



EUROPEAN INNOVATION COUNCIL AND SMEs
EXECUTIVE AGENCY (EISMEA)

Innovation Ecosystems, SMP/Entrepreneurship and Consumers
SMP/SME Pillar, Internal Market and Support to Standardisation

Brussels

**Call for Proposals: Representation of SMEs, consumers, environmental
interests and social interests in European standardisation**

EISMEA-SMP-STA-FPA-ANNEX III-2025

(SMP Standardisation)

Questions & Answers (Q&A)

Last updated: 25 March 2025

Question received 20 to 25 March 2025

QUESTIONS REGARDING APPLICATION FORM PAGE LIMIT	
Q1a	Can the number of pages be increased to 50, for this call of proposals?
Q1b	Please would it possible to extend the page limit for Part B of the application form from 30 to 40 pages, still excluding annexes? This would help us in providing with a more thorough description of our upcoming activities to represent SMEs' interests in European standardisation.
Q1c	Would it be possible to extend the page limit from 30 to 50 pages to ensure sufficient detail while respecting the required format?
Q1d	We note from the Application Form for the Call that the maximum length of Part B is limited to 30 pages (excluding Annexes). With Times New Roman 12 as the required font, this places a strict limitation on how we can describe our association, its successes and its plans for the next FPA. Would it be possible to extend Part B to 50 pages (as in 2021), and to allow us to delete those parts of the application that are not relevant (also as in 2021) e.g. sections regarding an Action Grant if the subsequent application is to seek an Operating Grant.

A1	<p>Following similar requests submitted by several applicants, the following modifications to the call document and the application form have been made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to the Call document: In section “5. <i>Admissibility and documents</i>”, the page limit indicated in the paragraph below was modified from “30 pages – 5 MB (Part B, excluding annexes)” to “50 pages – 10 MB (Part B, excluding annexes)”, with the final text being as follows: “<i>Proposals are limited to maximum 50 pages – 10 MB (Part B, excluding annexes). Evaluators will not consider any additional pages.</i>” • Changes to the Application form: In the "IMPORTANT NOTICE" box (page 2), the references to the page limit for Part B will be modified from 30 to 50 pages. <p>All other provisions remain unchanged.</p>
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Questions received on 18 and 19 March 2025

