BESTbelt

Full Proposal phase

3rd BESTbelt Call for Proposals 2024
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Applicants are invited to first refer to the BESTbelt Operational Manual and related documents published on the BESTbelt website. Questions, likely to be relevant to all applicants, can be found in this regularly updated document, classified by themes. Requests for additional clarifications can be sent until 14 June 2024 latest (10 days before the deadline for full proposal submission on 24 June).

FULL PROPOSAL FORMS AND STRUCTURE	
Question:	Where should I include the information regarding the qualification or skills of staff/experts?
Answer:	There is no explicit field to include the information about staff or expert qualifications. We recommend keeping this information as concise as possible. Possible fields to include this information though are Budget or Activities in Section 3 (Project description).
Question:	Can we sign our Full Proposal electronically?
Answer:	Yes, you may sign it electronically as long as the online tool or provider for digital signatures you are using is easily comprehensible and the process of signing is verifiable.
Question:	What happens if we do not submit our Full Proposal? Can we apply again next year?
Answer:	Unfortunately, the 3rd BESTbelt Call for Proposals will be the final call within the framework of BESTbelt.
Question:	Do we have to put different results in the logical framework and the full proposal template?
Answer:	No, you should use the same results in both files. The logical framework is seen as a tool to strengthen your project design and the intervention logic. The two documents should fit to each other.
Question:	Is it ok to add additional lines for outcomes to the logical framework?
Answer:	Yes, you may add more lines or specify more than one outcome in the same field, but please maintain the structure of the original file (which we also sometimes call Logframe).
Question:	The due diligence form is hard to understand – what shall I do?

Answer:	If you have concrete questions about the due diligence form, you can ask your regional focal point or the BESTbelt Office for support. Please be aware, that a completed due diligence form is an eligibility criterion. Remember, due diligence forms must be filled by both lead- and co-applicants (if applicable).
Question:	Is the due diligence questionnaire needed for municipalities when they are a co-applicant?
Answer:	Yes, every co-applicant must hand in the due diligence and financial capacity questionnaire forms completed and signed. Please be aware that these documents are important to assess the eligibility criterion.
Question:	Does the registration date of organisation (court registration) affect the application?
Answer:	The registration date of organisations is asked and considered in the due diligence and financial capacity questionnaire. The whole questionnaire will be considered during the evaluation process.
Question:	Is it possible to add additional co-applicants in the full proposal which were not included in the concept note?
Answer:	Generally, this is not possible, as it affects the complete project structure. Please use the section “stakeholders” in the full proposal form to describe the involvement of further partners and stakeholders, reflecting their role in the project. However, if this approach does not fit for your project, please kindly contact your regional focal point or the BESTbelt Office first for further assistance. In case co-applicants are added to the full proposal, documents related to new co-applicants need to be submitted with the full proposal (i.e., co-applicant declaration and mandate, signature, due-diligence, any other relevant informaiton).
Question:	Is it possible to change the project period compared to the concept note?
Answer:	If you adjust the project duration, you should justify exactly why this is necessary. Please be aware that the earliest starting date for projects is 1st October 2024.
Question:	Which forms need to be filled in by co-applicants?
Answer:	The full proposal form, the budget form and the logical framework are filled in for all applicants together. The due diligence form is mandatory for all applicants. The financial ID form is only needed for the lead applicant.
Question:	Who should complete and use the Logframe?
Answer:	The Logframe is a document to support the grantee on planning, conducting and assessing his own project. Also, it is a document that will follow the grantee from the beginning to the end of his project. Each project has one Logframe, and this

	document should be overseen by the lead applicant and ideally by the co-applicant(s) as well. Therefore, one document should be filled out for the project by the lead applicant with the acknowledgement of his co-applicant partners.
REPORTING AND PRE-FINANCING	
Question:	How often will I need to report during project implementation?
Answer:	The reporting requirements will be defined in detail in the grant contract. In general, grantees are foreseen to report every six months.
Question:	Which exchange rate do we have to use for reporting?
Answer:	Reporting requirements are described in the reporting guidelines, handed out to all grantees. For the financial reporting, the official European Commission accounting rates (InforEuro)[1] are asked to be applied. Therefor the exchange rate of the month of the last instalment for the BESTbelt project shall be used.
Question:	How to report driven kilometres with own vehicles?
Answer:	For organisation own cars, a proof o mileage based on your travel route is needed for mileage allowance. The maximum amount that can be accounted per kilometres is EUR 0,30 (cents/Km). For private cars, the actually incurred costs, paid out by the organisation, can be reported (capped at EUR 0,30/km). A proof of payment (e.g. bank statement) is needed to document the payment. In general, just the actually incurred and accounted costs, can be reported. Kilometres have to be documented in an understandable way, including starting and ending point and the purpose of the journey.
Question:	Is it necessary to have a separate bank account for the project?
Answer:	No, this is not needed. Ideally, all payments should be made from the account number you provide in the contract.
Question:	Will the grant be transferred in EUR or in my national currency?
Answer:	The grant will be transferred in EUR. Charges for currency conversion differ according to each bank.
Question:	Is it necessary to have a separate cost centre or reference number in the accounting system?

