

ERRIN Facility – Guide for applicants

1. Introduction

Overall objective of ERRIN is to stimulate innovation and to facilitate quick, effective and operational response to return-related priorities and challenges.

The ERRIN PMU supports the development of ideas and concepts, explores partnerships and synergies and assists Members in obtaining funding, finalising project proposals and starting implementation.

If there is no suitable external funding available, projects can be funded through the ERRIN Facility. The ERRIN Facility is a non-earmarked budget that can be allocated in a short timeframe to activities identified by ERRIN Members as important to address return related challenges.

An initial budget of 2.000.000 EUR is reserved for the Facility. The financial contribution from the ERRIN Facility to an ERRIN Member-led project can range from 50.000 EUR minimum to 500.000 EUR maximum.

2. Functional structure of the ERRIN –Facility

Overall strategic guidance, leadership and oversight for the implementation of the ERRIN Facility is carried out by ERRIN Management Board (MB). All ERRIN Members are represented in this MB.

Contributions will be allocated through a call for proposals. The call has an open deadline, so proposals can be sent in at any time. As the call has no deadline, it is not considered a competitive process. This allows for dialogue and discussion between potential Applicants and the ERRIN PMU. Potential Applicants are encouraged to contact the ERRIN PMU before the project proposal is finalised, enabling the ERRIN PMU to provide input and feed-back during project development.

All applications are reviewed by the ERRIN PMU (incl. AMIF-eligibility check). The assessment of eligible proposals is carried out by an Evaluation Committee (EC). This Committee consists of the Chair and Co-chairs of the MB and is supported by the ERRIN PMU.

The ERRIN PMU manages the day-to-day implementation of the Facility. The ERRIN PMU must ensure maximum coherence and coordination with other funds.

A harmonised monitoring and evaluation cycle, including on the spot visits, will facilitate a steep learning curve and knowledge driven development.



3. Objectives of the call and types of Actions

3.1 Objectives

Overall objective of the call for proposals is to identify and award contributions to Actions that cannot be funded elsewhere and that contribute to the overall ERRIN objectives of innovation and development of a common approach.

The call consists of the 4 thematic streams that the MB identified as main challenges:

- Outreach and pre-departure counselling
- Direct government to government co-operation
- Innovative approaches towards re-integration
- Integrated return management

There is no pre-defined distribution key between the four strands.

3.2 Types of Actions

In principle all areas covered by AMIF Return can be supported. However, there are some general limitations to be taken into account:

- Actions are limited to the AMIF scope and eligibility-rules as defined by the Responsible Authority of the Netherlands (which is the grant recipient of the ERRIN Specific Action).
- Actions must fit into the scope, objectives and timeline of ERRIN.
- Actions must take into account the scope of FRONTEX.
- Since ERRIN facilitates the development of a common European approach, Actions have to involve stakeholders of more than 1 ERRIN MS and work towards common practices.

Action proposals should:

- Include a clear element of sustainability, including ensuring coherence and synergies with various past and ongoing interventions.
- Focus on clear, short term quantitative outputs.
- Bring significant EU-added value.
- Make sure that implementation of the Action can start at the latest 1 month after the contract is signed.

For each stream, the proposals should in particular focus on the aspects mentioned below (non-exhaustive):

1) *Outreach and pre-departure counselling*

- Target group based outreach strategies
- Involvement of new stakeholders that can reach the target group
- Innovative communication strategies



2) *Direct “government to government co-operation”*

- Direct referral of returnees to existing services
- Active involvement of 3rd country governments (national or local level) in the reception and reintegration of returning migrants
- Joint (= in co-operation with the local government) capacity building of local (state or non-state) actors

3) *Innovative approaches towards re-integration*

- Involvement of new stakeholders in the provision of (long-term) re-integration support
- Referral mechanisms to liaise the short-term re-installation assistance with longer term initiatives in 3rd countries
- Supporting local networks of service providers

4) *Integrated return*

- Facilitate and improve co-operation between actors involved in dealing with individual returns (return counsellors, social workers, reintegration service provider...)
- Trainings
- Capacity building and quality management of service providers
- Measures to follow-up the quality and impact of re-integration service delivery

There is no pre-defined geographical scope. However, Actions must focus on nationalities and countries that are relevant in return policy. The ERRIN MB can at all times decide to prioritise or limit the geographical scope of the Facility.

