



Social Prerogatives and Specific Competencies Lines (SocPL)

Call for proposals

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CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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0. Introduction

This is a call for EU **action grants** in the field of social dialogue under the **Social Prerogatives and Specific Competencies Lines (SOCPL)**.

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

- Regulation 2018/1046 ([EU Financial Regulation](#))

The call is launched in accordance with the 2021 Work Programme¹ and will be managed by the **European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL)**.

The call covers the following **topic**:

- **SOCPL-2021-IND-REL-Improving expertise in the field of industrial relations**

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

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

- the [Call Document](#) outlines the:
 - background, objectives, scope, activities that can be funded and the expected results (sections 1 and 2)
 - timetable and available budget (sections 3 and 4)
 - admissibility and eligibility conditions, criteria for financial and operational capacity and exclusion (sections 5, 6 and 7)
 - evaluation and award procedure (section 8)
 - award criteria (section 9)
 - legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements (section 10)
 - how to submit an application (section 11)
- the [Online Manual](#) outlines the:
 - procedures to register and submit proposals online via the EU Funding & Tenders Portal ('Portal')
 - recommendations for the preparation of the application
- the [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement](#) contains:
 - detailed annotations on all the provisions in the Grant Agreement you will have to sign in order to obtain the grant (*including cost eligibility, payment schedule, accessory obligations, etc*).

¹ Commission Implementing Decision C(2021) 1113 final of 23 February 2021 concerning the adoption of the work programme for 2021 and the financing decision for the implementation of the prerogatives of the Commission and specific powers conferred on the Commission in the social and employment field.

1. Background

Budget heading 07.20.04.06 is intended to cover grants for measures promoting social dialogue at cross-industry and sectoral level in accordance with Article 154 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), and for developing European social dialogue in its different dimensions of information exchange, consultation, negotiation and joint action. The budget heading is also **intended to promote analysis and research in the field of industrial relations, notably** promotion of exchange of information and experience among the parties actively involved in industrial relations, with the aim of contributing to developing and reinforcing industrial relations structures in Europe.

By promoting analysis and research on industrial relations, the measures should help the social partner organisations (representatives of management and labour) to contribute to addressing the overarching EU employment and social policy challenges as laid down in particular in:

- the Political Guidelines presented by Ursula von der Leyen in “A Union that strives for more – My agenda for Europe” and the Commission Work Programme 2021;
- the Commission Communications “A Strong Social Europe for Just Transitions”, “The European Green Deal”, the EU’s Digital Strategy and the European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience;
- the Objectives of the Recovery and Resilience Facility and corresponding national Recovery and Resilience plans;
- the joint proclamation of European Parliament, Council and Commission of November 2017 on the European Pillar of Social Rights as well as the related Commission Communication Establishing a European Pillar of Social Rights (COM(2017)0250) and the follow-up Action Plan to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights (as adopted on 3rd March 2021);
- the Annual Sustainable Growth Strategy, the Joint Employment Report and the recommendations addressed to the Member States in the context of the European Semester; The budget heading can be used to finance actions involving partners from the Candidate Countries.

Moreover, this call is responding to the challenges posed to social partners by the Covid-19 crisis, which has a significant impact on their capacity to pursue social dialogue.

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

Objectives (expected outcome)

The **overarching objective** of this call is to promote analysis and research on industrial relations, at EU level as well as in comparative terms (identifying convergences and differences in the industrial relations systems in place in the EU Member States and in Candidate Countries), thereby contributing and promoting exchange of information and experience among the parties actively involved in industrial relations, with the aim of contributing to developing and reinforcing industrial relations structures in Europe.

Definitions used in the context of this call

“Social partner organisation” is either an organisation representing workers – often also referred to as “trade union” – or an organisation representing employers. They engage in some form of “social dialogue”, discussing and often negotiating such issues as wages, working conditions, training, etc.

"Industrial relations" concerns the collective – rather than individual – aspects of the employment relationship between workers, employers and their respective representatives. This includes the tripartite dimension where public authorities (at different levels) are involved. As such, industrial relations refer to the set of rules governing employment and relations at the workplace, together with the ways in which the rules are made, changed, interpreted and implemented by trade unions, employers and the state.

