



Preparatory Action

Call for proposals

A European public sphere: a new online media offer for young Europeans

(Call CNECT/2023/9573146)





EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology
Directorate Media Policy
UNIT I.3 – Audiovisual Industry & Media Support Programmes

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

0. Introduction	4
1. Background	5
2. Objectives — Themes and priorities — Activities that can be funded — Expected impact	5
Objectives	5
Themes and priorities (scope)	6
3. Available budget	9
Project budgets	9
4. Timetable and deadlines	9
Duration of projects	9
5. Admissibility and documents	9
6. Eligibility	11
Eligible participants (eligible countries)	11
Consortium composition	13
Eligible activities	13
Geographic location (target countries)	15
Ethics	15
Security	15
7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion	15
Financial capacity	15
Operational capacity	17
Exclusion	17
8. Evaluation and award procedure	18
9. Award criteria	19
10. Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	20
Starting date and project duration	21
Milestones and deliverables	21
Form of grant, funding rate and maximum grant amount	21
Budget categories and cost eligibility rules	22
Reporting and payment arrangements	23
Pre-financing guarantees	24
Certificates	24
Liability regime for recoveries	24

Provisions concerning the project implementation	24
Other specificities	25
Non-compliance and breach of contract	25
11. How to submit an application.....	25
12. Help	27
13. Important	29

0. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for EU **action grants** in the field of pilot projects and preparatory actions.

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

- Regulation [2018/1046 \(EU Financial Regulation\)](#) Preparatory action within the meaning of Article 58(2)(b)

The call is launched in accordance with the 2023 Work Programme¹ and will be managed by the **European Commission, Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology (DG CNECT)**.

The call covers the following **topic/action: A European public sphere: a new online media offer for young Europeans**.

We invite you to read the **call documentation** carefully, and in particular this Call Document, the Model Grant Agreement and all other published annexes, as well as 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)
 - available budget, timetable and duration (sections 3 and 4)
 - admissibility and eligibility conditions (including mandatory documents; sections 5 and 6)
 - criteria for financial and operational capacity and exclusion (section 7)
 - evaluation and award procedure (section 8)
 - award criteria (section 9)
 - legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreement(s) (section 10)
 - how to submit an application (section 11)
- 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 <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/eu-supports-four-media-consortia-enrich-pan-european-debate-among-young-europeans> to consult the list of projects that are currently funded.

¹ Commission Decision C/2023/1699 adopted on 17/03/2023 on the financing of pilot projects and preparatory actions in the field of "Communications Networks, Content and Technology" and the adoption of the work programme for 2023.

1. Background

Informed citizens are an essential component of well-functioning democracies. This is also true at European Union level, where political decisions should be taken in full transparency and based on an open and fact-based public debate. This requires independent reporting from multiple viewpoints, going beyond local and national angles.

Yet in a time of ever faster news consumption and increasing media convergence, newsrooms are struggling to adapt to new and potentially lasting consumption habits.

Young Europeans consume information online more than others, and through other media and platforms. Legacy media are therefore struggling to capture their attention and engage them. According to a Eurobarometer survey in winter 2022-2023², over 80% of people younger than 40 (and 81% of those younger than 25) believe online social networks can make people interested in political affairs, and that 74% of them believe social networks are a good way to have your say on political issues.

Communicating cross-border topics to young Europeans is another challenge, partially because of the lack of a truly transnational media public sphere in which such topics of common concern are discussed. The same study shows that only 43% of people feel well-informed about EU affairs. Among the age group 15-24, this percentage falls to 39%.

In this context, this Preparatory Action addresses the challenges to bring the EU closer to youngsters, to address issues of concern to them, to encourage them to become active citizens and to spur a public debate across borders. Timing wise, the action will support journalistic production and dialogue following the 2024 EP elections, in a period in which a new EU Parliament and new EU Commission take shape.

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

Objectives

The action aims to engage with young Europeans by creating curated online spaces that gather thought-provoking journalistic content around current affairs, empowering them to compare and contrast national, regional and local perspectives from across Europe, discuss and discover how their interests link to interests of young Europeans in other Member States, and to relevant EU initiatives. The aim is to address topics of pan-European relevance, and create an open, true, informed and constructive debate about recent and future life in Europe among young Europeans, using innovative formats on digital platforms, with the ultimate goal of creating greater awareness about European visions and realities, European values, ideas and decision-making processes so that they subsequently contribute to a more active civil society.

