



Guide for Coordinators AAL Programme

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Table of Contents

1. Project Selection and Reconfiguration Process	3
2. Clarification and Negotiation Process at National Level	4
3. Negotiation Process at Project Level	4
4. Guidelines for National Grant Agreements	6
5. Payment of National and EC Contribution	8
6. Reporting and Monitoring of Projects	8
7. Roles of Project Partners and AAL Management Unit	8
8. Guidelines for dissemination and reach out	10

1. Project Selection and Reconfiguration Process

1.1 Selection of Projects for Funding

Guided by the outcome of the evaluation process, the final selection of projects for funding will be made using the following principles:

- Maximizing the total quality of the project portfolio of the Call
- Optimizing the usage of the available funding of the Call
- Ensuring sufficient thematic spread and avoiding directly overlapping projects to be funded in AAL Programme
- Ensuring participation of project partners from as many AAL Partner States participating in the Call as possible

Phase 1 of project selection is ended with a list of projects, which after approval of the AAL General Assembly, are invited to start the clarification and negotiation phase with their national funding agency (Batch 1 of projects).

1.2 Reconfiguration of Consortia

After the completion of phase 1 of the project selection, additional project proposals that have been assessed to be of good quality by the evaluation process will be invited to restructure their consortia. Restructuring may take place with the following boundary conditions:

- Invitation for restructuring will take place only when availability of national funding is the limiting factor
- Restructuring is possible only in cases where changes affect less than 50% of the total effort (person months) of the original proposal
- Restructuring cannot lead to changing of the project coordinator
- Restructuring can take effect either through non-funded participation of the partner or through finding a replacement partner from an AAL Partner state that still has funds available. This can be combined with redistribution of tasks between the remaining partners of the consortium.

Projects that are invited to resubmit their proposal with a restructured consortium have to meet the eligibility criteria of the Call. They may be subject to a re-evaluation by independent European expert(s), in order to ensure their quality. The selection of the projects to be funded among the resubmitted proposals will be guided by the outcome of the evaluation process and the availability of national budgets. After the approval of AAL Executive Board, additional projects are invited to start the clarification and negotiation phase with their national funding agency (Batch 2 of projects)

Note! If at any point of the project selection phase or the clarification and negotiation phase a project partner withdraws from the project, is ineligible or not able to fulfill its commitment as stated in the proposal and this affects more than 20% of the total effort (in person months) of the original proposal, the project proposal is irrevocably disqualified without the opportunity of restructuring. Furthermore, if at any point, the project coordinator withdraws from the project, is ineligible or not able to fulfill its commitment as stated in the proposal, the project proposal is irrevocably disqualified without the opportunity of restructuring. In any case, a restructuring of the consortium can lead to a re-evaluation of the proposal.

2. Clarification and Negotiation Process at National Level

The negotiation process starts with a notification of the CMU to the coordinators of a project that the project partners will be invited by their NFA to proceed to the clarification and negotiation phase.

During the negotiation process, the national partners have to fulfil administrative requirements as imposed by the national funding rules. Contractual relations will only exist between the project partners and their national funding authorities. No agreement is closed between the AAL Programme and a funded consortium. The EC contribution is transferred through the NFA/NCP.

Grant agreements (or equivalents) under the AAL Programme are directly closed between the national funding organisations and the funded project partners. Certain requirements for the central AAL programme level shall be annexed to the national grant agreements, e.g. the duties concerning AAL progress reporting, central level review meetings, publication of project details, and participation at events.

The intended “time to contract” is 3-6 months.

3. Negotiation Process at Project Level

Certain issues have to be resolved at a central or project level and cannot be negotiated on the partner level:

- Project start and duration
- Consortium agreement
- Description of work

These project issues are negotiated between the project coordinator and the NFA/NCP of the project coordinators country. This NFA/NCP is referred to as a **lead NFA/NCP** and this lead NFA/NCP will assist the project coordinator and inform the CMU about the outcome of the negotiation.

3.1 Project Start and Duration

As the negotiation of the grant agreement is done for every project partner independently of any other partner, the start and duration of funding will most certainly be different for many project partners. The project coordinator – being assisted by the lead NFA/NCP – will have the

duty to identify a common start date and duration on the project level. This decision influences the schedule for the reporting cycle of the project.

This information should be included in the Consortium Agreement and the first page of the Description of Work of the project.

3.2 Consortium Agreement (CA)

Projects which are approved for funding must submit a signed consortium agreement before the grant agreements with the national agencies enter into force and prior to the start of the project (according to the EC Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation (2014/C 198/01)). The CA must include provisions regarding intellectual property rights. Help can be obtained from the IPR Helpdesk (www.ipr-helpdesk.org).

The coordinator will send the consortium agreement to the lead NFA/NCP. The Consortium Agreement is the only legal agreement on the level of the whole consortium.

3.3 Description of Work or Project Work Programme

The Description of Work (DoW) is made on the basis of Part B, which is the technical project description at the time of the proposal submission. The DoW is an updated version of this document to incorporate information as resulting from the negotiation process.

