



# Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM)

## Call for proposals

*Technical Assistance for Disaster Risk Management ("Track 1")*

UCPM-2024-TRACK1

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**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
**Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations**  
**ECHO B - Disaster Preparedness and Prevention**  
**Prevention and Disaster Risk Management**

## Call for Proposals

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## 0. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for EU **action grants** in the field of disaster risk management under the **Union Civil Protection Mechanism**.

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

- Regulation (EU, EURATOM) 2018/1046 ([EU Financial Regulation](#))
- the basic act ([Decision No 1313/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism](#)).

The call for proposals is launched in accordance with the 2021-2026 Multi-Annual Work Programme<sup>1</sup> (hereafter the Financing Decision) and will be managed by the **European Commission, Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO)**.

The call covers the following **topic**:

- **UCPM-2024-Track 1 – Technical Assistance for Disaster Risk Management**

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](#). The frequently asked questions section (FAQ) will also provide useful information and will be updated regularly.

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

- the [Call Document](#) outlines the:
  - a) background, objectives, scope, activities that can be funded and the expected results (sections 1 and 2)
  - b) timetable and available budget (sections 3 and 4)
  - c) admissibility and eligibility conditions (including mandatory documents; sections 5 and 6)
  - d) criteria for financial and operational capacity and exclusion (section 7)
  - e) evaluation and award procedure (section 8)
  - f) award criteria (section 9)
  - g) legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements (section 10)
  - h) how to submit an application (section 11)
- the [Online Manual](#) outlines the:
  - i) procedures to register and submit proposals online via the EU Funding & Tenders Portal ('Portal')
  - j) recommendations for the preparation of the application

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<sup>1</sup> [Commission Implementing Decision C\(2023\) 6621 final of 06.10.2023](#), on the financing of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism and adopting a multiannual work programme for 2021-2026 repealing and replacing Implementing Decision C(2022) 9290 final

- the AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement contains:
  - k) 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 the DG ECHO website ([Prevention and Preparedness Programme webpage](#)) and the [Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network platform](#) to consult projects funded previously.

## 1. Background

The Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) was established by the European Parliament and the Council through the Decision No 1313/2013/EU<sup>2</sup>. Since then, the UCPM has become a comprehensive framework for European cooperation in disaster prevention, preparedness, and response.

Currently, 37 states - the 27 EU Member States and Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Türkiye and Ukraine are participating in the UCPM<sup>3</sup>. In addition, Kosovo<sup>4</sup> and Georgia are also eligible to apply under this call, in line with the Financing Decision.

The overall objective of the UCPM is to strengthen the cooperation among Member States in the field of civil protection to improve the effectiveness of systems for preventing, preparing for, and responding to natural and human-induced disasters. The UCPM aims to achieve a high level of protection against disasters by preventing or reducing their potential effects, and to enhance preparedness at Member State and Union level to respond to disasters.

The UCPM legislation also calls for the establishment and development of Union Disaster Resilience Goals in the area of civil protection. These goals are meant to guide actions that can be taken by the UCPM and by civil protection authorities in the Member States with a view to strengthen prevention, preparedness and response. A recommendation setting out Union Disaster Resilience Goals in the area of civil protection was published in February 2023<sup>5</sup>. The Recommendation identifies five strategic areas where further efforts are needed, including improving risk assessment, anticipation and DRM planning; increasing risk awareness and preparedness of the population; enhancing early warning; and ensuring a robust civil protection system. In addition, a Communication<sup>6</sup> accompanying the Recommendation on the Union Disaster Resilience Goals put forward five flagship initiatives that will contribute to the implementation of the Goals.

The co-financing of projects has been used by the UCPM as a key instrument for supporting Member States' disaster risk management (DRM) efforts<sup>7</sup>.

The Financing Decision provides for a funding opportunity to directly support Member

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<sup>2</sup> [OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 924](#)

<sup>3</sup> In light of Article 28(1a) of Decision No 1313/2013/EU, where reference is made to Member States, it shall be understood as including Participating States as defined in Article 4(12) of Decision No 1313/2013/EU.

