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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO THIRD PARTIES: INNOVATION GRANTS FOR MUNICIPAL WASTE MANAGEMENT

Q1. Can applicants from countries other than Armenia, Poland and Albania?

A1. In compliance with the Guidelines for Applicants, section 2.1.1 “*Eligibility of Applicants (i.e. Lead Applicant and Co-Applicant)*”, an entity **can apply as Co-applicant** if it is established in any EU/EEA country and in any ENI or IPA country eligible for EU support, and complies with the other eligibility criteria for Co-applicant. Conversely, an entity that is not established either in Armenia or in Poland or in Albania is not eligible to apply as Lead Applicant.

Q2. Referring to Lot 1, does the project proposal have to focus on the development of a digital application or can it include the development of hardware or other types of innovative solution?

A2. In compliance with the Guidelines for Applicants, section 1.2 “*Objectives of the Programme*” the Specific Objective of Lot 1 is the “**Introduction of innovations and smart solutions in MWM/HHWM, including digital applications, for citizens to:**

- *Recognise Household Hazardous Waste (HHW), prevent its use, and participate in segregation and support treatment in accordance with locally applicable regulations and best practices;*
- *Increase citizens’ participation in HHW prevention and proper management at the municipal level;*
- *Promote initiatives and improved policies related to HHW prevention and proper management at the municipal level.”.*

A project proposal under Lot 1 must address the above-mentioned specific objective and contribute to the achievement of the output and result indicators (also presented in section 1.2 of the Guidelines), and in particular of indicator O.1 “**Number of technical and organizational improvements, innovations and smart/digital solutions for MWM/HHWM developed**”.

In line with this, **activities in a project proposal for Lot 1 can include, but are not limited to, the development/application/ promotion of a digital application.** Proposed activities can also consist of the development of other innovations and smart solutions such as hardware installation/development; device development; a mix of digital solutions (Internet of Things, machine learning, artificial intelligence, etc.) and non-digital technologies (equipment, machinery, supplies, etc.).

Q3. Is there any restriction on creating a platform or an app that are open and free of charge for users?

A3. No, there is no restriction: the platform / digital application can be open and offered free of charge to users or, alternatively, it is possible to charge users, provided that platform / digital application is offered free of charge to Yerevan, Warsaw and Tirana. This is specified in the Guidelines for Applicants, Section 2.1.2 “*Eligible Actions: Actions for which applications may be made*” which stipulates that the digital applications “**can be made available on the basis of an open licence or a fee-based licence. Licensed digital applications will be accepted, provided that their use is offered free of charge to Yerevan, Warsaw and Tirana Municipalities for at least 5 years from the end date of the implementation period as per Sub-grant Contract.**”.

Q4. What kind of project proposal should be approved? And what kind of product can be proposed? A concept type or 'minimal viable product' (MVP) show case?

A4. The project proposal will be checked, evaluated and scored applying the criteria presented in the Guidelines for Applicants, section 2.3 "Evaluation and Selection of Applications". Therefore, the approval of a project proposal depends on its compliance with the requirements as per the Guidelines for Applicants, on the quality of its contents and, subsequently, on the score attributed by the Evaluation Committee.

The proposed project **must contribute to the achievement of the output and result indicators presented in section 1.2 of the Guidelines**, including indicators R1. – 'Number of institutional users of innovations and smart/digital solutions for MWM/HHWM' and R2. – 'Number of end users (inhabitants) of innovations and smart/digital solutions for MWM/HHWM'. **All expected outputs and results must be achieved during project implementation.** This means that **any product(s) developed under the project must be put in use and must be able to reach, and be utilized by the expected number of users before the project ends.** The applicant should therefore self-assess if a 'concept type' or a 'minimal viable product' can be utilized by the expected users before the project conclusion.

Q5. Are bank commissions eligible costs?

A5. As specified in the Guidelines for Applicants, Section 2.1.3 "*Eligible costs: costs that can be included*" a cost is eligible when it is "*necessary to the implementation of the Action*". Besides, the draft Sub-Grant Contract (Annex B.I to the Guidelines) in Article 12.1 (f) stipulates that to be eligible costs must be "*reasonable, justified and comply with the requirements of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency*". In line with these provisions, bank commissions are eligible if they are directly linked and necessary for the project implementation and their amount is reasonable and commensurate to the other project costs.

