Engaged Citizen Reporting (ECR) Grant Scheme

Frequently Asked Questions

15/7/2020

Q1: Do we need to have special IT structure/service before the ECR tool is installed?
A1: Aside of functioning web site there is no need for specific IT support. Project team will support grantees in this regard, when and if needed, through activities to be implemented by the project partner BIRN.
Q2: What is the language of the ECR Tool? In what language will the questionnaires (ECR tool) be prepared/published? This is very important for minority communities. Can the content be drafted in local language or it will be in English only?
A2: The tool will be available in the following languages: Albanian, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian/Montenegrin, Macedonian. This means that if a media outlet publishes content in Albanian or Serbian or any other of local languages, it will have access to the tool in Albanian or Serbian or any other of local languages (all the infrastructure will be in local languages, not English). If for instance one outlet from Bosnia and Herzegovina wants to publish surveys in BCSM and Roma language, they will have access to the ECR tool in BCSM (infrastructure is in BCSM), but they will be able to add and publish surveys in Roma language.
Q3: Is it possible to integrate (technically) the current channels of communication that the media outlets have (viber, social media, WhatsApp, etc) with the ECR tool?
A3: If the question is whether the ongoing communication on different channels can be integrated into the ECR tool (for instance, if someone suggests topic through Viber, can this "go" to the ECR, as if this was suggested through ECR form), the answer is no. That was not envisioned, as the original idea was to try to use this platform as a secure method for communication (unlike for example Viber or Facebook messenger). Even if you design it so that these messages feed the ECR form too, they are originally sent through unsecure means of communication. Also, it would be more effective for the media if they tried to promote this tool as the most desirable mean of communication, so that they do not have to waste their resources for communication on many different channels, which is time consuming. The promotion and adoption of the ECR tool as preferable mean of communication will of course take time, too. However, as we all learn by doing, we did dedicate some funds for the maintenance and further development of the tool, so we may take this question into consideration at a later stage and explore possibilities to include and promote ECR tool via existing channels of communication.

Q4: Is there any existing concrete model where we can see how this tool is working in the real life? Is there any forum chat within the ECR tool for community engagement?

A4: The concept of engaged citizens reporting is quite new, but there are several platforms world-wide that served as model for designing the tool, including Correctiv and its Crowdnewsroom, The Bureau Local and ProPublica (see example of the form here). There won't be a forum chat for the citizens within the ECR tool. The tool will not be public, it will be used only by the media to produce surveys, polls, task, etc. which will then be embedded on their own websites, where the end users will have the opportunity to engage by filling in those forms. So, citizens are not expected to engage among themselves, similar to engagement in comment section or forums.

Potential engagement and knowledge sharing among the media outlets can, however, be facilitated by the project and the partner organisations in this project, such as BIRN. For instance, if several media want to cover the same topic and want to develop and share the same survey and eventually produce not only local, but wider story (e.g. national, or regional) BIRN can coordinate such efforts, too.

Q5: Is there any mobile app for the ECR tool?

A5: There won't be a mobile app for the media outlets, but the content produced through the ECR tool (surveys, polls, tasks, etc.), which is embedded on the websites of media outlets will be responsive – forms can be read and filled in on any device (computer, mobile phone, tablet). And for example, if the media outlet has its own mobile app, ECR forms must work on that app too. We believe that the vast majority of media would use the desktop version of the ECR tool, so developing an app would not be cost effective. Using the ECR platform as an app would be an equivalent to using a CMS (background of your website) as an app to add articles on your phone, which is almost impossible.

Q6: Who is going to be responsible for the maintenance of the ECR tool when the grants end? What will be done to support us to continue to use the ECR tool after the end of grant?

A6: BIRN is responsible for the maintenance and the project will cover the cost of maintenance of the Tool even after the grant life, so that the sustainability of our intervention is preserved. ECR tool is treated as any equipment on the project. It will be defined in the grant agreement who is the owner and how it can be transferred to the grantee.