QUESTION 1	
Q1	<p>The call “EISMEA-SMP-STA-FPA-Annex III-2025” foresees an application Form.</p> <p>The application form has two parts: “Part A” is the administrative form, “Part B” is for the Technical description.</p> <p>Part B, chapter 4 “Multiannual action plan” contains a table (on page 25) that asks for “a rough estimate of your overall costs and income for the duration of the EU framework partnership”. So, we understand we must not deliver a detailed budget estimate (for 2026 and for 2027).</p> <p>Please confirm that our reading/understanding is correct.</p>
A1	<p>In Part B, chapter 4 “<i>Multiannual action plan</i>” of the application form, you need to fill in the table “<i>OPTION only for Operating Grants FPAs: Multi-annual budget estimate - FOR TOPIC 1, 2, 3 or 4</i>” with approximate (or estimated) figures.</p>
QUESTION 2	
Q2	<p>The “call for proposals” – page 21 – states that “<i>proposals are limited to 30 pages – 5 MB (Part B, excluding annexes)</i>”</p> <p>The application form (Part A and B) contains numerous indicative text and informative boxes. For example, when one applies “Option 1”, the many pages of “Option 2” can be deleted.</p> <p>Can you confirm that – for calculating the maximum number of 30 pages – we can delete the “indicative text” and “option text/boxes” that are not applicable?</p>
A2	<p>In addition to the deletion of the "IMPORTANT NOTICE" box page, you may also delete the sections that you do not intend to use as follows:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are applying for FPA-AG (Action Grants), you may delete the section "OPTION 1 only applicable for FPAs for Operating grants – TOPIC 1, 2, 3 or 4". You may also remove the tables for Operating Grants in section 4 of the application form. • If you are applying for FPA-OG (Operating Grants), you may delete the section "OPTION 2 only applicable for FPAs for Action grants – TOPIC 5, 6, 7, or 8". You may also remove the tables for Action Grants in section 4 of the application form. <p>You do not need to delete anything from Part A because it does not count toward the 30-page limit.</p>
QUESTION 3	
Q3	<p>In the application form – Technical Description (part B) – there is “option 1” and “option 2”. For “option 1”, the box 2.4 “Risk Management” mentions a column “Work Package”. As this call regards a proposal for a conclusion of a FPA (covering 24 months or 2026-2027) and not an Operating Grant, we will leave the column “Work Package” empty.</p> <p>Can you confirm that this is “OK”?</p>
A3	<p>No, although this call concerns a proposal for an FPA (covering 24 months, i.e., 2026–2027) and not is indeed not a call for proposals for Specific Grant agreements for an Operating Grant, it is still necessary to fill out the “Work Package” column of the application form.</p> <p>In EU funding and project management contexts, a “Work Package” is a way of grouping tasks/activities or objectives of the Framework partnership for a larger ‘work plan’ for more effective oversight. If your ‘work plan’ is not already divided into ‘work packages’, you can define them in whatever way best suits your proposal and risk assessment needs. For example, you might group tasks/activities by outcome/deliverable, key milestones, or by the expertise or resources required.</p> <p>Below are some examples of how you might structure and describe “Work Packages”. <u>These are examples but, in your application, you should summarise as possible:</u></p> <p>T.1.1 Organisational Development and Capacity Building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description: Provide a short overview of the main objectives and approach. • Capacity building and development needs: Summarise the current status and gaps. • Activities for strengthening the organisation in the long term: Describe the actions (e.g., training, new processes) and expected outputs. <p>T.1.2 Increasing the Financial Capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description: Outline the aims and methods (e.g., fundraising strategies). • Fundraising situation: Describe the status quo (e.g., current donors or funding mix).

- **Activities to ensure diversification and sustainability:** Detail specific steps and outputs (e.g., new donor outreach, alternative revenue streams).
- **Activities to decrease any dependence on the operating grant in the long run:** Explain how you will reduce reliance. If you must maintain the grant for structural reasons, justify it.

T.2.1 [Activity Name]

- **Description:** Summarise the main goal of this activity.
- **Channels and means (How will it be implemented?):** Specify methods, platforms, or processes.
- **Outputs:** Clearly define the tangible results (e.g., deliverables, guidelines, workshops).

By creating logical groupings in this manner, you can more easily identify potential issues and plan your approach to address them, which forms the basis for a clear, structured risk analysis.

For further reference, please consult the “Work Packages” section for Operating Grants in the [Standard Application Form](#), which is available in the Reference Documents of the Single Market Programme (SMP) in the EU Funding & Tenders Portal (Templates & forms / Application forms). While the details in that form are provided for Operating Grants, they still offer a useful template for structuring your work packages of the work plan for an FPA as well.

Questions received on 17 March 2025

QUESTION 1	
Q1	<p>We seek clarification regarding the risk assessment section in the Application Form (Parts A and B), which refer to work packages. How should organizations applying for operating grants respond to this section, given that operating grants are not structured into work packages? Thank you for your guidance.</p>
A1	<p>While this call concerns a proposal for an FPA (covering 24 months, i.e., 2026 – 2027) and not is indeed not a call for proposals for Specific Grant agreements for an Operating Grant, it is still necessary to fill out the “Work Package” column of the application form.</p> <p>In EU funding and project management contexts, a “Work Package” is a way of grouping tasks/activities or objectives of the Framework partnership for a larger ‘work plan’ for more effective oversight. If your ‘work plan’ is not already divided into ‘work packages’, you can define them in whatever way best suits your proposal and risk assessment needs. For example, you might group tasks/activities by outcome/deliverable, key milestones, or by the expertise or resources required.</p> <p>Below are some examples of how you might structure and describe “Work Packages”. <u>These are examples but, in your application, you should summarise as possible:</u></p> <p>T.1.1 Organisational Development and Capacity Building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description: Provide a short overview of the main objectives and approach. • Capacity building and development needs: Summarise the current status and gaps. • Activities for strengthening the organisation in the long term: Describe the actions (e.g., training, new processes) and expected outputs. <p>T.1.2 Increasing the Financial Capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description: Outline the aims and methods (e.g., fundraising strategies). • Fundraising situation: Describe the status quo (e.g., current donors or funding mix). • Activities to ensure diversification and sustainability: Detail specific steps and outputs (e.g., new donor outreach, alternative revenue streams). • Activities to decrease any dependence on the operating grant in the long run: Explain how you will reduce reliance. If you must maintain the grant for structural reasons, justify it. <p>T.2.1 [Activity Name]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description: Summarise the main goal of this activity. • Channels and means (How will it be implemented?): Specify methods, platforms, or processes. • Outputs: Clearly define the tangible results (e.g., deliverables, guidelines, workshops).