<sup>4</sup> This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

<sup>5</sup> OJEU N° C 56 of 15.2.2023, p. 1

<sup>6</sup> [Communication COM\(2023\) 61 final](#) of 08.02.2023

<sup>7</sup> Article 21 of the [UCPM Decision 1313/2013/EU](#).

States' efforts in the field of disaster risk management.

First introduced in the UCPM Annual Work Programme of 2019, "Track 1" grants help national civil protection and other disaster risk management authorities prepare investment projects and strengthen their institutional and policy framework. Between 2019 and 2023, 20 Member States have received funding for 49 grants, for a total value of over EUR 20 million.

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

The action "Technical Assistance for Disaster Risk Management" (hereinafter: "Track 1") provides national disaster risk management authorities of eligible countries with financial support for the development of strategic disaster risk management actions. National disaster risk management authorities are best placed to identify priorities and gaps that the UCPM and other programmes (national, EU, international) can help address in their countries.

The Commission intends to award and sign Grant Agreement(s) directly with the national level civil protection authority (or other relevant disaster risk management competent authority) of eligible countries.

Activities eligible for funding under this action are presented in section 6 of this document. Applications will need to clearly explain how proposed activities contribute to achieving general and specific objectives mentioned below.

### 2.1. General Objectives of Track 1 (according to the Financing Decision)

- To support Member States' efforts of enhancing their institutional and technical capacity for preparing, implementing, monitoring, evaluating and improving strategic disaster prevention and preparedness activities.
- To sustain Member States' efforts to anticipate future systemic shocks, related to pandemics and/or other hazards, by fostering a culture of prevention and by improving cooperation between the civil protection, disaster risk management, and other relevant services.
- To support the preparation and the implementation of prevention and preparedness investments, strategies and reforms.
- To support the new and future Participating States in fulfilling their responsibilities under the Mechanism.
- To further develop plans, procedures and/or arrangements aimed at ensuring effective cross-sectoral, cross-border or trans-national crisis prevention, preparedness and response, while ensuring the integration with the overall UCPM efforts.
- To support civil protection organisations and disaster risk management actors in integrating climate adaptation and resilience in their risk assessments, strategies and plans, investments, and overall activities.
- To support the greening of civil protection and disaster risk management activities.

### 2.2. Specific Objectives of the 2024 Track 1 call

- To facilitate access to financing for investments in disaster risk management, including for the green transition;

- To contribute to new policies, strategies and investment plans for anticipating and managing current and future risks;
- To support the implementation of the [EU Wildfire Prevention Action Plan](#);
- To support the implementation of the Disaster Resilience Goals (four out of the five Goals are supported through this call, disaster resilience goal no. 4 is covered by response capacities in the European Civil Protection Pool and rescEU);
- To enhance risk awareness and preparedness of the population and to facilitate public access to disaster risk information;
- To generate evidence and knowledge for improved policy and practice in disaster risk management, and climate resilience;
- To support the green transition of disaster risk management authorities.

### 2.3. Priorities (scope)

**Applicants must choose only one of the following priorities:**

#### **Priority 1. Strategic frameworks for disaster risk management**

- a) Develop a multi-risk or risk-specific disaster risk management plan and/or strategy;
- b) Carry out studies and assessments required to develop policies, legislation, institutions and/or measures for improved disaster risk management and climate resilience;
- c) Develop a strategic framework for public awareness raising and training programmes for disaster risk management;
- d) Develop or enhance national multi-hazard disaster loss databases and/or tools;
- e) Develop green transition plans and/or instruments for disaster risk management authorities;
- f) Contribute to the implementation of the relevant Union disaster resilience goals.

#### **Priority 2. Investments for disaster risk management**

- a) Conduct feasibility studies and/or assessments required for the preparation or upgrade of investments for disaster risk management and climate resilience (infrastructure and/or other investment projects), such as design, cost-benefit analyses, impact assessments, etc.;
- b) Develop proposals for investment projects addressing disaster and climate resilience that would be submitted for funding to national budget or to various Union funds;
- c) Develop national/sub-national investment plan(s) for implementing prevention, preparedness, and/or recovery measures;
- d) Contribute to the implementation of the relevant Union Disaster Resilience Goal(s).



