



**Terms of Reference: 1st Call for Proposals Urban
Innovative Actions**

15/12/2015 – 31/03/2016

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1. Introduction

As stated in the Article 8 ERDF¹, ERDF may support innovative actions in the area of sustainable urban development. In this framework, the European Commission has launched the Urban Innovative Actions (UIA) Initiative in order to identify and test new solutions which address issues related to sustainable urban development and are of relevance at Union level.

The main aim of the UIA Initiative is therefore to provide urban authorities across Europe with space and resources to test bold and unproven ideas addressing interconnected challenges and experiment how these respond to the complexity of real life. Projects to be supported shall be innovative, of good quality, designed and implemented with the involvement of key stakeholders, result oriented and transferable.

The UIA Initiative has a total ERDF budget of around EUR 372 million.

UIA projects will be selected through annual Calls for Proposals from 2015 to 2020 on one or more topics proposed by the Commission.

Each project can receive up to EUR 5 million ERDF co-financing. There is no fixed minimum size for UIA project budgets. However, small projects (i.e. below EUR 1 million ERDF requested) may have a reduced probability of being selected as they may struggle to demonstrate that the actions are of sufficient scale to produce meaningful conclusions.

Project implementation must take place within a maximum period of 3 years.

The UIA Initiative is an instrument of the Commission and is managed by the DG for Regional and Urban Policy under indirect management. For the implementation of the Initiative, the Commission has designated the Region Nord-Pas de Calais as Entrusted Entity. For the management of the Initiative, a Permanent Secretariat (PS) has been established.

With the present Terms of Reference, the Entrusted Entity is inviting eligible authorities to submit project proposals in the framework of the 1st Call for Proposals. For this Call for Proposals a budget of EUR 80 million is allocated.

¹ European Regional Development Fund Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32013R1301>

The present document sets out the requirement and process to follow for the 1st Call for Proposals. It should be read in conjunction with the [UIA Guidance](#) and the [guidance for the Application Form](#), published on the UIA website.

2. Eligible authorities – Who can apply

Article 2 UIA² establishes that the following authorities may apply for support to undertake UIA projects:

- Any urban authority of a local administrative unit defined according to the degree of urbanisation as city, town or suburb comprising at least 50 000 inhabitants
- Any association or grouping of urban authorities of local administrative units defined according to the degree of urbanisation as city, town or suburb where the total population is at least 50 000 inhabitants; this can include cross-border associations or groupings, associations or groupings in different regions and/or Member States

Definitions for the concepts of local administrative units and degree of urbanisation are provided by Eurostat³. In particular, in the framework of the UIA Initiative the concept of local administrative unit refers to the democratically elected administrative body relevant to the urban area concerned (e.g. city council, municipality, borough, etc.).

In order to ensure the consistency of the figures related to the total number of inhabitants, in the case of single urban authorities as well as for associations and groupings of cities, applicants are invited to refer to the information provided in spreadsheet elaborated by Eurostat⁴.

However, as not all Member States describe their locally governed areas as local administrative units, it is possible that there are some inconsistencies and gaps in the Eurostat spreadsheet. As such, if an urban authority believes that it is eligible but does not appear in the Eurostat spreadsheet, or it feels that the information is somehow inconsistent with the reality of its situation, it is invited to apply.

² UIA Delegated Regulation (EU) No 522/2014: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:32014R0522>

³ Definition of Local Administrative Unit: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Glossary:Local_administrative_unit_%28LAU%29

Definition of degree of urbanisation: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Glossary:Degree_of_urbanisation

⁴ EUROSTAT/ Urban Audit database, Correspondance table LAU2-NUTS2010, EU28 (2012): <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/nuts/local-administrative-units>

However, in case which are uncertain the UIA PS will liaise with all relevant partners, including Eurostat, to determine the eligibility.

The category of associations and groupings of urban authorities where the population is at least 50 000 inhabitants can include institutions with a legal status of organised agglomerations⁵, and therefore considered as tiers of government by the national legislation (i.e. Communautés d'Agglomération in France, Città Metropolitane in Italy, Metropolitan Authorities in the United Kingdom), but also organisations without a legal status of organised agglomeration, created on a voluntary basis by the urban authorities involved (already existing or created for the purpose of the UIA initiative).

In the case of associations and groupings recognised as organised agglomerations, the institution, including all the other urban authorities involved, will be considered as the Urban Authority.