The project will cover costs related to hosting, so grantees can continue to use it even after the end of grant.

Q7: Having in mind that we publish our TV shows on facebook page only, will the usage of the ECR tool be possible on the same facebook page which has been used for communicating with the audience? We do not have a website, so is this necessary to enable the ECR tool usage? If yes, it will be a challenge for us as we are part of the larger platform of the national broadcaster.

A7: The main condition for the ECR tool to be installed and media outlet to benefit from is a functioning web site – owned by the applicant. Please see point 5.1 of the Application form, where you are required to describe your organisational capacity, including your web site (Application Form, 5.1: To apply the ECR

tool, the applicant must have a functioning website Please provide short information on your organisation's functioning website and its usage). The applicant should clearly describe the functionality of the website where the ECR tool will be installed and used. In cases where the organisation is part of the larger platforms, the application form should clearly state that minimum conditions for installing and using the ECR tool are met.

Q8: How would interaction with citizens be conducted? The topics that will be the subject of research and reporting through usage of ECR tool – do they need to be determined within the application form or they will be determined/selected during training which is planned for the ECR tool?

A8: You will have your own account and you can sign into ECR tool/platform. The communication/interaction with citizens will be conducted through the website.

Topics can be proposed by media outlet and by citizens and they need not to be all listed in the application form – as they can be further defined during the training as well as during the implementation period.

It is not obligatory that the applicant defines each topic, but rather provides the focus of the research/usage of ECR tool as well as it is welcome to list the topics that are envisaged to be covered during engagement with citizens.

Q9: The power-point presentation refers to minimum of 3 stories to be presented as an output in the application form: what does that mean?

A9: This is a minimum number of stories foreseen per project initially, but this will be coordinated/discussed during the training so please consider this as a guidance not as a requirement for your application form. The number of stories to be developed using the ECR tool is not limited for this Call.

Q10: We will propose topics through questionnaires, but can citizens propose the topics by themselves?

A10: Yes, the citizens will propose the topics but also media outlet can propose a topic through questionnaires. And this should be supported by well-planned promotional activities.

Q11: Can we change the thematic areas chosen in the application form, later during the implementation, if the conditions require that?

A11: Yes, that is possible. In the application form, it's worthy to mention some focus areas, not specific ones, and later during implementation, the concrete issues might be chosen to be covered.

Q12: Can we use an online poll for selection of thematic areas/topics to cover?

A12: Yes, you can use whatever approach you think is better capturing the attention of the citizens, and their involvement.

Q13: Do we need to report only on the issues/topics arrived through ECR tool?

A13: No, that is not obligatory. You can pick issues by ECR tool, or you choose your own topics, and use ECR tool to gather data, info and other evidences on the topic you have proposed.

Q14: We will propose several topics. Some can be more interesting for the public and some less. Is it better to have more topics or less?

A14: The number and the type of topics depends on the applicant. However, some topics require longer research and the project, with 9 months' timeframe can not contain large number of such topics. There are also topics that require less research and they can be of larger number. There is no limit in regard to topics envisaged within this Call for Applications.

Q15: COVID 19 crisis will affect the direct contact with community, especially youth and might affect the project implementation. How do we address this while using the ECR tool? In addition, the media outlet has been planning to organise forums (physical gathering of people) to gather opinions on specific issues. Not sure if that would be still possible after Covid-19 situation. What to do in those cases?

A15: The ECR tool is designed to counter that challenge and addresses the issue of social/physical distance caused by COVID 19 situation. The tool will allow the online interaction with the citizens, without the need to meet physically with them.

Q16: We would like to use the ECR tool to strengthen the communication with our audience within the existing functioning TV programme and present the topics in ongoing broadcasting programmes. Is this relevant and can we be excluded because of this?

A16: You will not be excluded if you want to enrich your current programme scheme. The application needs to refer to how the ECR tool will be used to strengthen the overall organisation capacity and the engagement with citizens. The tool is also to be used to strengthen the communication but also to better verify the information that is received from citizens. It is not necessary to have a definite format or number of the topics in the application and this can be discussed during the training within the first month of project implementation (see also A2).

