



# **Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV)**

## **Call for proposals**

to promote civil society organisations' awareness of, capacity building and  
implementation of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights

(CERV-2023-CHAR-LITI)

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## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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## 0. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for EU **action grants** under the **Citizens, Equality, Rights and Value Programme (CERV)**. The regulatory framework for this EU Funding Programme is set out in:

- Regulation 2018/1046 ([EU Financial Regulation](#))
- the basic act (CERV Regulation [2021/692](#)<sup>1</sup>).

The call is launched in accordance with the 2023-2024 Work Programme<sup>2</sup> and will be managed by the **European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)** ('Agency')

 The call covers the following **topics representing five programme priorities**:

- **CERV-2023-CHAR-LITI-CHARTER (Topic 1):** Capacity building and awareness raising on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights;
- **CERV-2023-CHAR-LITI-CIVIC (Topic 2):** Promoting rights and values by empowering the civic space
- **CERV-2023-CHAR-LITI-LITIGATION (Topic 3):** Strategic litigation;
- **CERV-2023-CHAR-LITI-SPEECH (Topic 4):** Protecting EU values and rights by combating hate speech and hate crime;
- **CERV-2023-CHAR-LITI-WHISTLE (Topic 5):** Supporting an enabling environment for the protection of whistleblowers.

Each project application under the call must address only one of these topics/priorities.

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:

- 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)

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/692 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 establishing the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (OJ L 156, 5.5.2021, p. 1).

<sup>2</sup> Commission Implementing Decision C/2022/8588 of 01/12/2022 concerning the adoption of the work programme for 2023-2024 and the financing decision for the implementation of the Rights and Values Programme.

- 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*).

You are also encouraged to visit the [Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal](#) to consult the list of projects funded previously under the call **CHAR-LITI 2022**, [Europe for Citizens Programme Project Results website](#), [REC Programme results webpage](#) and the [Daphne Toolkit to consult the lists of projects funded previously under the related previous programmes](#).

## 1. Background

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union ('the Charter') brings together a broad range of fundamental rights and reaffirms that the EU is built on the values of fundamental rights, democracy and the rule of law. Its binding nature has enabled the EU legal order to develop into a beacon of fundamental rights protection.

To improve the application of the Charter and increase the public's knowledge about it, the European Commission presented in 2020 the Strategy to strengthen the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights ('Charter Strategy'<sup>3</sup>). As part of the Charter Strategy, the Commission committed to supporting an enabling environment for civil society actors, including by stepping up its efforts regarding the funding opportunities. This is one of the topics of the 2022 annual report on the application of the Charter on *A thriving civic space for upholding fundamental rights in the EU*.

The role of civil society organisations in upholding fundamental rights in the EU is crucial also in the area of combating hate speech and hate crime. Hate speech and hate crime have been growing at an alarming rate in recent years in the EU. The COVID pandemic and the war in Ukraine have contributed to further polarisation and the spread of racist, xenophobic and intolerant speech and conspiracy theories. There is often a continuum between hateful speech, in particular online, to hate motivated attacks and violence in real life. Addressing hate speech and hate crime, by enhancing the cooperation between civil society and public authorities and other stakeholders, is

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<sup>3</sup> COM/2020/711 final

key to protecting fundamental rights (right to freedom of expression, right to dignity and to non-discrimination) and to safeguarding healthy and pluralistic democracies.

Civil society is also an important actor in supporting the correct implementation of Directive 1937/2019 on the protection of persons reporting breaches of Union law ('the Whistleblowing Directive'). Whistleblowers' reports enhance transparency and accountability and are a key component of the enforcement chain of Union and national law, as they feed authorities with information, leading to effective detection, investigation and prosecution of breaches. When reporting breaches of the law, whistleblowers make use of their right to freedom of expression as enshrined in Article 11 of the Charter. Civil society organisations can play an important role in ensuring that potential whistleblowers can report without fear of retaliation, that persons in charge of handling whistleblowers' reports are trained adequately, awareness is raised of the general public, and they can provide advice and support to whistleblowers.

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

### Objectives

Protecting, promoting and raising awareness of rights by providing financial support to civil society organisations which are active at local, regional, national and transnational level in promoting and cultivating those rights, thereby also strengthening the protection and promotion of Union values and respect for the rule of law and contributing to the construction of a more democratic Union, democratic dialogue, transparency and good governance.

This call for proposals will support several EU policy initiatives, including: European democracy action plan, Communication on 'A more inclusive and protective Europe: extending the list of EU crimes to hate speech and hate crime', Commission Communication on Strengthening whistleblower protection at EU level, Rule of law report, Strategy to strengthen the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the EU, the Annual reports on the application of the EU Charter of fundamental rights, Commission Recommendation on protecting journalists and human rights defenders who engage in public participation from manifestly unfounded or abusive court proceedings ('Strategic lawsuits against public participation').

