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# Guidelines

## for sub-grant applicants

**Project U-SOLVE B\_A.1.1. \_0183**

**Reference: <Guidelines\_U-SOLVE\_02\_04023>**

**Deadline for submission of application: <29/09/2023>**

*Follow up call - restricted only to the applicants selected under the U-SOLVE Call for subgrants with Reference USOLVE\_01\_040722*

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These guidelines set out the rules for the submission, selection and implementation of the actions financed under this call, in conformity with the ENI CBC MED Programme rules, which are applicable to the present call (available at <http://www.enicbcmcd.eu/home> ).

## 1.1. BACKGROUND

U-SOLVE is a strategic ENI CBC MED funded project. It aims to transform the start-up process into an entrepreneurial sustainable development strategy and journey, by bridging active policy for entrepreneurship with the adoption of UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Due to the growing relevance of the urban settlements in contemporary societies, U-SOLVE specifically addresses the possible role of open innovation in the transformation of Mediterranean cities: the most pressing SDGs related challenges are therefore identified through a participatory process and are tackled by activating local entrepreneurial agents and their coalitions. This dynamic activity will allow them to emerge, scale up, and create qualified jobs and economic value, while supporting the transition of cities towards a sustainable model. With U-SOLVE, the adoption of new technologies and business models developed by creative entrepreneurs and innovators, specifically youths or females, is promoted. Importantly, this approach aims towards socioeconomic prosperity, social equity and environmental protection in urban communities. Pilot U-SOLVE Innovation Hubs are established in the participating countries to host the innovators and pave the way to the long-term impact and replicability of the methodology.

## 1.2. OBJECTIVES OF THE CALL FOR SUB-GRANTS

This call for sub-grants will cover the following main objectives of U-SOLVE project:

- Increase entrepreneurial culture and acumen among youths and women.
- Support innovative businesses, that are offshoots of the creative and cultural sectors, supporting SDGs in target urban areas.
- Promote the establishment of sustainable innovation ecosystems in the cities served by the U-SOLVE pilot Innovation Hubs.

The **specific objective** of this call is to influence the creation of an experimental path for innovative ideas/solutions pre-selected in the first step of the evaluation. The vision is to support a minimum of thirty of those (at least five per country participating in the U-SOLVE project), leading to new projects or ventures in a creative sector that support a more sustainable and inclusive model of economic prosperity. What is more and equally important is U-SOLVE's drive to support cities' initiatives for urban transition across all

urban sustainability domains. Inextricably linked to cities' sustainable development is the need to tackle challenges brought by climate crisis, as the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East (EMME) Region has been recognized as a global climate change 'hotspot' with particularly high vulnerability to adverse climate change effects. To achieve a high impact on the target communities, U-SOLVE sets out to identify "creative avenues" by mobilizing the creative sector (at the crossroads of arts, culture, business and technology) to promote and influence sustainable behaviors and cultures. These "creative avenues" will become potential opportunities, through different project related initiatives and activities, to culminate to successful businesses. Therefore, U-SOLVE's expected results should be highly innovative: projects/business ideas addressing sustainable development challenges, led by or involving youths (graduates or equivalent between 24 and 35 years old) and/ or women (of all ages) in traditional and non-traditional creative sectors.

## 2-step procedure

**This Call is the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the 2-step selection methodology developed under the Project U-SOLVE and involves:**

**STEP 1:** The selection of innovative projects/business ideas based upon their quality, potential scalability and impact relating to the urban SDGs. Capacity building and acceleration services have been offered to the selected projects/business ideas (training, mentoring, and networking) by the U-SOLVE partners. The selected innovators have also access to the local U-SOLVE Innovation Hub.

**STEP 2:** A follow up call - restricted only to the pool of the pre-selected innovative projects/business ideas - to select (at least) 30 (minimum 5 per country) which have also successfully completed the capacity building activities - that will be awarded the sub-grants. The U-SOLVE partners located in each participating country will be responsible for Sub-grant contracting, management and reporting activities.

## Responsibility of the 2-step Call procedure

The partner responsible in each participating country for the management of the call process is presented in the following table.

