

Call for Proposals EEA/CY/NGO/C-1

**PricewaterhouseCoopers Ltd,
being the NGO Fund Programme Operator for the Republic of Cyprus**

Announces

The First Call for Proposals EEA/CY/NGO/C-1 within the Fund for Non Governmental Organisations (NGO Fund) in the framework of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 for the Republic of Cyprus

1. Objective

The objective of the Fund for Non Governmental Organisations (NGO Fund) is to strengthen civil society development and enhance contribution to social justice, democracy and sustainable development in the Republic of Cyprus by providing financing to NGO projects in selected areas of support.

A minimum 30% of the funding is made available for bi-communal projects that would benefit both communities within the priority areas, with a view to encouraging bi-communal contacts and a minimum of 10% of the funding is made available for children and youth driven organisations and/ or activities targeting children and youth.

Donor States' horizontal concerns related to hate speech, extremism – hate crime, racism and xenophobia, homophobia, anti-Semitism, tolerance/multicultural understanding, sexual harassment, violence against women and trafficking should also be addressed through the Fund.

2. Areas of support

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Through the current call, the NGO Fund shall provide funding in the core and additional areas of support as indicated below. Additional financing in the Outcome of “Strengthened capacity of NGOs and an enabling environment for the sector promoted” is made available under a separate call **EEA/CY/NGO/C-2**.

2.1. Core Areas of support

The following areas are eligible for support and should be covered by at least 40% of the Programme allocation:

- Democracy and participatory democracy
- Human rights, including minority rights (ethnic, religious, linguistic and sexual orientation)
- Good governance and transparency
- Combat racism and xenophobia and promoting anti-discrimination
- Social inequalities, poverty and exclusion, including in rural areas
- Gender equality and combating gender-based violence

2.2. Additional eligible areas and activities

The following areas and activities are also eligible for support:

2.2.1. Protection of the environment and climate change

- Awareness-raising and civic participation
- Develop umbrella organisations and/or new networks on biodiversity/climate change
- Mobilising local involvement to protect biodiversity
- Environmental educational activities and training for teachers

2.2.2. Provision of welfare and basic services

Provision of key services to vulnerable groups: children and youth at risk, people affected by HIV/AIDS, children with disabilities and/or mental disorders and their

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families, victims of trafficking and gender-based violence and/or domestic violence, where such services are not otherwise or not adequately provided by governmental institutions.

3. Eligible Activities and Expenditures

The types of activities to be funded are as follows:

- a. Fostering active citizenship and participatory democracy, including grassroots / local level
- b. Advocacy, watchdog and monitoring activities
- c. Awareness raising activities
- d. Multicultural dialogue activities
- e. Participation in policy and decision making processes
- f. Capacity building and organisational support to NGOs
- g. Strengthening governance in membership based NGOs
- h. Network and coalition building
- i. Mutual learning and dissemination
- j. Education and training activities
- k. Provision of innovative / new welfare and basic services to defined target groups

Eligible expenditures are defined according to the rules on eligibility of expenditure contained in Chapter 7 of the Regulation on the implementation of the European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 available on <http://eeagrants.org/Results-data/Results-overview/Documents/Legal-documents/Regulations-with-annexes/EEA-Grants-2009-2014>

Furthermore, in the implementation of actions in the framework of bi-communal projects financed under the NGO Fund, costs will be eligible provided that:

- (i) The rights of natural or legal persons including the rights to possessions and property shall be respected. In this context, the contracting parties shall act in accordance with the case law of the European Court of Human Rights. To this end, the written consent of the natural or legal person owning any property in the *The Fund for Non Governmental Organisations* benefits a grant from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA Grants and by the Republic of Cyprus through the Planning Bureau

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- areas not under the effective control of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus potentially affected by project-related activities must be submitted together with the application for funding of bi-communal projects.
- (ii) For any actions financed under the NGO Fund involving travelling abroad, the legal points of entry and exit of the Republic of Cyprus shall be used.
 - (iii) Payments to beneficiaries shall only be made through legally operating banking institutions in the Republic of Cyprus.

