



# **Justice Programme (JUST)**

## **Call for proposals**

Call for proposals for action grants to support transnational projects in the fields of e-Justice, victims' rights and procedural rights (JUST-2023-JACC-EJUSTICE)

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers

**JUST.04 – Programme and financial management**

## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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## 0. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for EU **action grants** in the field of e-Justice, victims’ rights and procedural rights under the **Justice Programme (JUST)**.

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

- Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 ([EU Financial Regulation](#)), and
- the basic act (Justice Programme Regulation [2021/693](#)<sup>1</sup>).

The call is launched in accordance with the 2023-2024 Work Programme<sup>2</sup> and will be managed by **the European Commission, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST)**.

Please note that this call **is subject to the final adoption of the budget for 2024** by the EU budgetary authority. In case there are substantial changes, we may have to modify the call.

The call covers the following **topic**:

- **JUST-2023-JACC-EJUSTICE — Call for proposals for action grants to support transnational projects in the fields of e-Justice, victims’ rights and procedural rights**

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

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

- the [Call Document](#) outlines the:
  - background, objectives, scope, activities that can be funded and the expected results (sections 1 and 2)
  - timetable and available budget (sections 3 and 4)

<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/693 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 establishing the Justice Programme (OJ L 156, 5.5.2021, p. 21).

<sup>2</sup> Commission Implementing Decision C(2022)8467 final of 25 November 2022 concerning the adoption of the work programme for 2023 and 2024 and the financing decision for the implementation of the Justice Programme.

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

You are also encouraged to visit [Justice and Consumers](#) page on Europa and the [Justice Programme Project Results](#) website to consult the list of projects funded previously.

## 1. Background

Digitalisation of justice can tangibly contribute to increasing the efficiency and resilience of justice systems. Similarly, progress on European e-Justice can support an effective European area of justice with regard to strengthening judicial cooperation and facilitating access to justice for individuals, legal practitioners businesses, including through the use of novel technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence.

In the area of criminal justice, there is a need to continue improving the implementation and application in practice of the six EU directives adopted in the field of procedural rights of suspects and accused persons, namely Directive 2010/64/EU on the right to interpretation and translation, Directive 2012/13/EU on the right to information, Directive 2013/48/EU on the right of access to a lawyer, Directive (EU) 2016/343 on strengthening certain aspects of the principle on presumption of innocence as well as the right to be present at the trial, Directive (EU) 2016/800 on procedural safeguards for children, Directive (EU) 2016/1919 on legal aid, and to raise awareness about the legislation adopted in this area. It is also necessary to explore possible further developments in the area of procedural rights.

In the area of victims' rights, there is a need to focus on the implementation of the EU Strategy on victims' rights (2020 – 2025). This includes continuous work on improving the application of the EU rules on victims' rights. Other important objectives of the strategy include empowering victims of crime by ensuring safe environment so that they can report crime, participate in criminal proceedings, claim compensation and ultimately recover from consequences of crime. Strengthening cooperation and coordination among all relevant stakeholders is also particularly important. It encourages civil society to get involved in providing support to victims in cooperation with the relevant national authorities. Actions considering the specific situation of victims of war crimes, in particular in relation to provision of access to information, support and protection to those victims, shall also be duly considered.

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

### **JUST-2023- JACC-EJUSTICE — Call for proposals for action grants to support transnational projects in the fields of e-Justice, victims' rights and procedural rights**

#### *Objectives (expected outcome)*

Facilitate effective and non-discriminatory access to justice for all, and effective redress, including by electronic means (e-Justice), by promoting efficient civil, and criminal procedures, and by promoting and supporting the rights of all victims of crime as well as the procedural rights of suspects and accused persons in criminal proceedings.

#### *Themes and priorities (scope)*

This biennial call for proposals, under the Access to justice specific objective, covers two priorities:

#### **1. e-Justice priority**

The key objective under the e-Justice priority is to contribute to achieving the goals of the Commission Communication on the Digitalisation of Justice in the EU<sup>3</sup> and the Council European e-Justice Strategy<sup>4</sup> and Action Plan 2019-2023<sup>5</sup> by supporting the implementation of e-Justice projects at the European and national level (as far as they have a European dimension).