Country	U-SOLVE responsible partner	U-SOLVE Innovation Hub
Cyprus	The Cyprus Institute	Municipality of Strovolos, Nicosia
Egypt	ASRT- Academy of Scientific Research & Technology	Alexandria
Greece	IED-Institute of Entrepreneurship Development	Larissa
Italy	The Cyprus Institute	Palermo
Jordan	JUST-Jordan University of Science and Technology	Irbid
Palestine	PAU-Palestine Ahilya University	Bethlehem

## 1.3. FINANCIAL ALLOCATION

The overall indicative amount made available under this call for sub-grant proposals is EUR **300.000**. The following table reports the countries, the partner responsible of the funds and the financial allocation for subgrants:

Country	U-SOLVE responsible partner	Financial allocation for subgrants
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Cyprus	The Cyprus Institute	50.000 Euro
Egypt	ASRT- Academy of Scientific Research & Technology	50.000 Euro
Greece	IED-Institute of Entrepreneurship Development	50.000 Euro
Italy	The Cyprus Institute	50.000 Euro
Jordan	JUST-Jordan University of Science and Technology	50.000 Euro
Palestine	PAU-Palestine Ahilya University	50.000 Euro

The above project partners reserve the right to modify the total amount according to the effective budget available, also in expansion, and not to award all available funds. The responsibility of funds might be updated along the implementation process.

### **Size of sub-grants**

Any sub-grant to be awarded under this call (STEP 2) must not exceed the maximum amount of EUR 10.000 (up to 100% of funding from the total budget justified) for each beneficiary, who can also benefit from additional capacity building services offered by the U-SOLVE project.

The payment plan of subgrants is the following:

- **After project finalization:** Subgrants will be paid out after the successful finishing of the project, required reports and project documentation, cost justification. Responsible Project Partners reserve the right to pay an extra instalment within the project period, according to the availability of the funds.

The sub-grant shall take the forms of reimbursement of costs.

The lead applicants will report the progress of the selected actions to the responsible partners (as defined in Chapter 1.2.), through narrative (**model provided in Annex Fa**) and financial activity (**model provided in Annex Fb**) reports. The indicative reporting process and periods are described in the Standard Subgrant Contract (**Annex B**).

## **1.4. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

There are three sets of eligibility criteria, relating to:

(1) the actors:

- The '**lead applicant**', i.e. the entity submitting the application form,
- If any, its **co-applicant(s)** (where it is not specified otherwise the lead applicant and its co-applicant(s) are hereinafter jointly referred as '**applicant(s)**').

(2) the activities:

- Type of activities for which the sub-grant may be awarded.

(3) the costs:

- Forms of financing and types of cost that may be taken into account in setting the amount of the subgrant.

#### 1.4.1. Eligibility of applicants (i.e. lead applicant and co-applicant(s))

##### Lead Applicant

(1) In order to be eligible, the Lead Applicant must:

- Have been selected at the STEP 1 of this Process, under the U-SOLVE Call with Reference **USOLVE\_01\_040722**
- Has successfully completed the capacity building activities, organized by U-SOLVE for the pre-selected participants, under the U-SOLVE Call with Reference **USOLVE\_01\_040722**. Specifically, the lead applicant should attend at least 80% of the capacity building activities reserved for the proposals selected in step 1, in the relevant U-SOLVE country.
- Be a legal entity, established as a business under national law with a registration number or equivalent, at prior to the application.
- Be established and currently based in the following territories:

Country	Eligible Territories
Cyprus	Whole Country
Egypt	Marsa Matruh, Al-Iskandanyah, Al Buhayrah, Kafr ash Shaykh, Ad Daqahliyah, Dumyat, Ash Sharquiyah, Al Isma'iliyah, Bur Sa'id
Greece	Anatoliki Makedonia - Thraki, Kentriki Makedonia, Thessalia, Ipeiros, Ionia Nisia, Dytiki Ellada, Sterea Ellada, Peloponnisos, Attiki, Voreio Aigaio, Notio Aigaio, Kriti
Italy	Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Lazio, Liguria, Puglia, Sardegna, Sicilia, Toscana
Jordan	Irbid, Al-Balga, Madaba, Al-Karak, Al-Tafilah, Al-Aqaba
Palestine	Whole Country

- Be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action, not acting as an intermediary.
- Meets the following additional requirements:
  - i. Comply with the European Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC2 and the SME user guide. As a summary, the criteria which define an SME are: (a) Independent (not linked or owned by another enterprise), in accordance with Recommendation 2003/361/EC; (b) Headcount in Annual Work Unit (AWU) less than 250; (c) Annual turnover less or equal to €50 million OR annual balance sheet total less or equal to €43 million.
  - ii. Start-ups that do not have yet annual turnover or balance sheets are also considered eligible, given that they fulfill the other eligibility criteria at submission time.
  - iii. Applicants may not be recipients of State Aid through other grants or financing from national governments or the European Union in excess of 200.000 euro over a period of three years. If, during the project execution, any funding inside minimis regime is received by applicant or co-applicant, an updated minimis declaration must be sent to the sub-granter.
  - iv. Not be in any insolvency situation and shall be compliant with local labor codes and social security rules.

