



MedBEEsinessHubs

Guidelines

for sub-grant applicants

MedBEEsinessHubs- C_A.1.2_0035

Reference: Call for MedBEEsinessHubs Sub-Grant Proposals Number 1

Deadline for submission of applications: 10 May 2023



These guidelines set out the rules for the submission, selection and implementation of the actions financed under this call, in conformity with the ENI CBC MED Programme rules, which are applicable to the present call and available at <http://www.enicbcmmed.eu/home>.

1.1. BACKGROUND

Bees are important for the environment and to the economy. It is estimated that pollinators, including honeybees, bumblebees, and wild bees, contribute at least 22 billion EUR each year to the European agriculture. Honeybees also provide honey and other apiculture products such as pollen, wax for food processing, propolis in food technology, and royal jelly used as a dietary supplement and as an ingredient in food. For some time now, news about a severe loss of honeybees, and other pollinators has been concerning various professionals and the wider public alike. The European Commission has taken important steps to diagnose and prevent bees' mortality, while it has published the Green Deal paper, with 2 policy pillars relating to biodiversity and 'Farm to fork' hence supporting the ecosystems and minimising the negative impact of humans. Apiculture is supported through the Common Agricultural Policy, while Specific priority 8 of the CAP 2021-27 supports rural development policies through diversification actions by creating value added for their products.

The MedBEEsinessHubs project contributes to these policies by suggesting holistic approaches in creating value added products/services and opening new market opportunities for the honeybee products; at the same time the project is linking rural development policies with the honeybee and the necessity to protect the ecosystem, building upon the concept of **Bee-Economy** for sustainable growth especially in deprived rural communities.

Aiming at empowering local communities in five Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPC): Cyprus, Egypt, Italy, Lebanon and Palestine, through capacity building activities in business-oriented as well as handcrafting techniques, and through micro-funding, MedBEEsinessHubs supports the creation and modernisation of Micro-Small-Medium sized Enterprises (MSMEs)¹ operating in the Bee-Economy. **Apiculture**, as an existing activity in the target regions, will be developed as a tool for economic growth under the notion of cooperation, necessary to support private enterprises and the trickle effects of the concept at the sustainable destination level. The final aim: to establish the Mediterranean BEEsiness Hubs, comprising of five clusters of bee-businesses, supporting not only individual job creation but also regional tourism growth, reverting the regional isolation and the current lack of a sustainable destination theme.

In light of this, the MedBEEsinessHubs project is launching a call for proposals in all participating partner countries to award sub-grants of €264,700 value to MSMEs/start-ups, profit/non-profit making entities, NGOs, social enterprises, natural persons, with youth or women in managerial positions.

This call is issued for beneficiaries based in Italy, while the local implementing agency is the Italian Arab Chamber of Cooperation.

¹ [Commission Recommendation 6 May 2003](#) on the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. MSME has fewer than 250 employees and annual turnover below €50 million or balance sheet below €43 million.

1.2. OBJECTIVES OF THE CALL FOR SUB-GRANTS

The **global objective** of the MedBEEsinessHubs sub-granting scheme is to establish clusters of Bee-enterprises in the five Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPCs) of Cyprus, Egypt, Italy, Lebanon and Palestine. This will be achieved through the creation/upgrading of MSMEs/start-ups/NGOs operating in the Bee-Economy by producing tangible and long-lasting impact on their competitiveness, sustainability, access to cross-border and international markets, and eventually their capacity to create jobs for young people and women.

This Call for Proposals is **addressed to natural persons, enterprises (MSMEs/start-ups) and NGOs that operate in the Bee-Economy sector registered in Italy.**

Bee Economy refers to enterprises engaged in the:

- production, reproduction, and processing of goods derived from the honeybee. A non-exhaustive list of honeybee derivative examples includes beeswax, bee venom, honey, pollen, propolis, royal jelly.
- provision of services and/or activities based on the theme of the honeybee. A non-exhaustive list of such services/activities includes: educational activities on the bee, bee-keeping entertainment, information center on the bee, training centers on apiculture, tourism-related services/activities based on the theme of the bee/apiculture, etc.
- for this call of proposals activities related *exclusively* to beekeeping and practices, and equipment associated solely with the primary activity of beekeeping are **not eligible**. Please refer to Section 1.4.2 for more details.