4. Type of assistance, Programme Outcomes and size of grants

The total amount to be disbursed under the NGO Fund for this call is EUR 1,175,056. The assistance is provided in the form of grants for selected projects. The minimum and maximum amount of project grants per project class is shown in the following table:

Grants size class				
Class Nr.	Minimum Funding per project €	Maximum Funding per project €	Regranting Allocation €	Projects Duration
Class 1	5.000	20.000	130.612	max 6 months
Class 2	20.001	70.000	444.444	max 12 months
Class 3	70.001	120.000	600.000	max 18 months
	Totals		1.175.056	

Project duration shall be calculated from the date of the project contract signature (or later if so stipulated in the project contract). The Date of the contract signature is defined as the date of the last signature.

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The funds shall be allocated to the following Outcomes as follows:

Outcome	Funds Available for re-granting
Outcome 1: Provision of welfare and basic services to defined target groups increased	€430,714
Outcome 2: Strengthened capacity of NGOs and an enabling environment for the sector promoted	€252,097
Outcome 3: Democratic values, including human rights, promoted	€492,245
Total re-granting for all Outcomes	€1,175,056

The grant rate will be up to 90 percent (90%) of eligible project costs. The NGO Project Promoters (end-recipients) are expected to contribute a minimum of ten percent (10%) as own contribution either in cash or in kind. In-kind contribution can constitute up to fifty percent (50%) of the end-recipients' own contribution. Project budgets must be submitted in Euro.

5. Payment flows

Payments towards the projects will be carried out by the Programme Operator. Payments will take the form of advance payments, interim payments and final balance payments.

Payments to Class 1 projects shall normally be in the form of one advance payment of at least 65% of the project grant and one final balance payment of up to 35% of the project grant.

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Payments to Class 2 projects shall normally be in the form of one advance payment of 40% of the project grant, interim payments in the form of pre-financing of up to 40% of the grant less any unabsorbed funds previously paid, and one final balance payment of up to 20% of the project grant.

Payments to Class 3 projects shall normally be in the form of one advance payment of at 40% of the project grant, interim payments in the form of pre-financing of up to 30% of the grant less any unabsorbed funds previously paid, and one final balance payment of up to 30% of the project grant.

Advance payments will be made no later than one month after the signing of the project agreements.

Interim payments shall be made on the basis of approved project interim reports which are to be submitted by the Project Promoters to the Programme Operator. The payments shall be carried out no later than one month after the verification and approval of such reports.

Payments of the final balance shall be made on the basis of approved final reports which are to be submitted by the Project Promoters to the Programme Operator. The payments shall be carried out no later than one month after the verification and approval of such reports.

6. Eligible Applicants and Partners

1. Eligible applicants are NGOs that are established in the Republic of Cyprus and fall within the following definition: "A non-profit voluntary organisation established as a legal entity, having a non-commercial purpose, independent of local, regional and central government, public entities, political parties and commercial organisations. Religious institutions, political parties and social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations according to the EU definition) are not considered NGOs."

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2. The Programme Operator shall, for the purpose of interpreting the definition in paragraph 1, duly take into account the interpretation guidance contained in section 2.3 of the Guideline for NGO Programmes. In cases of doubt, the Programme Operator shall consult with the Financial Mechanisms Committee.
3. Applicants may prepare proposals either on a sole basis, or in partnership with other organizations (Project Partners). Project Partners may be a public or private entity, commercial or non-commercial, as well as non-governmental organisations, all of whose primary locations are either in the Donor States, Beneficiary States or a country outside the European Economic Area that has a common border with the respective Beneficiary State, or any inter-governmental organisation, actively involved in, and effectively contributing to, the implementation of a project. It shares with the Project Promoter a common economic or social goal which is to be realised through the implementation of that project.

7. Procedure for Submission of Applications

- Applicants must fill in the Application Form and the Budget Form and include all relevant Annexes in accordance with the requirements of the Guide for Applicants.
- Annexes and other supporting documents which are relevant to the projects submitted shall be attached to the application.
- The application must be submitted in English in 2 hard copies (1 original and 1 copy), as well as in electronic format (MS Word format for the Application and MS Excel format for the budget form on a CD or USB drive) which must be identical to the hard copy.
- The envelope containing the application must be marked " Proposal for the NGO Fund in Cyprus **EEA/CY/NGO/C-1**".

