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Call for Proposals

“VaMoz Digital! Digital Competences, Entrepreneurship and Services as Opportunities for Youth Growth in Mozambique”

(Ref: 01/2023/VaMoz Digital/AICS_NDICI Africa/2023/442-998)

REPLIES TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

(replies updated to **26th January 2024** – most recent questions on top)

- 1) Is it possible to get ahold of international entities to whom we could connect and make partnerships for the applicant consortium, similar to we have with the useful study “[Ecosystem Mapping for Maputo](#)” [published on the same website pages, just below the Call for proposals]. It would help us create partnership that better align with the initiative and meet the required standards.**

AICS launched this Call for Proposals through international channels and expects that international entities with the desired expertise will soon look for local partners and apply for the grant(s). There is not a list of such potential partners available for local partners or international companies who need a not-profit-making organisation to lead the consortium. However, please read the reply to the previous question (just below) about the possibility that these international entities avail show interest in building a public-private partnership.

- 2) How can a university with valuable expertise in the fields required for the applicants be part of a consortium applying for the grant, if it has no eligibility because it is not authorised to work in Mozambique, nor is its partner in the country?**

Universities established in the eligible countries as per the Guidelines for Applicants may team up with other entities as co-applicants or associates, if they do not qualify under all the eligibility criteria as Lead Applicant, including the proven capacity to operate in Mozambique.

In general, AICS Maputo will publish through frequent updates to these FAQ a list with the names and contacts of every prospective Lead Applicant which sends to Maputo@aics.gov.it its willingness to participate and to network with local or other organisations for applying together as a consortium the contacts.

- 3) May private for-profit companies be beneficiary partners under this call?**

Yes, the eligibility criteria for Co-applicants do not exclude for-profit companies. However, the no-profit rule of the PRAG procedures for grants (Section 6) states that these companies (Co-applicants or Associates) will not be allowed to make a profit within the programme supported by the two EU/AICS grants.

However, private companies whose nature is profit-making may not lead a consortium (see eligibility criteria for Lead Applicants).

Also note: a company which is non-profit making by statute is eligible as Lead applicant.

4) May it be an EU company which desires to operate a tech hub/training centre/incubator in one of the eligible regions?

For the reason stated in the previous answer, if an EU (or any international) company desires to operate such a structure in the Centre and/or in the North of Mozambique, it may start the “adventure” as part of the applying consortium and accept the no-profit rule of the European grants for the duration of the award contract, thus exploring the potential markets, creating relationships, etc., then negotiate a concession from the public owner of the tech hub to operate it as a normally functioning private business. An international or local company may also decide to participate in the applying consortium just for promoting and expanding the local digital ecosystem, reaping the benefits in terms of increased commercial opportunities.

5) We read in the FAQ already published on your website that [...] and this seems contradicting the Guidelines [...]

Each call for proposals has its own specific rules, eligibility criteria for lead applicants, co-applicants, etc. Therefore, the Guidelines for Applicants and the annexes published with **code NDICI AFRICA/2023/442-998**, as well as **these Replies** to FAQ are the only set of rules and indications to refer to.

On 24th November 2023 a **public consultation and presentation** of two upcoming similar Calls for Proposals (for the “DIGIT” programme and for this one) had been carried out and another “FAQ” document, produced after that session, was published. However, that informative and consultative virtual presentation was still discussing a set of rules and mechanisms which had not yet been definitively approved. Now the two Calls for Proposals were published and their specific documents need to be used for reference.

6) Among the indicative deliverables for Output 2.2 there are “100 support measures to ensure that particularly disadvantaged youth (financially or materially) are supported to access to courses and/or incubation services”. Did you mean 100 [different kinds of] measures or 100 people to benefit from one or a few types of support measures?

The quoted text means that 100 beneficiaries from vulnerable groups (e.g. People with Disabilities - PWD) shall benefit from some forms of support allowing them to participate into the activities as the other people, therefore “not leaving [them] behind”.

7) Is there a total number of beneficiaries to reach? When the Guidelines indicate the desired number of beneficiaries per category, shall the proposal add them to determine the total?

The Guidelines indicate the desired targets of beneficiaries, articulated by categories, which look to the contracting agency ambitious but reasonably attainable. The *total* number is not relevant: the real challenge is covering (if possible) all the various categories to ensure that the programme has the desired width.

Besides, in few cases the categories are defined in such a way that adding the beneficiaries of the categories would duplicate the number: e.g. the beneficiaries of the measures to ensure that people with specific vulnerabilities access the opportunities created by the programme – such as training

courses, start-up incubation services, hackathon competitions – will be (partly) the same people benefiting from the very courses, services, etc.

8) Are operational/operating costs only eligible under indirect costs (7%)?

No. It depends on the definition of operating (operational) costs. In general, many operating costs are eligible as direct costs: please see the General Conditions to be annexed to the contract, published among the annexes (Annex II to Annex G), at Section 14.2, where a list of the eligible direct costs should clarify this question.

