



European Commission
Enterprise & Industry Directorate General

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

EUROPEAN EXCELLENCE AWARD FOR ACCESSIBLE TOURISM

56/G/ENT/PPA/12/6472

GRANT PROGRAMME 2012

The present call for proposals is composed of a set of Grant Submission Documents,
which form an integral part of this call:

The call for proposals,
The Guide for Submission
The Submission Set

The terms set out in the call for proposals document shall take precedence over those in
the other parts of the Grant Submission Documents.

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1. CONTEXT

This call for proposals is published in the framework of the Preparatory action "Tourism and accessibility for all", financed by the European Parliament.

In 2010, further to the entry into force of the Lisbon treaty which lays down specific competences for the EU in the tourism sector, the European Commission adopted an ambitious political agenda¹ to boost the competitiveness of the European tourism industry, make it fit for the challenges of globalisation, and maintain Europe's position as the leading world tourism destination for the years to come. In response to the Commission's initiative, in 2011 the European Parliament adopted a Report (the "Fidanza" Report²) pleading for sustainable, high quality tourism, **accessible** to everyone, as one of the challenges that must be achieved to strengthen the European tourism industry. To foster this important objective, the European Parliament included in its budget for 2012 a Preparatory Action "Tourism Accessibility for All"³ aimed at laying down the foundations for future initiatives in the area of tourism and accessibility.

The overall purpose of this call is to " *incentivise and reward European destinations which make accessibility as a key priority in their promotional offer*".

Specific aims of the European Excellence Award for Accessible Tourism are:

- To foster adaptation of tourism products and services to the needs of people with disabilities
- To promote the use of innovative solutions
- To improve skills and training with relation to accessibility in the tourism supply chain
- To raise awareness and promote cooperation between public and private stakeholders on the access needs of tourists
- To foster the creation of a seamless and truly accessible tourism supply chain in Europe
- To disseminate best practices and promote networking amongst destinations

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE CALL

2.1. GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The objective of the present call for proposals is to support eligible countries' National Administrations in charge of tourism, or other public bodies corresponding to the definition set up in point 5.2 below (hereafter 'the applicant') for the purpose of the selection of best practices or excellence initiatives implemented in the tourism industry and that have improved access to all visitors, particularly to people with disabilities.

¹ <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/10/858&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

² <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2011-0407>

³ Preparatory action within the meaning of Article 49 (6) of Council Regulation n. 1605/2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities.

2.2. DESCRIPTION OF THE WORK

Applicants are requested to design an award scheme to be implemented at national level for the selection through an open competition of best practices, practical solutions, or excellence initiatives which facilitate the access of people with special access needs to tourism services.

The practices, solutions or initiatives to consider for the award can be both private, supported by private-public partnerships, or supported by public funds and are put in place by economic operators/SMEs in the tourism sector, alone or in cooperation with other public or private bodies.

The national awards will help identifying practices, solutions or initiatives that:

- have provided a tangible improvement of the access conditions to tourism services for people with special access needs;
- can showcase how tourism businesses have benefited from better accessibility, boosting at the same time consumers' confidence and satisfaction;
- have helped raising quality standards across the whole tourism industry as well as the quality of life in the local communities.

2.2.1. Categories for the award

Award schemes at national level shall be designed around the following categories:

CATEGORY 1: Accommodation and catering. This category aims to single out practices, solutions, or initiatives which have substantially improved the access to and the use of services in these facilities (e.g. rooms, restaurants, common areas, swimming pools, gyms, wellness areas, etc...) for tourists with special access needs. These solutions can refer, for example, to improvements to the infrastructures and buildings, to the information provided before and during the stay, to the presence of dedicated/customised services, and of support services, such as information, booking, web and mobile solutions, marketing and tourism intermediation. Dedicated skills and training of staff, as well as safety aspects, can also be taken into account.

