

Call for Proposals 2021

OT4D Private-Public-Partnerships Co-Financing Facility

1 Introduction

The Organic Trade for Development in Eastern Europe (OT4D) programme is supported by the Swiss State Secretariat of Economic Affairs (SECO) in the frame of its trade promotion activities in transition countries. The overall goal of the programme is to increase and enhance jobs in rural areas, particularly for youth and women, and to contribute to the multiple positive effects of organic farming in terms of economic growth, innovation and natural environment. The overall programme implementation is with IFOAM – Organics International¹.

OT4D supports the framing of Public Private Partnerships (PPP) in export supply chains of organic products of Albania, Ukraine and Serbia by launching this call for application to the PPP co-financing facility (section 4), which is facilitated by the consortium 'Helvetas²/FiBL³'.

The main objective of this co-financing mechanism is to support organic export ventures that help increase production and trading capacities of organic sector stakeholders in the three focus countries to become more competitive in the international market. The PPP co-financing facility shall enable and foster business partnerships among the Swiss and European sourcing industry and local business actors from Albania, Serbia and Ukraine that contribute (a) to value addition, (b) help create jobs, (c) create public goods⁴ for the sector and (d) develop relevant capacities that foster sustainable organic business development with focus on exports in Ukraine, Albania and Serbia.

With this call for proposals, the consortium invites the Swiss and Europe based organic sourcing industry to submit project proposals, relating to own sourcing structures or by partnering up with an identified partner company in one of the three countries. The co-financing facility aims specifically at fostering the participation and project implementation by SMEs, supporting a wider cooperation among companies and the engagement of local organizations and service providers as means to strengthen organic sector development in each of the focus countries.

This document describes the aims and scope of the present call for proposals.

2 Thematic focus

The organic market in Switzerland and Europe is growing at double-digit rates. Eastern Europe countries have the potential to participate in this lucrative market but still need improvement of sector services. The Public Private Partnerships (PPP) supported through this co-financing facility shall

¹ [International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements \(IFOAM\)](#)

² [HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation](#)

³ [Research Institute of Organic Agriculture \(FiBL\)](#)

⁴ A public good (also social good or collective good) is a good that is both non-excludable and non-rivalrous, and valuable to more than one user. Users cannot be barred from accessing and/or using it for failing to pay for it. Also, the use by one person neither prevents access of other people nor does it reduce availability to others. Therefore, the good can be used simultaneously by more than one person.

contribute to foster economic, social, and environmental development in rural areas and mobilise investments of strategic relevance. The co-financed PPPs will be driven by market demand. Besides creating tangible benefits for all actors involved in the proposed PPP, projects will need to create and contribute to public goods which create benefits to all market actors in the organic sector. OT4D expects contributions to following 'public goods':

- A. Strengthening of organic sector-relevant services of local business support organizations (BSOs), service providers, research institutions, policy makers etc.
- B. Contributing to sector-relevant learning and making information available that benefits organic sector development within the country
- C. Supporting capacity development efforts within the organic sector
- D. Improving general access to organic inputs or processing facilities

3 Geographical focus

The geographical focus of the PPP projects must relate to organic production sites located in Albania, Serbia, and Ukraine.

4 Who can apply?

The Swiss and EU based sourcing industry in partnership with the Serbian/Albanian/Ukrainian producing industry that are supplying the Swiss and European (EU) organic markets are invited to propose project ideas to the PPP co-financing facility. Applying business partnerships may also involve service providing stakeholders.

5 Budget and financial contribution

SECO provides a total amount of CHF 1,5 million to this 'OT4D Private-Public-Partnerships Co-Financing Facility'. The financial contribution by SECO may not exceed 50% of the overall project budget. This implies that a contribution of at least 50% of own funding is requested from grant applicants, where in-kind contributions⁵ by project partners are permitted up to maximum 30% of the total project budget (i.e. a minimum of 20% financial contribution to the total project costs is required). All co-funding shall be transparently communicated in the proposal. The project budget must justify the use of funds and include funds for capacity building and monitoring and evaluation based on key indicators: i) export trade volume (in CHF) of the PPP; ii) invested financial volume into the PPP; iii) # of public goods for the organic sector strengthened (qualitatively and quantitatively); iv) # jobs created with PPP. Yearly monitoring reports are requested to document progress and reflect on key indicators.

