

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Reference : AP-Init-2021-01

“Strengthening Health Systems at All Levels
(community to national) (HSS)”

Reference : AP-Init-2021-02

“Access to Quality Health Services for Vulnerable
Populations (VP)”

THESE CALLS WILL CLOSE 25/01/2021 AT 12:00 NOON (UTC+1)

Requests for a link to access the Cloud may be made

between December 14th 2020 and January 18th 2021



CALLS FOR PROPOSALS AP-Init-2021-01 / AP-Init-2021-02

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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GENERAL QUESTIONS

APPLICATION PROCESS

What kind of documents are we supposed to send?

Applications must include all of the documents requested in the Call for Proposals Guidelines. Incomplete applications will be rejected, and missing documents will not be requested from applicants.

Proposals must be drafted in French or in English and include the following documents:

1. The **letter of intent** (according to the template provided).
2. A **simplified budget** in euros (according to the template provided).
3. The **administrative application form** (according to the template provided).
4. A **copy of the bylaws** of the lead applicant organization.
5. The **most recent validated annual financial statements**, for N-2 or N-1.
6. The lead applicant organization's **estimated budget** for N.
7. The most recent **Annual Report**.
8. The most recent validated **audit statement**.
9. **Letters of commitment** from each of the partner organizations contributing to project implementation, where applicable.

To whom are we supposed to send our project?

Please follow the guidelines in the application process of the Call for Proposals: full applications must be uploaded to the Expertise France Cloud by **12 noon the 25th of January 2021 (Paris time - UTC + 1)** (date and time of upload as proof).

Lead applicants must request beforehand a link for Cloud access by sending an email with the heading "request for link + call for proposals reference + chosen theme (VP or HSS)" to the following address: i5pc-ap@expertisefrance.fr. Applicant organizations must request a link to access the Cloud between the 14th of December 2020 and the 18th of January 2021.

An email containing the link and access login details will be shared as soon as possible. This link will enable applicants to access individual Cloud spaces to which only they and the L'Initiative administrators will have access and to upload their applications.

Only one access link will be created and sent to the applicant per project, and it will only be sent upon request. Please note that applications sent by email or by post will not be considered.

Can we submit an expertise channel application in order to draft the project?

The expertise channel aims to provide technical assistance to facilitate access to Global Fund grants or to support the implementation of the grants. It is not supposed to support the drafting of projects to be submitted to the L'Initiative project channel. Therefore, this request would be rejected.

Can one request for a link be done for two calls for proposals?

The request for a link for the Cloud must specify the reference of the call for proposals (VP or HSS); therefore, two emails must be sent if an applicant decides to submit an application to each call for proposals.

If the applicant organization wishes to submit two projects for a same call for proposals then it will also have to do two separate requests for links.

Can a project already submitted but not selected in the framework of a previous call for proposals be sent again?

It is possible to redo a project previously submitted by including the feedback received for the previous submission and the Call for Proposals Guideline novelties.

Can the same organization submit two project proposals for each call for proposals (AP-Init-2021-01 and AP-Init-2021-02)?

You can submit up to **three** letters of intent per year across all of the calls for proposals published, which includes the operational research call for proposals.

However, as the lead applicant, you can only submit a maximum of **two** letters of intent per call for proposals.

APPLICANT'S ELIGIBILITY

LEAD APPLICANT

What kind of organizations are eligible as lead applicant?

In order to apply for L'Initiative grants the lead applicant must:

- be a legal entity with a head office in an eligible country, or France (e.g. to have bylaws registered in an eligible country, or France).

And

- Projects must be implemented in partnership. Partners must be involved in project design and be responsible for implementing activities.

And

- Implementation partners must benefit from budget delegation.
- For multi-country projects, include at least one local partner from each implementing country. A local partner is mandatory for the structures that implement activities in a country which is different from their home country. However, organizations that have their headquarters in an eligible country will not have the obligation to have partners in their home country.

