



CEI Extraordinary Call for Proposals 2020

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Deadline for application submission: 9/4/2020 (two weeks, simplified Application Form)

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

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1. Background and Primary Objectives

With the ongoing disruption from **COVID-19**, the CEI is aware of the difficulties this poses for education and working activities in general in the CEI region and beyond, where schools, universities and other working environments are increasingly cancelling most in-person classes and meetings, not to mention medical appointments limiting access to health facilities.

In these difficult times, schools, institutions and operators are focusing on finding alternative ways to transform the current serious emergency into an important opportunity for fostering and disseminating innovation at educational and professional level and enhancing experiences already in place in many schools and health centres, through telemedicine for example, where remote diagnosis and treatment of patients by means of telecommunications technology would be ever more useful today.

On such basis, the CEI intends to contribute to facing the global COVID-19 outbreak through tangible and immediate action addressing its 17 Member States, i.e.: **Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine**, with particular attention to those which are not members of the EU.

While a growing number of countries, regions and cities are declaring a state of emergency - and the World Health Organization has officially classified the worldwide outbreak a pandemic - the CEI is launching this **Extraordinary Call for Proposals** that will allocate small grants for addressing specific needs at local level in the above-mentioned countries. The purpose is to support the communities and territories of CEI Member States in facing this emergency through a simple tool, able to respond to the necessities of citizens quickly.

2. Areas of Intervention

CEI grants will be allocated for actions in three areas of intervention:

1. **Healthcare and telemedicine (MED)**, *taking into account that telemedicine software platforms have become very accessible and useful, and especially helpful in monitoring patients with existing conditions, even at a distance. Telemedicine software allows doctors to reach out to patients via video link, which can be incredibly useful for practices when traveling to the medical facility can be difficult and even dangerous for patients with existing health conditions;*
2. **Education and e-learning/distance learning (EDU)**, *taking into account that the educational paths that teachers design and develop in virtual environments can be easily accessible to pupils and students through personal devices and can offer valuable help in overcoming the logistical difficulties that can be determined when schools or classrooms are, for various reasons, unavailable and continuity of education in the presence not guaranteed;*
3. **Support to Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs)¹**, *taking into account that smart working may help improve both the performance and the satisfaction that is obtained from the job especially when it is not possible to reach your workplace.*

¹ According to Commission Regulation (EU) NO 651/2014 (ANNEX I), an enterprise is considered to be any entity engaged in an economic activity, irrespective of its legal form. This includes, in particular, self-employed persons and family businesses engaged in craft or other activities, and partnerships or associations regularly engaged in an economic activity. SME's are classified as Micro, Small or Medium Enterprises, according to EU No 651/2014 definition, as follows:

SME CATEGORY	MEDIUM	SMALL	MICRO
Staff Headcount:	<250	<50	<10
Turnover:	<50M€	<10M€	<2M€
Balance Sheet Total:	<43M€	<10M€	<2M€

The data to apply to the headcount of staff and the financial amounts are those related to the latest approved accounting period and calculated on an annual basis.

3. Submission Procedure

3.1. Application Package

The **Application Form** (*EX. Call 2020_Application Form_TEMPLATE.docx*) shall be downloaded from the CEI website. The **Application Package** to be submitted by email to the CEI shall consist of:

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

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

The Application Form shall be filled-in in all its parts: incomplete Application Packages will be automatically rejected. Any technical question or problem concerning the format of the Application Form shall be addressed in writing to applications@cei.int quoting as subject **EX. Call 2020 – Technical Info**.

3.2. Deadline

Applications shall be submitted by **9 April 2020** carrying as subject of the email the indication **EX. Call 2020 – Country – MED – EDU –MSMEs** (to be filled-in as appropriate). Applications submitted after the established deadline will be automatically rejected. Nevertheless, taking into account the limited duration of the submission phase, due to the urgency character of this Call, the CEI reserves the right to extend the above-mentioned deadline.

3.3. Email Address

Applications shall be forwarded **exclusively by email** to applications@cei.int. The CEI National Coordinator of the country of the Applicant institution must be in copy to the submission email (see [contact list](#) on the CEI website). If the CEI National Coordinator of the Applicant's country is not put in copy in the submission email, the Application will be automatically rejected. International / regional organisations shall forward applications directly to the above-said email box. Under this Call for Proposals, an Applicant institution can submit **only one Application Form**.

