



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MIGRATION AND HOME AFFAIRS

Brussels
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HOME-Funds/2021/19

COMMITTEE FOR THE HOME AFFAIRS FUNDS

Subject: Launch of the call for expression of interest under the “Specific Action on the provision of services to victims of trafficking in human beings who are third-country nationals” under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) Reference AMIF/2022/SA/2.4.1.

1. INTRODUCTION

Regulation (EU) 2021/1147 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2021 establishing the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)¹ provides that Member States may receive funding for specific actions in addition to their initial allocations in their respective programmes.

Specific actions aim to fund transnational or national projects that bring Union added value in accordance with the objectives of the AMIF for which one, several or all Member States may receive an additional allocation to their programmes.

They will be implemented as one of the component of the Thematic Facility in line with Art. 11 of the AMIF Regulation.

On 25 November 2021, the Commission adopted the financing decision and the work programme for 2021-2022 Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund Thematic Facility.²

By the present note, the Commission launches a call for expression of interest for “Specific Action on the provision of services to victims of trafficking in human beings who are third-country nationals”, in line with the actions listed in the above-mentioned Commission’s financing decision and work programme.

¹ Regulation (EU) 2021/1147 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2021 establishing the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund.

² Commission Implementing Decision C(2021) 8458 final of 25/11/2021

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Specific actions will be implemented by one or more Member States participating in the AMIF via funding received in addition to the allocation under their AMIF programmes.

Funding for specific actions is added to the Member States' programme allocations at the time of the approval of the initial programme or by means of a programme amendment. That additional funding is earmarked for the specific action concerned and shall not be used for other actions in the Member State's programme, except in duly justified circumstances and as approved by the Commission through the amendment of the programme. This means that, as a rule, in case of under-spending or non-implementation of the specific action, Member States will not be able to use the corresponding amount to support any other action of their programme. In such cases, any unused amount would be reimbursed to the Union budget and/or decommitted, except under the circumstances referred to above.

Whereas the regular EU co-financing rate under the Member States' programmes will not exceed 75% of total eligible expenditure, projects implemented under specific actions may benefit from an increased co-financing rate of 90% of total eligible expenditure.

The specific action must be implemented by the Member States in accordance with the AMIF Regulation and the Common Provisions Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 (CPR)³.

As regard the value added tax ("VAT") eligibility regime, Article 64 (1)(c) of the CPR provides that VAT is not eligible, except:

- (i) "for operations the total cost of which is below EUR 5 000 000 (including VAT);
- (ii) for operations the total cost of which is at least EUR 5 000 000 (including VAT) where it is non-recoverable under national VAT legislation".

³ Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy

3. CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

3.1. Indicative Budget available

The 2021-2022 AMIF Thematic Facility work programme indicates the overall budgetary allocation reserved for specific actions in the years 2021 and 2022.

The indicative amount envisaged for this call is EUR 2 million.

The requested amounts (i.e. EU contribution to a Member State's AMIF programme) for this Specific Action

- must not be lower than EUR 250 000 per application.
- should ideally range between EUR 250 000 and EUR 500 000 per application.

3.2. Background for the Specific Action

The EU has in place a solid legal and policy framework to address trafficking in human beings, anchored in Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims ("EU Anti-trafficking Directive"). The EU Anti-Trafficking Directive establishes robust provisions on victim's protection, assistance and support, as well as on prevention and prosecution of the crime. It takes a zero-tolerance approach towards traffickers, adopts a strong human rights-based approach, and incorporates a gender-specific perspective, recognising that women and men are often trafficked for different purposes.

The EU Anti-trafficking Directive contains specific provisions for the assistance, support and protection of victims of trafficking in human beings. Under Article 11(5) of the Directive, Member States have an obligation to provide assistance and support measures on a consensual and informed basis, which include "*at least standards of living capable of ensuring victims' subsistence through measures such as the provision of appropriate and safe accommodation and material assistance, as well as necessary medical treatment including psychological assistance, counselling and information, and translation and interpretation services where appropriate*". Member States are further required to provide child victims with assistance, support and protection, with the child's best interests being a primary consideration (Article 13). Moreover, children should receive additional services under Article 14, including "access to education" and a guardian where parents are not available to ensure the child's best interests, as well as protection measures in criminal investigations and proceedings under Article 15. Article 16 provides specific provisions for the assistance, support and protection of unaccompanied child victims of trafficking in human beings to find durable solutions based on an individual assessment of the best interests of the child and appointment of a guardian, as well as a representative in criminal investigations and proceedings.

