



Montenegro

Ministry of Finance and Social Welfare

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### Contracting Authority's Clarifications

#### Grant scheme: *“Implementation of training and education for deficit occupations”* EuropeAid/171432/ID/ACT/ME

Following the online info session held on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2021, below are presented the answers on questions raised by the participants. Also, the table contains the answers on questions received on the functional e-mail address [cfcu@mif.gov.me](mailto:cfcu@mif.gov.me).

<b>Q1</b>	<b>Could you tell me how many applications (projects) can one organization submit?</b>
A1	<p>In accordance with the Guidelines for Applicants, Section 2.1.4 Eligible actions: actions for which an application may be made, undersection Number of applicants and grants per applicants/affiliated entities, it is specified:</p> <p><i>“The lead applicant may not submit more than 2 application(s) under this call for proposals.</i></p> <p><i>The lead applicant may not be awarded more than 1 grant under this call for proposals.</i></p> <p><i>The lead applicant may be a co-applicant or an affiliated entity in another application at the same time, but not in more than one application.</i></p> <p><i>A co-applicant/affiliated entity may not be the co-applicant or affiliated entity in more than 2 application(s) under this call for proposals.</i></p> <p><i>A co-applicant/affiliated entity may not be awarded more than 1 grant under this call for proposals.”</i></p> <p>In addition, please note that in the event of failure to fulfil these requirements, the applications of all concerned entities will be rejected.</p>
<b>Q2</b>	<b>Could you send us presentations from the Info sessions?</b>
A2	<p>Presentations from the Info Sessions will be published on the relevant sites of the European Commission (<a href="https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome">https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome</a>) and CFCU (<a href="http://www.cfcu.gov.me/en/tenders/grants/open_calls">http://www.cfcu.gov.me/en/tenders/grants/open_calls</a>).</p>
<b>Q3</b>	<b>Are projects aimed at social entrepreneurship and the formation of social enterprises, which would be self-sustainable after the completion of the project, also included?</b>
A3	<p>In accordance with the Guidelines for applicants, Section 2.2.4. Further information about applications: <i>„To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the contracting authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of lead applicants, co-applicants, affiliated entity(ies), an action or specific activities.”</i></p>

	<p>However, please refer to the Section 2.1.1 of the Guidelines for applicants - Eligibility of applicants (i.e. lead applicant and co-applicant(s)) indicating the following:</p> <p><i>“In order to be eligible for a grant, the lead applicant must:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>be a legal person and</i></li> <li>• <i>be non-profit-making or profit-making and</i></li> <li>• <i>be a specific type of organisation such as:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <i>non-governmental organisation (including social partners);</i></li> <li>b) <i>local authority in Montenegro (i.e. municipality);</i></li> <li>c) <i>public sector entity (public utility company, etc.);</i></li> <li>d) <i>private sector entity (i.e. training provider etc.) or</i></li> <li>e) <i>international organisation as defined by Article 156 of the EU Financial Regulation and</i></li> </ol> </li> <li>• <i>be established in Montenegro, in a Member State of the European Union, or in any other country as specified within Annex I of the IPA II Regulation. (this obligation does not apply to international organisations) and</i></li> <li>• <i>be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action with the co-applicant(s) and affiliated entity(ies), not acting as an intermediary.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>(2) Potential applicants may not participate in calls for proposals or be awarded grants if they are in any of the situations listed in Section 2.6.10.1 of the practical guide.”</i></p> <p>Furthermore, the section 2.1.4. Eligible actions: actions for which an application may be made of the GfA states the following:</p> <p><i>“The actions proposed under Cfp, proposed activities, must include, as a minimum the following activity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Training of the target group members followed by the employment of the trained target group members. The employment of the trained TG members must take place during the implementation of the action and should preferably continue after the implementation of the project.”</i></li> </ul>
Q4	<b>What is the correct form of applications that should be submitted by 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021?</b>
A4	In accordance with the Guidelines for Applicants, Section 2.2.1. Concept note content, concrete steps during preparation of the Concept note were given. In addition to that, please see the instructions in the grant application form annexed to the Guidelines for Applicants (Annex A) as well.
Q5	<b>Does the lead applicant have to involve the co-applicant or the project may be implemented solely by the lead applicant?</b>
A5	In accordance with the Section 2.1.1. of the Guidelines for Applicants (Eligibility of applicants (i.e. lead applicant and co-applicant(s))), <i>“The lead applicant may act individually or with co-applicant(s).”</i>
Q6	<b>Can co-applicants/associates/affiliated entities be from one of the states in the region?</b>

