



Instrument for Financial Support for Customs Control Equipment (CCEI)

**Call for proposals – Invitation to submit a
proposal**

(CCEI-2021-EQUIP-IBA)

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CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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0. Introduction

This is an invitation to submit proposals for EU **action grants** in the field of customs under the **Instrument for financial support for customs control equipment (CCEI)**.

The regulatory framework for this EU Funding Programme is set out in:

- Regulation 2018/1046 ([EU Financial Regulation](#))
- the basic act (CCEI Regulation [2021/1077](#)¹).

The invitation is launched in accordance with the 2021-2022 Work Programme² and will be managed by the **European Commission, Directorate-General for Taxation and Customs Union (DG TAXUD)**.

The call covers the following **topics**:

- **CCEI-2021-EQUIP-IBA-BCROSS – Equipment for border crossing points**
- **CCEI-2021-EQUIP-IBA-LAB – Equipment for customs laboratories**

Under topic 1, we will fund maximum 1 project application per Member State, (with a maximum of 20 work packages — one per BCP); under topic 2, we will fund maximum 1 project application per Member State (with a maximum of 5 work packages — one per customs laboratory).

Each project application under the call must address only one of these topics. Applicants wishing to apply for more than one topic, must submit a separate proposal under each topic. Applicants cannot submit more than one proposal per topic.

We invite you to read the **call documentation** carefully, and in particular this Call Document, the Model Grant Agreement, the [EU Funding & Tenders Portal Online Manual](#) and the [EU Grants AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement](#).

These documents provide clarifications and answers to questions you may have when preparing your application:

¹ Regulation (EU) 2021/1077 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 establishing, as part of the Integrated Border Management Fund, the instrument for financial support for customs control equipment (OJ L 234, 2.7.2021, p. 1).

² Commission Implementing Decision C(2021) 7142 final of 7 October 2021 concerning the adoption of the work programme for 2021 and 2022 and the financing decision for the implementation of the instrument for financial support for customs control equipment.

- the Call Document outlines the:
 - background, objectives, scope, activities that can be funded and the expected results (sections 1 and 2)
 - timetable and available budget (sections 3 and 4)
 - admissibility and eligibility conditions (including mandatory documents; sections 5 and 6)
 - criteria for financial and operational capacity and exclusion (section 7)
 - evaluation and award procedure (section 8)
 - award criteria (section 9)
 - legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements (section 10)
 - how to submit an application (section 11)
- the Online Manual outlines the:
 - procedures to register and submit proposals online via the EU Funding & Tenders Portal ('Portal')
 - recommendations for the preparation of the application
- the AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement contains:
 - detailed annotations on all the provisions in the Grant Agreement you will have to sign in order to obtain the grant (*including cost eligibility, payment schedule, accessory obligations, etc*).

1. Background

The Instrument for financial support for customs control equipment (CCEI) funds grants to Member State customs authorities for the purchase/upgrade/maintenance of customs control equipment.

It supports the Customs Union and the tasks of the customs authorities to protect the financial and economic interests of the EU and its Member States, to ensure security and safety within the EU and to protect it from illegal trade, while facilitating legitimate business activity. The long-term vision is to achieve equivalent levels of results of customs controls that will prevent the diversion of flows of goods towards the weakest points.

The CCEI thus aims to contribute to more uniformity, adequacy and improved results in the performance of customs controls at the EU external borders, by addressing the current imbalances between the Member States in carrying out customs controls. It allows for a structured solution providing national customs administrations with adequate technical equipment to control goods crossing the borders, while taking into account the specificities of different border crossing points, in particular, their geographical location, size, traffic characteristics, risk analyses, and threats they are exposed to.

The funding will be made based on a detailed needs and risk assessment at the different customs entry points and customs laboratories and the gaps in terms of equipment.

2. Objectives — Themes and priorities — Activities that can be funded — Expected impact

CCEI-2021-EQUIP-IBA-BCROSS – Equipment for border crossing points and CCEI-2021-EQUIP-IBA-LAB — Equipment for customs laboratories

Objectives

The present call aims to:

- support the Customs Union and customs authorities in the EU customs territory as defined in Article 4(1) of the Union Customs Code Regulation [952/2013](#), to protect the financial and economic interests of the EU and its Member States, to ensure security and safety within the Union and to protect the Union from illegal trade while facilitating legitimate business activity
- contribute to adequate and equivalent results of customs controls through the transparent purchase, maintenance and upgrade of relevant, state-of-the-art, such as secure, safe and environmental-friendly, and reliable customs control equipment, thereby supporting the customs authorities acting as one to protect the interests of the Union
- fill in existing performance gaps in the functioning of the priority border crossing points (BCPs)/laboratories and ultimately ensure increased added value of the investments, by increasing the effectiveness and the efficiency of the customs controls (in numbers, results achieved and efficiencies gained).