[or]

- be natural persons, residing in the eligible territories

Country	Eligible Territories
Cyprus	Whole Country
Egypt	Marsa Matruh, Al-Iskandanyah, Al Buhayrah, Kafr ash Shaykh, Ad Daqahliyah, Dumyat, Ash Sharquiyah, Al Isma'iliyah, Bur Sa'id
Greece	Anatoliki Makedonia - Thraki, Kentriki Makedonia, Thessalia, Ipeiros, Ionia Nisia, Dytiki Ellada, Sterea Ellada, Peloponnisos, Attiki, Voreio Aigaio, Notio Aigaio, Kriti
Italy	Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Lazio, Liguria, Puglia, Sardegna, Sicilia, Toscana
Jordan	Irbid, Al-Balga, Madaba, Al-Karak, Al-Tafilah, Al-Aqaba
Palestine	Whole Country

- Have been pre-selected at STEP 1 of this Process, under the U-SOLVE Call with Reference **USOLVE\_01\_040722**
- Has successfully completed the capacity building activities, organized by U-SOLVE for the pre-selected participants, under the U-SOLVE Call with Reference **USOLVE\_01\_040722**. Specifically, the natural person(s) should attend at least 80% of the capacity building activities reserved for the proposals selected in step 1, in the relevant U-SOLVE country.
- Commit to establishing a legal entity fully compliant with the requirements of point a) in case of assignment of a subgrant.

In the cases of applications submitted by natural persons, the participation of a natural person in a legal entity also submitting a business idea/solution under this call is not permitted.

Applicants, and, in the case of legal entities, persons who have powers of representation, decision-making or control over the applicant and the affiliated entities are informed that, should they be in one of the situations of early detection or exclusion according to article 52.2.vi of the ENI CBC Implementing Rules, personal details (name, given name if natural person, address, legal form and name and given name of the persons with powers of representation, decision-making or control, if legal person) may be registered in the early detection and exclusion system, and communicated to the persons and entities concerned in relation to the award or the execution of a grant contract.

In the declaration included in the full proposal form (**Annex D**), the lead applicants must declare themselves and the co-applicant(s) (if any) are not in any of these situations.

The lead applicant may act individually or with co-applicant(s). If awarded the sub-grant contract, the lead applicant will become the sub-grantee, who is the main interlocutor of the project beneficiary / partner awarding the sub-grant. It may represent and act on behalf of any other co- sub-grantee (if any) and coordinates the design and implementation of the action.

### [Co-applicant(s)]

Co-applicants participate in designing and implementing the action, and the costs they incur are eligible in the same way as those incurred by the lead applicant.

Co-applicants must satisfy all the eligibility criteria as applicable to the lead applicant themselves.

Co-applicants must sign the mandate in the grant application form.

If awarded the subgrant contract, the co-applicant(s) (if any) will become co-sub grantee(s) in the action (together with the sub grantee).

#### 1.4.2. Eligible actions: actions for which an application may be made

##### Definition

An action is composed of a set of activities.

##### Duration

The initial planned duration of an action may not exceed two (2) months.

##### Themes and locations

The action must introduce a business solution/project directly connected with the general objectives of U-SOLVE (provided in detail by following the link <https://www.enicbcmmed.eu/projects/u-solve>), and specifically with the impact areas, priorities and challenges hereby reported:

Country	U-SOLVE responsible partner	U-SOLVE Innovation Hub	Impact area	Priorities	SDGs	Local challenges
Cyprus	The Cyprus Institute	Municipality of Strovolos	Metropolitan area of Nicosia	Urban and transport planning	11	Improvement of public and soft mobility, regeneration and management of public spaces
				Sustainable energy	7	Adoption of distributed solar energy generation, energy efficiency
				Waste management	11, 12	Local circular economy practices, waste upscaling
Egypt	ASRT-Academy of Scientific Research & Technology	Alexandria	Metropolitan area of Alexandria, Special focus on Burg E Arab	Blue infrastructure	6, 14	Pollution of water resources
				Urban food system	2, 12	Water scarcity
				Sustainable Energy	7	Reduction of carbon emission in factories and plants serving the cities
				Waste management	11, 12	Insufficient waste management system



