



# Justice Programme (JUST)

## Call for proposals

Call for proposals for action grants to promote judicial cooperation in civil  
and criminal matters

(JUST-2024-JC00)

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**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers

**JUST.H3 – Budget, programmes and financial management**

## **CALL FOR PROPOSALS**

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## 0. Introduction

This is call for proposals for EU **action grants** in the field of judicial cooperation in civil and commercial and criminal matters under the **Justice Programme (JUST)**.

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

- Regulation 2018/1046 ([EU Financial Regulation](#))
- 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 2024 budget by the EU budgetary authority. In case there are substantial changes, we may have to modify the call (or even cancel it).

The call covers the following **topic**:

- **JUST-2024-JCOO — Call for proposals for action grants to promote judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters.**

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)
  - 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:

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<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 25.11.2022 on the adoption of the Justice work programme for 2023-2024.

- 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 2014-2020 Project Results](#) and [Justice Programme 2021-2027 Project Results](#) websites to consult the list of projects funded previously.

## **1. Background**

Funding under this call will support national and transnational projects that promote judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters. While there are a number of EU instruments in force which provide a legal framework for judicial cooperation among Member States, projects funded by the EU budget can improve their application, identify issues, facilitate contacts and in general improve the cooperation between the relevant stakeholders.

Furthermore, in the digital age and against the background of the challenges highlighted by the COVID-19 crisis, judicial cooperation needs to make full use of electronic tools and channels to ensure the effective, swift, secure and resilient communication between the competent authorities and with the relevant actors.

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

### **JUST-2024-JCOO — Call for proposals for action grants to promote judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters.**

#### Objectives (expected outcome)

Facilitate and support judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters, and promote the rule of law, independence and impartiality of the judiciary, including by supporting the efforts to improve the effectiveness of national justice systems, and the effective enforcement of decisions.

#### Themes and priorities (scope)

There are four priorities for 2024:

### **1. Judicial cooperation in civil matters**

The aim is to promote judicial cooperation in civil matters and to contribute to the effective and coherent application and enforcement of EU instruments to create a genuine European area of justice in civil and commercial matters and in the field of family law.

Priority shall be given to projects aiming in particular at:

- better enforcement of judicial decisions through better procedures, case-handling and cooperation in cross-border disputes;
- improving in a child-sensitive way the situation of children involved in civil cases, e.g. through better procedures, case-handling and cooperation in the family law area such as parental responsibility, international child abduction and maintenance or issues relating to civil status of children;
- facilitating cross-border procedures, e.g. on service of documents and taking of evidence, on successions or cross-border circulation of public documents, through better information and awareness-raising.

## **2. Judicial cooperation in criminal matters**

The aim of this call for proposals is to promote judicial cooperation in criminal matters and to contribute to the effective and coherent application of EU mutual recognition instruments in criminal matters.

a) Priority shall be given to the implementation and practical application of the following mutual recognition instruments:

- Directive 2014/41/EU regarding the European Investigation Order in criminal matters;
- Council Framework Decision 2002/584/JHA on the European arrest warrant and the surrender procedures between Member States;
- Council Framework Decision 2008/909/JHA on the application of the principle of mutual recognition of judgments in criminal matters imposing custodial sentences or measures involving deprivation of liberty for the purpose of their enforcement in the European Union;
- Council Framework Decision 2008/947/JHA on the application of the principle of mutual recognition to judgments and probation decisions with a view to the supervision of probation measures and alternative sanctions;
- Council Framework Decision 2009/829/JHA on the application, between Member States of the European Union, of the principle of mutual recognition to decisions on supervision measures as an alternative to provisional detention;
- Council Framework Decision 2005/214/JHA on the application of the principle of mutual recognition to financial penalties;
- Regulation (EU) 2018/1805 on the mutual recognition of freezing orders and confiscation orders.