9) In the call for proposals, it is written that “if any of the applicants or affiliated entity(ies) is in receipt of an operating grant financed by the EU, it may not claim indirect costs on its incurred costs within the proposed budget for the action” (Section 2.1.5. Eligibility of costs). What if the duration of the project is shorter than that of the Vamoz Digital programme? When an applicant is receiving funding for indirect costs from the EU under another programme, may it insert the 7% of indirect costs in this grant’s budget, too?

The Guidelines’s standard note mentioned in this question (common in all EU-funded grant terms of reference) is a general principle meant to avoid duplication in the costs which are covered by the EU and/or its implementing partners’ grants.

Therefore, if all operating costs of an organisation were covered by an operating grant of the EU, these specific costs should not be covered also by the 7% indirect costs eligible under this grant. However, if they are covered until a certain date which is closer than the end of the VaMoz Digital grant period, then the costs for the very functioning of the organisation can be covered with the indirect cost part for the remaining period.

In any case, please note that operating costs may include both direct and indirect costs. Operating costs encompass all expenses associated with the day-to-day functioning of an organization, which includes both costs directly tied to specific projects (direct costs) and those that support the organisation as a whole (indirect costs).

The second part of the question proposes a case of two programmes with different activities and budgets, both with the right to claim also 7% of the respective direct costs: this percentage of eligible indirect costs is set as a support amount for each programme and these indirect costs do not even need to be detailed or justified. The case is different from the situation considered in Section 2.1.5. of the Guidelines.

10) The applying consortium need to include at least a “public entity” (as active member or at least as the entity contributing with a facility where the tech hub will be established). Does this mean a central government entity or also a municipality, a public university, a vocational training institute, etc. is eligible to apply? Can you provide a definition of public entity?

Yes, the public entities applying as Lead applicant or Co-applicant or Associate (one of which must contribute with the facility to refurbish or expand and serve as tech hub), include municipalities, public universities, national public institutes, public vocational training institutes, research institutes, among others.

In general, a public entity may be defined as a legal entity that operates under the control, influence, or ownership of the government and serves a public purpose. This term encompasses various organizations and institutions established to carry out functions of public interest. The specific characteristics and categories of public entities may vary depending on the legal frameworks of

individual countries. In Mozambique, for example, public entities may consist of government ministries, local councils (municipal, district, and provincial), public institutes, state-owned enterprises, and parastatal entities. These organizations play a role in governance, service provision, and economic activities, often with a focus on meeting the needs of the public.

11) May the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education (MCTES) bid for the same project?

No, because its Directorate for Information Systems, Studies and Projects (DiSIEP) has discussed and contributed to the Terms of Reference (Guidelines for Applicants) of this Call for Proposals. Nevertheless, public universities and other public institutes supervised by the MCTES with statutory technical and financial autonomy and are eligible.

12) Is it mandatory to make a consortium to apply?

Since it is unlikely that the only mandatory member of an applying consortium (the Mozambican public entity which contributes at least with a structure/facility for the tech hub) possesses alone all the experience and competences in various fields required to be eligible as Lead applicant, in practice there will be the need to involve more partners in the applying team. The programme encourages and was designed to be implemented by a public and private partnership, with or without the civil society organisations which are used to manage EU or national governments' grants, but there are no further mandatory indications on the composition.

13) Can an Italian (or German, or Spanish, Tanzanian) association of municipalities (private entity, but no profit making) be a lead applicant, while creating a consortium with a Mozambican public entity and would this be enough? Or should an international organization be part of the consortium?

As reminded in the previous reply, the relevant principle is that the expertise and management capacity to implement and account for the grant need to be ensured by the applying team.

14) Does a co-applicant need to be exclusive to one consortium?

Yes, under each lot the Guidelines specify that the team members must be exclusive to an applying consortium. But one organisation may be co-applicant or lead applicant in another consortium applying to the other lot.

15) Is there a guidelines document in Portuguese?

Unfortunately no, but please check in the Guidelines the faculty to write (and submit) the proposal (with logical framework and budget) also in Portuguese, so to facilitate the communication exchanges and coordination with local partners.

16) Should the application be only submitted by the delivery of physical documents or is there an alternative online channel to submit a proposal?

Unfortunately the European procedure adopted for this Call for Proposals indicates only the physical option (hand delivery or couriers such as UPS, DHL, Portador Diário, etc.).

17) Are the two lots supposed to be complementary? If yes, may we propose that one of these tech hubs is based in Maputo?

The Southern region is excluded by the Guidelines of Applicants. Please check the eligible geographical areas. The complementarity should emerge by the design of these two lots and the other programme financed by AICS (see “DIGIT” Call for Proposals for Maputo), since the purpose is to cover the national territory as much as possible with these development initiatives contributing to the digital transformation of Mozambique.

18) We saw that there is the obligation of submitting an MOU/Agreement stating the roles and the commitments towards the implementation of the programme by the consortium members. Must just one comprehensive MoU/Agreement be submitted or may the agreements among the members be articulated into more than one MoU?

Since it is crucial that all participants in the bid are aware of the other members’ respective tasks and commitments, and considered that the contracting authority is not demanding a legal constitution of such consortium (or notary-recognised identities), a unique agreement with the signatures of all members’ representatives is requested.