Primary priority will be given to projects aiming at joining or enhancing existing or on-going e-Justice projects:

- Projects facilitating electronic cross-border interaction and communication between judicial authorities, as well as with citizens, businesses and practitioners in judicial proceedings. For example, with regard to:
  - o Preparatory and implementation activities with regard to the Commission Proposal for a Regulation on the digitalisation of judicial cooperation and access to justice in cross-border civil, commercial and criminal matters, and amending certain acts in the judicial cooperation<sup>6</sup> (depending on the progress achieved in the negotiations process between the co-legislators);
  - o The use of videoconferencing in a cross-border setting, in particular with regard to standardisation and achieving interoperability.
- Participation in the e-Evidence Digital Exchange System, set up following the Council conclusions on improving criminal justice in cyberspace from 9 June 2016<sup>7</sup>;
- Integration of electronic multilingual standard forms into national e-government systems, in the context of Regulation (EU) 2016/1191<sup>8</sup>. In this regard, national

<sup>3</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=COM:2020:710:FIN>.

<sup>4</sup> [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52019XG0313\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52019XG0313(01)).

<sup>5</sup> [https://eurlex.europa.eu/legalcontent/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52019XG0313\(02\)&from=EN](https://eurlex.europa.eu/legalcontent/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52019XG0313(02)&from=EN).

<sup>6</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021PC0759>.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/24300/cyberspace-en.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32016R1191>.

implementations must use and comply with the common XML schemas (XSDs) developed by the Commission;

- Participation in the Find a Lawyer (FAL) search tool hosted on the e-Justice Portal;
- Participation in the Find a Notary (FAN) search tool hosted on the e-Justice Portal;
- Participation in the Find a Bailiff (FAB) search tool to be hosted on the e-Justice Portal;
- Implementation of the European Case Law Identifier (ECLI<sup>9</sup>) in case law repositories and interconnection with the e-Justice Portal;
- Participation in the Land Registers Interconnection (LRI) to be hosted on the e-Justice Portal;
- Participation in the European Court Database (in both civil and criminal matters) hosted on the e-Justice Portal.

Secondary priority will be given to the development of concrete cases on the use of artificial intelligence and distributed ledger technology in the justice area.

The Artificial Intelligence Act complements existing Union law on non-discrimination with specific requirements for AI systems, which have been identified as intended to assist a judicial authority in researching and interpreting facts and the law and in applying the law to a concrete set of facts. The specific rules aim to minimise the risk of algorithmic discrimination, in particular in relation to the design and the quality of data sets used for the development of AI systems, complemented with obligations for testing, risk management, data governance, documentation, human oversight and cybersecurity throughout the AI systems lifecycle. The design and the quality of data sets used for AI systems should, for example, take into account non-discrimination, including a gender dimension to forestall gender-based discrimination.

Finally, as tertiary priority, other e-Justice projects related to the development of relevant EU policies such as victims' rights, rights of suspects and accused in criminal proceedings and projects which are in advanced stage of development or already live on the e-Justice Portal at the moment when the call is published could also be financed.

National projects will be funded insofar as they offer a clearly demonstrated EU added value, for instance allowing to participate in EU projects, providing best practices for other EU Member States or promoting interoperability. Notwithstanding, transnational (multi-country) projects will have priority over national ones.

Indicative budget: EUR 4 100 000

## **2. Victims' rights and procedural rights priority**

Projects to be funded under this priority should:

- contribute to the effective and coherent application of EU criminal law in the area of the rights of persons suspected or accused of crime;

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<sup>9</sup> Relevant activities could also relate to the adoption of / migration to the new ECLI Extension Language ("ECLI-XL") standard: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9280-2019-REV-2/en/pdf>.

- contribute to the effective and coherent application of EU law in the area of the rights of victims of crime in line with the priorities set up by the EU Strategy on victims' rights (2020-2025).

In both areas (procedural rights and victims' rights), actions may include possible future EU initiatives regarding gaps in EU legislation where a further need for EU action is identified. Projects ensuring maximum practical benefits and impact for the target groups will be assessed more favorably than theoretical projects consisting mainly of research and other analytical activities. Actions on access to information, support, protection to victims of war crimes shall also be considered. Successful projects shall ensure easy access to and wide dissemination of their results.