Q17: Identity of citizens: will it be protected, will it be known to media outlet and can we continue communicating with them, to verify the information? How the topic will be published/questionnaire and how the inputs by citizens will be received?

A17: ECR tool will be used by the media outlet who will be logged-in, the outlet will design the questionnaire which is published on the outlet's website. Citizens will not enter the ECR platform (this is to be used by the media outlet only), but the media outlet can see the answers to the questionnaire from the background. Communication will be encrypted because of security reasons. Only if chosen by citizens, they can leave their info to be contacted later, but there will be anonymous cases as well.

Q18: How to better include elderly community when we talk about ECR tool because of on-line use. What about minority groups: there are minority groups that have no computer, little usage of telephone and

no access to internet: so how to apply ECR tool in these cases as we would like to include and expend our audience as much as possible.

A18: Minorities are not the only marginalised groups that media outlets should target as there is also LGBT community, youth, women, etc. In addition, it is not only minorities directly that can report on their issues but similarly, members of community can report on issues that minorities face.

As for elderly community representatives, many media outlets are on-line platforms by now. They are aware of their audience and the elderly community members can be targeted by implementing different promotional activities that will encourage engaged reporting. In the budget you can also foresee some sorts of events to combine with the usage of ECR tool. Promotional activities should be foreseen in the budget.

The infrastructure of the ECR tool will be in English as well, since the initial version is developed in English, so communication even in English is available.

Q19: There is huge emphasis in the application form and Call on gender sensitivity and minority groups and we are heaving problem understanding how these groups should be addressed. Most obviously it would be dealing with topics that are of interest for these groups. Is there some other form foreseen that should be considered?

A19: We would like to take a much more engaged approach than just looking at, for example, how many women there are among readers and similar. We would like to not only motivate larger participation of women and other underrepresented groups in media content, but also try to engage them as source of information, source of expertise, collocutors, engage them in problem solution, allow them to have their voice heard. When it comes to media outlets internal capacity, we are interested to not only know many women are employed, but also if they have equal treatment and same level of protection of their rights. We want to encourage a proactive approach in this regard and it is considered as an additional value, not a precondition for a grant.

Q20: Is it obligatory to have only specific groups covering in our reporting?

A20: No, not necessarily. You might offer journalistic reporting to a wider and general audiences, but bear in mind that specific groups/audiences can be defined not only as marginalised or not, but it can be as a geographical focus, or other division by typology of the audiences that this tool will benefit more.

Q21: ECR tool and research/interviews – will they be only online or based on direct contact with the audience? Elderly citizens, but not only, do not always feel comfortable with on-line tools therefore here is a possibility that certain target groups might not be included or the research applied through ECR tool might be affected with false negative or false positive depending on the target group that will use mostly the tool.

A21: In principle the ECR tool is planned for on-line usage and this is re-enforced with current COVID 19 affected situation. We are aware that this will present some challenges for several target groups,

therefore promotional activities are of extreme importance. Promotional activities should be customised and adopted to different target groups and can be designed in different forms.

Q22: Promotional activities: are they relevant?

A22: Yes, very relevant and they need to be budgeted. It is encouraged that social media are also used for promotion of ECR tool.

Q23: Is the promotion of ECR tool allowed through social media?

A23: Yes, it is allowed and even encouraged. Usage and publishing through web site is a priority but usage of social media is also allowed.

Q24: Can we include additional activities for engagement of citizens besides the use of the ECR tool such as focus groups?

A24: This would have to be assessed within a context of the complete project proposal (application form). You could use focus groups to narrow down the topics before you present it, using the ECR tool. Whatever activities you think are complementary to ECR tool clearly present it within your proposal/application form to demonstrate how they contribute to engaging citizens.

Q25: Please clarify further this understanding of the ECR application process – content wise: we are pitching some ideas based on which you will decide if we should receive basic or advanced ECR tool. Topics are obviously important and there are some that need to be defined that we will actually work on. Can you more closely explain how much we need to determine the topics in the application.