3.4. Notification within Respective Appraisal Phases

3.4.1. Assignment of a Reference Number

Upon receipt of the submission email, the Secretariat will assign a Reference Number to the Application (**305.xxx-20**) and notify the Applicant by email as appropriate in the following days. Applicants will need to keep the Reference Number for monitoring the further appraisal and notification phases.

3.4.2. Evaluation and Awarding

Upon completion of the Administrative and Eligibility Check, a roster of shortlisted applications will be created by the Secretariat. Shortlisted Applications only will proceed to the following evaluation phase by the competent CEI structures according to an Evaluation Grid (see *11. Assessment Grids*). Only Applications reaching a *good* or *very good* total score according to the mentioned Evaluation Grid are eligible to receive possible CEI co-financing. No direct communication to Applicants will occur at this stage.

The list of Applications proposed for funding is submitted by the Secretariat to the Committee of CEI National Coordinators (CNC), which will take the final decision on allocation of CEI grants.

The Secretariat will notify directly both the Applicants who are awarded with a CEI grant and those who are not. The direct notification will occur by email exclusively at a date following the meeting in which the decision has been taken.

4. Budget of the Call

The overall indicative amount under this Call for Proposals is **600.000,00 EUR** that will be made available by the following sources of funding:

- CEI Cooperation Fund, which is financed by all CEI Member States, will provide up to **310.000,00 EUR**;
- Know-how Exchange Programme (KEP), which is entirely financed by Italy, will provide up to **290.000,00 EUR**. In line with the rules governing the functioning of KEP, its resources shall be spent only for actions targeting non-EU CEI Member States², regardless of the nationality of the applicant which can be based in any Member Country of the CEI.

The CEI reserves the right not to award all available funds.

5. Amount of CEI grants, reporting and disbursement procedure

Applicants can request a **CEI grant** up to 100% of the value of their project, and up to a maximum amount of **40.000,00 EUR**. Any applicable co-financing (if any) can be referred to in the application form. An **Advance Payment** (up to 80% of the approved CEI grant) can be requested as soon as the official communication of awarding is received from the CEI-Executive Secretariat. Upon completion of the activity, Applicants will be requested to send a narrative and financial report (based on a template that will be made available by the CEI), along with a request for Final Payment. The CEI will validate the narrative and financial report, reserving the right to ask for additional information and documentation, if necessary. The **Final Payment** will be disbursed by the CEI-ES as soon as the narrative and financial report will be validated.

6. Eligibility Criteria

Applications shall fulfil the following eligibility criteria:

6.1. Compliance to Areas of Intervention

The Application should exclusively refer to one of the areas of intervention indicated in chapter 2. *Areas of Intervention*. Applicants are invited to describe clearly and in very practical terms the intervention logic of their projects vis-à-vis the selected core sector. The same goes for related expected results. It is essential to make sure to be as specific as possible.

6.2. Eligible Applicants

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

² Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Ukraine.

Under this Call for Proposals, applicants can submit up to two distinct project proposals, provided that the beneficiaries are different.

6.3. Eligible Activities and Eligible Expenses

CEI grants will be allocated to - and subsequently managed by - eligible Applicants (*see* 6.2) based and registered in all CEI Member States (<https://www.cei.int/member-states>).

Nevertheless, special attention will be paid to activities addressing, as primary beneficiaries, entities and citizens of non-EU CEI Member States. Within this framework, activities eligible to receive CEI funding are the following.

For area of intervention 1 – Healthcare and telemedicine (MED):

- purchase of equipment to meet urgent medical needs;
- purchase of medical software and other IT tools to facilitate telemedicine practices;
- organisation of online seminars (webinars) to facilitate transfer of knowledge between and among healthcare experts and operators (from CEI EU Member States to CEI non-EU Member States);
- realisation and production of information material (infographics, videos, social media campaigns) to facilitate dissemination of knowledge and awareness raising on measures, including hygiene ones, to tackle the spread of COVID-19;
- translation of documents, information material and research work into the national languages of CEI non-EU Member States.

For area of intervention 2 – Education and e-learning/distance learning (EDU):

- purchase of equipment for e-learning purposes, including hardware (school digital boards, computer, laptops, tablets, devices, etc.) and software (online tools, platforms for distance learning, etc.);
- organisation of online seminars (webinars) to facilitate transfer of knowledge between and among education experts and operators (from CEI EU Member States to CEI non-EU Member States).

