



CEI Cooperation Fund Call for Proposals 2015

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Deadline for application submission: Wednesday, 20 May 2015, 17:00:00 CEST (GMT+2) Trieste time

Applicants need to carefully observe the criteria and obligations set by this Call before submitting their proposals. Rejection clauses will apply automatically as explained over the text.

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1. Background and Primary Objectives

The CEI Cooperation Fund co-finances CEI Cooperation Activities aimed at strengthening cooperation among CEI Member States. CEI Cooperation Activities are organised by institutions of CEI Member States in order to implement the strategic goals and main objectives set by the CEI Guidelines and Rules of Procedure and by the CEI Plan of Action.

CEI Cooperation Activities aim at capacity building by knowledge transfer and sharing, in particular from EU CEI Member States to non-EU CEI Member States, and at exchanging experiences and good practice among all CEI Member States by favouring mobility and networking. In this context, particular attention will be paid to the involvement of non-EU CEI Member States and to a reasonable balance between participating EU and non-EU CEI Member States.

2. Areas of Intervention

CEI Cooperation Activities shall be organised in the ten areas of intervention and related priorities – grouped into three thematic pillars – outlined in the **CEI Plan of Action 2014-2016**:

1. *Towards a Knowledge-based Society*
 - Research and Innovation
 - Life-long Education and Training
 - Information Society
2. *Towards a Sustainable Economy and Development*
 - Transport, Logistics and Accessibility
 - Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
 - Climate, Environment and Rural Development
 - SMEs and Business Development
3. *Towards an Inclusive Society*
 - Intercultural Cooperation
 - Media
 - Civil Society.

The CEI Plan of Action 2014-2016 is available for consultation and ready reference within the CEI website at http://www.cei.int/sites/default/files/502.001-14_plan_of_action_2014-2016_final.pdf

As outlined in the Plan of Action, the CEI is supporting the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies within its territory. The CEI is also supporting its Member States targeted by the Eastern Partnership (EAP) to bring them closer to the EU as well as the SEE 2020 Strategy of the RCC. Proposals reflecting those objectives are welcome.¹

Applicants are requested to refer – within the specific section of the Application Form – to the CEI Plan of Action 2014-2016, not simply by quoting its relevant chapters but by explaining how and why the proposed activity is contributing to meeting the CEI objectives. Copying of any part of the above-said document is not admitted and will possibly cause a negative evaluation or rejection of the application. Applicants, who deem that their proposal is reflecting as well the objectives of the above-said strategies, are requested to explain the envisaged connections.

¹ In drafting their application, Applicants are encouraged to explore possible connections and synergies with the above-mentioned macro-regional strategies, with SEE 2020 Strategy and with the Eastern Partnership (EAP). The relevant information is available at the following websites:

- EUSBSR at <http://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu/>
- EUSDR at <http://www.danube-region.eu/>
- EUSAIR at <http://www.adriatic-ionian.eu/>
- SEE 2020 at <http://www.rcc.int/pages/62/south-east-europe-2020-strategy>
- EaP at http://eeas.europa.eu/eastern/index_en.htm

3. Submission Procedure

3.1. Format

The Application Form (*CF Call 2015 Application Form _ TEMPLATE.docx*) shall be downloaded from the CEI website at <http://www.cei.int/content/cooperation-activities?tab=1>

The **Application Package** to be submitted by email to the CEI shall consist of:

- **Application Form in MS Word** strictly respecting the proposed format (character size, colours, paragraph structure etc. - no inclusion of images or photos).
- **PDF version of the Application** carrying the signature and stamp of the Applicant's institution on the last page.
- **Official proof of registration** (see 6.2. *Eligible Applicants*).

For technical reasons the Application Package email shall not exceed the size limit of 6 MB.

The Application Form shall be filled-in in all its parts: incomplete Applications will be automatically rejected. Application Forms from past Calls as well as incomplete Application Packages will be automatically rejected.