[1] https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/procedures-guidelines-tenders/information-contractors-and-beneficiaries/exchange-rate-inforeuro_en

Answer:	The reporting requirements are defined in detail in the reporting guidelines. However, it is helpful if a specific project reference is used in analytical accounting system(s) and time registration so that costs may be clearly attributed to your BESTbelt project.
Question:	What kind of receipts do I need to provide with the reports?
Answer:	All the reporting requirements and necessary supporting documents are defined in the reporting guidelines, as well as in the corresponding reporting templates. Please notice that all expenses need to be clearly documented (e.g., invoices, timesheets, pay-slips, bank statements) and proved by a proof of payment (e. g. bank receipt). Indirect costs do not need to be declared during reporting. However, all indirect costs need to be internally archived in case you have to provide it during an audit.
Question:	Do we have to translate our invoices?
Answer:	This is not needed, because we require the financial report to be prepared logically and in full. However, the project team may ask for translations if needed. Additionally, comments and explanations can be provided in English for each financial document, if necessary.
Question:	How will the payment of the grant be organised?
Answer:	The grant will be provided in separate payments (usually in three instalments), as a pre-financing. The first instalment (60% of your total approved grant) will be transferred after the signature of the grant agreement or just about the start of your project, in case your project starts after October 2024. The second instalment (30% of your grant) is due after the approval of one midterm progress report. If at the end of the reporting period the expenditures actually incurred is less than the previous payment, the further pre-financing payment shall be reduced by the underspent amount. The final instalment (remaining 10% of your grant) will be provided after the final summary report. The total sum of all pre-financing and interim payments will not exceed 90% of the total grant. The remaining 10% balance will be paid following the approval of the final summary report. Be aware that the definition of the instalment payments will be set at the time of contract agreement, once your project has been approved.
Question:	Is an audit needed for the project?
Answer:	There is no regular audit needed for the project. However, it is possible that documents must be made available in connection with the final BESTbelt audit. So please keep your original documentation up to five years after finalising your BESTbelt project.

COSTS AND BUDGET	
Question:	Is it possible to change the project budget in the full proposal compared to the concept note?
Answer:	Deviations from the concept note budget are possible but the total project budget may not deviate by more than 20%. The grant may be awarded up to a maximum of 40.000 EUR. If your project is in the category of transboundary projects you may apply for up to a maximum of 60.000 EUR.
Question:	My country has a standard regulation for paying transportation costs that are higher than 0,30€/Km, which is different from the BESTbelt program. Which fee will apply to my project, and who will pay it?
Answer:	BESTbelt can only cover 0,30€ per Km of transportation costs (Transport with own vehicle, see Budget template) for your project. In case you have a higher fee applied in your country, you must cover the rest of the transportation cost with your own money.
Question:	Do we have to provide further details for our overheads?
Answer:	No, overheads are covered through the indirect costs budget line and need no further prove. You should however be able to justify the rate of indirect costs included in your budget (see also: Operational Manual). For the reporting, we ask you to describe what the amount was spent for. Even if the costs have not to be proved, we ask you to keep the relevant documents (e.g., bills) in case they are needed for the final BESTbelt audit.
Question:	How do I include indirect costs?
Answer:	Indirect costs can be included as up to 7% of the total amount of direct eligible costs (see also: Operational Manual). They are included as a budget line in the form provided. Note that total amount of direct eligible costs refers to the cost categories Human resources, Travel, Equipment and Other costs (budget sections 1 to 4 in budget table).
Question:	When travelling do we have to follow national regulations for daily allowances?
Answer:	Yes, travel costs have to be calculated and paid out to staff according to your internal regulations during the reporting period. However, please be aware that eligible daily rates are capped, according to the daily rates stated in the pdf you received with the reporting template (see pdf file **daily rates travels** with max. amounts that can be remunerated). The daily rates cover the maximum amount of costs, that can be accounted per day and person travelling in the correspondent country. (see reporting guidelines).