Themes and priorities (scope)

Actions that address the following industrial relations (see definition above) themes will be particularly welcome:

(1) The role and contribution of industrial relations, including social dialogue at different levels

- in responding to the major challenges and in seizing the opportunities related to the transition to a climate-neutral and digital economy, including artificial intelligence, as well as globalisation, demographic ageing and technological change;
- to address the employment, social and economic challenges as identified in the European Pillar of Social Rights and its Action Plan adopted in 2021;
- to mitigate the economic, employment and social consequences of the COVID-19 crisis, while contributing to the reallocation processes which are key to a sustainable recovery.

(2) the adaptation of social dialogue, in particular collective bargaining, to changes in employment and work related challenges, such as:

- modernisation of the labour market, job creation and job matching; employment in SMEs;
- new forms of work; quality of work, anticipation, preparation and management of change and restructuring;
- digitalisation (including artificial intelligence);
- sustainability, including its environmental and international dimension;
- (intra-EU) labour mobility, migration, youth employment, equal opportunities, health and safety at work, modernisation of social protection systems.

(3) Functioning and effects of coordination of collective bargaining across different levels and territories, including the role of collective bargaining systems in ensuring adequate minimum wages for all workers in the European Union, in light of the Commission proposal for a Directive on Minimum Wages adopted in 2020.

Activities that can be funded (scope)

The following categories of actions are targeted:

(1) Analysis and research in the field of industrial relations, such as

- Activities to further deepen the analysis on topics/key findings that were examined by the European Commission e.g. the chapters on social dialogue in Employment and Social Developments in Europe (ESDE) Reports;

- Research activities on industrial relations and social dialogue, such as studies, surveys and other forms of data collection, monitoring exercises, action research;
- Measures to enhance the collection and use of (comparative) information on industrial relations systems in EU Member States and Candidate Countries and on developments at European level;
- Initiatives to promote awareness of effective industrial relations practices, at both national and European level, including by bringing together relevant actors such as academia, social partners and policy makers.

(2) Exchange of information and experience among the parties actively involved in industrial relations, with the aim of contributing to developing and reinforcing industrial relations structures in Europe:

- Measures to identify and exchange information in the area of industrial relations, including through the activities of networks between industrial relations parties and/or experts.

(3) Actions to disseminate above findings in publications, round tables, seminars, conferences, training measures and training tools:

- The actions contribute to future industrial relations analysis by the Commission, notably in the context of the European Semester and the employment and social development in Europe (ESDE) Reports.

Activities funded under this call for proposals should pay adequate attention to gender equality and avoid discrimination.

Access for people with disabilities shall be guaranteed.

When drafting the proposal, applicants are invited to pay particular attention to the following elements:

- The proposal should provide a clear explanation of the rationale and problem definition/analysis underpinning the proposed action, as well as the specific contribution of the action to the objectives of the call for proposals and its expected impact.
- This call for proposals aims at funding projects with a strong research/analysis focus. Project proposals should therefore clearly describe the research methodology, covering at least the following elements:
 - The proposal should specify one or several research question(s). In doing so, applicants are strongly encouraged to explain how the project will contribute:
 - a. on the one hand to the EU policy agenda;
 - b. on the other hand to improving expertise in the field of industrial relations (including references to existing research on the given topic).
 - The key concepts or variables of the research project should be defined with a sufficient level of detail, indicating how the concepts will be measured;
 - The work plan should specify which data will be used to feed the analysis;
 - Projects building on existing data should indicate which sources will be used,

including, where relevant, the provisions to access the data;

- Where collection of new data is envisaged, the proposal should outline a data collection strategy, including measures to ensure data quality (envisaged number of cases, criteria according to which these will be selected)
- The work plan should include an analytical strategy, indicating how the data will be scrutinised in a systematic manner to shed light on the research question(s). Finally, the work plan should provide details on reporting of the research findings;
- In case of follow-up actions submitted by the same applicant on similar or related topics, the added value of the new proposal as compared to ongoing and previous actions should be clearly explained;
- The choice of organisations involved and countries covered should be duly explained and justified as regards their relevance towards the specific objectives of the action.

