

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Call for small projects of the RISTANC project

Translation disclaimer

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**Can a natural person apply to the Call and can their work be an eligible project cost?
How are labour costs and the payment of financial support treated?**

Yes. Natural persons of legal age with permanent residence in an EU Member State may apply to the Call, as defined in point 2 of the Guidelines for applicants and section A.2 of the application form.

The work of a natural person as applicant is an eligible project cost (point 6 of the Guidelines for applicants). In the financial plan, this is stated under item A.3 SME owners and natural persons as applicants, together with the estimated scope of work (e.g. number of hours or months) and the cost per unit. The labour cost must be stated as a total cost, including all taxes and contributions (total gross or gross 2). The tax treatment of payments to a natural person is settled in accordance with the applicable Slovenian tax legislation. The maximum amount of financial support per project is EUR 12,000, whereby all associated taxes and contributions are included in this amount.

Funding is based on the principle of lump sum financing (point 5.1 of the Guidelines for applicants). The funds are paid out in three instalments:

- 20% upon signature of the agreement,
- 30% following the approval of interim results or milestones,
- 50% following the approval of final results,

as specified in point 8.2 of the Guidelines for applicants.

Disbursement is based on the activities carried out and results achieved; therefore, the applicant does not prove actual costs by submitting accounting documents (point 9 of the Guidelines for applicants).

**Is it possible to include other colleagues, partners or external experts in the project?
Which forms of cooperation are envisaged and does the RISTANC consortium provide professional support in the implementation of projects?**

Yes. It is possible to include other colleagues, partners and external experts in the project. The financial plan in the application form envisages several forms of cooperation:

- Partners involved in the project implementation and listed in section C.7 of the application form. The applicant remains the project lead and is responsible for its implementation, including financial responsibility. An individual partner may participate in only one application under this Call (point 2 of the Guidelines for applicants).
- Natural persons under direct contract, for example sole traders or persons engaged on the basis of a copyright or work contract (item A.2 of the financial plan).
- Subcontractors performing external services, for example diving or engineering services or professional environmental impact assessments (item B.1 of the financial plan).

When procuring goods and services, the principles of transparency, equal treatment of bidders and ensuring competition must be observed, as set out in point 11 of the Guidelines for applicants.

The RISTANC consortium does not provide experts for the implementation of small projects. The inclusion of experts with relevant skills and experience is therefore welcome. The competencies and experience of the applicant and partners will be taken into account during the evaluation under criterion 6 (Evaluation criteria).

How is intellectual property on results created within the project regulated under the call, and which information about the project or its results is publicly disclosed?

All economic copyright and other intellectual property rights in the work created within the project shall remain with the applicant or the author, as stated in point 12 of the Guidelines for applicants. Point 12 also allows the contracting parties to agree otherwise by means of a subsequent written agreement. The provisions of point 12 refer to the work created by the applicant within this contract; the Call does not regulate rights to solutions developed prior to the project.

A description of the selected project, the date of the award of funds, the project duration and the name and country of the recipient shall be published (see points 8.1 and 14 of the Guidelines for applicants). Furthermore, communication and visibility obligations apply, including a potential field visit by the communication team involving photography and

filming (points 10 and 10.1 of the Guidelines for applicants). The principle of open science applies to announcements, publications and data: announcements and publications must be open access, while data is shared according to the principle of 'as open as possible, as closed as necessary' (Chapter 1 of the ethical aspects document).

Can an association with its registered office in Ljubljana apply for the call, even if the project content relates to the conservation of the Slovenian sea, and the activities would be carried out primarily in the hinterland and partly in the Slovenian sea area? Are awareness-raising, educational and community projects also eligible under the call?

The association's registered office being in Ljubljana is not an obstacle, as legal entities must have their registered office in an EU Member State (point 2 of the Guidelines for applicants).

Awareness-raising, educational and community activities are among the eligible activities of the Call (point 3 of the Guidelines for applicants). Activities may also be carried out in the hinterland, but in accordance with point 2 of the Guidelines for applicants, they must contribute to addressing challenges in the Slovenian sea area, including the coast.

Applicants must therefore clearly define and justify in their application how their project contributes to one or more of the challenges defined in point 1 of the Guidelines for applicants (Key challenges).

Is an application eligible if an individual involved in the preparation or project implementation is professionally linked to a partner of the RISTANC consortium?