A6	<p>In accordance with the Guidelines for Applicants, Section 2.1.1. Eligibility of applicants and 2.1.2 Affiliated entities, among other requirements, the lead applicant, co-applicant and affiliated entity(ies) must <i>“be established in Montenegro, in a Member State of the European Union, or in any other country as specified within Annex I of the IPA II Regulation. (this obligation does not apply to international organisations)”</i></p> <p>Please consult the whole list of requirements for the eligible applicants in the above mentioned section.</p> <p>Additionally, please refer to the Annex a2a of PRAG 2020 - Rules on participation in procurement procedures and grants (<a href="https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/prag/document.do?isAnnexes=true">https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/prag/document.do?isAnnexes=true</a>), for list of counties eligible to participate in the award of procurement contracts, grants and other award procedures financed under IPA II (CIR- Article 10) (page 3 of the annex a2a).</p> <p>On the other hand, as per Guidelines for Applicants, Section 2.1.3 – Associates and Contractors: <i>“Associates do not have to meet the eligibility criteria referred to in Section 2.1.1.”</i> Please note that, although the associates play a real role in the action, they may not receive funding from the grant, with the exception of per diem or travel costs.</p>
Q7	<p><b>Are costs less than 50.00 EUR containing VAT acceptable or VAT should be exempted on such smaller amounts? Is the process of VAT exemption conducted through the Ministry of Finance and Social Welfare?</b></p>
A7	<p>VAT/taxes, duties and charges are not eligible for the activities, regardless of the size of amount. Therefore, the invoices for the amounts of below 50 EUR are also subject to VAT exemption. The process of the VAT exemption is coordinated by the Ministry of Finance and Social Welfare, i.e. CFCU as the Contracting Authority.</p> <p>For more information please consult Annex J - <i>Information on the tax regime applicable to grant contracts</i> of the Application package.</p>
Q8	<p><b>Is there a list of occupations that are defined for this project as in deficit?</b></p>
A8	<p>No, a list of deficit occupations is not compiled for this Call for Proposals.</p> <p>However, please be informed that, in accordance with the Guidelines for Applicants, Section 1.2. Objectives of the programme and priority issues, <i>“applicants should note that the ‘burden of proof’, i.e. producing evidence persuasive enough to establish that skills, competences, knowledge and attitudes are ‘hard to find’ is on the applicant’s side, hence they are advised to present these evidences (e.g. prior failed attempts to recruit, lack of qualified labour etc) in the relevant sections of their application forms.”</i></p>
Q9	<p><b>What happens if the target is not achieved, if the trainees have attained the training but cannot be employed (do not get a job) during the project?</b></p>
A9	<p>In order to prevent this situation from happening in the first place, the applicants are advised to invest additional efforts in the project planning phase, to research the market and set realistic targets, previously determining all risks and obstacles which</p>

