet at home, but only 72% have access to it at a place of education, and sometimes not in the classroom. (based on Eurostat data)

⁴ COM(2016) 587 of 14.9.2016

⁵ 2016/2305(INI) of 01.06.2017

should be explored by Member States and the Commission in support of the achievement for the main socio-economic drivers (schools, universities, public administrations).

In 2015, the Commission published a call for tenders for a feasibility study on the provision of satellite broadband for schools located in rural areas and not covered by any fixed wired or wireless broadband. In 2016, many schools in the EU still lacked broadband access (especially in primary schools, 25% of which have no broadband access or even no Internet access at all). The main reasons behind this situation are: poor awareness among schools and local authorities of the technical options available to access broadband Internet; a limited number of dedicated, large national institutional support programmes; lack of knowledge of possible funding options, including voucher schemes, and how to implement them. The study report “Satellite broadband for schools: Feasibility study” (SMART 2015/0061)⁶, was published in September 2017. It confirmed that the use of satellite-based access and distribution is an efficient solution to make broadband Internet and educational multimedia contents immediately available to schools that are now unconnected or poorly connected, and may remain in this situation for a few years from now.

The purpose of the pilot project is to contribute to attaining the general policy objective taking stock of the findings of the study referred to above.

The Commission has decided to implement this pilot project through the award of a grant following the publication of a call for proposals.

2. OBJECTIVES

The general objective of the pilot project is to **contribute to assessing the benefits of a broadband connectivity via satellite in areas impacted by digital divide** with the support of regional or national public authorities, as a precursor of the even larger benefits that the European Gigabit Society will later make largely available.

In accordance with this objective, the entities allowed to participate in the call must have a clear experience in implementing space telecommunications technologies for the reduction of the digital divide and for connectivity improvement.

Accordingly, proposals shall help the Commission to achieve at least the following specific objectives:

- Analysis of EU regions in long-term digital divide and impacted sectors and population notably for schools: the identification of some relevant regions, schools and other stakeholders must be in the proposals ;
- Assessment of simple, efficient and cost-effective implementation schemes (e.g. vouchers) to ensure easy access to satellite broadband connectivity: the proposals must present solutions ensuring easy access to satellite broadband connectivity;
- Assessment, through deployment of broadband internet access via satellite to some unconnected schools (“field trials”), of the benefit of distribution via satellite of educational multimedia content relying, to the extent possible, on data and services offered by the Union space programmes; and

⁶ <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/results-satellite-broadband-schools-study>

- Development of outreach and communication activities.

Proposals shall describe how relevant European stakeholders in the ICT supply chain shall be involved through an inclusive process and which appropriate coordination with educational stakeholders (Ministries of Education, EU Commission, etc.) shall be established.

Applicants may find useful data and information for the preparation of their proposal by contacting NEREUS – Network of European Regions Using Space Technologies. As NEREUS is the unique European regions’ association spreading the use and understanding of space technologies, it could provide support to the pilot project while taking care of involving regions currently not members of NEREUS.

Within the limited scope of a pilot project, the overall expected outcomes of the pilot project are:

- The assessment of the benefits of a broadband connectivity via satellite for a minimum of 10 schools across Europe in minimum of 3 different and a maximum of 5 different Member States and;
- The assessment of other market sectors and identification of the related stakeholders that could potentially benefit from broadband connectivity via satellite in regions affected by digital divide.

The proposals shall take into consideration, in order to avoid any overlapping and exploit possible synergies, any other existing or planned initiatives (European, national, regional...) which are likely to meet the need of broadband connectivity improvement of the schools chosen to be connected.

3. TIMETABLE

	Steps	Date and time or indicative period
(a)	Publication of the call	31/07/19
(b)	Deadline for submitting applications	05/11/2019 – 17:00:00
(c)	Evaluation period	Q4 2019
(d)	Information to applicants	December 2019
(e)	Signature of grant agreement	Q1 2020

4. BUDGET AVAILABLE

The total budget earmarked for this call for proposals is estimated at EUR 950 000.

Only one proposal will be funded by the contracting authority.

The contracting authority reserves the right not to distribute the funds available, if the quality of the proposals does not reach the minimum quality threshold required.

5. ADMISSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

In order to be admissible, applications must be:

- sent no later than the deadline for submitting applications referred to in section 3;
- submitted in electronic submission system available at <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>;
- drafted in one of the EU official languages⁷; and
- be perfectly legible.

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

Due to technical constraints, the forms used in the submission system are standard forms for Horizon 2020 actions. Nevertheless, this Pilot Project is not a H2020 action and any reference to H2020 in the forms or in the templates must be disregarded. The only reference document is this Call Document and the related Commission Decision C(2019) 1646 of 5.3.2019.

6. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA⁸

6.1. Eligible applicants

Proposals may be submitted by consortia composed by any legal entities except natural persons, such as:

- non-profit organisations (private or public);
- public authorities (national, regional, local);
- international organisations;
- universities;
- educational institutions;
- research centres;
- profit making entities;

The applicant and its co-applicant(s) may act together with affiliated entities. Only the following two types of entities may be considered as affiliated entities to the applicants, in conformity to Article 187 of the Financial Regulation (FR):

- a) several legal entities forming together one legal entity or 'sole beneficiary' that may or may not have been specifically established for carrying out the action (e.g. groupings, joint ventures). In this case, it will be necessary to check that the legal entities forming the 'sole beneficiary' fulfil the eligibility, exclusion and selection criteria and have provided the appropriate supporting documents.