The DoW is the basis for the central progress reporting. It must indicate clear dates for project deliverables and milestones and assign clear responsibilities to them. The project coordinator submits the DoW one month after the start date of the project to the lead NCP.

The Project Coordinator sends to the Lead NCP and AAL CMU the electronic copies of the following consortium documents: signed grant/funding agreements, Consortium Agreement, Financial Plan and Description of Work. These documents should be at first agreed by the lead NCP, if applicable.

3.4 Changes in the Project

The coordinator must communicate all major changes in the project as they happen to the lead NFA/NCP. Major changes in the project include:

- Changes in the global objectives of the project
- Changes in the composition of the consortium
- Changes in duration of the project
- Major changes in the resources

In addition, major changes must be approved by the AAL Association. For this approval, the coordinator has to send a request by email to the AAL CMU and put all involved NFAs/NCPs in copy. The request must state the reason for the change; it must also include an updated version of the Description of Work (DoW) with track changes and other supporting documents if necessary. After the reception of a documented request for changes, each of the involved NFA/NCPs shall communicate their agreement/disagreement with the proposed change within

2 weeks. The AAL CMU and NCP will check if the central eligibility criteria and conditions are still respected and if the request can be approved.

In case of approval, each project partner will have to contact its corresponding NFA in order to update their national grant agreements/decisions. The submitted documents will be used later by each participant, when contacting the corresponding NCP for the amendment of the project. When appropriate (i.e. change of participant), the amended Consortium Agreement has also to be provided by the coordinator.

Any request for a major change must be made up to 3 months before the end of the project.

Other changes such as the change of the coordinating person, address, etc. can be communicated to the CMU by e-mail by the project coordinator, with a copy to the lead NCP.

4. Guidelines for National Grant Agreements

The described requirements of the AAL Association for the national grant agreements are based on the legal framework of the AAL Programme and the AAL Association. If they are already fulfilled by the national grant agreements, no changes are necessary. If not, an amendment to the national grant agreement should be signed in order to fulfil the missing requirements.

(1) Following this communication and on the basis of the list of selected proposals approved by the AAL Association General Assembly, the beneficiaries shall present the full proposals of their projects to their national funding authority within 30 calendar days.

(2) The national funding authority of the coordinator of the joint project shall organise the coordination and negotiation process in the collaborative project, and ensure that a valid consortium agreement is agreed and signed by all partners. For all such obligations the national funding authority of the coordinator shall receive appropriate support from the project coordinator and the other participating national funding agencies.

(3) Following the completion of this coordination and negotiation process, the national funding authorities engaged in a collaborative project **shall establish grant agreements** with participants in the collaborative project. These grant agreements shall be established in accordance with national rules within 60 calendar days after the presentation of the full proposal. Verification of the eligibility of costs and keeping to the EC State Aid Rules for R&D projects are essential. Any substantial changes in the project during the negotiation process, such as changes of the composition of the consortium, changes of the main objectives of the project, substantial reductions or increases of the budget of the project have to be reported to the AAL Association for approval before signing the grant agreements. The same shall apply if such changes occur during the implementation of the projects.

(4) **Grant agreements shall also contain all necessary information reporting and control obligations comprised in this agreement** *[see further below]*. The national funding authority shall also ensure that the funding of the project is in accordance with the funding rates set out in the General Agreement, including its Annex, and in the annual agreement between the AAL Association and the Commission and with national funding rules.

(5) **The project beneficiary shall provide a declaration, that double funding from a national or community source has not and will not be provided.**

(6) In case of failure of the negotiation and grant agreement process the national funding authorities shall report to the AAL Association within 60 calendar days after the presentation of the full proposal.

(7) **All grant agreements of a collaborative trans-national project shall enter into force the calendar day after signature of all partner project agreements.** Signings shall take place within 60 days after the presentation of the full proposal.

(8) The **project coordinator** shall submit to his national funding authority within 14 calendar days after the completion of the grant agreements

- A description of the collaborative project work programme in particular of all activities and actions necessary to fulfil the objectives stipulated in the grant agreements,
- Copy of all grant agreements,
- The consortium agreement,
- The financing plan of the project.

After approval the national funding authority of the project coordinator shall communicate the results of its examination to the AAL Association within 21 calendar days after signing the grant agreements. National funding authorities shall provide access to the grant agreements and all related documents on request of the AAL Association or any organisation listed in Part 7.

(9) The **grant agreement shall include an obligation of the beneficiary to acknowledge the funding received from the European Community and to display the European logo in an appropriate way.**

(10) The **grant agreement shall also include** an obligation of the beneficiary to provide all necessary information and documents on request to the AAL Association for the publication of project information according to the General Agreement between the AAL Association and the European Commission, and to accept that the AAL Association and the Commission are entitled to publish the information referred tin in Articles 34.4 and 34.5 of the General Agreement.

(11) If a national funding authority does not operate with grant agreements, the regulations referring to grant agreements refer also to the national equivalents of grant agreements.