In the case of associations and/or groupings of urban authorities without a legal status of organised agglomeration, the urban authorities involved are requested to identify one Main Urban Authority and the Associated Urban Authorities.

Previous experiences show that single projects delivered by associations or grouping of cities without a status of organised agglomeration, comprising more than 3 urban authorities, and without territorial contiguity, risk losing coherence and having difficulties in delivering meaningful results. As such, it is recommended that associations and/or groupings of urban authorities (without the status of organised agglomerations) who wish to apply should be territorially contiguous and seek to limit the number of Associated Urban Authorities involved.

All Urban Authorities shall be located in an EU Member State.

Only authorities as listed above may submit an Application Form in the framework of the Call for Proposals for UIA.

An Urban Authority or an association/grouping can submit only one project proposal in the framework of the present Call for Proposals.

⁵ Organised agglomerations are defined as associations and groupings of urban authorities represented by politico-administrative institutions having delegated competences for policy-making and implementation in the policy area covered by the Urban Innovative Action project.

3. Thematic coverage for the 1st Call for Proposals

The Commission has decided to closely align the topics that Urban Authorities can address through the UIA Initiative to those defined in the framework of the EU Urban Agenda.

More especially, each Call for Proposals for UIA will focus on a limited number of topics. For the 1st Call for Proposals applicants can submit project proposals addressing the following topics:

- Urban poverty (with a focus on deprived urban neighbourhoods)
- Integration of migrants and refugees
- Energy transition
- Jobs and skills in the local economy

As stated, the Commission's desire is to see projects proposed that bring forth creative, innovative and durable solutions to address the various challenges identified. As UIA will also be a laboratory for new ideas, the Commission aims to encourage novel experimentation which draws on experience in a variety of disciplines. For that reason, the Commission has avoided being overly prescriptive in terms of describing the types of projects it expects to see proposed.

In addition, as these projects are in essence isolated test cases, a flexible interpretation will be used in terms of what can be funded by the ERDF as part of a single UIA project. However, the overall project must be supportive of the thematic objectives and investment priorities of the ERDF. Consequently, if necessary, a project may be able to finance an activity that would normally be funded under conventional operational programmes via the European Social Fund (ESF), provided that:

1. The knowledge generated by the overall project can be viewed as contributing effectively to the thematic objectives and investment priorities of the ERDF; and
2. The project is not overwhelmingly focussed on an activity more typically covered by the ESF

- **Urban poverty (with a focus on deprived neighborhoods)**

Poverty has a huge impact upon cities – whether through the costs it generates in terms of lost productivity and lost contributions to the public purse, or through its side effects such as the potential for increased social tension, increased probability of poor health and an increased tendency towards social and spatial segregation. Addressing poverty also has a direct impact on local budgets due to e.g.

the intense use of enabling support services and local benefits/subsidies allocated to alleviate poverty. It is therefore no surprise that combating urban poverty (and in particular the related social/spatial segregation) was identified by stakeholders at the city, national and European level as one of the key priorities that an EU Urban Agenda should pursue.

The identification of this issue and its importance is nothing new. Indeed, one of the aims of the Europe 2020 strategy is to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion by 20 million relative to 2010. However, despite the ambitious aim, since the start of the economic crisis, the situation has worsened. Between 2008 and 2012 the number of people in the EU at risk of poverty or social exclusion increased by 6.5 million to almost a quarter (24,8%) of the population. In 2012, every fourth European was at risk of poverty or social exclusion⁶. As such, it remains clear that there is much to do in this area in terms of generating innovative solutions.

Poverty has multiple contributing factors such as unemployment or working in precarious jobs, low income/pensions and inadequate social benefits, low educational attainment, health inequalities, high housing costs/poor housing quality and location, barriers to access to quality services, childcare and education and inefficient service delivery, high/rising level of household costs (e.g. food, utility, transportation expenses), the rise of single households/single parents, discrimination and low level of participation in community and public life. These factors tend to combine with others to create a vicious cycle of poverty that is structural and visibly concentrated spatially in many EU cities and neighbourhoods. This point is particularly important - poverty not only exacerbates social differences between people and groups; but also leads to significant effects on the way that cities define their spaces and zones. As poverty increases, so too does the risk of concentration of the urban poor in deprived areas, which are characterized by social segregation, stigmatisation of a wider section of citizens, reduced mobility (incl. less access to public transport), limited access to credit, housing deprivation and not only environmental degradation but reduced public spending on its prevention.