⁷ In order to speed the evaluation process and the award of funds, proposals must be drafted preferably in English.

⁸ [Articles 194\(1\)\(b\) and 197 FR](#)

- b) legal entities having a legal or capital link with a beneficiary that is neither limited to the action nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation (e.g. networks, federations, trade unions). These affiliated entities have to fulfil the eligibility and exclusion criteria and provide the appropriate supporting documents.

Entities affiliated to a beneficiary may participate in the implementation of an action provided that both of the following conditions are fulfilled:

- (i) the entities concerned are identified in the grant agreement; and
- (ii) the entities concerned abide by the rules applicable to the beneficiary under the grant agreement with regard to i) the eligibility of costs or conditions for triggering the payment, and ii) the rights of checks and audits by the Agency, the Commission, OLAF and the Court of Auditors.

Country of establishment

Due to the limited scope of the pilot project, only applications from legal entities established in EU Member States are eligible (including outermost regions).

For British applicants: Please be aware that eligibility criteria must be complied with also at the time of signature of the grant agreement and for the entire duration of the grant. If the United Kingdom withdraws from the EU during the grant period without concluding an agreement with the EU ensuring in particular that British applicants continue to be eligible, you will cease to receive EU funding (while continuing, where possible, to participate) or be required to leave the project on the basis of the rules set out in the grant agreement.

Consortium requirements

In order to be eligible, a proposal must be submitted by a consortium composed of at least three legal entities from two different Member States.

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

- it is formed of several legal entities complying with the eligibility, non-exclusion and selection criteria set out in this call for proposals (this includes the requirement of three legal entities representing two EU Member States), and implementing together the proposed action;
- the application identifies the said entities.

For the purpose of declaring eligible costs as specified under section 11.3, the entities composing the applicant shall be treated as affiliated entities in accordance with Article 187 of the Financial Regulation⁹ (see pt.6.1).

If awarded the Grant contract, the applicant will become the beneficiary identified as the Coordinator.

Each member of the consortium must have a precise and clearly identified role in the implementation of the project. There is no upper limit on the number of members in a consortium, but it should be composed in such a way as to allow for the achievement of project objectives in the most effective and cost-efficient manner.

⁹ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p.1)

All members of a consortium must appoint one of them acting as coordinator. It will be 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.

Supporting documents

In the course of the procedure each legal entity (applicant) may be requested to register and provide a Participant Identification Code (PIC, 9-digit number), serving as the unique identifier of their organisation in the Participant Register.

Upon communication of the applicant's PIC, the EU Validation Services (Research Executive Agency Validation Services) will contact the applicant (via the messaging system embedded in the Participant Register) and request the latter to provide the supporting documents necessary to prove the legal existence and status and the financial capacity of the organisation. All necessary details and instructions will be provided via this separate notification.

6.2. Eligible activities

The proposals must present a set of activities such as the following types of eligible activities:

- Coordination activities between the consortium members and with the concerned stakeholders;
- studying, deployment and testing/validation actions aiming at connecting schools;
- conferences, seminars;
- training activities;
- awareness raising and dissemination actions;
- actions aiming at the creation and improvement of networks, exchanges of good practices;
- studies, analyses, mapping projects;

Within the overall objectives specified under section 2, proposals shall cover at least the following activities:

(i) Demand-side management

Presentation of the sampling strategy across Europe of affected regions, analysis and sampling of schools to be connected as “pilot schools”.

(ii) Supply-side management

Methodology for the consultation and choice of “Satellite broadband internet access providers” and “Educational multimedia content providers”.

(iii) Deployment of experiments in “pilot schools”

Analysis and adaptation of an implementation scheme (e.g. vouchers based on similar practices such as the WiFi4EU scheme).

Deployment (field trials) of broadband internet access via satellite to some unconnected schools over Europe. The minimum duration of field trials with schools must not last less than 12 months.

(iv) Management of Schools' feedback

Organisation, collection and synthesis "pilot schools" feedback.

(v) Outreach and training

Organisation of workshops, concept papers, links with Copernicus academy, links with companies for internships organisation.

(vi) Analysis of other impacted sectors in regions affected by digital divide and recommendations based on lessons learnt from the implementation of the aforementioned activities.

In order to test appropriate solutions easing the connection of schools, applicants may propose financial support to third parties (e.g. re-granting small financial amounts to schools or other stakeholders) as far as:

- third parties are neither affiliated entities nor associates nor contractors;
- the amount of the financial support is limited to 20,000 € per recipient for the duration of the action..

6.3. Implementation period

The maximum duration of projects is **24 months**.

Applications for projects scheduled to run for a longer period will not be accepted.

Activities must start not later than three months after the signature of the grant agreement.