CATEGORY 2: National Heritage, Culture, Entertainment and Leisure. This category aims to single out practices, solutions and initiatives which have enhanced the enjoyment of a tourism destination by people with special access needs. The category has to be intended in the broadest scope, including for example access to heritage places, natural landscapes, landmark places, arts and culture, but also play, sport, recreation, shopping, festivals, gastronomy, celebrations and so on. It encompasses indoor or outdoor programs, services, and amenities. Support services, such as information, booking services, marketing, ICT and mobile technologies, can also be taken into consideration in this category.

The aspects indicated for each category are non-exhaustive: **applicants are strongly encouraged to present additional elements relevant to accessibility.**

National authorities can implement an awarding scheme for either both or only one of the categories indicated above and shall identify for each category **one winner and 2 runners-up**. Therefore the applicants can submit either one proposal relating to one of the two categories indicated above or two proposals (one for each category).

2.2.2. Requirements for applications:

Proposals should indicate the most effective activities and mechanisms to develop and successfully implement the scheme for the selected category.

As a minimum, the proposals shall describe in detail:

(1) Implementation of the scheme for the selected Category

All activities should be described in a comprehensive way, in a coherent chronological order by work packages.

(2) Establishment of specific award criteria, clear, logical, relevant and coherent

Applicants shall propose a first set of specific award criteria which will apply to the selection procedure. The criteria should be clear, logical, relevant and coherent. They can be fine-tuned during the first phase of the project. The criteria should focus, as a minimum, on the following:

- I. **Novelty and Innovation:** the initiative, solution or practice addresses a common problem in a fresh, effective, exciting way.
- II. **Impact:** the initiative, solution or practice has made a measurable positive difference to the accessibility of travellers and to the business concerned, or to the tourism industry, or to the destination.
- III. **Inclusion:** the initiative or practice benefits specific target groups in need of special access provisions and/or contributes to the dissemination and consolidation of Universal Design solutions
- IV. **Transferability:** the initiative offers good potential for nation-wide application and/or application in other sectors of the tourism industry and/or application in other parts of Europe.

Additional criteria could also focus, for example, on networking and cooperation across different sectors of the tourism industry or with other EU counterparts.

(3) Evaluation of all candidate destinations and guidance during the application process

Applicants shall describe how they will inform about the project all potential candidate and will support them for the submission of the applications (e.g. clear and concise guidelines for potential entrants could be foreseen; help desk activities; etc).

(4) Promotion of the project

Applicants shall describe how they will organise the information campaign to disseminate knowledge of the initiative and reach all potential candidates (i.e. press releases, web sites, info days, seminars, etc). Visibility of the EU support to the project should be raised.

(5) Selection of the winner and of 2 runners up

Organisation of the decision-making process is at the discretion of the Applicants provided that the established framework is respected (categories, minimum criteria). Each applicant shall be able to substantiate its choice via transparent reporting (e.g. minutes of the selection meeting), if requested by the Commission. It is expected that a final ranking of 1 winner and 2 runners up is drawn up. The winners and the runners-up will be invited to a European Award ceremony in Brussels, to promote the practices/initiatives selected and provide them wide visibility.

(6) Organisation of a national awards ceremony

Applicants are invited to describe how they will organise the national Awards ceremony (at least 3 national journalists and the European Commission Representation/Delegation should be invited to participate in the event in order to raise the visibility of the project in the participating country).

(8) Submission of a “Dossier on the winner initiative” and “Dossiers on the 2 runners up”

At the end of the selection, applicants shall submit to the Commission a dossier on the selected project/initiative for the category identified and for the 2 runners-up. Information should be submitted concisely, following the template provided in Annex 5

2.3. DELIVERABLES

The expected deliverables of the project are:

- the description of the selection and award scheme for the identification of an excellence initiative for accessible tourism services, in one of the Categories indicated in section 2.2.1

- a **“Dossier for the winner initiative”** and **“Dossiers for the 2 runners up”**.

