



European Defence Fund (EDF)

Call for proposals

Support to the National Focal Points Network
(EDF-2022-CSA-NFP)

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1.0	09.06.2022	– Initial version.	
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EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Directorate-General for Defence Industry and Space
DEFIS.A – Defence Industry

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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0. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for an EU **action grant** for coordination and support activities under the **European Defence Fund (EDF)**.

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

- Regulation 2018/1046 ([EU Financial Regulation](#))
- the basic act (EDF Regulation [2021/697](#)¹).

The call is launched in accordance with the 2022 Work Programme Part II² and will be managed by the **European Commission, Directorate-General for Defence Industry and Space (DG DEFIS)**.

This call covers the following topic:

- **EDF-2022-CSA-NFP-SNFPN: Support to the National Focal Point (NFP) network**

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, type of action and funding rate, objectives, scope and types of activities, expected impact and specific conditions (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 Agreement (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:

¹ Regulation (EU) 2021/697 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2021 establishing the European Defence Fund and repealing Regulation (EU) 2018/1092 (OJ L 170, 12.5.2021).

² Commission Implementing Decision C(2022) 3403 final of 25/05/2022 on the financing of the European Defence Fund established by Regulation (EU) No 2021/697 of the European Parliament and the Council and the adoption of the work programme for 2022 - Part II.

- 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 European Defence Fund (EDF) fosters the competitiveness, efficiency and innovation capacity of the European defence technological and industrial base (EDTIB).

It contributes to the EU strategic autonomy and its freedom of action, by supporting collaborative actions and cross-border cooperation between legal entities throughout the Union, in particular SMEs and mid-caps, as well as by strengthening and improving the agility of both defence supply and value chains, widening cross-border cooperation between legal entities and fostering the better exploitation of the industrial potential of innovation, research and technological development, at each stage of the industrial lifecycle of defence products and technologies.

With the view to ease the communication with all EU and Norway defence stakeholders and in particular SMEs, the Commission has set up a [network of National Focal Points](#).

The National Focal Points for the EDF (NFP-EDF) consists of a network of individuals nominated by Member States and countries associated to the European Defence Fund (EDF) that are supported by national structures established under the responsibility and control of the Member States and Associated Countries. The NFPs form an essential part of the EDF implementation by providing practical information, advice, training, and other forms of assistance to stakeholders on all aspects of participation in the EDF.

The National Focal Points must also be encouraged to act as a network, exchange best practises and develop jointly common activities at EU level. This is the scope of the present call for proposals.

2. Type of action and funding rate — Objectives — Scope and types of activities - Expected impact — Specific conditions

Type of action and funding rate

This call for proposals concerns an EDF Coordination and Support Action (CSA) that will be implemented through an actual costs grant.

Coordination and Support Actions (CSA) are reimbursed at a funding rate of 100%.

EDF-2022-CSA-NFP-SNFPN: Support to the National Focal Point (NFP) network

Objectives

The objectives of this call are to:

- enhance the functioning of the EDF-NFP network and contribute to the increase of the impact of the EDF in maximising the competitiveness of EU defence industry, its capacity to innovate and contribute to developing key technologies for the future;
- strengthen cross-border collaboration between EDF-NFPs and to improve coordination in EDF-NFP-related activities that reach more than one Member State or Associated Country;

- continuously improve the services of the individual EDF-NFPs with respect to all aspects of participation in the EDF and to all stakeholders concerned;
- foster matchmaking activities to facilitate the forming of consortia participating in the EDF calls
- enhance the cooperation of EDF-NFPs with the Enterprise Europe Network and other relevant networks

Scope and types of activities

This action aims at facilitating trans-national cooperation between EDF-NFPs with a view to identifying and sharing good practices and raising the general standard of support to (potential) programme applicants, taking into account the diversity of actors that could benefit from the programme and thus contribute to strengthening the European defence industry.