### **Priority 3. Investments to improve crisis management capabilities**

- a) Support effective crisis management capacities in a Member State, e.g. processes aimed at ensuring effective scenario-building, foresight and horizon-scanning for the purposes of detecting, identifying and assessing potential future crisis situations;
- b) Develop or improve existing plans, procedures and/or arrangements, including business continuity planning, aimed at ensuring effective cross-sectoral and cross-border crisis preparedness and responses, including ones with a UCPM component;
- c) Develop or enhance existing plans, procedures and/or arrangements for sharing information, including early warning information, on a cross-sectoral and cross-border basis;
- d) Contribute to the implementation of the relevant Union Disaster Resilience Goals.

#### 2.4. Activities that can be funded (scope)

Under **Priority 1. Strategic frameworks for disaster risk management** – outputs could include:

- New or improved multi-risk or risk-specific disaster risk management plans or strategies;
- Improved risk assessment analyses, methodologies or tools;
- Compilation of good practices and knowledge in the field of disaster risk management;
- Development and implementation of strategies and measures aimed at increasing risk awareness and preparedness of the population.
- Digital awareness raising products, such as media campaigns, including social media, open-source platforms, other visuals;
- Development of training and educational modules, methodologies, workshops, for the general public or specific groups, including vulnerable groups and persons with disabilities;
- New or improved action plans for prevention, including "build-back better" measures following disasters;
- Studies and analyses aimed at developing/upgrading policies, legislation, governance arrangements, and / or implementing the relevant Union disaster resilience goals;
- Green transition plans and/or tools for disaster risk management authorities;
- Relevant databases and/or IT applications;
- New or improved national multi-hazard disaster loss databases and procedures.

Under **Priority 2. Investments for disaster risk management** – outputs could include:

- Studies for the preparation or upgrade of investments for disaster risk management and climate resilience (e.g. feasibility assessment, economic analyses, impact assessment, design options, etc.).
- Proposals for investment projects addressing disaster risk management and climate resilience that would be submitted for funding under the national budget or other funding instruments (including EU), including technical specifications/terms of reference;
- Studies, analyses, guidelines, or procedures aimed at implementing the relevant Union disaster resilience goal.

Under **Priority 3. Investments to improve crisis management capabilities** – outputs could include:

- Plans and standard operating procedures;
- Development of training modules and corresponding training materials to build relevant skills in DRM;
- Guidance material for translating lessons learnt into existing learning initiatives;
- Scenario frameworks, manuals, guidelines and planning tools, action plans, evaluation reports and trainings on their use and adaptation;
- Improved methodologies and applications for forecasting, detection and monitoring;
- Tools for public warning, taking into account specific needs of the population (for instance, multi-lingual communities, vulnerable groups and persons with disabilities, etc.);
- Studies, analyses, guidelines, or procedures aimed at implementing the relevant Union Disaster Resilience Goal(s).

### 2.5. Expected Impact – outcomes

**Priority 1. Strategic framework for disaster risk management** – possible outcomes:

- Strengthened national disaster risk assessment capabilities;
- Strengthened national disaster risk management framework;
- Improved data and analysis for developing new disaster risk management policies, plans, legislation, etc.;
- Increased evidence-based public risk awareness and population preparedness;
- Strengthened capabilities and understanding of disaster risk among the general public or specific groups, including vulnerable groups and persons with disabilities.
- Improved multi-hazard disaster loss data;
- Progress made in the implementation of the Disaster Resilience Goals.

**Priority 2. Investments for disaster risk management** – possible outcomes:

- Increased quality of disaster risk management investment plans and

projects;

- Improved disaster risk management budgeting with a view to implement disaster resilience goals;
- More investments in disaster risk management;
- Increased synergies with other funding instruments;
- Progress made in the implementation of the Disaster Resilience Goals.

**Priority 3. Investments to improve crisis management capabilities** – possible outcomes

- Increased cross-sectoral crisis management capabilities at national, regional, local, cross-border and European levels;
- Strengthened early warning systems, public warning and information systems;
- Better forecasting and scenario-building capacities;
- Integration of early warning systems in decision making;
- Progress made in the implementation of the Disaster Resilience Goals.

