



Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV)

Call for proposals

Call for proposals for 3-year framework partnership agreements to support European networks, civil society organisations active at EU level and European think tanks in the areas of Union values
(CERV-2025-OG-FPA)

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EUROPEAN EDUCATION AND CULTURE EXECUTIVE AGENCY (EACEA)

EACEA.B – Creativity, Citizens, EU Values and Joint Operations
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CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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0. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for EU **framework partnerships for grants** to support European networks, civil society organisations active at EU level, and European think tanks in the areas of Union values under the **Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV)**. The regulatory framework for this EU Funding Programme is set out in:

- Regulation 2018/1046 ([EU Financial Regulation](#))
- the basic act (CERV Regulation [2021/692](#)¹).

The call is launched in accordance with the 2023-2025 Work Programme² and will be managed by the **European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)** ('Agency').

 Please note that this call is subject to the final adoption of the budget by the EU budgetary authority. In case there are substantial changes, we may have to modify the call (or even cancel it).

Framework partnerships (FPAs) are long-term cooperation instruments that serve as umbrella for regular or recurrent grants in the same field or area and under a common action plan (or work programme of activities). They are a prerequisite for being able to apply for these grants, but don't create any legitimate expectations or entitlement to get them. FPA beneficiaries are normally identified on the basis of a standard evaluation and award procedure and then invited to submit their proposals for grants (closed calls; addressed directly to the framework partners). Please note that for the first year, the FPA and SGA applications are submitted in parallel due to time constraints. **You must first complete the FPA application, and then use the FPA application number in the SGA application.** Grant agreements (SGAs) can only be signed if the FPA has been signed, and before the end date of the FPA.

The call covers the following **topic**:

- **Call for proposals for 3-year framework partnership agreements to support European networks, civil society organisations active at EU level, and European think tanks in the areas of Union values**

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

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

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

¹ Regulation (EU) 2021/692 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 establishing the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (OJ L 156, 5.5.2021, p. 1).

² Commission Implementing Decision C(2024) 4922 final of 18.7.2024 concerning the adoption of the work programme for 2023-2025 and the financing decision for the implementation of the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme.

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

You are also encouraged to visit the [Europe for Citizens Programme Project Results website](#), [REC Programme results webpage](#) and the [Daphne Toolkit](#) to consult the list of projects funded previously.

1. Background

The Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme provides funding for citizens' engagement, equality for all and the implementation of rights and EU values.

Framework partners play a crucial role in the promotion and protection of these rights and values and are privileged partners of the European Commission. This call aims to set up 3-year Framework Partnership Agreements with European networks, civil society organisations active at EU level, and European think tanks whose activities contribute to the implementation of the programme's objectives.

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

Objectives

The objective of this call is to protect, promote and raise awareness of rights, as laid down in the EU Treaties, in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union ("the Charter") and in the applicable international human rights conventions by providing financial support to European networks, civil society organisations active at EU level, and European think tanks in promoting and cultivating those rights.

The call thereby also aims at strengthening the protection and promotion of Union values including respect for the rule of law and contributing to the construction of a more democratic Union, democratic dialogue, transparency as well as good governance. The call aims to support the strive for a Union where there is no place for hate, racism, discrimination or violence in any of its forms.

The call intends to increase the capacities of the framework partners to contribute actively to the development and implementation of EU policies in areas such as:

- promoting and protecting fundamental rights as enshrined in the Charter; combating hate speech and hate crime, including hate speech online.
- fight against specific forms of intolerance and discrimination, such as anti-Black racism, anti-Muslim hatred, antigypsyism, anti-Asian racism, and anti-migrant sentiments, and promoting equal opportunities for racial and ethnic groups.
- promoting LGBTIQ equality and fighting discrimination against LGBTIQ people (including intersectional discrimination and inequality experienced on grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics).
- promoting diversity and inclusion at the workplace.
- promoting equality on the grounds of age and fighting against ageism.
- fighting antisemitism, fostering Jewish life and promoting Holocaust education, research and remembrance.
- ensuring remembrance of enslavement and legacy of colonialism and diverse European cultural heritage, as well as promoting awareness about Roma culture and history, including the memory of the Roma Holocaust.
- supporting, advancing and implementing comprehensive policies to promote women's full enjoyment of rights, gender equality, including work-life balance, equal pay between women and men, women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming.
- promoting and protecting the rights of the child, including children's right to protection and care as well as their right to express their views and participate in decisions in matters that concern them.
- combating violence, including gender-based violence and violence against children by (1) preventing and combating at all levels all forms of gender-based violence, (2) preventing and combating all forms of violence against children, young people and other groups at risk and (3) supporting and protecting all direct and indirect victims of violence.
- promoting democratic standards, including free, fair, resilient and inclusive electoral processes, promoting election integrity, fighting disinformation, information manipulation and foreign interference.
- promoting EU citizenship rights.³
- promoting citizens' engagement, and democratic participation.