In the area of procedural rights, the main legislative measures concerned include in particular:

- Directive (EU) 2016/800 on procedural safeguards for children who are suspects or accused persons in criminal proceedings;
- Directive (EU) 2016/1919 on legal aid for suspects and accused persons in criminal proceedings and for requested persons in European arrest warrant proceedings;
- Directive 2010/64/EU on the right to interpretation and translation in criminal proceedings;
- Directive 2012/13/EU on the right to information in criminal proceedings;
- Directive 2013/48/EU on the right of access to a lawyer in criminal proceedings and in European arrest warrant proceedings, and on the right to have a third party informed upon deprivation of liberty and to communicate with third persons and with consular authorities while deprived of liberty;
- Directive (EU) 2016/343 on the strengthening of certain aspects of the presumption of innocence and of the right to be present at the trial in criminal proceedings.

In the area of victims' rights, the main legislative measures concerned include in particular:

- Directive 2012/29/EU establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime;
- Council Directive 2004/80/EC relating to compensation to crime victims;
- Directive 2011/99/EU on the European protection order;
- Regulation (EU) No 606/2013 on mutual recognition of protection measures in civil matters;
- Directive (EU) 2017/541 on combating terrorism.

Indicative budget: EUR 6 000 000

### *Activities that can be funded (scope)*

All activities should, both at design and implementation stage, incorporate a gender equality perspective. Thus, applicants are expected to conduct and include in their proposal a [gender analysis](#), which maps the potential different impact of the project and its activities on women and men as well as girls and boys in all their diversity. Thereby, unintended negative effects of the intervention on either gender should be



forestalled (do no-harm approach). To this end, applicants are encouraged to consult the key questions listed on the EIGE website, when conducting their gender analysis. A gender-sensitive approach should be taken to the identification of best practices, data collection, including [sex-disaggregated statistics](#), and information dissemination. All communication activities should forestall discrimination, victimisation and stereotyping of women and men. Mutual learning, analytical and training activities should incorporate a gender equality perspective, and promote gender balanced participation in trainings.

### **For the e-justice priority:**

Project activities under this call would in principle include analytical, conceptual, design and elaboration work, IT software development, quality assurance and related auxiliary measures necessary for the establishment of new IT systems, as well as the expansion and adaptation of existing national and transnational solutions towards addressing the objectives of the call.

The requirements of the eIDAS Regulation<sup>10</sup>, the use of the Digital Building Blocks developed under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) programme<sup>11</sup>, as well as the results from the e-CODEX project and ISA Core vocabularies, should be taken into account if and where relevant.

Supporting activities relating to project management, content preparation, editorial work, communication, promotion and dissemination are also eligible for funding.

### **For the victims' rights and procedural rights priority:**

The following activities can be covered:

- mutual learning, exchange of good practices, development of working and learning methods which may be transferable to other participating countries;
- exchange and provision of information and development of information and educational tools;
- capacity building for professionals, including training in victim-sensitive communication;
- facilitating cooperation between competent authorities (including where relevant national experts or agencies dealing with the aspects covered by this call) and/or legal practitioners and/or service providers (including multi-disciplinary networks at EU or international, national, regional or local levels) and/or civil society organisations / National Human Rights Institutions / Equality bodies, Ombuds Institutions and national authorities (at national and local level, where relevant, including experts with gender expertise);
- communication activities including dissemination of information about rights and activities raising awareness of the existing rules on rights at EU and national levels, relevant to the priorities of the call;
- training activities, as long as they are of ancillary nature and not the main purpose of the project;
- analytical activities, such as data collection and creation of data bases, surveys, research etc.

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<sup>10</sup> Regulation (EU) 910/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

<sup>11</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/cefdigital/wiki/display/CEFDIGITAL/CEF+Digital+Home>.

### Expected impact

#### **For the e-justice priority:**

- Addressing the relevant policy goals set out in the Commission Communication on the digitalisation of justice in the EU;
- Improved participation, with the aim of achieving full EU coverage concerning the various e-Justice interconnection projects;
- Opportunities allowing Member States to engage in new pilot initiatives, in particular those identified in the European e-Justice Action Plan (2019-2023);
- Improved awareness of on-going and future e-Justice activities.