In these dossiers, the applicant should describe the selected practices and the reasons for their selection. The length of each dossier should not exceed 15 pages (A4 size). The dossiers shall be submitted in a reader-friendly document in English, presented according to the following structure:

- presentation of the initiative/practice in a marketing perspective;
- description of actions which justify the nomination;
- information about management, annual turnover, number of customers served;
- description of the impact and how the initiative has improved access and business.

A detailed template of the final dossier is provided in Annex 5

The dossiers must be forwarded in two copies on paper as well as on CD. If available, promotional material on the selected initiative and the runners-up (brochures, leaflet, etc), high resolution photos and other images (for ex. logo of the project, if exiting) shall be inserted in the dossier and on the CD ROM and should not be included directly in the text of the dossier.

All documents and images will be published on DG ENTR website and used for all other Communication activities. Therefore they must be of high quality: it is recommended that the image size is 2480 x 3508 pixel or 210 x 279 mm. Pictures must have a resolution of not less than 250 dpi. Photos must be free of copyrights.

The dossier shall also include **a short video** (more or less 40 seconds) presenting and explaining the shortlisted practice or initiative. The format of the video and contents shall be further discussed with the Commission.

- a comprehensive **“Final Implementation Report”**, describing the work undertaken all along the selection procedure. If this Final Implementation Report is not written in English or French, in order to facilitate and speed up the validation procedure by the Commission services, it should be accompanied by a 5 pages (A4 format) summary in one of these two languages.

The Final Implementation Report is composed of two parts:

(a) Technical part:

The total length of the technical part should not exceed 10 pages. It shall describe:

- a) The activities undertaken and the achievements with reference to each of the work packages outlined in the proposal. Applicants should refer to the original action plan and clearly indicate and explain any differences between the planned and the actual action plan. Any problems encountered should be explained, along with any solutions that were implemented.
- b) An evaluation of the "lessons learnt" and "added value" of the action implemented and which follow –up actions will be put in place to continue fostering and raising awareness on accessible tourism.

(b) Financial part:

The financial part shall consist of:

- 1) a declaration of real costs;
- 2) a request for final payment;

The declaration as well as the request for payment should be signed by the project responsible and sent by registered post to the Commission in original.

- 3) a final financial statement of the eligible costs actually incurred, following the structure of the estimated budget including all supporting documents/evidence that justify the declared costs;
- 4) a full summary statement of the receipts and expenditure of the action. It is very much advised that all supporting documents justifying the above costs are kept from the very beginning of the project (e.g. timesheets, salary slips, invoices, etc).

The Final Implementation Report must be submitted, within 3 months following the closing date of the action (see draft agreement I.2.2.).

The Final Implementation Report shall be submitted on paper in two copies (technical report) and in one copy (financial report) as well as on CD ROM or USB stick (document in word format with financial statements in excel version).

3. TIMETABLE

1. Scheduled start-up date for the action: **March 2013**
2. Maximum duration of action is: **10 months**
3. No applications will be accepted for projects scheduled to run for a longer period than that specified in this call for proposals.

The period of eligibility of costs will start on the day mentioned in Article I.2.2. of the grant agreement, "the starting date of the action".

The intention is to inform applicants of the outcome of the award procedure no later than the month of January 2013.

The period of eligibility of costs will start on the day the contract is signed by the last of the parties. If a beneficiary can demonstrate the need to start the action before the agreement is signed, expenditure may be authorised before the agreement is signed. Under no circumstances can the eligibility period start before the date of submission of the grant application.

3.1. DETAILED TIMETABLE

Projects co-financed under this call for proposals can be carried out according to the following calendar to be considered as tentatively.

March 2013-April 2013	Setting up of the Operative Team, fine tuning of the specific selection criteria, drafting of the application forms, etc.
May 2013	Implementation of the awareness raising and the communication campaign
June 2013	Launching the project, receiving the candidatures, selection procedure initiated
October 2013	Communication of the winner and runners up to the Commission
November 2013	Dispatch of the dossiers for the winner and the 2 runners up
December 2013	National Award ceremony (end of agreement)
From January to March 2014	Completion of the Final implementation Report

4. FINANCING

The estimated **maximum budget** allocated from the Preparatory Action "Accessible Tourism" financing decision C(2012)208 of 25/01/2012 for this call for proposals is: **EUR 300.000**.