A25: The application process does not involve pitching/commissioning. This will take place later. The process is different from traditional content grants where you propose specific topics and number of articles/quantity of content to be produced within your application and begin implementing it when you receive a grant. It is foreseen that all selected media first undergo a joint training on how to use the tool. This will be followed with one-on-one mentoring process during which you will do the commissioning of topics. Topics and the level of depth in which they will be investigated by media are difficult to foresee as you cannot foresee how citizens will react to it when you post it through the tool either in surveys or tasks. Even if you select a great topic, citizens still may show low level of interest/response, so you will then need to select some other topic. There are a lot of variables, therefore we want to show some level of flexibility and do not expect you to propose an exact list of topics and quantity of content to be produced in your application.

When it comes to which media will work on which ECR tool, basic and advanced tool are both available within the same platform. When you log in, you will be able to select which tool you will use, basic or advanced, depending on your topic. It will also depend on the internal capacity of media and its resources. Some media may not have the capacity to use the advanced tool as it requires a much larger amount of data to be compiled and processed.

Q26: Do we need to determine in the application which tool we will use (basic or advanced ECR tool or the mix of the two) or can we leave it for this to be determined during the training? It is not clear whether both basic and advanced ECR tool will be embedded within the website or the applicant will/may choose one of the ECR tools to be used?

A26: You do not need to name which tool you will use, basic, advance, or both in your application. Basic and advance ECR tool are different. The applicant may choose which of the tools is to be used, however this is better determined during the training that will be provided specifically for the ECR tool. Based on the information obtaining during the training and the characteristics of basic and advanced ECR tool the applicant may choose the tool that is more suitable for media outlet. This will also depend on the media outlet capacity, ability and overall organisational development. The topic will determine which tool you will use. You will be able to use the tool to develop different surveys in relation to selected topic, but also assign different tasks to citizens to deliver various evidence in order to support you in processing the topic. As citizens upload information and respond to your questionnaire you will be able to easily analyse the data received. It will not have a traditional form of 'propose a topic' section, but very specific questionnaire and task for citizens. If you have posted a simple survey you will be able to publish its results immediately, while if you have asked citizens to provide evidence you will be able to collect enough information of certain quality and in accordance with your professional standards. This will help you assess how to further follow up on the topic, by doing some interviews, requesting response from officials, etc. The tool will allow for two-way communication between the media and citizens and collect input from citizens in a structured and targeted way that would be available to all journalists within the same media and not dispersed through media's various channels of communication like FB, viber, mail. It will allow citizens to propose topics of local interest and provide media with relevant inputs and documents, while on the other hand, it will allow media to engage citizens as source of information when reporting on topics of local interest. The data received through the application remains with the media who collected it. The tool will be encrypted, so data citizens will provide will be safe.

Q27: Do we need to include in the budget costs related to trainings on how to use the tool?

A27: No, all costs related to the use of ECR tool will be covered and costs to be included in the budget are those that you will need when you start using the tool.

Q28: The project implementation period in Oct 2020 – June 2021 and in the first month of implementation we will receive training on ECR, do we foresee the staff salaries for the first month or do we plan the salaries for 8 months only? And how will this training be conducted: on-line or it will be implemented in classical manner (classroom-type of training)?

A28: The project implementation period is foreseen to be up to 9 months. The human resources costs, as part of the overall project cost should be foreseen for the entire project implementation period and should be clearly justified in the budget. This includes the first month of the project implementation.

Human resources costs should only include cost of staff directly involved in implementation of the proposed project proportionate to their level of involvement. Salaries and honoraria should be reasonable for the proposed project activities performed and consistent with the salary history, professional skills and experience, as all the costs made should be backed up by an adequate evidence

proving the actual expenditure, and these should be available on demand since all activities are subject to an audit.

Originally, it was planned to have regional "off-line" trainings, by language groups. However, we are closely following the ongoing Covid-19 crisis and will act accordingly, including the organisation of online trainings.

