

**NOTICE OF CALL FOR PROPOSALS WITH A VIEW TO OBTAINING A
GRANT FOR A PREPARATORY ACTION TO PROMOTE SECURE AND
QUALITY REST AREAS AT THE BORDER CROSSING POINTS BETWEEN
THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

Call for proposals DGTREN/PREP/2008

1. CONTEXT

The European Commission intends to award¹ a grant to a preparatory action aiming at facilitation of cross-border traffic at the European Union's North-Eastern external border crossing points by promoting secure and quality rest areas in the territory of the European Union at the main border crossing points to the Russian Federation as announced in the DG TREN work programme for 2008. Information on this call for proposals is available on the DG TREN website at the following address:

[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/energy_transport/grants/proposal_en.htm]

The ad-hoc Working Group on EU-Russia Transport Logistic Problems considered infrastructure issues as one of the two "key points which needed to be addressed". In this regard, the Working Group pointed out in its final recommendations the importance to give priority to actions at three border crossing points:

- Vaalimaa-Torpjanovka (Finland/Russia)
- Narva-Ivangorod (Estonia/Russia)
- Terehova-Burachki (Latvia/Russia)

This joins also the shared concern of the social partners at European level, namely the International Road Transport Union (employers) and the European Transport Workers Federation (employees) and which has been expressed several times to the Commission on the need for action to address the lack of secure and quality parking areas at the border between the European Union and the Russian Federation. This preparatory action may be seen in the context of the continuous efforts to promote secure and quality parking areas in Europe following the calls for proposals in 2006 and 2007. The European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) and the International Road Transport Union have also jointly addressed the general issue by carrying out a survey on Attacks on International Heavy Goods Vehicle Drivers and by updating a publication providing information on truck parking areas in Europe.

Moreover, the availability of a sufficient number of adequately equipped parking areas contributes to a smooth and efficient implementation of the rules on maximum driving times and minimum breaks and rest periods, which are currently being amended in the transport operations between the EU and third countries. Border crossing procedures may take time and lines are common at the EU's external borders towards Russia. This makes drivers forced to wait for a prolonged period in a parking place until it is their turn to

¹ Subject to the adoption by the Commission of the annual DG TREN work programme 2008 for grants.

proceed to the customs. Limited parking areas and parking areas without appropriate equipments ensuring an acceptable level of health and safety for drivers and of protection against freight crime could therefore lead to situations where drivers would have to schedule their itineraries in a suboptimal manner in order to comply with the regulation in force.

On the initiative of the European Parliament, €3,5 million has been allocated in the 2008 Community budget to a preparatory action budget line to address this specific issue. The budget is devoted to actions for the facilitation of cross border traffic security and safety on three EU's North-Eastern external border-crossing points by the creation of up to three safe truck parking areas in order to improve road safety, the security of drivers and freight and tackle environmental and social problems created by long lines of lorries at border-crossing points towards Russia. This initiative follows and supplements similar pilot projects initiated in 2006 and 2007 to support the construction of model secure parking areas and the development of corresponding draft standards.

2. SOURCES OF FUNDING

The actions selected will be co-financed from the budget line “Facilitation of cross-border traffic at the EU north-east external border-crossing points” (060705).

3. ESTIMATED TOTAL AMOUNT FOR THIS CALL

The estimated total amount for the Preparatory action(s) for 2008 is EUR 3.500.000.

4. PERCENTAGE OF COMMUNITY CO-FINANCING

The grants are intended as incentives for carrying out a preparatory action which could not be executed without Community financial support, and they reflect the principle of co-financing.

The Commission therefore plans to grant only funds which are complementary and subsidiary to contributions made by the beneficiary, the national, regional or local authorities and other bodies. Accordingly, the amount granted will be normally 50% but can go up to 70% in duly justified cases of the total eligible costs of the operation. Contributions in kind are not regarded as eligible costs.

5. OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED RESULTS

Definition of a secure and quality rest place:

A secure rest place provides an appropriate number of secure parking slots which are equipped with security means adequate to the specific risk assessment of the parking area concerned. A quality rest place provides an appropriate number of parking slots equipped with adequate facilities for long rest of drivers of heavy duty vehicles, in accordance with Regulation (EC) n°561/2006/EC or the AETR agreement as well as for waiting the turn to proceed to customs.

Objectives:

Trade and road transport between the EU and its Eastern neighbours are expected to continue growing. Currently, because of enforced delays on the border-crossing points, truck drivers are compelled to spend several days in a queue of many kilometres on the

border. This situation threatens not only road safety and drivers' security but also creates a damaging environmental and social situation. Taking into account recent trends in traffic demands, this preparatory action is intended to support actions at one or more of the following three border crossing points between the EU and Russia:

- Vaalimaa-Torpjanovka (Finland/Russia)
- Narva-Ivangorod (Estonia/Russia)
- Terehova-Burachki (Latvia/Russia)

The actions will be chosen on the basis of actual needs at each of the border crossings. Evaluation criteria will include the maturity, the soundness of the financial package, the economic viability and the socio-economic and environmental effects of the actions.

Proposals should include actions contributing to the following objective.

The action shall aim at providing the lorries travelling in the direction of Russian Federation through Finland, Estonia or Latvia secure and quality rest places according to the existing draft international standards² for the planning, design, financing and operation with at least a minimum quality level. Ideally the proposal would include an integral and integrated action to provide parking capacity for the lorries and sanitary facilities for the drivers. The proposal could also include catering facilities.

The action should include a queuing system where drivers would know their number in the line and where they could therefore take an uninterrupted rest of at least 9 hours in their lorry.

General condition

- The action should include initiatives to inform the potential users about the rest places which have been established. These initiatives should include at least publication, translation and dissemination of information through the web or any other appropriate media.
- The action should from the outset establish an evaluation plan. A report on the evaluation of the works carried out during the duration of the action will be submitted as part of the Final report.
- The action should *inter alia* refer to existing internationally recognised good practices, requirements and standards in the field of secure rest place for drivers of heavy duty vehicles and protection against fright crime. It should target from one to three of the main locations of international road transport crossing points from the EU to Russia.
- The action should plan for consultation of an advisory board composed of interested stakeholders external to the action. The consultation should take place for key

² Draft standards have been developed by ETF/IRU and the study NEA (available on http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road/studies/index_en.htm). More detailed standards are being developed in the on-going Pilot Project 'Secure Truck Parking Operational Services' (see www.setpos.eu).

deliverables at regular intervals. Members of the advisory board will be co-opted with the Commission services. Resources for reimbursing the travel expenses of 10 members of the advisory board for at least 2 meetings should be planned.

Expected results:

The main road border crossing points between the EU and Russia are provided with adequate parking areas, which enable the waiting of lorries in an organised manner, not causing nuisance to the local population, harm to the environment and giving the drivers the possibility to take the prescribed rest periods. The users of these areas should be financing the financing gap of the construction and the running of these areas.

Formal conditions:

The reports according to Article I.5 of the Grant Agreement shall be submitted in English language, in any case in paper and electronic formats. The final technical implementation report will include a complete description of the work and the results achieved.

Three copies of the reports shall be supplied on paper form and one copy in electronic form, either in MS Word or in HTML format.

The Commission may publish the results of the action and necessary data in order to allow a reproduction of successful approaches. For this purpose, the applicant must ensure that there are no restrictions based on confidentiality and/or intellectual property rights. All confidential information should be provided in a clearly labelled annex to the public report.

6. ELIGIBILITY OF COSTS:

The Commission is ready to support operations of a maximum duration of 24 month. Eligible costs can be incurred only after signature of the grant agreement by all the parties.

Purchase costs of equipment (new or second-hand) are eligible costs, provided that it is written off in accordance with the tax and accounting rules applicable to the beneficiary and to its partners and generally accepted for items of the same type. Only the portion of the equipment's depreciation corresponding to the duration of the action and the actual rate of use for the operation may be taken into account by the Commission.