In order to make a real impact on reducing urban poverty, the Commission's desire is to see projects proposed that bring forth innovative and novel solutions, in particular regarding the fundamentals driving cyclic poverty in deprived areas. The Commission wants to see projects that deal with the interconnectedness of the major causal factors, combining people and place-based approaches in

⁶ EC, Sixth report on economic, social and territorial cohesion, 2014:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/publications?title=&themeld=0&tObjectiveld=ALL&typeld=14&countryld=0&periodld=0&fundld=0&policyld=0&languageCode=en&search=1

order to identify and implement sustainable solutions that break the circle of social and spatial polarisation.

- **Integration of migrants and refugees**

In terms of the key drivers of global urbanisation, migration is one of the most important, together with fertility and life expectancy. For many cities it may even be the most important. As such, a well-thought through migration policy is an essential component of effective urban development. However, migration policy will only succeed if it is underpinned by effective inclusion policies, which through the provision of services and opportunities, ensures the long-term integration of migrants into the urban fabric.

Cities are undoubtedly at the forefront of this situation as they are often the first port of call for migrants due to the level and quality of services and infrastructure that they provide. Thus they are often faced with the difficult, complex and long-term process of fostering integration and mutual trust. If this integration into the urban fabric is poorly managed, it can result in multiple problems and ineffective solutions that completely fail to address basic needs, and lead to the exclusion of migrants from the labour market, housing, health and education services etc. This is a particular risk when cities are asked to deal with sizeable and sudden population movements that put sudden pressure on the services of the cities.

While many urban authorities in the EU are now attuned to the realities and policy responses needed for the effective inclusion of migrants and refugees; in terms of ERDF, there is a wide range of measures capable to support their effective integration e.g.:

- Investments in social and health infrastructure: community-based social care, community centres, shelters, prevention and primary care health services, etc.
- Investments in education infrastructure: kindergarten, schools, vocational schools, etc.
- Urban regeneration: physical and social regeneration of areas in which migrants/refugees are concentrated
- Housing infrastructure: social housing

As stated previously, UIA projects will be in essence isolated test cases and it is accepted that the effectiveness of the types of investments listed above largely depend on their coordination with social integration and labour market measures (such as training, language courses, counselling, coaching,

vocational training and employment measures). - Therefore a flexible interpretation will be used in terms of what can be funded by the ERDF as part of a single UIA project, provided that the overall project can be viewed as supportive of the thematic objectives and investment priorities for ERDF.

- **Energy transition**

Energy transition is perhaps best defined as a shift from a system dominated by finite (chiefly fossil-based) energy towards a system⁷ using a majority of renewable energy sources, also maximising the opportunities available from increased energy efficiency and better management of energy demand. As with many challenges, urban areas are the places in which the greatest progress can be made on energy transition. How cities grow and operate has a huge impact on energy demand as they account for 60 to 80% of global energy consumption and around the same share of CO2 emissions.

This is a crucial issue for the EU. A high level of energy efficiency is beneficial for security of supply, sustainability, affordability for households and industry and competitiveness of the EU economy. Indeed, it is one of the key objectives of EU energy and climate policy, as set out in the recent Energy Union Communication, the 2014 European Energy Security Strategy and Energy Efficiency Communication.

For years cities have been pushing ahead with local initiatives and projects on sustainable energy and have been leading from the front on the issue of transition to a more efficient and secure energy outlook. UIA aims to help accelerate this transition. Without being prescriptive in terms of the types of projects we wish to see, there are however some key elements that urban authorities proposing projects should consider. For instance:

- Increasing the production of renewable energy at local level and improving its distribution
- Energy efficient retrofitting of buildings – buildings consume some 40% of final energy in the EU and this is the largest and most cost-effective area for improvement
- Energy efficiency measures with the aim of minimising the risk of fuel poverty and its consequences (e.g. poor health, child poverty, educational under-achievement etc.)
- Increasing the adoption of low carbon technologies

⁷ Energy Cities, 30 Energy Cities' proposals for the energy transition of cities and towns, 2014: http://www.energy-cities.eu/IMG/pdf/cahier_short_jan2014_en.pdf

- Supporting energy efficiency and smart energy management in public infrastructure and the housing sector
- Moderating the demand for heating and cooling and deploying innovative, nature-based solutions to heat/cool buildings and neighbourhoods
- Addressing non-technological barriers i.e. promoting behavioural change towards more sustainable choices and reducing demand for energy

It is clear from the type of activities described above that 'energy transition' encompasses technological, societal, cultural, economic and environmental aspects and there is a clear implication that it also means a more active role for citizens and communities. Thus, while urban authorities should feel free to experiment with bold ideas, they should seek to involve and inform their citizens, not least to ensure early buy-in ahead of any new technological solutions aiming to improve the outlook.