	<p>By creating logical groupings in this manner, you can more easily identify potential issues and plan your approach to address them, which forms the basis for a clear, structured risk analysis.</p> <p>For further reference, please consult the “Work Packages” section for Operating Grants in the Standard Application Form, which is available in the Reference Documents of the Single Market Programme (SMP) in the EU Funding & Tenders Portal (Templates & forms / Application forms). While the details in that form are provided for Operating Grants, they still offer a useful template for structuring your work packages of the work plan for an FPA as well.</p>
QUESTION 2	
Q2	<p>We seek clarification regarding the Operational Capacity section (Part A and B, Section II, 1.1) of the Application Form. This section requests applicants to demonstrate their capacity through descriptive information related to the team and technical capacity.</p> <p>Could you please clarify where we should reflect on these elements?</p>
A2	You should reflect this information in the Part B of the Application Form
QUESTION 3	
Q3	<p>Could you please confirm whether this information should be submitted as an annex to the Application Form?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Details of the core team responsible for managing and implementing the project, including their qualifications and competences</i> → Could you please clarify whether applicants are required to submit CVs of the core team members? ▪ <i>An overview of the applicant's activities over the last 3 years, highlighting relevant experience and achievements;</i> ▪ <i>A list of previous projects and activities relevant to standardisation or the actions to be implemented, including their scope and outcomes;</i> ▪ <i>A summary of strategies, policies, or approaches successfully implemented in the field of standardisation for the selected topic;</i> ▪ <i>A description of the technical capacity available to support participation in the development and revision of European standards that are necessary for Union legislation and policies;</i> ▪ <i>An explanation of the technical equipment, tools, or facilities and patents available to the applicant, where relevant;</i> ▪ <i>Information demonstrating national membership in at least two-thirds of Member States;</i> ▪ <i>An outline of the geographical coverage in terms of membership and the strategy for further development;</i> ▪ <i>A description of the natural or economic resources involved in the project.</i> → Could you please clarify what does natural and economic resources refer to?

<p>A3</p>	<p>The call for proposals requires applicants to demonstrate their operational capacity meaning their know-how, qualifications and resources to successfully implement the proposed activities. Therefore, the corresponding information in the Application Form must not be treated as a simple list of resources, but applicants should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide concise, pertinent information that clearly underpins your proposal. • Highlight key achievements, technical capabilities, and experiences relevant to the standardisation project. • Provide pertinent information (no CVs) showing how your team’s expertise and resources actively contribute to the project’s objectives. Avoid listing every resource; instead, focus on those that directly support your capacity to deliver the proposed work plan.
<p>QUESTION 4</p>	
<p>Q4</p>	<p>Considering that Proposals are limited to maximum 30 pages and we are applying for an Operating Grant without any partners or affiliated entities, could you please confirm we can delete any reference to action grants in the Application form? Could you please confirm we can delete any reference to Applicant N2 and Affiliated entities in the Application form?</p>
<p>A4</p>	<p>In addition to the deletion of the "IMPORTANT NOTICE" box page, you may also delete the sections that you do not intend to use as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are applying for FPA-AG (Action Grants), you may delete the section "OPTION 1 only applicable for FPAs for Operating grants – TOPIC 1, 2, 3 or 4". You may also remove the tables for Operating Grants in section 4 of the application form. • If you are applying for FPA-OG (Operating Grants), you may delete the section "OPTION 2 only applicable for FPAs for Action grants – TOPIC 5, 6, 7, or 8". You may also remove the tables for Action Grants in section 4 of the application form. <p>You do not need to delete anything from Part A because it does not count toward the 30-page limit.</p>