The facility features two categories of grants. The targeted number of projects as per country and for each of the categories is shown in the table below.

Table 1: Grant categories, ranges of contribution and targeted project number.

Category	Range of contribution	Targeted number of projects per country
A	Up to 50'000 CHF	2-6
B	Up to 100'000 CHF	2-4

⁵ In-kind contributions are non-monetary contributions to project implementation, goods and services, such as expert time or office space that is valued monetarily but not accounted for.



6 Awarding criteria

For the selection of PPPs to be supported, the following evaluation criteria apply:

1. **Relevance and impact:** The PPP projects aim at making a measurable contribution to the objective of OT4D⁶ and increasing the competitiveness and value addition of existing or new supply chains originating from Albania, Serbia and Ukraine by respecting inclusiveness of marginalized groups (e.g. women, youth).
2. **Public goods:** The PPP projects support and create tangible benefits for a further good development of the organic sector in the corresponding country. Examples could be: the anchorage of organic practice in rural advisory systems; the support of organic capacity development services and programs (e.g. agricultural schools to develop an organic curriculum); improved general information about organic production, access to organic inputs or processing facilities; the overall strengthening of capacities of local BSOs, service providers and research institutions in activities related to organic production, processing and trade.
3. **Cross-company cooperation and potential for scalability:** The PPP projects shall allow for cross-company cooperation within the organic sector of the countries and show a potential for scaling-up across the sector, without being reliable on grant funding primarily.
4. **Monitoring, evaluation and learning:** The PPP projects shall be monitored and evaluated according to the main indicators⁷ of OT4D: of OT4D. Project partners must be willing to share data and identified good practices and lessons learnt, and to contribute to peer learning in the import/export platforms supported by OT4D.
5. **Additionality:** The PPP project must show that it cannot be implemented without the PPP co-financing contribution.
6. **Efficiency:** The expected outputs of the PPP projects are well balanced with the invested resources.
7. **Sustainability:** The PPP projects provide a sustainable anchoring of the project outcome in the sector and the integration of implementing partners.
8. **Implementation capacity:** The applicants provide a proven indication of experience and sufficient resources to successfully implement the project.

7 Call for proposals

7.1 Two-stage application process

The call for proposals is structured as a two-stage process. The first step, the concept note (CN), must be submitted using the CN application form (annex 1). After a compliance check by the manager of the Co-Financing Facility, the concept notes will be assessed by an **Expert Committee**⁸ according to the above mentioned evaluation criteria. For all concept notes that receive an above average scoring, the applicants will be invited to give an oral presentation and to prepare a full project proposal. Only project concepts in line with the objectives of the Co-Financing Facility are invited for presentation and potentially for the submission of a project proposal. The process is illustrated in the figure 1 with a detailed timeline in table 2.

⁶ <https://www.ifoam.bio/our-work/how/facilitating-organic/organic-trade-4-development>

⁷ Key indicators: i) export trade volume (in EUR) of the PPP; ii) invested financial volume into the PPP; iii) # of public goods for the organic sector strengthened (qualitatively and quantitatively); iv) # jobs created with PPP.

⁸ Expert committee of the OT4D PPP co-financing facility consists of each a representative of FiBL, Helvetas, SECO, SIPPO, plus a retail expert.



Figure 1: Two-stage application process involving the submission of a concept note and the full proposal.

After the publication of the call for proposals, interested parties are given a window for questions and answers regarding the application process, prior to submit a concept note.

7.2 Aspects to be covered in the concept note

The concept note explains the idea of the project and how it complies with the selection criteria. Applicants should use the template in annex 1. The concept note will be assessed by the Expert Committee according to the criteria given in section 8. In the case of a positive assessment, the project partners are invited to submit a full project proposal. The concept note should be no longer than five pages and address the following points:

- Country of implementation
- Rational (to explain the specific need)
- Project idea
- Main objectives and key intervention lines
- Resources needed, incl. tentative budget
- Presentation and possible roles of partners and implementing partners.