2.6. Horizontal principles

Proposals are invited to highlight their contribution to the Commission’s horizontal commitments as appropriate to the proposal’s particular focus and structure. Horizontal issues include: the reduction of climate impacts associated with project implementation as well as the broader concept of greening in civil protection<sup>8</sup>; the promotion of gender balance and equality in project implementation and output; as well as the consideration of needs and perspectives of vulnerable groups and persons with disabilities.

**3. Available budget**

The estimated available call budget is **EUR4 500 000**.

We reserve the right not to award all available funds, depending on the proposals received and the results of the evaluation.

**4. Timetable and deadlines**

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
Call opening:	01 February 2024
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>23 April 2024 – 17:00:00 CET</u> (Brussels)
Evaluation:	April-May 2024
Information on evaluation results:	June 2024
GA signature:	September - October 2024

<sup>8</sup> A [recent report prepared by PPRD East project](#) could be used for inspiration.

## 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 (coordinator and, if applicable, 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*)
- Mandatory annexes and supporting documents (*to be uploaded*):
  - Detailed budget table (*template available in the Submission System*)
  - Letter of Support from the competent national civil protection authority, except for applicants which themselves are the national civil protection authority. Guidance on the information to be provided to the national authority when seeking endorsement is available [here](#). (*specific Word template available in the Submission System*).

Please note that the amounts entered into the summarised budget table (filled in directly online) must correspond to the amounts calculated in the detailed budget table. In case of discrepancies, the amounts in the online summarised budget table will prevail.


At proposal submission, 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, the beneficiary and affiliated entity will have to confirm this again by signing a declaration of honour (DoH). Proposals without full support will be rejected.

Proposals requesting more than EUR 750 000 as the EU contribution are **not** admissible.

Only applications by single applicants are considered admissible.

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

Proposals are limited to maximum **60 pages** (Part B), excluding annexes. 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 and affiliated entities) must:

- be legal entities (public bodies);
- be the national level civil protection authority or a national authority with disaster risk management responsibilities of eligible countries;
- be established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:
  - **UCPM Participating Countries:**
    - EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs));
    - Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Norway, North Macedonia, Serbia, Türkiye, Ukraine;
    - **Other countries:** Georgia and Kosovo<sup>9</sup>, in view of their ongoing efforts to join the UCPM.

According to the Financing Decision, **the applicants have to be national disaster risk management authorities of eligible countries.** This includes civil protection authorities and other authorities with disaster risk management responsibilities. **Whenever the applicant is not a national civil protection authority, the application should include references to the relevant legal basis showing the responsibilities of the applicant in the disaster risk management area.**

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 as defined in section 13.

### *Specific cases*

Natural persons – Natural persons are NOT eligible.

International organisations – International organisations are not 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 persons<sup>10</sup>.

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 entities covered by Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#)*<sup>11</sup>). Such entities are

<sup>9</sup> This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

<sup>10</sup> See Article 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

<sup>11</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).

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

In the context of this call, which is targeting single applicants, by 'consortium' we refer to the applicant (beneficiary) plus, possibly, affiliated entity(-ies) and/or associated partner(s).

### **Only applications by single applicants are allowed (single beneficiaries); affiliated entities are allowed, if applicable and duly justified.**

Due to the technical nature of the activities and the administrative structure in case of decentralised administrations, a legal entity having a legal or capital link with the main applicant, which is neither limited to the action nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation, may take part in the action as an **Affiliated Entity**.

Affiliated entities may declare eligible costs. It is therefore important that applicants correctly identify the Affiliated Entity(-ies) in the application form.

Where an action, due to its nature, should require sub-contracting (e.g. to make available a specific/technical expertise), the eligible applicant will still need to keep the "steering" of the action and ownership of its outputs. Under this call for proposals, **the entire action may be sub-contracted, except for the tasks of reporting and submitting of the deliverables to the Commission.**

In all cases, the eligible applicant takes the responsibility for the oversight and execution of the activities and for the final deliverables to the Commission.

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.

During the evaluation phase, the Commission reserves the right to assess the qualification of an entity other than the beneficiary identified in the application form, according to Article 187 of the Financial Regulation.