	<p>could possibly affect the project implementation phase. The applicants are also reminded on the provision of the Guidelines for Applicants Section 1.2. Objectives of the programme and priority issues, which specifies “<i>The project proposals must set clear target values in their Logical Framework for the following indicators: a) number of persons to be trained (total and number of those belonging to prioritised groups); b) number of persons expected to be employed as the result of the action. The lower ratio between the expected number of persons to be employed and expected number of persons to be trained as the result of the action will be considered as added value of project proposal (see further under Evaluation Grid for Concept notes, question 1.4). The ratio will be calculated for all received projects using the scale of convenience (developed once all projects are received) and scored accordingly, with top 20 percentile scoring 5, those in next 20 percentile range 4 and further. This shall constitute the sole criteria for assessing added values in projects i.e. question 1.4 of the Concept note Evaluation grid.</i>”</p> <p>However, the applicants should keep in mind the very importance of adequate balance between willingness to achieve additional points concerning the added value prescribed above and setting realistic and feasible targets.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Guidelines for Applicants Section 2.1.4. Eligible actions: actions for which an application may be made, clearly state that the employment must take place during implementation of the action: „<i>The actions proposed under CfP, proposed activities, <u>must include</u>, as a minimum the following activity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Training of the target group members followed by the employment of the trained target group members. The employment of the trained TG members must take place during the implementation of the action and should preferably continue after the implementation of the project. Please note that in the event of failure to fulfil this requirement, the application will be rejected.</i>”</li> </ul> <p>Depending on the level of achievement of the set targets in regard to the question raised, the Contracting Authority reserves the right to decide on the manner of resolving the situation. If such issue incurs during the implementation period, it will be resolved in accordance with the provisions of the General Conditions. In the case of minor deviations detailed explanation may be sought as to why the targets were not achieved, or, in case of major deviations, some more negative measures may be taken, such as certain financial implications or even the termination of the grant contract (Article 12.2 of the General Conditions).</p>
Q10	<b>This Call for proposals does not limit the direct costs of training per participant as in the previous one (2,000.00 EUR)?</b>
A10	The statement is correct. No limitation was set concerning the costs of training per participant.
Q11	<b>Is the obligatory duration of the trainee's employment contract after the end of the project defined (minimum 6 months)?</b>
A11	The duration of the trainee’s employment contract is not defined under this Call for proposals. However, please refer to the Section 2.1.4 of the Guidelines for applicants - <i>Eligible</i>