7. EXCLUSION CRITERIA

7.1. Exclusion

The authorising officer shall exclude an applicant from participating in call for proposals procedures where:

- (a) the applicant is bankrupt, subject to insolvency or winding-up procedures, its assets are being administered by a liquidator or by a court, it is in an arrangement with creditors, its business activities are suspended, or it is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for under EU or national laws or regulations;
- (b) it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the applicant is in breach of its obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions in accordance with the applicable law;
- (c) it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the applicant is guilty of grave professional misconduct by having violated applicable laws or regulations or ethical standards of the profession to which the applicant belongs, or by having engaged in any wrongful intent or gross negligence, including, in particular, any of the following:

- (i) fraudulently or negligently misrepresenting information required for the verification of the absence of grounds for exclusion or the fulfilment of eligibility or selection criteria or in the performance of a contract, a grant agreement or a grant decision;
 - (ii) entering into agreement with other applicants with the aim of distorting competition;
 - (iii) violating intellectual property rights;
 - (iv) attempting to influence the decision-making process of the Agency during the award procedure;
 - (v) attempting to obtain confidential information that may confer upon it undue advantages in the award procedure;
- (d) it has been established by a final judgment that the applicant is guilty of any of the following:
- (i) fraud, within the meaning of Article 3 of Directive (EU) 2017/1371 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Article 1 of the Convention on the protection of the European Communities' financial interests, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 July 1995;
 - (ii) corruption, as defined in Article 4(2) of Directive (EU) 2017/1371 or Article 3 of the Convention on the fight against corruption involving officials of the European Communities or officials of Member States of the European Union, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 May 1997, or conduct referred to in Article 2(1) of Council Framework Decision 2003/568/JHA, or corruption as defined in the applicable law;
 - (iii) conduct related to a criminal organisation, as referred to in Article 2 of Council Framework Decision 2008/841/JHA;
 - (iv) money laundering or terrorist financing within the meaning of Article 1(3), (4) and (5) of Directive (EU) 2015/849 of the European Parliament and of the Council;
 - (v) terrorist offences or offences linked to terrorist activities, as defined in Articles 1 and 3 of Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA, respectively, or inciting, aiding, abetting or attempting to commit such offences, as referred to in Article 4 of that Decision;
 - (vi) child labour or other offences concerning trafficking in human beings as referred to in Article 2 of Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council;
- (e) the applicant has shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations in the performance of a contract, a grant agreement or a grant decision financed by the Union's budget, which has led to its early termination or to the application of liquidated damages or other contractual penalties, or which has been discovered following checks, audits or investigations by an authorising officer, OLAF or the Court of Auditors;
- (f) it has been established by a final judgment or final administrative decision that the applicant has committed an irregularity within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95;
- (g) It has been established by a final judgement or final administrative decision that the applicant has created an entity in a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or any other legal obligations of mandatory application in the

jurisdiction of its registered office, central administration or principal place of business;

- (h) it has been established by a final judgement or final administrative decision that an entity has been created with the intent referred to in point (g);
- (i) for the situations referred to in points (c) to (h) above, the applicant is subject to:
 - (i) facts established in the context of audits or investigations carried out by European Public Prosecutor's Office after its establishment, the Court of Auditors, the European Anti-Fraud Office or the internal auditor, or any other check, audit or control performed under the responsibility of an authorising officer of an EU institution, of a European office or of an EU agency or body;
 - (ii) non-final judgments or non-final administrative decisions which may include disciplinary measures taken by the competent supervisory body responsible for the verification of the application of standards of professional ethics;
 - (iii) facts referred to in decisions of persons or entities being entrusted with EU budget implementation tasks;
 - (iv) information transmitted by Member States implementing Union funds;
 - (v) decisions of the Commission relating to the infringement of Union competition law or of a national competent authority relating to the infringement of Union or national competition law; or
 - (vi) decisions of exclusion by an authorising officer of an EU institution, of a European office or of an EU agency or body.

7.2. Remedial measures¹⁰

If an applicant declares one of the situations of exclusion listed above (see section 7.1), it must indicate the measures it has taken to remedy the exclusion situation, thus demonstrating its reliability. This may include e.g. technical, organisational and personnel measures to correct the conduct and prevent further occurrence, compensation of damage or payment of fines or of any taxes or social security contributions. The relevant documentary evidence that illustrates the remedial measures taken must be provided in annex to the declaration. This does not apply for situations referred in point (d) of section 7.1.

7.3. Rejection from the call for proposals

The authorising officer shall not award a grant to an applicant who:

- (a) is in an exclusion situation established in accordance with section 7.1; or
- (b) has misrepresented the information required as a condition for participating in the procedure or has failed to supply that information; or
- (c) was previously involved in the preparation of documents used in the award procedure where this entails a breach of the principle of equal treatment, including distortion of competition, that cannot be remedied otherwise.

The same exclusion criteria apply to affiliated entities.

¹⁰ [Article 136\(7\) FR](#)

Administrative sanctions may be imposed on applicants, or affiliated entities where applicable, if any of the declarations or information provided as a condition for participating in this procedure prove to be false.

7.4. Supporting documents¹¹

Applicants and affiliated entities must provide a declaration on their honour certifying that they are not in one of the situations referred to in Articles 136(1) and 141 FR, by filling in the relevant form attached to the application form accompanying the call for proposals and available at <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>.

This obligation may be fulfilled in one of the following ways:

- (i) the coordinator of a consortium signs a declaration on behalf of all applicants and their affiliated entities; OR
- (ii) each applicant in the consortium signs a declaration in its name and on behalf of its affiliated entities; OR
- (iii) each applicant in the consortium and the affiliated entities each sign a separate declaration in their own name.