Indicative number of projects: *up to 12*

- **Maximum EU co-financing rate** of eligible costs: **75%**
- **Maximum European Union co-financing ceiling** per project: **EUR 30.000€**

Proposals with a EU co-financing beyond any of the above two maxima will be ineligible.
Please refer to section 5 below.

- Maximum two projects per EU Member state (i.e. one project for each of the categories indicated in Section 2)
- Please note that one action may give rise to the award of only one grant from the European Union budget to any one beneficiary.
- EU financing can never cover 100 % of the costs of an action.
- The Commission reserves the right to award a grant of less than the amount requested by the applicant. In such a case, beneficiaries proposed for award will be proposed either to increase their co-financing, propose other co-financing means or to decrease the total costs without altering the substance of the proposal. Grants will not be awarded for more than the amount requested.
- The publication on the Internet site does not guarantee the availability of funds for the above action.
- The Commission grant may not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit for the beneficiary. Profit is defined as a surplus of receipts over costs. The amount of the grant will be reduced by the amount of any surplus.

4.1. CO-FINANCING AND JOINT AND SEVERAL RESPONSIBILITY

The beneficiary shall supply evidence of the co-financing provided. It can be provided either by way of own resources, or in the form of financial transfers from third parties. For this call for proposals, the Commission does not accept co-financing in kind. Please refer to the Guide for Submission, chapter IV for further details.

In case where a multi-beneficiary agreement is possible or required, all partners shall agree upon appropriate arrangements between themselves for the proper performance of the action. In particular, they shall accept the joint and several responsibilities for any amount due to the Commission by anyone of them as stipulated in article II.18 of the grant agreement.

The final grant agreement shall be signed by each participating co-beneficiary unless a power of attorney is conferred to the appointed co-ordinator (Form A/4 of the submission set).

4.2. SUBCONTRACTING

Subcontracting does not limit the responsibilities of beneficiaries.

Please note that the beneficiary(ies) has(have) to have the necessary capacity to perform the project. Only tasks that are not core business can be sub-contracted to consultants.

When submitting the proposal, it is not necessary to have performed already a tendering process. However, proposed subcontractors without a tendering process will lead to ineligibility of the corresponding costs.

Please refer to the guide for submission (page 28) for further details on subcontracting.

4.3. PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The draft grant agreement annexed to this call for proposals specifies the payment arrangements in article I.4 for single beneficiary agreements and I.5 for multiple beneficiary agreements. The agreement is attached for information only, and should not be submitted with the proposal.

Your attention is in particular drawn to part B of the General Conditions, article II.14, where the eligibility of costs is described. These costs are also further explained in chapter VI of the Guide for Submission.

5. ELIGIBILITY

APPLICATIONS MUST COMPLY WITH ALL OF THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA SET OUT IN THIS SECTION.

5.1. GEOGRAPHICAL ELIGIBILITY

Applications from legal entities established in one of the following countries are eligible:

(1) EU Member States

5.2. LEGAL STATUS ELIGIBILITY

In what follows “partners” are to be understood as any potential co-signatory of the future grant agreement subject to this call, and as proposed by the applicant co-ordinator.

1. Applicants may act individually or in consortium with partner organisations. In the submission set, you will find two different types of grant agreement for reference.

2. Partners of the lead organisation must satisfy the same eligibility criteria as those for applicants; the applicant will be the coordinator

3. Applicants must correspond to the definition, of the following target organisations:

EU Member States' National Administration in charge of tourism. If the responsibility for the tourism sector is decentralised, then the proposal may be submitted by the competent regional/local administration. National Tourist Offices or other public bodies in charge of tourism can submit an application, provided that the competent National Administration **gives its consent in writing.**

4. Applications must be submitted by a legal person.

5. Corporate bodies must be properly constituted and registered under the law. If a body or organisation is not constituted under the law, a physical person must be designated to provide the legal responsibility.