Applicants who have already applied in past Calls are required not to copy or quote any of the descriptions of past Applications (regardless the eligibility of the application and the awarding or not of a CEI co-financing). Should the current proposal be a follow-up of already CEI-supported activities, the innovative aspects and adequate motivations will need to be highlighted in the present application.

Any technical question or problem concerning the format of the Application Form shall be addressed in writing to applications.coopfund@cei.int quoting as subject **CF Call 2015 – Technical Info**

3.2. Deadline

Applications shall be submitted by the deadline of **Wednesday, 20 May 2015, 17:00:00 CEST (GMT+2) Trieste time** carrying as subject of the email the indication **CF Call 2015 – Country – Short title of the Cooperation Activity** (to be filled-in as appropriate). Applications submitted after the established deadline will be automatically rejected.

3.3. Email Address

Applications shall be forwarded **exclusively by email** to the CEI Secretariat to applications.coopfund@cei.int

The CEI National Coordinator of the country of the Applicant institution must be in copy to the submission email (see the contact list at <http://www.cei.int/contacts/National%2BCo-ordinators>). If the CEI National Coordinator of the Applicant's country is not put in copy in the submission email, the Application will be automatically rejected.

International/regional organisations shall forward applications directly to applications.coopfund@cei.int

Under this Call for Proposals an Applicant institution can submit **only one Application Form**. Should an Applicant institution submit more than one Application, all the Applications submitted will be rejected. Furthermore, should an Applicant be partner/beneficiary in Applications different from that submitted by it, the Secretariat reserves the right to reject this other application or to exclude the concerned partner/beneficiary.

Applicants to the CEI Cooperation Fund cannot submit to any other CEI Fund and Instrument applications for activities which may be directly/indirectly connected with the Cooperation Activity they applied for. Should this be the case, the Application will be rejected or the awarded contribution withdrawn.

3.4. Notification within Respective Appraisal Phases

3.4.1. Assignment of Reference Number

Upon receipt of the submission email, the Secretariat will assign a Reference Number to the Application (1202.xxx-16) and notify the Applicant by email as appropriate in the next days. Applicants will need to keep the Reference Number for monitoring the further appraisal and notification phases.

3.4.2. Shortlisting of Applications

Upon completion of the Administrative and Eligibility Check, the roster of shortlisted applications classifying for proceeding to the second phase of the evaluation will be published on the CEI website. The list of those which have failed meeting the Administrative and Eligibility Check criteria will as well be published. No direct notification to Applicants will occur at this stage.

3.4.3. Evaluation Phase

Shortlisted Applications only, will proceed to the following evaluation phase by the competent CEI structures according to an Evaluation Grid (see 12. *Assessment Grids*). Only Applications reaching a *good* (61-80) or *very good* (81-100) total score according to the Evaluation Grid are eligible to receive possible CEI co-financing. No direct communication to Applicants will occur at this stage.

3.4.4. Allocation of a CEI contribution

As stated by CEI Rules for Allocation of Resources in Rule C4, the decision on allocation of CEI contributions is taken by the Committee of CEI National Coordinators (CNC). The Secretariat will notify directly both the Applicants who are awarded with a CEI contribution and those who are not. The direct notification will occur by email exclusively at a date following the meeting in which the decision has been taken.

4. Budget of the Call

The overall indicative amount made available under this Call for Proposals is **four hundred thousand Euros (400.000 EUR)** that will be made available by the CEI Cooperation Fund which is financed by all CEI Member States. The CEI reserves the right not to award all available funds.

5. Size of Potential CEI Contribution

Applicants can request a CEI contribution up to the maximum amount of **fifteen thousand Euros (15.000 EUR)**. Any Application requesting more than the above-mentioned ceiling will be automatically rejected.

The CEI contribution cannot exceed 50% of the total cost of a given Cooperation Activity. Applications, which are not meeting this condition, will be automatically rejected.

The balance must be financed from the Applicants' own resources or from other sources, including in-kind contributions, the latter anyhow remaining within a reasonable proportion (not exceeding 25%) of the total budget of the activity.

The CEI reserves the right not to award the entire requested contribution to a given Cooperation Activity.