Questions received on 28 February 2025

QUESTION 1a	
Q1a	As there is just 1 indicative budget for environmental interests, could you please let us know which is the ceiling per topic?
A1a	<p>Please note that this is a call for a Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA), whereas your questions refer to the budget of specific grant agreements (SGA) that may be concluded following the signature of an FPA.</p> <p>The FPA itself does not include a financial commitment as this is only the case for the SGA.</p> <p>The indicative budget mentioned in the FPA call document provides applicants only with an estimation of the potential funding allocation per Annex III organisation category.</p> <p>However, as you have observed, there is no predefined maximum amount per topic or maximum reimbursement rate, as these elements will be determined at the stage of the invitation for specific proposals in view to conclude SGAs.</p>
QUESTION 1b	
Q1b	Could we apply for the maximum amount for both 2026 and 2027? E.g. 25% of 5,750,000 euros and 25% of 5,800,000 euro
A1b	<p>Please note that this is a call for an FPA, whereas your questions refer to the budget of SGAs that may be signed following the signature of an FPA.</p> <p>You are inquiring if you could apply for an SGA that cumulates the indicative budget for both 2026 and 2027. As you have observed in the FPA call document, there is no predefined maximum amount per topic.</p> <p>Furthermore, the budgets for 2026 and 2027 are indicative and subject to a Financing Decision of the European Commission, meaning that the specific allocation of funds will only be determined later at the stage of the invitation for specific proposals in view to conclude SGAs, based on the available budget.</p> <p>In any case, only a beneficiary who has signed an FPA can be invited by EISMEA to submit a specific proposal in view to conclude an SGA.</p>
QUESTION 2a	
Q2a	Could we apply for both the Topic 3 (Operating Grant) and the Topic 7 (Action Grant)?
A2a	<p>You can apply for Topic 3 (FPA-OG) and the Topic 7 (FPA-AG).</p> <p>As stated in the FPA call document (section 0. Introduction, p. 7), each project application under the call must address only one of these topics. Applicants wishing to apply for more than one topic must submit a separate proposal under each topic.</p> <p>For example, if an applicant wants to apply for FPA-OG and FPA-AG, then the applicant must apply twice, one application to submit the FPA-OG proposal and another one to submit the FPA-AG proposal.</p>

QUESTION 2b	
Q2b	If so, for each topic could we apply for the maximum amount for both 2026 and 2027? E.g. 25% of 5,750,000 euro and 25% of 5,800,000 euro
A2b	<p>The indicative budget mentioned in the FPA call document only provides an estimation of the potential funding allocation under the SGAs which may be concluded per Annex III organisation category, not per topic.</p> <p>As a result, there is no predefined maximum amount per topic, and any future funding amounts will be determined in the invitation for specific proposals in view to conclude SGAs.</p> <p>When filling in the tables in the application form, applicants should not use the indicative budget per Annex III organisation category as a ceiling (see Application Form, page 25-26):</p> <p>i. "OPTION only for Action Grants FPAs: Multi-annual budget estimate (all years) - FOR TOPIC 5, 6, 7 or 8" (p. 25), applicants are expected to provide a rough estimate of the overall costs of their Action Plan for the entire duration of the FPA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The costs in this table do not refer to the eligible costs proposed in the budget of specific action grant agreement but relate to the estimated costs of the organisation for implementing its Action Plan for the FPA. <p>ii. "OPTION only for Operating Grants FPAs: Multi-annual budget estimate - FOR TOPIC 1, 2, 3 or 4" (p.25-26), applicants are expected to provide a rough estimate of the overall costs and income for the entire duration of the FPA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The costs in this table do not refer to the eligible costs proposed in the budget of specific operating grant agreement but relate to the estimated costs of the organisation for implementing its Work Plan for the FPA.
QUESTION 3	
Q3	As for the Action Grant, could you please let us know which is the ceiling for the indirect costs?
A3	<p>Please note that indirect costs are relevant only for specific action grants and will be determined at the stage of each invitation for a specific action grant proposal.</p> <p>For the SMP Programme indirect costs are fixed at a flat rate of 7% of the eligible direct costs.</p> <p>Applicants can find more information about indirect costs in action grants in the dedicated sections of the EU Grants AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement.</p>
QUESTION 4	
Q4	Could you please confirm us that the maximum reimbursement rate of 95% of the eligible costs is valid for both the Topic 3 (Operating Grant) and the Topic 7 (Action Grant)?

