



Horizon Europe

Call for a prize — Rules of Contest

EU Award for Gender Equality Champions

(HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-GENDER-Prize)

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CALL FOR APPLICATIONS — RULES OF CONTEST

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0. Introduction

This is a call (contest)¹ for an EU recognition **prize** in the field of gender equality and inclusiveness under the **Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area Work Programme of the Horizon Europe Framework Programme for Research and Innovation**.

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

- Regulation 2018/1046 ([EU Financial Regulation](#))
- the basic act (Horizon Europe Regulation²)

The call is launched in accordance with the 2023-2025 Work Programme³ and will be managed by the **European Research Executive Agency (REA)** ('Agency').

We invite you to read the **call documentation** on the Funding & Tenders Portal Topic page carefully, and in particular these Rules of Contest and the [EU Funding & Tenders Portal Online Manual](#).

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

- the [Call Document](#) (Rules of Contest) outlines the:
 - background, objectives, scope, activities that can be funded and the expected results (sections 1 and 2)
 - available budget and timetable (sections 3 and 4)
 - admissibility and eligibility conditions (including mandatory documents; sections 5 and 6)
 - criteria for exclusion (section 7)
 - evaluation and award procedure (section 8)
 - award criteria (section 9)
 - other conditions (section 10)
 - how to submit an application (section 11)
- the [Online Manual](#) outlines the procedures to register and submit applications online via the EU Funding & Tenders Portal ('Portal').

¹ For ease of reference and consistency on the Funding & Tenders Portal, the terms 'call', 'project' and 'participant' are used as equivalent to 'contest', 'application' or 'contestants/applicants'.

² Regulation (EU) 2021/695 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 establishing Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, laying down its rules for participation and dissemination, and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1290/2013 and (EU) No 1291/2013.

³ Commission Implementing Decision C(2024)2371 of 17 April 2024 amending Commission Implementing Decision C(2022)7550 on the adoption of the work programme for 2023-2024 within the framework of the Specific Programme implementing Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation and on its financing, and extending the work programme to 2025.

You are also encouraged to visit the [EU Award for Gender Equality Champions website](#) for additional information.

1. Background

The Commission's Communication on a "A new ERA for Research and Innovation" adopted on 30 September 2020⁴ reaffirmed gender equality as one of the priority areas to address for deepening the European Research Area (ERA) and strengthening the European research and innovation (R&I) potential. As this new ERA framework underlines, gender equality is also closely related to the development of an enhanced labour market for researchers, of improved research career assessment procedures, and of a transformative agenda for higher education institutions, which will ensure that talents in all their diversity can thrive in gender-equal, inclusive, fair, ethical and safe career environments.

The package adopted by the Council of the European Union on 26 November 2021 further reinforces this priority setting with gender equality and inclusiveness as a principle and value of the ERA⁵. The ERA Policy Agenda for 2022-2024⁶ includes a dedicated action (Action 5) to promote gender equality and foster inclusiveness, taking note of the Ljubljana declaration on gender equality in R&I⁷. This entails supporting all aspects of gender equality through inclusive Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) and policies, with the "inclusive" dimension relating more specifically to the opening of gender equality policies to intersections with other social social categorisations and personal identities – and potential grounds for discrimination – such as racial or ethnic origin, disability, or sexual orientation and gender identity (cf. LGBTIQ⁸).

The Council Recommendation of 18 December 2023 on a European framework to attract and retain research, innovation, and entrepreneurial talents in Europe⁹ and the accompanying Charter for Researchers¹⁰ reaffirm the importance of inclusive GEPs in fostering talent development and retention when referring to them as adequate mechanisms for promoting gender equality and achieving sustainable institutional change.

As several studies and the analysis carried out by Horizon 2020 funded project CASPER on existing national award and certification schemes for gender equality in research performing organisations, including universities, have shown¹¹, awards and certification schemes implemented in different countries, in the EU and beyond, can be useful tools

⁴ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0628>

⁵ Council Recommendation on a Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2021.431.01.0001.01.ENG

⁶ See the annex to the Council Conclusions on the future governance of the ERA: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14308-2021-INIT/en/pdf>

⁷ https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MIZS/Dokumenti/PSEU/Ljubljana-Declaration-on-Gender-Equality-in-Research-and-Innovation-endorsed_final.pdf

⁸ LGBTIQ refers to people identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer or other forms of non-binary gender identities and diverse sexual orientations, cf the Commission's LGBTIQ Strategy 2020-2025: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/lesbian-gay-bi-trans-and-intersex-equality/lgbtiq-equality-strategy-2020-2025_en

⁹ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C_202301640.