Greece	IED-Institute of Entrepreneurship Development	Larissa	Municipality of Larissa (City of Larissa) Municipality of Trikala (City of Trikala)	Urban and transport planning	11	Limited use of sustainable-mobility means (electric vehicles, bikes) and practices (car sharing) & insufficient management of public spaces.
				Green infrastructure	3,11,15	Lack of modern urban green infrastructure
				Waste management	11, 12	Limited use of circular economy practices.
				Urban health equity	3, 7, 11	Extended use of old and polluting heating & cooling systems, limited use of digital methods and practices to promote urban health equity
				Sustainable Energy	7	Limited network of electric chargers for electric vehicles. Limited network of household solar panels. Limited use of Renewable Energy Sources in the urban context.
Italy	The Cyprus Institute	Palermo	Metropolitan area of Palermo	Urban and transport planning	11	Improvement of public and soft mobility, regeneration and management of public spaces
				Green infrastructure	3, 11, 15	Increase and interconnect green spaces, increase of urban biodiversity, improve maintenance of green infrastructures, promote multiple use of green spaces



				Waste management	11, 12	Local circular economy practices, waste upcycling
Jordan	JUST-Jordan University of Science and Technology	Irbid	Irbid and northern governorates	Water resources and management	6	Improvement of water resources, quality, and treatment
				Sustainable Energy	7	Development of feasible and sustainable energy sources
				Waste management	11, 12	Circular economy practices
				Urban food System	2, 3, 12	Development of functional food, Improvement of Mediterranean diet, improvement of food traceability and trust from field to fork
				Sustainable tourism	9, 6, 7, 11	Reduction of energy and water use, green transportation
Palestine	PAU-Palestine Ahilya University	Bethlehem	Southern West Bank- "Bethlehem and Hebron Governorates"	Urban and transport planning	11	Urban planning, transport system, regeneration and management of public spaces
				Blue infrastructure	6	Water scarcity and sewage systems
				Sustainable tourism	9, 11	Sustainable food supplies, lack of handicraft and industry support, need of innovative applications to boost local tourism
				Sustainable Energy	7	Renewable solar energy sources.
				Waste Management	11,12	Limited use of circular economy practices

				Urban Food System	2,3,12	Sustainable food supplies, Improvement of mediterranean diet, improvement of food chain system
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Activities must be engaging **the creative and cultural sectors** and specifically:

- *Visual and digital arts*
- *Performing arts*
- *Cultural industries (film & video, TV & radio, music, books & press, video games, etc.)*
- *Creative industries (fashion, design, advertising, etc.).*

### Location

Actions must take place in one or more of the following areas:

Country	Impact area
Cyprus	Metropolitan area of Nicosia
Egypt	Metropolitan area of Alexandria , Special focus on Burg El Arab
Greece	Municipality of Larissa <b>(City of Larissa)</b> Municipality of Trikala <b>(City of Trikala)</b>
Italy	Metropolitan area of Palermo
Jordan	Irbid and northern governorates
Palestine	Southern West Bank- "Bethlehem and Hebron Governorates"

### Types of action

U-SOLVE project will finance startup actions/projects addressing the following main objectives of U-SOLVE project:

- Increase entrepreneurial culture and acumen among youths and women.
- Support innovative businesses, that are offshoots of the creative and cultural sectors, supporting SDGs in target urban areas.
- Promote the establishment of sustainable innovation ecosystems in the cities served by the U-SOLVE pilot Innovation Hubs.

#### Types of activity

The types of activity to be financed under the Call must be clearly linked to the specific objectives of the U-SOLVE Project and the proposed action. Indicatively, the proposed action could include:

- *Activities for the development of new product/service.*
- *Activities for the improvement of existing product/service.*
- *Integration of ICT in the relevant business processes.*
- *Activities for the increase of sustainability within relevant processes*
- *Behavioural changes, networking, visibility, communication and engagement activities.*

#### Visibility

Subgrant applicants must comply with the objectives and priorities and guarantee the visibility of the EU financing (see the [Communication and Visibility Requirements for EU External Actions](#)).