The **specific objectives** of this call for sub-grant proposals are to contribute towards:

1. The creation/upgrading of MSMEs/start-ups/NGOs managed by young people (between 20 and 45 years old) and/or women (all ages), operating in the **Bee-Economy** sector;
2. The development of new products and/or services in the **Bee-Economy** sector leading to accessing new markets, increased exports, or the creation of transnational business connections/partnerships;
3. The upgrading and/or creation of processing units for **bee** products, including their certification with quality assurance systems e.g. ISO 9001, ISO 14000, HACCP/ISO 22000, OHSAS 18001 (health and safety at work);
4. The increase in the number of MSMEs operating in the **Bee-Economy** using information and communication technologies, including electronic commerce, Virtual Reality (VR), Artificial Intelligence (AI), etc.
5. The production and/or promotion of organic **bee** products/services.
6. The creation of new jobs, especially in rural areas, in the **Bee-Economy** sector.

By doing so, the MedBEEsinessHubs sub-granting scheme in all five Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPCs) of Cyprus, Egypt, Italy, Lebanon and Palestine is expected to result in:

- Bee-enterprises managed primarily by youth and/or women
- 5 regional Clusters comprising of MSMEs operating the Bee-Economy sector in the above MPCs

- 1 Mediterranean Cluster of Bee-businesses with cross-border dimension, namely the MedBEEsinessHubs
- increased economic opportunities and jobs for young people and women, especially in rural areas

NOTE: All awarded sub-grantees will join the regional Bee-Economy Cluster created by the MedBEEsinessHubs local project partners, and as a result will also join the Mediterranean cluster of businesses, i.e the MedBEEsinessHubs, by signing the relevant Charter in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) (Annex 6).

1.3. FINANCIAL ALLOCATION

The overall indicative amount available for Italy under this call for sub-grant proposals is **EUR 50.000,00**. The Italian Arab Chamber of Cooperation (CCIA) as the local Implementing Agency of the sub-grant scheme in Italy reserves the right not to award all available funds. If the allocation per country cannot be used due to insufficient quality or number of proposals received, the CCIA reserves the right to reallocate the remaining funds to other countries.

Size of sub-grants

Any grant requested under this call for proposals must fall between the following minimum and maximum amounts:

- Minimum amount: EUR 2.000,00
- Maximum amount: EUR 5.000,00

Notes

- To be considered eligible, applicants must include **a co-financing of 10%** of the cost of proposed action in their budget proposal.
- The sub-grant shall take the form of reimbursement of direct costs on investments that shall be completed the latest by **31st August 2023**.
- The sub-grant shall be reimbursed only after the completion of the supported action, and the acceptance of the Narrative & Financial report as per Article 4.1 of the sub-grant contract (Annex 3).

1.4. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

There are three sets of eligibility criteria, relating to:

- **Actors (see section 1.4.1):** The '**applicant**', i.e., the entity submitting the application form.
- **Activities (see section 1.4.2):** Type of activities for which the sub-grant may be awarded.
- **Costs (see section 1.4.3):** Forms of financing and types of cost that may be taken into account in setting the amount of the subgrant.

1.4.1 - Eligibility of applicants

(1) Applicant

In order to be eligible for a grant, the Applicant must:

- Be a natural person or legal entity;
- If a legal entity, this must be **a specific type of organization:**
 - a. A micro, small or medium-sized enterprise², **or**
 - b. A Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), **and**
- If legal entity it must be registered in the Registrar of Companies in Italy in another equivalent official registry, **and**
- Whether a natural person, or legal entity, must be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action, not acting as an intermediary.

(2) Applicants, and, in case of legal entities, persons who have powers of representation, decision-making or control over the applicant, and the affiliated entities are informed that, should they be in one of the situations of early detection or exclusion according to article 52.2.vi of the ENI CBC Implementing Rules³, personal details (name, given name if natural person, address, legal form and name and given name of the persons with powers of representation, decision-making or control, if legal person) may be registered in the early detection and exclusion system, and communicated to the persons and entities concerned in relation to the award or the execution of a grant contract.