Table 2: Timeline of the two-stage application and assessment process.

Step	Activity	Who	Deadline
1	Call for proposal	Consortium FiBL/Helvetas	July 6, 2021
2	Time window for Q&A	Applicants	until August 6, 2021
3	Submission of concept note (template in annex)	Applicants	August 24, 2021
4	Assessment by expert committee	Expert committee	
5	Invitation for project full proposal	Expert committee	September 17, 2021
6	Submission of project proposal	Applicants	October 31, 2021
7	Assessment by expert committee	Expert committee	
8	Presentation of Project Proposal	Applicants	November 2021



9	Final decision and approval	Expert committee	December, 2021
10	Signing of contribution agreement	Consortium FiBL/Helvetas, Applicant	January, 2022
11	Start of PPP projects	Applicants	February, 2022

8. Award criteria

The concept notes and project proposals need to comply with thematic focus of section 2 and a set of award criteria (section 6). The award criteria are assessed using a score from 0-100% as listed in table 4. Each award criterion AC1-8 (in table 4) is weighed equally. One criterion must be met to at least 50% (min 50%), in sum (over all criteria), the award criteria need to be fulfilled to at least 60% on average.

Table 3: Scale from 0-100% for the assessment of the project proposals.

%	Quality of documentation	Points covered
100%	Detailed and clearly comprehensive, figures provided, realistic assumptions	Complete evidence for all points required
75%	Detailed and comprehensive	Complete evidence for 75% of points required
50%	Detailed and comprehensive, assumptions are only partially comprehensible and realistic	Complete evidence for 50% of points required
25%	Incomplete, lacks details, not realistic	Complete evidence for 25% of points required
0%	Documentation completely missing	No evidence for points required

Table 4: Award criteria of the call (for concept notes and project proposals).

Nr.	Awarding criteria	Concept Note	Project Proposal
AC1	Relevance and impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project addresses the thematic focus described in section 2 Expected impact is clearly described and quantified if possible Inclusiveness is respected by addressing marginalized groups (e.g. women, youth, ethnic minorities) 	min 50%	min 50%
AC2	Public goods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public goods are envisaged and the benefits for the entire organic sector of the country are clearly described Capacity building measures for strengthening local institutions (producers' associations, vocational training institutes, local extension services, etc.). 	min 75%	min 75%
AC3	Cross-company cooperation and potential for scalability	min 50%	min 50%



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-company collaboration and/or partnerships with sector organizations and research institutions • High potential for replicability within the organic sector and geographic region 		
AC4	<p>Contribution to project results – monitoring, evaluation and learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness to share the data referring to the OT4D MEL Framework within the Import/export platforms • Willingness to share identified good practices and lessons learnt • Budget reserved for the monitoring of indicators at outcome and impact level 	min 50%	min 50%
AC5	<p>Additionality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear arguments that the project cannot be implemented without the SECO co-financial contribution 	min 50%	min 50%
AC6	<p>Efficiency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Favourable ratio of proposed resources (budget, staff) to number of beneficiaries and expected outcomes (e.g. increase in productivity and income) • Favourable ratio of co-financing contribution to full costs for the project 		min 50%
AC7	<p>Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project pursues sustainability goals regarding ecological, social and economic aspects. • Project continuation secured beyond the co-funded project phase • The proposed activities have to be sustainable, e.g. where it relates to new services it must be demonstrated that the service will be cost-covering after a defined period. • Integration of local partners along the value chains with long-term commitments, including retailers, CSOs and research institutes etc. 	min 50%	min 50%
AC8	<p>Implementing Capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proven track-record of capacity and expertise of implementing organization and partners 		min 50%

9 Administrative information

9.1 Submission of concept notes and project proposals

Applications must be submitted electronically to HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, OT4D@helvetas.org using the application form in annex 1, respectively the template provided with the invitation for the project proposal. Timely reception of concept notes and proposals will be confirmed.

9.2 Questions and answers

Questions regarding the application process can be addressed to HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation by e-mail to the same address: OT4D@helvetas.org.