6. Eligibility Criteria

The Applications shall fulfil the following eligibility criteria:

6.1. Compliance to the CEI Plan of Action

The Application should mainly refer to one of the areas of intervention and respective priorities (see 2. *Areas of Intervention*) as specified in the CEI Plan of Action 2014-2016. Activities which are not in line with the Plan of Action and/or with the proposed area of intervention and respective priorities will be automatically rejected. While interdisciplinarity is considered an asset, multiple references to the Plan of Action should be avoided.

6.2. Eligible Applicants

All public and private entities based and registered in CEI Member States as well as international/regional organisations can apply. Individuals cannot apply. All Applicants shall refer to their legal status within the Application Form, referring to the relevant legislation or act as appropriate. Non-Governmental and Civil Society Organisations as well as private entities shall annex an official proof of registration to the Application Form with a courtesy translation into English.

6.3. Eligible Activities

CEI Cooperation Activities can take the form of conferences, seminars, workshops, and other types of meetings, training activities as well as preparation of studies and analysis. Other types of activities meeting the primary objectives can also be taken into consideration, including those initiatives aimed to facilitate

the generation of projects that can contribute to the implementation of the macro-regional strategies and SEE 2020.

Applications organised over multiple activities are admissible but Applicants shall request the CEI support only for one defined portion/event of the programme falling into the calendar year 2016. Should the Applicant not elaborate on this, the CEI reserves the right to choose – provided the application has successfully proceeded to the allocation phase – the single event and related budget lines to be awarded with a CEI contribution.

During the evaluation there will be no preference given to one type of activity over the other: apart from compliance to the CEI Rules for Allocation of Resources and accuracy in providing comprehensive information over the proposed activity, the extent and quality of regional cooperation in these activities will be taken into consideration as well as the added value with respect to European integration.

6.4. Participation Quorum

Regardless the type of activity proposed, Applicants should pay the utmost attention to the aspects related to participation of attendees from the CEI region and to knowledge and experience sharing, which shall represent the main focus of CEI Cooperation Activities. Applicants shall first and foremost respect the participation quorum set by CEI Rules for Allocation of Resources in Rule A5 (*at least half plus one, but in no case less than one third of CEI Member States*), bearing in mind that the quorum applies to both participants and speakers.

Higher rating will be given to applications foreseeing the participation of a larger number of CEI Member States. Particular attention will be paid to the involvement of non-EU CEI Member States and to a reasonable balance between participating EU and non-EU CEI Member States. The number of local participants and speakers ought to be in a reasonable proportion to participation from other CEI countries. The CEI regional character should be preserved (in terms of reasonable proportion of participants) in Cooperation Activities involving a large number of third countries.

Any application envisaging a CEI participation scheme below the minimum allowed quorum will be automatically rejected.

6.5. Eligible Expenses

The budget lines that are eligible to be reimbursed by the CEI contribution should mainly focus on participation of attendees from the CEI region. The CEI contribution shall indeed be designed in order to favour to the maximum extent possible the attendance of foreign CEI participants and speakers in the proposed activity. Locally borne expenses which are not influencing international participation shall only residually be included in the requested CEI contribution.

The budget lines that are eligible to CEI reimbursement encompass, inter alia:

- **Travel and accommodation expenses of CEI participants and speakers.**
This budget line refers to travel and accommodation expenses of foreign CEI participants and speakers. Local participants from the country of the organising institution are admitted to CEI reimbursement exclusively in activities organised by non-EU CEI Member States that are taking place in the same CEI member country.
In no case representatives of the organising institution, and in particular the project and financial manager, can request to be reimbursed for mission costs from any approved CEI contribution. This applies also to cases in which the organising institution and the implementation venue of the activity are located in different localities and/or countries.
Please note that a participant and/or speaker is classified as 'CEI' when he/she permanently depends on and officially represents a sending institution based/registered in a CEI country. Nationals of CEI countries living or working for institutions outside the CEI region cannot be classified as 'CEI participants / speakers'.
- **Local transport costs** (for foreign CEI attendees) connected to the event, including airport transfers as appropriate.