- **Jobs and skills in the local economy**

In the discussions on the EU Urban Agenda, the issue of job creation was consistently raised as one of the top priorities for the EU, Member States, cities and citizens. This is not surprising when one considers that whilst the level of unemployment has been falling in recent times, 22.6 million people in the EU were unemployed as of September 2015, with many of these in the age groups that should normally be the most productive and involved in a healthy, prosperous society.

As with the other topics, cities are in a unique position to address this challenge because urban authorities take decisions that are closest to most citizens. As the EU gradually moves out of the economic crisis, it should be remembered that more than two-thirds of the EU's workforce live in cities and that urban agglomerations are the main drivers for innovation, competitiveness and economic growth across Europe. Cities therefore have a key role to play in creating and supporting the right conditions for the innovative investments that lead to more and better jobs for their citizens.

Once more, the kinds of projects expected are not defined in detail, but the URBACT report "More jobs: better cities"⁸ could be used for inspiration as it sets out some of the steps that urban authorities can take to stimulate growth and jobs. For instance:

⁸ More Jobs : Better Cities, Urbact report 2013: <http://urbact.eu/more-jobs-better-cities-framework-city-action-jobs>

- Strengthening local supply chains to help the local economy to benefit from the local market and playing an active role in building connections between local companies, their stakeholders, and both local and broader market opportunities
- Actions to help maximise demand and to enhance the connection of local SMEs with wider markets
- Supporting existing SMEs, identifying their key challenges and providing innovative solutions
- Providing a business-enhancing environment, working in collaboration with the business community and building bridges among complementary businesses (i.e. circular economy, waste from one process being raw material for another...)
- Developing an enhanced entrepreneurial culture and fostering the creation of new firms and social enterprises by promoting favourable local eco-systems, including through 'business incubators' and similar initiatives
- Fostering job-rich sectors such as the green economy, health, ICT etc.

In order to get the most benefits from economic growth, the Commission recognises that cities need to ensure a good match between demand (the jobs available) and supply (the people who want them) in their labour markets. Upgrading skills levels and better foresight regarding labour market needs are essential; people need to have the right skills if they are to be employed long-term by a competitive employer. Elements that could be considered by cities when designing actions: working with educational establishments to match their teaching to the evolving labour market needs, stimulating skills demand, cooperating with employers to make sure the skills needed are known in advance.

As stated previously and because UIA projects will be in essence isolated test cases, a flexible interpretation will be used in terms of what can be funded by the ERDF as part of a single UIA project, provided that the overall project can be viewed as contributing effectively to the thematic objectives and investment priorities of the ERDF; and that the project is not overwhelmingly focussed on an activity more typically covered by the ESF.

4. Funding Principle

The UIA Initiative follows the "total costs" principle. A project is co-financed by the ERDF up to 80% of the eligible costs. Every partner receiving ERDF needs to secure public or private contribution to complete its budget (20% at least) either from its own resources or from other sources. However, it is encouraged that the majority of contributions come from public sources.

The UIA payment scheme is mainly based on the principle of advance ERDF payment:

- A first ERDF advance payment corresponding to 50% of the ERDF grant is made to the Urban Authority on signature of the Subsidy Contract
- A second ERDF advance payment corresponding to 30% of the ERDF grant is made to the Urban Authority after the submission and approval of an interim progress report which includes audited project expenditure
- A third ERDF payment is made upon approval of the final progress report which also includes the audited project expenditure
- A final ERDF payment is made to the project after the submission and approval of the final qualitative report

Detailed information on the funding principle for UIA projects is provided in section 1.7 of the UIA Guidance.

5. Project generation and development

5.1 Partnership for Urban Innovative Actions

Within the UIA projects, Urban Authorities are expected to establish strong local partnerships with the right mix of complementary partners. All partners need to be from the EU. A partnership can be made up of the following:

- **Urban Authority:** the UIA Initiative functions on the basis of an Urban Authority who is responsible for the overall implementation and management of the entire project.