8. Submission of multiple proposals

NGOs may submit more than one proposal as main Applicants. However, a second proposal (as judged by the relative positions of the two proposals in respect of marks attained during evaluation) by the same main Applicant that meets the eligibility and

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selection criteria may only be selected for funding only if all other proposals that attain the threshold mark of its class are funded.

This rule also applies to proposals submitted by the same Applicant to both Calls for proposals. (i.e. if an Applicant submits a proposals to both Calls for proposals and both proposals could be funded given their final mark, then only the proposal will the higher mark will be funded and the second proposal – even if submitted under the other Call – will only be funded if all other proposals that attain the threshold mark of its class are funded.

NGOs may participate in more than one proposal as partners with no ramifications on the selection process.

9. Deadline and address for submission of applications

The Call is open as of 24 July 2013. Applications must be submitted in a sealed, intact envelope/ box as letter/ parcel by registered or express mail, by courier, in person or by post to the address indicated below and should bear the text exactly as indicated below:

Proposal for the EEA NGO Fund in Cyprus

Call: EEA/CY/NGO/C-1

Project Class 1/2/3 [please indicate your project's Class]

Price Waterhouse Coopers Ltd

Aias Building, 19 Diagoras Street,

CY-1097 Nicosia, Cyprus

Attn: Panagiotis Moiras

NOT TO BE OPENED BY THE INTERNAL MAIL DEPARTMENT

Applicant: [Name of Applicant Organisation]

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All applications must be received at the above address at the latest by 30 October 2013 at 16.00 local time. Evidence of timely submission by post or courier service will be constituted by the sending date of the postmark or the date of the deposit slip.

10. Assessment of Proposals

10.1. *Formal Eligibility and Administrative Compliance Criteria*

The eligibility check is the first step carried out after receipt of the proposals. The proposals will be evaluated against the eligibility criteria as referred to in the Call. To be eligible, the proposals and proposers have to satisfy to all eligibility criteria.

On the basis of documentation to be submitted by the Applicants together with their Application Form, only proposals that fulfill all of the formal eligibility and administrative compliance criteria will be retained for evaluation.

The Formal Eligibility and Administrative Compliance Criteria which are also included in the Financial and Administrative Handbook, and the Guide for Applicants are as follows:

- a. Applicant must be a legal entity registered in the Republic of Cyprus. Applicants' legal form must conform to the definition of NGOs given in this call and in section 2.3 of the Guideline for NGO Programmes (<http://eeagrants.org/Results-data/Results-overview/Documents/Legal-documents/Guidelines-mandates-and-strategy>).
- b. Applicant must not be bankrupt or in the process of bankruptcy, or the process of reorganization or liquidation.
- c. Applicant must not have been found guilty by a final judgment of criminal offences related to the use of funds from EEA and Norway Financial mechanisms or EU structural funds, or other public funds.
- d. Applicant must not provide false or misleading information in the application and its supporting documents, as well as should not conceal any information including that about conflict of interest.

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- e. Copies of the Applicant's official registration documents in the competent authority of the Republic of Cyprus must be included with the Application. The PO may request clarifications in regards to these documents but omission to include them in the Application will immediately disqualify the Application.
- f. The Application must be duly signed by the Applicant's legal representative and that legal representative must be clearly indicated either in the Applicant's official registration documents or through an original, signed decision of the Applicant's decision making body (Board of Directors, Annual General Meeting or otherwise depending on the type of organization).
- g. The Application must be submitted in the provided Application forms, all fields of the Application form must be duly completed and the Application must reach the Programme Operator by the deadlines noted in Section 9 "*Deadline and address for submission of applications*" above
- h. The requested contribution from the NGO Fund does not exceed 90% of the total eligible budget
- i. The proposed project is not in receipt of funding from any other EU or national source for the same costs claimed in the proposal
- j. The proposal must be accompanied by a statement of commitment to the co-financing requirements (included as an Annex of the Application Form - Double Funding Declaration)
- k. The indicative costs applied for are eligible in accordance with the provisions of Section 3 (Eligible Activities and Expenditures) above
- l. The duration of the project must in any case be clearly indicated with the maximum duration indicated per project class falling within the limits presented in Section 4 "*Type of assistance, Programme Outcomes and size of grants*" above
- m. Applicant must not make or attempt to make any direct or indirect influence on representatives of NGO Programme Operator, National Focal Point, Financial Mechanism Office, Project Evaluators or Selection Committee members, during the entire period of implementation of the NGO Programme in Cyprus
- n. In the case of bi-communal projects, the rights of natural or legal owners including the rights to possessions and property are not violated

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Applicants' failure to comply with the above criteria will lead to the Application being disqualified from further evaluation.