	<p><i>actions: actions for which an application may be made indicating the following:</i>  <i>“The employment of the trained TG members must take place during the implementation of the action and should preferably continue after the implementation of the project.”</i></p>
<b>Q12</b>	<b>Can a private higher education institution be a lead applicant?</b>
A12	<p>In accordance with the Guidelines for grant applicants, Section 2.2.4. Further information about applications: <i>„To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the contracting authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of lead applicants, co-applicants, affiliated entity(ies), an action or specific activities.”</i></p> <p>However, as long as eligibility criteria specified in the section 2.1.1 of the GfA are met, your entity will be eligible for this call (please see A3).</p>
<b>Q13</b>	<b>Can two related legal entities, which have a training centre as an independent third legal entity, apply for this call? Are there any restrictions in that sense?</b>
A13	<p>In accordance with the Guidelines for grant applicants, Section 2.2.4. Further information about applications: <i>„To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the contracting authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of lead applicants, co-applicants, affiliated entity(ies), an action or specific activities.”</i></p> <p>However, please find further instructions concerning the relation between involved parties in the project clearly described in the Guidelines for Applicants - Section 2.1.1. Eligibility of applicants (i.e. lead applicant and co-applicant(s)), Section 2.1.2. Affiliated entities and Section 2.1.3. Associates and Contractors.</p>
<b>Q14</b>	<b>Could you share more information about specific activities that could be funded?</b>
A14	<p>Please find all important information about eligible types of actions/activities in the Section 2.1.4. of the Guidelines for Applicants (Eligible actions: actions for which an application may be made). As it is specified, <i>“The actions proposed under CfP, proposed activities, must include, as a minimum the following activity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Training of the target group members followed by the employment of the trained target group members. The employment of the trained TG members must take place during the implementation of the action and should preferably continue after the implementation of the project.</i></li> </ul> <p>(...)</p> <p><i>The applicants may propose additional relevant activities, provided that they are proven to be conducive to the main objective set for the Call and for the proposed action in particular. These may include (list is not exhaustive):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Activities that promote partnership with relevant stakeholders such as municipalities, VET schools, NGOs, social partners, etc.</i></li> <li>• <i>Career guidance and counselling, facilitating employment; Enhancing self-employment; Micro and small enterprises support and development; Counselling, coaching and mediating; short-term placements/visits to employers, matching services;</i></li> <li>• <i>Entrepreneurial learning, Entrepreneurship training, Social entrepreneurship development; Innovative learning and digital competences</i></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Public gatherings, analytical and research activities, public awareness and outreach, guidance; peer to peer support, personal strengthening programmes,</i></li> <li>• <i>Procurement of supplies/equipment needed for on the training and/or employment.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Q15</b>	<b>Can the lead applicant be private limited liability company and co-applicant a public educational institution?</b>
A15	Please see A3.
<b>Q16</b>	<b>Are the costs of purchasing equipment for the purpose of employing the trainees eligible?</b>
A16	<p>In accordance with the Guidelines for Applicants, Section 2.1.4. Eligible actions: actions for which an application may be made, it is specified that “<i>the applicants may propose additional relevant activities, provided that they are proven to be conducive to the main objective set for the Call and for the proposed action in particular. These may include (list is not exhaustive):</i></p> <p>(...)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Procurement of supplies/equipment needed for on the training and/or employment.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Q17</b>	<b>Please provide us with concrete examples of the roles of lead applicant, co-applicant and other entities related to the grant applicant.</b>
A17	<p>Clear description of the roles of the involved parties in the project (lead applicant, co-applicants, affiliated entities, associates and contractors) may be found in the Guidelines for Applicants – Sections: 2.1.1. Eligibility of applicants (i.e. lead applicant and co-applicant(s)), 2.1.2. Affiliated entities and 2.1.3. Associates and contractors.</p> <p>In addition, please refer to the Articles 1.5 and 1.6 of the General Conditions for more information.</p>
<b>Q18</b>	<b>What are deficit occupations? Please clarify whether the potential applicants are guided by an official list of deficit occupations, or whether applicants need to explain their needs from the point of view of the employer. If it is instructed to follow the official list of deficit occupations, could you provide us with the necessary materials?</b>
A18	Please see A8.
<b>Q19</b>	<b>Is it eligible if the lead applicant (LLC) organises and conducts practical training in cooperation with the school which provides part of their professional staff in the relevant field?</b>
A19	Please see A3.
<b>Q20</b>	<b>Can non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and limited liability companies (LLCs) apply together, because they are related professions and established by the same founder?</b>
A20	Please see A3 and A13.
<b>Q21</b>	<b>When will the final list of grant awarded entities be published?</b>
A21	In accordance with the Guidelines for Applicants, Section 2.5.2. Indicative table,

	tentative dates were specified. It is expected that the contracts are signed by 8 <sup>th</sup> December 2021, after which the Award Notice will be prepared and published on the relevant sites.
<b>Q22</b>	<b>Can co-applicants be from the region?</b>
A22	Please see A6.
<b>Q23</b>	<b>Which version of PRAG is valid for this call?</b>
A23	This Call for Proposals is published in accordance with the PRAG (Practical Guide) version from 1 <sup>st</sup> August 2020.
<b>Q24</b>	<b>Can part of the training be conducted outside of Montenegro?</b>
A24	In accordance with the Guidelines for Applicants, Section 2.1.4, undersection Location, it is specified that <i>“Actions must take place in Montenegro. In addition, side activities such as study tours and site visits may take part in countries and territories outside of Montenegro, however only if directly related to the specific objective of the Call and necessary for the successful implementation of the project.”</i>
<b>Q25</b>	<b>Are the costs of training for existing employees to become licensed trainers for practical training accepted as eligible?</b>
A25	In accordance with the Guidelines for grant applicants, Section 2.2.4. Further information about applications: <i>„To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the contracting authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of lead applicants, co-applicants, affiliated entity(ies), an action or specific activities.”</i>  However, please see A14.  In addition, please refer to the Article 14 - Eligible costs of the General Conditions for more information.
<b>Q26</b>	<b>Do trainers have to be from Montenegro? Can they be from another country if there are no trainers for that area of profession in Montenegro?</b>
A26	Please see the provisions given in the Annex IV to the standard grant contract - Procurement by grant beneficiaries in the context of European Union external actions, Sub-Section 2.1 – The nationality rule.
<b>Q27</b>	<b>What is the deadline for submitting the full application, if the concept note is previously accepted?</b>
A27	In accordance with the Guidelines for Applicants, Section 2.2.7. Deadline for submission of full applications, it is specified that <i>“the deadline for the submission of full applications will be indicated in the letter sent to the lead applicants whose application has been pre-selected”</i> .  However, please see Indicative timetable (Section 2.5.2. of the Guidelines for Applicants), where tentative dates were specified. It is expected that the deadline for submission of full applications will be 12 <sup>th</sup> July 2021.
<b>Q28</b>	<b>Should trained staff be employed in a specific company that applies or is it enough that they are ready for the labour market after the training? Please</b>