And

- Organizations must not have any statutory provisions that preclude Expertise France or any external auditor appointed by Expertise France from carrying out audits and inspections and having the relevant rights to access project sites and premises where the project will be carried out, including all documents and electronic data concerning the technical and financial management of the project

Can international stakeholders with an establishment agreement in an eligible country submit a project as lead applicant?

According to the Call for Proposals Guidelines, the lead applicant must "be a legal entity with a head office in an eligible country, or France (e.g. to have bylaws registered in an eligible country, or France)". An international NGO (with a head office not located in an eligible country) with an establishment agreement (or a representation /or an office) in an eligible country and with only an authorization to work in this country is not eligible as lead applicant as its bylaws are not registered in an eligible country.

Our organization is based in an ineligible country and registered as international NGO.

**** is our organization eligible to apply for either a project in an eligible country or a project with a regional focus (so a multi country approach).***

**** Does your definition of International organizations include International NGO, or does it just apply to UN linked organizations?***

* Your organization may not be lead applicant nor receiving funding from L'Initiative but may participate as a technical support provider; only legal entities with a head office in an eligible country, or France, are eligible to apply.

*The term "International Organization" refers here to public-sector legal entities created by international treaties between States or between international organizations (e.g. United Nations agencies). An International NGO does not fall into the category "International organization" and may be a lead applicant. However, the International NGO must meet the admissibility criteria as specified in the Call for Proposals Guidelines.

Is it possible for governments (i.e., Ministries of Health from eligible countries) to apply as the primary applicant?

Ministries of Health from eligible countries can indeed submit applications as a lead applicant.

The Call for Proposals Guidelines state that: “For this call for proposals, each organization can submit a maximum of two letters of intent as lead applicant. Furthermore, each organization can only submit a maximum of three letters of intent total for all L’Initiative calls for proposals in a given year”. Could you please clarify if the organization’s HQ office (based in France), and the organization’s Myanmar office, which is legally registered in Myanmar (but not as an independent local entity) can be considered as 2 different organizations or if both offices are counted as “one organization”?

According to the Call for Proposals Guidelines, the lead applicant must “be a legal entity with a head office in an eligible country, or France (e.g. to have bylaws registered in an eligible country, or France)”. An organization with an establishment agreement (or a representation /or an office) in an eligible country and with only an authorization to work in this country is not eligible as lead applicant nor as a local partner as its bylaws are not registered in an eligible country as an independent local entity. From our understanding, you could be considered as one organization.

As a lead applicant, you can submit a maximum of 2 projects per call and a maximum of 3 projects in total. If you do not apply as a lead applicant, you are not limited to the number of projects you participate in. Nevertheless, you should remain attentive to your management capacities.

I work for a small, community-based organization based and registered in the USA and in Mali. I read the eligibility requirements in the guidelines, but cannot tell if we are eligible since we are registered in two countries. Our national director lives and works in Mali running all of our programs, but I help manage grants and fundraise from the USA. All of our activities take place in Mali.

We take into consideration the country where the bylaws of the organization are registered. If the bylaws are registered only in Mali or in Mali and in the USA, you will be eligible to the call for proposals but if the bylaws are only registered in the USA, you will not be eligible. Please note that you can be registered in Mali as a subsidiary/representation of the US organization (and not as a legal separate entity). In this case, you will not be eligible.

PARTNERSHIPS

Can United Nations organizations submit an application?

International Organizations may participate as technical support providers but may not be lead applicants nor receiving funding from L’Initiative. This does not apply to regional organizations.

The term “International Organization” refers here to public-sector legal entities created by international treaties between States or between international organizations (e.g. United Nations agencies).

Is an institutional partner (ministry, public institution) required in order to submit a project?

To apply with an institutional partner is not a requirement; all the partners can be non-governmental institutions. Institutions can also be partners or lead applicants.

Can the local partner be a European NGO (non-French) with a longstanding presence in the country?

A European NGO can be a partner in the project but will not be considered as a local partner.

Do we have to include at least a partner from each beneficiary country?