### Themes and priorities (scope)

This call for proposals will promote right and values by building primarily civil society organisations capacity and awareness on the Charter and by carrying out activities to ensure that the Charter is upheld. Projects will be selected to ensure a balanced representation of the five priorities. Projects can be national or transnational. Transnational projects are particularly encouraged.

**Proposals must be submitted to only ONE of the 5 following priorities:**

### **1. Capacity building and awareness raising on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights**

The Charter Strategy underlines the importance of strengthening the application of the Charter in the Member States, in particular through awareness raising and capacity building initiatives.

The projects funded under this priority could address the needs on capacity building and awareness raising on the Charter **in general**, or they could focus on **one or several** of the thematics below:

- *Rights enshrined in the Charter and awareness of the Charter's scope of application*<sup>4</sup> In accordance with its Article 51, the Charter is applicable to Member States only when they are implementing EU law. Given the specific nature of this instrument, in comparison with other international Treaties protecting fundamental rights, and considering the increasing number of references to the Charter in the case law of the Court of Justice of the EU, there is a specific need to promote a good understanding both of the rights enshrined in the Charter and of the situations in which the Charter applies, i.e. when EU law is being implemented.
- *Protecting fundamental rights in the digital age.* To follow up on the Annual Charter Report 2021<sup>5</sup>, on fundamental rights in the digital age, the aim of the priority is to protect fundamental rights by strengthening accountability for the use of automation where rights are at stake. This includes approaches for addressing and combatting bias and multiple/intersectional discrimination based on gender and on other grounds including ethnic and racial origin, caused or intensified by the use of **artificial intelligence systems**. Projects will aim to develop guidelines (including measures that ensure gender-sensitive implementation), technical benchmarks and tools, including for algorithm-audits<sup>6</sup>. Projects are expected to develop a concrete tool or a benchmark process in an area of the applicant's choice with demonstrated relevance for fundamental rights, without prescribing the area or the type of the tool (e.g. it could be software, a benchmark data set, a simulation environment, a procedure).

## 2. Promoting rights and values by empowering the civic space

In line with the Charter Strategy and following up to the Charter Report 2022 on a thriving civic space for upholding fundamental rights in the EU, projects under this priority should promote rights and values by empowering civil society actors to work together at the local, regional and national levels on the fields covered by the programme. Projects should also help creating a channel of communication with the EU level to report on the state of the civic space in their countries and voice their concerns.

More specifically, projects could create a systematic and comprehensive monitoring system to regularly and consistently monitor the environment in which civil society organisations work in the national contexts, building on the Fundamental Rights Agency indicators about the shrinking civic space<sup>7</sup> and of

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<sup>4</sup> Projects addressing Article 45 may also cover 'Freedom of movement and of residence', as grandfathered in the Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community.

<sup>5</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/2021-annual-report-application-charter-fundamental-rights\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/2021-annual-report-application-charter-fundamental-rights_en)

<sup>6</sup> An explanation of the objectives and certain approaches to algorithm-audits can be found here: <https://foundation.mozilla.org/en/blog/its-time-to-develop-the-tools-we-need-to-hold-algorithms-accountable/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://fra.europa.eu/en/themes/civil-society>

internal organisations' data<sup>8</sup>, and in particular of breaches of CSOs and rights defenders' fundamental rights.

Projects could also support and enhance the protection of CSOs, their members and rights defenders working to protect and promote EU values under attack.

Transnational partnerships with mutual learning possibilities for partners in several EU Member States are particularly encouraged to apply, as well as networks of relevant actors at national level such as National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), Equality bodies, Ombuds-institution and the national Charter Focal Points.

### **3. Strategic litigation**

As highlighted in the Charter Strategy, people need to be aware of their rights and need help to receive effective judicial protection in case their fundamental rights are breached. Such protection also includes strategic litigation involving rights enshrined in the Charter, which contributes to a more coherent implementation and application of EU law and to the enforcement of individuals' rights.

Strategic litigators are key to fostering the promotion and protection of Charter rights and support should be given to strengthening their capacity and specialised knowledge on the Charter and on how to develop a strategic approach to cases. In this context, the support and assistance to the victims provided by civil society organisations, NHRIs and Equality bodies and Ombuds-institutions is instrumental.

Projects under this priority should, through training, knowledge sharing and exchange of good practices, strengthen the knowledge and ability of civil society organisations as well as of practitioners, legal professionals and independent human rights bodies to effectively engage in litigation practices at national and European level and to improve access to justice and enforcement of rights under EU law, including the Charter.