	<b>clarify whether trained staff can be employed in other companies or only in the one that applies?</b>
A28	<p>In accordance with the in the Section 2.1.4. of the Guidelines for Applicants (Eligible actions: actions for which an application may be made), it is specified, <i>“The actions proposed under Cfp, proposed activities, must include, as a minimum the following activity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Training of the target group members followed by the employment of the trained target group members. The employment of the trained TG members must take place during the implementation of the action and should preferably continue after the implementation of the project.</i></li> </ul> <p>Additionally, same section also envisages that:  <i>“During the implementation of grant contract monitoring will be conducted by Contracting Authority/PIU within the Ministry for Economic Development, against:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <i>the training certificates issued by training providers for the trained members of TGs and</i></li> <li>b) <i>employment contracts signed between trained members of TGs, and the employers, including the duration of the employment contracts.”</i></li> </ol> <p>Therefore, it is not enough just to conduct the training (prepare candidates for the labour market), but to ensure that a certain number of trained candidates are actually employed. Additionally, please be informed that the Guidelines for Applicants do not specify at which employer should the trained members of TGs be employed after the training. This should be presented as the part of the project proposal designed by the applicant(s).</p>
<b>Q29</b>	<b>Can the lead applicant be a non-profit association formed this year?</b>
A29	<p>There are no specific restrictions on how long an entity should exist. However, please consult the Guidelines for Applicants, Section 2.3. Evaluation and selection of applications where specific criteria for the selection of applicants are stated. More specifically, please see the provisions given in the sub-section Step 2 of the evaluation process (Opening and administrative checks and evaluation of Full Applications), which, among other, specifies:  <i>“The selection criteria help to evaluate the applicant(s)'s and affiliated entity(ies)'s operational capacity and the lead applicant's financial capacity and are used to verify that they:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>have stable and sufficient sources of finance to maintain their activity throughout the proposed action and, where appropriate, to participate in its funding (this only applies to lead applicants);</i></li> <li>• <i>have the management capacity, professional competencies and qualifications required to successfully complete the proposed action. This applies to applicants and any affiliated entity(ies).”</i></li> </ul> <p>Additionally, special attention must be drawn to the Evaluation grid for this phase of evaluation and provision which specifies:  <i>“If the total score for Section 1 (financial and operational capacity) is less than 12 points, the application will be rejected. If the score for at least one of the subsections</i></p>