Expected impact includes:

- Increased availability of online information around European topics in different European languages, presented in engaging formats and through multiple viewpoints.

² Standard Eurobarometer 98 - <https://europa.eu/!6CwXDx>

- Daily, thought-provoking content around current affairs, through innovative cross-border editorial processes.
- Greater awareness about decision-making processes.
- Innovative and engaging discussions and events, that help young Europeans exchange views and discover ways to get involved in pan-European projects across language barriers.
- Increased democratic engagement of youth across various social groups, language groups and age groups, with particular attention to non-cosmopolitan audiences and young Europeans with fewer opportunities.

In line with these objectives, applicants should describe their approach to (1) content selection, (2) creation, (3) distribution and (4) moderating discussions.

Themes and priorities (scope)

1. Content selection

Applicants must show a clear understanding of the interests of youngsters in all of the envisaged languages, geographic areas and/or social groups, which can be proven by past experience, desk research and/or polls. This Call does not set any minimum or maximum age, it is up to the applicants to explain their target groups, and to provide a solid understanding of their interests, and the available offer for these groups.

Applicants should indicate the already available information sources that serve these interests and explain how the proposed project adds value to them. Each proposal should try to formulate its unique value proposition for the envisaged target groups.

While this preparatory action focuses on the creation of original content and debates, any proposal for an online community may require publication of and/or linking to external content, to have a lively community with daily updates. Applicants should clearly describe how they plan to combine own content and external content, while clearly distinguishing the two.

2. Content creation

Applicants should propose an innovative cross-border editorial process, describing the editorial workflows for the local reporters as well as the editorial oversight. Editorial independence will be guaranteed by a charter of independence that will be part of the agreement between the European Commission and the awarded applicants.

Applicants need to respect widely accepted professional media standards. The chosen standards should be indicated in the proposal and confirmed with a signed Declaration on Standards & Independence (Annexed to the Call).

Applicants will share editorial responsibility. They will draw up editorial guidelines at the start of the project, and regularly monitor compliance. Proposals should include a draft model of the said guidelines.

Applicants should propose a professional and multicultural editorial team, and demonstrate how the central editorial workflow takes into account the diversity of society, and how it involves diverse young content creators.

Content creation should mainly focus on informative content. It should link topics that are of current interest to youngsters to the institutional decisions that affect them. The content production process should be clearly explained and provide for a diversity of views, on matters of relevance and importance across Europe. Applicants need to provide examples of how their content will address multiple viewpoints and allow audiences to form their own opinion.

Proposals should include a provisional list of topics that can attract various groups while acknowledging diverging opinions, so as to stimulate lively and constructive discussions and debates, including debates following the 2024 Elections for the European Parliament.

Proposals should focus on European topics and European languages. Proposals should create and select content in **at least five European languages**. Applicants are encouraged to handle content in as many EU Member States as possible, involving relevant entities in those countries.

The expected production quantity must be clearly indicated per format and per language. Applicants should explain how content will be translated and/or subtitled and how input from multiple reporters in different languages will be compared/combined.

The choice of formats should be cost-effective and in line with the information consumption habits across Europe.

The content must aim to address audiences from diverse regions and social groups. Applicants are encouraged, in particular, to associate media and youth organisations that can provide independent information in areas where provision of EU affairs is scarce.

3. Content distribution

The produced formats need to appeal to youngsters in their local realities, and therefore applicants should describe how the central editorial coordination feeds into various channels and/or language versions of their own channels, partner websites, blogs and/or social media networks.

Proposals should explain how each piece of content will be adapted/tailored to the different distribution platforms and target groups.

Proposals should describe how a taxonomy/categorisation of topics will be established, to gather content around specific interests.

Proposals need to include a mock-up to illustrate how the platform(s) and distribution formats may look.

Applicants should accompany their engagement plans with a solid market research and involve, when relevant, initiatives that are already active in any given community. Therefore, proposals must explain how the content production is accompanied by significant engagement from the audiences targeted in each of the linguistic markets.

Proposals must contain an outreach plan, to reach as many young Europeans as possible. The plan should identify the target audiences and relevant multipliers for each language version, and describe ways to encourage them to use the proposed materials. The plan must include clear, realistic objectives for each of the target audiences and include mid-term and final targets for the expected audience figures. Applicants should also identify how they will use the growing number of available digital tools to measure the influence (e.g. reach) of their outputs.