A specific priority regarding any particular instrument(s) listed above may be given in the call for proposals.

b) Priority shall also be given to:

- an efficient contribution to the European Security Union Strategy as regards the judicial responses to terrorism, notably on reinforcing the prevention of radicalisation, especially in prisons and after release from prison, and taking into account the gender of (ex) detainees.
- implementation of the Commission Recommendation on detention<sup>3</sup> and linked issues related to detention conditions, including protection of vulnerable detainees and prevention gender-based violence, pre-trial detention and

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<sup>3</sup> [Recommendation on the procedural rights of suspects and accused persons subject to pre-trial detention and on material detention conditions](#)

alternatives to detention, as well as raising awareness of case law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) and recommendations of the Council of Europe in this field;

- the functioning of Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA) Treaties or other Treaties containing provisions on MLA with third States (e.g. EU-US MLA Agreement, Budapest Cybercrime Convention and its Second Additional Protocol), including with respect to the exchange of electronic data.

Proposals not in line with priorities 1 and 2 may still be awarded funding, if applicants can justify this by:

- the necessity to improve the implementation and application of the civil or criminal justice EU acquis on the basis of an evidence-based needs assessment, showing that more activities are required for the proper application of EU law in the field to be covered;
- the need to improve judicial cooperation, e.g. in case of gaps in the acquis or to face newly emerging challenges, on the basis of an evidence-based needs assessment.

However, applicants should take into account that a deviation from the priorities 1 and 2 may result in a less relevant proposal, which may therefore not be considered for funding.

Applicants are strongly advised to research Commission initiatives in the field of judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters to minimise the risk of replication of existing structures, and in particular IT-platforms.

### **3. Support to the Member States for the setting up and strengthening of national networks active in the area of judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters**

The main objective is to contribute to the effective and coherent application of the EU acquis relating to judicial cooperation in civil, commercial and criminal matters.

In the area of civil and commercial matters, support will be provided to the members of the European Judicial Network in civil and commercial matters (EJN-civil) and to the national authorities, courts and professional associations they represent. Projects will focus on setting up and strengthening national EJN-civil networks to ensure better handling of cross-border civil cases and more generally a better implementation of EU legislation. The national networks will encourage the full participation of all national Network members<sup>4</sup> (e.g. central authorities, bailiffs, notaries, lawyers). This will help to increase the contribution of EU countries to the Network's activities (in particular the Network meetings) and enhance the work and visibility of the Network as a whole.

In the area of criminal matters, support will be provided to national authorities, courts, prosecution services and professional associations representing them, for the setting up and/or strengthening of national networks in order to ensure better implementation of EU judicial cooperation instruments in criminal matters.

Strengthened national networks can promote better implementation of EU civil and criminal justice instruments through cooperation, dialogue, sharing of experience,

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<sup>4</sup> As listed in Article 2(1) of the [Council Decision establishing the EJN-civil](#)



exchange of information and training activities (where appropriate also in liaison with other national systems). Through these activities the national projects would ensure interaction at national level, knowledge sharing and gathering of information. As a result, this would deepen EU-wide building bridges and mutual trust between different justice systems.

#### **4. Support to the Member States for the linking and exchange of their biometric data with the ECRIS-TCN central system.**

The main objective of this priority is to support national projects implementing the changes to:

- national IT systems allowing for the appropriate linking and exchange of fingerprints and facial images with the ECRIS-TCN<sup>5</sup> central system.

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

Whereas several measures and initiatives are listed, it is not requested to include all of them in a single project. Projects with a strong focus are very much valued.

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.

This topic will cover the following activities:

- facilitating cooperation between competent authorities and agencies, legal practitioners and/or service providers (including multi-disciplinary networks at international, national, regional or local levels);
- mutual learning, identifying and exchange of best practices, development of working methods which may be transferable to other participating countries;
- analytical activities, including data collection, statistics, surveys, research, etc.;
- exchange and provision of information and development of information tools;
- capacity building for professionals;
- dissemination and awareness raising activities;
- training activities can also be funded under this call, as long as they are of ancillary nature and not the main purpose of the project.

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<sup>5</sup> European Criminal Record Information System – Third Country Nationals.

For priority 4, project activities 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 solutions towards addressing the objectives of priority 4. Activities relating to project management, communication, promotion and dissemination are also eligible for funding.