Projects under this priority can also include a focus on countering manifestly unfounded or abusive court proceedings against journalists and human rights defenders who engage in public participation (Strategic lawsuits against public participation).

### **4. Protecting EU values and rights by combating hate crime and hate speech**

All forms and manifestations of hatred are incompatible with the EU values and the fundamental rights enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty and the Charter. Hatred affects the individual victims and the groups they belong to, generates societal polarisation and silences wide sectors of the population, weakening pluralism and undermining respectful public democratic debates. The online world has amplified the negative effects of hate speech. Hate crimes are a direct violation of the victims' fundamental right to dignity, to equality and non-discrimination. Combating hate speech and hate crime is therefore a key part of the Commission's action to promote EU values and to ensure that the Charter is upheld.

At EU level, the 2008 Council Framework Decision requires the criminalisation of certain forms of hate speech and hate crimes. Also, the Commission adopted a

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<sup>8</sup> <https://monitor.civicus.org/>

Communication in December 2021 inviting the Council of the European Union to extend the legal basis for EU-level criminalisation to other forms of hate speech and hate crime beyond the racist and xenophobic grounds already covered by the Framework Decision.

Civil society organisations play a crucial role in combating hate speech and hate crime, thereby safeguarding and promoting fundamental rights. Projects under this priority should aim to enable civil society organisations to establish mechanisms of cooperation with public authorities to support the reporting of episodes of hate crime and hate speech; to ensure support to victims of hate speech and hate crime; and to support law enforcement, including through training or data collection methodologies and tools. Projects should also focus on activities that tackle hate speech online, including reporting content to IT companies, designing countering narrative and awareness raising campaigns, and educational activities to address the societal challenges of hate speech online.

## **5. Supporting an enabling environment for the protection of whistleblowers**

A Union of values and rights is also based on effective law enforcement systems and the effective detection, investigation and prosecution of breaches of Union law. Support will be given to creating an enabling environment for reporting and informing on breaches of the Union law, in particular by building capacity on the effective application of the Directive on whistleblower protection (Directive (EU) 2019/1937). This Directive provides for an obligation to establish internal and external reporting channels, a strict obligation to maintain the confidentiality of the reporting person as well as for high standards of protection from retaliation and legal remedies for whistleblowers who report on breaches of EU law in a wide range of key policy areas, thus promoting the fundamental values of the rule of law and democracy as well as the right to freedom of expression, enshrined in Article 11 of the Charter.

Civil society organisations play a crucial role in help ensuring an effective implementation of these legal standards. Projects under this priority should support and protect whistleblowers and build capacity of national authorities and legal practitioners to ensure adequate legal remedies to protect whistleblowers.

### Activities that can be funded (scope)

The following activities can be covered:

#### **1. Capacity-building and awareness raising on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights**

- Capacity building of civil society organisations and awareness raising activities aiming to increase the knowledge and the use of the EU Charter, including its gender dimension, especially on its scope of application;
- Facilitating cooperation between civil society organisations and other key actors in enforcing the Charter, such as NHRIs, Equality bodies, Ombuds Institutions and Member State authorities (at national, regional and local level);
- Training and train-the-trainer activities for professionals (such as experts, lawyers and legal advisers, communicators, policy and advocacy advisers), including through operational guidance and learning tools;

- Mutual learning, exchange of good practices, development of working and learning methods, including mentoring programmes that may be transferable to other countries;
- Analytical activities, such as sex-disaggregated data collection and research, and the creation of tools or data bases (e.g. thematic databases of jurisprudence);
- Communication activities, including dissemination of information and awareness raising about rights and redress mechanisms, relevant to the priorities of the call;
- Development of procedures, guidelines, technical benchmarks and tools, including for algorithm-audits, to help to protect fundamental rights, including gender equality and non-discrimination, where automation is used.

## **2. Promoting rights and values by empowering the civic space**

- Analytical activities and creation of a methodology to monitor the civic space in EU Member States;
- Mutual learning, exchange of good practices, including those that may be transferable to other countries;
- Communication activities, including dissemination of information and awareness raising about the state of play on civic space, including towards the EU level;
- Capacity building in civil society organisations on monitoring the civic space;
- Developments of tools and services for the support and the protection of CSOs, their members and other rights defenders working to protect and promote EU values, under attack;
- Development of synergies among the actors working to protect the civic space at local, regional, national and European level and between them and the national and European authorities.