A professional link between an individual involved in the preparation or project implementation and a partner of the RISTANC consortium does not in itself mean that the applicant is ineligible to apply.

In accordance with point 2 of the Guidelines for applicants, applicants who are personally, professionally, economically or otherwise linked to the RISTANC consortium partners must disclose such links in Section B of the application form (Disclosure of conflict of interest and compliance with ethical aspects).

Disclosing a connection does not in itself mean that the application will be excluded. The Commission takes this into account when preventing conflicts of interest, including by ensuring that Commission members who are linked to the applicant or the disclosed connection do not participate in the evaluation of that application.

When describing the disclosure of a conflict of interest, please be as specific as possible: state the type of cooperation (e.g. lectures, leading workshops, or other contractual cooperation), the period of cooperation, and a statement as to whether you are participating in the project implementation of the RISTANC project with the consortium partner. If you are participating in the RISTANC project, please state this clearly.

Can the same organisation participate in multiple applications, for example as a partner?

An application may be submitted in partnership. In the case of a partnership application, the applicant or project lead remains responsible for the project implementation, including financial responsibility. In this regard, the restriction in point 2 of the Guidelines for applicants must be observed: each applicant may participate in only one application within this call, either as an applicant or as a partner. In the event that the same entity submits or participates in multiple applications, only the first application submitted will be considered, and the remaining applications will not be processed.

Is it possible to include the labour costs of an employee of a public institution (e.g. a teacher) who is directly involved in the implementation of project activities in the

project budget? How is such work accounted for and what should be considered to prevent double financing?

Yes. Labour costs for persons directly involved in the implementation of project activities are eligible. In the financial plan of the application form, these are stated under item A.1 Employees (or equivalent staff), together with the estimated scope of work (e.g. number of hours or months) and the cost per unit.

Funding is based on the principle of lump sum financing. Funds are paid to the applicant based on the activities carried out and results achieved, not on the basis of proving actual costs. The applicant will therefore not submit payslips or accounting documents as evidence of actual costs, but rather substantive reports and other evidence of activity implementation.

The Call does not specify the method by which a public institution pays an employee for any additional work. The institution must arrange this in accordance with the applicable national legislation and rules governing work and salaries in the public sector. It is recommended that the applicant coordinates the payment method with the institution's management and accounting department in advance.

When planning the budget, the prohibition of double financing must also be taken into account. Work that is already funded by a regular salary or other public funds cannot be simultaneously funded by the project. Therefore, only the scope of work that represents additional project work and is not already covered by other public funds may be included in the budget.

If an employee's work is fully covered by their regular salary from public funds, the estimated scope of their participation in the project may be stated in the application, but the cost of this work is not claimed for funding. In this case, other eligible costs necessary for the implementation of project activities may be included in the financial plan, such as consumables, equipment, costs of workshops, communication activities or external contractors.

It should also be noted that indirect costs are charged at a rate of 25% of the sum of direct personnel costs (A) and direct purchase costs (C). If you do not claim labour costs, item A is zero; therefore, indirect costs are charged only on item C.

Activities for which support is claimed must therefore not be simultaneously funded by other European, national or local public sources.

Are non-governmental organisations from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) eligible to participate in the RISTANC call? Can a locally registered non-governmental organisation with its registered office in the DRC apply as a lead applicant or as a partner?

The eligibility of organisations is defined in point 2 of the Guidelines for applicants.

- Lead applicants: a legal entity applying as an applicant must have its registered office or business address in a Member State of the European Union, in one of the overseas countries or territories (OCTs) or in a country associated with the Horizon Europe programme. A non-governmental organisation that is registered and has its registered office in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is therefore not eligible to apply as a lead applicant.
- Partners: applications may be submitted in partnership. In this case, the applicant remains the project lead and is responsible for its implementation, including the financial implementation of the project. An individual organisation may participate in only one application within this call, either as an applicant or as a partner.
- Geographical area of implementation: regardless of the forms of cooperation, the planned activities must be carried out in the Slovenian sea, including the coast, or must contribute to addressing challenges in this area.

When assessing eligibility, it is therefore necessary to consider the conditions regarding the registered office of the organisation, as well as the rules regarding partnership and the geographical area of implementation of activities, as defined in the Guidelines for applicants.