¹⁰ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15135-2023-ADD-1/en/pdf>.

¹¹ See: Horizon 2020 GENDER-NET Plus project Deliverable D6.1 - National and regional plans and initiatives promoting gender equality and structural change: https://gender-net-plus.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/GENDER-NET_Plus_Deliverable_6.1-final.pdf; Horizon 2020 CASPER project Deliverable D3.3- State of the Art Analysis: mapping the awarding certification landscape in Higher Education and Research: https://zenodo.org/record/4561664#.Yk_tpE1BxPY

for advancing gender equality in academic, research and innovation organisations, with some awarding schemes effectively being used as drivers for competition in attracting students and researchers and/or as a prerequisite for having access to funding.

In this context, an annual Prize has been established in 2022, the **EU Award for Gender Equality Champions**, to recognise the outstanding achievements of academic and research organisations through the implementation of Gender Equality Plans (GEPs).

A GEP is a set of commitments and actions that aim to promote gender equality in an organisation through institutional and cultural change. A GEP lifecycle, which typically last around 3 to 5 years, contains the following phases, as highlighted in the [Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans¹²](#):

- An audit phase (elements of this phase should include the collection of sex-disaggregated and/or gender-disaggregated data and a review of practices to identify gender inequalities and their causes. The audit stage should also include review of relevant national and regional laws, regulations, or funding requirements);
- A planning phase (during this phase, an organisation will set the objectives and targets for the GEP alongside a roadmap of actions and measures. This phase also includes allocating resources and responsibilities for the delivery of the GEP and agreeing timelines for implementation);
- An implementation phase (in which the roadmap of activities is implemented, including, for example, setting up working groups to develop and implement new policies and procedures. This phase should include awareness raising and training efforts to achieve buy-in and build capacity and support for the GEP across the organisation, as well as give visibility internally and externally to the GEP);
- A monitoring and evaluation phase (in which the delivery of the plan and progress against its aims and objectives are regularly assessed. Ongoing review of findings and progress will also provide space for learning and feedback to enable adjustments and improvements to interventions).

In the context of the Horizon Europe GEP eligibility criterion, as laid down in General Annex B of the Horizon Europe Work Programme 2023-2025, the applicants' GEP must meet the four following mandatory process-related requirements (please see section 6. Eligibility)¹³:

- publication: a formal document published on the institution's website and signed by the top management;
- dedicated resources: commitment of resources and expertise in gender equality to implement the plan;
- data collection and monitoring: sex/gender disaggregated data on personnel (and students, for the establishments concerned) and annual reporting based on indicators;

¹² Horizon Europe guidance on Gender Equality Plans: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ffcb06c3-200a-11ec-bd8e-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-232129669>

¹³ See General Annex B-Eligibility to the Work Programme 2023-2025, pages 16-17: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2023-2024/wp-13-general-annexes_horizon-2023-2024_en.pdf

- training: awareness raising/training on gender equality and unconscious gender biases for staff and decision-makers.

Content-wise, it is recommended in the Horizon Europe Work Programme 2023-2025 General Annex B¹⁴ that the applicants' GEP addresses the following thematic areas, using concrete measures and targets, the coverage of which is evaluated under the award criteria (see section 9 'Award criteria'):

- work-life balance and organisational culture;
- gender balance in leadership and decision-making;
- gender equality in recruitment and career progression;
- integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content;
- measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment.

2. Objectives – Themes and priorities – Activities– Expected results

Objectives

The “**EU Award for Gender Equality Champions**” is a recognition prize scheme meant as a booster and complement of the requirement to have in place a Gender Equality Plan (GEP)¹⁵, and a tool for advancing inclusive gender equality plans and policies in the framework of the new European Research Area (ERA) policy agenda. The Award is also an enabler for the transformation agenda for universities set forth in the new ERA, in synergy with the European Education Area (EEA) and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA, Bologna process), and in line with the new Communication on a European Strategy for Universities adopted on 18 January 2022.