The Commission welcomes in particular projects that provide for a full project cycle, including preparatory, implementation and dissemination, follow-up and reporting activities.

Measures mainly aimed at directly supporting European social partners' initiatives and processes, such as consultations, meetings, negotiations and other actions related to the work of European Social Dialogue Committees at both sectoral and cross-industry level, are not covered by this call for proposals. These types of actions are funded under a separate call for proposals.

Expected impact

Proposals are expected to contribute to the promotion of social dialogue at cross-industry and sectoral level in accordance with Article 154 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). They shall in particular contribute to improved stakeholders' and social partners' expertise and knowledge on industrial relations, through analysis and research.

3. Available budget

The available call budget is **EUR 4 150 000**.

This budget might be increased by maximum 20%.

The Commission expects to fund between 10 and 25 proposals.

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

4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
Call opening:	29 April 2021
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>15 July 2021 – 17:00:00 CET</u> (Brussels)
Evaluation:	October 2021
Information on evaluation results:	December 2021
GA signature:	December 2021/ January 2022

5. Admissibility

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 as PDF in the system*)
- **mandatory annexes and supporting documents** (*to be uploaded as PDF files/included in Part B*):
 - detailed budget table: not applicable
 - CVs: short outlines of core project team
 - activity reports of last year: not applicable
 - list of previous projects (key projects relating to the subject of the call in the last 3 years)

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 **70 pages** (Part B). Evaluators will not consider any additional pages.

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

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

6. Eligibility

Eligible participants (eligible countries)

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

- be legal entities (public or private bodies)
- be established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:
 - EU Member State (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs))
 - non-EU countries (not for coordinator and single applicants): Candidate countries: Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey
- The single applicant must be an international organisation.
- The Coordinator, other beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners must fall within one of the following categories: non-profit-making organisations such as universities and research institutes; social partners; public authorities; international organisations, European-level organisations.
- Affiliated entities and associated partners may be part of a single applicant proposal or consortia.

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. 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 persons².

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 may participate as 'sole beneficiaries' or 'beneficiaries without legal personality'³. ⚠ 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).

Social partner organisations — These include notably the European social partner organisations that are consulted in accordance with Article 154 TFEU (for the list, see [List of consulted organisations](#)) as well as other European-level social partner organisations that are not included in this list, but who are for example involved in the preparation and launch of European social dialogue at sector level. Social partner organisations without legal personality are eligible provided that the conditions for entities without legal personality (see above) are met.

EU restrictive measures — Special rules apply for certain entities (e.g. entities subject to [EU restrictive measures](#) under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)⁴ and entities covered by Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#)⁵). Such entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity, including as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any).

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

Consortium composition

Proposals by single applicants are allowed.

Proposals submitted by a consortium must comply with the following conditions:

- To be eligible as consortium, actions must include a coordinator and a least one other beneficiary (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities;)
- The consortium must be composed of at least one non-profit-making university or research institute as coordinator or other beneficiary. This requirement is not applicable if the coordinator is an international organisation;
- If the coordinator is not a European-level or international organisation, it must be in a consortium with at least one organisation (other beneficiary) from a different eligible country to that of the coordinator.

Eligible activities

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

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

³ For the definitions, see Articles 187(2) and 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

⁴ Please note that the EU Official Journal contains the official list and, in case of conflict, its content prevails over that of the [EU Sanctions Map](#).

⁵ Commission guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#) on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards (OJEU C 205 of 19.07.2013, pp. 9-11).

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

Financial support to third parties is not allowed.

Geographic location (target countries)

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

Duration

Projects should normally range between 12 and 24 months (extensions are exceptionally possible, if duly justified and through an amendment).

Project budget

Project budgets are expected to range between EUR 150 000 and EUR 650 000 per project but this does not preclude the submission/selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion

Financial capacity

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

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

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

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

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

If we consider that one or more participants' 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 the participants 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 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.