#### **For the victims' rights and procedural rights priority:**

Expected results under the area of procedural rights are:

- Improved knowledge of the legislation and administrative practices related to specific provisions of the EU acquis regulating the rights of suspects and accused persons in criminal proceedings, and increased capacity of national practitioners to address issues related to such rights;
- Strengthened cooperation and exchange of information between competent national authorities, NGOs and professional organisations in relation to the rights of persons suspected or accused of crime;
- Harmonisation of the administrative practices applicable in relation to the relevant legislation in different Member States;
- Reduced risks of breaches of fair trial rights;
- Compatibility of the national legal framework and regulations linked to the rights of persons suspected or accused in criminal proceedings with EU acquis on procedural rights;

Expected results under the area of victims' rights are:

- Increased capacity of national practitioners to address issues related to the rights of victims of crime;
- Improved cooperation among the competent national authorities, NGOs and/or professional organisations in the field of victims' rights, including for compensation in cross-border cases;
- Improved public awareness and knowledge about victims' rights at both EU and national level (including amongst the most vulnerable groups);
- Improved knowledge about specific provisions of the EU acquis regulating issues such as referring victims to the relevant support services, victims' access to information in the area of victims' rights, individual assessment of victims' needs, use of procedural means to protect victims during criminal trial, including use of remote hearings and video testimonies;
- Compatibility of the national legal framework and administrative practice related to victims' rights with the relevant EU acquis;
- Improved support services to victims through:
  - increased number of victims' support organisations providing general and specialist support services to victims of crimes and their family members, and of targeted and integrated specialist support services for victims with

specific needs such as victims of domestic violence, victims of other forms of gender-based violence, child victims, victims of hate crime and migrant victims of crime, victims of war crimes in a targeted, gender-sensitive and integrated manner that regroups psychological and social aid with a cooperation with police and judicial authorities;

- improved access of victims to such support services;
- increased quality of the services (including gender-sensitive, victim-centred and trauma-informed approaches to services) provided by victims support organisations;
- Increased awareness of the problematic of relations between victims and offenders including actions aimed at improving victims' access to justice and decreased re-offending via tools such as restorative justice.

### 3. Available budget

The indicative available call budget is **EUR 10 100 000**.

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

### 4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
Call opening:	4 May 2023
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>4 October 2023 – 17:00:00 CET</u> (Brussels)
Evaluation:	October 2023 -January 2024
Information on evaluation results:	February - March 2024
GA signature:	April – May 2024

### 5. Admissibility and documents


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

Proposals must be submitted **electronically** via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (accessible via the Topic page in the [Search Funding & Tenders](#) section). Paper submissions are NOT possible.

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

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

- Application Form Part A — contains administrative information about the participants (future coordinator, beneficiaries and affiliated entities) and the summarised budget for the project (*to be filled in directly online*)
- Application Form Part B — contains the technical description of the project (*to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed and then assembled and re-uploaded*)
- Part C (*to be filled in directly online*) containing additional project data, including mandatory indicators
- **mandatory annexes and supporting documents** (*templates available to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, assembled and re-uploaded*):
  - **detailed budget table** (*template available in the Portal Submission System – **to be re-uploaded filled out in the format xlsx***)
  - **CVs (standard) of core project team** (or, where the key personnel is not yet known, a job profile description)
  - **activity report of last year of the coordinator** (unless it is a public body)
  - **list of previous projects** (key projects for the last 4 years) (*template available in Part B*)
  - for participants with activities involving children: their **child protection policy** covering the four areas described in the [Keeping Children Safe Child Safeguarding Standards](#)

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


Please be aware that since the detailed budget table serves as the basis for fixing the lump sums for the grants (and since lump sums must be reliable proxies for the actual costs of a project), the costs you include MUST comply with the basic eligibility conditions for EU actual cost grants (see [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6](#)). This is particularly important for purchases and subcontracting, which must comply with best value for money (or if appropriate the lowest price) and be free of any conflict of interests. If the budget table contains ineligible costs, the grant may be reduced (even later on during the project implementation or after their end).

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

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

Proposals are limited to maximum **45 pages** (Part B). Evaluators will not consider any additional pages. Shorter proposals are welcome.

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

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

## 6. Eligibility

### Eligible participants (eligible countries)

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

- be legal entities (public or private bodies)
- be established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:
  - EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs), excluding Denmark)
  - non-EU countries:
    - countries associated to the Justice Programme or countries which are in ongoing negotiations for an association agreement and where the agreement enters into force before grant signature ([list of participating countries](#))
    -

Beneficiaries and affiliated entities must register in the [Participant Register](#) — before submitting the proposal — and will have to be validated by the Central Validation Service (REA Validation). For the validation, they will be requested to upload documents showing legal status and origin.

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


### *Specific cases*

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

International organisations — International organisations are eligible both as coordinators and partners. The rules on eligible countries do not apply to them.

