



## **European Social Fund+ (ESF+)**

### **Call for proposals under Framework Partnership Agreement**

Annual operating grants 2022 to support EU level Social NGO  
Networks

**ESF-2021-OG-NETW-NGO-SGA**

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**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
**DG EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND INCLUSION**

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## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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## 0. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for EU **operating grants** in the field of **social inclusion** under the **European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) for 2022**.

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

- Regulation 2018/1046 ([EU Financial Regulation](#));
- [the basic act (ESF+ Regulation<sup>1</sup>)].

The call is launched in accordance with the 2021 Work Programme<sup>2</sup> and will be managed by the **European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL)**.

**Operating grants** provide general financial support to organisations whose statutory activities serve the strategic objectives of EU policies (*mainly non-profit organisations, voluntary associations, foundations, NGOs or similar*). They do not support a specific project (like action grants), but the annual operating budget of the organisation (or part of it). Operating grants are always mono-beneficiary grants supporting the work programme of activities of only one organisation. They follow the same rules for the grant agreements as action grants, but do not differentiate between direct and indirect costs. Receiving an operating grant may however have an impact on the possibility to receive the indirect costs flat-rate in EU action grants (see [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6.2.E](#)).

This call is open **only** to organisations having submitted a proposal to the call “Framework partnership agreements to support EU level Social NGO Networks” (see call ESF-OG-NETW-NGO-2021-FPA). Please note that for the first year, the Framework Partnership Agreement (**FPA**) and **Specific Grant Agreement (SGA) applications are submitted in parallel** due to time constraints. You must first complete the FPA application, and then use the FPA application number in the SGA application. SGAs can only be signed if the FPA has been signed, and before the end date of the FPA.

The call covers the following **topic**:

**- ESF-OG-NETW-NGO-2021-SGA – Specific grant agreement under the framework partnership agreement to support EU level Social NGO Networks**

We invite you to read the **call documentation** on the Funding & Tenders Portal Topic page 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> Proposal for a Regulation [COM\(2018\) 382 final](#) – pending adoption by the European Parliament and the Council.

<sup>2</sup> Commission Decision C(2021)3917 final of 7 June 2021 concerning the adoption of the work programme for 2021 and the financing decision for the implementation of the Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) strand of the European Social Fund Plus.

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

## 1. Background

The **Employment and Social Innovation ("EaSI") strand of the ESF+** provides funding to achieve high employment levels, fair social protection, a skilled and resilient workforce ready for the future world of work, as well as inclusive and cohesive societies aiming to eradicate poverty.

In line with the operational objectives of the Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) strand, this call will **support networking at Union level and dialogue with and among relevant stakeholders** in the policy areas of **employment and social inclusion**<sup>3</sup> and build up the institutional capacity of these stakeholders to contribute actively to the development and implementation of all relevant policies.

This call is linked to the parallel call ESF-2021-OG-NETW-NGO-FPA that aims to set-up **4-year Framework Partnership Agreements with EU-level networks** and organisations whose activities contribute to the implementation of the programme's objectives and which will implement among others: analytical activities, training and capacity building activities, mutual learning and exchange of good practices, awareness raising, information and dissemination activities with EU added value.

Every year, an **operating grant** may be awarded to framework partners to finance their activities, insofar as these are in line with the programme's objectives in the area concerned and the policy priorities that may be established by the Commission. The costs of general administrative expenditure necessary for the running of these organisations may also be covered.

This call aims at awarding **operating grants for 2022** to partners that have first been awarded a framework partnership agreement.