Themes and priorities (scope)

The call implements the priorities of the CCEI for 2021-2022, i.e.:

- 1) **Stronger and better equipped Customs Union:** target particular shortages in the equipment of individual BCPs and customs laboratories in a way that it guarantees their proper functioning
- 2) **EU added-value:** the equipment items purchased with CCEI support must contribute to improved customs controls at EU level.
- 3) **Sustainability and Innovation:** The equipment purchased with CCEI support should be innovative and sustainable, i.e. comply with the latest market trends and optimal functionalities. It should be reliable, relevant and state-of-the-art. It needs to be able to be used continuously in the long-term and respond to present and future customs control needs and changing threats and risks.

Activities that can be funded (scope)

The call targets the following:

- (a) purchase, maintenance and upgrade of customs controls equipment which are part of the list of equipment in the equipment questionnaire (*detailed budget table; see Annex 1*), including innovative detection technology equipment, that has one or more of the following customs control purposes:
 - for topic CCEI-2021-EQUIP-IBA-BCROSS:
 - non-intrusive inspection
 - indication of hidden objects on humans

- radiation detection and nuclide identification
- sampling and field analysis of samples
- handheld search
- for topic CCEI-2021-EQUIP-IBA-LAB:
 - analysis of samples in laboratories
 - sampling and field analysis of samples.

The proposals can also, but are not obliged, to include:


- (b) training or the upgrading of skills, when these are of an introductory nature and included in the contract
- (c) purchase of software and software updates directly necessary to use the customs control equipment, and electronic software and programming necessary to inter-link existing software with the customs control equipment
- (d) testing of new pieces or new functionalities in operational conditions
- (e) joint work between customs offices of different Member States to enable more efficient and effective testing and procurement.

Equipment items that require the use of dedicated software for their operation must be interoperable (i.e. should be able to be interlinked/share information within the Member State and across the entire Customs Union).

Proposals with work packages concerning postal BCPs must include actions and results related to eCommerce.

Specific requirements are moreover mandatory for the following types of equipment:

- high-energy X-ray scanners: compliance with the World Customs Organisation's (WCO) standard for the Unified File format 2.0

 Proposals must address for each work package at least the following two building blocks mentioned in section 9: 'Customs Union acting as one' and 'Trade facilitation'.

Expected impact

The projects should contribute to the added value of the CCEI in improving the performance of the Customs Union. Beneficiaries should achieve optimal coverage of the risks and threats at the BCP or laboratory. Contribution to possible synergies and efficiencies in the use of the equipment through co-sharing and following the purchase of the equipment is also envisaged.

The projects should moreover ensure that the equipment purchased will be reliable, relevant and state-of-the-art.

The beneficiaries will be asked to collect data on the conditions and outcomes of the controls, in order to allow evaluating the efficiency of the funded measures and feed the analysis for risk management and security at the borders.

3. Available budget

The available call budget is **EUR 271 514 000**.

Specific budget information per topic can be found in the table below.

Topic	Topic budget
1 — CCEI-2021-EQUIP-IBA-BCROSS	EUR 217 211 200
2 — CCEI-2021-EQUIP-IBA-LAB	EUR 54 302 800

Under topic 1, we will fund maximum 1 project application per Member State, (with a maximum of 20 work packages — one per border crossing point (BCP)); under topic 2, we will fund maximum 1 project application per Member State (with a maximum of 5 work packages — one per customs laboratory). Each project will be allocated a maximum of 15% of the topic budget.

We reserve the right not to award all available funds or to redistribute them between the call priorities, depending on the proposals received and the results of the evaluation.

4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
Call opening:	14 October 2021
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>18 January 2022 – 17:00:00 CET</u> (Brussels)
Evaluation:	January-April 2022
Information on evaluation results:	April-May 2022
GA signature:	May-June 2022

5. Admissibility and documents

Proposals must be submitted before the **call deadline** (see *timetable section 4*).

Proposals must be submitted **electronically** via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (accessible via the link in the invitation letter). Paper submissions are NOT possible.