#### Number of applications and subgrants per applicant(s)

- Each applicant may submit more than one application under this call for subgrant proposals.
- **Applicants may not be awarded more than one sub-grant under this call for subgrant proposals.**
- A co-applicant may be the co-applicant in more than one application(s) under this call for proposals.
- **A co-applicant may not be awarded more than one sub-grant(s) under this call for proposals.**
- In the cases of applications submitted by natural persons, the participation of a natural person in a legal entity also submitting a business idea/solution under this call is not permitted.

#### 1.4.3. Eligibility of costs: costs that can be included

The applicants will submit a budget within their application presenting the specific costs they expect to cover with the subgrant. The effective expenditure should be aligned with the application presented for evaluation. The sub-grant shall take the forms of reimbursement of costs.

Only eligible costs can be covered by the sub-grant. The categories of costs that are eligible and non-eligible are indicated below. The budget is both a cost estimate and an overall ceiling for eligible costs.

#### Eligible direct costs

- **Human Resources costs:** directly linked for the execution of the project.
- **Travel and subsistence costs:** travel costs for events directly linked to the execution of the project (e.g. meetings, dissemination/ promotion of the project, visiting of directly relevant events).
- **Material-Supplies costs:** directly linked for the execution of the project.

- **Subcontracting costs:** directly linked for the execution of the project, e.g. legal, IPR, external mentoring, etc. Dissemination: professional documentation, material, translation, interpretation of project progress and results. But no subcontracting for services offered within the consortium.

To be eligible under this call for proposals, costs must comply with the provisions of Article 9 of the sub-grant contract (**Model subgrant contract is provided in the Annex B**). The subgrant applicant(s) agree that the expenditure verification(s) referred to the sub-grant contract will be carried out by the auditor contracted by the responsible partner for the subgrants process in each country, as defined in the Chapter 1.2. To be considered eligible, the costs must be incurred after the contract signature and during the duration of the project.

#### Eligible indirect costs

The indirect costs incurred in carrying out the action may be eligible for flat-rate funding, but the total must not exceed 7 % of the estimated total eligible direct costs. Indirect costs are eligible provided that they do not include costs assigned to another budget heading in the sub-grant contract. The lead applicant may be asked to justify the percentage requested before the sub-grant contract is signed. However, once the flat rate has been fixed, no supporting documents need to be provided.

**NB:** If any of the applicants is in receipt of an operating grant financed by the EU, it may not claim indirect costs on its incurred costs within the proposed budget for the action.

#### Ineligible costs

The following costs are not eligible:

- debts and debt service charges (interest);
- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- costs declared by the applicants and financed by another action or work programme receiving a European Union grant;
- purchases of land or buildings;
- currency exchange losses;
- duties, taxes and charges, including VAT, except when non-recoverable under the relevant national tax legislation unless otherwise provided in appropriate provisions negotiated with partner countries, as per the provisions of the related Financing Agreement;<sup>1</sup>
- loans to third parties;
- fines, penalties and expenses of litigation;

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<sup>1</sup> For details on VAT and tax provisions set in Financing Agreements (FA), the potential applicants may refer to the specific national provisions.

- contributions in kind;

#### Exchange rate

According to article 67 of the Implementing Rules on the use of the euro as specified in par. 4.8.3 of the JOP, expenditure incurred in a currency other than the euro shall be converted into euro using the monthly accounting exchange rate of the Commission for the month during which the expenditure was submitted for examination to the auditors for its verification at each payment claim. EC rates are available at the following website link:

[http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts\\_grants/info\\_contracts/inforeuro/index\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuro/index_en.cfm)

It should be indicated the exchange rate used and the month applied.

#### **1.4.4. Ethic clauses and Code of Conduct**

##### a) Absence of conflict of interest

The applicant must not be affected by any conflict of interest and must have no equivalent relation in that respect with other applicants or parties involved in the actions. Any attempt by an applicant to obtain confidential information, enter into unlawful agreements with competitors or influence the evaluation committee or the project Lead Beneficiary / responsible partner during the process of examining, clarifying, evaluating and comparing applications will lead to the rejection of their application and may result in administrative penalties.

##### b) Respect for human rights as well as environmental legislation and core labour standards

The applicant and its staff must comply with human rights. In particular and in accordance with the applicable act, applicants who have been awarded contracts must comply with the environmental legislation including multilateral environmental agreements, and with the core labour standards as applicable and as defined in the relevant International Labour Organisation conventions (such as the conventions on freedom of association and collective bargaining; elimination of forced and compulsory labour; abolition of child labour).