Q6. Is an NGO that has a previous experience in innovation and research eligible under this call?

A6. In compliance with the Guidelines for Applicants, section 2.1.1 "*Eligibility of Applicants (i.e. Lead Applicant and Co-Applicant)*", an entity is eligible as Lead Applicant or as Co-Applicant if it is:

- a micro, small or medium-sized Enterprise (SME), OR
- a Research Institution, OR
- a Research and Development Institution, OR
- a Higher Education Institution.

An NGO may be eligible if it belongs to any of these categories, for example if it has the status of research institution or the status of an SME.

Q7. According to point 1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME: "the global objective of this call for proposals is: to improve municipal waste and household hazardous waste management systems by devising and promoting innovations, smart solutions and digital (mobile/online) applications for better management of municipal waste (MW) **and/or** household hazardous waste (HHW)."

But According to point „DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT" (in the Application point 2.5 Relevance we see the following instruction: "Explain why and how the Project you propose will contribute 'to improving municipal waste **and** household hazardous waste management systems (...).

So the question is: is the solution included in the project could be for municipal waste but not for household hazardous waste management system?

A7. The proposed project is required to contribute to the global objective of the call for proposals as per Guidelines for Applicants, Section 1.2 "*Objectives of the Programme*" and, therefore, "*to improve municipal waste and household hazardous waste management systems by devising and promoting innovations, smart solutions and digital (mobile/online) applications for better management of municipal waste (MW) **and/or** household hazardous waste (HHW).*" The global objective is then structured in 4 Specific objectives and should be read jointly with them. Notably, the Specific Objective 1, and the related Lot 1, refer to Household Hazardous

Waste (HHW). Specific Objectives 2, 3 and 4 refer to 'MWM/HHWM'. Please note that household hazardous waste is a sub-category of municipal waste and therefore, any project application containing eligible types of solutions improving municipal waste (wider scope) and/or household hazardous waste (narrower scope), and correctly addressing the relevant Specific Objective, will be considered for selection.

Q8. Our organization is interested in applying for this project and we have a question. Is it possible for the Legal Representative (Lead Applicant) to participate in the project online if they are absent from the country? We do not have a Co-applicant. Additionally, should the Legal Representative also serve as the Project Team Leader?

A8. The Legal Representative of the Lead Applicant is involved in project preparation in its capacity of authorized signatory of the Lead Applicant, and is required to sign the Declaration included in the Application Form (Annex A.I to the Guidelines for Applicants), Part 4. In case of award of sub-grant, the Lead representative will be also required to sign the Sub-grant Contract on behalf of the awarded entity. As such he/she formally and legally represents the Lead Applicant but is not necessarily involved in the project implementation, and his/her physical presence is not required.

Differently, the Project Team Leader will play a key role in project implementation acting as the head of the Project Team. As required by the Application Form (Annex A.I to the Guidelines for Applicants), Section 2.6.4, the person proposed as Project Team leader must have *"sufficient technical expertise and capacity (including knowledge of the issues to be addressed) to successfully implement the proposed Action"*. His/her CV must be included in the application and will be scored in the evaluation phase.

In consideration of the above, the Legal Representative can be proposed as Project Team Leader or Team Member only if he/she holds the necessary technical expertise and skills and can commit to the role, and ensure the successful project implementation.

Q9. How many applicants from each country will be winners for this project?

A9. The Guidelines for Applicants, Section 1.3 *"Financial Allocation provided by the Sub-grantor"*, stipulate that *"This call for proposals is structured in 4 Lots. One Sub-Grant contract is intended per each Lot (...). If, due to insufficient quality or number of proposals received, no contract can be signed under one Lot, the Sub-Grantor reserves the right to approve additional project proposals under the other lots. Project proposals under the other lots will be identified considering their evaluation score. Preference may be given to projects under Lot 1."* In line with this, the number of applications that will be approved depends on the number of applications received, on their quality, and on the results of the evaluation. Indicatively, it can be expected that one application per Lot will be approved and contracted, which means that at least one application for Armenia, at least an application for Poland and at least one for Albania should be contracted. More winners can be contracted based on the available budget for sub-grants and the individual values and scores of the best project proposals.