In relation to existing EU legislation and policy, the work of the framework partners will support the implementation of the following initiatives:

- European democracy action plan and 'Defence of Democracy Package'.
- EU Citizenship Report 2020 and Reinforcing democracy and integrity of

³ This area also includes 'Freedom of movement and of residence', as grandfathered in the Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community.

elections package.

- the EU Citizenship Package.
- Rule of law reports.
- Strategy to strengthen the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the EU.
- the Gender Equality Strategy (2020-2025)⁴, which includes notably preventing and combatting gender-based violence (of particular relevance is the Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence⁵).
- EU Strategy on victims' rights.⁶
- the EU Anti-racism Action Plan (including anti-Muslim hatred).⁷
- the EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation (2020-2030).⁸
- the LGBTIQ Equality Strategy (2020-2025).⁹
- the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child.¹⁰
- Commission Recommendation on developing and strengthening integrated child protection systems in the best interests of the child.¹¹
- EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life (2021-2030).¹²
- the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2021-2030).¹³
- Commission Recommendation on protecting journalists and human rights defenders who engage in public participation from manifestly unfounded or abusive court proceedings ('Strategic lawsuits against public participation').¹⁴
- the Joint Communication "No place for hate: a Europe united against hatred".¹⁵
- the revised Code of conduct on countering illegal hate speech online, and the Recommendations of the 2024 European Citizens Panel on tackling hatred in society.¹⁶

⁴ [A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025.](#)

⁵ [Directive \(EU\) 2024/1385 on combating violence against women and domestic violence.](#)

⁶ [EU Strategy on victims' rights \(2020-2025\).](#)

⁷ [EU Anti-racism Action Plan 2020-2025.](#)

⁸ [The EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation \(2020-2030\).](#)

⁹ [LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025.](#)

¹⁰ [The EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child and the European Child Guarantee.](#)

¹¹ [Recommendation on developing and strengthening integrated child protection systems in the best interests of the child.](#)

¹² [EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life \(2021 - 2030\).](#)

¹³ [Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(2021-2030\).](#)

¹⁴ [Commission Recommendation \(EU\) 2022/758 of 27 April 2022 on protecting journalists and human rights defenders who engage in public participation from manifestly unfounded or abusive court proceedings \('Strategic lawsuits against public participation'\).](#)

¹⁵ [No place for hate: a Europe united against hatred.](#)

¹⁶ [Final recommendations on tackling hatred in society.](#)

Themes and priorities (scope)

- (1) promoting and protecting Union values.
- (2) promoting equality, preventing and combating discrimination.
- (3) promoting gender equality.
- (4) preventing and combating gender-based violence.
- (5) protecting and promoting the rights of the child.
- (6) preventing and combating violence against children.
- (7) combating racism, xenophobia and all forms of intolerance.
- (8) promoting citizens' engagement.
- (9) promoting European remembrance.

European networks must be active in one of these nine priorities.

Civil society organisations active at EU level and European think tanks must be active either in priority (8) promoting citizens' engagement, or in priority (9) promoting European remembrance.

Activities that can be funded (scope)

This call will support European networks, civil society organisations active at EU level, and European think tanks whose activities contribute to the implementation of the objectives of the programme and which will implement among others:

- policy analysis and advice;
- advocacy;
- research and data collection/sharing/analysis;
- citizens' education at different levels and age groups;
- capacity building;
- for European networks: network activities, network development, and procedural improvements to increase clarity, transparency, respect of EU values, and equal treatment;
- mutual learning, training, and exchange of good practices;
- awareness raising;
- critical thinking and media literacy activities (including pre-bunking) to fight hate speech and disinformation, information manipulation and foreign interference;
- citizens' (including children) engagement activities inspired by methods of participatory and representative democracy;
- information and dissemination activities with EU added value.