Entities without legal personality — Entities which do not have legal personality under their national law may exceptionally participate, provided that their representatives have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf, and offer guarantees for the protection of the EU financial interests equivalent to that offered by legal persons<sup>12</sup>.

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

Associations and interest groupings — Entities composed of members (like for instance networks) may participate as 'sole beneficiaries' or 'beneficiaries without legal personality'<sup>13</sup>.  Please note that if the action will be implemented by the members, they should also participate (either as beneficiaries or as affiliated entities, otherwise their costs will NOT be eligible).

Countries currently negotiating association agreements — Beneficiaries from countries with ongoing negotiations (*see list above*) may participate in the call and can sign grants

<sup>12</sup> See Article 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

<sup>13</sup> For the definitions, see Articles 187(2) and 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

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>14</sup> and entities covered by Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#)<sup>15</sup>*). Such entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity, including as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any).

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

### Consortium composition

*For the e-Justice priority:*

Proposals must be submitted by a consortium of at least two applicants (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities) and from at least two different eligible countries. The consortium must include at least one public body, private non-profit organisation or international organisation as beneficiary (not as affiliated entity).

Proposals by single applicants or by a consortium from one eligible country are exceptionally allowed, but only if the project application clearly demonstrated potential for EU added value.

*For the victims' rights and procedural rights priority:*

Proposals must be submitted by a consortium of at least two applicants (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities), which complies with the following conditions:

- minimum two independent entities from two different eligible countries.
- the consortium must include at least one public body, private non-profit organisation or international organisation as beneficiary or affiliated entity.

### Eligible activities

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

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

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

Financial support to third parties is not allowed.

### Geographic location (target countries)

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

### Duration

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<sup>14</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>15</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).

*For the e-Justice priority:*

Projects should normally range between 12 and 24 months.

Extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment.

*For the victims' rights and procedural rights priority:*

Projects should normally range between 12 and 24 months.

Extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment.

*Project budget*

*For the e-Justice priority:*

The EU grant applied for cannot be lower than EUR 100 000. The maximum grant amount is EUR 800 000 per project.

The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

*For the victims' rights and procedural rights priority:*

The EU grant applied for cannot be lower than EUR 100 000. There is no upper limit.

The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

*Ethics and EU values*

Projects must comply with:

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

Projects must seek to promote gender equality and non-discrimination mainstreaming in accordance with the [Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit](#). Project activities should contribute to the equal empowerment of women and men in all their diversity, ensuring that they achieve their full potential and enjoy the same rights. They should also seek to reduce levels of discrimination suffered by particular groups (as well as those at risk of multiple discrimination) and to improve equality outcomes for individuals<sup>16</sup>. Proposals should integrate gender and non-discrimination considerations in proposals and target a gender-balanced representation in project teams and activities. It is also important that individual data collected by the beneficiaries are broken down by sex ([sex-disaggregated data](#)), disability or age whenever possible.

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

Participants with activities involving children must moreover have a child protection policy covering the four areas described in the [Keeping Children Safe Child Safeguarding Standards](#). This policy must be available online and transparent to everyone who comes in contact with the organisation. It must include clear information about the recruitment

of staff (including trainees and volunteers) and include background checks (vetting). It must also include clear procedures and rules to staff, including reporting rules, and continuous training.

## 7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion

### Financial capacity

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

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

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

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

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

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

- further information
- an enhanced financial responsibility regime, i.e., joint and several responsibility for all beneficiaries or joint and several liability of affiliated entities (*see below, section 10*)
- prefinancing paid in instalments
- (one or more) prefinancing guarantees (*see below, section 10*)

or

- propose no prefinancing
- request that you are replaced or, if needed, reject the entire proposal.

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

### Operational capacity

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

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



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

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

- general profiles (qualifications and experiences) of the staff responsible for managing and implementing the project
- description of the consortium participants
- applicants' activity reports of last year (if applicable)
- list of previous projects (key projects for the last 4 years).

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

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

### Exclusion

Applicants which are subject to an **EU exclusion decision** or in one of the following **exclusion situations** that bar them from receiving EU funding can NOT participate<sup>17</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>18</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, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No [2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation,

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<sup>17</sup> See Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

<sup>18</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.

decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant.

Applicants will also be refused if it turns out that<sup>19</sup>:

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

## 8. Evaluation and award procedure

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


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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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<sup>19</sup> See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

## 9. Award criteria

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

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

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

Maximum points: 100 points.