To maximise the chances of re-publication, applicants will need to identify the needs of partners and potential partners and take those needs into account from the outset when designing the production process. Proposals should clearly explain the workflows, the conditions for involving others and the modalities of collaboration. It should provide quantifiable but realistic ambitions in this regard, providing proof and/or indicators of interest from content producers as well as distributors to publish

on media outlets and social media.

The network must be open to media, youth organisations and/or other non-profit organisations that can bring added value to the partnership, whether national, regional or local. Proposals must explain how and under which conditions interested organisations can join the network or be involved in any other way during implementation.³

4. Moderating discussions

As this action aims to inform, empower and engage young Europeans in their language, applicants are invited to consider various ways to facilitate interaction.

Online talk shows and discussions may be part of the engagement strategy, in which case the approach to moderation will need to be explained.

Events may be part of the project if they aim at generating discussion, cost-efficiently. In that case the proposal should include an indicative planning of events and target groups.

Local partners should be considered to contribute to reporting, involve local communities, moderate discussions and/or organise events.

Cost-efficiency

Proposals should pay particular attention to cost-efficiency and effectiveness.

Grants to third parties are allowed if relevant, for instance to organise competitions for young journalists or to support projects (by media organisations, journalists etc.) that provide independent journalistic coverage of current affairs for youth, under the provisions set out in Sections 6 and 10 of this Call for Proposals and the provisions in the Grant Agreement.

Objectively verifiable indicators

Proposals should include concrete deliverables and set clear, objectively verifiable and quantifiable performance indicators for all activities, incl. content aggregation, content production, content distribution and promotion as well as awareness-raising activities. The expected reach must be more precise than the sum of available distribution channels. For example, applicants should not only mention the amount of followers, but provide proof of engagement for similar types of content and specify the type of engagement. Applicants should also declare how they will measure audience reach.

Applicants will have to supplement their offer with a list of indicators aiming to measure how well the proposed actions and plans are achieved. Indicators will revolve around, at least, the following categories: (a) proportion of EU citizens addressed through the multilingual offer, (b) potential audience, (c) actual audience, (d) digital reach, (e) engagement through social media (f) editorial quality and European perspective.

³ This might include financial aspects. If relevant, applicants may foresee expansion within the proposed budget envelope by creating a reserve budget of up to 10%, which can be allocated during implementation after approval of the European Commission (through a contract amendment). They can also foresee support to third parties, under the conditions laid out in sections 6 and 10.

Sustainability

Proposals should address financial sustainability in the long-term and explain whether (and how) the project can be continued independently once the requested period of EU support has ended.

3. Available budget

The available call budget is **EUR 9 000 000 (nine million Euros)**. The EU co-financing is limited to a *maximum of 80% of the total eligible costs*.

Project budgets

We expect to fund **up to 4 projects**. Project budgets (maximum grant amount) are expected to range between **EUR 1.5 and EUR 3.2 million per project**, but this does not preclude the submission/selection of proposals requesting lower amounts.

The Commission reserves the right not to award all available funds depending on the proposals received and the results of the evaluation. The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested. Applicants are reminded that **budget-cost effectiveness** of the proposal is part of the award criteria.

4. Timetable and deadlines

Indicative timetable and deadline for submission	
Call opening:	October 2023
Deadline for submission:	<u>Monday 29 January 2024 23h59 CET</u>
Evaluation:	February/March 2024
Information on evaluation results:	April 2024
GA signature:	May/June 2024
Start date of the project	1 August, 1 September or 1 October 2024

Duration of projects

Projects should last **approximately 14 months** (Indicative duration).⁴

5. Admissibility and documents

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

⁴ For contracts signed, extensions are possible, but only if duly justified and through an amendment.

The mandatory Grant Application Form and other mandatory template documents to be completed are available at <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news-redirect/802275>

Regarding the submission modality, we refer to section 11.

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) as well as information about the operational capacity of the applicants
- **Application Form Part B** — contains the technical description of the project
- **Mandatory annexes and supporting documents** (*to be submitted together with the application*):
 - Grant Application Form (Part A and Part B) and its annexes:
 - Detailed estimated budget table for the action (Annex 2 to CMGA)
 - Legal entity form⁵ (for all applicants)
 - Bank account form⁶ (only for the coordinator)
 - Financial Capacity Check table and Balance Sheet and Profit & Loss supporting documents (please refer to section 7)
 - CVs (standard⁷) of core project team
 - Activity reports of last year⁸
 - Declaration on standards and independence.