In order to comply with criteria b, c, d and h the Applicant must provide a Solemn Statement a template of which is provided as Annex to the Application Form Template. The Programme Operator may ask the Applicant to substantiate its statement with official documentation. In such a case the Applicant must provide such official documentary evidence within 5 working days of the Programme Operator's request.

9.2. Administrative compliance assessment and eligibility assessment

The task of the evaluation will commence with the receipt of all applications submitted and their subsequent registration. The PO will proceed to the preliminary detailed screening of applications against the pre-determined formal eligibility and administrative compliance criteria and prepare the list of administratively compliant and eligible proposals. The eligibility criteria will be rigorously applied and any proposal found to be ineligible will be excluded. During this process, clarifications by the proposers may be deemed necessary, where the PO will send a formal clarification request to the relevant proposers. An applicant whose application is rejected due to non-compliance with administrative and eligibility criteria can request the review of the decision. The applicant shall submit such a request within 7 working days of being notified about the rejection and shall provide reasons for why the decision should be overturned. In case applicants do not submit their clarifications within the time frame specified, their proposal will be deemed as ineligible. In case the documentation submitted with the proposal does not provide convincing evidence of satisfying the eligibility and compliance criteria, their proposal will be deemed as ineligible. The PO shall make and communicate the decision to the applicant within 14 working days from the receipt of the request.

If it becomes clear before, during or after the evaluation phase that one or more of the eligibility criteria are not fulfilled, the proposal is declared non eligible and eliminated

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from the selection process. Where there is a doubt on the eligibility of a proposal, the PO will reserve the right to proceed with the evaluation, pending a final decision on eligibility in order to ensure that there is no delay in the process. The fact that a proposal is evaluated in such circumstances does not constitute proof of its eligibility. If more than one version of the same proposal is received, only the latest complete eligible version sent before or on the deadline will be evaluated.

The decision to exclude a proposal for failing one or more eligibility criteria will be taken by the PO. This decision may be taken at any appropriate moment before, during or after the evaluation process, when ineligibility has been proven.

As a result of this process, a list of administratively compliant and eligible proposals will be drafted and a list of proposals which did not pass this first stage of the evaluation will be drafted.

The next step will be the information of applicants whose proposals did not pass the eligibility check with an official letter. The letter will include the proposal title, proposal identifier, the information of the rejection and the reasons for the rejection, i.e. which of the Formal Eligibility and Administrative Compliance criterion or criteria was or were not met, and that their proposal will not be evaluated as regards its technical part. The proposals which passed the Formal Eligibility and Administrative Compliance Criteria will pass to the next phase of technical assessment.

9.3. Technical Assessment

9.3.1. Selection Criteria

The technical assessment will be carried out based on a set of Selection Criteria which will serve to verify, examine and assess the information provided in the Application of each project. The criteria relate to how each proposed project contributes to the Programme's objective, expected outcomes and outputs.

The Selection Criteria are detailed below with their respective weights:

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Applications selection (evaluation) criteria