## **3. Strategic litigation**

- Activities to increase the ability of civil society organisations, including legal practitioners working for them, NHRIs, Equality bodies and Ombuds Institutions and other rights defenders to develop skills and capacity in the area of strategic litigation on fundamental rights under the Charter, including by deepening their knowledge about the preliminary ruling mechanism (under Article 267 TFEU) and the opportunities of legal protection available under EU law;
- Analytical activities, such as data collection and research, and the creation of tools or data bases (e.g. thematic databases of jurisprudence);
- Communication activities, including dissemination of information and awareness raising about rights, redress mechanisms, and strategic cases;
- Capacity building and awareness raising activities to counter manifestly unfounded or abusive court proceedings against journalists and human

rights defenders who engage in public participation (Strategic lawsuits against public participation).

Please note that under this priority, **the litigation fees will not be funded.**

#### **4. Protecting EU values and rights by combating hate speech and hate crime**

- Activities to enable civil society organisations to report episodes of hate, including with a focus on specific grounds, and to contribute to the creation of data collection methodologies and mechanisms;
- Activities to ensure support to victims of hate speech and hate crime, encouraging reporting, providing practical help in seeking redress and gender-sensitive and psycho-social support;
- Activities to support the enforcement of existing legislation prohibiting hate speech and hate crime, including through training for law enforcement and justice professionals;
- Activities to elaborate national or local coalitions or action plans against hate speech and hate crime, and to establish or reinforce mechanisms of structured cooperation, particularly between civil society organisations and public authorities in the area of tackling hate crime and hate speech, including to support investigation and prosecution and to protect victims;
- Activities to tackle hate speech online, in particular to monitor the prevalence of hate speech on social media and the "ecosystems" of hatred online, to report hate speech content to IT companies, and to design effective initiatives to prevent and combat hate speech. These can include campaigns or educational activities to address the societal challenges of hate speech online.

#### **5. Supporting an enabling environment for the protection of whistleblowers**

- Activities to build the capacity for civil society organisations and, for national regional or local public authorities, legal practitioners and private organisations active in the field of implementation of the Directive on whistleblower protection, where these are in partnership with civil society organisations, including by developing targeted guidance or training materials or train-the-trainer programs;
- Activities and tools to promote awareness raising and communication activities to increase the public's knowledge and understanding of the national laws transposing the Directive, of the existence of the internal and external reporting channels and the legal remedies and measures of protection available in case retaliation occurs;
- Analytical activities, such as sex-disaggregated data collection on whistleblower reports and cases of retaliation, development of indicators to effectively record cases and research, in particular on caselaw and the creation of tools or other databases (e.g. on the collection of the data mentioned above and thematic databases of jurisprudence);
- Mutual learning activities and activities aimed at exchange of good practices on the effective implementation of the Directive, in particular as regards the

establishment of internal or external reporting channels, handling of whistleblowing reports, effective measures to ensure confidentiality and the application of adequate legal remedies for the protection of whistleblowers against retaliation and of support measures for whistleblowers;

- Activities enhancing and facilitating cooperation between national authorities and civil society organisations, including by elaborating national, regional or local protocols on whistleblower protection.

Projects' design and implementation are expected to promote gender equality and non-discrimination mainstreaming. This includes a gender analysis, mapping potential different needs of and impact on women and men as well as integrating a gender equality perspective in the design of the activities. To this end, applicants are encouraged to consult the key questions listed on the [EIGE website](#) when conducting their gender analysis. Unintended negative effects of the intervention on either gender should be avoided (do no harm approach). Applicants are expected to design and implement their communication and dissemination activities in a gender-sensitive way. This includes in particular usage of gender-sensitive language. The same applies to the design and implementation of monitoring and evaluation activities. Proposals that integrate a gender-perspective across all their activities will be considered of higher quality.

### Expected impact

#### **1. Capacity building and awareness raising on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights**

- Increased awareness and better use of the Charter by CSOs, NHRIs, equality bodies, Ombuds Institutions, other rights defenders, and Member State authorities;
- Improved knowledge of available redress mechanisms under national and EU law, and how to make the best use of them for the benefit of rights holders;
- Improved cooperation between CSOs, NHRIs, Equality bodies, Ombuds Institutions, other rights defenders and Member State authorities on Charter-related issues;
- Increased prevention, mitigation, detection of and redress for breaches of fundamental rights, including algorithmic discrimination;
- Improved accountability of the development and use of automated systems, including specific algorithms and their output;
- Increased capacities to mitigate or otherwise address discriminatory biases in automated systems;
- Improved knowledge of fundamental rights, including gender equality and non-discrimination law, the legal requirements associated with the development and use of automated systems, and of practical approaches to ensure compliance.