The action should cover:

- NFP-organised joint trainings to improve the services they provide, share experiences and best practices in relation to their support for the EDF;
- Twinning arrangements/facilities (in person visits or virtual), where NFPs can learn from their counterparts about the different approaches adopted in supporting national entities' participation in the EDF;
- The development of information and promotional materials (both in digital and physical formats) that can be used by the whole NFP network, relating to the services the NFP network is providing and on practical aspects of participating in the EDF;
- The organisation of cross-border matchmaking events at selected international and European defence fairs or at national information activities such as national EDF infodays;
- The setting up of a website providing information about the services supported by the action, including, but not limited to listing relevant events, introducing the EDF with a special focus on entities that are new to defence research and development, and a facility to conduct partner search taking into account existing platforms and practices;
- The development of methodologies to help EDF-NFPs to interact with Enterprise Europe Network that has already well-established contacts with entities that are active in civilian R&D and can facilitate matchmaking;
- Interaction with relevant national industry associations and with relevant Horizon Europe NCP networks, with the objective to have a wider reach to industrial entities and make the EDF better known.

Special attention should be given to enhancing the competence of EDF-NFPs, including helping less experienced EDF-NFPs rapidly acquire the know-how built up in other countries. The action should provide clearly defined and quantified deliverables and milestones in line with the activities mentioned in the scope of this topic.

NFPs that choose not to participate as a member of the consortium, are nevertheless invited and encouraged to participate in the action activities (e.g. workshops), and the costs incurred by the consortium for such participation (e.g. travel costs paid by

the consortium) may be included in the estimated budget and be eligible for funding by the Commission.

Expected impact

- Increased awareness about and visibility of opportunities provided by the EDF, as well as stronger participation of newcomers to the programme, incl. SMEs in particular;
- Enhanced NFP services across the Union and Associated Countries in the defence area, providing solid support to (potential) programme applicants;
- Consistent level of support given to their respective stakeholders by NFPs across the European Union and Associated Countries

Specific topic conditions

- For all topic under this call, multi-beneficiary applications are mandatory and specific conditions for the consortium composition apply (*see section 6*)
- For all topic under this call, following reimbursement option for equipment costs applies: depreciation only (*see section 10*)

3. Available budget

The available call budget is **EUR 1 500 000**.

Topic	Topic budget	Multi-topic with common budget envelope (common ranked list)	Fixed maximum number of projects
EDF-2022-CSA-NFP-SNFPN: Support to the National Focal Point (NFP) network	EUR 1 500 000	No	1

The Commission reserves the right not to award all available funds or to redistribute them between the various action of the work programme 2022, depending on the proposals received and the results of the evaluation.

4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
Call opening:	21 June 2022
Deadline for submission:	<u>26 October 2022 – 17:00:00 CET (Brussels)</u>
Evaluation:	November 2022 - February 2023
Information on evaluation results:	March/April 2023
GA signature:	April-June 2023

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 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 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 re-uploaded*)

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 (Part B) are limited to maximum **30 pages** (counting the work package descriptions). 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 (consortium members) must be:

- **the national organisations hosting the EDF National Focal points** appointed by the Member States or Norway
- legal entities (public or private bodies)
- established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:
 - EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs))
 - non-EU countries : listed EEA countries ('EDF associated countries', see [list of participating countries](#))
- have their executive management structure established in eligible countries
- must not be subject to control by a non-associated third country or non-associated third-country entity (unless they can provide guarantees – see Annex 2 - approved by the Member State or EDF associated country where they are established)

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 roles, such as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions, etc (see *section 13*).

 Please note that, in EDF, subcontractors involved in the action³ and associated partners—must also comply with the above-listed conditions concerning establishment and control.

Associated partners which are not established in one of the eligible countries (or which are subject to control by a non-associated third country or non-associated third-country entity) may however participate exceptionally if certain conditions are fulfilled (*not contravene EU and MS security and defence interests; consistent with EDF objectives; results not subject to control or restriction by non-associated third countries or non-associated third-country entities; no unauthorised access to classified information; no potential negative effects over security of supply of inputs which are critical for the project*), subject to agreement by the granting authority and without any funding under the grant.