4. Eligibility criteria

4.1 Eligibility of applicants

Only a public body (on central, regional or local level) of an ERRIN Member can apply for funding.

Public bodies of the same or another ERRIN Member, or of non-ERRIN Members can join the Applicant as Co-applicant. International Organisations, Non-governmental organisations and other private law bodies (established in the EU or not) can join the Applicant as Co-applicant as well.

A Co-applicant is responsible for a part of the action and the budget linked to it. The Co-applicant is subject to the overall operational and financial responsibility of the applicant. A Partnership Agreement between the applicant and Co-applicant(s), describing 1) the division of tasks and responsibilities and 2) the financial management system is required for a contribution to be awarded.

Co-applicants have to be legal entities. Participation of natural persons is not eligible. Private enterprises can participate in actions as Co-applicant on the condition that they are not making direct profit from the activity.



4.2 Eligibility of applications

In order to be eligible for a contribution, applications:

- a) Must be filled in by an eligible applicant (cfr. section 4.1)
- b) Must be composed of documents listed in section 15
- c) Must look for funding between 50.000 EUR and 500.000 EUR for activities eligible under the AMIF
- d) Must end by 30 June 2020 at the latest
- e) Must be linked to the overall objectives and work-plan of ERRIN.

5. Submission and evaluation procedure of applications

5.1 Submission of Applications

Applications shall be made using the *Application Form* template. They shall be supplemented by detailed budget in euro, using the *Budget for the Action* template, the *Financial Identification Form* and the *Financial Information Form for Private-law Co-Applicants* (if applicable).

For reasons of efficiency, as a general rule, the Application Form as well as all other documents shall be filled in in English. However, the Application Form can also be filled in in French.

Applications must be submitted, together with all the other documents listed in the checklist (section 15), through the “contact”- function of the ERRIN work-space in EMN-IES.

5.2 Evaluation of the Application

The evaluation and assessment process follows 4 successive steps:

- Eligibility check of the proposal
- Administrative and performance check of the co-applicant(s)
- Consultation of ERRIN Members and institutional stakeholders
- Assessment of the award criteria

The duration of this entire process should last no longer than 2 months after the receipt of the Application.

Following an award decision, the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice, Return and Departure Service will sign a Contract with the Applicant.

Step 1 – Eligibility check

The ERRIN PMU will evaluate if the proposed Action corresponds to the AMIF-regulation. Both the financial and the operational perspective are taken into account.

Only applications that pass this Eligibility Check are withheld for further analysis.



Step 2 – Administrative and performance checks of the co-applicants

Co-applicants must be sufficiently solid and experienced to implement Actions. This will be assessed based on the information gathered through the *Financial Information Form for Private-law Co-Applicants*. If additional clarification or information is needed, the ERRIN PMU can contact the (co-) applicant directly.

If a co-applicant is judged insufficiently solid or experienced, the ERRIN PMU will develop together with the Applicant an appropriate containment strategy (incl. replacing the Co-applicant).

If the potential risk is judged too high, the ERRIN PMU can turn down an Application.

Step 3 – Input by ERRIN Members

The ERRIN PMU will forward all eligible applications to the ERRIN Members. The objective is to pursue complementarities with similar activities and explore possibilities of partnership, collaboration and additional or external funding.

All ERRIN Members have 5 working days to give comments, suggest complementarities and point out potential overlap.

Depending on the content of the application, the ERRIN PMU can forward an application to relevant institutional stakeholders (EASO, EUDEL, EEAS) for input and comments.

During this process, any ERRIN Member can propose to join the action. If this is the case, the ERRIN PMU will inform the Applicant, facilitate negotiations and assist in adapting the proposal.

Step 4 – Award criteria

Eligible applications and their proposed Actions will be assessed on the basis of the following (weighted) award criteria:

Relevance of the proposal to the call objectives (25%)

Particular attention will be paid to:

- Contribution to the ERRIN Work Plan,
- Innovative character of proposed Action
- Complementarity with other actions developed within the framework of ERRIN
- Geographical relevance (based on the importance of a certain target group for EU return policy).