Costs of specific equipment which is directly and exclusively linked to the Preparatory action (such as e.g. road signs, IT equipments, etc) will exceptionally, given the nature of the action, be considered as fully eligible for a reimbursement by the Commission of up to 70 %. However, this exception only applies if the beneficiary keeps the equipment purchased with the support of the EU grant in that specific action for at least five years. Purchase of land is excluded.

Certain tasks can be subcontracted if the beneficiaries do not intend to carry them out themselves. If so, rules provided by Article II.9 of the Grant Agreement apply. Contracts awarded to subcontractors should only cover the execution of a limited part of the action. The tasks concerned and the estimated costs must be set out clearly in the application.

7. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

7.1. Legal status of applicants:

Eligible are proposals must be submitted in writing by one of the following types of applicants:

- A Member State, a regional or a local authority
- One or (jointly) several public or private undertakings or bodies
- A joint undertaking

Project proposals submitted by natural persons are not eligible. Applicants (other than public authorities) must show that they exist as a legal person, by providing a certified true copy of their articles of association or equivalent.

In no case, projects proposals submitted by third Countries or legal or natural persons established outside EU countries can be beneficiaries of the funds.

7.2. Grounds for exclusion

Applications will not be considered for a grant if the applicants are, at the time of the grant award procedure, in any of the following situations:

- a) they are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- b) they have been convicted of an offence concerning professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of res judicata;
- c) they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can justify;
- d) they have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the authorising officer or those of the country where the grant agreement is to be performed;
- e) they have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity detrimental to the Communities' financial interests;
- f) they are currently subject to an administrative penalty referred to in Article 96(1) of the Financial Regulation³ for being guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the

³ Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) n° 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities, OJ L 248 of 16 September 2002, p. 1, amended by Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) n° 1995/2006 of 13 December 2006, OJ L 390 of 30 December 2006, p. 1.

information required by the contracting authority as a condition of participation in the contract procurement procedure or by the authorising officer as a condition of participation in the grant award procedure, for failing to supply this information or for having been declared to be in serious breach of their obligations under contracts or grants covered by the budget;

- g) they are subject to a conflict of interest;
- h) they have been guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required or have failed to supply this information;
- i) they have been excluded from the contracts and grants financed by the Community budget, in accordance with Article 96(2) lit. a of the Financial Regulation.

2. The cases referred to in point 7.2. e) cover:

- a) cases of fraud as referred to in Article 1 of the Convention on the protection of the European Communities' financial interests established by the Council Act of 26 July 1995⁴;
- b) cases of corruption as referred to in Article 3 of the Convention on the fight against corruption involving officials of the European Communities or officials of Member States of the European Union, established by the Council Act of 26 May 1997⁵;
- c) cases of participation in a criminal organisation, as defined in Article 2(1) of Joint Action 98/733/JHA of the Council⁶;
- d) cases of money laundering as defined in Article 1 of Council Directive 91/308/EEC⁷.

Applicants must certify that they are not in one of the situations listed in point 7.2.

7.3. Administrative and financial penalties

Without prejudice to the application of penalties laid down in the Grant agreement, applicants and beneficiaries who are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the contracting authority as a condition of participation in the contract procurement procedure or by the authorising officer as a condition of participation in the grant award procedure, who have failed to supply this information or who have been declared to be in serious breach of their obligations under contracts or grants covered by the Community budget may be subject to administrative or financial penalties, in accordance with Article 96(1) of the Financial Regulation.

⁴ OJ L 316, 27.11.1995, p. 48.

⁵ OJ C 195, 25.6.1997, p. 1.

⁶ OJ L 351, 29.12.1998, p. 1. Joint action of 21 December 1998 on making it a criminal offence to participate in a criminal organisation in the Member States of the European Union.

⁷ OJ L 309, 25.11.2005, p. 15-36. Directive 2005/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 October 2005 on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purpose of money laundering and terrorist financing (Text with EEA relevance).