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<sup>3</sup> ESF+ regulation - Article 4 - Specific objectives

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

### Objectives

- Promoting **social inclusion and combating poverty** by providing financial support to EU-level networks of civil society organisations active in this area at local, regional, national and transnational level. It will thereby contribute to the implementation of the **European Pillar of Social Rights** and its **Action Plan**, ensuring just transitions, protecting livelihoods, boosting employment, reducing poverty and inequalities and creating opportunities for all;
- Supporting the **EU policy initiatives** proposed by the Commission to **put the pillar's principles into practice**. The **Action Plan** contains proposals for initiatives in the respective fields of the 20 principles (e.g. support to children, minimum income, access to essential services, combatting homelessness, quality and affordable long-term care, access to healthcare, social economy). Progress in turning the principles of the pillar into action will be monitored through the European Semester;
- Delivering on the European Pillar of Social Rights is a **shared responsibility** of the EU institutions, national, regional and local authorities, social partners and civil society. **Civil society organisations** are expected to:
  - (i) support the implementation of the Pillar at EU, national and local level notably by collecting and exchanging data and good practices and cooperating with public authorities in the design and implementation of relevant policies;
  - (ii) organise communication and engagement activities to raise awareness of the Pillar and promote social rights in Europe;
- The ultimate goal is to build a **stronger social Europe**: modernise and strengthen the welfare states to **protect people, combat poverty and inequalities**, and to face the green, digital and demographic transitions.

### Themes and priorities (scope)

Framework partners should be active in **fostering social inclusion and combating poverty**.

Networks are expected to implement work programmes that:

- contribute concretely and directly to the **implementation of the EPSR** principles and related initiatives that are relevant to their statutory aim, with a particular focus on national and local level;
- organise **communication and engagement activities** to raise awareness of the EPSR and promote social rights in Europe;
- strengthen the **capacity of national member organisations** to enable them to actively contribute to the EPSR implementation;
- provide **concrete support to the European Semester process** (at EU and national levels, including through the recovery and resilience plans).

The annual operating grants that will be signed based on these framework partnership agreements will **increase the capacities** of these networks of civil society organisations active at EU level to contribute actively to the development and implementation of EU policies in these areas.

**Important to note:**

- the inclusion of **persons with disabilities** (principle 17) should be mainstreamed across all activities. However, networks that are **mainly active in the area of disability** should apply to the **parallel calls for proposals** funded by the programme Citizens, Equality, Rights and Value (CERV-2021-DISA-OG-FPA; CERV-2021-DISA-OG-SGA).

- in order to ensure a high level of coherence between the co-funded activities and the objectives of the ESF+ programme, the actions proposed must **directly support social inclusion objectives**. Costs related to complementary actions supporting objectives covered by other programmes (i.e. non-discrimination) must represent less than 10% of the operational budget.

The **2022 work programmes** must directly and concretely support the **implementation and awareness raising** of the recent (already adopted) or upcoming (notably those announced in the EPSR action plan for 2021/2022) **EU policy initiatives and guidances** that are **relevant to the core mission** of the applicant.

Activities that can be funded (scope)

This call will support networks at EU-level whose activities contribute to the implementation of the above-mentioned objectives, priorities and initiatives. Networks will implement among others analytical activities, training and capacity building activities, mutual learning and exchange of good practices, awareness raising, information and dissemination activities with EU added value.

Activities may include:

- contributing to evidence-based regulation, policies and reforms at EU/national/local level and provide the Commission with input for policy design. E.g. by gathering relevant evidence (especially from local levels) and by contributing to ad-hoc public or targeted consultations and to thematic strategic dialogue meetings on policy or programme management related issues;
- promoting concrete pledges for actions supporting the implementation of relevant key EU initiatives such as the EPSR;
- raising public awareness and disseminating information on social protection and social inclusion policies and legislation at EU and national levels including good practices in ensuring access to social protection for all and map out existing gaps;
- building capacity of national members to actively engage them in implementing the EPSR locally;
- promoting EMPL programmes, projects and results – assist in the transfer and exchange of good practices (e.g. EaSI projects);
- reinforcing cooperation with other EU level networks (e.g. through joint actions), including across different policy areas; with and between the national social stakeholders; with national, regional and local authorities.

Activities should also enable the networks to integrate **cross-cutting issues** (e.g. gender, disability, non-discrimination) in their day-to-day work.