Applicants must provide a 3-year work programme (in Part B of the application form) starting in 2026 and outlining the proposed key activities and budget forecast in one of the nine priorities.

Based on yearly invitations to submit an annual work programme, an operating grant may be awarded to Framework Partners in order to finance their activities if in line with the objectives of the CERV programme in the area concerned and the above priorities. The proposed work programme should clearly explain how it intends to support EU policy and how it translates policy into concrete action.

The costs of general administrative expenditure necessary for the running of the applicant organisation may also be covered.

Framework partners that qualify as European networks have the possibility to re-grant (i.e. provide Financial Support to Third Parties, FSTP) to their member organisations. Financial support to third parties can only support activities outlined by the framework partner and must be in line with the framework partner's work programme and the concrete activities in the respective priorities supported by the call. The financial support should benefit exclusively the activities of member organisations operating at local, regional and national level. Member organisations that are themselves EU-wide networks/ umbrella organisations are excluded from benefitting from financial support to third parties. The maximum amount of financial support per third party per financial year shall not exceed EUR 60 000. The budget dedicated to financial support to third parties should not exceed in any case 25% of the CERV annual operating grant of the framework partner.¹⁷

Under the re-granting option, network members that receive a grant from a framework partner are expected to help to achieve at least one of the following objectives:

- Strengthened capacity to protect and promote rights and EU values;
- A more supportive environment for CSOs and human rights defenders, such as national human rights institutions;
- A more developed advocacy and watchdog role for CSOs;
- Increased involvement of CSOs in policy- and decision-making processes with local, regional, and national governments;
- Increased citizens' awareness of EU rights and values;
- Strengthened national, regional and local cooperation within civil society.

Expected impact

European networks are expected to contribute to achieving at least one of the following objectives:

- Building the capacity of national or regional organisations working in the areas covered by the grant.
- Building and increasing the capacity of network partners to develop coherent and coordinated activities to promote the relevant policy objectives.
- Expanding the network's reach, including new partners.
- A measurable increase in the impact of the network's activities in the respective policy priority.

¹⁷ Further details on the conditions for Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) are included in the call provisions applicable to CERV annual operating grants.

Civil society organisations active at EU level in citizens’ engagement and European remembrance are expected to contribute to achieving at least one of the following objectives:

- Building and increasing their capacity to develop coherent and coordinated national and/or transnational activities to promote the relevant policy priority at EU level, which includes promoting European remembrance.
- A tangible contribution made by the organisation’s permanent, usual and regular national and/or transnational activities to the relevant policy objectives at EU level and a measurable increase in impact in the respective policy priority.
- Tangible and direct contribution to citizens' engagement (including children’s or other specific groups) in both participatory and representative democracy, aligning with EU policy objectives and demonstrating a measurable enhancement in the respective policy priority.

European think tanks active in European remembrance and citizens’ engagement are expected to contribute to achieving at least one of the following objectives:

- Providing a link between research and policy-making at European level, which helps find solutions to problems;
- Facilitating interaction between citizens (including young people), academia and decision-makers at national and EU level.

3. Available budget

The budget will be allocated via specific calls to the selected framework partners (see the specific call CERV-2025-OG-SGA).

Depending on the number and quality of proposals, we expect to sign between 70-80 framework partnerships.

4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
FPA	
Call opening:	24 October 2024
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>28 January 2025 – 17:00:00 CET</u> <u>(Brussels)</u>
Evaluation:	February – May 2025
Information on evaluation results:	June 2025
FPA signature:	July 2025
First SGA call	
Opening for submission:	24 October 2024
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>5 February 2025 – 17:00:00 CET</u>

Evaluation:	February – May 2025
Information on evaluation results:	August 2025
GA signature:	November 2025