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 (Short outlines of the proposed persons who will perform the main tasks, notably project manager and key personnel);
- description of the consortium participants;
- list of previous projects (key projects relating to the subject of the call in the last 3 years);
- C1 level of English, French or German for the project manager of the coordinator. For the project manager of the coordinator: a minimum of 2 years of professional experience in the field of social dialogue and/or industrial relations; the CV should include a specific section on experience in social dialogue and industrial relations, showing clearly that the requirement of minimum two years of experience is met.

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

Public bodies, Member State organisations and international organisations may be 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 participate⁶:

- 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 misconduct⁷ (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);

⁶ See Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

⁷ Professional misconduct includes: violation of ethical standards of the profession, wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility, false declarations/misrepresentation of information,

- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant);
- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decisionmaking- or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant);
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No [2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decisionmaking- or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant);
- created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decisionmaking- or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).

Applicants will also be refused if it turns out that⁸:


- 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 total scores.

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

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.

⁸ See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

include adjustments to the proposal to address recommendations of the evaluation committee or other concerns. Compliance will be a pre-condition for signing the grant.

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

9. Award criteria

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

- **Relevance:** clarity and consistency of project, objectives and planning; extent to which they match the themes and priorities and objectives of the call; contribution to the understanding of industrial relations; European/transnational dimension; impact/interest for a number of countries (EU or eligible non-EU countries); possibility to use the results in other countries; (Max. 30 points)
- **Quality:**
 - **Project design and implementation:** the research methodology; links between the identified problems, needs and solutions proposed (logical frame concept); methodology for implementing the project (concept and methodology, management, procedures, timetable, risks and risk management, monitoring and evaluation); feasibility of the project within the proposed time frame; cost effectiveness (sufficient/appropriate budget for proper implementation; best value for money) (Max. 25 points)
 - **Project team and cooperation arrangements:** quality of the consortium and project teams; appropriate procedures and problem-solving mechanisms for cooperating within the project teams and consortium; in case of single applicants (international organisation) the internal working arrangements of the team (Max. 25 points)
- **Impact:** appropriate dissemination strategy for ensuring sustainability and long-term impact; sustainability of contribution to improved stakeholders' and social partners' expertise and knowledge on industrial relations, (Max. 20 points)

Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score
Relevance	15	30
Quality — Project design and implementation	10	25
Quality — Project team and cooperation arrangements	10	25
Impact	8	20
Overall (pass) scores	60	100

Maximum points: 100 points.

Individual thresholds per criterion: 15/30, 10/25 and 8/20 points.

Overall threshold: 60 points.

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

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

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

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

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

Milestones and deliverables

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

Starting date and project duration

The project starting date and duration will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (Data Sheet, point 1). Normally the starting date will be after grant signature. Retroactive application can be granted exceptionally for duly justified reasons but never earlier than the proposal submission date.

Project duration: normally between 12 and 24 months

Form of grant, funding rate and maximum grant amount

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

Project budget: *see section 6 above*. The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

The grant will be a budget-based mixed actual cost grant (actual costs, with unit cost and flat-rate elements). This means that it will reimburse ONLY certain types of costs (eligible costs) and ONLY costs you actually incurred for your project (NOT the budgeted costs).

The costs will be reimbursed at the funding rate fixed in the Grant Agreement (90%).

Grants may NOT produce a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). For-profit organisations must declare their revenues and, if there is a profit, we will deduct it from the final grant amount (*see art 22.3*).

Moreover, please be aware that the final grant amount may be reduced in case of non-compliance with the Grant Agreement (*e.g. improper implementation, breach of obligations, etc*).