Proposals (including annexes and supporting documents) must be submitted using the forms provided *inside* the Submission System (⚠ NOT the documents sent available on the Portal — they are only for information).

Project acronym — Please use the following naming convention: 'Year-Country-Acronymtopic' (ex. 2021-BE-BCROSS).

Proposals must be **complete** and contain all the requested information and all required annexes and supporting documents:

- Application Form Part A — contains administrative information about the participants (future coordinator, beneficiaries and affiliated entities) and the summarised budget for the project (*to be filled in directly online*)

- Application Form Part B — contains the technical description of the project (*to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed and then assembled and re-uploaded*)
- **mandatory annexes and supporting documents** (*to be uploaded*):
 - detailed budget table ('*equipment questionnaire*'; *template available in the Submission System*)
 - CVs of core project team: not applicable
 - activity report of last year
 - list of previous projects: not applicable
 - strategic plan
 - documents supporting the price estimates for the equipment (*e.g. price quotations and supplier brochures*), if available

Please note that the amounts entered into the summarised budget table (filled in directly online) must correspond to the amounts calculated in the detailed budget table (equipment questionnaire). In case of discrepancies, the amounts in the online summarised budget table will prevail.

At proposal submission, you will have to confirm that you have the **mandate to act** for all applicants. Moreover, you will have to confirm that the information in the application is correct and complete and that the participants comply with the conditions for receiving EU funding (especially eligibility, financial and operational capacity, exclusion, etc). Before signing the grant, each beneficiary and affiliated entity will have to confirm this again by signing a declaration of honour (DoH). Proposals without full support will be rejected.

Applications must respect the conditions and limitations set out in this call document regarding structure and set-up (one application per Member State per topic, maximum of work packages, one work package per border control point (BCP)/customs laboratory, etc).

Your application must be **readable, accessible and printable**.

Proposals are limited to maximum **70 pages** (Part B). Evaluators will not consider any additional pages.

You may be asked at a later stage for further documents (*for legal entity validation, financial capacity check, bank account validation, etc*).

 For more information about the submission process (including IT aspects), consult the [Online Manual](#).

6. Eligibility

Eligible participants (eligible countries)

In order to be eligible, the applicants (beneficiaries and affiliated entities) must:

- be competent customs authorities of Member States within the meaning of Articles 2 and 7 of the CCEI Regulation and
- have provided the information requested within the framework of the needs assessment conducted in the previous year.

Beneficiaries and affiliated entities must register in the [Participant Register](#) — before the submitting the proposal — and will have to be validated by the Central Validation

Service (REA Validation). For the validation, they will be requested to upload documents showing legal status and origin.

Other entities may participate in other consortium roles, such as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions, etc (*see section 13*).

Specific cases

Competent national customs authorities — These cover the customs administrations of the Member States responsible for applying the customs legislation and any other authorities empowered under national law to apply certain customs legislation, as defined in Article 5(1) of the Union Customs Code Regulation [952/2013](#).

EU restrictive measures — Special rules apply for certain entities (*e.g. entities subject to [EU restrictive measures](#) under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)*³ and *entities covered by Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#)*⁴). Such entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity, including as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any).

Consortium composition

Only applications by single applicants are allowed (single beneficiaries; affiliated entities and other participants are allowed, if needed).

Eligible activities

Eligible activities are the ones set out in section 2 above.

The following equipment is not considered as eligible for funding under this invitation

- equipment with a military focus
- equipment that is subject to national/third country security requirements that could affect the implementation or put into question the award of the grant (*e.g. technology restrictions, national security classification, etc*)

Projects should take into account the results of projects supported by other EU funding programmes. The complementarities must be described in the project proposals (Part B of the Application Form).

Activities should be complementary to but should not overlap with activities financed through the EU Anti-Fraud Programme (EUF) or the Border management and Visa Instrument (BMVI), or any other EU funding programme with similar activities (*e.g. Resilience and Recovery Fund*).

Projects must comply with EU policy interests and priorities (*such as environment, social, security, industrial and trade policy, etc*).

Financial support to third parties is not allowed.

Duration

Projects should normally range between 12 and 36 months (extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment).

³ Please note that the EU Official Journal contains the official list and, in case of conflict, its content prevails over that of the [EU Sanctions Map](#).

⁴ Commission guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#) on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards (OJEU C 205 of 19.07.2013, pp. 9-11).