Categories

The Prize will be awarded to four academic or research organisations, and contestants can apply to one among the following three prize categories:

- **Sustainable Gender Equality Champions:** Organisations that can demonstrate a significant and sustained record of activity and a high level of achievement through the implementation of their GEP;
- **Newcomer Gender Equality Champions:** Organisations that have recently finalised the implementation of their first GEP and can demonstrate the most progress achieved through its implementation;
- **Inclusive Gender Equality Champions:** Organisations that have developed the most innovative inclusive GEP – i.e. a GEP addressing intersections between gender and at least two other social categories, such as racial or ethnic origin, social origin,

¹⁴ See General Annex B-Eligibility of the Horizon Europe Work Programme 2023-2025, pages 16-17: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2023-2024/wp-13-general-annexes_horizon-2023-2024_en.pdf

¹⁵ See General Annexes of the Horizon Europe Work Programme (Gender equality plans and gender mainstreaming in General Annex B – Eligibility) pages 16-17.

sexual orientation and gender identity (LGBTIQ) or disability – and can demonstrate concrete results obtained through its implementation.

Expected outcomes

- Enable the development of a European community of academic and research champions in institutional transformation towards inclusive gender equality. Strengthening of the inclusiveness and connectivity objectives under the new European Research Area. In case there are no winners for two or three of the four prizes, at least one prize will be awarded in each category, as long as there are winners in both.

Expected results

The prizes will increase public awareness of the importance of addressing gender equality in academic and research organisations through institutional change, incentivise a high degree of commitment to the implementation of inclusive GEPs, and create a community of champions inspiring other academic and research organisations into becoming gender equality champions themselves.

3. Available budget

Each prize winner will receive EUR 0.1 million from a total prize budget of EUR 0.4 million. There will be one winner in the prize category “Sustainable Gender Equality Champions”, two winners in the prize category “Newcomer Gender Equality Champions”, and one winner in the prize category “Inclusive Gender Equality Champions”. In case there is/are no winner(s) in one or more categories, the corresponding prize amount will be reallocated to the highest-ranking proposal(s) in another category/ies according to the order below.

In the absence of a winner in category 1 “Sustainable Gender Equality Champions”, the prize amount will be reallocated to the next highest-ranking proposal(s) submitted in category 2 “Newcomer Gender Equality Champions”. In the absence of such submitted proposal in category 2, the prize amount will be reallocated to the next highest-ranking proposal(s) submitted in category 3 “Inclusive Gender Equality Champions”.

In the absence of a winner in category 3 “Inclusive Gender Equality Champions”, the prize amount will be reallocated to the next highest-ranking proposal(s) submitted in category 2 “Newcomer Gender Equality Champions”. In the absence of such submitted proposal in category 2, the prize amount will be reallocated to the next highest-ranking proposal(s) submitted in category 1 “Sustainable Gender Equality Champions”.

In the absence of a winner in category 2 “Newcomer Gender Equality Champions”, the prize amount will be reallocated to the next highest-ranking proposal(s) submitted in category 3 “Inclusive Gender Equality Champion”. In the absence of such submitted proposal in category 3, the prize amount will be reallocated to the next highest-ranking proposal(s) submitted in category 1 “Sustainable Gender Equality Champions”.

4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines	
Call opening:	4 September 2024
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	16 October 2024 – 17:00:00 CET (Brussels)
Evaluation:	October 2024 - February 2025
Information on evaluation results/ award:	March 2025

5. Admissibility and documents

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

Applications 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.

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

The applicant must upload the latest fully implemented Gender Equality Plan (GEP)¹⁶ of the organisation submitting the proposal. The document should preferably be in English.

Applications 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 (*to be filled in directly online*).
- Application Form Part B — contains the technical description of the application (*to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed and then re-uploaded*). In the relevant field, applicants must provide the weblink to where the Gender Equality Plan on which the application is based has been published and can be accessed as a publicly available document signed by the top management.
- Mandatory annex: Gender Equality Plan (GEP) on which the application is based (*to be uploaded as a PDF file*).