BESTbelt

Question:	Are there any costs which are not eligible?
Answer:	All expenditures incurred outside the project period, or which are not directly linked to the project are not eligible. Furthermore, all goods or services provided to the beneficiary free of charge by a third party (contribution in kind) are not eligible costs. See the Operational Manual for more information and examples of non-eligible costs.
Question:	Is there a minimum sum for tendering?
Answer:	Please consult the BESTbelt Procurement regulation for more details on tendering.
Question:	Is VAT eligible?
Answer:	Yes, VAT is eligible but if you are recovering VAT then it is not. If in doubt, please contact the BESTbelt Office for assistance.
Question:	Where do I specify time of spending in the budget form?
Answer:	The budget form (Form 7) is an Excel document with four sheets. On the second sheet (*1.Budget table*), columns have been predefined with reporting periods. According to the duration of your project, you should define 6-month periods and edit this sheet accordingly. Also, note that in the budget table sheet, columns C-E define the entire project period, and the columns that follow define each 6-month reporting period (i.e., columns F-H for period 1, columns I-K for period 2, etc.). Please read the column headers marked in grey to find the specific time of spending for your project.
Question:	My country has a different currency other than Euro. How do I calculate my costs?
Answer:	Estimate the costs in Euro for your proposal using an approximate rate applied to your national currency. You may use online exchange rate programs such as InforEuro[1].
Question:	BESTbelt supports the use of sustainable measures, however in most cases more sustainable products, materials or actions are more expensive. How should I then decide and fit those costs in my budget?
Answer:	For the planning of your budget, you should consider all options available and the trade-off between best price and effectiveness. BESTbelt recommends applicants to use when possible more sustainable products and actions, but you need to evaluate it yourself and find the best balance between completing your budget and covering all costs, including more sustainable options.

BESTbelt

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	
Question:	As a small organization, we do not have employees. For projects, regularly members of our board are engaged. For some donors they are considered as staff and for others as external experts. How does it fit within BESTbelt?
Answer:	Staff/personnel are employed by the (co-)applicant with a regular work contract. Service contracts count as external experts. It is highly recommended to include a minimum of contracted staff, which is accounted by your BESTbelt project to assure the supervision and durability of the project. In any case, please explain the reasons for your working model and how you intend to organise internally as well as potential synergies deriving from the chosen structure. Please state how supervision and durability will be secured.
Question:	Is it possible to include part-time employees additionally as external experts? How about the tendering procedure in this case? These employees are also mentioned in the project application by name.
Answer:	This is a very specific case, and some specifications must be taken into account. Please contact the BESTbelt Office for clarification. In any case the tendering procedure must be an open-ended process so that external experts cannot yet be determined prior to completing the procedure.
Question:	Who is the responsible contact for advice and administration during project implementation?
Answer:	During project implementation, you can always ask your Regional Focal Point for help on specific questions or contact the BESTbelt Office with general and administrative questions.
Question:	Can I download the map of the scope of the EGB, for example as a shapefile?
Answer:	The map is available online here. On this website you may zoom in and look precisely in detail the scope of the European Green Belt. Please note that for Fennoscandia the scope is not assessed yet (map is not marked in green). A map file to be downloaded is not available yet.
Question:	Are permits (i.e., for data collection, fieldwork, etc.) needed to be presented until FP submission?
Answer:	It is not necessary to already have all permits and allowances by the time of full proposal submission. However, it is recommended that applicants already contact relevant authorities and provide a confirmation that they will be able to receive necessary permits. Please also define the time in your project timeline for this action considering any possible delays or problems. Moreover, it would be good that a description about special permits and allowances is presented in the full proposal (what you need and how it will be acquired). If permits are difficult to acquire, consider already setting this up before project initiation or proposal

	submission. Evaluators will assess if this aspect has given enough relevance and if the timely of acquisition is reasonable.
Question:	Is it possible to change activities at the full proposal stage?
Answer:	The full proposal is a continuation of the concept note. If you were selected for the full proposal stage, this means that the core of your proposal together with the activities proposed were evaluated and selected for possible funding. Change of activities may imply fundamental changes in project structure, goal and impact. Therefore, we strongly recommend you not to apply large changes in relation to your concept note. In case you have an urgent need for changing activities, please first contact your RFP to clarify any issues or open questions. Additionally, in your full proposal, please also explain any changes and clearly justify the changes or justify the need for new activities proposed.
Question:	My project includes co-applicants. How should I implement and report the cashflow between my partners?
Answer:	Your proposal should describe the costs for each budget line and clearly define the distribution among partners in each organization. As lead applicant you will be responsible for receiving the project instalments and managing the project budget. It is up to you and the project needs, however, to define the details. Notice that during reporting you will have to provide receipts and confirmation of money transfer to BESTbelt for the approval or your progress reports.