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

Overall threshold: 70 points.

Proposals that pass the individual threshold for the criterion 'Relevance' AND the overall threshold will be considered for funding — within the limits of the available budget (i.e., up to the budget ceiling). Other proposals will be rejected.

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

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

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

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

### Starting date and project duration

The project starting date and duration will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 1*). Normally the starting date will be after grant signature. The action should start within 6 months following the Grant Agreement signature, except in duly justified cases. Retroactive application can be granted exceptionally for duly justified reasons — but never earlier than the proposal submission date.

Project duration: *see section 6 above*

Extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment.

### Milestones and deliverables

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

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

### Form of grant, funding rate and maximum grant amount

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

Project budget (maximum grant amount): *see section 6 above*.

The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

The grant will be a lump sum grant. This means that it will reimburse a fixed amount, based on a lump sum or financing not linked to costs. The amount will be fixed by the granting authority on the basis of the estimated project budget and a funding rate of 90%.

### Budget categories and cost eligibility rules

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

*Budget categories for this call:*

- Lump sum contributions<sup>20</sup>

*Specific cost eligibility rules for this call:*

- the lump sum amount must be calculated in accordance with the methodology set out in the lump sum decision and using the detailed budget table provided
- the lump sum calculation should respect the following conditions:
  - for lump sums based on estimated project budgets: the estimated budget must comply with the basic eligibility conditions for EU actual cost grants (see [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6](#))

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<sup>20</sup> [Decision](#) of 30/09/2022 authorising the use of lump sums for actions under the Justice Programme (2021-2027).

- for lump sums based on estimated project budgets: costs for financial support to third parties: not allowed

### Reporting and payment arrangements

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

After grant signature, you will normally receive a **prefinancing** to start working on the project (float of normally **80%** of the maximum grant amount; exceptionally less or no pre-financing). The pre-financing will be paid 30 days from entry into force/financial guarantee (if required) — whichever is the latest.


There may also be **additional prefinancing payments**, especially in case of a weak financial capacity.

There will be no **interim payments**.

For projects with duration of 24 months or more, you will be expected to submit one progress report not linked to payments after 12 months.

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

All payments will be made to the coordinator.

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

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

### Prefinancing guarantees

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Certificates

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

### Liability regime for recoveries

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

For beneficiaries, it is limited joint and several liability with individual ceilings — *each beneficiary up to their maximum grant amount*.

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

### Provisions concerning the project implementation

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

- rights of use on results: Yes

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

- additional communication and dissemination activities: Yes

### Other specificities

n/a

### Non-compliance and breach of contract

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



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

## **11. How to submit an application**

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

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

### **a) create a user account and register your organisation**

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

Once you have an 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 4 parts, as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 12. Help

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

- [Online Manual](#)
- FAQs on the Topic page (for call-specific questions in open calls)
- [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: [EC-JUSTICE-CALLS@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EC-JUSTICE-CALLS@ec.europa.eu).

Please indicate clearly the reference of the call and topic to which your question relates (*see cover page*).

## 13. Important



### IMPORTANT

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

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

- **Coordinator** — In multi-beneficiary grants, the beneficiaries participate as consortium (group of beneficiaries). They will have to choose a coordinator, who will take care of the project management and coordination and will represent the consortium towards the granting authority. In mono-beneficiary grants, the single beneficiary will automatically be coordinator.
- **Affiliated entities** — Applicants may participate with affiliated entities (i.e. entities linked to a beneficiary which participate in the action with similar rights and obligations as the beneficiaries, but do not sign the grant and therefore do not become beneficiaries themselves). They will get a part of the grant money and must therefore comply with all the call conditions and be validated (just like beneficiaries); but they do not count towards the minimum eligibility criteria for consortium composition (if any).
- **Associated partners** — Applicants may participate with associated partners (i.e. partner organisations which participate in the action but without the right to get grant money). They participate without funding and therefore do not need to be validated.
- **Consortium agreement** — For practical and legal reasons it is recommended to set up internal arrangements that allow you to deal with exceptional or unforeseen circumstances (in all cases, even if not mandatory under the Grant Agreement). The consortium agreement also gives you the possibility to redistribute the grant money according to your own consortium-internal principles and parameters (for instance, one beneficiary can reattribute its grant money to another beneficiary). The consortium agreement thus allows you to customise the EU grant to the needs inside your consortium and can also help to protect you in case of disputes.



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

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

This includes:

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

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

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