Applicants should **optimise the use of online/offline activities** depending on the objectives of each activity, and taking into account **environmental and health**

**considerations.** Possibilities offered by online activities to maximise impact should be utilised (e.g. publically available recorded webinars). The cost-effectiveness, size and frequency of **physical events** should be carefully considered and be reasonable.

### Expected impact

The Commission expects networks to design and implement **relevant, quality and impactful work programmes that fit the objectives and priorities** defined in the call. The work plan should clearly demonstrate the organisation's capacity to generate **concrete impacts**.

### Applicants are invited to:

- provide clear descriptions of the main activities and implementation methodology;
- describe the contribution and added value of the programme to the EU policy in the area of this call;
- describe the way in which they use monitoring and external evaluations in order to assess their overall performance and the relevance and impact of their outputs.

### In terms of results, the Commission expects:

- Improved awareness about EU policies and funding among the network's members;
- Increased awareness of EU and national authorities about the needs and potential of organisations represented by the networks;
- Increased capacity of the networks and their members to support policy making in their respective areas;
- Enhanced research and availability of data about the fields in which the networks operate.

## **3. Available budget**

The available call budget is **EUR 13 800 000**.

This budget might be increased by a maximum 20% in case of available funds each year.

Depending on the number and quality of proposals, the Commission expects to fund 18 to 24 proposals.

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



#### 4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
<b>FPA</b>	
Call opening:	23 June 2021
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>28 September 2021 – 17:00:00 CET</u> (Brussels)
Evaluation:	October - December 2021
Information on evaluation results:	January 2022
FPA signature:	January-February 2022
<b>First SGA calls</b>	
Invitations to submit proposals:	23 June 2021
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>30 September 2021 – 17:00:00 CET</u>
Evaluation:	October - December 2021
Information on evaluation results:	January 2022
GA signature:	January-February 2022

#### 5. Admissibility and documents

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

Proposals must be submitted **electronically** via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (accessible via the 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 annexes and supporting documents:

- Application Form Part A — contains administrative information about the applicant organisation 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 as PDF in the system*)
- **mandatory annexes and supporting documents** (*to be uploaded as PDF files/included in Part B*):

- detailed budget table: not applicable,
- CVs : not applicable,
- activity reports of last year: not applicable,
- list of previous projects: not applicable,
- other annexes (when applicable).

At proposal submission, you will have to confirm that the information in the application is correct and complete, and that your organisation complies with the conditions for receiving EU funding (especially eligibility, financial and operational capacity, exclusion, etc). Before signing the grant, you will have to confirm this again by signing a declaration of honour (DoH).

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

Proposals are limited to **40 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, established as formal networks, must be European-level organisations that comply with the following criteria:

- be legal entities properly established and registered in one of the eligible countries participating in the programme, i.e.:
  - EU Member State;
  - non-EU countries: listed EEA countries and countries associated to the ESF+ ([associated countries](#)<sup>4</sup>) or countries which are in ongoing negotiations for an association agreement and where the agreement enters into force before grant signature
- be non-governmental, non-profit-making, and independent of industry, commercial and business or other conflicting interests;
- have statutory aims falling under the objectives and scope of the priorities of this call for proposals;
- have national member organisations in at least fourteen (14) Member States of the European Union;
- have members that are mainly non-profit organisations;
- be mandated by their members, through a Management Board or other administrative forum, to represent these members at the EU level and to be responsible for the activities of the network;

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<sup>4</sup> [There is none at the time of publication of this call for proposals](#)

- be a single applicant: only the network or the organisation appointed as the joint secretariat/officially appointed coordinator may submit an application; the member organisations are not eligible to apply.
- provide a detailed work programme for 2022.

Applicants 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.

**Only** the organisations that have first been awarded a framework partnership (see call ESF-OG-NETW-NGO-2021-FPA) will be considered eligible under this call.

### 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 NOT eligible.

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>5</sup>.