Quality of the Proposal and Implementation Methodology (35%)

Particular attention will be paid to:

- Clarity, consistency and coherence of the proposed activities
- The quality of the envisaged activities, implementation methodology, organisation of work and management strategy
- The replication, sustainability and dissemination of results



European added value (15%)

Particular attention will be paid to:

- The extent to which the Action, its outcomes and impact have European added value
- Number of EU MS involved, pilot character for the EU

Cost effectiveness (25%)

Particular attention will be paid to:

- The degree to which the output and impact of the Action is proportional to the requested contribution
- Clarity and consistency of the estimated budget description

Applications that pass the threshold of minimum 65% under each criterion will be considered for funding within the limits of the available budget.

The assessment will be carried out by an Evaluation Committee (EC). This committee consists of the chair and both co-chairs of the ERRIN MB (Netherlands, FRONTEX and the European Commission).

6. Award of financial contribution

6.1 Award decision

The award decision is taken by the ERRIN MB by formally endorsing the assessment of the evaluation committee.

Until this stage, the Dutch Responsible Authority can, as grant recipient of the ERRIN SA and as such financially responsible, use their veto as foreseen in the ERRIN-agreement.

6.2 Accepted and rejected applications

The ERRIN PMU will notify Applicants upon finalisation of the evaluation procedure. Successful Applicants will be notified and, in case, be informed about conditions and recommendations. They will subsequently receive a copy of the Contract for acceptance.

Unsuccessful Applicants will receive a letter stating the reasons of refusal.

6.3 Right to adjust proposal

The ERRIN PMU, based on the deliberations of the EC, can suggest adjustments of proposals (narrative and budget) following the award decision and prior to the signature of the Contract. Such changes only aim at enhancing the coherence of proposals, ensuring their cost efficiency and taking into account activities of other Actions, which might not be known to the Applicant. They should not bring any major modifications to the application such as adjustment of activities.

6.4 Contract

Following an award decision, the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice, Return & Departure Service, will sign a Contract with the Applicant. Subsequently, it will be sent to the applicant to countersign.

Upon the signature of the Contract, the Applicant will start implementing the action, in partnership with the Co-applicants, according to the proposal that has been approved.



Before the Contract is signed, the Applicant will notify the agreement between the Applicant and any Co-applicants to the contracting authority.

6.5 Start date and duration of the Actions

The starting date included in the Application Form is indicative as the Action will start a) the day following that on which the second of the two Parties signs the Contract or b) at a later date (to be specified in the Contract).

Applicants should note that if their Action is selected, they may receive the Contract after the start date of the Action that they have set. The exact duration of the Action shall be specified in the Contract.

The implementation period of any Action cannot go beyond 30 June 2020.

7. Exclusion criteria

Applicants will be excluded from participating in the Call for Proposals and from the award if they are in one of the following situations:

7.1 Exclusion from participation in the Call for Proposals

- a) They are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- b) They or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment of a competent authority of an EU MS which has the force of res judicata;
- c) They have been guilty of proven grave professional misconduct;
- d) They are not in compliance with their obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of Belgium or those of the country where the Action is to be implemented;
- e) They or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation, money laundering or any other illegal activity, where such an illegal activity is detrimental to the Union's financial interests;
- f) They are currently subject to an administrative penalty for: being guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the EC as a condition of participation in a procurement or award procedure or for failing to supply this information, or having been declared to be in serious breach of its obligations under grant agreements or contracts financed by the Union's budget.



7.2 Exclusion from award

Applicants will not be granted financial assistance if, in the course of the award procedure, they:

- a) are subject to a conflict of interest in connection with the Action;
- b) are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the EC as a condition of participation in the award procedure or fail to supply this information;
- c) find themselves in one of the situations of exclusion, referred to in section 7.1.

Administrative and financial penalties may be imposed on Applicants and Co-Applicants who are guilty of misrepresentation.

8. Legal Commitments

An award decision does not represent a legal or financial commitment. The award of each contribution is subject to the conclusion of a Contract duly countersigned between the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice, Return and Departure Service, and the Beneficiaries.

In the event a contribution is awarded, a Contract, drawn up in euro and detailing the conditions and funding rate, will be sent to the Applicant.