### Eligible activities

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

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

### Ineligible activities

The following activities are not considered eligible for funding under this invitation:

- Purchase of equipment;
- Works;
- Activities on Prevention and Preparedness in the field of Disaster Risk Management being funded by other EU funds, including funds made available to implement Decision No 1313/2013/EU.

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*).

## **7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion**

**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);**
- if the individual requested grant amount is not more than EUR 60 000.

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

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.

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

- further information
  - an enhanced financial responsibility regime, i.e. joint and several responsibility for all beneficiaries or joint and several liability of affiliated entities (*see below, section 10*)
  - prefinancing paid in instalments
  - (one or more) prefinancing guarantees (*see below, section 10*)
- or
- propose no prefinancing
  - request that you are replaced or, if needed, reject the entire proposal.

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

### Operational capacity

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

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

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

### Exclusion

Applicants which are subject to an **EU exclusion decision** or in one of the following **exclusion situations** that bar them from receiving EU funding can NOT participate<sup>12</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>13</sup> (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No [2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, 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>14</sup>:

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<sup>12</sup> See Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

<sup>13</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>14</sup> See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).



- 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** 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 (within a topic) 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) Projects focusing on a theme that is not otherwise covered by higher ranked projects will be considered to have the highest priority.
- 2) The *ex aequo* proposals within the same topic will be prioritised according to the scores they have been awarded for the award criterion 'Relevance'. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on their scores for the criterion 'Impact'. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on their scores for the criterion 'Quality'.
- 3) If this does not allow to determine the priority, a further prioritisation can be done by considering the overall project portfolio and the creation of positive synergies between projects, or other factors related to the objectives of the call. These factors will be documented in the panel report.
- 4) After that, the remainder of the available call budget will be used to fund projects across the different topics in order to ensure a balanced spread of the geographical and thematic coverage and while respecting to the maximum possible extent the order of merit based on the evaluation of the award criteria.

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 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 facilitate the evaluation of proposals in relation to the set objectives and priorities. They enable the selection of proposals which the Contracting Authority can be confident will comply with its objectives and priorities.

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

### Relevance (30 points):

- Extent to which the proposal contributes to the achievement of the general and specific objectives of the Action (section 2 of this document);
- Extent to which the needs for the proposal are justified by existing strategies/plans or are demonstrated with a clear and sound rationale (i.e. peer review recommendations, evaluations, lessons learnt, previous studies, etc);
- Extent to which the proposal contributes to implementing the Disaster Resilience Goals;
- Extent to which the proposal contributes to leveraging investments (i.e. funding from the EU Investment and Structural Funds, national funds).

### Quality (40 points):

- Soundness of the proposed results framework and organisation of the work, including implementation timetable, sequencing and monitoring of activities;
  - Adequacy and quality of: implementation structure, methodology, human and financial resources deployed in relation to the objectives envisaged (including in terms of value for money);
  - Clarity and justification of the budget requested to carry out the project, as indicated in the budget form attached as Annex III;
  - Extent to which the planning of the project is adequately developed, monitoring and quality control measures are in place and project management arrangements are well adapted to nature and objectives of the project.
- Extent to which the proposal includes measures to contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts (e.g., reducing the number of travels, green procurement, etc.).

### Impact (30 points):

- Extent to which the proposal puts forward tangible and realistic impacts.

- Justification of the expected impact on the institutional and technical capacity of relevant disaster risk management authorities is provided.
- Links between the proposal and EU policy objectives (cohesion policy, climate change adaptation policy, biodiversity strategy, sustainable finance, private sector etc.) are properly explained.
- Extent to which the dissemination strategy is clear, and adequate to communicate on the project results and to share results with other Participating States.
- Extent to which the proposal puts forward a convincing sustainability plan and demonstrates commitment to build on the proposal results.

Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score
Relevance	15	30
Quality	20	40
Impact	15	30
<b>Overall (pass) scores</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100</b>

Maximum points: 100 points.

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

Overall threshold: 65 points<sup>15</sup>.