Project budget

Project budgets (maximum grant amount) must not exceed 15% of the topic budget (see section 3).

7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion

Financial capacity

Applicants must have **stable and sufficient resources** to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share. Organisations participating in several projects must have sufficient capacity to implement all these projects.

Since all applicants are public authorities, they are automatically considered to have sufficient financial capacity.

Operational capacity

Applicants must have the **know-how, qualifications and resources** to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share (including sufficient experience in projects of comparable size and nature).

Applicants must also have the necessary infrastructure and licenses/authorisations required to use the equipment.

This capacity will be assessed together with the 'Relevance' award criterion, on the basis of the competence and experience of the applicants and their project teams, including operational resources (human, technical and other) or, exceptionally, the measures proposed to obtain it by the time the task implementation starts.

If the evaluation of the award criterion is positive, the applicants are considered to have sufficient operational capacity.

Applicants will have to show their capacity via the following information:

- general profiles (qualifications and experiences) of the staff responsible for managing and implementing the project
- applicant's activity report of last year
- statement on preparation of staff to use the equipment
- training and other capacity building planned for the equipment.

The applications must show that there is sufficient and well-trained staff to operate the equipment securely and safely.

Additional supporting documents may be requested, if needed to confirm the operational capacity of any applicant.

Exclusion

Applicants which are subject to an **EU exclusion decision** or in one of the following **exclusion situations** that bar them from receiving EU funding can NOT participate⁵:

- bankruptcy, winding up, affairs administered by the courts, arrangement with creditors, suspended business activities or other similar procedures (including procedures for persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- in breach of social security or tax obligations (including if done by persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)

⁵ See Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

- guilty of grave professional misconduct⁶ (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No [2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).

Applicants will also be refused if it turns out that⁷:

- during the award procedure they misrepresented information required as a condition for participating or failed to supply that information
- they were previously involved in the preparation of the call and this entails a distortion of competition that cannot be remedied otherwise (conflict of interest).

8. Evaluation and award procedure

The proposals will have to follow the **standard submission and evaluation procedure** (one-stage submission + one-step evaluation).

An **evaluation committee** will assess all applications. Proposals will first be checked for formal requirements (admissibility, and eligibility, *see sections 5 and 6*). For proposals found admissible and eligible, each work package will be evaluated against the operational capacity and award criteria (*see sections 7 and 9*) and then ranked according to its score.

For work packages with the same score (within a topic) a **priority order** will be determined according to the following approach:

Successively for every group of *ex aequo* work packages, starting with the highest scored group, and continuing in descending order:

- 1) The *ex aequo* work packages will be prioritised according to the scores they have been awarded for the award criterion 'Added value'. When these scores


⁶ Professional misconduct includes: violation of ethical standards of the profession, wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility, false declarations/misrepresentation of information, participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition, violation of IPR, attempting to influence decision-making processes or obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain advantage.

⁷ See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

are equal, priority will be based on their scores for the criterion 'Relevance'. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on their scores for the criterion 'Sustainability'.

- 2) If this does not allow to determine the priority, a further prioritisation can be done by considering the overall work package portfolio and the creation of positive synergies between work packages, or other factors related to the objectives of the call. These factors will be documented in the panel report.
- 3) After that, the remainder of the available call budget will be used to fund work packages ensuring a balanced spread of the geographical coverage and while respecting to the maximum possible extent the order of merit based on the evaluation of the award criteria.

All proposals will be informed about the evaluation result (**evaluation result letter**). Proposals with successful work packages will be invited for grant preparation; the other ones will be put on the reserve list or rejected.

 No commitment for funding — Invitation to grant preparation does NOT constitute a formal commitment for funding. We will still need to make various legal checks before grant award: *legal entity validation, financial capacity, exclusion check, etc.*

Grant preparation will involve a dialogue in order to fine-tune technical or financial aspects of the project and may require extra information from your side. It may also include adjustments to the proposal to address recommendations of the evaluation committee or other concerns. Compliance will be a pre-condition for signing the grant.

If you believe that the evaluation procedure was flawed, you can submit a **complaint** (following the deadlines and procedures set out in the evaluation result letter). Please note that notifications which have not been opened within 10 days after sending are considered to have been accessed and that deadlines will be counted from opening/access (*see also [Funding & Tenders Portal Terms and Conditions](#)*). Please also be aware that for complaints submitted electronically, there may be character limitations.