(12) List of information, reporting and control obligations:

1. Information deliverables
 - 1.1. Consortium Agreement
 - 1.2. Project work programme, including financial planning
 - 1.3. Changes in the project
 - Changes in the global objectives of the project
 - Changes in the composition of the consortium
 - Changes in the duration of the project
 - Changes in the resources, especially changes in the planned budget
2. Reporting requirements
 - 2.1. Annual progress and final report (template available on the AAL web-site)
 - 2.2. Midterm review report
3. Control requirements
 - 3.1. Balance of the past year before the project starts for commercial companies, or equivalent (e.g. financial closing report) for other organisations
 - 3.2. The obligation of beneficiaries to report an imminent insolvency or a major change in ownership or organisational structure

5. Payment of National and EC Contribution

After the signature of the grant agreement between the NFA and the project partners and the signature of the consortium agreement, the payment to the beneficiaries will be done by the NFA/NCP according to the national regulations. These payments include both the national and the EC contribution.

6. Reporting and Monitoring of Projects

Besides the national obligations for project reporting (which concerns the single partners within a project), few efforts are requested from the central AAL programme level to assess the progress of the projects. The framework for consortia level reports and reviews is:

- - Annual progress and financial report per calendar year
- - Draft Business plan/business model at project mid-term
- - Final Business plan/Business model before the end of the project
- - Exploitation plan at project mid-term
- - Mid-term review of the project (physical review),
- - A final report about achievements and financial data (remote review)

Relevant documents for reports and reviews can be found on the AAL website: <http://www.aal-europe.eu/documents-ressources/resources-for-project-coordinators/>

All project public deliverables and dissemination material should be sent to AAL CMU and will be made available on the AAL Public Deliverables website: <http://deliverables.aal-europe.eu/>

7. Roles of Project Partners and AAL Management Unit

This section gives an overview on the responsibilities and duties of the parties involved in a project.

7.1 The Project Coordinator

- Acts as the official interface between the AAL Programme and the consortium partners
- Communicates all information to and from the consortium to the lead NFA/NCP and the CMU
- Is responsible for central annual and final reporting duties of the project
- Is responsible for organising of mid-term review meeting
- Updates project work plan whenever required and submits the result to the lead NFA/NCP and the CMU
- Presents project progress at AAL events (on request)

7.2 Project Partner

- Fulfils all duties as requested by the project coordinator and the NFA/NCP
- Informs the NFA/NCP and the project coordinator on any project relevant changes
- Participates in project mid-term review meetings
- Participates in AAL events

7.3 Lead NCP

- Acts as the official interface between the negotiated project and the CMU
- Communicates to and from the NFA involved in the specific project
- Receives updated work plans whenever required
- Support the CMU in the coordination of the central project mid-term review meeting
- Provides all relevant project data to the central information systems

7.4 NCP of Project Partner

- Fulfils all duties as requested by the lead NFA/NCP
- Administers the national activities and financials with the national project partner
- Harmonises national with the central administrative reporting requirements
- Provides actual financial and legal project data for the project partner to the CMU
- Attend, when possible, project mid-term review meetings

7.5 CMU

- Supervises the processes and collects project information for the AAL central level
- Provide a templates for annual and final central level project reporting
- Transfers the EC contribution to the NFA/NCP for further distribution to the project partners
- Generates and analyses statistical information
- Organise with NFA/NCP the central mid-term review meeting

8. Guidelines for dissemination and reach out

In the context of the AAL Joint Programme, the project consortium commits to providing the following:

- Within the first 2 months after project start, a fact sheet (see annex) on the project to be presented on the AAL web site (using the template delivered by the AAL CMU). This fact sheet should include:
 - Name address of all partners
 - Type of partner (end user, business, SME, Technology)
 - Abstracts of the project
 - Amount of the Community financial contribution and the rate of funding costs (amount of the financial contribution in relation to the total budget) per partner organization
- Within first 2 months after project start, two slides (Power Point format, in English) presenting the project (including the partner's overview and the project objectives).
- A press release of the project kick-off, in English and in the national languages of the participants of the consortium, to be broadly disseminated in the local/national press, and sent to the AAL CMU.
- No later than 4 months after project start date, the project web-site as a basic tool to disseminate project results. The web-site should contain as a minimum: Project description, Partners, Contact details, acknowledgment to the NFA and EC, public deliverables, link to the AAL JP web site, logos of AAL JP and European Community. It should be lively and updated. It is encouraged to include videos of demonstrations and updates could be provided in RSS feed.

In addition:

- The project should be represented during the annual AAL Forum – the AAL JP annual dissemination event. A specific budget in disseminations should be planned for this participation.
- Any communication or publication, including information given to press, publicity material, official notices, reports, publications, shall acknowledge that the project is/was carried out under the AAL Joint Programme with funding by the European Union and involved National Funding Authorities, and shall display, in an appropriate way, the European logo (available at www.aal-europe.eu).

Guide for Coordinators – AAL Programme

- Any of the above mentioned shall be communicated to the CMU for them to have this published on the AAL website (if needed).

Example of acknowledgement sentences:

- “The project (acronym) no AAL-2008-1-(xxx) has received funding from AAL JP, co-funded by the European Commission and National Funding Authorities of country xx, ... (as appropriate) “
- “The project (acronym) no AAL-2008-1-(xxx) is funded under AAL JP”