Proposals should simultaneously meet two requirements: (1) to reach the minimum pass score per award criteria, AND (2) to reach at least 65 points in total for the three award criteria. Only proposals passing both thresholds will be considered for funding — within the limits of the available call budget. Other proposals will be rejected.

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<sup>15</sup> The overall threshold is not the result of the addition of the minimum pass scores per award criteria.

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

If you pass the 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 on the month following the grant agreement signature. The starting date may be delayed for up to four months, for duly justified reasons. Retroactive application can be granted exceptionally for duly justified reasons – but never earlier than the proposal submission date.

**Project duration: the initial duration of the project cannot exceed 24 months** (extensions are possible only exceptionally, if duly justified and through an amendment).

### Milestones and deliverables

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

The following deliverables are mandatory for all projects:

- Progress reports: all projects at month 9, for projects of 20 months or over an additional report at month 17;
- An executive summary in English of core deliverables<sup>16</sup>, except where duly justified.
- Materials for communication purposes (high resolution photos, videos, and at least one short story in English featuring project results).

### 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): EUR 750 000 per project. 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 costs that were *actually* incurred for your project (NOT the *budgeted* costs). For unit costs and flat-rates, you can charge the amounts calculated as explained in the Grant Agreement (*see art 6 and Annex 2 and 2a*).

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<sup>16</sup> This is particularly the case for those deliverables considered "sensitive" and whose circulation will be restricted.

**The costs will be reimbursed at the funding rate fixed in the Grant Agreement (95%).**

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<sup>17</sup>: Yes
  - volunteers unit cost<sup>18</sup>: No
- travel and subsistence unit cost<sup>19</sup>: Yes
- costs associated with the delivery of a Certificate on the Financial Statements: Yes
- equipment costs: **not eligible (only depreciation costs may be eligible)**
- indirect cost flat-rate: 7% the eligible direct costs (categories A-D, except volunteers costs and exempted specific cost categories, if any)

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<sup>17</sup> Commission [Decision](#) of 20 October 2020 authorising the use of unit costs for the personnel costs of the owners of small and medium-sized enterprises and beneficiaries that are natural persons not receiving a salary for the work carried out by themselves under an action or work programme (C(2020)7715).

<sup>18</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).

<sup>19</sup> Commission [Decision](#) of 12 January 2021 authorising the use of unit costs for travel, accommodation and subsistence costs under an action or work programme under the 2021-2027 multi-annual financial framework (C(2021)35).

See AGA ARTICLE 6 on eligible costs: travel and subsistence costs must be declared using the unit cost according to Annex 2a of the grant agreement. If a particular instance of travel, accommodation or subsistence in the action is not covered by one of the unit costs mentioned in Decision C(2021)35, amended by Commission Decision C(2023)4928, the actual costs may be used.

- VAT: VAT is NOT eligible
- other:
  - in-kind contributions for free are allowed, but cost-neutral, i.e. they cannot be declared as cost;
  - Kick off meeting: the costs incurred to attend the kick-off meeting (introductory meeting) organised by the granting authority are eligible as travel and subsistence 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.
  - Participation in project related events, including dissemination events and study visits.
  - Project websites: communication costs for presenting the project on the participants' websites or social media accounts are eligible; costs for *separate* project websites are not eligible.

### Reporting and payment arrangements

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

After grant signature, you will normally receive a **pre-financing** corresponding to **70%** of the maximum grant amount to start working on the project (exceptionally less or no pre-financing). The pre-financing will be paid 30 days from entry into force/financial guarantee (if required) — whichever is the latest.

There will be no additional **pre-financing payments** linked to a periodic report.

In addition, you will be expected to submit one or two progress reports not linked to 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 the 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 and the costs declared.

Together with your final report, you will be expected to provide the following annexes:

1. A minimum of five high quality visuals, which the Commission may publish to illustrate the project's results;
2. A snapshot of the project's results uploaded by the beneficiary on the Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network platform;
3. Layman report (publishable summary) summarising the work of the project for a general audience. Layman's reports clearly and concisely outline the

achievements of the project and its long-term benefits, thereby being more likely to attract the interest of journalists and policymakers, along with those experts and stakeholders focusing on similar issues to those addressed by the project.