Associations and interest groupings — Entities composed of members may participate as 'sole beneficiaries' or 'beneficiaries without legal personality'<sup>6</sup>.

Countries currently negotiating association agreements — Applicants from countries with ongoing negotiations (*see above "Eligible participants (eligible countries)"*) may participate in the call and can sign grant agreements if the negotiations are concluded before grant signature (with retroactive effect, if provided in the agreement).

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>7</sup> and entities covered by Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#)<sup>8</sup>). Such entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity, including as beneficiaries, , 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

Not applicable, only applications by single applicants are allowed.

<sup>5</sup> See Article 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

<sup>6</sup> For the definitions, see Articles 187(2) and 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

<sup>7</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>8</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).

### Eligible activities

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

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.

Projects should be consistent with the action plan submitted for the framework partnership agreement call. Only applications that have first been awarded a framework partnership will be considered eligible.

### Geographic location (target countries)

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

### Duration

The duration of the work programme to be covered by the 2022 operating grant should coincide with the budgetary (financial) year of the applicant (12 months).

### Project budget

Annual operating grants budgets are expected to **range between EUR 100.000 and EUR 1.000.000 per work programme.**

The value of the annual grant will correspond to the FPA's multi-annual budget estimate.

## **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.

For framework partnerships, the financial capacity check will be done only once at FPA-level (see call ESF-OG-NETW-NGO-2021-FPA).

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).

For framework partnerships, the operational capacity check will be done at FPA-level and then again for each specific grant application. As this is the first year, FPA and SGA calls are launched in parallel due to time constraints. **Exceptionally** the operational capacity will therefore be assessed only at the level of the FPA, following the capacity requirements laid down in ESF-OG-NETW-NGO-2021-FPA.

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

### Exclusion

Applicants which are subject to an **EU exclusion decision** or in one of the following **exclusion situations** that bar them from receiving EU funding can NOT participate<sup>9</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>10</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)
- 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, decisionmaking- or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No [2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making- or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, 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>11</sup>:

- during the award procedure they misrepresented information required as a condition for participating or failed to supply that information

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<sup>9</sup> See Article 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

<sup>10</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.

<sup>11</sup> See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

- 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).


For framework partnerships, exclusion will be checked before FPA signature and then again before signature of each specific grant.

## 8. Evaluation and award procedure

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

An **evaluation committee** will assess the applications that have first been awarded a framework partnership agreement grant. Proposals will then be checked for formal requirements (admissibility, and eligibility, *see sections 5 and 6*). Proposals that are found admissible and eligible will be evaluated against the award criteria (*see sections 7 and 9*) and then ranked according to their scores.

All applicants will be informed about the evaluation result (**evaluation result letter**). Successful applicants 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** (Max. 40 points; min 25): Relevance to the themes, priorities and objectives of the call of: the organisation's mission statement, the specific objectives defined for the period covered by the framework partnership, the activities and multi-annual action plan. Contribution and added-value of the programme to the EU policy.
- **Quality:**
  - **Project team and cooperation arrangements** (Max. 10 points; min 5): How cooperation arrangements among team and network members will ensure effective delivery of the work programme; well-justified recourse to sub-contracting;

- **Project design and implementation** (Max. 30 points; min 15): Overall technical quality and clarity of multi-annual plan; internal communication and management procedures, risk management, monitoring and evaluation, feasibility of the programme (methodology and timeframe); cost-effectiveness (sufficient /appropriate budget for proper implementation; best value for money).
- **Impact:** (Max. 20 points; min 10): European/transnational impact of the network, activities and outputs; Extent to which the programme and activities focus on local reach out and implementation; Ambition and relevance of expected long-term impact of results on target groups/general public; Appropriate dissemination strategy to ensure sustainability and long-term impact on identified target group.

Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score
Relevance	25	40
Quality — Project design and implementation	15	30
Quality — Project team and cooperation arrangements	5	10
Impact	10	20
<b>Overall (pass) scores</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>

Maximum points: 100 points.