Budget categories and cost eligibility rules

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

Budget categories for this call:

- A. Personnel costs
 - A.1 Employees,
 - A.2 Natural persons under direct contract,
 - A.3 Seconded persons
 - A.4 SME owners and natural person beneficiaries
- B. Subcontracting costs
- C. Purchase costs
 - C.1 Travel and subsistence
 - C.2 Equipment
 - C.3 Other goods, works and services
- E. Indirect costs

Specific cost eligibility conditions for this call:

- personnel costs:
 - SME owner/natural person unit cost: No
 - volunteers unit cost: No
- travel and subsistence unit cost: Yes
- equipment costs: depreciation
- other cost categories:
 - costs for financial support to third parties: not allowed
- indirect cost flat-rate: 7% of the eligible direct costs (categories A-D, except volunteers costs, if any)
- VAT: non-deductible VAT is eligible (but please note that since 2013 VAT paid by beneficiaries that are public bodies acting as public authority is NOT eligible)
- other:
 - in-kind contributions for free are allowed, but cost-neutral, i.e. they cannot be declared as cost
 - kickoff meeting: costs for kickoff meeting or general information session organised by the granting authority are eligible (travel costs for maximum 2 persons, return ticket to Brussels and accommodation for one night) only if the meeting takes place after the project starting date set out in the Grant Agreement; the starting date can be changed through an amendment, if needed
 - project websites: communication costs for presenting the project on the the participants' websites or social media accounts are eligible; costs for *separate* project websites are not eligible
 - other ineligible costs: NO

Specific cost eligibility rules for this call: NOT APPLICABLE

Reporting and payment arrangements

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

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

- **actions of 12 months** : one prefinancing payment of 70% paid within 30 days from the entry into force of the grant agreement or after receiving the financial guarantee (if required), whichever is the latest
- **actions between 12 to 24 months**: prefinancing payments linked to annual reporting periods will be made as follows:
 - 40% from the entry into force of the grant agreement or after receiving the financial guarantee (if required), whichever is the latest
 - 40% after receiving an additional prefinancing report. Where the consumption of the previous prefinancing is less than 70%, the amount of the new prefinancing payment will be reduced by the difference between the 70% ceiling and the amount used
- **actions between 24 to 36 months**: prefinancing payments linked to annual reporting periods will be made as follows:
 - 30% from the entry into force of the grant agreement or after receiving the financial guarantee (if required), whichever is the latest
 - a second and third prefinancing of 40% and 20% after receiving additional prefinancing reports. Where the consumption of the previous prefinancing is less than 70%, the amount of the new prefinancing payment will be reduced by the difference between the 70% ceiling and the amount used.

There will be no **interim payments**.

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

All payments will be made to the coordinator.

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

Prefinancing guarantees

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

Specific rules for carrying out the action: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 18 and Annex 5)*:

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

Other specificities

n/a

Non-compliance and breach of contract

The Grant Agreement (chapter 5) provides for the measures we may take in case of

breach of contract (and other non-compliance issues).

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

11. How to submit an application

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

Submission is a 2-step process:

a) create a user account and register your organisation

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

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

b) submit the proposal

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

Submit your proposal in 3 parts, as follows:

- Part A includes administrative information about the applicant 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
- Annexes (*see section 5*). Upload them as PDF files.

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

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

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

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

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

12. Help

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

- [Online Manual](#)
- FAQs on the Topic page (for call-specific questions in open calls; not applicable for actions by invitation)
- [Portal FAQ](#) (for general questions).

Please also consult the Topic page regularly, since we will use it to publish call updates. (For invitations, we will contact you directly in case of a call update).

Contact

For individual questions on the Portal Submission System, please contact the [IT Helpdesk](#).

Non-IT related questions should be sent to the following email address:

- call-specific questions: EMPL-VP-INDUSTRIAL-RELATIONS@ec.europa.eu

Questions on submission must:

- be sent at the latest 7 days before the submission deadline (*see section 3*).
- indicate clearly the reference of the call and topic to which your question relates (*see cover page*).

13. Important



IMPORTANT

- **Don't wait until the end** — Complete your application sufficiently in advance of the deadline to avoid any last minute **technical problems**. Problems due to last minute submissions (*e.g. congestion, etc*) will be entirely at your risk. Call deadlines can NOT be extended.
- **Consult** the Portal Topic page regularly. We will use it to publish updates and additional information on the call (call and topic updates).
- **Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Exchange System** — By submitting the application, all participants **accept** to use the electronic exchange system in accordance with the [Portal Terms & Conditions](#).
- **Registration** — Before submitting the application, 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 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 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](#).