Each application must include a partner from each of the implementation countries. However, for multi-country projects, lead applicants that have their headquarters in an eligible country will not have the obligation to have partners in their home country.

Can an NGO not based in an ineligible country which joins a consortium led by an eligible organization be able to receive funding from L'Initiative for activities benefitting to eligible countries?

A project can be submitted as long as the leader of the consortium (lead applicant) is an organization based in an eligible country and the activities are carried out in eligible countries.

An NGO that is part of the consortium would then receive funding from the lead applicant, but not directly from L'Initiative.

Can the number of partners involved in the project implementation change between the letter of intent application and the complete project one (if the letter of intent is selected at the end of the stage 1)?

In case of a change of partner or evolution of the number of partners between the 2 stages, this aspect must be specifically justified by the applicant; this will be particularly looked at by the evaluators and will be addressed to the selection committee.

What is a « letter of commitment »; is there a template for this letter? Who do these letters need to be addressed to?

It is required to include in your application a commitment letter for each partner involved in the implementation of the project. We do not have a template for this letter which must lay out the extent of the partnership for each partner. The format of the letter is up to you: For instance, these letters can be written by each partner addressed to the lead applicant to inform them of their commitment to partake in the implementation of the project if funding is granted.

There is a note that for this call for proposals “each organization can only submit a maximum of two letters of intent as lead applicant (lead agency)”. Is there a cap on how many letters of Intent sub recipients/partners can be part of? Are there any other restrictions on the partners themselves?

As a lead applicant, you can submit a maximum of 2 projects per call and a maximum of 3 projects in total. If you do not apply as a lead applicant, you are not limited to the number of projects you participate in. Nevertheless, you should remain attentive to your management capacities. All the restrictions applicable are detailed in the guidelines.

ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES

Does the submitted project need to cover a whole country or can it focus on a part of a country?

The submitted project can cover the whole country or only a part of it. The applicant must design the project according to the needs identified.

Are eligible countries to L'Initiative always the same?

The list of eligible countries is specified for each call for proposals. You will need to verify in the call for proposals guidelines which you would like to apply for to see if the countries you would like to implement the project in are eligible.

In L'Initiative's email communications on the publication of the 2021 call for proposals to the MENA region, Mauritania is not indicated as a country of the zone, yet it is present in the list of eligible countries in the various response frameworks. Our organization is conducting a project in the MENA region that includes Mauritania. Can you confirm that it is not a problem to include it in our application targeting the MENA region, in a continuity approach with the current program?

The list of eligible countries for this call for proposals is indeed defined in Article 4.4 of the Call for Proposals Guidelines, which takes precedence over other communications concerning this call. Mauritania is therefore eligible, and you can include it in your application targeting the MENA region.

We noted the absence of Egypt in the countries eligible for the 2021 call for proposals. However, the program we are currently conducting includes Egypt as a target country. In a process of sustainability, we would like to know if Egypt could be included in a case of a renewal of a regional project?

In accordance with article 4.4 of the Call for Projects Guidelines, the projects presented may be carried out for the benefit of beneficiaries exclusively in one or more of the countries listed as eligible. As Egypt is not included in this list, it cannot be included in your letter of intent.

COMPLEMENTARITY WITH THE GLOBAL FUND

It is mentioned in both Call for Proposals Guidelines that The Initiative project activities have to complement Global Fund activities. Does this mean that only local NGOs who are currently Global Fund recipients can apply or can those who are not receiving GF funds also apply?

To be eligible, proposals submitted must describe in detail the link with Global Fund grants in terms of implementation, coordination, synergies and value-added.

Being a recipient of Global Fund grants is not an admissibility criterion.

On The Initiative's website, our country is listed as eligible but we would like to know if this is only for TB or also for other pandemics such as HIV, since the Global Fund has no funding for HIV in our country.