⁵ Template in all EU languages for Legal Entity Form available at: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm

⁶ Template in all EU languages for the BAF available at: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/financial_id/financial_id_en.cfm

⁷ CVs can be submitted in any format. Since standard CVs are required in the call conditions we strongly recommend you to use the Europass format. If you are still recruiting, please provide the job profile.

⁸ This report should describe your organisation's activities for the last year. It should be detailed enough to allow us to check your organisation's aims and activities and its operational and professional capacity.

No finalised annual report yet? Submit the draft version, certified by your organisation's legal representative.

No report of this type available? Create one for this application and have it certified by your legal representative.

Online versions — If your report is available on your website, you can just provide a link (directly to the document(s), not simply to the homepage) and indicate the link on a separate sheet and upload it as annex (PDF format).

- **Additional annexes and supporting documents** (*for information of the applicants and/or to be submitted at a later stage in the procedure*):
 - Model Declaration of honour
 - Model grant agreement and its annex 2a-unit costs SME owners and 5-Specific rules.

Templates are available at <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news-redirect/802275>. You are obliged to use all provided templates to prepare your proposal.

Please note that the amounts entered into the tab “consolidated budget” of the Estimated budget (Annex 2 to CMGA) table must correspond to the amounts calculated in the tabs of the detailed budget per applicant/affiliated entity. In case of discrepancies, the amounts in the consolidated budget table will prevail.

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)⁹. **Before signing the grant**, each beneficiary and affiliated entity will have to confirm this again by signing a declaration of honour (**DoH**¹⁰). Proposals without full support will be rejected.

Proposals are limited to maximum **70 pages** (Part B). Evaluators will not consider any additional pages. Shorter proposals are welcome.

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

6. Eligibility

Eligible participants (eligible countries)

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

- be legal entities (public or private bodies)
- be established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:
 - EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs)).

Proposals may be submitted by any of the following applicants or combinations of:

- News media organisations¹¹
- Non profit organisations, including youth organisations (private or public).


⁹ See declaration in Grant Application Form - Part A

¹⁰ See Article 196.1 (b) and 137(1) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#)

¹¹ For the purposes of this call, news media organisations are organisations in which a core activity is the regular production and dissemination of professional news content, irrespective of its format (audio-visual media, broadcasting, printed news, newswires, multimedia, radio, online, etc.), under the editorial workflows, standards and responsibility of the said organisation.

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

 Following the Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/2506, as of 16th December 2022, no legal commitments (including the grant agreement itself as well as subcontracts, purchase contracts, financial support to third parties etc.) can be signed with Hungarian public interest trusts established under Hungarian Act IX of 2021 or any entity they maintain.

Affected entities may continue to apply to calls for proposals. However, in case the Council measures are not lifted, such entities are not eligible to participate in any funded role (beneficiaries, affiliated entities, subcontractors, recipients of financial support to third parties). In case of application made by a consortium of entities, co-applicants will be invited to remove or replace that entity and/or to change its status into associated partner. Tasks and budget may be redistributed accordingly.

The indicative list of affected entities (the trusts and the entities they maintain) is available under [this link](#)¹². This link will bring you to the official Annex to Hungarian Act IX of 2021.

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.

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 persons¹³.

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

Affiliated entities¹⁴

Legal entities having a legal or capital link with applicants, which is neither limited to the action nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation, may take part in the action as affiliated entities, and may declare eligible costs as specified in section 10.

¹² [2021. évi IX. törvény - Nemzeti Jogszabálytár \(njt.hu\)](#)

¹³ See Article 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

¹⁴ In accordance with Article 187 FR, entities **that satisfy the eligibility criteria** and that do not fall within one of the situations referred to in Articles 136(1) and 141(1) FR and that have a link with the applicant, in particular a legal or capital link, which is neither limited to the action nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation, will be considered as entities affiliated to the applicant.

For that purpose, applicants shall identify such affiliated entities in the application form – Part A.

Associations and interest groupings — Entities composed of members may participate as 'sole beneficiary'¹⁵ or 'beneficiaries without legal personality'¹⁶. ⚠ Please note that if the action will be implemented by the members, they should also participate as beneficiaries or as affiliated entities, otherwise their costs will NOT be eligible.

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)¹⁷ and entities covered by Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#)¹⁸). Such entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity, including as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, third parties giving in-kind contributions (for free), subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any).