8. SELECTION CRITERIA¹²

8.1. Financial capacity¹³

Applicants must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activity throughout the duration of the grant and to participate in its funding. The applicants' financial capacity will be assessed on the basis of the following supporting documents to be submitted with the application:

a) Low value grants (\leq EUR 60 000):

- a declaration on their honour.

b) Grants $>$ EUR 60 000:

- a declaration on their honour, and

EITHER

- the profit and loss account as well as the balance sheet for the last 2¹⁴ financial years for which the accounts were closed;
- for newly created entities: the business plan might replace the above documents;

OR

- the table provided for in the application form, filled in with the relevant statutory accounting figures, in order to calculate the ratios as detailed in the form.

c) Grants for an action $>$ EUR 750 000¹⁵:

¹¹ [Article 137 FR](#)

¹² [Article 198 FR](#)

¹³ [Article 198 FR](#).

¹⁴ [The number of years requested may not exceed three years \(Article 196 \(c\) FR\)](#)

¹⁵ [Article 196\(d\) FR](#).

- (i) the information and supporting documents mentioned in point b) above, and
- (ii) **an audit report** produced by an approved external auditor certifying the accounts for the last 2 ¹⁶ financial years available, where such an audit report is available or whenever a statutory report is required by law.

If the audit report is not available AND a statutory report is not required by law, a self-declaration signed by the applicant's authorised representative certifying the validity of its accounts for the last 2 ¹⁷ financial years available must be provided.

In the event of an application grouping several applicants (consortium), the above thresholds apply to each applicant.

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

On the basis of the documents submitted, if the contracting authority considers that financial capacity is weak, it may:

- request further information;
- decide not to give pre-financing;
- decide to give pre-financing paid in instalments;
- decide to give pre-financing covered by a bank guarantee (see section 11.4 below);
- where applicable, require the joint and several financial liability of all the co-beneficiaries.

If the Responsible Authorising Officer considered that the financial capacity is insufficient, s/he will reject the application.

The verification of the financial capacity shall not apply to public bodies, including Member States organisations and to International Organisations.

8.2. Operational capacity¹⁸

Applicants must have the professional competencies as well as appropriate qualifications necessary to implement the proposed action. In this respect, applicants must demonstrate an experience in implementing space telecommunications technologies for the reduction of the digital divide and for connectivity improvement.

In this respect, applicants have to submit the following supporting documents:

- curriculum vitae or description of the profile of the people primarily responsible for managing and implementing the operation (Head of Project, Technical and Education experts), showing a cumulative experience within the consortium of 5 years in the sector of education and 5 years in scientific/technology sector relevant for the implementation of the action. Curriculum vitae or description of

¹⁶ *The number of years requested may not exceed three years (Article 196 (d) FR)*

¹⁷ *The number of years requested may not exceed three years (Article 196 (d) FR)*

¹⁸ *Article 196 and 198 FR.*

the profile may be accompanied where appropriate, like in the field of research and education, by a short list of relevant publications;

- the last organisation's activity report for the past year (2018);
- a list of at least 3 projects performed and connected to the policy field of the present call carried out by the members of the consortium in the current year and the 2 past years (2019, 2018, 2017) and for a budget of minimum EUR 100,000 per project. The list must be established as a declaration of honour, certifying true and sincere the information contained;
- a description of the technical equipment, tools or facilities and patents at the disposal of the applicant;
- an inventory of natural or economic resources involved in the project.

9. AWARD CRITERIA¹⁹

Applications will be examined and evaluated by the Research Executive Agency (REA) with the possible assistance of external evaluators. If the examination of the application reveals that the proposed action does not meet the eligibility criteria stated in section 6, the application will be rejected on this sole basis.

Eligible applications will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

1. Award criteria, scores and weighting

Award criteria

Grant proposals will be evaluated by experts, on the basis of the following award criteria ‘excellence’, ‘impact’ and ‘quality and efficiency of the implementation’.

The different aspects of the proposals will be considered as set out in the table below:

	Award criteria		
	Excellence	Impact	Quality and efficiency of the implementation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity and pertinence of the objectives; • Soundness of the concept; • and credibility of the proposed methodology and sampling strategy (Regions, schools); • Quality and relevance of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which the outputs of the project would contribute to each of the general and specific objectives mentioned in section 2; • Quality of the proposed measures to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploit and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality and effectiveness of the work plan, including extent to which the resources assigned to work packages are appropriate with the expected objectives and deliverables; • Appropriateness of the management structures

¹⁹ Article 199 FR

	coordination.	disseminate the project results (including management of IPR), <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage research data where relevant. • Communicate the project activities to different target audiences. 	and procedures, including risk and innovation management; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complementarity of the participants and extent to which the consortium as whole (when relevant) brings together the necessary expertise; • Appropriateness of the allocation of tasks, ensuring that all participants have a valid role and adequate resources in the project to fulfil that role.
Maximum score / Weighting	5	5	5
Minimum Quality Threshold	3	3	3

Scoring

Evaluation scores will be awarded for the criteria, and not for the different specific aspects listed in the above table. Each criterion will be scored out of 5.

Minimum score per criterion (threshold): the threshold for individual criteria will be 3.

Minimum total score (threshold): the overall threshold, applying to the sum of the three individual scores, will be 10.

Proposals not reaching the above-mentioned thresholds will be rejected.