In the declaration included in the sub-grant application form, the applicant must declare that himself is not in any of these situations.

If awarded the sub-grant contract, the applicant will become the sub-grantee, who is the main interlocutor of the Arab Italian Cooperation Chamber (CCIA) awarding the sub-grant.

1.4.2 - Eligible actions: actions for which an application may be made

Definition

An action is composed of a set of activities.

Completion date

The last date of completion of an action is **31st August 2023**.

Location

Actions must take place in **Italy**, regions **Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Lazio, Liguria, Puglia, Sardegna, Sicilia, Toscana**.

² [Commission Recommendation 6 May 2003](#) on the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. MSME has fewer than 250 employees and annual turnover below €50 million or balance sheet below €43 million.

³ EC Regulation 897/2014.

Types of action

Types of action which may be financed under this call must address at least one of the Call's Objectives specified in Section 1.2.

The following types of action are **ineligible**:

- Actions which have already been completed
- Actions commenced prior to the award of the subgrant
- Actions already financed by other EU programmes
- Actions discriminating individuals or groups on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, disability, marital status or sexual orientation

Types of action **restrictions**:

- For this call of proposals activities related *exclusively* to beekeeping and practices, and equipment associated solely with the primary activity of beekeeping, are **not eligible**.
- Purchase of hives or other equipment related to beekeeping activities, and not to the processing of honeybee products, is eligible up to 30% of the total budget.
- Consultancy and marketing services, relevant to the Bee-Economy sector, are eligible up to 30% of the total budget.

Visibility

Subgrant applicants must comply with the objectives and priorities and guarantee the visibility of the EU financing (see the [Communication and Visibility Requirements for EU External Actions](#)).

Number of applications and subgrants per applicant(s)

- The applicant may not submit more than one application under this call for proposals.
- A natural person who owns more than 50% of shares in a legal entity can submit only one application under this call for proposals, either under the capacity of a natural person or a legal entity, not both.

1.4.3 - Eligibility of costs: costs that can be included

The sub-grant shall take the form of reimbursement of costs.

Only eligible costs can be covered by the sub-grant. The categories of costs that are eligible and non-eligible are indicated below. The budget is both a cost estimate and an overall ceiling for eligible costs.

Eligible direct costs

To be eligible under this call for proposals, costs must comply with the provisions of Article 9 of the sub-grant contract (Annex 3).

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- For this call of proposals activities related *exclusively* to beekeeping and practices, and equipment associated solely with the primary activity of beekeeping, are **not eligible**.
- Purchase of hives or other equipment related to beekeeping activities, and not to the processing of honeybee products, is eligible up to 30% of the total budget.
- Consultancy and marketing services, relevant to the Bee-Economy sector, are eligible up to 30% of the total budget.

The subgrant applicant agrees that the expenditure verification(s) referred to in Articles 6, 10 and 11 of the sub-grant contract (Annex 3) will be carried out by the auditor contracted by the Italian Arab Cooperation Chamber (CCIA).

Ineligible costs

The following costs are not eligible:

- debts and debt service charges (interest);
- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- costs declared by the applicants and financed by another action or work programme receiving a European Union grant;
- purchases of land or buildings;
- currency exchange losses;
- duties, taxes and charges, including VAT, except when non-recoverable under the relevant national tax legislation unless otherwise provided in appropriate provisions negotiated with partner countries, as per the provisions of the related Financing Agreement;⁴
- loans to third parties;
- fines, penalties and expenses of litigation;
- contributions in kind.

1.4.4 - Ethic clauses and Code of Conduct

a) Absence of conflict of interest

The applicant must not be affected by any conflict of interest and must have no equivalent relation in that respect with other applicants or parties involved in the actions. Any attempt by an applicant to obtain confidential information, enter into unlawful agreements with competitors or influence the evaluation committee or the Arab Italian Chamber of Cooperation (CCIA) during the process of examining, clarifying,

⁴ For details on VAT and tax provisions set in Financing Agreements (FA), the potential applicants may refer to the specific national provisions.

evaluating and comparing applications will lead to the rejection of its application and may result in administrative penalties.

b) Respect for human rights as well as environmental legislation and core labour standards

The applicant and its staff must comply with human rights. In particular and in accordance with the applicable act, applicants who have been awarded contracts must comply with the environmental legislation including multilateral environmental agreements, and with the core labour standards as applicable and as defined in the relevant International Labour Organisation conventions (such as the conventions on freedom of association and collective bargaining; elimination of forced and compulsory labour; abolition of child labour).

Zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and sexual abuse:

The European Commission applies a policy of 'zero tolerance' in relation to all wrongful conduct which has an impact on the professional credibility of the applicant.

Physical abuse or punishment, or threats of physical abuse, sexual abuse or exploitation, harassment and verbal abuse, as well as other forms of intimidation shall be prohibited.

c) Anti-corruption and anti-bribery

The applicant shall comply with all applicable laws and regulations and codes relating to anti-bribery and anti-corruption. The Arab Italian Chamber of Cooperation (CCIA) and the Programme bodies reserve the right to suspend or cancel the sub-grant if corrupt practices of any kind are discovered at any stage of the award process or during the execution of the contract. For the purposes of this provision, 'corrupt practices' are the offer of a bribe, gift, gratuity or commission to any person as an inducement or reward for performing or refraining from any act relating to the award of a contract or execution of a contract already concluded.

d) Breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud

The Arab Italian Chamber of Cooperation (CCIA) and the Programme bodies reserve the right to suspend or cancel the procedure, where the award procedure proves to have been subject to breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud. If breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud are discovered after the award of the contract, the project beneficiary may refrain from concluding the contract.

1.5. HOW TO APPLY AND THE PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW

1.5.1 - Applications

Subgrant applicants are invited to submit an application using the model of Sub-grant application form annexed to these guidelines (Annex 2a). Applicants must apply in **English/Italian**.

Please complete the application form carefully and as clearly as possible so that it can be assessed properly. Any error related to the points listed in the checklist of the subgrant application form or any major inconsistency may lead to the rejection of the application. Clarifications will only be requested when information provided is unclear and thus prevents the Arab Italian Chamber of Cooperation (CCIA) from conducting an objective assessment.

Hand-written applications will **not** be accepted.

Please note that only the application form (Annex 2a) accompanied by the following annexes will be evaluated.

- Annex 2b - Budget
- Annex 5 - De minimis declaration for sub-grantee

It is therefore of utmost importance that these documents contain **ALL** the relevant information concerning the action.

Depending on the supported action, all applications must also include:

- for the purchase of equipment: relevant quotations and product specifications
- for infrastructures: detailed refurbishment quotation and/or analytical cost prepared by a qualified architect.

1.5.2 - Where and how to send applications

The complete application form and supporting documents (please refer to Section 1.6.1 - STEP 1: OPENING & ADMINISTRATIVE CHECKS) must be submitted in **electronic format** by email including in the subject line:

- The **reference number and the title of the call for proposals (MedBEEsinessHubs – C_A.1.2_0035 – Call 1)**, together with
- The **full name of the applicant**

To be sent to the following email address:

mbeeshubs.project@gmail.com

Files shall be included in compressed folder(s) and **may not** be submitted through a temporary link with a short-term expiration.

Applications sent by any other means or delivered to other e-mail addresses will be rejected.

All documents must be signed.

The Arab Italian Chamber of Cooperation (CCIA) will be sending an email message to each applicant confirming the date and time of receipt of their application.

1.5.3 - Deadline for submission of applications

The deadline for submission of applications is **10 May 2023** by 18:00 Italian local time. Applications received after the deadline will be rejected.

1.5.4 - Further information about applications

Questions may be sent by e-mail no later until 19th of April 2023 to the following e-mail address **mbeeshubs.project@gmail.com**, indicating clearly the reference of the call for subgrants.

The Arab Italian Chamber of Cooperation (CCIA) has no obligation to provide clarifications to questions received after this date. Replies will be given no later than 11 days before the deadline for the submission of applications.

To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the Arab Italian Chamber of Cooperation (CCIA) cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of applicants, or an action.