9. Award criteria

The **award criteria** for this call are as follows:

- **Relevance (10 points):**
 - **Quality of proposal:** clarity and consistency of project, objectives and planning; extent to which they match the themes and priorities and objectives of the call; contribution to the EU strategic and legislative context
 - **Justification of equipment needs:** justification of needs linked to a stronger and better equipped Customs Union (e.g. need to fill customs performance gaps; unmet control needs, lack of adequate equipment, need to replace equipment to maintain or raise performance standards, need for equipment to more effectively face new challenges/ threats that require increased capacities)
 - **Project design and implementation:** technical quality; project coherence and consistency; logical links between the identified problems, needs and solutions proposed (logical frame concept); methodology for implementing the project (concept and methodology, management, procedures, timetable, risks and risk management, monitoring and evaluation); feasibility of the project within the

proposed time frame; cost effectiveness (sufficient/appropriate budget for proper implementation; best value for money)

– **Added value (10 points):**

- **Customs Policy building block alignment:** clear EU added value and contribution to the following five building blocks:
 - **Customs Union acting as one:** impact/interest for a number of countries (EU); possibility to use the results in other countries; potential to develop mutual trust/cross-border cooperation; co-sharing of equipment; synergies in the use of the equipment (*e.g. joint controls or mobile equipment shared among BCPs/laboratories or across Member States*); inter-agency cooperation with other authorities represented at the border; commitment to share information from the use of the equipment; joint procurement and testing of customs control equipment on behalf of several Member States*
 - **Union safety and security:** detection of relevant risks and threats; seizure of narcotics or drug precursors; illicit trafficking of radioactive or nuclear materials or weapons, money laundering (cash control)
 - **Protecting the EU financial interests:** reduction of the customs gap through improved identification of the customs duties due and improved collection of duties; detection of customs and fiscal/VAT fraud; improvement of revenue collection; correct and uniform application of the Customs Tariff
 - **Protecting the Union from unfair and illegal trade:** detection of counterfeited goods, illicit trafficking of waste, hazardous or toxic materials and endangered species prohibited under CITES convention; protecting the single market against the import of non-compliant and unsafe products or prohibited/restricted items
 - **Facilitation of the legitimate business activity (Trade facilitation):** improved customs efficiency; reduced waiting times; increased capacity to control (as a percentage of the traffic volume); better targeted controls (as a percentage in increased hit rates)*[‡]

* *Work packages that do not address the building blocks 'Customs Union acting as one' and 'Trade facilitation' will not receive a pass score.*

[‡] *Postal BCP work packages will not receive a pass score if they do not address actions and results related to e-commerce.*

– **Sustainability (10 points):**

- **Long term impact:** equipment is put into use as soon as possible and used continuously in the long-term, maintaining its potential to respond to the present and future customs control needs of the BCP/customs laboratory; equipment is considered as reliable, secure, safe and environmental-friendly (including the environmentally-friendly disposal of replaced and/or upgraded equipment); adequate maintenance and warranty services are already arranged as part of the purchase of new equipment; duration of maintenance service and warranty; plan for disposal of the equipment.

– **Innovation (10 points):**

- **Market trends and new challenges:** equipment is 'state-of-art' and will equip the customs authorities to face new challenges in the most efficient way thanks to innovative approaches.

Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score	Weighting
Relevance	5	10	3
Added value	5	10	4
Sustainability	5	10	2
Innovation	3	10	1
Overall weighted (pass) scores	48	100	N/A

Maximum points: 100 points.

Individual thresholds per criterion: 5/10, 5/10, 5/10 and 3/10 points.

Overall threshold: 48 points.

Proposals that pass the individual thresholds AND the overall threshold will be considered for funding — within the limits of the available call budget. Other proposals will be rejected.

10. Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements

If you pass evaluation, your project will be invited for grant preparation, where you will be asked to prepare the Grant Agreement together with the EU Project Officer.

This Grant Agreement will set the framework for your grant and its terms and conditions, in particular concerning deliverables, reporting and payments.

The Model Grant Agreement that will be used (and all other relevant templates and guidance documents) can be found on [Portal Reference Documents](#).

Starting date and project duration

The project starting date and duration will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 1*). Normally the starting date will be after grant signature. Retroactive application can be granted exceptionally for duly justified reasons — even before proposal submission date back to 1 January 2021.

Project duration: between 12 and 36 months (extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment).