Priority order for proposals with the same score

If necessary, the panel will determine a priority order for proposals that have been awarded the same overall score. The following approach will be applied:

(a) In case of multiple proposals with the same result, proposals that address the highest number of Regions in which schools have been (or will be) chosen to be connected as “pilot schools” will be considered to have the highest priority;

(b) In case of multiple proposals with the same result under (a), proposals that address the highest number of schools which the proposal commit to connect as “pilot schools” will be considered to have the highest priority;

(c) In case of multiple proposals with the same result under (b), they will themselves be ranked according to the scores they have been awarded for the criterion “Impact”.

If a distinction still cannot be made, the panel may decide to further prioritise by considering other factors related to the objectives of the call. These factors will be documented in the report of the Panel.

Evaluation procedure

- Proposals will be evaluated by independent experts.

As part of the evaluation by independent experts, a panel review will recommend a table listing the applications ranked according to their score and within the limits of the funds available. In addition, a reserve list will be drawn up following the same criteria to be used if more funds should become available during the validity period of the reserve list.

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

Proposal coordinators will receive an Evaluation Summary Report (ESR), showing the results of the evaluation for their proposal.

10. LEGAL COMMITMENTS²⁰

The Contracting Authority for the award and signature of the grant is the Research Executive Agency (REA).

In the event of a grant awarded, a grant agreement, drawn up in euro and detailing the conditions and level of funding, will be sent to the applicant, as well as the information on the procedure to formalise the agreement of the parties.

Two copies of the original agreement must be signed first by the coordinator on behalf of the consortium and returned to the REA immediately. The REA will sign it last.

11. FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

11.1. Form of the grant²¹

Notwithstanding the respect of the co-financing principle, the grant will reimburse up to 100% of the eligible costs incurred and declared by the consortium/beneficiary for the implementation of the action.

Eligible costs must be declared under the following forms ('forms of costs'):

- (a) for **direct personnel costs**: as actually incurred costs ('actual costs'),
- (b) for **direct costs of subcontracting**: as actually incurred costs (**actual costs**);
- (c) for **direct costs of providing financial support to third parties**: as actually incurred costs (**actual costs**).
- (d) for **other direct costs**: as actually incurred costs (**actual costs**);

²⁰ Article 201 FR.

²¹ Articles 125 and 194(1)(c) FR

(e) for **indirect costs**: on the basis of a flat-rate applied (7% of the eligible direct costs);

11.2. Eligible costs²²

Eligible costs shall meet all the following criteria:

- they are incurred by the beneficiary.
- they are incurred during the duration of the action , with the exception of costs relating to final reports and audit certificates;
 - The period of eligibility of costs will start as specified in the grant agreement.
 - If a beneficiary can demonstrate the need to start the action before the agreement is signed, the costs eligibility period may start before that signature. Under no circumstances can the eligibility period start before the date of submission of the grant application.
- they are indicated in the estimated budget of the action;
- they are necessary for the implementation of the action which is the subject of the grant;
- they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular being recorded in the accounting records of the beneficiary and determined according to the applicable accounting standards of the country where the beneficiary is established and according to the usual cost accounting practices of the beneficiary;
- they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation;
- they are reasonable, justified, and comply with the principle of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency.

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

The same criteria apply to costs incurred by the affiliated entities.

Eligible costs may be direct or indirect.

11.2.1. Eligible direct costs

The eligible direct costs for the action are those costs which:

with due regard to the conditions of eligibility set out above, are identifiable as specific costs directly linked to the performance of the action and which can therefore be booked to it directly, such as :

- (a) *the costs of personnel working under an employment contract with the beneficiary or an equivalent appointing act and assigned to the action, provided that these costs are in line with the beneficiary's usual policy on remuneration.*

Those costs include actual salaries plus social security contributions and other statutory costs included in the remuneration. They may also comprise additional remunerations, including payments on the basis of supplementary contracts regardless of the nature of those contracts, provided that they are paid in a

²² [Article 186 FR](#)

consistent manner whenever the same kind of work or expertise is required, independently from the source of funding used;

The costs of natural persons working under a contract with the beneficiary other than an employment contract or who are seconded to the beneficiary by a third party against payment may also be included under such personnel costs, provided that the following conditions are fulfilled:

- (i) the person works under conditions similar to those of an employee (in particular regarding the way the work is organised, the tasks that are performed and the premises where they are performed);*
- (ii) the result of the work belongs to the beneficiary (unless exceptionally agreed otherwise); and*
- (iii) the costs are not significantly different from the costs of staff performing similar tasks under an employment contract with the beneficiary;*

The recommended methods for the calculation of direct personnel costs are provided in Appendix.