- **Subsistence costs** of foreign participants during the event (meals, coffee breaks and refreshments) up to a reasonable share and not more than 50% of the budget line.
- **Social programmes** connected to the activity, including costs of site visits disciplinarily relevant to the activities, up to a reasonable proportion and amount and not more than 20% of the budget line.
- **Printing and text translation** exclusively from/to English. Please note that text translation is admitted in very special cases only when a concrete added value is proven as the working language of the CEI is English.
- **Conference kits** (pens, notepads, folders, bags) up to a limited proportion and amount and not more than 20% of the budget line.
- **Conference venue preparation** (hall and audio-visual equipment rent).
- **Fees** for foreign speakers from CEI member countries and preferably from non-EU CEI member countries up to a reasonable percentage of the overall participation expenses and within the limits set by CEI Rule B8.

In case Applicants find it difficult to ensure the attendance of CEI participants and speakers as outlined in their Application Form they are invited to contact CEI National Coordinators and/or Focal Points and seek their assistance in identifying qualified representatives to be invited.

Please note that the cost estimate of the proposed activity needs to be realistic and reflect real needs and expenses in a manner which can be verified. Non-motivated, overestimated and rough, lump sum calculations will be negatively considered. Particular attention shall be paid to the consistency of the budget estimate to the overall description and relevant parts of the Application Form.

The CEI reserves the right to apportion a CEI contribution to a given Cooperation Activity to a limited number of (including a single) eligible budget lines.

6.6. Non Eligible Expenses

The CEI contribution cannot reimburse organisational or administrative costs (including human resources of the organising institution and all related national and international mission costs in preparation of, during and after the activity, overheads, bank fees, courier or postage expenses...), non-CEI participants, speakers or other attendees, translations from/to languages both different from English, purchase of materials and equipment, registration fees, in-kind contributions². Simultaneous interpretation costs and the rent of the related equipment are not eligible to CEI reimbursement either. Web creation, design and maintenance as well as any human resource cost for design and implementation of promotional activities are not eligible to be reimbursed by the CEI contribution either.

6.7. Exchange Rate Fluctuations and National Fiscal Regulations

The budget of the Application Form shall be outlined in Euro. The Applicant is entirely responsible of the calculations leading to the outlined budget estimate including currency conversions and national/local taxes and levies (e.g. VAT). The CEI is not responsible of or reimbursing currency rate variations and cannot be charged with potential shortages or financial consequences of exchange rate fluctuations and underestimation or disregard of national fiscal regulations by the Applicant. Budget calculations in countries

² An in-kind contribution is a non-cash, other than monetary contribution or input which can be given a cash value. Expenditures in-kind are expenditures not giving rise to an actual payment: they can take the form of:

- donation of goods or services, time or expertise, rather than cash or appreciated property;
- infrastructure support, office supplies support, equipment support etc. ;
- human resources of the organising institution

which are outside the Euro zone can take as basis the exchange rate of the National Bank of their country on the day of submitting the Application.

The CEI contribution is transferred in Euro. Bank transfers to accounts in a local currency are likely to be automatically converted by the recipient's bank to the currency of the account, using the exchange rate of the date of transaction. In any such cases, the CEI will not be responsible of any possible depreciation of the transferred tranches of the CEI contribution.

7. Implementation Period

The activities within this Call shall be implemented from 1 January to 31 December 2016. In activities being carried out over longer implementation periods a possible CEI contribution can be approved only for a portion being implemented in the year 2016. The exact date and venue of the proposed activity shall be referred to in the Application Form, generic information is not acceptable.

8. Location

CEI Cooperation Activities must take place in CEI Member States.

9. Indicative Timetable of Appraisal Phases

- Deadline for submission of Applications: Wednesday, 20 May 2015, 17:00:00 CEST (GMT+2) Trieste time
- Administrative and Eligibility Check: Until mid June 2015
- Acknowledging shortlisted Applicants (qualified; rejected) by publication on CEI website: by the end of June 2015
- Evaluation of Applications: July 2015
- Co-financing awarding: September to December 2015 with direct communication to Applicants.