Milestones and deliverables

The milestones and deliverables for each project will be managed through the Portal Grant Management System and will be reflected in Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement.

Form of grant, funding rate and maximum grant amount

The grant parameters (*maximum grant amount, funding rate, total eligible costs, etc*) will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 3 and art 5*).

Project budget (maximum grant amount): *see section 6 above*. The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

The grant will be a budget-based mixed actual cost grant (actual costs, with and flat-rate elements). This means that it will reimburse ONLY certain types of costs (eligible costs) and costs that were *actually* incurred for your project (NOT the *budgeted* costs). For and flat-rates, you can charge the amounts calculated as explained in the Grant Agreement (*see art 6 and Annex 2*).

The costs will be reimbursed at the funding rate fixed in the Grant Agreement (**80%**).

Grants may NOT produce a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). For-profit organisations must declare their revenues and, if there is a profit, we will deduct it from the final grant amount (*see art 22.3*).

Moreover, please be aware that the final grant amount may be reduced in case of non-compliance with the Grant Agreement (*e.g. improper implementation, breach of obligations, etc*).

Budget categories and cost eligibility rules

The budget categories and cost eligibility rules are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 3, art 6 and Annex 2*).

Budget categories for this call:

- A. Personnel costs
 - A.1 Employees, A.2 Natural persons under direct contract, A.3 Seconded persons
- B. Subcontracting costs
- C. Purchase costs
 - C.2 Equipment
 - C.3 Other goods, works and services
- E. Indirect costs

Specific cost eligibility conditions for this call:

- personnel costs: personnel costs are NOT eligible
- equipment costs: full cost (*— including costs for installation, start-up services, introductory training, subscriptions/software/inter-connection, warranty and maintenance, if part of the equipment contract and necessary for its use; equipment must part of the list of equipment in the equipment questionnaire (detailed budget table; see Annex 1)*); costs for renting or leasing are NOT eligible
- costs for other goods, works and services:
 - costs for separate maintenance contracts (*— up to 20% of the total eligible costs*)
 - costs for the certificate on the financial statements (CFS)
- indirect cost flat-rate: 0% of the eligible direct costs (categories A-D, except volunteers costs and exempted specific cost categories, if any)
- VAT: VAT is NOT eligible
- other:

- in-kind contributions for free are allowed, but cost-neutral, i.e. they cannot be declared as cost
- other ineligible costs: Yes:
 - personnel costs
 - costs for renting or leasing of equipment
 - infrastructure such as buildings or outdoor facilities, as well as furniture
 - land purchase
 - cost relating to training or the upgrading of skills, other than the introductory training included in the purchase or upgrade contract
 - costs associated with electronic systems, with the exception of software and software updates directly necessary to use the customs control equipment and with the exception of the electronic software and programming necessary to inter-link software with the customs control equipment
 - costs of networks, such as secured or unsecured communication channels, or subscriptions, with exception of networks or subscriptions exclusively necessary to use the customs control equipment
 - costs of transport means, such as vehicles, aircrafts or ships, with the exception of mobile customs control equipment
 - costs of consumables, including reference or calibration material, for customs control equipment
 - costs relating to personal protective equipment.

Reporting and payment arrangements


The reporting and payment arrangements are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4 and art 21 and 22*).

After grant signature, you will normally receive a **prefinancing** to start working on the project (float of normally **50%** of the maximum grant amount; exceptionally less or no prefinancing). The prefinancing will be paid 30 days from entry into force/financial guarantee (if required) — whichever is the latest.

There will be no **interim payments**.

However, you will be expected to submit one or more progress reports not linked to payments.

Payment of the balance: At the end of the project, we will calculate your final grant amount. If the total of earlier payments is higher than the final grant amount, we will ask you to pay back the difference (recovery).

 Please be aware that payments will be automatically lowered if one of your consortium members has outstanding debts towards the EU (granting authority or other EU bodies). Such debts will be offset by us — in line with the conditions set out in the Grant Agreement (*see art 22*).

Please also note that you are responsible for keeping records on all the work done and the costs declared.

Prefinancing guarantees

If a prefinancing guarantee is required, it will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4*). The amount will be set during grant preparation and it will normally be equal or lower than the prefinancing for your grant.

The guarantee should be in euro and issued by an approved bank/financial institution established in an EU Member State. If you are established in a non-EU country and would like to provide a guarantee from a bank/financial institution in your country, please contact us (this may be exceptionally accepted, if it offers equivalent security).