Specific cases

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)⁴ and entities covered by Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#)⁵*). 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 national support structures** (organisations hosting NFPs) **from at least 10 Member States or Associated Countries**.

Eligible actions and activities

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

The following activities are not considered as eligible for funding under this call:

- projects that do not implement the objectives set out in Article 3 of the EDF Regulation
- projects that do not cover the mandatory types of activities set out in section 2

³ 'Subcontractors involved in the action' means subcontractors with a direct contractual relationship to a beneficiary or affiliated entity, other subcontractors to which at least 10 % of the total eligible costs of the action are allocated, and subcontractors which may need access to classified information in order to carry out the project.

⁴ 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](#).

⁵ 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).


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*).

 Please note that moreover, in EDF, only infrastructure, facilities, assets and resources which are located or held in an eligible country may be used. Other assets, infrastructure, facilities or resources may be used only exceptionally if certain conditions are fulfilled (*no competitive substitutes are readily available; not contravene EU and MS security and defence interests; consistent with EDF objectives; results not subject to control or restriction by non-associated third countries or non-associated third-country entities*), subject to agreement by the granting authority and without any funding under the grant.

Duration

Project duration: **36 months**

Projects of longer duration may be accepted in duly justified cases. Extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment.

Project budget

Project budgets (maximum grant amount): should not exceed **EUR 1 500 000**

This does not however preclude the submission/selection of proposals requesting other amounts. The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

Ethics

Projects must comply with:

- highest ethical standards (including highest standards of research integrity) and
- applicable EU, international and national law.

Proposals under this call may be made subject to specific ethics rules (which become part of the Grant Agreement in the form of ethics deliverables, *e.g. ethics committee opinions/notifications/authorisations required under national or EU law*).

Security

Projects involving classified information must undergo security scrutiny to authorise *funding* and may be made subject to specific security rules (detailed in a security aspects letter (SAL) which is annexed to the Grant Agreement).

The security rules will be governed by Commission Decision [2015/444](#)⁶ and its implementing rules⁷.

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 beneficiaries, except for:

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

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

If the Commission considers that your financial capacity is not satisfactory, it 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
 - 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).

⁶ See Commission Decision 2015/544/EU, Euratom of 13 March 2015 on the security rules for protecting EU classified information (OJ L 72, 17.3.2015, p. 53).

⁷ See Article 27(4) EDF Regulation.

This capacity will be assessed together with the Implementation' 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 (including previous projects, if any)

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 participate⁸:

- 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 misconduct⁹ (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 EU Regulation [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

⁸ See Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

⁹ 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.

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 that¹⁰:

- 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 (for each budget envelope; *see section 3*) 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 (within a budget envelope) 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) Proposals will be prioritised according to the scores they have been awarded for the criterion 'Excellence'. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on scores for the criterion 'Impact'.
- 2) If necessary, any further prioritisation will be based on the number of Member States or EDF associated countries, in which applicants involved in the proposal are established.

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 will be considered to have been accessed and that deadlines will be counted from opening/access (*see also [Funding & Tenders Portal Terms and Conditions](#)*). Please also

¹⁰ See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

be aware that for complaints submitted electronically, there may be character limitations.

9. Award criteria

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

– Excellence (5 points)

Excellence of the overall activities proposed:

- Clarity and pertinence of the proposal’s objectives and corresponding targets, their compliance of the proposal with the objectives, scope and types of activities, technical requirements and expected impact as set out in section 2
- Quality and originality of the proposed measures.

– Impact (5 points)

- Credibility of the pathways to achieve the expected outcomes and impacts specified in the call for proposals, and the likely scale and significance of the contributions from the action.
- Suitability and quality of the measures to maximise expected outcomes and impacts, as set out in the dissemination and exploitation plan, including communication activities
- Extent to which the beneficiaries of the consortium have a reach in all EU Member States and Associated Countries, by involving a maximum number of NFPs in the consortium directly and openness of activities to non-beneficiary NFPs

– Implementation (5 points)

- Quality and effectiveness of the work plan (work breakdown structure), including timing and inter-relation of the different work packages (illustrated by a Gantt chart, Pert chart or similar), comprehensiveness of the milestones and deliverables of the project, quality of the risk management and detail of proposed risk treatments (e.g. mitigation measures)
- Capacity and role of each participant, appropriateness of the allocation of tasks and resources between consortium members, ensuring that all participants have a valid and complementary role, appropriateness of the management structures and procedures ensuring a high level of effectiveness and efficiency for carrying out the project.

Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score	Weighting
Excellence	3	5	1
Impact	3	5	1
Implementation	3	5	1
Overall weighted (pass) scores	10	15	N/A

Maximum points: 15 points.

The minimum pass score for each individual criteria is 3.

Overall threshold: 10 points.

Proposals that pass the overall threshold will be considered for funding — within the limits of the available budget (i.e. up to the budget ceiling). 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 — but never earlier than the proposal submission date.

Project duration: *see section 6 above*

Milestones and deliverables

The milestones and deliverables for each project will be managed between the Commission and the Coordinator of the consortium during the Grant Agreement Preparation (GAP) 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 will be an actual costs 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. This rate depends on the type of activities and participants (*see section 2*).

Grants may in principle NOT produce a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). Where the no-profit rule is activated in the Grant Agreement, 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 (*Not Applicable*)
- B. Subcontracting costs
- C. Purchase costs
 - C.1 Travel and subsistence
 - C.2 Equipment
 - C.3 Other goods, works and services
- D. Other cost categories
 - D.1 Financial support to third parties
 - D.2 Internally invoiced goods and services
- E. Indirect costs

Specific cost eligibility conditions for this call:

- personnel costs:
 - average personnel costs (unit cost according to usual cost accounting practices): Yes
 - SME owner/natural person unit cost¹¹: No
- subcontracting costs:
 - country restrictions for subcontracting costs: Yes, subcontracted work must be performed in the eligible countries
- travel and subsistence unit cost¹²: No (only actual costs)
- equipment costs: depreciation only
- other cost categories:
 - costs for financial support to third parties: not allowed
 - internally invoiced goods and services (costs unit cost according to usual cost accounting practices): allowed
- indirect cost:
 - flat-rate: 25% of the eligible direct costs (categories A-D, except subcontracting costs, financial support to third parties and exempted

¹¹ 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).

¹² 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).

- specific cost categories, i.e. internally invoiced goods and services and PCP procurement costs)
- 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
 - eligible cost country restrictions: Yes, only costs for activities carried out in eligible countries are eligible
 - other ineligible costs: Yes, costs related to the use of assets, infrastructure, facilities or resources located or held outside the eligible countries are not eligible (even if their use was authorised, *see section 6*)

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 **55%** of the maximum grant amount; exceptionally less or no prefinancing). The prefinancing will be paid 30 days from entry into force/starting date/financial guarantee (if required) — whichever is the latest.

For projects of more than 18 months, there may be one or more **additional prefinancing payments** linked to a prefinancing report and one or more **interim payments** (with detailed cost reporting).

Payment of the balance: At the end of the project, the Commission will calculate your final grant amount. If the total of earlier payments is higher than the final grant amount, The Commission 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 other EU bodies). Such debts will be offset — 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 the Commission 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

Security rules: *see Model Grant Agreement (Article 13)*

Ethics rules: *see Model Grant Agreement (Article 14)*

IPR rules: *see Model Grant Agreement (Article 16):*

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

Specific rules for carrying out the action: see *Model Grant Agreement (Article 18)*.

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 2 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. The PDF file must have a size of less than 100 MB.

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: DEFIS-EDF-PROPOSALS@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, associated partners must be registered in the [Participant Register](#). The draft 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 per beneficiary/affiliated entity must be justified in the application and may be accepted by the granting authority (*see section 10*).

- **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 in principle NOT give a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). Where the no-profit rule is activated in the Grant Agreement, 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 under this call (and be awarded a funding for them).
Organisations may participate in several proposals.
- **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, it 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](#).