No individual replies will be given to questions. All questions and answers as well as other important notices to applicants during the course of the evaluation procedure will be published on the project website (<https://enicbcmmed.eu/projects/medbeesinesshubs>) as the need arises. It is therefore advisable to consult the abovementioned website regularly in order to be informed of the questions and answers published.

1.6. EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications will be examined and evaluated by an evaluation committee composed by representatives of the Arab Italian Chamber of Cooperation (CCIA), a three-member Committee of Officers of the CCCI appointed for this purpose by the President of the CCIA.

The Committee during its sessions has a quorum when all three of its members are present. The Committee will evaluate and rate the applications/proposals on the basis of defined selection criteria (section 1.6.2 below) and submit the results for validation to the President of the CCCI. All applications will be assessed according to the following steps and criteria.

If the examination of the application reveals that the proposed action does not meet the eligibility criteria stated in Section 1.4, the application will be rejected on this sole basis.

(1.6.1) STEP 1: OPENING & ADMINISTRATIVE CHECKS

During the opening and administrative check, the following criteria will be assessed:

- If the sub-grant application deadline has been met. Otherwise, the application will be automatically rejected.
- If the application form is duly and fully completed and signed. If any of the requested information is missing or is incorrect, the application may be rejected on that **sole** basis and the application will not be evaluated further.
- If the following documents have been submitted:
 - Annex 2a – Application Form
 - Annex 2b - Budget
 - Annex 5 - De minimis declaration for sub-grantee
 - Applicant's entity status as follows:
 - For a Natural person
 - 1) Identity Card
 - For a Legal entity

- 1) Certificate of incorporation
 - 2) Certificate of Directors
 - 3) Decision by the Board of Directors to sign the application
 - 4) Certificate of Operation from the competent authority (to verify it is legally operating)
- For actions related to purchase of equipment
 - 1) Equipment quotation with product specifications
 - For actions related to investments in infrastructure:
 - 1) Title Deed
 - 2) Rental or Management Agreement
 - 3) Building permit with the relevant to the application form use
 - 4) Refurbishment quotation and/or analytical cost prepared by a qualified architect.

(1.6.2) STEP 2: EVALUATION OF THE APPLICATION

The applications that pass the opening and administrative checks will be further evaluated on their quality, including the proposed budget and capacity of the applicants. They will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria in the evaluation grid below. There are two types of evaluation criteria: Selection and Award criteria.

The selection criteria help to evaluate the applicant's operational and financial capacity and are used to verify that they:

- have stable and sufficient sources of finance to maintain their activity throughout the proposed action and, where appropriate, to participate in its funding;
- has the management capacity, professional competencies and qualifications required to successfully complete the proposed action.

The award criteria help to evaluate the quality of the applications in relation to the objectives set forth in the guidelines, and to award sub-grants to projects/actions which maximise the overall effectiveness of the call for proposals. They help to select applications which the Arab Italian Chamber of Cooperation (CCIA) can be confident will comply with its objectives and priorities. They cover the relevance of the action, its consistency with the objectives of the call for proposals, quality, expected impact, sustainability and cost-effectiveness.

TABLE 1: EVALUATION AWARD CRITERIA

Criterion	Documentation needed	Evaluation Score Point(s)
Person of an age < 41 years	(1) Identity Card	2

In case of a legal person this applies to the shareholder with a majority of shares	(2) Certificate of registration of the Chamber of Commerce	
Gender (female)	Identity Card	2
Beekeeper with at least 10 hives	Certificate of the Ministry of Health with the National Bee Registry Database	1
Participation in MedBEEsinessHubs business & finance workshops	Attendance confirmation	2 for 100% attendance 1 for >50% attendance
Participation in MedBEEsinessHubs workshops on handcrafting honeybee products and beekeeping practices	Attendance confirmation	2 for 100% attendance 1 for >50% attendance
Development of new product or service based on the Bee-economy concept	Subgrant application form	3
Production and/or promotion of organic bee products	Certificate of organic production	2
Supported economic activity in rural areas	Certificate of operational address/ Confirmation of residential address	1
Currently Unemployed	Unemployment certificate	1
Academic / vocational training qualifications in beekeeping, agricultural or environmental sciences (college, university degree)	Copy of certificate	2
Infrastructure for educational and/ or tourist programs	Proof of activities on education and/or tourism	2
Maximum score		20

After the evaluation, a table will be drawn up listing the applications ranked according to their score. The highest scoring applications will be provisionally selected until the available budget for this call for proposals is reached. In addition, a reserve list will be drawn up following the same criteria. This list will be used if for some reasons applicants selected withdraw their application, or within a maximum period of 30 days after signing the Sub-Grant Contract they do not begin the implementation of their proposed Action, or if more funds become available during the validity period of the reserve list.