Amounts blocked in bank accounts will NOT be accepted as financial guarantees.

Prefinancing guarantees are formally NOT linked to individual consortium members, which means that you are free to organise how to provide the guarantee amount (*by one or several beneficiaries, for the overall amount or several guarantees for partial amounts, by the beneficiary concerned or by another beneficiary, etc*). It is however important that the requested amount is covered and that the guarantee(s) are sent to us in time to make the prefinancing (scanned copy via Portal AND original by post).

If agreed with us, the bank guarantee may be replaced by a guarantee from a third party.

The guarantee will be released at the end of the grant, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the Grant Agreement.

Certificates

Depending on the type of action, size of grant amount and type of beneficiaries, you may be requested to submit different certificates. The types, schedules and thresholds for each certificate are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4 and art 24*).

Liability regime for recoveries

The liability regime for recoveries will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet point 4.4 and art 22*).

Provisions concerning the project implementation

IPR rules: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 16 and Annex 5)*:

- rights of use on results: Yes

Communication, dissemination and visibility of funding: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 17 and Annex 5)*:

- additional communication and dissemination activities: Yes

Specific rules for carrying out the action: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 18 and Annex 5)*:

- durability: Yes

Other specificities

n/a

Non-compliance and breach of contract

The Grant Agreement (chapter 5) provides for the measures we may take in case of breach of contract (and other non-compliance issues).

 For more information, see [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement](#).

11. How to submit an application

All proposals must be submitted directly online via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System. Paper applications are NOT accepted.

Submission is a **2-step process**:

a) create a user account and register your organisation

To use the Submission System (the only way to apply), all participants need to [create an EU Login user account](#).

Once you have an EU Login account, you can [register your organisation](#) in the Participant Register. When your registration is finalised, you will receive a 9-digit participant identification code (PIC).

b) submit the proposal

Access the Electronic Submission System via the Topic page in the [Search Funding & Tenders](#) section (or, for calls sent by invitation to submit a proposal, through the link provided in the invitation letter).

Submit your proposal in 3 parts, as follows:

- Part A includes administrative information about the applicant organisations (future coordinator, beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners) and the summarised budget for the proposal. Fill it in directly online
- Part B (description of the action) covers the technical content of the proposal. Download the mandatory word template from the Submission System, fill it in and upload it as a PDF file
- Annexes (*see section 5*). Upload them as PDF file (single or multiple depending on the slots). Excel upload is sometimes possible, depending on the file type.

The proposal must keep to the **page limits** (*see section 5*); excess pages will be disregarded.

Documents must be uploaded to the **right category** in the Submission System otherwise the proposal might be considered incomplete and thus inadmissible.

The proposal must be submitted **before the call deadline** (*see section 4*). After this deadline, the system is closed and proposals can no longer be submitted.

Once the proposal is submitted, you will receive a **confirmation e-mail** (with date and time of your application). If you do not receive this confirmation e-mail, it means your proposal has NOT been submitted. If you believe this is due to a fault in the Submission System, you should immediately file a complaint via the [IT Helpdesk webform](#), explaining the circumstances and attaching a copy of the proposal (and, if possible, screenshots to show what happened).

Details on processes and procedures are described in the [Online Manual](#). The Online Manual also contains the links to FAQs and detailed instructions regarding the Portal Electronic Exchange System.

12. Help

As far as possible, ***please try to find the answers you need yourself***, in this and the other documentation (we have limited resources for handling direct enquiries):

- [Online Manual](#)
- [Portal FAQ](#) (for general questions).

We will contact you directly in case of a call update **Contact**

For individual questions on the Portal Submission System, please contact the [IT Helpdesk](#).

Non-IT related questions should be sent to the following email address: TAXUD-CCEI-A1@ec.europa.eu.

 Please:

- send your questions at the latest 7 days before the submission deadline (see *section 4*)
- indicate clearly the reference of the call and topic to which your question relates (see *cover page*).

13. Important



IMPORTANT

- **Don't wait until the end** — Complete your application sufficiently in advance of the deadline to avoid any last minute **technical problems**. Problems due to last minute submissions (*e.g. congestion, etc*) will be entirely at your risk. Call deadlines can NOT be extended.
- **Consult** the Portal Topic page regularly. We will use it to publish updates and additional information on the call (call and topic updates).
- **Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Exchange System** — By submitting the application, all participants **accept** to use the electronic exchange system in accordance with the [Portal Terms & Conditions](#).
- **Registration** — Before submitting the application, all beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners must be registered in the [Participant Register](#). The participant identification code (PIC) (one per participant) is mandatory for the Application Form.
- **Consortium roles** — When setting up your consortium, you should think of organisations that help you reach objectives and solve problems.