With the exception of Call for Proposals No. 3 (operational research), which is exclusively dedicated to tuberculosis, the two other calls are intended to supplement Global Fund financing with HSS actions (Call No. 1) or actions aimed at vulnerable populations (Call No. 2). Applicants must submit projects that complement the Global Fund's current funding in the country. To be eligible, the proposals sent must describe precisely the link with Global Fund grants in terms of implementation, coordination, synergies and added value.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

MANAGEMENT CAPACITIES

What kind of audit statement can be submitted: audit statement related to the organization or related to specific projects?

The requested audit statement is related to the organization and performed by an independent auditor. If an audit statement of the organization is unavailable, a project audit can be provided. In this case, it is desirable to choose a project that is of a similar size to the one submitted to L'Initiative.

« The average annual cost of a project must not exceed 70% of the annual budget of the lead applicant organization»: Why?

The average annual cost of a project must not exceed 70% of the annual budget of the lead applicant organization; if it is the case the project will be considered as non-eligible.

This criterion was set by the Steering Committee to ensure that applicants have adequate management and absorptive capacities.

For example, for an organization with an annual budget of 1 million Euros, the total amount for the project should not exceed 700,000 Euros on average per year, i.e. a total of 1.4 million Euros over 24 months or 2.1 million Euros over 36 months.

How do you calculate the annual budget of the lead applicant?

The annual budget of the lead applicant organization is taken from the last financial report provided. In case of major differences between income and expenditure, the amount of expenditure will be considered. This information must also be completed in the administrative form (Annex 4).

What does « most recent validated annual financial statements» mean?

The « most recent validated annual financial statements» is the most recent annual financial statement validated by an auditor or the board of the organization (if there is no auditor).

The requested documents include an annual report and an audit statement. We are a limited liability company and do not have these documents, what can we do?

The annual report is a report describing the activities implemented by the organization for the past year; if you do not pose an annual report, all documents providing information on the activities implemented by the organization for the past year can be assessed.

The most recent audit statement is the most recent annual financial statement validated by an auditor or the board of the organization. If an audit statement of the organization is unavailable, a project audit can be provided. In this case, it is desirable to choose a project that is of a similar size to the one submitted.

It is the applicant's responsibility to provide any necessary and available documents to present its experience and management capacity.

AMOUNT REQUESTED

How much can we request to L'Initiative?

The total amount of the grant funded by L'Initiative must cover 50% to 100% of the total project budget and will range **between €500,000 and €3,000,000**. A project not respecting this criterion will be excluded.

CO-FINANCING

Co-Financing: The Call for Proposals Guidelines states that applicants with an annual budget higher than €5 million must obligatorily include a co-financing in the budget.

****Could you please let me know what will be accepted as "co-financing"- and if there are specific instructions/requirements for this element.***

****Do the non-lead applicants in a consortium need to show co-funding capacity as part of their contribution?***

* There is no other specific instructions about co-financing. However, the Call for Proposals Guidelines stipulates that co-financing can be "from internal or external (other donors) funds".

* Partner organizations don't have to show co-funding capacity.

About the fact that applicants with an annual budget higher than €5 million must obligatorily include a co-financing in their budget:

It is specified that the annual budget will be established using the most recent validated annual financial statements (i.e. for N-1 or N-2) submitted. Is it the one submitted with the letter of intent (stage 1) or with the complete project (stage 2) which you will base your assessment on? We will send the N-2 validated financial statement (as the N-1 won't yet be available) in January (with the letter of intent) and the N-1 in June with the complete project; we might be in a situation with a budget lower than €5 million in N-2 and higher than €5 million in N-1.

This criterion will be assessed during the stage 1 (letter of intent) and again during the stage 2 (complete project). If you expect a noticeable evolution of the overall amount of your budget, it should be considered in the submission (and then, include a co-financing). We advise you to anticipate this aspect if you think that you will be in the obligation to include a co-financing.

Does the co-financing requirement for applicants with annual budget above 5 million euro relate to organization's own resources or can it include other donor funds, e.g. Global Fund, PEPFAR, and state budget?

The budget of the lead applicant includes all resources of the organisation : the organisations own resources as well as funding received from other funders.