Trafficking is a transnational crime, and half of the victims identified in the European Union are non-EU citizens, mainly from Africa, Western Balkans and Asia⁴. Victims are also trafficked in mixed migration flows to the EU via all routes. The current global and regional migration situation heightens the risks of trafficking, with traffickers abusing asylum procedures, including by legalising their own status and that of their victims. Children in migration, in particular unaccompanied migrant children, are especially vulnerable to traffickers⁵. The identification and detection of victims or potential victims of trafficking in mixed migration flows remains a challenge.

According to the latest available data, between 2017 and 2018, there were more than 14 000 registered victims within the European Union⁶. The actual number is likely to be significantly higher as many victims remain undetected. The majority of the victims in the EU are women and girls trafficked for sexual exploitation. Almost every fourth victim of trafficking in the EU is a child.

Trafficking in human beings brings high profits to criminals and carries with it enormous human, social and economic costs. In the EU, these costs are estimated to be up to EUR 2.7 billion in a single year. The Commission's [Study on the economic, social and human costs of trafficking in human beings within the EU \(2020\)](#) provides that victims of trafficking are legally entitled to specialised services⁷, which are organised at the level of the Member States. These include accommodation, medical and psychological assistance, legal assistance, education, training, job placement, reintegration assistance, return assistance. The study provided estimates on the costs of specialised services per victim, amounting to EUR 11 355 per victim and EUR 91 149 042 in total in the EU in 2016.

The Commission's [Study on Reviewing the Functioning of Member States' National and Transnational Referral Mechanisms](#) (2020) highlighted that in the majority of Member States, victims of trafficking in human beings have access to dedicated services and accommodation, as well as assisted accommodation, supervised apartments, safe houses, hostels or hotels. Nevertheless, sustainable funding to civil society organisations running shelters, as well as specialised facilities for victims of trafficking based on their sex, age, and the specific consequences of the forms of exploitation that they have experienced, remain to a large extent unavailable. There are also discrepancies in the way specialised services, such as medical and psychological assistance, are provided to victims depending on the Member State where they are. The provision of support and services to vulnerable groups is also a challenge. Several Member States do not have specialised accommodations for child victims of trafficking, who are often placed in foster care or institutions. The study further showed that very little data is available on the provision of specific support for victims with special needs and victims from particularly vulnerable groups, which may mean that they are not sufficiently taken into account in support systems.

⁴ Data collection on trafficking in human beings in the EU (2020)

⁵ COM(2020) 776; SWD(2020) 226.

⁶ European Commission, Study on Data Collection on Trafficking in Human beings in the EU (2020); Third report on the progress made in the fight against trafficking in human beings, COM(2020) 776 and its accompanying Staff Working Document, SWD(2020) 226.

⁷ See Articles 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 of the Anti-trafficking Directive.

Protecting, supporting and empowering the victims, especially women and children, is a priority under the [EU Strategy on combatting trafficking in human beings \(2021-2025\)](#).

This Specific Action relates in particular to the Strategy's key action for the Commission to enable targeted funding support to specialised shelters for victims of trafficking, including specialised facilities for trafficked women and children via Internal Security Fund. Victims of trafficking should have access to appropriate and safe accommodation that allows them to escape from traffickers and that is adapted to their specific needs and circumstances. Safe shelters are needed for children, women and men. Same-sex shelters that also provide trauma-focussed support can effectively help victims' recovery.