## **2. Promoting rights and values by empowering the civic space**

- Increased awareness about the state of play on civic space in the EU Member States based on sound evidences and comparable indicators;
- Strengthened relations and creation of networks among the participants protecting the civic space at local, national and European level, and between them and the national and European authorities;
- Increased dialogue about the civic space, with an increment of public attention to it, and developed positive narratives towards CSOs and rights defenders protecting and promoting fundamental rights, rule of law and democracy.
- More protected CSOs, their members and rights defenders working in a safe environment;
- Increased reporting of attacks faced by the targeted actors and more prompt and targeted response.

## **3. Strategic litigation**

- Increased awareness and knowledge by legal professionals and practitioners in CSOs, NHRIs, Equality bodies, Ombuds-institutions and other rights defenders about EU law, including the Charter and existing remedies and redress mechanisms to enforce them at national and European level;
- Increased awareness and knowledge by the general public of their rights under EU law, including the Charter, existing remedies and redress mechanisms to enforce them at national and European level as well as awareness and knowledge of available support by legal professionals and practitioners;
- Increased ability of CSOs, NHRIs, equality bodies and Ombuds-institutions and other rights defenders to develop a litigation strategy and communicate and advocate around it and to bring strategic litigation cases before national courts and the European Court of Justice; Strengthened abilities of legal professionals and practitioners in CSOs, NHRIs, Equality bodies, Ombuds-institutions and other rights defenders to cooperate and engage in litigation practices to assist individuals in making effective use of available remedies to enforce their rights under EU law, including the Charter, before national and European courts;
- Increased awareness on the use of manifestly unfounded or abusive court proceedings against journalists and human rights defenders who engage in public participation (Strategic lawsuits against public participation);
- Improved knowledge of safeguards and strategic protection against manifestly unfounded or abusive court proceedings for journalists and human rights defenders who engage in public participation.

## **4. Protecting EU values and rights by combating hate speech and hate crime**

- More effective outreach to individuals and groups at risk of hate victimisation, thereby raising awareness of their rights, including through schools and educational activities;

- Increased knowledge of EU and national hate crime and hate speech legislation;
- Strengthened national or local actions to enhance the capacity of authorities, in particular law enforcement agencies to detect bias indicators and to effectively investigate and prosecute offenses, including through multi-stakeholder cooperation;
- Enhanced hate crime recording and data collection methodologies;
- More effective mechanisms to report hate speech and hate crimes and to empower victims and witnesses to come forward;
- Enhanced assistance to victims to access specialist support, providing both victims and witnesses with emotional support, practical help and information;
- Enhanced hate crime recording and data collection methodologies;
- Increased knowledge on the prevalence and "ecosystems" of hatred on the different social media platforms, in the various national and linguistic contexts;
- Increased effectiveness of notice and action mechanisms by IT companies to enable a prompt assessment and removal of hate speech content;
- Increased awareness among the general population about hate speech and its negative effects on democracy and pluralism;
- Enhanced resilience of civil society organisations to carry out their work against hateful groups and greater capacity to respond to attacks.

## **5. Supporting an enabling environment for the protection of whistleblowers**

- Increased awareness and understanding by the general public and by potential whistleblowers, of the existing reporting channels and procedures, as well as of the rights provided under the Directive on whistleblower protection ;
- Increased capacity and knowledge of civil society and, if where relevant of other representatives, such as national authorities or practitioners active in the field of whistleblowing protection, to correctly apply the Directive's rules addressed to private organisations and public entities;
- Improved effectiveness and coherence of the Directive's application, including through improved cooperation between national, regional or local authorities and civil society.
- Enhanced data collection on whistleblower reports and cases of retaliation and enhanced capacity of the national systems to record whistleblower reports and cases and to assess the effectiveness of the national laws transposing the Directive.

## **3. Available budget**

The available call budget is **EUR** 16 000 000.

Priorities will have separate budgets. The distribution of respective available funds will be proportional to the number of eligible proposals received under each priority.

If the budget allocated to any priority exceeds the requirements of all proposals positively evaluated in that priority, the excess budget will be re-allocated to the other priorities based on the distribution as above.

Equally, if the allocated funding to a priority is insufficient to fund the highest ranked proposal in that priority, the necessary budget will be transferred from the other priorities based on the distribution as above, in order to ensure that the highest ranked proposal can be funded.

We reserve the right not to award all available funds or to redistribute them between the call priorities, in order to ensure budget optimisation.

#### 4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
Call opening:	24 January 2022
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	25 May 2023 – 17:00:00 CET (Brussels)
Evaluation:	June-September 2023
Information on evaluation results:	October–November 2023
GA signature:	January – February 2024

#### 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 Topic page in the [Search Funding & Tenders](#) section. 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 available on the Topic page — they are only for information).