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

Applications are limited to maximum **15 pages** (Part B). Evaluators will not consider any

¹⁶ See GEP lifecycle definition in Section 1. Background. A fully implemented GEP means that has fulfilled a full lifecycle.

additional pages.

An applicant can only apply to one category of the three prize categories.

You may be asked at a later stage for further documents (*for legal entity validation, bank account validation, ethics review, declaration of honour, etc*) or for a short video message on your achievements in the chosen Prize category. This video will be used for communication purposes only.

- 📘 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 applicant must:

- be a legal entity (public or private body)
- be a research performing organisation, including a higher education establishment (e.g. university)
- be established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:
 - EU Member State (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs))
 - non-EU country associated to the Horizon Europe ([associated countries](#))
- comply with the mandatory requirements of the Horizon Europe Gender Equality Plan eligibility criterion. This means that the applicant's GEP must meet the four following mandatory process-related requirements¹⁷:
 - publication: a formal document published on the institution's website and signed by the top management;
 - dedicated resources: commitment of resources and expertise in gender equality to implement the plan;
 - data collection and monitoring: sex/gender disaggregated data on personnel (and students, for the establishments concerned) and annual reporting based on indicators;
 - training: awareness raising/training on gender equality and unconscious gender biases for staff and decision-makers.
- Applicants that have already received an EU or Euratom prize - cannot receive a second prize for the same activities.

Winners of any category of the previous editions of EU Award for Gender Equality Champions are not eligible for any category of this prize.

Eligibility conditions

Category 1 "Sustainable Gender Equality Champions"

¹⁷ See General Annex B-Eligibility of the Horizon Europe Work Programme 2023-2025, pages 16-17: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2023-2024/wp-13-general-annexes_horizon-2023-2024_en.pdf.

The applicant must have completed at least one full GEP lifecycle¹⁸ in order to be able to measure progress and show sustainability over time. This entails having gone through audit, planning and implementation phases as well as, at least, one monitoring and evaluation phase including one review of findings and progress, and resulting in at least one new implementation phase in a new GEP lifecycle.

Category 3 “Inclusive Gender Equality Champions”

The applicant’s inclusive GEP must have completed, at least a full GEP lifecycle¹⁹, including having gone through at least one monitoring and evaluation phase, in order to be able to show measurable progress.

For prize categories 1 (Sustainable Champions) and 3 (Inclusive Champions), the submitted GEP must have been completed (e.i., fully implemented and evaluated). Therefore, the duration of the submitted GEP lifecycle cannot extend beyond the call closure date.

Category 2 “Newcomer Gender Equality Champions”

The applicant must have recently finalised the implementation of their first GEP, in order to be able to show measurable progress. The submitted GEP must have completed at least the three phases of a GEP lifecycle (audit, planning and implementation) and reached the monitoring and evaluation phase by the call closure date.

For all three categories, to be considered as complying with the Horizon Europe GEP eligibility criterion, the applicant must have filled in accordingly the corresponding self-declaration GEP questionnaire featured under the Legal Information tab of the Participant Register, accessible through the Funding and Tenders Portal.

Only applications submitted by a single legal entity will be allowed. Joint applications will not be allowed.

All applicants must register in the [Participant Register](#) — before the call deadline — and will have to be validated by the Central Validation Service (REA Validation). For the validation, you will be requested to upload documents showing legal status and origin.

Specific cases

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 persons²⁰.

Third countries currently negotiating association agreements to Horizon Europe — Applicants established in third countries negotiating association to Horizon Europe may participate in the call and can receive a prize if the Horizon Europe association agreement with the third country concerned applies at the time when the award decision is taken (see General Annex B to Horizon Europe Work programme 2023-2025).

¹⁸ See GEP lifecycle definition in Section 1. Background

¹⁹ See GEP lifecycle definition in Section 1. Background.

²⁰ See Article 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

EU restrictive measures — Special rules apply for certain entities (*e.g. entities subject to [EU restrictive measures](#) under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)²¹ and entities covered by Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#)²²*). Such entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity.