(3) VERIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY OF THE APPLICANTS

The eligibility verification will be performed according to the criteria set out in Section 1.4.1 on the basis of the following supporting documents requested by the) Italian Arab Chamber of Cooperation (CCIA).

Table 2: Eligibility supporting documents

For a Natural person	Identity Card
For a Legal Entity	(1) Certificate of registration from the Chamber of Commerce
For minor investments in infrastructure	(1) Title Deed (2) Rental or Management agreement (3) Building permit with the relevant to the application form use (4) Refurbishment quotation and/or analytical cost prepared by a qualified architect

It will by default only be performed for the applications that have been provisionally selected according to their score and within the available budget for this call for proposals.

Any rejected application will be replaced by the next best placed application on the reserve list that falls within the available budget for this call for proposals.

If the abovementioned supporting documents are not provided before the deadline indicated in the request for supporting documents sent to the applicant, the application may be rejected.

1.7. NOTIFICATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE EVALUATION

1.7.1 - Content of the decision

Applicants will be informed in writing of the contracting body decision concerning their application, and, if rejected, the reasons for the negative decision. Moreover, official communication of the award decision will be published on the project website (<https://enicbmed.eu/projects/medbeesinesshubs>).

An applicant believing that it has been harmed by an error or irregularity during the award process may lodge a complaint. Resolution of appeal requests, if any, will be provided maximum 10 days after the reception of the complaint.

1.7.2 - Indicative timetable

	DATE	TIME
Deadline for requesting any clarifications from the Italian Arab Cooperation Chamber (CCIA)	19 April 2023	18:00 Italian local time

Last date on which clarifications are issued by the Italian Arab Chamber of Cooperation	26 April 2023	18:00 Italian local time
Deadline for submission of applications	10 May 2023	18:00 Italian local time
Communication to applicants on the evaluation results (indicative)	17 May 2023	18:00 Italian local time
Notification of award	24 May 2023	18:00 Italian local time
Signature of Sub-Grant Contract	24 May – 2 June 2023	n/a
Implementation period of funded Actions	Contract signature date - 31 August 2023	n/a
Submission of Narrative & Financial Reports by the sub-grant beneficiary	Within 1 month after end of Sub-Grant implementation period	18:00 Italian local time
Payment of Sub-Grant	Upon acceptance of Narrative & Financial Reports by CCIA (latest by 31 October 2023)	n/a

This indicative timetable refers to provisional dates and may be updated by the Italian Arab Chamber of Cooperation (CCIA) during the procedure. In such cases, the updated timetable will be published on the project web site (<https://enicbmed.eu/projects/medbeesinesshubs>).

1.8. IMPLEMENTING AGENCY

The responsibility for the management and implementation of the MedBEEsinessHubs Sub-granting scheme in Italy lies with the *the* Italian Arab Chamber of Cooperation (CCIA) and specifically with the CCIA which undertakes:

- Informing the interested parties on all issues related to the sub-granting scheme.
- The organization of the necessary infrastructure, the electronic receipt, classification and registration of applications, the checking of the formal conditions of participation and the required supporting documents and the provision of any means required for the full administrative support of the scheme.
- The evaluation process of the applications.
- The monitoring of the progress of the implementation and completion of the funded actions and the processing of the payment procedures of the Beneficiaries (sub-grantees).
- The control and verification / confirmation of expenses and the responsibility of certifying the completion of funded actions.

LIST OF ANNEXES

- **ANNEXES TO BE COMPLETED AND SUBMITTED WHEN APPLYING**

Annex 2a: Sub-grant application form (Word format) / EN

Annex 2b: Budget (Excel format) /EN

Annex 5: De minimis declaration for sub-grantee (Word format) / EN