Consortium composition

Proposals must be submitted **by a consortium**¹⁹ of at least 5 applicants (beneficiaries; affiliated entities and other participants are allowed, if needed, but affiliated entities do not count for the minimum number of applicants²⁰), which complies with the following conditions:

- **minimum 5 entities from 5 different EU Member States.**

Associated partners, if any, are considered third parties (see section 13). They are not applicants, not part of the consortium and hence do not count for the minimum number of applicants.

Eligible activities

The following types of activities are eligible under this call for proposals:

- Coordination;

¹⁵ See Article 187.1 (a) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#)

¹⁶ For the definitions, see Articles 187(2) and 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

¹⁷ 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](#).

¹⁸ 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).

¹⁹ An application may be submitted by a consortium, a 'sole applicant/beneficiary' (see section 13 for the definition of this concept) or by a combination of a "sole applicant" and other legal entities. Any of these applications will be considered as an application submitted by a consortium. In case a 'sole applicant/beneficiary' is involved, its participating members must be identified in the grant application as either beneficiaries or affiliated entities, otherwise their costs will NOT be eligible. Please note that (unlike a 'single applicant') the concept of a 'sole applicant/beneficiary' unites multiple legal entities. If the application is submitted by a 'sole beneficiary' as defined by Article 187(2) of the EU Financial Regulation, the members implementing the action count for the minimum number of applicants.

²⁰ Except for the case of 'Sole' beneficiary.

- Journalistic production and content distribution;
- Organisation of youth events and other youth engagement activities;
- Creation and maintenance of websites and platforms;
- Online advertising (max 10% of the total eligible direct costs);
- Other promotion and dissemination actions;
- Actions aiming at the creation and improvement of networks, such as exchanges of good practices among youth media reporters;
- Analyses and mapping of perceptions among youth;
- Financial support to third parties (e.g. a competition for young journalists, or support for projects (by media organisations, journalists etc) that provide independent journalistic coverage of current affairs for youth).

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

- Activities that do not primarily serve the objectives of this grant (such as lobbying).

Projects should take into account EU policy interests and priorities (such as environment, social, security, industrial and trade policy, etc).

Financial support to third parties is allowed for grants and prizes under the following conditions:

- the calls must be open, published widely and conform to EU standards concerning transparency, equal treatment, conflict of interest and confidentiality
- the calls must remain open for at least two months
- the outcome of the call must be published on the participants' websites, including a description of the selected projects, award dates, project durations, and final recipient legal names and countries
- the calls must have a clear European dimension
- applications must be assessed by a diverse and independent jury
- the applications must include²¹:
 - an exhaustive list of the types of activities for which a third party may receive financial support;
 - the definition of the entities, persons or categories of persons which may receive financial support;
 - the criteria for awarding financial support;
 - the maximum amount to be granted to each third party and the criteria for determining it.
- The amount of financial support per third party must not exceed **EUR 15 000**

²¹ See Article 204 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#)

(fifteen thousand Euros). No co-funding from the ultimate beneficiaries (i.e. the third parties receiving the support) shall be required.

In addition, your project application must clearly specify **why** financial support to third parties is needed and **how** it will be managed. The proposal must also clearly describe the **results** to be obtained.

Geographic location (target countries)

Proposals must relate to activities taking place in the eligible countries (*see above*). The **territorial focus of this action is EU Member States**.

Ethics

Projects must comply with:

- highest ethical standards and
- applicable EU, international and national law.

Security

No specific rules. Please refer to the general provisions in the MGA (Art. 13).

7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion

Financial capacity²²

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 submit together with your application (and which depend on your status and the amounts you receive, as detailed below) *e.g. profit and loss account and balance sheet, business plan, audit report produced by an approved external auditor, certifying the accounts for the last closed financial year, etc*). The analysis will be based on neutral financial indicators, but will also take into account other aspects, such as dependency on EU funding and deficit and revenue in previous years.

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

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

In the event of an application grouping several applicants (consortium), **the below thresholds apply to each applicant**.

In the case of legal entities forming **one** applicant (the "sole applicant" or "sole beneficiary"), as specified in section 6, the below requirements apply to each one of those entities.

²² See Articles 196(1) (c)(d) and 198(2), (4) and (5) of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#)

The financial capacity of the applicants or “sole applicant/beneficiary” or the coordinator will always be assessed based on documents to be provided under point 7.b).