Measures for the protection of the Union budget against breaches of the principles of the rule of law in Hungary — Following the Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/2506, as of 16 December 2022, no legal commitments can be entered into with Hungarian public interest trusts established under the Hungarian Act IX of 2021 or any entity they maintain. Affected entities may continue to apply to calls for prizes. However, as long as the Council measures are not lifted, such entities are not eligible to be awarded the prize.

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

Eligible activities

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

Ethics and values

Activities must comply with the highest ethical standards and the applicable EU, international and national law on ethical principles.

Moreover, they must respect basic EU values (such as respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and human rights, including the rights of minorities).

The activities must comply with:

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

and may not:

- aim at human cloning for reproductive purposes
- intend to modify the genetic heritage of human beings which could make such changes heritable (with the exception of research relating to cancer treatment of the gonads, which may be financed), or
- intend to create human embryos solely for the purpose of research or for the purpose of stem cell procurement, including by means of somatic cell nuclear transfer.

Moreover, activities must have an exclusive focus on civil applications and no prize can be awarded for activities carried out outside the EU, if they are prohibited in all Member States.

²¹ 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](#).

²² 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).

Applications involving ethics issues will have to undergo an ethics review to authorise funding. Applications that did not respect the above ethical principles and standards cannot be awarded a prize.

Security

Applications involving EU classified information must comply with Decision [2015/444](#) and its implementing rules. Applications that are too security-sensitive cannot be awarded a prize.

7. 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 participate²³:

- 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 misconduct²⁴ (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 prize)
- 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 prize)
- 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 prize)
- 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 prize)
- created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the prize).

Applicants will also be refused if it turns out that²⁵:

²³ See Articles 136 and 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#)

²⁴ 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.

- 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

Applications will be subject to a formal evaluation by a **jury**.

If there are more than 200 applications for a given prize category, there will be a **pre-selection** to select the best 50 to pass to jury review. Otherwise, all applications will pass directly to jury review.

The pre-selection panel and jury usually have a different composition, but jury members may participate in the pre-selection panel.

The pre-selection panel/jury will evaluate each application against the award criteria.

For applications with the same score, in each of the three prize categories, the pre-selection panel/jury will determine a **priority order** according to the following approach: The score for the criterion N°1 will be given a weight of 2. If two or more applications still tie in any category, the prize in this category will be equally divided and awarded to all applications with the same score.

On the basis of the evaluation by the jury (and after the mandatory checks: *ethics review, security scrutiny, legal entity validation, non-exclusion, double funding and plagiarism, etc*), the awarding authority will decide on the award of the prize.

All applications will be informed about the evaluation result (**evaluation result letter**). Successful applications will be awarded the prize; the unsuccessful ones will be rejected.

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 are deemed to have been accessed (and received) 10 days after sending and that deadlines will be counted from then (*see also [Funding & Tenders Portal Terms and Conditions](#)*).

9. Award criteria

If admissible and eligible, the applications will be evaluated and ranked against the following **award criteria** defined for each of the three prize categories.

1. **Category “Sustainable Gender Equality Champions”**

Organisations that can demonstrate a significant and sustained record of activity and a high level of concrete achievement through the implementation of their GEP.

²⁵ See Article 141(1) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

Award criterion 1: Sustainable Impact – The applicant should demonstrate through concrete examples a high level of achievement and impact of its fully implemented GEP(s)²⁶ in creating positive and sustainable institutional change towards gender equality, and in covering all five thematic areas recommended in Horizon Europe Work Programme 2023-2025 General Annex B²⁷. The applicant must support their claims with qualitative and quantitative data, including baselines, performance measures and indicators, and show the sustainable anchoring of the GEP in the organisation and long-lasting improvements.

Award criterion 2: Inspirational Model – The applicant should demonstrate an influence of its fully implemented GEP(s) beyond the sole organisation, such as serving as an inspiration to other organisations e.g. through peer-mentoring, having an impact on policy at regional level and/or national level and/or EU level.

Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score
Sustainable Impact	3.0	5.0
Inspirational Model	3.0	5.0
Overall (pass) scores	6.0	10.0

Maximum points: 10 points.

Individual thresholds: 3/5 points.

Overall threshold: 6 points.