Our confusion is about the amount to request that covers at least 50%. Does it mean that, if you request 400,000, you need to plan for a project budget of 800,000? Or simply we can request between 400,000 to 800,000 from L'Initiative?

Again, what do you mean that an organization with a budget of more than 5million, needs 10% co-funding? What about those with an annual budget of less than 5 million, how much do they need to contribute to the proposed budget?

The project budget must remain between €500,000 and €3,000,000 with at least 50% covered by L'Initiative's grant. If **the total budget of your project** is €800,000 you can request between 400,000 and 800,000 from L'Initiative.

If the annual budget of your organization is over €5,000,000 you will need to find other donors than L'Initiative (or co-finance the project with your own funds) to cover at least 10% of the project budget. If the annual budget of your organization is less than €5,000,000, it is not mandatory to find other donors than L'Initiative (but it is strongly encouraged).

COST ELIGIBILITY

As the salaries paid to civil servant are not eligible, are the daily allowance (per diem) given to participate to the activities eligible for these stakeholders?

Per diem to participate in project activities are eligible **only in case of when travel outside the place of residence is necessary**. In this case, the per diem allowance must not exceed the rate set by the French Ministry of the Economy and Finance except in the case of national staff and participants, for whom daily per diem are set in agreement with Expertise France. The rates applied by the French Ministry of the Economy and Finance can be found on the Internet via the following link: http://www.economie.gouv.fr/dgfip/mission_taux_chancellerie/frais.

It is common in many countries that a fee is requested by trainers from the Ministry of Health to deliver an intervention in a training not planned by the Ministry itself but organized by NGOs. Is the payment of fees (in addition to the daily allowance) for trainers from the Ministry of Health considered as eligible?

For civil servant trainers, only a daily allowance (per diem) to participate in activities is eligible in case of when travel outside the place of residence is necessary. In this case, the per diem allowance must not exceed the rate set by the French Ministry of the Economy and Finance except in the case of national staff and participants, for whom daily per diem are set in agreement with Expertise France. The rates applied by the French Ministry of the Economy and Finance can be found on the Internet via the following link : http://www.economie.gouv.fr/dgfip/mission_taux_chancellerie/frais.

Is there a limit to the level of Human resources and coordination costs in the budget submitted to L'Initiative?

There is no limit set concerning the Human resources and coordination costs; the percentage of budget costs dedicated to Human resources and coordination will be assessed project by project.

Can all the costs for partners be presented in the activities heading or must they be split under the different headings?

The costs for partners must be split under the different headings of the budget (HR and coordination, activities etc.).

Can salaries paid to public servant (ministry, hospital, university, etc.) be part of the co-financing?

The salaries paid to public servant and being part of the project can be considered as co-financing regarding the proportion of their involvement in the project, as these are not considered as eligible cost for L'Initiative.

As written in the Call for Proposals Guidelines, as non-eligible costs:

o “Expenses directly linked to costs covered by the Global Fund (prevention, diagnostic and patient care activities, including health products). However, this expenditure could be considered eligible within the framework of pilot or innovative activities aimed at scale-up or within the context of operational research.”

What do you mean by innovative activities? Could we have examples?

The innovative aspect of the activities presented will be assessed by the evaluator when evaluating the letters of intent. It is not possible to provide examples of innovative activities as this aspect will be assessed according to the country context.

Could you explain what you put behind "structure costs"? And clarify what is eligible as a necessary expenditure for the project?

The wording varies significantly but this does not change the list of eligible costs. In accordance with the call for proposals guidelines, the following direct costs are among others eligible:

- The cost of project staff (...);
- The cost of purchasing or leasing equipment and supplies (new or used) (...);
- Costs of consumable goods;
- Direct costs required for the successful completion of the project (...);

Structural costs are considered to be the fixed costs and charges borne by the structure regardless the activities and projects implemented. The examples you mention are considered eligible direct costs as long as they are related to the specific needs of the project. The costs related to the activities implemented by the partners must be broken down into the different cost categories of the budget (HR and coordination, activities, etc.).