Nota bene :

- In the case of associations and groupings recognised as organised agglomerations, the institution, including all the other urban authorities involved, will be considered as the Urban Authority in the framework of the UIA project

- In the case of associations and/or groupings of urban authorities without a legal status of organised agglomeration, the urban authorities involved are requested to identify one Main Urban Authority and the Associated Urban Authorities. More especially:
 - The Main Urban Authority is responsible for the overall implementation and management of the entire project and bears the entire financial and juridical responsibility vis-à-vis the Entrusted Authority

 - The Associated Urban Authorities They will be responsible for the delivery of specific activities and the production of related deliverables/outputs. AUAs will have a share of the project budget and will report the costs incurred for the delivery of the activities.

- **Delivery Partners:** institutions, agencies, organisations, private sector partners, associations that will have an active role in the implementation of the project. They will be responsible for the delivery of specific activities and the production of the related deliverables/outputs. It should be noted that only organisations having legal personality are entitled to participate in a project as formal partners. Consultancy firms having as primary objective the development and management of European projects are not entitled to participate in a project as formal partners.

A wider group of stakeholders should also be involved in the design and implementation of the project. The group could include institutions, agencies, organisations and associations. These won't have a direct role but are considered relevant in order to ensure a smooth and effective implementation as well as shared ownership of the project.

Delivery partners and any other organisation included in the wider group of stakeholders cannot submit a project proposal in the framework of the present Call for Proposals.

Detailed information on the roles and responsibilities of the Urban Authorities (Associated Urban Authorities, if relevant) and Delivery Partners is provided in section 2.1 of the UIA Guidance.

5.2 Project Activities

Activities within the frame of the UIA projects shall be organised around Work Packages and shall support one or several ERDF Thematic Objective and related Investment Priority as set out in the first paragraph of the Article 9 CPR⁹ for ESIF and in the Article 5 ERDF.

Each project will have in place a UIA Expert:

- to provide ongoing advice and guidance on the substance of the action, especially regarding the innovative content
- to assist in the development of documentation and outputs that will capture and disseminate lessons learnt, good practice, etc. to the wide audience
- to ensure that the action remains on track and is in line with the agreed proposal

Costs for UIA Experts (including for travel and accommodation) will be covered by the UIA Initiative.

More information on the role and tasks of UIA Experts is provided in section 1.5 of the UIA Guidance.

5.3 Budget lines and eligible expenses

All expenditure related to the implementation of the UIA projects shall be eligible according to the UIA Guidance and budgeted in the appropriate budget lines:

- Staff
- Office and administration
- Travel and accommodation
- External expertise and services
- Equipment
- Infrastructure and construction works

⁹ Common Provision Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013: <http://eurlex.europa.eu/legalcontent/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:32013R1303>

6. Application process

The application pack for the 1st Call for Proposals for UIA consists the following:

- The present Terms of Reference (available in all EU languages)
- A working version of the Application Form and the Confirmation Sheet and guidance (available in all EU languages)

In addition, the UIA Guidance (available only in English), will need to be extensively consulted regarding the overarching rules of the Initiative.

All documentation can also be found on the UIA website.

The application process is 100% paperless through the use of UIA's Electronic Exchange Platform (EEP). **The application consists and Application form and a scanned signed Confirmation sheet.** A link to the EEP for the creation and submission of these can be found with the above documents on the UIA website. The EEP will be available to submit an application at the latest one month before submission deadline.

It is strongly recommended that applicants fill in the Application Form in clear English, although it may also be submitted in any of the official EU languages. It should be noted that the Strategic and Operational Assessment of the Application Forms submitted will be done on the basis of the English version (to be translated in English by an external service provider contracted by the Permanent Secretariat (PS) in case the Application Form is submitted in another language). The quality of the translation will be not guaranteed.

The final deadline for the submission of the Application Form and Confirmation sheet is 31/03/2016, 14h00 CET.