2. Category “Newcomer Gender Equality Champions”

Organisations that have recently finalised the implementation of their first GEP and can demonstrate the most progress achieved through its implementation.

- **Award criterion 1: Progress Achieved** – The applicant should demonstrate through concrete examples the progress achieved in creating positive institutional change towards gender equality through the implementation of its GEP, and in covering at least four of the five thematic areas recommended in Horizon Europe Work Programme 2023-2025 General Annex B²⁸. The applicant must support their claims with qualitative and quantitative data, including baselines, performance measures and indicators.
- **Award criterion 2: Stakeholder engagement** – The applicant should demonstrate a high level of engagement of the organisation’s various internal stakeholders, including women and men from the different categories of staff (and student body for teaching institutions), in the design, implementation and assessment of its GEP.

²⁶ See section 1. Background.

²⁷ See section 1. Background.

²⁸ See Section 1. Background.

Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score
Progress Achieved	3.0	5.0
Stakeholder engagement	3.0	5.0
Overall (pass) scores	6.0	10.0

Maximum points: 10 points.

Individual thresholds: 3/5 points.

Overall threshold: 6 points.

3. Category “Inclusive Gender Equality Champions”

Organisations that have developed the most innovative inclusive GEP – i.e. a GEP addressing intersections between gender and at least two other social categories, such as racial or ethnic origin, social origin, sexual orientation and gender identity (LGBTIQ), or disability, - and can demonstrate concrete results obtained through its implementation.

- **Award criterion 1: Progress achieved** – The applicant should demonstrate through concrete examples the progress achieved in creating positive institutional change towards inclusive gender equality through the implementation of its inclusive GEP, and in covering at least three of the five thematic areas recommended in the Horizon Europe Work Programme 2023-2025 General Annex B²⁹. The applicant must support their claims with qualitative and quantitative data including baselines, performance measures and indicators.
- **Award criterion 2: Innovative Inclusiveness** – The applicant should demonstrate the impact of innovative actions implemented under its inclusive GEP- i.e. a GEP addressing intersections between gender and at least two other social categories³⁰. Examples of such innovative actions are new ideas or new tools not tested elsewhere, advanced participatory approaches, innovative partnerships, or else targeted innovative actions such as actions addressing the impact of COVID-19 on gender equality and inclusiveness, support schemes for endangered researchers, etc.

Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score
Progress Achieved	3.0	5.0
Innovative Inclusiveness	3.0	5.0

²⁹ See Section 1. Background

³⁰ Examples of such social categories include racial or ethnic origin, social origin, sexual orientation and gender identity (LGBTIQ), or disability.

Overall (pass) scores	6.0	10.0
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Maximum points: 10 points.

Individual thresholds: 3/5 points.

Overall threshold: 6 points.

In each of the three prize categories, applications must pass both the individual thresholds AND the overall threshold. Evaluation scores will be given for each of the criteria relevant for a given category. Scores will be given with a resolution of one decimal place.

In each category, the prize will be awarded to the application(s) with the best score(s). Other applications will be rejected.

10. Other conditions

Payment arrangements

The prize money will be paid to the prize winners after the award ceremony, provided all the requested documents have been submitted.

Communication — Dissemination — Visibility of funding

Prize winners must promote the prize and its results, by providing targeted information to multiple audiences (including the media and the public) in a strategic and effective manner.

Communication activities related to the prize (*including media interviews, press statements, presentations, etc., in electronic form, via traditional or social media, etc.*), must acknowledge EU support and display the European flag (emblem) and funding statement (translated into local languages, where appropriate):



Funded by the
European Union



Funded by the
European Union



Co-funded by the
European Union

The emblem must remain distinct and cannot be modified by adding other visual or text. separate and marks, brands

Apart from the emblem, no other visual identity or logo may be used to highlight the EU support.

When displayed in association with other logos (*e.g. of winners or sponsors*), the emblem must be displayed at least as prominently and visibly as the other logos.

For the purposes of these obligations, the winners may use the emblem without first obtaining approval from the awarding authority. This does not, however, give them the right to exclusive use. Moreover, they may not appropriate the emblem or any similar trademark or logo, either by registration or by any other means.

Any communication or dissemination activity related to the prize must use factually accurate information.