7.4. Eligible projects

The granting of Community aid to projects of common interest is conditional to compliance with relevant Community law, inter alia concerning environmental protection, competition and public procurement.

No Community financial aid shall be awarded for parts of projects receiving funds from other sources of Community financing.

8. SELECTION CRITERIA

The applicants must have access to solid and adequate funding sources, so as to be able to maintain activities for the period of the action funded and to help finance the action. The applicants must have the professional skills and qualifications required to complete the proposed action.

8.1. Financial capacity of applicants

Applicants must show that they have the financial capacity to carry out the action for which the grant is sought and must provide their balance sheet for the last financial year for which the accounts have been closed. The last of these provisions does not apply to public bodies.

Applicants must provide evidence for availability of the financing resources needed, apart from the co-financing of the EU required, in particular as far as own resources of the applicants and his partners, public funding and bank loans are concerned.

Applicants must fill in the form relative to legal entities, available from the website mentioned in point 1.

8.2. Technical capacity of applicants

Technical and professional capacity – means of proof required

- (1) Applicants must have the technical capacity and the operational capability to carry out the action to be supported. They must provide evidence of their knowledge and experience in the field of transport infrastructure, parking areas and transport operations as well as descriptions of projects and activities undertaken in the last three years and more particularly of projects related to the relevant issue. They must provide detailed curriculum vitae in English language of the team and demonstrate the managerial capabilities of the project director and manager, including his or her educational background, degrees and diplomas, professional experience, research work and publications.
- (2) Applicants must demonstrate that national competent authorities or organisations in the Member States covered by the action are committed to the establishment of the infrastructure of the rest places to be implemented by the action. They must provide evidence of the contacts and organisations that they intend to consult and whose resources they intend to draw-upon in the course of the execution of the action.

9. CRITERIA FOR THE AWARD OF THE GRANT

The operation supported must be designed to further the objective referred to in point 5 above. The Commission will base the choice of actions, (this is not a tender) and the rate of Community co-financing on the basis of the following criteria:

1. **Soundness of the approach:** A succinct presentation of the understanding of the present specifications, the quality and appropriateness of the proposals regarding the present and expected needs at the crossing points, the descriptions of measures in the rest places and the quality of the evaluation plan will be taken into account (20%).
2. **Organisation of work and degree of commitments of competent authorities/organisations in the Member States covered by the action:** The clarity and realism of the allocation of work, timing, milestones and deliverables will be taken into account. The maturity of the proposal will be evaluated, reflected by the status of preparation of the activities subject to the application, including (where appropriate) the planning authorisations. Finally, the degree of commitments of national authorities/organisations in the Member States covered by the action will be an important criterion. (30%).
3. **Interest of action at European level and multiplier effect:** As the European level interest of the action lies on the users of the parking areas, not in their geographical scope (maximum of 3 Member States, maximum of 3 rest areas), the visibility⁸ (publications, organisation of events, Internet sites, CD-ROM, etc.) of the action will be taken into account. (10%).
4. **Economic viability, cost-effectiveness and environmental impact:** Account will be taken of the financial viability, the cost/benefits ratio, the environmental impact and the number of lorries that may be serviced and the degree of contribution to the improvement of the quality of service in relation to both the EU grant and the total cost of the action. The financial viability and the cost/benefit will be demonstrated by a calculation based on the guidelines applicable in the context of the Cohesion Fund (40 %).

Only proposals that have reached a total score of a minimum of 75 % and a minimum score of 60% for each criterion will be taken into consideration for awarding the grant.

The evaluation of eligible proposals which fulfil the selection criteria is carried out using a single-stage submission (that is the full proposal is submitted) with a two step evaluation, where the full proposal will be:

- Assessed by external experts against all evaluation criteria;
- Evaluated by an Evaluation Committee, composed of DG TREN officials from the concerned Directorate. This Committee draws up a list of projects for which a support is proposed, on the grounds of the evaluation criteria.