	<p><i>under Section 1 is 1, the application will also be rejected.”</i></p> <p>Information about supporting documents for the provisionally selected applications, please find in the Section 2.4. Submission of supporting documents for provisionally selected applications.</p> <p>In addition, please see A3.</p>
<b>Q30</b>	<b>Does Co-working space fall into the educational?</b>
A30	<p>In accordance with the Guidelines for Applicants, Section 2.2.4. Further information about applications: <i>„To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the contracting authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of lead applicants, co-applicants, affiliated entity(ies), an action or specific activities.”</i></p> <p>However, please find more information about the types of the eligible actions/activities in the Guidelines for Applicants, Section 2.1.4. Eligible actions: actions for which an application may be made.</p>
<b>Q31</b>	<b>Is there a minimum number of people who must participate in the training under the project?</b>
A31	<p>No minimum number of people who must participate in the organised training is specified. However, please note that, in accordance with the Guidelines for Applicants, Section 1.2. Objectives of the Programme and priority issues, it is specified that <i>“The project proposals must set clear target values in their Logical Framework for the following indicators: a) number of persons to be trained (total and number of those belonging to prioritised groups); b) number of persons expected to be employed as the result of the action. <b>The lower ratio between the expected number of persons to be employed and expected number of persons to be trained as the result of the action will be considered as added value of project proposal</b> (see further under Evaluation Grid for Concept notes, question 1.4). The ratio will be calculated for all received projects using the scale of convenience (developed once all projects are received) and scored accordingly, with top 20 percentile scoring 5, those in next 20 percentile range 4 and further. This shall constitute the sole criteria for assessing added values in projects i.e. question 1.4 of the Concept note Evaluation grid.”</i></p>
<b>Q32</b>	<b>Is there a list of occupations that are in the focus of the competition? Are there any areas you will favour? Can the lack of IT skills among the unemployed be the subject of the project?</b>
A32	<p>Please see A8. Additionally, please note that no specific areas will be favoured during the evaluation of applications submitted under this Call for Proposals.</p>
<b>Q33</b>	<p><b>1. We are a non-profit Association / Cluster established this year, but our members are 11 private IT companies from Montenegro that have existed for a long time. Given that our organisation model is specific, is there a possibility that, when the time comes, we submit evidence of our members’ projects and the financial documentations of our association’s members as well?</b></p> <p><b>2. The competition says that if the applicant fails to hire people trained during the project the financing will be suspended. What if the organization does not have the capacity to employ all the people it trains? For example, we commit to</b></p>

	<p><b>train 30 people in a year, and can we employ 5-6 in our Association or companies? Is it a condition to employ absolutely ALL persons who have passed the training? Does it count if we will provide support on the labour market to the people we train in order to connect them with certain organizations where they can possibly get a job or must they all be employed?</b></p> <p><b>3. In the case of employment, do they have to be one-year employment contracts, service contracts etc. (when the person is considered to be employed)? Is it necessary that we take all the people unemployed from the evidence at the Employment Agency of Montenegro, or is it enough that they themselves provide a document of registration for unemployment?</b></p>
A33	<p>1. In accordance with the Guidelines for Applicants, Section 2.2.4. Further information about applications: <i>„To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the contracting authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of lead applicants, co-applicants, affiliated entity(ies), an action or specific activities.”</i> However, please be informed that models for applying and relations between lead applicants, co-applicants and affiliated entities you may find in Sections: 2.1.1. Eligibility of applicants (i.e. lead applicant and co-applicant(s)), 2.1.2. Affiliated entities and 2.1.3. Associates and contractors. In addition, please see A29.</p> <p>2. Please see A9, A28 and A31. In addition to the mentioned references, please note that it is of applicant’s choice to propose number of persons to be trained and number of persons expected to be employed as the result of the action and no additional requirements were specified in that sense.</p> <p>3. Please see A11. Types of contracts which should be signed with candidates are to be defined by employers in line with their internal procedures and applicable national regulations. Regarding the question when the person is considered to be employed, please be informed that <i>“monitoring will be conducted by Contracting Authority/PIU within the Ministry for Economic Development, against:</i></p> <p><i>a) the training certificates issued by training providers for the trained members of TGs and</i></p> <p><i>b) employment contracts signed between trained members of TGs, and the employers, including the duration of the employment contracts.”</i> as specified in the Guidelines for Applicants, Section 2.1.4 Eligible actions: actions for which an application may be made.</p> <p>The target group of this Call of proposals is clearly defined in the Guidelines for Applicants, Section 1.2. Objectives of the Programme and priority issues (<i>“The target group of this CfP are, primarily, jobseekers with low level of education or qualifications and skills not matching labour market demand and long term unemployed people across Montenegro, interested in acquiring ‘hard to find’ skills, competences, knowledge and attitudes. Amongst these prioritised are (explicitly, but not exclusively) women and youth”</i>.)</p>