Moreover, it must indicate the following disclaimer (translated into local languages where appropriate):

“Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union. Neither the European Union nor the awarding authority can be held responsible for them.”

IPR — Rights of use

The awarding authority does not obtain ownership of the results produced in the context of the prize.

The awarding authority has the right to use non-sensitive information relating to the prize and materials and documents received from the winners (*such as pictures or audio-visual material, in paper or electronic form*) for information, communication, dissemination and publicity purposes.

Photos and videos taken by the awarding authority either in preparation of the award ceremony or during the award ceremony are the sole property of the awarding authority.

Checks, audits and investigations

The awarding authority, the European Research Executive Agency (REA) the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), the European Public Prosecutor’s Office (EPPO) and the European Court of Auditors (ECA) may carry out checks, audits and investigations in

relation to the prize.³¹

Withdrawal of the prize — Recovery of undue amounts

The awarding authority may withdraw the prize after its award and recover all payments made, if it finds out that:

- false information, fraud or corruption was used to obtain it
- the prize winners were not eligible or should have been excluded or
- the prize winners are in serious breach of their obligations under these Rules of Contest.

11. How to submit an application

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

You can access the Portal [here](#), or by clicking 'Apply now' on the official prize webpage.

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 application

Access the Electronic Submission System via the Topic page in the [Search Funding & Tenders](#) section.

Submit your application in 3 parts, as follows:

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

³¹ For the powers of OLAF, EPPO and ECA, see Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 883/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 September 2013 concerning investigations conducted by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1073/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Regulation (Euratom) No 1074/1999 (OJ L 248, 18/09/2013, p. 1), Council Regulation (Euratom, EC) No 2185/1996 of 11 November 1996 concerning on-the-spot checks and inspections carried out by the Commission in order to protect the European Communities' financial interests against fraud and other irregularities (OJ L 292, 15/11/1996, p. 2), Council Regulation (EU) 2017/1939 of 12 October 2017 implementing enhanced cooperation on the establishment of the European Public Prosecutor's Office ('the EPPO') and Article 287 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU) and Article 257 of EU Financial Regulation 2018/1046.

The application 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 application might be considered incomplete and thus inadmissible.

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

Once the application 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 application 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 application (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

Additional information can be found here:

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

Please also consult the Topic page regularly, since we will use it to publish call updates.

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: [Research Enquiry Service](#) .

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 updates).
- **Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Exchange System** — By submitting the application, all applicants **accept** to use the electronic exchange system in accordance with the [Portal Terms & Conditions](#).
- **Registration** — Before submitting the application, all applicants must be registered in the [Participant Register](#). The participant identification code (PIC) (one per applicant) is mandatory for the Application Form.
- **No double funding** — There is a strict prohibition of double funding from the EU budget. Applications that have already received an EU prize cannot receive a second prize for the same activities.
- **Resubmission** — Applications may be changed and re-submitted until the deadline for submission. For first past the post prizes with cut-off dates, applications can be changed and re-submitted until the cut-off date; the re-submission may however let you use your position as first in place.
- **Rejection** — By submitting the application, all applicants accept the call conditions set out in these Rules of Contest (and the documents they refer to). Applications that do not comply with all the call conditions will be **rejected**. This applies also to joint applicants: All applicants need to fulfil the criteria; if any one of them doesn't, they must be replaced or the entire application will be rejected.
- **Cancellation** — The awarding authority may cancel the contest or decide not to award the prize — without any obligation to compensate participants (*e.g. no applications, jury cannot determine winner, winner is not eligible or must be excluded, objectives have already been achieved, etc*). In this case, you will be informed via a call update.
- **Language** — You can submit your application in any official EU language. However, for reasons of efficiency, we strongly advise you to use English. 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 prizes awarded and the winners (name, address and amount awarded) is published each year on the [Europa website](#).

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** — Any processing of personal data in the context of this prize will be done in accordance with Regulation [2018/1725](#). It will be processed solely for the purpose of evaluating your application (and subsequent management of your prize and, if needed, programme monitoring, evaluation and communication). Details are explained in the [Funding & Tenders Portal Privacy Statement](#).

By submitting the application, all applicants accept that the awarding authority will publish information on the finalists and winners.