##### **Zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and sexual abuse:**

The European Commission applies a policy of 'zero tolerance' in relation to all wrongful conduct which has an impact on the professional credibility of the applicant.

Physical abuse or punishment, or threats of physical abuse, sexual abuse or exploitation, harassment and verbal abuse, as well as other forms of intimidation shall be prohibited.

##### c) Anti-corruption and anti-bribery

The applicant shall comply with all applicable laws and regulations and codes relating to anti-bribery and anti-corruption. The project Lead Beneficiary / responsible partner and the Programme bodies reserve the right to suspend or cancel the sub-grant if corrupt practices of any kind are discovered at any stage of the award process or during the execution of the contract. For the purposes of this provision, 'corrupt practices' are the offer of a bribe, gift, gratuity or commission to any person as an inducement or reward for

performing or refraining from any act relating to the award of a contract or execution of a contract already concluded.

#### d) Breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud

The project Lead Beneficiary / responsible partner and the Programme bodies reserve the right to suspend or cancel the procedure, where the award procedure proves to have been subject to breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud. If breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud are discovered after the award of the contract, the project beneficiary may refrain from concluding the contract.

## 1.5. HOW TO APPLY AND THE PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW

### 1.5.1. Applications

Subgrant applicants are invited to submit an application annexed to these guidelines (**Annex A**), online following the link <https://usolve-project.eu/home>. Applications must be in English. Applications sent by any other means (e.g. by fax, by post or by e-mail) will be rejected.

Please complete the application form carefully and as clearly as possible so that it can be assessed properly. Any error related to the points listed in the checklist of the subgrant application form or any major inconsistency may lead to the rejection of the application. Clarifications will only be requested when information provided is unclear and thus prevents the partner responsible for the subgrants process in each country, as defined in Chapter 1.2, from conducting an objective assessment.

Hand-written applications will not be accepted.

Please note that only the application form and the published annexes which have to be filled in will be evaluated. It is therefore of utmost importance that these documents contain ALL the relevant information concerning the action.

### 1.5.2. Where and how to send applications

## 2-Steps submission procedure

**STEP 1- Registration in the platform and application form:** Each applicant has already been registered in the platform within the first step of this procedure. The application for subgrants will be submitted through the same account.

**STEP 2- Full proposal:** This section provides the full proposal sections, according to the application form (**Annex A**). *The application form includes the declaration (Annex D), that should be signed by the applicants. The signature can be manual (this document must be scanned) or digital/electronic.* In case of partnership with co-applicant, a duly signed mandate of the co-applicant (in case of partnership) should be attached also. Before the submission, the applicants should attach in the relevant section the following documents:

- Identity Document (ID Card) of the legal representative (in case of legal entities) or all applicants (in the case of natural persons).

*In the event that applicant submits several proposals; they must be submitted separately.*

It is not mandatory to fill in all the information at the same moment, the info is saved automatically, and it will be available to edit in YOUR APPLICATIONS section. When all the information will be completed, click the Close and Submit button, but notice that once the application is closes, no further modifications can be made.

***Applicants must verify that their application is complete using the checklist included in the Annex C. Incomplete applications may be rejected.***

#### 1.5.3. Deadline for submission of applications

Applications will be accepted until **29/09/2023**.

*Each Urban Hub can define an earlier or later deadline for the submission of proposals, ensuring that the duration of the submission period will be at least fifteen (15) days. In this case, the deadline for submission for this Hub will be announced through the Call website (<https://usolve-project.eu/home>), by the Urban Hub Manager responsible.*

#### 1.5.4. Further information about applications

Questions can be forwarded by e-mail no later than 7 days before the deadline for the submission of applications to the following address <[usolve.eni@gmail.com](mailto:usolve.eni@gmail.com)>, clearly indicating the reference of the call for subgrants.

U-SOLVE partners have no obligation to provide clarifications to questions received after this date. Replies will be given no later than 5 days before the deadline for the submission of applications. To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the U-SOLVE partners cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of applicants, co-applicants, or an action.

No individual replies will be given to questions. All questions and answers as well as other important notices to applicants during the course of the evaluation procedure, will be published on the website of U-SOLVE call, as the need arises. It is therefore advisable to consult the abovementioned website regularly in order to be informed of the questions and answers published.