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

- 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*)
- Part C (*to be filled in directly online*) containing additional project data including mandatory indicators
- **mandatory annexes** (*to be uploaded*):

- detailed budget table/calculator: not applicable
- CVs (standard) of core project team
- **supporting documents (to be uploaded):**
  - the coordinator's activity reports of last year (*n/a for newly established organisations*)
  - the coordinator's list of previous projects (key projects for the last 4 years) (*template available in Part B*) (*n/a for newly established organisations*)
    - for any of the participants implementing activities involving children (person under the age of 18): their child protection policy covering the four areas described in the Keeping Children Safe Child Safeguarding Standards


 Please note that an annual activity report is NOT a financial audit report or balance sheet, but a report highlighting the activities and projects of your organisation.

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.

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 (lead applicants "Coordinator", co-applicants and affiliated entities) must:

- For lead applicants (i.e. the "Coordinator"): be non-profit legal entities (private bodies)
- For co-applicants: be non-profit or profit legal entities (public or private bodies). Organisations which are profit-oriented may apply only in partnership with private non-profit organisations;
- be formally established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:
  - EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs))

### Other eligibility conditions:

- Activities must take place in any of the eligible countries (EU Member States);

- The EU grant applied for cannot be lower than EUR 75 000;
- The project can be either national or transnational; the application may involve one or more organisations (lead applicant "Coordinator" and co-applicants).

Beneficiaries and affiliated entities must register in the [Participant Register](#) — before 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*

**Natural persons** — Natural persons are NOT eligible (with the exception of self-employed persons, i.e. sole traders, where the company does not have legal personality separate from that of the natural person).

**International organisations** — International organisations are eligible. The rules on eligible countries do not apply to them.

**Entities without legal personality** — Entities which do not have legal personality under their national law may exceptionally participate, provided that their representatives have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf, and offer guarantees for the protection of the EU financial interests equivalent to that offered by legal persons<sup>9</sup>.

**EU bodies** — EU bodies (with the exception of the European Commission Joint Research Centre) can NOT be part of the consortium.

**Associations and interest groupings** — Entities composed of members may participate as 'sole beneficiaries' or 'beneficiaries without legal personality'<sup>10</sup>. ⚠ Please note that if the action will be implemented by the members, they should also participate (either as beneficiaries or as affiliated entities, otherwise their costs will NOT be eligible).

**Programme Contact Points** — Are eligible as coordinator or beneficiary in open calls, if they have procedures to segregate the project management and the information provision functions and if they are able to demonstrate cost separation (i.e. that their project grants do not cover any costs which are covered by their other grant). This requires the following:

- use of analytical accounting which allows for a cost accounting management with cost allocation keys and cost accounting codes AND application of these keys and codes to identify and separate the costs (i.e. to allocate them to either one of the two grants)
- recording of all real costs incurred for the activities that are covered by the two grants (including the indirect costs)
- allocation of the costs in a way that leads to a fair, objective and realistic result.

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<sup>9</sup> See Article 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

<sup>10</sup> For the definitions, see Articles 187(2) and 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

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)*<sup>11</sup> and entities covered by Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#)<sup>12</sup>). 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).

 For more information, see [Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment](#).

### *Consortium composition*

Proposals must be submitted by a consortium of at least 1 applicant (beneficiary; not affiliated entities).

### *Eligible activities*

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

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).

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.

### *Geographic location (target countries)*

Proposals must relate to activities taking place in the eligible countries (*see above*).

### *Duration*

Projects should normally range between 12 and 24 months (extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment).

### *Ethics and EU values*

Projects must comply with:

- highest ethical standards
- EU values based on Article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union and Article 21 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and
- other applicable EU, international and national law (including the General Data Protection Regulation [2016/679](#)).

Projects must seek to promote gender equality and non-discrimination mainstreaming in accordance with the [Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit](#). Project activities should contribute to the equal empowerment of women and men in all their diversity, ensuring that they achieve their full potential and enjoy the same rights (*see [Non-discrimination mainstreaming instruments, case studies and ways forward](#)*). They

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<sup>11</sup> 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](#).

<sup>12</sup> 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).

should also seek to reduce levels of discrimination suffered by particular groups (as well as those at risk of multiple discrimination) and to improve equality outcomes for individuals<sup>13</sup>. Proposals should integrate gender and non-discrimination considerations in proposals and target a gender-balanced representation in project teams and activities. It is also important that individual data collected by the beneficiaries are broken down by sex (*sex-disaggregated data*), disability or age whenever possible.

Applicants must show in their application that they respect ethical principles and EU values based on Article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union and Article of the 21 EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Participants with activities involving children must moreover have a child protection policy covering the four areas described in the [Keeping Children Safe Child Safeguarding Standards](#). This policy must be available online and transparent to everyone who comes in contact with the organisation. It must include clear information about the recruitment of staff (including trainees and volunteers) and include background checks (vetting). It must also include clear procedures and rules to staff, including reporting rules, and continuous training.