Q29: It is difficult to foresee the budget given that we do not know specifically defined activities.

A29: We could not set some quantity of activities that would be desirable given the variety of use of the tool, while it is also difficult for you to define the exact number of articles to be produced given that you are yet to learn about how to use the tool and cannot estimate how much time it may take to develop a questionnaire, promote it, collect data, analyse data, create a story. You can define fixed expenses related to human resources and operational expenses, number of journalists that you will want to engage in using the tool. More people you engage, it will be expected that you can produce more content. Some expenses will also depend on the form of news, if it is for example video content, you will need to include all expenses related to video production. You can also plan some expenses for promotion.

Q30: Given that project is 'live' and changes may be needed, is it possible to make minor changes to the initial budget after grantees are selected?

A30: Yes, however, the extent to which changes to the budget during grant period will be possible will be defined in the grant agreement. The grant agreement will define the percentage of allowable change, type and form of approval.

Q31: If we foresee in the project certain training for members of our editorial office engaged on the project, can it be covered by the budget?

A31: Funds from the grant should not be used to cover training needs, as Media for All Project can consider covering such cost directly, but this needs to be directly and timely communicated. All costs of trainings/capacity building in relation to the grant such as training on how to use ECR tool are to be covered by Media for All Project.

Q32: We don't see the added value of this new online tool, considering that we are interacting with our audience for more than 20 years, and we do it very effectively, live in our TV studios, with phone calls, etc.

A32: ECR tool is not only a tool to gather people's opinions on an issue, or for them to complain on their problems. The basic version of this Tool is doing that, and it is doing it anonymously, which is an advantage to just phone calls. But there is the advanced version also, through which you can go beyond just gathering claims by the audience. You can use it to ask the citizens' assistance to gather data/evidences on topics of your media interest, as well as would allow your media to develop analyses reports on specific issues.

Q33: What happens when the project finishes? Currently the media outlets are suffering financially more than ever, due to the Covid 19. How can this project ensure media outlets sustainability?

A33: This project has envisaged other components in addition to grant schemes, that will offer good opportunities for the media outlets in the region, to develop further their internal capacities, their audiences, as well as their potential for bigger revenues. That is all what this Project can do. We encourage you to describe these challenges in your application form, related to sustainability of your media outlet beyond the lifetime of the Project, and how you think this project/grant might assist you better.

Q34: Is ECR tool the same and only one application/software for all media outlets to use, or there will be personalised version for each media outlet?

A34: The application in only one, but each media outlet will have its own account and will use it as an individual tool, separate from the other media outlets.

Q35: Is there any technical assistance offered during installation and later the usage of this Tool?

A35: Yes, the project team, led by BIRN, will assist and train the media outlets on how to use this tool during the first month of their grant. In addition, the assistance and mentorship will continue during all grant life.

Q36: Does the ECR tool have integrated verification of data mechanism? For example, how we will confirm/verify whether the photo sent by a citizen is the original photo or whether is photoshopped (i.e. receipt of a pharmacy)? In general, will the ECR tool provide support in verifying sent information especially audio and photos?

A36: Fact checking is the most important issue when dealing with citizens and especially with citizens' reporting. The tool cannot have embedded protection and verification mechanisms. Programmers will be engaged on how to further develop the ECR tool and develop defense mechanisms against spam or dealing with IP address related issues and authenticity (one address one person is an option but still public wifi options should be also not limited). This is work in progress and to be defined by the time grants start with their implementation.

Verification of information or data received from citizens is important, but it is also regular part of the initial stages of verification as of investigative journalism or journalistic research and this is a journalistic responsibility during their field work. Therefore, the same principle should be applied when using the ECR tool. This will be also covered by the training to be provided by the project (BIRN as a partner organisation in this project). Our trainers are already using/applying the tool and they will share their experiences during the training.

