



BEST 2.0+

Call for proposals 2020

Questions related to the call

Applicants are invited to first refer to the Guidelines and related documents published on the [BEST 2.0+ portal](#). In case of remaining questions, a list of frequently asked questions - and answers - classified by themes can be found below. Requests for additional clarifications sent no later than 10 working days before the deadline of the call, which are likely to be relevant to all applicants, can also be found in this regularly updated document.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Applicants' eligibility

Question: Are UK Overseas Territories eligible independently of the Brexit and its outcomes?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Can I apply if I already benefited from a BEST 2.0 grant? Can a new project continue activities previously financed by BEST?

Answer: You can apply again as a former BEST beneficiary provided you still meet the eligibility criteria set in the Guidelines. The objective of BEST is to empower local stakeholders and “unlock their potential”, the focus of the call is therefore on seed funding and new actions. Continuation of BEST funded activities will not be the priority.

Question: Is there a maximum number of co-applicants?

Answer: No there is no maximum threshold. However, please bear in mind the feasibility of your project and its coordination. Numerous co-applicants could add an administrative layer and complexity to the management of your project.

Question: Are universities eligible to apply?

Answer: Universities are eligible provided they meet the “special conditions for research organisations” defined in the Guidelines for applicants.

Question: Is a farmer eligible to apply?

Answer: Individuals are not eligible to BEST 2.0+. Therefore, a single farmer cannot apply to the call for proposals, but a group of farmers with a legal entity (such as a cooperative) could, provided it meet the criteria set in the Guidelines.

Question: What are the eligibility criteria of our project's partners?

Answer: Alike the lead applicant, the co-applicant should meet all the same eligibility criteria defined in the Guidelines.

A subcontractor is not considered as an applicant but its contractual relationship with the Coordinator (selected lead applicant) shall abide by the BEST Procurement Policy and Procedures, annexed to the BEST Grant Agreement.

Question: Does the organisation need to be established for a number of years to be eligible?

Answer: No, there is not such criterion. However, in order to ascertain the capacity of an organisation to administer a BEST 2.0+ grant, applicants are requested to complete a Due Diligence and Financial Capacity Questionnaire, to be submitted with the Concept Note.

Question: What does "Registered in one of the EU or UK OCTs" mean?

Answer: Organisations must be registered in a territorial register managed by the relevant local authorities. It can take several forms depending on the OCT. Proof of registration must be provided together with the Concept Note.

In addition the organisation should comply with the eligibility criteria described in the Guidelines.

Costs and budget

Question: How should the budget be presented if the project involves co-applicants?

Answer: Preselected applications will need to present separately the costs of each organisation involved through different budget lines at the full proposal stage.

Question: How to design the budget? Is it necessary to request the maximum amount allowed?

Answer: The total amount of the grant must be spent during the implementation period of the project. The amount should be consistent with the proposed activities and workplan. It is important to be realistic as to what can be achieved and spent during the project. It may therefore not be necessary to request the maximum amount allowed.

Question: Is there a maximum amount allowed on subcontracting?

Answer: There is no ceiling or maximum percentage regarding the share of the budget allocated to subcontracting. However, only activities which are not essential to the project can be subcontracted. In all cases, subcontracting must be duly justified.

Question: What are the procurement rules applicable?

Answer: The procurement policy and procedures applicable to BEST 2.0+ beneficiaries are defined in the grant contract signed by the recipient. They vary according to the value of the contracts, are applicable to all goods and services procured and must be respected in all cases.

Question: Are the costs incurred during the preparation of the proposal eligible?

Answer: No, only the costs incurred during the implementation of the project are eligible costs.

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| Question: How to include import taxes? |
| Answer: Import taxes are considered as part of the cost of purchasing items and thus should be included within the cost budgeted for the item itself; they should not be included as separate lines in the budget. |
| Question: How should office costs be budgeted? |
| Answer: Office costs are part of the indirect costs and shall hence not be assigned to another budget heading. Indirect costs must be up to 7% of the estimated total eligible direct costs. Once agreed no supporting documents need to be provided. |
| Question: Do I have to provide quotes as supporting documents (e.g. for equipment) when defining my budget? |
| Answer: Supporting documents are required at the full proposal stage only you choose to use a simplified costs option (SCO). We strongly encourage applicants to opt for this option if possible. The use of SCO is explained in the guidelines for applicants. |
| Question: What is the grant payment schedule? Are advanced payments being made? What about the amount allocated to the co-applicant? |
| Answer: All payments are made to the account of the main applicant who is then responsible for the transfer(s) to the co-applicant(s). The grant will be paid in several instalments: a pre-financing at the beginning of the project; interim payments which are subject to the validation of periodic reports; and a final payment of the remaining balance after approval of the final report. |
| Question: What do you mean by “co-funding is not allowed”? |
| Answer: Additional support should be strictly kept outside the scope of the grant, which should be self-sufficient. This is meant for simplifying the project management and reporting requirements. The budget of BEST 2.0+ project must include only the costs requested for funding by BEST 2.0+. |
| Question: Are studies and equipment eligible? |
| Answer: The procurement of services and goods is possible if it meets the eligible criteria of costs defined in the Guidelines (pp.5-6). |

Additional information

Question: Whom to contact in case of questions?

Answer: Should you have any questions or encounter any difficulties, please contact your [Regional Focal Point or the BEST 2.0+ Secretariat](#). The latter are bound by the principle of confidentiality. They also are impartial and will ensure equal treatment among candidates in their answer. Contact details are available online.

Question: Where can I find the strategic and other relevant documents mentioned in the Guidelines?

Answer: Useful links can be found below. Please be cautious, some information may be outdated. In case of conflicting information, the Guidelines of the BEST 2.0+ Call for proposals always prevail.

For the "Overseas Association Decision":

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32013D0755>

For an overview of all projects funded by the BEST 2.0 Programme:

<https://best2plus.org/documents/BEST%20Brochure%202011-2018%20WEB.pdf>

For the BEST webpage on the European Commission website:

https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/best/funding/index_en.htm

For the old portal of BEST 2.0:

<https://2017.best2plus.org/>

Question: What is the role of the Regional Advisory Committee (RAC)?

Answer: The role of the RAC is to assess the concept notes and full proposals based on the criteria defined in the Guidelines in an impartial and independent evaluation. The report of the evaluation done by the RAC is sent to the European Commission for selecting the proposals for funding by BEST 2.0+.

Question: Is there a minimum project duration?

Answer: The project duration is at the discretion of the applicant respecting the maximum duration of 19 months. A project can then be less than 19 months. The duration should reflect the activities to be conducted and no extension will be granted, independently of the initial duration.