## 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.

The financial capacity check will be carried out on the basis of the documents you will be requested to upload in the [Participant Register](#) during grant preparation (*e.g. profit and loss account and balance sheet, business plan, audit report produced by an approved external auditor, certifying the accounts for the last closed financial year, etc*). The analysis will be based on neutral financial indicators, but will also take into account other aspects, such as dependency on EU funding and deficit and revenue in previous years.

The check will normally be done for all coordinators, except:

- public bodies (entities established as public body under national law, including local, regional or national authorities) or international organisations
- if the project requested grant amount is not more than EUR 60 000.

If needed, it may also be done for affiliated entities.

If we consider that your financial capacity is not satisfactory, we may require:

- further information
  - an enhanced financial responsibility regime, i.e. joint and several responsibility for all beneficiaries or joint and several liability of affiliated entities (*see below, section 10*)
  - prefinancing paid in instalments
  - (one or more) prefinancing guarantees (*see below, section 10*)
- or
- propose no prefinancing

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<sup>13</sup> [Non-discrimination mainstreaming– instruments, case studies and way forwards](#)

- request that you are replaced or, if needed, reject the entire proposal.

 For more information, see [Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment](#).

### 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).

This capacity will be assessed together with the 'Quality' 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
- description of the consortium participants
- applicants' activity reports of last year – n/a for newly established organisations
- list of previous projects (key projects for the last 4 years)- n/a for newly established organisations

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

Public bodies, Member State organisations and international organisations are exempted from the operational capacity check.

### 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 participate<sup>14</sup>:

- 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)
- guilty of grave professional misconduct<sup>15</sup> (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)

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<sup>14</sup> See Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

<sup>15</sup> 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.

- 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, decisionmaking 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, decisionmaking 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 that<sup>16</sup>:

- 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** (assisted by independent outside experts) will assess all applications. Proposals will first be checked for formal requirements (admissibility, and eligibility, *see sections 5 and 6*). Proposals found admissible and eligible will be evaluated against the operational capacity and award criteria (*see sections 7 and 9*) and then ranked according to their scores.

For proposals with the same score a **priority order** will be determined according to the following approach:


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

- 1) The *ex aequo* proposals within the same topic will be prioritised according to the scores they have been awarded for the award criterion 'Relevance'. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on their scores for the criterion 'Quality'. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on their scores for the criterion 'Impact'.

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<sup>16</sup> See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

All proposals will be informed about the evaluation result (**evaluation result letter**). Successful proposals 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:** extent to which the proposal matches the priorities and objectives of the call; clearly defined needs and robust needs assessment; clearly defined target group, with gender perspective being appropriately taken into account; contribution to the EU strategic and legislative context; European/trans-national dimension; impact/interest for a number of countries (EU or eligible non-EU countries); possibility to use the results in other countries (potential for transfer of good practices); potential to develop mutual trust/cross-border cooperation (40 points)
- **Quality:** clarity and consistency of project; logical links between the identified problems, needs and solutions proposed (logical frame concept); methodology for implementing the project with gender perspective being appropriately taken into account (organisation of work, timetable, allocation of resources and distribution of tasks between partners, risks & risk management, monitoring and evaluation); ethical issues are addressed; feasibility of the project within the proposed time frame; financial feasibility (sufficient/appropriate budget for proper implementation; cost-effectiveness (best value for money (40 points)
- **Impact:** ambition and expected long-term impact of results on target groups/general public; appropriate dissemination strategy for ensuring sustainability and long-term impact; potential for a positive multiplier effect; sustainability of results after EU funding ends (20 points)

Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score
Relevance	25	40
Quality — Project design and implementation	n/a	40
Impact	n/a	20
<b>Overall (pass) scores</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>

Maximum points: 100 points.

Individual threshold for the criterion 'Relevance': 25/40 points.

Overall threshold: 70 points.

Proposals that pass the individual threshold for the criterion 'Relevance' 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 and at the maximum within 6 months after the grant signature. Retroactive application can be granted exceptionally for duly justified reasons — but never earlier than the proposal submission date.

Project duration: between 12 and 24 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.

Beneficiaries will have to ask attendees in events to participate in the EU Survey on Justice, Rights and Values. This survey allows the granting authority to closely monitor training, mutual learning and awareness-raising events. The beneficiaries will receive a weblink to the survey, to be forwarded to the attendees. They will have access to the survey results for their project and can use it for their project evaluation. The granting authority will aggregate the results of all the projects financed under the CERV programme.