Activities under this topic, especially where they relate to IT software development (priority 1), will take into account existing solutions such as results from the e-CODEX project, CEF building blocks and ISA<sup>2</sup> Core vocabularies.

Proposals with a practical focus are deemed more impactful than mere research proposals.

Similarly, proposals that consider in their design and implementation a gender perspective, are deemed more impactful (See also section 9).

### Expected impact

#### **For priorities 1 and 2:**

- Increased capacity of national practitioners, courts and authorities to address issues related to judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters and to the application of the EU instruments on civil and civil procedural law, as well as on criminal and criminal procedural law;
- Strengthened cooperation and exchange of information between competent national authorities (including courts) in relation to judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters, including taking into account the relevant case-law of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU);
- Alignment of the Member States' administrative practices related to the relevant legislation;
- The legal framework and regulations linked to judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters are in line with EU acquis and relevant case-law of the CJEU;
- Improved cross-border cooperation between judicial authorities responsible for judicial cooperation in civil, commercial and criminal matters, and improved cooperation and coordination between these authorities and other responsible agencies and institutions across the EU; Prosecutors, judges and other stakeholders have better specialised knowledge and experience on the legislation and administrative practices related to judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters;
- Acceleration of proceedings in relation to judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters; less breaches of time-limits;
- Increased awareness of policy makers related to judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters;
- In particular for priority 2, improved situation of persons subject to measures in the field of judicial cooperation in criminal matters, enhancement of their social rehabilitation and re-integrations in a gender-sensitive way, reduced risks of violation of their fundamental rights.

#### **For priority 3:**

- Better implementation of EU judicial cooperation instruments in civil and criminal matters;
- Increased capacity of national practitioners, courts and authorities to address issues related to judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters and to the application of the EU instruments on civil and civil procedural law, as well as on criminal and criminal procedural law;

- Prosecutors, judges and other stakeholders have better specialised knowledge and experience on the legislation and administrative practices related to judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters;
- Strengthened cooperation and exchange of information between competent national authorities (including courts) in relation to judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters, including taking into account the relevant case-law of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU);
- More efficient and better functioning national networks in order to ensure better implementation and case-handling at the national level;
- Increased input of national networks to the Network's activities to strengthen the Network as a whole.

#### **For priority 4:**

- Improved exchange of fingerprints and facial images between national IT systems and the ECRIS-TCN central system;
- Enhanced capacity of national IT systems dealing with fingerprints and facial images;
- Improved processes at national level allowing for the appropriate linking and exchange of fingerprints and facial images with the ECRIS-TCN central system.

When drafting your workpackages, please ensure to streamline deliverables to avoid redundancies. On average, a project should have around 10-15 deliverables.

### **3. Available budget**

The available call budget is **EUR 5 800 000**.

The availability of the call budget still depends on the adoption of the budget 2024 by the EU budgetary authority.

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, while covering all call priorities and still maintaining a balanced allocation of funds between judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters.

### **4. Timetable and deadlines**

<b>Timetable and deadlines (indicative)</b>	
Call opening:	12 December 2023
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>18 April 2024 – 17:00:00 CET</u> (Brussels)
Evaluation:	April-September 2024
Information on evaluation results:	September-October 2024
GA signature:	October-November 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 — contains additional project data and the project's contribution to EU programme key performance indicators (*to be filled in directly online*)
- **mandatory annexes and supporting documents** (*some templates are 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](#). It should be clearly indicated in the application which partner(s) will work directly with children/minors.

⚠ 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

Applications will only be considered eligible if their content corresponds wholly (or at least in part) to the topic description for which it is submitted.

### *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](#))

In addition, under the **priorities 1 and 2**:

- a) Organisations which are profit-oriented must submit applications in partnership with public entities or private non-profit-oriented organisations;
- b) Projects must be transnational and involve organisations from at least two participating countries.