For area of intervention 3 - Support to Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs):

- purchase of equipment for facilitating smart working, including hardware (computers, laptops, tablets, devices, etc.) and software (online tools, platforms for smart working, etc.);
- organisation of online seminars (webinars) to facilitate transfer of knowledge between and among economic experts and operators (from CEI EU Member States to CEI non-EU Member States);
- purchase of consulting services to facilitate innovation, with a particular focus on digitalisation and dematerialization of businesses.

6.4. Participation

No participation quorum is envisaged under this Call.

Funded actions can involve either:

- one CEI Member State (for instance, an hospital purchasing medical equipment; a municipality producing an informative video for its citizens on how to tackle the spread of COVID-19; a school purchasing equipment for e-learning purposes; etc.);
- or
- two (or more) CEI Member States (for instance, an entity in a CEI EU Member State purchasing useful equipment and sending it a counterpart in a CEI non-EU Member State; an entity in a CEI EU Member State organising an online seminar (webinar) to transfer knowledge to one (or more) CEI non-EU Member State(s) on topics relevant to counter the spread of COVID-19; etc.).

Nevertheless, in line with the regional character of the CEI, cooperative actions involving several Member States are strongly encouraged.

6.5. Exchange Rate Fluctuations and National Fiscal Regulations

The budget of the Application Form shall be outlined in Euro. The Applicant is entirely responsible for the calculations leading to the outlined budget estimate including currency conversions and national/local taxes and levies (e.g. VAT). The CEI is not responsible for or reimbursing currency rate variations and cannot be charged with potential shortages or financial consequences of exchange rate fluctuations and underestimation or disregard of national fiscal regulations by the Applicant. Budget calculations in countries which are outside the Euro zone can take as reference value the exchange rate of the National Bank of their country on the day of submitting the Application. The CEI grant is transferred in Euro. Bank transfers to accounts in a local currency are likely to be automatically converted by the recipient's bank to the currency of the account, using the exchange rate of the date of transaction. In any such cases, the CEI will not be responsible for any possible depreciation of the transferred tranches of the CEI contribution.

7. Implementation Period

Owing to its “extraordinary” nature, this Call is designed to respond as quickly as possible to the emergency caused by COVID-19. In this regard, while the CEI will make any effort to simplify the application and evaluation phase, and the subsequent awarding procedure, successful Applicants are requested to immediately start the implementation of the activity funded through a CEI grant.

Moreover, to optimise the impact of this Call, Applicants are requested to conclude the implementation of the CEI-funded activity within a time frame of 6 months starting from the official communication of awarding received from the CEI.

8. CEI Visibility

Successful Applicants - implementing an activity funded by a CEI grant received in the context of this Extraordinary Call - are kindly requested to ensure maximum CEI visibility. This can be done by adding, whenever possible, the CEI logo (to be provided by the CEI) and/or by including a sentence stating that “this activity has received funding from the Central European Initiative” / “this purchase was made possible thanks to funding received from the Central European Initiative”. Applicants are also encouraged to make use of social networks to maximise CEI visibility. Finally, applicants are recommended to make reference to all actions undertaken to ensure CEI visibility in the narrative and financial report to be submitted at the end of the activity (*see chapter 5. above*).

9. Amendments to the Call

The CEI reserves the right to amend the present Call for Proposals by issuing addenda and/or amendments. Any addendum or amendment issued will become an integral part of the Call for Proposals upon being published on the CEI website.

10. Questions

Any question regarding the Call for Proposals shall be addressed before the deadline for submission – exclusively in written form by email to applications@cei.int quoting as subject **EX. Call 2020 – – Questions**.

11. Evaluation Grid

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

ANNEX 1 – EVALUATION GRID

<i>Evaluation grid</i>	<i>Score</i> ³
1. Relevance	/ 5
To which extent does the proposed Activity comply with the priorities set by the Call?	
2. Quality of the information	/ 5
Is the information reported in the Application Form satisfactory?	
3. Applicant's operational capacity	/ 5
Does the Applicant prove the necessary expertise to implement the proposed Activity?	
4. Results/objectives	/ 5
Is the proposed Activity likely to have an appropriate, practical and consistent outcome?	
5. Impact	/ 5
Does the Activity meet with the needs of the identified target group(s)?	
6. Cost effectiveness and budget coherence	/ 5
Is the budget clear, consistent and detailed, sound and cost-effective?	
7. CEI visibility	/ 5
Is the envisaged CEI visibility adequate?	
TOTAL	/ 35

Final Score

00-07 not acceptable | 8-14 insufficient | 15-21 acceptable | 22-28 good | 29-35 very good

³ **Score:** Very good (5), good (4), acceptable (3), insufficient (2), not acceptable (1).