The roles should be attributed according to the level of participation in the project. Main participants should participate as **beneficiaries** or **affiliated entities**; other entities can participate as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions. **Associated partners** and third parties giving in-kind contributions should bear their own costs (they will not become formal recipients of EU funding). **Subcontracting** should normally constitute a limited part and must be performed by third parties (not by one of the beneficiaries/affiliated entities). Subcontracting going beyond 30% of the total eligible costs must be justified in the application.

- **Coordinator** — In multi-beneficiary grants, the beneficiaries participate as consortium (group of beneficiaries). They will have to choose a coordinator, who will take care of the project management and coordination and will represent the consortium towards the granting authority. In mono-beneficiary grants, the single beneficiary will automatically be coordinator.
- **Affiliated entities** — Applicants may participate with affiliated entities (i.e. entities linked to a beneficiary which participate in the action with similar rights and obligations as the beneficiaries, but do not sign the grant and therefore do not become beneficiaries themselves). They will get a part of the grant money and must therefore comply with all the call conditions and be validated (just like beneficiaries); but they do not count towards the minimum eligibility criteria for consortium composition (if any).
- **Associated partners** — Applicants may participate with associated partners (i.e. partner organisations which participate in the action but without the right to get grant money). They participate without funding and therefore do not need to be validated.

- **Balanced project budget** — Grant applications must ensure a balanced project budget and sufficient other resources to implement the project successfully (*e.g. own contributions, income generated by the action, financial contributions from third parties, etc*). You may be requested to lower your estimated costs, if they are ineligible (including excessive).
- **No-profit rule** — Grants may NOT give a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). This will be checked by us at the end of the project.
- **No double funding** — There is a strict prohibition of double funding from the EU budget (except under EU Synergies actions). Outside such Synergies actions, any given action may receive only ONE grant from the EU budget and cost items may under NO circumstances declared to two different EU actions.
- **Completed/ongoing projects** — Proposals for projects that have already been completed will be rejected; proposals for projects that have already started will be assessed on a case-by-case basis (in this case, no costs can be reimbursed for activities that took place before the project starting date/proposal submission).
- **Combination with EU operating grants** — Combination with EU operating grants is possible, if the project remains outside the operating grant work programme and you make sure that cost items are clearly separated in your accounting and NOT declared twice (*see [AGA — Annotated Model Grant Agreement, art 6.2.E](#)*).
- **Multiple proposals** — Applicants cannot submit more than one proposal per topic. Multiple proposals will be rejected.
- **Resubmission** — Proposals may be changed and re-submitted until the deadline for submission.
- **Rejection** — By submitting the application, all applicants accept the call conditions set out in this this Call Document (and the documents it refers to). Proposals that do not comply with all the call conditions will be **rejected**. This applies also to applicants: All applicants need to fulfil the criteria; if any one of them doesn't, they must be replaced or the entire proposal will be rejected.
- **Cancellation** — There may be circumstances which may require the cancellation of the call. In this case, you will be informed via a call or topic update. Please note that cancellations are without entitlement to compensation.
- **Language** — You can submit your proposal in any official EU language (project abstract/summary should however always be in English). For reasons of efficiency, we strongly advise you to use English for the entire application. If you need the call documentation in another official EU language, please submit a request within 10 days after call publication (for the contact information, *see section 12*).

- **Transparency** — In accordance with Article 38 of the [EU Financial Regulation](#), information about EU grants awarded is published each year on the [Europa website](#).

This includes:

- beneficiary names
- beneficiary addresses
- the purpose for which the grant was awarded
- the maximum amount awarded.

The publication can exceptionally be waived (on reasoned and duly substantiated request), if there is a risk that the disclosure could jeopardise your rights and freedoms under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights or harm your commercial interests.

- **Data protection** — The submission of a proposal under this call involves the collection, use and processing of personal data. This data will be processed in accordance with the applicable legal framework. It will be processed solely for the purpose of evaluating your proposal, subsequent management of your grant and, if needed, programme monitoring, evaluation and communication. Details are explained in the [Funding & Tenders Portal Privacy Statement](#).