7. Selection process

Following submission, each application is subject to a selection process organised along the following steps:

1. Eligibility and Admissibility checks
2. Strategic assessment
3. Operational assessment

7.1 Eligibility and Admissibility checks

Upon closure of a call, an assessment is carried out as to the compliance of the received Application Forms and their annexes with the formal eligibility and admissibility criteria. These criteria consist of minimum technical requirements which unconditionally apply to all proposals submitted. The following elements constitute the eligibility and admissibility checks:

Eligibility

1. The Application Form has been submitted electronically via the EEP before the deadline indicated in the Terms of Reference of the Call for Proposals
2. The Application Form is completely filled in
3. The applicant is an urban authority of a local administrative unit defined according to the degree of urbanization as city, town or suburb and comprising at least 50 000 inhabitants

OR

The applicant is an association or grouping of urban authorities of local administrative units defined according to the degree of urbanisation as city, town or suburb where the total population is 50 000 inhabitants

4. (If applicable) In case of an association or grouping without a legal status of organised agglomeration, a Main Urban Authority and the Associated Urban Authorities are presented
5. Time limits are respected: the end date of the project respects the Call and the Initiative requirements
6. The maximum budget requirements and the co-financing principle are respected

Admissibility

1. A signed confirmation sheet shall be uploaded in the EEP system and attached to the Application Form by the end of the Call deadline.

If not all requirements set out above are complied with, the application will not be taken any further in the assessment process.

7.2 Strategic Assessment

Applications that are declared eligible and admissible will be subject to a Strategic Assessment carried out by a panel of External Experts. The Strategic Assessment accounts for 80% of the weighting given to the overall project assessment and consists of the following criteria:

- Innovativeness (40% of weighting) – To what extent is the applicant able to demonstrate that the project proposal is new and that has a clear potential to add value
- Partnership (15% of weighting) – To what extent is the involvement of key stakeholders relevant for the implementation of the project
- Measurability (15% of weighting) – To what extent will the project deliver measurable results
- Transferability (10% of weighting) - To what extent will the project be transferable to other urban areas across Europe

The indicative assessment questions for each criteria are presented in section 3.2.2 of the UIA Guidance.

As a result of the Strategic Assessment, the panel of External Experts elaborates an assessment of the applications and ranks them. In agreement with the Commission, applications which score over a certain threshold will go forward for an Operational Assessment.

Applicants will be notified at the end of the Strategic Assessment process of the decision.

7.3 Operational Assessment

The Operational Assessment is carried out by the PS and accounts for 20% of the weighting given to the overall project assessment.

The main objective of the Operational Assessment is to assess the quality of the proposal (including the justification for the project, the feasibility, consistency and coherence of the work plan, quality of the management structures proposed, coherence and proportionality of the budget, quality of the communication activities proposed).

Indicative assessment questions for the criterion “Quality” are presented in section 3.2.3 of the UIA Guidance.

After the Operational Assessment, a Selection Committee comprised of the Entrusted Entity and the Commission will meet to make the final selection. The Commission provides the final agreement as to which projects are selected. Applicants will be notified at the end of the Operational Assessment process of the decision.

7.4 Assessment scoring system

A score of 1 to 5 will be attributed to each weighted criterion which will result in an average score per project.

Detailed information on the assessment scoring system are provided in section 3.2.4 of the UIA Guidance.

8. Public procurement, audit, and state aid

Project partners which fulfil the definition of a contracting authority according to the relevant national procurement legislation have to respect the applicable public procurement rules.

Expenditure declared by the project must be audited by an independent auditor. The independent audit opinion must cover the legality and regularity of the expenditure declared, the delivery of the products and services, the soundness of the expenditure declared and the compliance of expenditure and operations with Community and national rule.

Approved projects must comply with State aid rules; State aid being understood as an advantage in any form whatsoever conferred on a selective basis to undertakings by national public authorities. Therefore economic activities (i.e. offering goods or services on the market) of projects financed under the UIA Initiative must be consistent with State aid rules. In the case State aid activities are identified, projects should take into account that restrictions may be applied.

Detailed information on public procurement and State aid are provided in sections 4.5.7 and 4.5.8 of the UIA Guidance.

9. How to get assistance

The PS staff will be ready to assist applicants with any technical questions they may have during the Call for Proposals Contact details can be found on the UIA website.

The PS will also organise 4 Applicants Seminars in cities located in the north, south, east and west of Europe. Dates and venues of the Applicants Seminars can be found in the section “Events” of the UIA website.

10. Key dates

- 15/12/2015 – Launch of the 1st Call for Proposals
- 31/03/2016 – Deadline for the submission of the Application Forms
- 10/2016 – Indicative date for the final decision for the approval of projects
- 10/2016 – Indicative start date for approved projects

We look forward to reading your project proposals soon!