SELECTION CRITERIA		Class 1 Max. Score	Class 2 Max. Score	Class 3 Max. Score
1	RELEVANCE WITH NGO FUND PRIORITIES	25	20	15
1.1	Clear description of the need of the target group to be addressed and its relevance to the objectives and priorities of the NGO Fund including the horizontal concerns. Clear definition of the planned effects (outputs, results, impacts)	13	8	7
1.2	Clear thematic focus which relates to the general objectives of the NGO Fund programme	10	7	5
1.3	Contribution to the strengthening of bilateral relations between the EEA/EFTA states and the Republic of Cyprus	2	5	3
2	QUALITY OF APPROACH AND MANAGEMENT	20	23	23
2.1	Coherence between the planned project effects and proposed approach and methodology including objectives, activities and results	5	8	8
2.2	Clear division of tasks and responsibilities, realistic and transparent work plan and timetable	5	5	5
2.3	Degree of innovativeness in the project design, methodology, outputs, target groups	5	5	5
2.4	Effectiveness of communication plan and extent to which the project results reach the target groups	5	5	5
3	QUALITY OF APPLICANT/ PARTNERSHIP	15	15	15
3.1	Coherence between the project objectives and the Applicant/ Partnership	10	5	3
3.2	Clear experience and capacity of Applicant/ Partnership to carry out the proposed project	5	10	12
4	QUALITY OF RESULTS	20	20	20
4.1	Expected results are concrete, visible and measurable, have capacity building potential	8	10	12
4.2	The results expected must contribute to the achievement of the goals described in the proposal	12	10	8
5	SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT RESULTS	10	10	10

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5.1	Potential for sustainability of project impact	2	4	4
5.2	Impact of the project activities on rural areas	2	2	2
5.3	Impact on the project on specific target groups such as minorities, children, immigrants	3	2	2
5.4	Impact of the project activities on the cross cutting issues of good governance, sustainable development and gender equality	3	2	2
6	BUDGET	13	15	20
6.1	The proposed budget realistically reflects the activities laid out in the proposal	5	6	8
6.2	Grant rate requested 70-90% of overall budget	1	1	0
6.3	Grant rate requested 50-70% of overall budget	2	2	1
6.4	Grant rate requested less than 50% of overall budget	3	3	2
6.5	Value for money	2	3	9
TOTAL SCORE (the total score is 103 as only one of sub criteria 6.2, 6.3, and 6.4 will apply to each proposal bringing the actual possible total to 100)		103	103	103

A minimum required score for key criteria is set, as well as a minimum total score for a project. The thresholds for the selection criteria blocks will be as follows:

Class 1 Proposals Assessment Thresholds		
	Class 1 Max Score	Threshold
1. Relevance with NGO Fund Priorities	25	13
2. Quality of Approach and Management	20	10
3. Quality of Applicant/ Partnership	15	7
4. Quality of Results	20	10
5. Sustainability of Project Results	10	5
6. Budget	13	6

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Total (points)	103	51
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Class 2 Proposals Assessment Thresholds		
	Class 2 Max Score	Threshold
1. Relevance with NGO Fund Priorities	20	10
2. Quality of Approach and Management	23	12
3. Quality of Applicant/ Partnership	15	8
4. Quality of Results	20	10
5. Sustainability of Project Results	10	5
6. Budget	15	6
Total (points)	103	51

Class 3 Proposals Assessment Thresholds		
	Class 3 Max Score	Threshold
1. Relevance with NGO Fund Priorities	15	8
2. Quality of Approach and Management	23	13
3. Quality of Applicant/ Partnership	15	8
4. Quality of Results	20	15
5. Sustainability of Project Results	10	5

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6. Budget	20	12
Total (points)	103	61

9.3.2. Proposals Evaluation

Each administratively compliant and eligible proposal will be assigned to two external evaluators from the list of selected evaluators, for assessment against the selection criteria. If the difference between the two evaluations on the same proposal is more than 30 out of 100 points, then the proposal will be evaluated by a third evaluator. The final score of the proposal will be the average of the two evaluations with the closest total marks. No additional data or clarifications may be requested by applicants for the technical proposal part of the application. The evaluators will assess proposals using the Guide for Evaluators.

The PO will rank the evaluated proposals by highest score and prepare a Project Proposals Ranking List. Based on the comments of the evaluators the PO, where necessary, may consult with the Applicants for the adjustment of their proposals as regards certain aspects i.e. reduced budget, reduced time frame, adjustment of activities etc.

At this stage of the evaluation no Appeals process will be available for Applicants.

10. State aid screening

All projects on the Project Proposals Ranking List must be cleared by the Commissioner for the Control of State Aid. The PO will communicate the List to the Commissioner for the Control of State Aid and will make any necessary adjustments to the final List based on the findings of the Commissioner.