Q37: Taking into consideration that the media outlets are still to receive training on usage of ECR tool, does the application form need to include activities in relation to this training and also the need to receive support in regards to implementation of the of ECR techniques during communication with citizens? How

many months are the training activities, so we can envisage them in our project activities? If the development of ECR tool and training is part of the project activities, how do we budget this?

A37: The application can refer to the media outlet needs for such capacity building; however this training will be covered through different project funding and will not be part of the grant agreement or the budget which is submitted together with the Application. Training is envisaged to last 3-4 days in the beginning of the project implementation (during the first month of implementation). ECR training and the costs are not to be included in the application budget, same with hosting and maintenance of the ECR tool. These are all covered by the project funding – not related to the grants.

Q38: Our readers often suggest the themes and we have worked on these bases even before. At what level is ECR tool public. How do we address verbal or written harassment that can be present during public communication with citizens? Verification as well as protection is a must but how to do it through ECR? How public is the citizen engagement and how can we as media outlet protect the public.

A38: ECR tool is based on platform which is not public. Your correspondence with citizens is not visible to the public but only final product is. This will give you the opportunity to analyse and verify the facts before you publish the story.

Q39: Our media outlet works and engages continuously with citizens. In this sense ECR tool might only expand the target group. However, we do not expect proactiveness from citizens having in mind their doubt in media today. How to ensure that we have citizens' response while using ECR tool?

A39: Your promotional activities should be planned in details. This will be investment to ensure expected proactive approach by the citizens. Our previous experience has proven that citizens are more proactive when you ask concrete inputs from them. If we pose general questions, there is a possibility of noninterest. But if the question is around something really important to the public than the interest is bigger. For example, environmental protection or construction related issues.

Q40: Is the budget to be prepared completely for content development?

A40: Yes, for content development, promotional activities, operational and human resources costs.

Q41: Is mentoring foreseen for entire project timeframe or only at the beginning?

A41: The mentoring is foreseen for entire project implementation period. The intensity of the mentoring will depend on the media outlet needs. Logically the intensity will be larger at the beginning and will be lower towards the end.

Q42: At the ECR Call for Applications, there is an explanation that the project will provide the ECR tool to the grantee, to be inserted in its web site. Following the principle of protecting the confidentiality of sources, is there any requirement from the grantee to share the acquired sensitive and confidential data from the citizens to the third parties, or will it remain exclusive and under the sole responsibility of the grantee?

A42: All communication between media outlets using the ECR tool and the citizens will be secured with several layers of encryption to enable citizens and whistle-blowers to potentially share sensitive information. There are no requirements for the applicant/possible grantee to share data with the third parties. Each media outlet will have its own credentials to use the tool, however during the project implementation, the project will administer the tool in terms of technical assistance (set up, maintenance, bug fixes, etc.). Media outlets will be able to use this tool after the project is finished, ensuring the sustainability of intervention.

In order to measure the success of the project - how many stories were produced using the tool, number of citizens engaged in the process, overall and per story - the project will collect statistical data on the tool implementation for the purpose of project reporting. However, the project will not share any information on individual end users nor the content of their entries.

Q43: Our organization was established after 1 January 2018. Are we eligible to apply?

A43: Section 4.1. Eligibility criteria of the Call for Applications (both Business Development and Engaged Citizen Reporting) state that in order to be eligible for funding under this Project, the applicant must fulfil the criteria 'Applicant must be a media outlet (legal entity owning this media outlet) established before 1 January 2018'. Therefore, your media outlet is not eligible for funding. This criteria is established so we can have at least one annual financial report and some content produced by the media that can be used as a base for monitoring of the media.

Q44: Currency of budget (EUR or GBP)?

A44: The budget is to be prepared in GBP.

Q45: Bank account: do we need to open a bank account in GBP to receive the funds under this project?

A45: Yes, to receive funds under this project, media outlet needs to have a bank account in GBP. Bank account should be opened during grant agreement preparation process.

Q46: Are there limitations in percentage of salaries of staff compared to other budget lines. We will have high costs of staff: coordinator, journalists, cameraman, editor, translator and in addition and the highest percentage will go into the human resources budget.