- (b) costs of travel and related subsistence allowances, provided that these costs are in line with the beneficiary's usual practices on travel;*
- (c) the depreciation costs of equipment or other assets (new or second-hand) as recorded in the beneficiary's accounting statements, provided that the asset:
 - (i) is written off in accordance with the international accounting standards and the beneficiary's usual accounting practices; and*
 - (ii) has been purchased in accordance with the rules on implementation contracts laid down in the grant agreement, if the purchase occurred within the implementation period;**

The costs of renting or leasing equipment or other assets are also eligible, provided that these costs do not exceed the depreciation costs of similar equipment or assets and are exclusive of any finance fee;

Only the portion of the equipment's depreciation, rental or lease costs corresponding to the implementation period and the rate of actual use for the purposes of the action may be taken into account when determining the eligible costs. By way of exception, the full cost of purchase of equipment may be eligible under the Special Conditions, if this is justified by the nature of the action and the context of the use of the equipment or assets;

- (d) costs of consumables and supplies, provided that they:
 - (i) are purchased in accordance with the rules on implementation contracts laid down in the grant agreement; and*
 - (ii) are directly assigned to the action;**
- (e) costs arising directly from requirements imposed by the Agreement (dissemination of information, specific evaluation of the action, audits, translations,*

reproduction), including the costs of requested financial guarantees, provided that the corresponding services are purchased in accordance with the rules on implementation contracts laid down in the grant agreement;

- (f) costs derived from subcontracts, provided that specific conditions on subcontracting as laid down in the grant agreement are met;*
- (g) costs of financial support to third parties, provided that the conditions laid down in the grant agreement are met;*

11.2.2. Eligible indirect costs (overheads)

Indirect costs are costs that are not directly linked to the action implementation and therefore cannot be attributed directly to it.

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

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

Applicants' attention is drawn to the fact that if they are receiving an operating grant financed by the EU or Euratom budget, they may not declare indirect costs for the period(s) covered by the operating grant, unless they can demonstrate that the operating grant does not cover any costs of the action.

In order to demonstrate this, in principle, the beneficiary should:

- a. use *analytical cost accounting that allows to separate all costs (including overheads)* attributable to the operating grant and the action grant. For that purpose the beneficiary should use *reliable accounting codes and allocation keys* ensuring that *the allocation* of the costs is done in a *fair, objective and realistic way*.
- b. *record separately:*
 - all costs incurred for the operating grants (i.e. personnel, general running costs and other operating costs linked to the part of its usual annual activities), and
 - all costs incurred for the action grants (including the actual indirect costs linked to the action)

If the operating grant covers the entire usual annual activity and budget of the beneficiary, the latter is not entitled to receive any indirect costs under the action grant.

11.3. Ineligible costs

The following items are not considered as eligible costs:

- a) return on capital and dividends paid by a beneficiary;
- b) debt and debt service charges;
- c) provisions for losses or debts;
- d) interest owed;
- e) doubtful debts;
- f) exchange losses;
- g) costs of transfers from the Commission charged by the bank of a beneficiary;

- h) costs declared by the beneficiary under another action receiving a grant financed from the Union budget. Such grants include grants awarded by a Member State and financed from the Union budget and grants awarded by bodies other than the Commission for the purpose of implementing the Union budget. In particular, beneficiaries receiving an operating grant financed by the EU or Euratom budget cannot declare indirect costs for the period(s) covered by the operating grant, unless they can demonstrate that the operating grant does not cover any costs of the action.
- i) contributions in kind from third parties;
- j) excessive or reckless expenditure;
- k) deductible VAT.

11.4. Balanced budget²³

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

The budget must be drawn up in euros.

Applicants for whom costs will not be incurred in euros should use the exchange rate published on the Infor-euro website available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuro/inforeuro_en.cfm

The applicant must ensure that the resources which are necessary to carry out the action are not entirely provided by the EU grant.

Co-financing of the action may take the form of:

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

Overall co-financing²⁴ may also include in-kind contributions from third parties, i.e. non-financial resources made available free of charge by third parties to the beneficiary or to the consortium. The corresponding costs of third parties are not eligible under the grant, e.g. providing a meeting room or equipment for free, etc.²⁵

In-kind contributions shall be presented separately in the estimated budget to reflect the total resources allocated to the action. Their approximate value shall be indicated in the estimated budget and shall not be subject to subsequent changes.

²³ Article 196(1)(e) FR

²⁴ Article 190 FR

²⁵ Please note that in actions where the grant is calculated in proportion to the total eligible costs (e.g. 80 % of the eligible costs) it is expected that all costs serving as a basis for calculating this proportion are eligible, this is to say incurred by the beneficiary and not by third parties. As a result the part of the costs not financed by the EU (e.g. the remaining 20 %) must be eligible too and could not be covered by the contributions in kind. Therefore, you can consider this option only in cases where the EU finances 100 % of the eligible costs and the co-financing principle must be complied with (e.g. for actions outside the external actions domain).

11.5. Calculation of the final grant amount

The final amount of the grant is calculated by the REA at the time of the payment of the balance. The calculation involves the following steps:

Step 1 — Application of the reimbursement rate to the eligible costs

The amount under step 1 is obtained by applying the reimbursement rate specified in section 11.1 to the eligible costs actually incurred and accepted by the REA.

Step 2 — Limit to the maximum amount of the grant

The total amount paid to the beneficiaries by the REA may in no circumstances exceed the maximum amount of the grant as indicated in the grant agreement. If the amount obtained following Step 1 is higher than this maximum amount, the final amount of the grant is limited to the latter.

If volunteers' work is declared as part of direct eligible costs, the final amount of the grant is limited to the amount of total eligible costs approved by the REA minus the amount of volunteers' work approved by the REA.

Step 3 — Reduction due to the no-profit rule

‘Profit’ means the surplus of receipts over the total eligible costs of the action where receipts are the amount obtained following Steps 1 and 2 plus the revenue generated by the action for beneficiaries and affiliated entities other than non-profit organisations.