Pre-financing guarantees - Not applicable

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*).

A Certificate on the Financial Statements must be provided for each beneficiary and affiliated entity when the requested EU contribution at interim or final payment is EUR 325 000 or more per organisation.

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

Security rules: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 13 and Annex 5)*

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
- limited communication and visibility to protect persons involved: Yes
- visibility in field operations outside the EU: Yes

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

- zero tolerance: Yes

- transfer of assets at the end of the action: No
- EU restrictive measures: 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 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 through the following hyperlink:

TOPIC UCPM-2024-Track 1:

[Funding & tenders \(europa.eu\)](#)

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 file (single or multiple depending on the slots). Excel upload is sometimes possible, depending on the file type.

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

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



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

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

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

## 12. Contact and help

As far as possible, please try to find the answers to your questions reading carefully this Call Document and the other documentation (we have limited resources for handling direct enquiries):

- [Online Manual](#)<sup>20</sup>
- Portal FAQ (for general questions)<sup>21</sup>.

We will send you any updates and additional information at the same e-mail address as the invitation to submit an application. 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:

[ECHO-CP-P&P@ec.europa.eu](mailto:ECHO-CP-P&P@ec.europa.eu)



Please:

- send your questions at the latest 7 days before the submission deadline (see *section 4*)
- indicate clearly the reference of the call and topic to which your question relates (*see cover page*).

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<sup>20</sup> <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/funding-tenders-opportunities/display/OM/Online+Manual>

<sup>21</sup> [Calls for proposals \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/calls-for-proposals/)

## 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.
- **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.
- **Balanced project budget** — Grant applications must ensure a balanced project budget and sufficient other resources to implement the project successfully (*e.g. own contributions, income generated by the action, financial contributions from third parties, etc*). You may be requested to lower your estimated costs, if they are ineligible (including excessive).
- **No-profit rule** — Grants may NOT give a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). This will be checked by us at the end of the project.
- **No double funding** — There is a strict prohibition of double funding from the EU budget (except under EU Synergies actions). Outside such Synergies actions, any given action may receive only ONE grant from the EU budget and cost items may under NO circumstances be declared to two different EU actions.

- **Completed/ongoing projects** — Proposals for projects that have already been completed will be rejected; proposals for projects that have already started will be assessed on a case-by-case basis (in this case, no costs can be reimbursed for activities that took place before the project starting date/proposal submission).
- **Combination with EU operating grants** — Combination with EU operating grants is possible, if the project remains outside the operating grant work programme and you make sure that cost items are clearly separated in your accounting and NOT declared twice (see [AGA — Annotated Model Grant Agreement, art 6.2.E](#)).
- **Multiple proposals** — Applicants may submit more than one proposal for *different* projects under the same call (and be awarded a funding for them).

Organisations may participate in several proposals.

BUT: if there are several proposals for *very similar* projects, only one application will be accepted and evaluated; the applicants will be asked to withdraw one of them (or it will be rejected).

- **Resubmission** — Proposals may be changed and re-submitted until the deadline for submission.
- **Rejection** — By submitting the application, all applicants accept the call conditions set out in this Call Document (and the documents it refers to). Proposals that do not comply with all the call conditions will be **rejected**. This applies also to applicants: All applicants need to fulfil the criteria; if any one of them doesn't, they must be replaced or the entire proposal will be rejected.
- **Cancellation** — There may be circumstances which may require the cancellation of the call. In this case, you will be informed via a call or topic update. Please note that cancellations are without entitlement to compensation.
- **Language** — You can submit your proposal in any official EU language (project abstract/summary should however always be in English). For reasons of efficiency, we strongly advise you to use English for the entire application. If you need the call documentation in another official EU language, please submit a request within 10 days after call publication (for the contact information, see *section 12*).
- **Transparency** — In accordance with Article 38 of the [EU Financial Regulation](#), information about EU grants awarded is published each year on the [Europa website](#).

This includes:

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

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

- **Data protection** — The submission of a proposal under this call involves the collection, use and processing of personal data. This data will be processed in accordance with the applicable legal framework. It will be processed solely for the purpose of evaluating your proposal, subsequent management of your grant and, if