The deadline for submitting the questions is August 6, 2021.

All questions will be answered in a consolidated and anonymous way to all interested parties on the OT4D website: www.organictrade4development.org.

9.3 Deadlines for submission

Concept note: August 24, 2021

Project proposals: October 31, 2021

9.4 Contribution agreements

Applicants awarded a financial contribution, will enter into a contract with the consortium (FiBL/Helvetas) in the form of a contribution agreement. The envisaged duration is until end of June 2023.

For the contribution agreement, the Expert Committee may elaborate additional requirements regarding the monitoring and evaluation of projects.

The OT4D PPP co-financing facility is implemented by HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation in collaboration with the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture, FiBL.



Annex 1: Template for Concept Note

Annex 1, Call for PPP Proposals OT4D

Template for Concept Note

The concept note should not be more than 5 pages (plus maximum 3 pages annexes), written in English, using font 10 Arial.

Structure and content of Concept Note for project:

General Information	
Country/-ies of PPP implementation	
Title of the project	
Name of main applicant (company) ⁹	
Legal status of main applicant	
Name of Co-applicant(s) ¹⁰	
Postal address (main applicant)	
Telephone/mobile number (main applicant)	
Name and E-mail of contact person for this project:	
Company's website(s):	

⁹ Main applicant must be a Swiss or EU based sourcing company

¹⁰ Please use one line for each co-applicant.



	The content guidance
<p>1. Relevance and impact</p>	<p>Background relevant for the project and linked with the intended changes of the intervention.</p> <p>Project opportunity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What specific problem does the PPP project intervention solve? • What opportunity does the PPP provide for organic sector growth? <p>To what extent does the project relate to already existing business opportunities, sector initiatives, etc.?</p> <p>1.3 Relevance and expected impact of the Proposed PPP-Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does this project contribute to the overall objectives of OT4D: (a) to value addition; (b) help create jobs; (c) create public goods for the sector and (d) develop relevant capacities that foster sustainable organic business development with focus on exports in Ukraine, Albania and Serbia. • Why is support needed for the PPP-project? (additionality) <p>1.4 Beneficiaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are the beneficiaries of the suggested PPP-project? • How many beneficiaries are expected to be reached? • Are women, youth and ethnic minorities involved?
<p>2. Main objectives and key intervention lines <i>What results shall be achieved and how?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of the project objectives and the expected results with a clear distinction between the levels of the objectives: key outputs, outcomes, impact. • Description of the intervention logic: How project outputs will produce effects and changes for the targeted beneficiaries. • Description of the selected approach with reference to best practices and capitalisation of experience to increase feasibility.
<p>3. Public good</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which public good is envisaged? • What is the benefit for the entire organic sector of the country?
<p>4. Partners involved</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are the implementation partners involved (organisational structure)? • What are their possible roles (steering mechanism)?
<p>5. Cross-company cooperation and potential for scalability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will cross-company collaboration and/or partnerships with sector organizations and research institutions take place? • How will spill over effects to other beneficiaries and target groups, happen? • Description of strategy for scaling.

<p>6. Contribution to project results – monitoring, evaluation and learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirmation of willingness to share identified good practices and lessons learnt, as well as data referring to the OT4D MEL Framework within the Import/export platforms. • Budget reserved for the monitoring of indicators at outcome and impact level.
<p>7. Additionality</p>	<p>Why can the project not be implemented without the co-financial contribution?</p>
<p>8. Sustainability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the project contribute to ecological, social and economic sustainability? • How is project continuation and cost covering of activities or new services secured beyond the co-funded project phase? • What capacity building measures will be taken for strengthening local institutions (producers' associations, vocational training institutes, local extension services, etc.)? • Are local partner organizations involved in the implementation of the project?
<p>9. Resources <i>What is required?</i> <i>Who shall contribute what?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources required in terms of personnel, technology, know how, finance in relation to the objectives of the intervention, contributions of other donors and partners. • Description of capacity development needs for which budget has been allocated. • Total amount required for proposed activities and expected contribution of PPP co-financing facility, financial planning per year (annex)