Individual thresholds per criterion: 25/40, 15/30, 5/10 and 10/20 points.

Overall threshold: 70 points.

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

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

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

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

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

### 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.

### 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.

### **Project duration: 12 months**

### 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

Please see section 6 above. The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

The grant will be a budget-based mixed actual cost grant (actual costs and unit cost). 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, 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. In light of the difficulties the social civil society organizations have been facing to generate matching funds since the beginning of the sanitary crisis, the maximum co-financing rate of 80% is **temporarily** and **exceptionally** increased to **90%** for the **first year** of the FPA. This rate of **90%** is valid for the work programme of 2022 and will be **re-assessed on an annual basis**. The FPA's multi-annual budgetary estimate shall be respected.

Grants may NOT produce a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs).

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 for this call:

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



*Specific cost eligibility conditions for this call:*

- travel and subsistence unit cost: Yes<sup>12</sup>
- equipment costs: depreciation
- other cost categories:
  - costs for financial support to third parties: not allowed
- indirect cost flat-rate : not applicable for operating grants
- 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
  - 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

Indirect costs — For operating grants, there is no differentiation between direct and indirect cost (because the grant aims to a large extent the financing of costs which would normally be considered 'indirect', i.e. general management costs, general running costs etc). Receiving an operating grant may however make you ineligible for receiving indirect costs in your EU action grants. If you intend to also apply for action grants, please make sure that you either have the accounting tools in place to combine them (or that the operating grants pays off — meaning that it covers enough of your general running costs and overheads to compensate the loss of the indirect costs in the action grants).

*Reporting and payment arrangements*

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

Payment of the grant is generally made in **pre-financing** instalments and a final payment (of the balance). The aim of the pre-financing is to provide the beneficiaries with a float. The pre-financing remains the property of the EU until the payment of the balance. The frequency and size of pre-financing will depend upon the project duration but may be adjusted in case of risk:

- **actions of 12 months** : one pre-financing payment of 70% paid within 30 days from the entry into force of the grant agreement or after receiving the financial guarantee (if required), whichever is the latest

There will be no **interim payments**.

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

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<sup>12</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).

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

### Pre-financing guarantees

If a pre-financing 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 to the pre-financing 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.

Pre-financing 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 pre-financing (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 limited joint and several liability with individual ceilings — *each beneficiary up to their maximum grant amount*.

### Provisions concerning the project implementation

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

- rights of use on results: Yes

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

- additional communication and dissemination activities: Yes

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

*Annex 5):*

- specific rules for ESF+ actions: Yes
- specific rules for financial support to third parties: No

*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 EULogin user account](#).

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

### **b) submit the proposal**

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

Submit your proposal in 3 parts, as follows:

- Part A includes administrative information about the applicant organisation and the summarised budget for the proposal. Fill it in directly online
- Part B (description of the action) covers the technical content of the proposal. Download the mandatory word template from the Submission System, fill it in and upload it as a PDF file
- Annexes (*see section 5*). Upload them as PDF files.

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 the present and other documentation (please note that the European Commission has 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:

- [general](#) questions on ESF+: [EMPL-EaSI@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EMPL-EaSI@ec.europa.eu)
- [call-specific questions](#): [EMPL-CALL-EASI-SOCIAL-INCLUSION@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EMPL-CALL-EASI-SOCIAL-INCLUSION@ec.europa.eu)

Questions on submission must:

- be sent at the latest 7 days before the submission deadline (see section 3).
- 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, the applicant must be registered in the [Participant Register](#). The participant identification code (PIC) (one per participant) is mandatory for the Application Form.
- **Consortium roles** — not applicable.
- **Coordinator** — not applicable.
- **Affiliated entities** — not applicable.
- **Associated partners** — not applicable.
- **Consortium agreement** — not applicable.
- **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** — Not applicable
- **Combination with EU operating grants** — not applicable.
- **Multiple proposals** — not applicable.
- **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**.

- **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](#).