10. Amendments to the Call

Up to fifteen (15) days before the deadline for submission of Applications, the CEI reserves the right to amend the present Call for Proposals by issuing addenda and/or amendments. Any addendum or amendment issued will become an integral part of the Call for Proposals upon being published at the following link <http://www.cei.int/content/cooperation-activities?tab=1>

11. Questions

Any question regarding the Call for Proposals shall be addressed – up to fifteen (15) days before the deadline for submission – exclusively in written form by email to applications.coopfund@cei.int quoting as subject **CF Call 2015 – Questions**. The Secretariat reserves the right to reply within a week's time. Pre-screening of applications and/or project ideas before official submission is not admitted.

12. Assessment Grids

In compliance with a criterion of full transparency and in order to help Applicants in an effective compilation of the Application Form, the assessment grids for evaluation of applications are provided below.

Administrative and eligibility check	Yes/No/Partly
Submission	
Has the Applicant respected the submission deadline?	
Was the Application submitted to the correct recipients (CEI email; National Coordinator)?	
Has the Applicant submitted only one application within the Call?	
Is the Application filled-in correctly in all its parts?	
Compliance	
Is the Applicant eligible?	
Is the type of activity eligible?	
Is the activity in line with the objectives of the Call?	
Is the activity in line with the Plan of Action, the areas of intervention and the respective priorities?	
Is the activity reflecting the objectives of a macro-regional strategy or SEE 2020?	
Is the implementation date in line with the Call?	
Is the participation quorum and percentage respected?	

Is the budget clear and the requested CEI contribution in line with the CEI Rules?	
Is the amount of the requested CEI contribution in line with the Call?	
Past experience	
Has the Applicant already applied for or obtained any CEI contribution?	
In case of recurring applications, is the CEI past experience with the Applicant positive?	

Evaluation grid	Score ³
1. Relevance to the CEI Plan of Action and to other regional strategies	/ 10
To which extent does the proposed activity comply with the priorities set by CEI Plan of Action?	
To which extent does the proposal meet with the needs of the targeted beneficiaries?	
2. Quality of the information	/ 5
Is the information reported in the Application Form satisfactory?	
3. Applicant's operational capacity	/ 15
Applicant's expertise and past experience	
Partners' expertise and past experience	
Partnership structure	
4. Participation	/ 10
Is the Applicant meeting the participation quorum? ⁴	
To which extent is the participation scheme in compliance with the regional character requested to Cooperation Activities?	
5. Impact and sustainability	/ 10
To which extent is the proposed activity suitable of contributing to meeting the envisaged goals?	
To which extent is the proposed activity likely to have a follow-up?	
6. Cost effectiveness and budget coherence	/ 15
To which extent is the budget clear, consistent and detailed?	
To which extent is the proposed budget sound and cost-effective?	
To which extent is the envisaged co-financing scheme sound and effective?	
7. Results/objectives	/ 20
Is the proposed activity likely to have an appropriate, practical and consistent outcome?	
Does the activity contain objectively verifiable indicators for measuring the expected outcome?	
Impact of the activity on regional cooperation	
Impact of the activity on European integration	
8. Visibility, dissemination and promotion	/ 15
Is the envisaged CEI visibility adequate?	
What is the quality of the promotional activities related to the action?	
What is the impact of the envisaged post-implementation dissemination scheme?	
TOTAL	/ 100

Comments

Final Score

00-20 not acceptable | 21-40 insufficient | 41-60 acceptable | 61-80 good | 81-100 very good

³ **Score:** Very good (5), good (4), acceptable (3), insufficient (2), not acceptable (1). Only Applications reaching a *good* (61-80) or *very good* (81-100) total score according to the evaluation grid below are eligible to receive possible CEI co-financing.

⁴ **Score:** All CEI Member States (5); more than two-thirds of CEI Member States (4); respecting the half-plus-one quorum (3); below the half-plus-one quorum (2); minimum allowed quorum (1)