9. Financial provisions

9.1 Budgetary allocation for the call for proposals

The total amount available for this call for proposals is EUR 2 000 000.

To comply with the initial timeframe of ERRIN, the eligibility of this budget expires on June 30, 2020¹. Budget can be allocated until March 31, 2020.

Minimum threshold per Action: EUR 50.000

Maximum threshold per Action: EUR 500.000

9.2 Eligibility rules

The ERRIN-Facility is part of the ERRIN Specific Action Grant. The Responsible Authority of the Netherlands is managing this grant on behalf of DG HOME. This implies that **Dutch AMIF-eligibility regulations** apply to all activities funded through the ERRIN-Facility.

9.3 Co-funding rate

As per general rule, the applicant must ensure co-funding of at least 10% of the eligible project budget. The co-funding can be provided in cash (preferred option) or in kind. The total co-funding can be shared between applicant and co-applicants.

¹ If ERRIN is prolonged after July 1, 2020, the eligibility period will be prolonged accordingly.



If a project has a clear overall interest, lower co-funding rates can be applied, although this is subject to approval by the ERRIN MB and on the condition that the overall co-funding budget allows it.

9.4 Non-cumulative award

An Action may only receive one contribution from the EU budget. In no circumstances shall the same costs be financed twice by the Union budget.

9.5 Non-retroactivity

No contribution may be awarded retroactively for Actions already completed before the funding decision is taken. In any case, costs eligible for funding may not have been incurred prior to the date the ERRIN MB approves the funding decision. Costs incurred between this date and the date the contract is signed, can be taken into account if they are needed to ensure timely implementation of the Action. ERRIN has to give prior approval upon written request of the Applicant.

9.6 Non-profit

The contribution may not produce a profit for the Applicant or the Co-Applicants. Profit is defined as a surplus of the receipts over the eligible costs approved by the Contracting Authority when the request for payment of the balance is made.

10. Data Protection

Any personal data will be processed solely for the purposes of the evaluation of the Application by the ERRIN PMU and the EC and the management and monitoring of the Contract by the Contracting Authority and may also be passed to the bodies charged with monitoring or inspection tasks under European Union law.

11. Final provisions

The ERRIN PMU reserves the right to clarify or update these Guidelines if required, following prior notification to the MB, and to inform those concerned in due course through the appropriate channels. Any changes to the Guidelines should however not change the conditions for the submission of applications.

12. Questions

Any questions concerning the Facility can be addressed to ERRIN@returnnetwork.eu

13. Complaints procedure

In order to ensure administrative transparency, a fair, equitable and non-discriminatory complaints handling procedure is established.

An applicant having a dispute or complaint about the award procedure should address him/herself in writing to the Senior Program Manager of ERRIN.

The written note should provide details of the basis upon which the dispute or complaint is being lodged, including:

- clear statement regarding what he/she considers was defective in the award procedure
- copies of, or references to, information to support the complaint



- statement regarding what he/she wishes to achieve as an outcome from the complaint process

The Senior Program Manager will acknowledge the complaint within 15 working days and request further information if required. The Senior Program Manager will conduct the necessary internal investigations and attempt to solve the matter.

14. Publicity

The Call for Proposals is published in the ERRIN workspace on EMN-IES.

Information on projects that are funded will be published in the same workspaces. The information will be regularly updated.

15. Checklist of documents to be submitted

The table below includes the documents that must be provided for the application to be eligible.

Document	Sending method	Signature
Application form (template)	Sent by e-mail, signed	Signed
Budget for Action (template)	Sent by e-mail	
Financial identification form	Sent by e-mail, signed	Signed
Financial Information Form for Private Law Co-Applicants (template)	Sent by e-mail, signed by co-applicants	Signed by Co-Applicants

16. Final provisions on monitoring and evaluation

Individual returns assisted within the Action shall be documented in the ERRIN data collection framework (RIAT). The PMU can adapt the data framework to make it fit the content of the project.

For every project, a specific Monitoring and Evaluation cycle will be developed. This M&E cycle is based on a standard reporting format, but its frequency and magnitude will be adapted to the scale and type of the project. The M&E cycle will be detailed in the Contract.

The ERRIN PMU will present on a quarterly basis a consolidated progress report on all ongoing projects to the ERRIN MB.