## 1.6. EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications at STEP-2 will be examined and evaluated by a Judging Committee comprising of representatives of the U-SOLVE partners and international experts. The judges will be responsible for evaluating the applications alongside the submitted documents, as well as conducting the online interviews with shortlisted participants.

All applications will be assessed according to the following steps and criteria. If the examination of the application reveals that the proposed action does not meet the eligibility criteria stated in Section 1.4, the application will be rejected on this sole basis.



## (1) STEP 1: OPENING & ADMINISTRATIVE CHECKS

During the opening and administrative check, the following will be assessed:

- If the deadline has been met. Otherwise, the application will be automatically rejected.
- If the application satisfies all the criteria specified in the checklist in the sub-grant application form. This includes also an assessment of the eligibility of the action. If any of the requested information is missing or is incorrect, the application may be rejected on that **sole** basis and the application will not be evaluated further.

## (2) STEP 2: EVALUATION OF THE APPLICATION

The applications that pass the opening and administrative checks will be further evaluated on their quality, including the proposed budget and capacity of the applicants. They will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria in the evaluation grid below. There are two types of evaluation criteria: selection and award criteria.

**The selection criteria** help to evaluate the applicant(s)'s operational capacity and the lead applicant's financial capacity and are used to verify that they:

- have stable and sufficient sources of finance to maintain their activity throughout the proposed action and, where appropriate, to participate in its funding (this only applies to lead applicants);
- have the management capacity, professional competencies and qualifications required to successfully complete the proposed action. This applies to all applicants.

**The award criteria** help to evaluate the quality of the applications in relation to the objectives set forth in the guidelines, and to award sub-grants to sub-projects which maximize the overall effectiveness of the call for proposals. They help to select applications which the project Lead Beneficiary / partner can be confident will comply with its objectives and priorities. They cover the relevance of the action, its consistency with the objectives of the call for proposals, quality, expected impact, sustainability and cost-effectiveness.

### Scoring:

The evaluation grid is divided into Sections and subsections. Each subsection will be given a score between 1 and 5 as follows: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.

Section	Maximum Score
<b>1. Financial and operational capacity</b>	<b>20</b>
1.1. Do the applicants have sufficient in-house experience of project management?	5
1.2 Do the applicants have sufficient in-house technical expertise? (especially knowledge of the issues to be addressed)	5

1.3 Do the applicants have sufficient in-house management capacity & resources? (Including staff, equipment, and ability to handle the budget for the action)?	5
1.4 Does the lead applicant and co-applicants have stable and sufficient sources of finance?	5
<b>2. Relevance</b>	<b>20</b>
2.1 How relevant is the proposal to the objectives of the call for proposals and the project? Are the expected results of the action aligned with the priorities defined in the guidelines for applicants for the relevant U-SOLVE impact area?	10
2.2 How clearly defined and strategically chosen are those involved (final beneficiaries, target groups)? Have their needs and constraints been clearly defined and does the proposal address them appropriately?	5
2.3 Does the proposal have a real added value? Does it contain particular added-value elements (e.g. innovation, best practices)?	5
<b>3. Design of the action</b>	<b>15</b>
3.1 How coherent is the design of the action? Are the activities proposed appropriate, practical, and consistent with the envisaged outputs and outcome(s)?	5
3.2 Are the outputs consistent with the needs of the target groups & final beneficiaries?	5
3.3 Are the outputs likely to contribute to the expected results?	5
<b>4. Implementation approach</b>	<b>10</b>
4.1 Is the action plan for implementing the action clear and feasible?	5
4.2 Is the timeline realistic?	5
<b>5. Sustainability of the action</b>	<b>20</b>
5.1. Is the action likely to have a tangible impact on its target groups?	5

5.2. Is the action likely to have multiplier effects, including scope for replication, extension, capitalization on experience and knowledge sharing?	5
5.3. Are the expected results of the proposed action sustainable? - Financially ( <i>e.g. financing of follow-up activities, sources of revenue for covering all future operating and maintenance costs</i> ) - Institutionally ( <i>will structures allow the results of the action to be sustained at the end of the action? Will there be local 'ownership' of the results of the action?</i> ) - At policy level (where applicable) ( <i>what will be the structural impact of the action — e.g. improved legislation, codes of conduct, methods</i> ) - Environmentally (if applicable) ( <i>will the action have a negative/positive environmental impact?</i> )	10
<b>6. Budget and cost-effectiveness of the action</b>	<b>15</b>
6.1 Are the activities appropriately reflected in the budget?	5
6.2 Is the ratio between the estimated costs and the results satisfactory?	10
<b>Maximum total score</b>	<b>100</b>

After the evaluation, the judges will shortlist a maximum of 10 projects per Country accordingly with evaluation criteria as presented in **Annex C** of the Call.