A4	<p>The current reimbursement rates are 95% for operating grants and 85% for action grants.</p> <p>The statement in the FPA call document regarding the 2026-2027 budget indicates that the availability of funding is subject to the final adoption of the respective Financing Decisions by the European Commission.</p> <p>At this stage, it is not yet confirmed if the reimbursement rate for action grants will remain at 85% or increase to 95%.</p> <p>The final rates will be determined by the adopted Financing Decisions for the relevant years and will be announced in the respective invitations for specific action grant proposals.</p>
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Questions received on 26 February 2025

QUESTION 1a	
Q1a	In Part B of the template, it is stated that the section ‘Standard activities (all years)’ should only be completed for proposals for operating grants. Does this mean that this section should not be included in applications for action grants?
A1a	Yes, this Option under section 4. Multi-Annual Action plan concerns only FPAs for OGs. Therefore, applicants for FPA AGs should not fill in this section.
QUESTION 1b	
Q1b	If so, can you confirm that for action grant applications, only the sections on ad-hoc activities and the ‘Multi-annual budget estimate (all years)’ need to be completed under Section 4?
A1b	Yes, the applicants for FPA-AG should fill in “Ad-hoc activities” and the Option “Multi-annual budget estimate (all years)” under Section 4.
QUESTION 2	
Q2	In Parts A and B, are we allowed to delete sections in the template that do not need to be filled out to ensure we remain within the 30-page limit?
A2	In addition to the deletion of the "IMPORTANT NOTICE" box page, you may also delete the sections that you do not intend to use as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are applying for FPA-AG (Action Grants), you may delete the section "OPTION 1 only applicable for FPAs for Operating grants – TOPIC 1, 2, 3 or 4". You may also remove the tables for Operating Grants in section 4 of the application form. • If you are applying for FPA-OG (Operating Grants), you may delete the section "OPTION 2 only applicable for FPAs for Action grants – TOPIC 5, 6, 7, or 8". You may also remove the tables for Action Grants in section 4 of the application form.
QUESTION 3	
Q3	On page 18 of the call, it states: “The availability of the call budget for 2026-2027 for specific (operating or action) grants still depends on the final adoption of the respective Financing Decisions by the Commission. For those specific grants, the EU contribution will be limited to a maximum reimbursement rate of 95% of eligible costs.” Currently, the reimbursement rate is 95% for operating grants and 85% for action grants. Can you confirm whether this will remain the same, or if the rate will be 95% for both operating and action grants?
A3	The current reimbursement rates are 95% for operating grants and 85% for action grants. The statement in the call regarding the 2026-2027 budget indicates that the availability of funding is subject to the final adoption of the respective Financing Decisions by the Commission. At this stage, it is not yet confirmed whether the reimbursement rate for action grants will remain at 85% or increase to 95%. The final rates will be determined by the adopted Financing Decisions for the relevant years.