⁸ In this respect, grant beneficiaries are reminded that the words "project carried out with the financial support of the European Commission" and the flag of the European Union must be included on any publication, material etc. relating to the action.

10. GENERAL CONDITIONS FOR AWARDING GRANTS

The general conditions for awarding grants, particularly the definition of the eligible costs and the methods of payment, are set out in the draft grant agreement available at the Internet address mentioned in point 1. Applicants must compulsorily take notice of this document and must take into account the conditions for awarding grants when drawing up their proposal.

For all applications for pre-financing of over €100 000, a financial guarantee equivalent to the amount pre-financed will be required. In addition, the Commission reserves the right to require a financial guarantee for pre-financing amounts of under €100 000.

The budget for the action attached to the application must have revenue and expenditure in balance and show clearly the costs which are eligible for financing from the Community budget. Therefore, applicants must provide a detailed breakdown of all expenditure related to their proposal.

The Commission will only recognise the cost of entities having signed the grant agreement, whether as beneficiary or as co-beneficiary. It will no longer accept the co-financed participation of third parties to the grant agreement, when they are neither beneficiaries, nor co-beneficiaries, unless they are subcontractors, the costs of which are taken into account when considering the beneficiaries or co-beneficiaries.

For actions where the cost to be financed by the Commission exceeds €500 000, the proposal must be accompanied by an external audit report produced by an approved auditor and give an assessment of the financial viability of the applicant. This report must certify the accounts for the last year available. If this report is not submitted, the proposal will be rejected.

The Commission services would welcome applications in English and in any case a summary and an overview table in English.

11. SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS FOR A GRANT

Applications must be made only using the **model application form available at the Internet address mentioned in point 1**. For each application, **one signed original and five copies as well as an electronic version** must be supplied by the organisation coordinating the action. Partners must fill in the sections B (information about each applicant) and C (declaration by each applicant) of the application form.

The form relative to legal entities, available from the website mentioned in point 1, must also be filled in.

Any unsigned applications will be rejected when the applications are opened.

12. CLOSING DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS FOR A GRANT

12.1. Grant applications can be sent in two ways:

- (a) **either sent by registered mail or by private courier**

The proposal must be sent by registered mail or by private courier, dispatched not later than 15 October 2008 (the postmark or the receipt issued

by the courier service serving as proof of the dispatch) to the following address:

By registered mail

European Commission
Directorate-General Energy and Transport
DM 28 - 0/110 - Archives
B-1049 Brussels
Belgium

With the mention “call for proposal Unit E.1”

By private courier

European Commission
Directorate-General Energy and Transport - DM 28 - 0/110
Avenue du Bourget 1
B-1140 Brussels (Evere)
Belgium

With the mention “call for proposal Unit E.1”

(b) or delivered by hand

Proposals delivered by hand must be submitted at the **Central Mail of the European Commission** by 15 October 2008 **not later than 3 p.m.** (Brussels time), at the following address:

European Commission
Directorate-General Energy and Transport – DM 28 0/110
Avenue du Bourget 1
B-1140 Brussels (Evere)
Belgium

With the mention “call for proposal Unit E.1”

In this case, a receipt must be obtained as proof of submission, signed and dated by the official in the Commission's central mail department who took delivery. The department is open from 08.00 to 17.00 Monday to Thursday, and from 8.00 to 16.00 on Fridays. It is closed on Saturdays, Sundays and Commission holidays.

12.2. Practical arrangements:

Applications must be placed inside two sealed envelopes, one inside the other. The inner envelope should be marked as follows:

| |
|--|
| Call for proposals TREN/PREP/2008 |
|--|

Not to be opened by the postal service

DM 28 0/110 – Archives

If self-adhesive envelopes are used, they must be sealed with adhesive tape and the sender must sign across that tape.

13. INDICATIVE SCHEDULE

Reception of proposals: refer to point 12.1 above

Evaluation: November 2008

Award decision: January 2009