Proposals under this Specific Action should take into account and explain their relevance in relation to the priorities and key actions of the [EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings \(2021-2025\)](#), as well as the [Pact on Migration and Asylum](#), the [EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027](#) and the renewed [Action Plan against Migrant Smuggling 2021-2025](#). Other documents relevant in that context should also be considered in the proposals, in particular reports published by the European Commission⁸ and EU agencies⁹, such as:

- [Third \(2020\) report](#) on the progress made in the fight against trafficking in human beings and its accompanying [Staff Working Document](#);
- [Study on Data collection on trafficking in human beings](#) (2020);
- [Study on Reviewing the Functioning of Member States' National and Transnational Referral Mechanisms](#) (2020);
- [Study on the economic, social and human costs of trafficking in human beings within the EU](#) (2020);
- [Joint report of the JHA agencies' network on the identification and protection of victims of human trafficking](#) (2021);
- Europol, [European Union Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment](#) (2021)
- Europol's [European Migrant Smuggling Centre 5th Annual Report](#) (2021)
- Eurojust [Report on Trafficking in Human Beings: Best practice and issues in judicial cooperation](#) (2021).

⁸ Other relevant Commission's publications to take into account: [Study on Comprehensive Policy Review of anti-trafficking projects funded by the European Commission](#) (2016); [Study on High risk groups for trafficking in human beings](#) (2015); [Study on gender dimension of trafficking in human beings](#) (2016).

⁹ Other relevant EU agencies' publications include for instance EASO (2020) [Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the European Union 2019](#); EASO (2019) [Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the European Union 2018](#); Frontex [Risk Analysis 2018](#); Europol 2018 [Report on Criminal networks involved in the trafficking and exploitation of underage victims in the EU](#); Fundamental Rights Agency 2019 guide to enhance child protection focusing; EIGE 2018 [Report on Gender-specific measures in anti-trafficking actions](#).

- EASO [Asylum Report 2021](#).

Proposals under this Specific Action should target activities that support victims of trafficking in human beings who are third country nationals and that occur in particular in the context of asylum and international protection procedures.

3.3. Scope and purpose of the Specific Action

This call targets single EU Member States participating in the AMIF, and in particular, Member States with a high number of registered victims who are third country nationals, taking into account the findings of the Commission's 2020 Study on Data collection on trafficking in human beings in the EU for the years 2017-2018.

Its objective is to contribute to the effective implementation of the EU Strategy on combating trafficking in human beings (2021-2025), including key actions targeted to the Member States. This action should address the above-mentioned challenges. The Commission has encouraged Member States to finance specialised shelters for victims of trafficking in human beings, including specialised facilities for trafficked women and children, via the AMIF national programmes. This Specific Action aims at providing assistance and support services for victims of trafficking in human beings, including in the context of shelters and specialised facilities, taking into account their immediate and longer-term needs, as well as a gender and child-sensitive approach. The Action should enable victims to have access to appropriate and safe accommodation and services in order to help them in their short and long-term recovery from the trafficking, accompany them in their re-integration into society and avoid their re-trafficking.

Proposals under this call should focus on the provision of services to victims of trafficking in human beings who are third country nationals. These services can include physical and mental health services, counselling, translation and interpretation services where appropriate, material assistance (e.g. food, clothing and other in-kind support), legal assistance, cultural mediation, education, job counselling and training. Activities in the proposals can also include specific services for child victims of trafficking in human beings, such as individual assessments, access to education and appointment of a legal guardian for child victims if relevant. The proposals should promote a multi-agency and multi-disciplinary approach, as well as involve multilingual staff for the assistance and support to be efficient.

In addition, the proposals could make available special assistance measures for vulnerable groups, such as children, people with disabilities and LGBTIQ people. Member States should take into account, where relevant, the findings of the Commission's Third report on the progress made in the fight against trafficking in human beings and the Study on National and Transnational Referral Mechanisms, which identify examples and good practices, as well as the gaps in the area of assistance and support to victims.

In the proposals Member States should also ensure respect for the horizontal principles described in Article 9 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060.

Proposals should be implemented in cooperation with civil society organisations.