### 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): No limit. The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

The grant will be a budget-based mixed actual cost grant (actual costs, with unit cost 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 unit costs and flat-rates, you can charge the amounts calculated as explained in the Grant Agreement (*see art 6 and Annex 2 and 2a*).

The costs will be reimbursed at the funding rate fixed in the Grant Agreement (90%).

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
  - A.4 SME owners and natural person beneficiaries
  - A.5 Volunteers
- B. Subcontracting costs
- C. Purchase costs
  - C.1 Travel and subsistence
  - C.2 Equipment
  - C.3 Other goods, works and services
- E. Indirect costs

*Specific cost eligibility conditions for this call:*


- personnel costs:
  - SME owner/natural person unit cost<sup>17</sup> Yes
  - volunteers unit cost<sup>18</sup>: Yes (without indirect costs)
- travel and subsistence unit cost<sup>19</sup>: Yes

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<sup>17</sup> Commission [Decision](#) of 20 October 2020 authorising the use of unit costs for the personnel costs of the owners of small and medium-sized enterprises and beneficiaries that are natural persons not receiving a salary for the work carried out by themselves under an action or work programme (C(2020)7715).

<sup>18</sup> Commission [Decision](#) of 10 April 2019 authorising the use of unit costs for declaring personnel costs for the work carried out by volunteers under an action or a work programme (C(2019)2646).

- equipment costs: depreciation
- other cost categories:
  - costs for financial support to third parties: not allowed;
- indirect cost flat-rate: 7% of the eligible direct costs (categories A-D, except volunteers costs and exempted specific cost categories, if any)
- VAT: non-deductible VAT is eligible (but please note that since 2013 VAT paid by beneficiaries that are public bodies acting as public authority is NOT eligible)
- other:
  - in-kind contributions for free are allowed, but cost-neutral, i.e. they cannot be declared as cost
  - kick-off meeting: costs for kick-off meeting organised by the granting authority are eligible (travel costs for maximum 2 persons, return ticket to Brussels and accommodation for one night) only if the meeting takes place after the project starting date set out in the Grant Agreement; the starting date can be changed through an amendment, if needed
  - project websites: communication costs for presenting the project on the participants' websites or social media accounts are eligible; costs for *separate* project websites are not eligible
  - other ineligible costs: No

 Volunteers costs — Volunteers costs are not a classic cost category. There are no costs because volunteers work for free, but they may nonetheless be added to the budget in the form of a prefixed unit cost (per volunteer) and thus allow you to benefit from the volunteers' work for the grant (by increasing the amount of reimbursement up to 100% of the normal costs, i.e. cost categories other than volunteers). More information is available in the [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6.2.A.5](#).


### 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 80% 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.

**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 (your coordinator) to pay back the difference (recovery).

All payments will be made to the coordinator.

 Please be aware that payments will be automatically lowered if one of your consortium members has outstanding debts towards the EU (granting authority or

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<sup>19</sup> Commission [Decision](#) of 12 January 2021 authorising the use of unit costs for travel, accommodation and subsistence costs under an action or work programme under the 2021-2027 multi-annual financial framework (C(2021)35).

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*).

For beneficiaries, it is one of the following:

- limited joint and several liability with individual ceilings — *each beneficiary up to their maximum grant amount*
  - unconditional joint and several liability — *each beneficiary up to the maximum grant amount for the action*
- or
- individual financial responsibility — *each beneficiary only for their own debts*.

In addition, the granting authority may require joint and several liability of affiliated entities (with their beneficiary).

### 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

### 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 4 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
- Part C containing additional project data. To be filled in directly online.
- 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](#)
- FAQs on the Topic page (for call-specific questions in open calls; not applicable for actions by invitation)
- [Portal FAQ](#) (for general questions).

Please also consult the Topic page regularly, since we will use it to publish call updates. (For invitations, 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: [EACEA-CERV@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EACEA-CERV@ec.europa.eu).

Please 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.

- **Consortium agreement** — For practical and legal reasons it is recommended to set up internal arrangements that allow you to deal with exceptional or unforeseen circumstances (in all cases, even if not mandatory under the Grant Agreement). The consortium agreement also gives you the possibility to redistribute the grant money according to your own consortium-internal principles and parameters (for instance, one beneficiary can reattribute its grant money to another beneficiary). The consortium agreement thus allows you to customise the EU grant to the needs inside your consortium and can also help to protect you in case of disputes.

- **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 may submit more than one proposal for *different* projects under the same call (and be awarded a funding for them).

Organisations may participate in several proposals.

BUT: if there are several proposals for *very similar* projects, only one application will be accepted and evaluated; the applicants will be asked to withdraw one of them (or it 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 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](#).