

**Invitation to expression of interest for
“EU4 Private Sector Development in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) / Post Covid-19”**

Replies to questions raised by Friday, 3rd February 2023, 12:00hrs, CET.

Q1: Could you please elaborate more specifically what is meant by eco-innovation in the framework of this Call for Expression of Interest?

A1: The definition of “Eco-innovation” provided by UNEP on <https://www.unep.org/eco-innovation> is largely applicable to the related terminology. In addition, the applicable indicators under Output 2 in the intervention logic may provide a closer guidance on the issues which should be tackled within the framework of terminology “eco-innovation”.

Q2: Under Output 2, Activity 2.1., it is stated that “at least 15% of grants for MSMEs should be allocated to those with capacity to facilitate green transition...”. Would you please explain which may be such MSMEs with capacity to facilitate green transition? Does this imply mature and champion MSMEs which can share learning and progress approaches to be scaled to other MSMEs? Or would that be relevant to MSMEs which have advisory function within the economic ecosystem (i.e. business development support organizations, etc.)? Or both?

A2: Please interpret this requirement in a way that at least 15% of grants for MSMEs should be largely allocated into the type of actions focused on facilitating a green transition in MSMEs. The selection of target groups to achieve this requirement depends on the applicants’ proposed methodology. Again, we kindly suggest you to observe the relevant indicators provided in the intervention logic for your closer guidance.

Q3: Does the threshold of 15% specified in Activity 2.1 must be applied to the envisaged grant support under Activity 2.2 and 2.3.?

A3: Yes.

Q4: Under the Output 3, the Action foresees pilot actions that promote resource efficient and circular processes and infrastructure. Besides the advisory support provided for the pilot actions, did the Contracting Authority envisions the provision of grants for the pilot actions?

A4: Please kindly read the following instructions from the “Invitation” which are relevant to your question: Pg 4, paragraph 3 states that “The foreseen Action will support ... by combining i) grant support (mainly for achievement of outputs 2 and 3) and ii) technical assistance (for achievement of output 1). In addition, similar to the answer to your question 2, it is up to the applicant to propose an adequate rationale and implementing methodology to ensure achievement of the relevant indicators provided in the intervention logic.

Q5: Under the Output 3, the Action foresees provision of advisory support for the pilot actions channelled via the local partners. Can you please elaborate what is meant by the local partners under this Call for Expression of Interest?

A5: The local partners under the description of the Activities to Output 3 may present the regional development agencies, chambers, agencies for SME development or any other service provider to SMEs preferably operating in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Again, the applicants’ choice of the local partners will depend on its proposed overall methodology.

Q6: In Annex I, the Call for Expression of Interest states that the indicative implementation period is from Q1 2024 to Q2 2027. Could you please specify the expected duration in months (i.e. 42 months) for the Action under this Call for Expression of Interest?

A6: Correct.

Q7: You state in the invitation under section “Selection process, Submission Requirements” that “interested entities are invited to submit their proposals to this Expression of Interest by replying to the questions mentioned under Annexes II & III”. Can you please confirm that interested entities are free to chose the format for the submission of the expression of interest as long as the questions mentioned under Annexes II & III of the expression of interest are taken into account?

A7: Please kindly use Annex III: Standard template for assessing potential applicants responding to a consultation process for expression of interest and follow the relevant instructions of the Invitation and in particular the instruction: “Please draft your expression of interest strictly using the following structure”...

Q8: You state in your invitation that “The best-placed entity will be invited to start negotiations, potentially leading to a Contribution Agreement.” Can you confirm that the decision of which entity is to be entrusted with the implementation of the Action will be made based of the expression of interest to be submitted by Friday, 3rd March 2023, 17:00hrs and that following the expression of interest no additional competitive procedure is to be expected?

A8: Please refer to the following provision of the “Invitation” specified under the Legal bases and consideration (page 1):

“This invitation to expression of interest aims at identifying entities which could be, later on, invited to negotiations on a potential subsequent entrustment of the Union's budget implementation tasks (BIT) in respect to specific action of the Annual Action Programme for Bosnia and Herzegovina for year 2021 “EU4 Private Sector Development in BiH/Post Covid-19”. The organisation in expressing an interest to this consultation does not commit itself. At the same time, the European Commission reserves the right to take its final decision on the delegated actions upon its discretion. “

Q9: Can you outline a tentative schedule for the award decision and contract negotiation process following the expression of interest?

A9: The potential Contribution Agreement signature is expected in the course of 2023, following a negotiation procedure, as specified in the “Invitation”. However, as you correctly pointed out, this schedule is tentative and the potential implementing partners will be informed of any changes to indicative planning.

Q10: When do you expect the contribution agreement contract(s) resulting from the Call for expression of interest to be signed?

A10: As above.