The proposals should include one or more of the following activities related to the provision of support and specialised services to victims of trafficking in human beings:

- Gender-sensitive and child rights based training and workshops for staff working in accommodation or specialised facilities for victims of trafficking in human beings, asylum and reception centres, and more generally providing assistance and support to victims of trafficking in human beings, notably through the production of information material such as handbooks or manuals;
- Measures aimed at fostering a multi-agency and multi-disciplinary approach, including public authorities, asylum and immigration officers, border guards, staff working in reception/asylum centres, social workers, child protection services, legal guardians, psychologists, medical staff, linguistic and cultural mediators, etc.;
- Creation of hotlines and apps providing information on available local services for victims of trafficking in human beings;
- Provision of material, medical and psychological support to victims of trafficking in human beings, counselling, translation and interpretation services, cultural mediation, legal and administrative assistance in accessing their rights or in criminal proceedings;
- Provision of individual risk assessments, taking into account the specific needs of the victims and vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities, LGBTIQ people and migrant communities, with the aim to avoid re-trafficking or re-victimisation;
- Access to education, vocational training, apprenticeship programmes, job placement services or skills enhancement, including in order to facilitate the re-integration of the victims into society after leaving the shelter or specialised facility;
- Provision of services adapted to the specific needs of child victims of trafficking in human beings, including children in migration and children who are unaccompanied or separated from their families, such as individual assessments, taking into account the best interests of the child, appointment of a legal guardian and/or representative, access to education;
- Cost of staff providing medical, psychological, social, material, linguistic, educational, legal, administrative (amongst other) assistance and support to victims.

Finally, the proposals should provide for a report outlining the results achieved and presenting recommendations how these results could be consolidated and continued in the Member State concerned (“sustainability”), as well as considered for replication in other Member States. The report should also draw lessons learnt on the cooperation between public authorities and civil society organisations.

The Specific Action proposed should not include activities related to the construction of shelters or specialised facilities for victims of trafficking in human beings. Where

relevant, the Specific Action can complement national programmes in terms of victims' assistance and support. The provision of services for the victims should be financed under this Action, notably in the context of the shelters and specialised facilities that Member States were encouraged to establish under their national programmes.

3.4. Expected results following the call

The projects selected should have a concrete operational impact on the assistance and support of third country national victims of trafficking in human beings. The (non-exhaustive) expected results would be:

- Improved quality of, and better access to dedicated services to victims of trafficking in human beings, taking into account their specific needs and circumstances;
- Increased number of victims of trafficking in human beings who are in asylum and international protection procedures receiving appropriate and specialised assistance and support;
- Improved quality of specialised services for vulnerable groups, such as children, including unaccompanied ones;
- Creation of a safer and more adapted environment for victims of trafficking in human beings to recover from the trafficking and avoid re-trafficking, including within the context of shelters and specialised accommodation;
- Increased capacity of staff working in shelters, specialised facilities, asylum and reception centres, as well as other relevant stakeholders to provide specialised assistance and support to victims of trafficking in human beings.

In line with Recital 30 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1147, this Specific Action will contribute to the implementation of the provisions of the Anti-trafficking Directive (2011/36/EU) on assistance, support and protection of victims of trafficking in human beings. The Specific Action aims at improving in the long-term the quality of assistance, support and protection services received by third country national victims of trafficking in human beings as well as their integration within the European Union.

4. PROCEDURE FOR APPLICATION

4.1. Admissibility and assessment aspects

All EU Member States participating in the AMIF are eligible.

The specific action proposed should not start before 3 June 2022 and be completed by 31 December 2025.

To be considered admissible, a proposal

1. has to be submitted within the deadline (see below) to the AMIF specific actions functional mailbox HOME-AMIF-SPECIFIC-ACTIONS@ec.europa.eu in the official AMIF/2022/SA/2.4.1. Application Form attached to this Note, together with its annexes, and be readable and complete (all fields necessary for assessment are filled in),

2. has to be submitted by the Managing Authority on behalf of the entity in the Member State that will be responsible for the implementation of the specific action,
3. has to identify a project beneficiary (an entity) that will be responsible for the implementation of the action in the Member State (in the lead for the action)

Other entities can be involved in the implementation of the specific action as co-beneficiaries.