In-kind and financial contributions by third parties are not considered receipts.

The total eligible costs of the action are the consolidated total eligible costs approved by the REA. The revenue generated by the action is the consolidated revenue established, generated or confirmed for beneficiaries and affiliated entities other than non-profit organisations on the date on which the request for payment of the balance is drawn up.

If there is a profit, it will be deducted in proportion to the final rate of reimbursement of the actual eligible costs of the action approved by the REA.

Step 4 — Reduction due to improper implementation or breach of other obligations

The REA may reduce the maximum amount of the grant if the action has not been implemented properly (i.e. if it has not been implemented or has been implemented poorly, partially or late), or if another obligation under the Agreement has been breached.

The amount of the reduction will be proportionate to the degree to which the action has been implemented improperly or to the seriousness of the breach.

11.6. Reporting and payment arrangements²⁶

The beneficiary may request the following payments provided that the conditions of the grant agreement are fulfilled (e.g. payment deadlines, ceilings, etc.). The payment

²⁶ *Articles 115, 202 and 203 FR.*

requests shall be accompanied by the documents provided below and detailed in the grant agreement:

Payment request ²⁷	Accompanying documents ²⁸
A pre-financing payment corresponding to 50% of the maximum grant amount. After the signature of the GA.	financial guarantee (see section 11.7.2)
<p>Payment of the balance</p> <p>The REA will establish the amount of this payment on the basis of the calculation of the final grant amount (see section 11.5 above). If the total of earlier payments is higher than the final grant amount, the beneficiary will be required to reimburse the amount paid in excess by the Commission through a recovery order²⁹.</p>	<p>(a) final technical report (b) final financial statement (c) a certificate on the financial statements and underlying accounts, if required</p>

In case of a weak financial capacity, section 8.1 above applies.

11.7.2 Pre-financing guarantee³⁰

A pre-financing guarantee for up to the same amount as the pre-financing may be requested in order to limit the financial risks linked to the pre-financing payment.

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

The guarantee may be replaced by:

- a joint and several guarantee by a third party or,
- a joint guarantee of the beneficiaries of an action who are parties to the same grant agreement.

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

²⁷ [Article 115 FR](#)

²⁸ [Article 203\(2\) FR](#)

²⁹ [Article 115\(2\) FR](#)

³⁰ [Articles 152 and 153 FR](#)

11.7. Other financial conditions

a) **Non-cumulative award**³¹

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

Under no circumstances shall the same costs be financed twice by the Union budget. To ensure this, applicants shall indicate in the grant application the sources and amounts of Union funding received or applied for the same action or part of the action or for its (the applicant's) functioning during the same financial year as well as any other funding received or applied for the same action.³²

b) **Non-retroactivity**³³

No grant may be awarded retrospectively for actions already completed.

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

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

c) **Implementation contracts/subcontracting**³⁴

Where the implementation of the action requires the award of procurement contracts (implementation contracts), the beneficiary may award the contract in accordance with its usual purchasing practices provided that the contract is awarded to the tender offering best value for money or the lowest price (as appropriate), avoiding conflicts of interest.

The beneficiary is expected to clearly document the tendering procedure and retain the documentation in the event of an audit.

Entities acting in their capacity as contracting authorities within the meaning of Directive 2014/24/EU³⁵ or contracting entities within the meaning of Directive 2014/25/EU³⁶ must comply with the applicable national public procurement rules.

Beneficiaries may subcontract tasks forming part of the action. If they do so, they must ensure that, in addition to the above-mentioned conditions of best value for money and absence of conflicts of interests, the following conditions are also complied with:

- a) subcontracting does not cover core tasks of the action;

³¹ [Article 191 FR](#)

³² [Article 196\(1\)\(f\) FR](#)

³³ [Article 193 FR](#)

³⁴ [Article 205 FR](#)

³⁵ Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on public procurement and repealing Directive 2004/18/EC (OJ L 94, 28.3.2014, p. 65-242)

³⁶ Directive 2014/25/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on procurement by entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors and repealing Directive 2004/17/EC (OJ L 94, 28.3.2014, p. 243-374)

- b) recourse to subcontracting is justified because of the nature of the action and what is necessary for its implementation;
- c) the estimated costs of the subcontracting are clearly identifiable in the estimated budget;
- d) any recourse to subcontracting, if not provided for in description of the action, is communicated by the beneficiary and approved by the Commission. The Commission may grant approval:
 - (i) before any recourse to subcontracting, if the beneficiaries requests an amendment
 - (ii) after recourse to subcontracting if the subcontracting:
 - is specifically justified in the interim or final technical report and
 - does not entail changes to the grant agreement which would call into question the decision awarding the grant or be contrary to the equal treatment of applicants;
- e) the beneficiaries ensure that certain conditions applicable to beneficiaries, enumerated in the grant agreement (e.g. visibility, confidentiality, etc.), are also applicable to the subcontractors.

d) Financial support to third parties³⁷

The applications may envisage provision of financial support to third parties. In such case the applications must include:

- an exhaustive list of the types of activities for which a third party may receive financial support;
- the definition of the persons or categories of persons which may receive financial support;
- the criteria for awarding financial support;
- the maximum amount (lower than EUR 20.000 per third party for the duration of the action) to be granted to each third party and the criteria for determining it.

