



II Partnership

Sub-Partners

Background

The North Sea Region programme's general rule is to work with "full" partners only - as described in Fact Sheet No 5.

The programme will allow for full partners to work with an extra layer of partners commonly designated by the term "sub-partners".

In general sub-partners are small in size, lack the financial and organizational capacity to cope with EU funded projects and/or have specific expertise in a particular theme or work package of a project. They usually only contribute to projects through staff time.

Guidance

The rules regarding legal status and eligible activities determined for "full" partners apply equally to sub-partners. Sub-partners cannot be contractors or suppliers. The nature of the involvement i.e. being sub-partner or contractor cannot be changed during the project implementation.

Sub-partners should have a relevant role in the execution of the project activities (they can be linked to a specific work package and should have a clear budget plan) while "full" partners continue to deliver an important part of the project. A budget breakdown for each sub-partner must be included in the project application as an appendix.

Sub-partners shall be identified and clearly mentioned in the application form and the obligatory partnership convention signed between the Lead Beneficiary and the other full partners.

Liabilities

Sub-partners shall be attached to a full partner and will be legally responsible for the content of their contribution. The full partner they are attached to shall act as a first guarantor of their financial contribution towards the project/the programme.

The sub-partners should either:

- a) Sign the joint partnership agreement as described in Fact Sheet No 5, or
- b) Sign a contract with the full partner in which the sub-partner agree to comply with the stipulations of the overall partnership agreement.

Sub-partners are, in other words, bound by the same rules and obligations as the full project partners.

Sub-partners will not have to submit individual letters of intent, but may be covered by the overall letter of intent from the full partner. Alternatively, the sub-partner may submit its own letter of intent. The full partner can, however, base his/her letter of intent on a combination of contributions from his/her own organisation and contributions from the sub-partners.

Sub-partners are as de facto beneficiaries of ERDF funding financially responsible and liable for their share of ERDF. The grant rate for sub-partners will be the same as for the “full” partner.

Finance and control

Sub-partners shall keep a full audit trail of all invoices and expenses to support claims on the same basis as a full partner. Full partners working with sub-partners will have their sub-partners expenses controlled by their 1st level controller.

The 1st level controller shall include on the spot checks at the sub-partners premises depending on his own assessment of the situation, the nature of activities performed by the sub-partner and in line with national rules for 1st level control.

Evaluation and/or approval of sub-partners

When assessing projects the programme secretariat will evaluate on a case by case basis the status, role and number of proposed sub-partners.

The number of sub-partners shall be evaluated against the specific activities to be executed by the formal partner but should be a manageable number and, in principle, not exceed the number of full partners.

The programme secretariat retains the option of advising against the inclusion of an organisation (or organisations) as a sub-partner(s) in a project.

References

Commission Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006, Article 15