The shortlisted applicants will have 5 minutes to pitch their idea/ solution during an interview. During the interview each applicant will be evaluated based on the following criteria: 1) The idea is innovative and creative is 2) The innovation is applicable (proof of concept) 3) The innovation is wealth- generating (proof of business) 4) the team is fitting the mission (team appraisal).

The final evaluation will be based on a short interview with the shortlisted applicants, which will be evaluated against the criteria also provided in Annex C of this Call. After the evaluation, a table will be drawn up listing the applications ranked according to their score for each U-SOLVE country. The highest scoring applications will be provisionally selected until the available budget for this call for proposals is reached. In addition, a reserve list will be drawn up following the same criteria. This list will be used if more funds become available during the validity period of the reserve list.

### (3) **STEP 3: VERIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY OF THE APPLICANTS**

The eligibility verification will be performed according to the criteria set out in Section 1.4 on the basis of the following supporting documents requested by the project Lead Beneficiary / partner:

- **Legal existence:** *Legal Identification Form accompanied with valid supporting documents indicating the business registration, the ownership and the legal representative of the sub grantee (date of issue within the last 3 months). The Legal Identification Form can be found following the link [https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/511699d1-223a-49ee-b33a-7a214e1e25ad\\_en?filename=legent\\_privcomp\\_en.pdf](https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/511699d1-223a-49ee-b33a-7a214e1e25ad_en?filename=legent_privcomp_en.pdf).*
- **Bank Account information:** *Financial Identification Form accompanied with recent Bank Statement (date of issue within the last 3 months). The financial Identification form can be found here [https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/63135761-b41c-433a-b2eb-87328e765674\\_en?filename=fich\\_sign\\_ba\\_qb\\_en.pdf](https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/63135761-b41c-433a-b2eb-87328e765674_en?filename=fich_sign_ba_qb_en.pdf).*
- **DeMinimis Declaration form according to the template provided in Annex E.**
- **Certification issued by the Urban Hub Manager responsible, certifying that the applicant (s) attended at least 80% of the available capacity-building activities for the relevant U-SOLVE country.**

It will by default only be performed for the applications that have been provisionally selected according to their score and within the available budget for this call for proposals.

Any rejected application will be replaced by the next best placed application on the reserve list that falls within the available budget for this call for proposals.

If the abovementioned supporting documents are not provided before the deadline indicated in the request for supporting documents sent to the applicant, the application may be rejected.

## 1.7. NOTIFICATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE EVALUATION

### 1.7.1. Content of the decision

Applicants will be informed in writing of the final decision concerning the award of subgrants (Step 2) and, if rejected, the reasons for the negative decision. An applicant believing that it has been harmed by an error or irregularity during the award process may lodge a complaint. Within the written notification for the final decision, the complaint submission procedure will be described.

### 1.7.2. Indicative timetable

DATE	TIME
1. Deadline for requesting any clarifications from the project Lead Beneficiary / Partner	7 days before the submission deadline

<b>2. Last date on which clarifications are issued by the project Lead Beneficiary / partner</b>	5 days before the submission deadline
<b>3. Deadline for submission of applications STEP 2</b>	29/09/2023
<b>4. Information to applicants on the evaluation of STEP 2</b>	max 30 days after the submission deadline

*This indicative timetable refers to provisional dates and may be updated by the project Lead Beneficiary / partner during the procedure. In such cases, the updated timetable will be published on the call web site.*

## List of annexes

**NOTE THAT ALL ANNEXES MUST BE ADAPTED AS FORESEEN TO THE CALL AND PUBLISHED TOGETHER WITH THE GUIDELINES**

### DOCUMENTS TO BE COMPLETED

Annex A: Sub-grant application form (Word format)

Annex B: Model Subgrant Contract

Annex C: Evaluation Criteria

Annex D: Model Declaration of applicants

Annex E: DeMinimis Declaration form

Annex Fa: Activity Report Template

Annex Fb: Financial Report Template