5. Admissibility and documents

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

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

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

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

- **Application Form Part A** — contains administrative information about the participants (future coordinator, beneficiaries and affiliated entities) and the summarised budget for the project (*to be filled in directly online*)
- **Application Form Part B** — contains the technical description of the project (*to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed and then assembled and re-uploaded*)
- **Part C** — contains additional project data and the project's contribution to EU programme key performance indicators (*to be filled in directly online*)
- **Mandatory annexes and supporting documents** (*templates available to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, assembled and re-uploaded*):
 - detailed budget table/calculator: **not** applicable
 - CVs (standard) of the core project team
 - Activity reports of last year
 - List of previous projects (key projects for the last 4 years) (*template available in Part B*)
 - **For participants with activities involving children**: their child protection policy covering the four areas described in the [Keeping Children Safe Child Safeguarding Standards](#)
 - other annexes:
 - **For participants applying as European networks**: a list of EU-based network members in the form shown below:


<i>[Name of the applicant i.e European network organisation]</i>		
List of member organisations		
Organisation legal name (member organisation)	Country of establishment (EU member states only)	Private/ public
Member 1		
[...]		

- **For participants applying for priority 8 as civil society organisations active at EU level:** a list of EU-based partner organisations in the form shown below:

<i>[Name of the applicant i.e civil society organisation active at EU level]</i>		
List of partner organisations		
Organisation legal name (partner organisation)	Country of establishment (EU member states only)	Private/ public
Partner 1		
[...]		

- **For participants applying for priority 8 and 9 as European think tanks:** the information in the form shown below:

<i>[Name of the applicant i.e European think tank]</i>		
Organisation legal name	Country of establishment (EU member states only)	Private/ public

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

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 framework partnership, each beneficiary and affiliated entity will have to confirm this again by signing a declaration of honour (DoH). Proposals without full support will be rejected.

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

Proposals are limited to maximum **40 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

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

Eligible participants (eligible countries)

Eligibility criteria:

In order to be eligible, applicants must:

- be legal entities (private bodies).
- be non-profit organisations.
- be established in one of the Member State of the European Union (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs)).
- be a European network, or a civil society organisation active at EU level, or a European think tank.
- be a single applicant; in case of European networks: only the network may submit an application; the member organisations are not eligible to apply.

Further eligibility criteria:

- For the priorities (1) – (7) (see section 2 - “themes/ priorities”), only European networks can apply.
- For European networks:

European networks must be an established formal network (with own legal personality) organised at European level with member organisations from at least 14 EU Member States.

If a European network applies under the priority (4) “Preventing and combating gender-based violence” and is active in the area of female genital mutilation (FGM), then the established formal network (with own legal personality) must have member organisations in at least 12 EU Member States.

- For applicants applying under the priority (8) “Promoting citizens engagement”: if the applicant is a civil society organisation active at EU level, then the applicant needs to have partner organisations in at least 14 EU Member States.

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 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 persons¹⁸.

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'¹⁹.

Programme Contact Points — Are not eligible under this call for proposals.

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)*²⁰). 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

Only applications by single applicants are allowed (single beneficiaries; affiliated entities and other participants are NOT allowed).

Eligible activities

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

The applicant must clearly specify to which priority these activities refer to (see list of nine priorities in section 2 above). Select only one priority from the list, and further elaborate on how your activities support this priority in the description of the action (Part B of the application form – section 1.3 “Contribution to EU policy”).

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

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

¹⁸ See Article 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

¹⁹ For the definitions, see Articles 187(2) and 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

²⁰ 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](#).

Geographic location (target countries)

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

Duration

The foreseen duration of activities under Framework Partnership Agreements is 36 months.

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

Ethics and EU values

Projects must comply with:

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

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

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

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

7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion

Financial capacity

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

The financial capacity check will be carried out on the basis of the documents you will be requested to upload in the [Participant Register](#) during grant preparation (*e.g. profit and loss account and balance sheet, business plan, audit report produced by an*

approved external auditor, certifying the accounts for the last closed financial year, etc). The analysis will be based on neutral financial indicators, but will also take into account other aspects, such as dependency on EU funding and deficit and revenue in previous years.

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

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

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

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

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

or

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

For framework partnerships, the financial capacity check will be done both at FPA and SGA-level.