In addition, under the **priority 3**:

- a) In the area of civil and commercial matters, the application must be submitted by the officially appointed members of EJM in civil and commercial matters, or by the national authorities, courts and professional associations representing the officially appointed members of EJM in civil and commercial matters;
- b) In the area of criminal matters, the application must be submitted by national authorities, courts, prosecution services and professional associations representing them;
- c) Only one application per participating country will be accepted. Projects do not need to have a transnational aspect.

In addition, under the **priority 4**, the applicants must:

- a) be the national authorities responsible for the systems linking national criminal records databases, as well as fingerprint databases, to the ECRIS-TCN central system.

- b) Only one application per participating country will be accepted. Projects do not need to have a transnational aspect.

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 under the **priorities 1 and 2**. 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>6</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>7</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 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>8</sup> and entities covered by Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#)<sup>9</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*

<sup>6</sup> See Article 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

<sup>7</sup> For the definitions, see Articles 187(2) and 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

<sup>8</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>9</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 priorities 1 and 2, proposals must be submitted by a consortium complying with the following conditions:

- The applications must involve minimum 2 entities (beneficiaries, not affiliated entities) from 2 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).

For priority 3, proposals by single applicants are also allowed.

For priority 4, proposals by single applicants are also allowed.

### Eligible activities

Eligible activities are the ones set out in section 2 above. Activities must be grouped into work packages (e.g., Project Management and Coordination; Communication and Dissemination, etc.), which are major sub-divisions of the project.

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 the 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

Projects should normally range between 12 and 24 months.

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

### Project budget

For priority 1 (civil matters), and priority 4 (ECRIS): the EU grant applied for cannot be lower than € 75 000. There is no upper limit.

For priority 2 (criminal matters) and priority 3 (EJN civil and criminal): Project budgets have to range between EUR 75 000 and EUR 350 000 per project.

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>10</sup>. Proposals should integrate gender and non-discrimination considerations in proposals and target a gender-balanced representation in project teams and activities. It is also important that individual data collected by the beneficiaries are broken down by sex ([sex-disaggregated data](#)), disability or age whenever possible.

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

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

## 7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion

### Financial capacity

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

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

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

- 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*)

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<sup>10</sup> [Non-discrimination mainstreaming– instruments, case studies and way forwards](#)



- 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
- activity report of last year of the coordinator (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>11</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>12</sup> (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)

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<sup>11</sup> See Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

- 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, 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>13</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


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<sup>12</sup> Professional misconduct includes: violation of ethical standards of the profession, wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility, false declarations/misrepresentation of information, participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition, violation of IPR, attempting to influence decision-making processes or obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain advantage.

<sup>13</sup> See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

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.

## 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/transnational 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 and measures/policies to guarantee full compliance with EU values 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).

<b>Award criteria</b>	<b>Minimum pass score</b>	<b>Maximum score</b>
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

Activities must be grouped into work packages, which are major sub-divisions of the project. For each work package, an objective, list of the activities, milestones and deliverables must be defined. Deliverables must be quantifiable and measurable. The grouping should be logical and guided by identifiable outputs.

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>14</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/calculator provided (if any)
- 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](#))
  - for lump sums based on estimated project budgets: costs for financial support to third parties is not allowed
  - communication costs for presenting the project on the participants' websites or social media accounts are eligible; costs for separate project websites are not eligible
  - personnel costs:
    - volunteers' unit costs<sup>15</sup> are allowed (without indirect costs)

### Reporting and payment arrangements

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

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<sup>14</sup> [Decision](#) of 30/09/2022 authorising the use of lump sums for actions under the Justice Programme (2021-2027).


<sup>15</sup> [Commission Decision](#) of 10 April 2019 authorising the use of unit costs for declaring personnel costs for the work carried out by volunteers under an action or a work programme (C(2019)2646)

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.

For projects with duration of 24 months, 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 one of the following:

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

or

- individual financial responsibility — *each beneficiary only for their own debts.*

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

#### Provisions concerning the project implementation

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

- rights of use on results: Yes

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

- additional communication and dissemination activities: Yes

#### Other specificities

n/a

#### Non-compliance and breach of contract

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Submit your proposal in 4 parts, as follows:



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

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 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 Regulation [2018/1725](#). 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](#).