QUESTION 4	
Q4	<p>The description of Topic 1 states that eligible activities include “activities relating to European and international standardisation,” while the description of Topic 5 does not mention international standardisation.</p> <p>Can you confirm whether participation in international standardisation is also an eligible activity under the action grant described in Topic 5, or is it limited to European standardisation? If limited to European standardisation, this appears to contradict the broader objective of supporting the EU’s “global leadership in digital, green, and resilient transitions.”</p>
A4	<p>In line with Article 16 of Regulation (EU) 1025/2012, operating grants support the functioning of recognised organisations, including activities related to both European and international standardisation as an integral part of their role. This includes organisational activities necessary to support standardisation at both levels.</p> <p>Conversely, action grants are project-based and focus on specific activities contributing to European standardisation. While the primary emphasis is on European standards and European standardisation deliverables, international standardisation may also be covered where it is necessary for achieving the objectives of a specific action.</p> <p>Under action grants, eligible activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision of legal and technical expertise, including studies, to support the assessment of the need for and development of European standards and standardisation deliverables; • Participation in the technical work for developing and revising European standards and standardisation deliverables necessary for the implementation of EU legislation and policies; • The promotion and dissemination of European standards and standardisation deliverables among relevant stakeholders. <p>While the direct reference in Topic 5 is to European standardisation, participation in international standardisation is eligible when it is necessary within a specific action, for example, to ensure alignment between European and international standards or to promote EU priorities at the global level. Unlike operating grants, where international standardisation is a built-in dimension, in action grants it is considered only where justified by the scope and objectives of the funded action.</p> <p>Furthermore, the eligibility criteria should be interpreted in line with the overall ‘Background’ of the call and ‘objectives’ as stated under each topic of the call document, which include supporting the EU’s global leadership in digital, green, and resilient transitions. Therefore, if international standardisation activities contribute to these objectives and are aligned with the broader framework of the action grants, they would be considered eligible.</p>
QUESTION 5	
Q5	<p>Can you confirm our understanding that the first call for a specific grant agreement for 2026, for organisations signing an FPA, will be published in July 2025?</p>

A5	<p>The indicative planning foresees the publication of the first call for a specific grant agreement for 2026, for organisations which have signed a Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA), in July 2025. This remains our intention, and all efforts will be made to adhere to this timeline.</p> <p>However, should any adjustments to the timeline become necessary, we will keep informed those entities which have signed an FPA.</p>
QUESTION 6	
Q6	<p>The call requires “documents demonstrating the link of affiliated entities to your organisation.”</p> <p>If affiliated entities are members of the main beneficiary, what documentation would be considered sufficient? Would a publicly available list of members on the organisation’s website be acceptable, or is it necessary to provide an invoice addressed to the affiliated entity for the annual membership fee and/or proof of payment of this fee?</p>
A6	<p>To demonstrate the link between affiliated entities and the applicant of an FPA AG, applicants must provide official and verifiable documentation confirming this relationship.</p> <p>A publicly available list of members on the organisation’s website may serve as supporting evidence, but it is not sufficient on its own unless it is an official document issued by the organisation and clearly identifies the affiliated entities.</p> <p>To ensure compliance with the call requirements, at least one of the following documents must be provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A formal declaration from the applicant confirming the affiliated entity’s membership and its rights/obligations within the applicant organisation. • An official membership certificate or equivalent document issued by the applicant. • An invoice addressed to the affiliated entity for the annual membership fee and/or proof of payment of this fee, which serves as strong supporting evidence of an active affiliation. <p>Applicants should ensure that the provided documentation is clear, up to date, and sufficiently substantiates the affiliation (in particular a capital or legal link).</p>
QUESTION 7	
Q7	<p>The call is unclear about whether financial support to third parties is allowed. Page 23 states that such support is not permitted, yet the table in Section 4 of Part B for action grants, titled “Multi-annual budget estimate (all years),” includes a column for financial support to third parties.</p> <p>Can you confirm whether financial support to third parties is allowed for action grants?</p>
A7	<p>The reference to financial support to third parties in the multi-annual budget estimate table (Section 4 of Part B) is a standard template element used across different EU funding programmes. However, in the context of this call for a Framework partnership agreement, the restriction stated on page 23 takes precedence, explicitly prohibiting financial support to third parties.</p>

<p>This restriction means that action grant beneficiaries cannot allocate part of their funding to third parties through direct financial support mechanisms such as cascading grants. Instead, costs must be incurred directly by beneficiaries or their affiliated entities, or through other eligible arrangements such as subcontracting.</p>
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