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

Operational capacity

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

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

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

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

- general profiles (qualifications and experiences) of the staff responsible for managing and implementing the project
- description of the consortium participants

- applicants' activity reports of last year
- list of previous projects (key projects for the last 4 years, ; *template available in Part B*).

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

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

For framework partnerships, the operational capacity check will be done generally at FPA-level and then again for each grant application in the grants calls.

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 participate²¹:

- 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 misconduct²² (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 framework partnership)
- 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 framework partnership)
- 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 framework partnership)
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of EU Regulation [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 framework partnership)
- 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,

²¹ See Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

²² Professional misconduct includes: violation of ethical standards of the profession, wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility, false declarations/misrepresentation of information, participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition, violation of IPR, attempting to influence decision-making processes or obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain advantage.

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

Applicants will also be rejected if it turns out that²³:

- 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).

For framework partnerships, exclusion will be checked before FPA signature and then again before signature of each grant.

8. Evaluation and award procedure

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


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

For proposals with the same score (within the same priority (budget envelope) a **priority order** will be determined according to the following approach:

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

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

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

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

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

If you believe that the evaluation procedure was flawed, you can submit a **complaint** (following the deadlines and procedures set out in the evaluation result letter). Please note that notifications which have not been opened within 10 days after sending will be considered to have been accessed and that deadlines will be counted from

²³ See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

opening/access (see also [Funding & Tenders Portal Terms and Conditions](#)). Please also be aware that for complaints submitted electronically, there may be character limitations.

9. Award criteria

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

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

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

Maximum points: 100 points.

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

Overall threshold: 70 points.

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

10. Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements (n/a for FPA)

11. How to submit an application

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

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

a) create a user account and register your organisation

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

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

b) submit the proposal

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

Submit your proposal in 4 parts, as follows:

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

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.

Guidance on the use of generative AI tools for the preparation of the proposal

When considering the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools for the preparation of the proposal, it is imperative to exercise caution and careful consideration. The AI-generated content should be thoroughly reviewed and validated by the applicants to ensure its appropriateness and accuracy, as well as its compliance with intellectual property regulations. Applicants are fully responsible for the content of the proposal (even those parts produced by the AI tool) and must be transparent in disclosing which AI tools were used and how they were utilised.

Specifically, applicants are required to:

- Verify the accuracy, validity, and appropriateness of the content and any citations generated by the AI tool and correct any errors or inconsistencies.
- Provide a list of sources used to generate content and citations, including those generated by the AI tool.
- Double-check citations to ensure they are accurate and properly referenced.
- Be conscious of the potential for plagiarism where the AI tool may have reproduced substantial text from other sources. Check the original sources to be sure you are not plagiarizing someone else's work.
- Acknowledge the limitations of the AI tool in the proposal preparation, including the potential for bias, errors, and gaps in knowledge.

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](#)
- Topic Q&A on the Topic page (for call-specific questions in open calls)
- [Portal FAQ](#) (for general questions).

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

Contact

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

Non-IT related questions should be sent to the following email address: FACEA-CERV@ec.europa.eu.

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

13. Important



IMPORTANT

- **Don't wait until the end** — Complete your application sufficiently in advance of the deadline to avoid any last minute **technical problems**. Problems due to last minute submissions (*e.g. congestion, etc*) will be entirely at your risk. Call deadlines can NOT be extended.
- **Consult** the Portal Topic page regularly. We will use it to publish updates and additional information on the call (call and topic updates).
- **Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Exchange System** — By submitting the application, all participants **accept** to use the electronic exchange system in accordance with the [Portal Terms & Conditions](#).
- **Registration** — Before submitting the application, all beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners must be registered in the [Participant Register](#). The participant identification code (PIC) (one per participant) is mandatory for the Application Form.
- **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** (*n/a for FPAs*) — 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).
- **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).
- **No-profit rule** (*n/a for FPAs*) — 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 cumulation of funding/no double funding** (*n/a for FPAs*) — It is strictly prohibited to cumulate 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 under two EU grants. If you would like to nonetheless benefit from different EU funding opportunities, projects must be designed as different actions, clearly delineated and separated for each grant (without overlaps).
- **Combination with EU operating grants** (*n/a for OG and FPAs*) — 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 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 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 the others (or they will be rejected).

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

This includes:

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

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

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