DG HOME will assess admissible proposals on the basis of the following award criteria:

A. Relevance [30 points]:

1. Clarity and consistency of the objectives and scope of the proposal seen against the objectives and expected impact/outcomes as identified in this call for expression of interest
2. Targeted nature of the proposal: degree to which the proposal identifies and seeks to address shortcomings at national level in the provision of services to victims of trafficking in human beings who are third country nationals;

B. Quality [40 points]:

1. Maturity of the proposal, the appropriateness of the design and planned implementation, taking into account the envisaged activities methodology, (including operational and financial management), the organisation of work and strategy for project management and monitoring, as well as the measures undertaken to mitigate the identified risks.
2. Purpose and scope of the proposed activities related to the provision of support and specialised services to victims of trafficking in human beings who are third country nationals: degree to which these activities support the application of Directive 2011/36, address vulnerable groups and ensure compliance with the EU acquis including the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.
3. Degree of involvement of civil society organisations and actors responsible for asylum and immigration procedures in the proposal.

C. Impact [30 points]:

1. Impact or effect of the proposal in relation to the objective of the call for expression of interest for the EU (Union added value)
2. Expected impact of the proposal in the Member State concerned for the target population (i.e. the degree of change in terms of the quantity and quality of the provision of services to victims of trafficking in human beings who are third country nationals; incl. changes to the programme's output and results indicators listed in Annex VIII of the AMIF Regulation;
3. Expectations for the sustainability of the project

4.2. Application procedure

Deadline for the application: Member States are invited to submit their proposals by 3 June 2022 at the latest, using the application form in Annex.

The proposals should be submitted through SFC2021 as an 'other Member State document' attached to the most recently adopted AMIF programme of the Member State. Member States may submit additional documentation if necessary.

Deadline for any clarification requests on this Note: Member States can send requests by 13 May 2022 at the latest to HOME-AFFAIRS-FUNDS-COMMITTEE@ec.europa.eu.

The Specific Actions Steering Committees may consult the Directorate E Working Group Specific Actions on the draft reply of requests for clarification.

In order to ensure equal and fair treatment of the proposals and allow the Commission to allocate at the same date all the available funding, DG HOME will assess all proposals simultaneously. Therefore, proposals submitted after the deadline will not be admissible.

The Members of the Committee for the Home Affairs Funds will be informed at the latest 10 working days before the deadline for the submission of the proposals in case the deadline for the submission of proposals is extended.

DG HOME will inform Member States of the outcome of the assessment of the proposals towards September 2022.

5. AMENDMENT OF THE AMIF PROGRAMMES AND ELIGIBILITY OF EXPENDITURE

After having been informed of the outcome of the call for expression of interest, each successful Member State shall submit to the Commission a request to amend its AMIF programme via SFC. The amended programme should include a short description of the specific action, adjust the output and result indicators and include the costs and codes linked to this specific action (respectively in the description and under tables 1, 2 and 3 of the relevant specific objective, and table 6 of the programme).

If the Specific Action is included in the programme after its initial approval by the Commission: The Monitoring committee should approve any proposal by the managing authority for the amendment of the programme (Article 40(2)(d) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060.

When amending an AMIF programme of a Member States, two situations may arise regarding the eligibility of expenditure¹⁰:

1. For Member States that have included all the types of interventions listed in Annex VI table 1 of the AMIF Regulation that are relevant for the Specific Action

¹⁰ Art. 63(7) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060.

“Provision of services to victims of trafficking in human beings who are third-country nationals” in table(s) 2.1.3 of the relevant specific objective(s) in their *initially approved* AMIF programme: expenditure for the Specific Action will be eligible as of 3/6/2022.

2. For Member States that have *not* included all the types of interventions listed in Annex VI table 1 of the AMIF Regulation that are relevant for the Specific Action “Provision of services to victims of trafficking in human beings who are third-country nationals” in the tables in the table(s) 2.1.3 of the relevant specific objective(s) in their initially approved AMIF programme: expenditure for the Specific Action will be eligible from the date of submission by the Member State of its request for amendment of the AMIF programme that will add the respective types of interventions in the programme.

Yours faithfully,

Chiara GARIAZZO
Chair of the Committee for the
Home Affairs Funds

(e-signed)
p.o. Beate GMINDER

Enclosures: Application form;
 Annex I Budget form;
 Annex II Output and result indicators.

c.c.: JHA Counsellors