5.3. EXCLUSION CRITERIA

By using the “Exclusion Criteria Form” (form D attached to the “Submission Set) applicants shall declare on their honour that they are not in one of the situations referred to in Articles 93 and 94 of the Financial Regulation. Please note that, according to articles 96 and 114 of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities and according to article 134b of the Commission Regulation (EC, Euratom) n° 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) n° 1605/2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities, administrative and financial penalties may be imposed by the Commission on applicants who are excluded in relation to points a) to h) of the form in question.

5.4. ELIGIBLE PROPOSALS

Applications must comply with the following conditions in order to be eligible for a grant:

1. Applications must be signed, dated and complete, using the standard submission set. All forms must be submitted in their original form with original signatures;
2. Applications must be submitted timely, in conformity with the specifications for the submission of proposals (see point 8 below);
3. Applications must respect the maximum EC contribution as laid out in section 4.
4. Applications must respect the maximum duration of projects (see section 3).
5. Applications must be in line with the scheduled start date (see section 3).
6. Applications may not include contributions in kind as part of their co-financing.

In this context, will be rejected any project directly or indirectly contrary to EU policy or against public health, human rights, citizen's security or freedom of expression.

6. SELECTION

The following sets out the basis for the evaluation of applicants' capacities in relation to the action. Please refer also to chapter IV of the Guide for Submission for further details.

6.1. APPLICANTS' FINANCIAL CAPACITY TO COMPLETE THE PROPOSED ACTION

Applicants must show they have stable and sufficient sources of funding to ensure the continuity of their organisation throughout the project and, if necessary, to play a part in financing it.

6.2. EXTERNAL AUDITREPORTS

Not applicable.

6.3. APPLICANTS' OPERATIONAL CAPACITY TO COMPLETE THE PROPOSED ACTION

Applicants must show they have the **operational (technical and management) capacity** to complete the operation to be supported and must **demonstrate their capacity to manage scale activity** corresponding to the size of the project for which the grant is requested. In particular, the **team responsible** for the project/operation must have **adequate professional qualifications and experience**.

7. AWARD

An evaluation of the quality of proposals, including the proposed budget, will be carried out in accordance with the evaluation criteria set out in point 10 to this call for proposals.

The complete selection and evaluation procedure is described in chapter IV of the Guide for Submission in Annex 2.

8. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Please note that electronic submissions are not allowed for this call.

Nevertheless, it is requested to receive in addition to the required paper copies of the project proposal **a CD Rom or USB stick with an electronic copy of the proposal** and the budget forms (word/excel files).

To facilitate and speed up the evaluation by the Commission service it is recommended that proposals be written in English or French. If another language is used, please provide a very comprehensive summary of the proposal (Form A/2 should be used to this purpose) in English or French.

Please consult chapter I of the Guide for Submission for the modalities of preparing the proposal.

The deadline for submission of proposals is:

13/11/2012

Applicants shall observe precisely the below indications in order that proposals can reach their precise destination in due time.

Proposals may be:

a) either sent by registered mail, (date of postmark serving as evidence of timely delivery); to the following address:

European Commission
Enterprise and Industry Directorate-General
Call for proposals No: 56/G/ENT/PPA/12/6472
Directorate E – Unit E/2 Cultural Instruments and Tourism
B100 04/28
B-1049 Brussels, Belgium

b) or sent by courier services (date of deposit slip serving as evidence of timely delivery), to the address below,

c) or delivered by hand, in person or by an authorised representative (date of acknowledgement of receipt by the Commission serving as evidence of timely delivery) to the following address:

European Commission
Enterprise and Industry Directorate-General
Call for proposals No: 56/G/ENT/PPA/12/6472
Directorate E – Unit E/2 Cultural Instruments and Tourism
B100 04/28

Service central de réception du courrier

**Avenue du Bourget, 1-3
B-1140 Bruxelles, Belgique**

How to reach Avenue du Bourget 1-3 : http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/calls/hand_delivery.html

In case of hand-delivery, a receipt must be obtained as proof of submission, signed and dated by the official in the Commission's central mail department who took delivery. This department is open from 08.00 to 17.00 from Monday to Thursday and from 08.00 to 16.00 on Friday; it is closed on Saturdays, Sundays and Commission holidays.

Please note that for security reasons hand deliveries (including courier services) are not accepted in other Commission buildings.

9. CONTACTS

Contacts between the contracting authority and potential applicants can only take place in certain circumstances and under the following conditions only:

- Before the final date for submission of proposals, at the request of the applicant, the Commission may provide additional information solely for the purpose of clarifying the nature of the call.

Any requests for additional information must be made in writing only to the coordinates stated below. The Commission may, on its own initiative, inform interested parties of any error, inaccuracy, omission or other clerical error in the text of the call for proposals.

Any additional information including that referred to above will be published on the internet in accordance with the various call for proposals' documents.

- After the deadline for submission of proposals:
If clarification is requested or if obvious clerical errors in the proposal need to be corrected, the Commission may contact the applicant provided the terms of the proposal are not modified as a result.

If the authorising officer finds that those proposals, which have been listed for award needs limited adaptations to their proposal. In such case, these applicants will receive a formal letter setting out the requested modifications. Any such modifications must stay within the limits of the request. This phase will not lead to a re-evaluation of the proposals, but a proposal might be rejected if refusing to ensure a positive follow-up to the request.

Contact coordinates for the call:

European Commission

Enterprise and Industry Directorate-General

Until 30/09/2012

Directorate F, Unit F2, F.2: Co-operatives, Mutuels, CSR and Support of Tourism Industry

From 01/10/2012

Directorate E – Unit E/2 Cultural Instruments and Tourism

E-mail address: ENTR-CFP-1256-acces-tou-award@ec.europa.eu

Office address: B100 4/028, B-1049 Brussels, Belgium

10. EVALUATION CRITERIA

When assessing the below evaluation criteria, the evaluation committee generally pays attention to the elements indicated below each criterion. Please note that these elements, which are indicative and non-exhaustive, are given on the basis of transparency and in order to help applicants to improve their applications.

EVALUATION CRITERIA	
1. Relevance	MAXIMUM SCORE
<i>This includes the overall understanding of the work to be performed, the level of detail of the work programme, the effectiveness of the methodology proposed, the coherence, and feasibility of the activities to be carried out.</i>	40
2. Quality	
<i>This includes the clarity, quality and completeness of the presentation of the proposal. This criterion also includes the extent to which the budget is complete, detailed and in line with the objectives and potential results of the proposed project. It will be judged if the link of each cost to the activities proposed in the project is clear.</i>	20
3. Impact	
<i>This includes the extent to which the proposed project contains multiplier effects (including possibilities for replication, consolidation, enhancement of the results), other follow up actions. This criterion evaluates the impact for accessible tourism for all travellers, regardless of their age or physical impairments.</i>	10
4. Visibility.	
<i>This criterion includes the extent to which the action will be promoted within the country and the extent to which it will raise visibility of the EU support to the proposed project.</i>	10
5. Budget and effectiveness.	
<i>The budget is complete, detailed and in line with the objectives and potential results of the proposed project. It will be judged if the link of each cost to the activities proposed in the project is clear.</i>	20
Maximum total score	100

11. ANNEX 1 SUBMISSION SET

ANNEX 1 SUBMISSION SET

ANNEX 2 GUIDE FOR SUBMISSION

ANNEX 3 DRAFT GRANT AGREEMENT

ANNEX 4 FINAL DOSSIER TEMPLATE