The amount of financial support per third party must not exceed EUR 20.000 for the duration of the action.

³⁷ *Article 204 FR*

12. PUBLICITY

12.1. By the beneficiaries

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

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

To do this they must use the text, the emblem and the disclaimer available at https://ec.europa.eu/info/resources-partners/european-commission-visual-identity_en

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

12.2. By the REA³⁸

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

The REA will publish the following information:

- name of the beneficiary;
- address of the beneficiary;
- subject of the grant;
- amount awarded.

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

13. PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA

The reply to any call for proposals involves the recording and processing of personal data (such as name, address and CV). Such data will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data.

The persons whose personal data are processed have the right to access and correct their own personal data. For this purpose, they must send any queries about the processing of their personal data to the data controller, via the contact point indicated in the privacy statement(s) that are published on the REA websites.

³⁸ *Articles 38 and 189 FR.*

Personal data may be registered in the Early Detection and Exclusion System by the European Commission, should the beneficiary be in one of the situations mentioned in Articles 136 and 141 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046³⁹. For more information see the Privacy Statement on:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/data-protection-public-procurement-procedures_en.

14. PROCEDURE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Proposals must be submitted by the deadline set out under section 3.

Applicants are requested to log in at <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home> and follow the procedure for submitting an application.

No modification to the application is allowed once the deadline for submission has elapsed. However, if there is a need to clarify certain aspects or to correct clerical mistakes, the REA may contact the applicant during the evaluation process⁴⁰.

Applicants will be informed in writing about the results of the selection process.⁴¹

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

Due to technical constraints, the forms used in the submission system are standard forms for Horizon 2020 actions. Nevertheless, this Pilot Project is not a H2020 action and any reference to H2020 in the forms or in the templates must be disregarded. The only reference document is this Call Document and the related Commission Decision C(2019) 1646 of 5.3.2019.

➤ **Contact**

REA-SPACE-CALLS@ec.europa.eu

³⁹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32018R1046>

⁴⁰ *Articles 151 and 200(3) FR*

⁴¹ *Article 200 FR*

Appendix
Specific conditions for direct personnel costs

1. Calculation

The ways of calculating eligible direct personnel costs laid down in points (a) and (b) below are recommended and accepted as offering assurance as to the costs declared being actual.

The REA may accept a different method of calculating personnel costs used by the beneficiary, if it considers that it offers an adequate level of assurance of the costs declared being actual.

a) for persons working exclusively on the action:

{ monthly rate for the person

multiplied by

number of actual months worked on the action }

The months declared for these persons may not be declared for any other EU or Euratom grant.

The **monthly rate** is calculated as follows:

{ annual personnel costs for the person

divided by 12 }

using the personnel costs for each full financial year covered by the reporting period concerned.

If a financial year is not closed at the end of the reporting period, the beneficiaries must use the monthly rate of the last closed financial year available;

b) for persons working part time on the action

(i) **If the person is assigned to the action at a fixed pro-rata of their working time:**

{ monthly rate for the person multiplied by pro-rata assigned to the action

multiplied by

number of actual months worked on the action }

The working time pro-rata declared for these persons may not be declared for any other EU or Euratom grant.

The monthly rate is calculated as above.

(ii) In other cases:

{hourly rate for the person multiplied by number of actual hours worked on the action}

or

{daily rate for the person multiplied by number of actual days worked on the action}

(rounded up or down to the nearest half-day)

The number of actual hours/days declared for a person must be identifiable and verifiable.

The total number of hours/days declared in EU or Euratom grants, for a person for a year, cannot be higher than the annual productive hours/days used for the calculations of the hourly/daily rate. Therefore, the maximum number of hours/days that can be declared for the grant are:

{number of annual productive hours/days for the year (see below)}

minus

total number of hours and days declared by the beneficiary, for that person for that year, for other EU or Euratom grants}.

The ‘**hourly/daily rate**’ is calculated as follows:

{annual personnel costs for the person

divided by

number of individual annual productive hours/days} using the personnel costs and the number of annual productive hours/days for each full financial year covered by the reporting period concerned.

If a financial year is not closed at the end of the reporting period, the beneficiaries must use the hourly/daily rate of the last closed financial year available.

The ‘number of individual annual productive hours/days’ is the total actual hours/days worked by the person in the year. It may not include holidays and other absences (such as sick leave, maternity leave, special leave, etc). However, it may include overtime and time spent in meetings, trainings and other similar activities.

2. Documentation to support personnel costs declared as actual costs

For **persons working exclusively on the action**, where the direct personnel costs are calculated following **point (a)**, there is no need to keep time records, if the beneficiary signs a **declaration** confirming that the persons concerned have worked exclusively on the action.

For **persons assigned to the action at a fixed pro-rata of their working time**, where the direct personnel costs are calculated following **point (b)(i)**, there is no need to keep time records, if the beneficiary signs a declaration that the persons concerned have effectively worked at the fixed pro-rata on the action.

For **persons working part time on the action**, where direct personnel costs are calculated following **point (b)(ii)**, the beneficiaries must keep **time records** for the number of hours/days declared. The time records must be in writing and approved by the persons working on the action and their supervisors, at least monthly.

In the absence of reliable time records of the hours worked on the action, the Commission may accept alternative evidence supporting the number of hours/days declared, if it considers that it offers an adequate level of assurance.