A46: The only limitation in terms of the budget is for equipment – up to 25% of the total budget of the project. There are no other limits, however, please note that the budget needs to correspond to the proposed activities, level of engagement on the project and be realistic. Detailed justification for each budget heading needs to be provided.

Q47: Are fees for employees to be expressed by gross or net amount?

A47: All the fees of project staff should be expressed by gross amount.

Q48: Can we include only salaries of current staff or we can hire some additional staff to be involved in project implementation?

A48: The budget of the Grant can be used for both: current staff (part of the salary) and new staff if you will need to hire/contract anybody new.

Q49: Is there a possibility to propose increased salary of employees? The reason for this is the fact that the work on the project will imply additional work compared to current level of engagement, plus, due to COVID-19 salaries have been reduced, and they are as such shown on the payroll.

A49: All staff related costs need to be supported by adequate evidence proving that the occurred financial figures are actually ones within contracts with employees. If you envisage that at the time of implementation some staff salaries will be changed, then you can budget an amount that you predict will be the actual one during the grant implementation. Payroll cost and claimed project staff cost should be in line.

Q50: Can we include an accountant into personnel costs?

A50: Yes, in the percentage proportionate to the level of involvement on the proposed project.

Q51: An IT supporter operates part time with us for website maintenance but is not included in the list of employees with insurance. Insurance is paid by the company owned by the IT person. If included as additional staff in this project, are we obliged to pay for the insurance?

A51: You can include in the grant budget, the cost of any member of your staff that will be engaged with the project, regardless he/she is working part time, full time, or on consultancy basis. In each case, if he/she is not included in the payroll of the company, you can either get a fiscal invoice from his/her company, or if not, you need to sign an individual service contract and pay the relevant tax, and submit to us the respective financial transaction for payment of that tax, in addition to the copy of the contract.

Q52: The limit in terms of the equipment purchase 25% of the total budget amount – is this fixed or it can be flexible?

A52: The limit for equipment, necessary for the project implementation, within the total budget is 25%. This limit cannot be changed (increased).

Q53: Can procurement of equipment for the implementation of the project be done abroad, and if so, do costs of transport, customs and VAT fall within the eligible costs?

A53: Equipment purchase abroad is not foreseen within this intervention. Should there be a justified need to procure abroad a piece of equipment which is essential to implement the project activity, and only in case when this equipment or its substitute cannot be procured on a local market (evidence proving this would be needed) - on a case by case basis, the project will assess if the need is justified and cost effective.

The procurement procedure will be prescribed by the Project. Rules will be set within the Grant Agreement and Terms & Conditions as annex to the Grant Agreement.

Q54: Is there VAT exemption or costs need to include the VAT?

A54: The Project is not VAT excluded, so all amounts specified in the Budget should be gross (inclusive of VAT) except reimbursable VAT.

Q55: The CFA refers to construction of working space as ineligible cost. What about the production equipment that will be installed in newly constructed media outlet production room?

A55: Indeed, the construction costs are ineligible costs and as such cannot be foreseen as part of the budget. However, the production equipment, necessary for the project implementation, within the set limit of 25% of the total budget is certainly an eligible cost under this call.

Q56: Is streaming equipment eligible?

A56: This is a production equipment and, if necessary for the project implementation, as such it is eligible. The only limitation is 25% of the total budget that can be allocated to equipment.

Q57: Will the equipment purchased in the framework of this grant, remain property of the media outlet, when the grant ends?

A57: The ownership of the assets bought during the grant is going to be regulated within the Grant Agreement with media outlet to secure further usage of the assets by media outlet after the project is finished, securing the sustainability of the project intervention.

Q58: Can you clarify if costs of development of website or procurement of software are eligible, and if software is considered under the category "Equipment" (max 25% of total budget)?