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11. Ranking

The PO will prepare the final version of the Project Proposals Ranking List after clearing by the Commissioner for the Control of State Aid. In preparing the list the PO will act to ensure the compliance with relation to the percentages for core areas of support, children and youth-driven organisations and bi-communal projects, the Call Outcomes, as well as the re-granting allocations for the three Classes of Projects. In case reallocation between outcomes, classes etc is required, the reallocation between these aspects of the Fund will be discussed and decided upon between the FMO / Donor States and the NFP. The PO, where necessary, may consult with the Applicants for the adjustment of their proposals as regards certain aspects i.e. reduced budget, reduced time frame, adjustment of activities etc.

12. Selection Committee meeting

The Selection Committee will hold a meeting and decide on the Approved Projects List ensuring that the allocation of funds described above is respected. The Selection Committee will decide upon the PO's suggestions for adjustments to the Approved Projects List in order to meet the Fund's allocation targets.

In case the Approved Projects List is exhausted in meeting the minimum funding distributions, the Selection Committee will draw projects from the Reserve projects list. The Reserve Projects List is the list of proposals cleared by the Commissioner for the Control of State Aid and which have received higher than the relevant Project Class threshold.

The Selection Committee meeting will result in:

- a final list of Approved Projects which will be the projects proposed for funding. This list should satisfy the percentage funding allocations as described above and ensure that the regranting budget is fully absorbed
- a final list of Reserve Projects ranked by evaluation average score and be kept until the contracting procedure with the Approved Projects promoters is completed. The Reserve Projects list will be maintained for the cases where

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project applicants may for any reason decide to withdraw their proposal prior to contracting or where additional funds become available to the NGO Programme either from other Programmes under the EEA Grants MOU with the Republic of Cyprus or from unabsorbed funds from the second call of the programme. In such cases, projects from the Reserve Projects list will be selected by the PO based on their marking but also on their duration and the available time-frame of the programme and the allocations between the areas of support, outcomes etc.

- a final list of Rejected Projects which are rejected based on their evaluation score which is lower than the respective project Class threshold.

13. Notification of Applicants

Successful Applicants on the Approved Projects List will be notified by official letter within 15 working days of the Selection Committee meeting and will be called to sign the Project Contract within 15 working days from the notification of the selection. The successful applicants will also be notified for any potential changes to the budget and/or funding amount that that PO decided to make to their application. The PO will have the right to propose a revised budget for projects (but never a higher grant amount than the amount requested in the submitted application) in cases where the PO believes that the proposed project activities may be carried out with decreased budget. In such cases, the project budget as revised by the PO will be annexed to the information letter, and project promoters will be called to sign the Project Contract for their proposed project based on the PO's revised budget. There will be no negotiations procedure in relation to the total funding available per project as the total budget for the call is expected to have been fully allocated at this stage. The successful applicants will have the option of not signing the Project Contract which will result in the selection of projects from the Reserve Projects List.

The PO will also inform applicants whose applications are rejected as well as the reasons for the rejection. This information shall be given by official letter, within 15 working days after the Selection Committee's decision has been made.

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The PO will also inform applicants whose applications are on the Reserve Projects list with explanation of the “Reserve” status, notifying that this status is a temporary status, and final decisions will be communicated once the Approved Projects promoters sign their Project Contracts. After signature of the project contracts, the applicants whose projects are on the Reserve Projects list will be informed by official letter notifying of the final decision with justification for their proposal evaluation score. The justification will be based on the marks and feedback provided by the evaluators.

14. Reference Documentation

The main reference documentation for the present call for proposals is the Guide for Applicants and the Application Form as well as their annexes which can be found at www.eeangofund.org.cy. Guidelines and additional documentation on the EEA Grants can be found at www.eeagrants.org. Furthermore, potential applicants are advised to check the National Focal Point’s website at www.planning.gov.cy/eeagrants/2009-2014.

15. Contact Information for queries

Questions may be sent by email to the contact below until 11 October 2013.

Pantelis Dimitriou – NGO Programme Manager

Phone: +357 22 875710

Fax: + 357 22 757080

Email: pdimitriou@firstelements.com.cy

All questions will be answered as soon as possible and in any case by 16 October 2013.