A58: Yes, they are eligible. If proposing purchase of licensed software, and if necessary for the project implementation, it should be included in the budget heading Equipment and it falls within the 25% of the limit of the total budget. If proposing development of software, and if necessary for the project implementation, than it should be presented in the Operational Costs regardless if this will involve hiring of a person or a company.

Q59: Can we use lump sums for some costs?

A59: The budget should be clearly presented, with detailed justifications for each budget line. Lump sum may be applied to some extent (this is to be considered as an exception), but it is preferable that costs are described to as much detail as possible. If lump sum instead of unit cost is used, justification should be provided how the applicant has come to this lump sum

Q60: Is legal aid provided within the project, in case of litigation and lawsuit or threat of lawsuit due to the content of the show, or do media outlets have to take care of these issues? In certain projects in which we took part, the legal aid was provided.

A60: Media for all Project has funds dedicated to legal assistance for protection and support to media and journalists. Need for legal assistance is considered on one on one basis and funded separately, as it cannot be predicted if the legal issues will occur and legal aid needed, so applicants do not need to include these costs in the budget. Another thing is if you need legal advice in relation to your proposed project, that type of legal service should be part of the proposal.

Q61: Our media outlet has changed ownership but as media outlet is functioning for more than 20 years. Will this be a problem as the last change in the ownership dates in May 2019?

A61: The applicants need to provide proof that indeed the media outlet has had a continuity in its functioning, content development and employment and that the ownership did not affect this continuity. Please do submit all necessary documentation that can confirm this statement.

Q62: Should any of the certificates like registration or tax requested as supporting document be translated?

A62: The application must be submitted in English; however, the supporting documents issued by local institutions can be submitted in local languages.

Q63: What if we cannot obtain the tax certificate in time due to Covid crisis and slow process of issuing of the certificate by Tax administration?

A63: If you cannot obtain the certificate in time, at least submit the evidence that you have requested it. We will take into consideration such extraordinary circumstances and if needed consider how much longer it would be acceptable to wait for the certificate. We are aware that, because of COVID 19 there are state-covered schemes introduced in a form of subsidies: in these cases the applicant should submit evidence that the media outlet is benefiting from such schemes and – if applicable – the due taxes are to be covered as part of these subsidies. If you encounter any situation where you cannot obtain proper documentation due to certain country specific issue, please submit any evidence you can obtain to present the encountered issue and we will take it into consideration.

Q64: How old should the Tax Administration certificate on payment of all due taxes? There might be issues in issuance of the certificate due to COVID 19 situation and also an issue related to the governments' measures in relation to payment of taxes.

A64: The applicant should submit all the certificates obtained from Tax Administration with the latest and most updated format and information. These documents will be assessed by the project team on individual bases. The certificate/confirmation on paid taxes should be part of the application package.

Q65: Is revision or evaluation or audit of the project foreseen after the end of the project implementation?

A65: Grantee will sign Grant agreement which will define all grantee's obligations, project activities, reporting, how long project documentation should be archived, as well as that grantee will be required to submit all necessary evidence which is subject to an eventual audit.

Q66: Financial statements: is it required to be issued by relevant regulatory body or by the applicant? Similarly, is the applicant's stamp and signature enough on the financial statements?

A66: Financial statements are to be submitted together with the Application Form. If Financial statements are approved by the authorised state body, then Financial statements should be accompanied with confirmation that they are complete and valid. In case the authorised state body still has not issued such confirmation, then applicants should only submit Financial statements signed (and/or stamped) by their authorised person.

Q67: If we are to apply to both grant schemes ECR and BD, can one person manage both projects or are they to be managed individually?

A67: Yes, however in this case, percentage of time, level of engagement and relevant tasks should be planned accordingly and clearly presented in both applications. We as a project, do encourage media outlet to use this opportunity and build / strengthen its internal project management skills.

Q68: Can application for ECR and BD grants be joined?

A68: Not allowed. These are two different grant schemes. Each application should stand on its own as it will be evaluated by a separate selection panel. It is the project's responsibility to ensure coordination between two grants, however each application should be treated separately. The proposals in these applications should not be interdependent.