The **individual** applicants' financial capacity will be assessed based on the following supporting documents to be submitted with the application (the thresholds below thus refer to the requested grant per partner, not to the total grant requested):

- a) Low value grants (\leq EUR 60 000):
 - a declaration on their honour²³
- b) Grants $>$ EUR 60 000:
 - a declaration on their honour²⁴

AND

- the profit and loss account as well as the balance sheet for the last 2 (two) financial years for which the accounts were closed;
- for newly created entities: the business plan might replace the above documents;
- the Financial Capacity check table provided for in Annex to the application form, filled in with the relevant statutory accounting figures mentioned above.

- c) Grants for an action $>$ EUR 750 000:
 - (i) the information and supporting documents mentioned in point b) above, and
 - (ii) **an audit report** produced by an approved external auditor certifying the accounts for the last 2 (two) financial years available, where such an audit report is available or whenever a statutory report is required by law.

If the audit report is not available AND a statutory report is not required by law, a self-declaration signed by the applicant's authorised representative certifying the validity of its accounts for the last 2 (two) financial years available must be provided.

On the basis of an analysis of the documents submitted, if we consider that the financial capacity of an applicant is **weak or insufficient** we may:

- request further information;
- impose 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*);
- decide to give pre-financing paid in instalments;
- request (one or more) pre-financing guarantees (*see below, section 10*);
- propose no pre-financing or reduce the pre-financing;
- decide to reject the participation of the applicant in the proposal and request

²³ To be declared via the coordinator at proposal submission stage, and to be confirmed via the signed DoH at grant signature stage. Please refer to section 5.

²⁴ See above footnote.

reallocation of the tasks to another applicant of the consortium or his replacement without compromising the quality of the proposal.

If the financial capacity of the consortium as a whole or of the coordinator or single or “sole applicant/beneficiary” is considered **insufficient**, the Authorised Representative Officer of the Commission may reject the application.

Operational capacity²⁵

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, which is to be submitted together with the application:

- 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).

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

In the event of an application grouping several applicants (consortium), the above requirements shall apply to the combined capacity of all members of the consortium. Combined capacity means that individually, each member of the consortium should comply with the criteria corresponding to its task in the project.

In the case of legal entities forming **one** applicant (the “sole applicant/beneficiary”), as specified in section 6, the above requirements apply to each one of those entities.

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 participate²⁶:

- 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)

²⁵ See Article 198(3) and (6) of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#)

²⁶ See Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

- 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 misconduct²⁷ (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 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 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 that²⁸:

- 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.

²⁷ 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.


²⁸ See Article 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

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

1. The ex aequo proposals 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'.
2. 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.

The verification of the financial capacity will be done only for the highest ranked proposals.

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, 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).

9. Award criteria

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

- **Relevance (30 points):** the relevance of the project and the contribution of its expected results to the objectives of the call, including its European dimension and added value, the number of countries and European languages covered, the diversity of countries/regions involved across Europe, and the provision of independent information and engagement in areas where provision of EU affairs is scarce.
- **Quality (30 points):**
 - **Project design and implementation:** the effectiveness and rationale of the proposed methodology and organisation (including concept, planning, work packages, management procedures, timetable, risk management, editorial quality control, monitoring and evaluation, professional standards); technical quality; logical links between the identified problems, needs and solutions proposed (logical frame concept).
 - **Project team and cooperation arrangements:** The experience of the proposed project teams; efficiency of the team composition to reach the objectives of this call; allocation of work packages,

responsibilities among the partners; mechanisms to ensure innovation, collaboration, diversity, impartiality and editorial independence.

- **Impact (20 points):** Expected audience figures and reach at the start and at the end of the Action, substantiated by audience figures of consortium members and other interested media as well as an outreach plan; appropriate dissemination and promotion strategy; openness and transferability of the expected results beyond consortium members to reach diverse young audiences.
- **Budget-cost effectiveness (20 points):** cost effectiveness of the proposed action, and in particular the relevance and quality of the means of implementation and the resources deployed in relation to the objectives envisaged and responsibilities of the partners; efficient use of financial resources as regards the objectives of the call; plans to ensure financial sustainability beyond EU funding.

Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score
Relevance	18	30
Quality	18	30
Impact	12	20
Budget-cost effectiveness	12	20
Overall (pass) scores	60	100

Maximum points: 100 points.

Individual thresholds per criterion: **60%**.

Overall threshold: **60 points**

Proposals that pass the individual thresholds **AND** the overall threshold can be considered for funding — within the limits of the available call budget (i.e. up to the budget threshold) and the number of projects to be funded, as announced in section 3. Other proposals will be rejected.

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

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

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

The Model Grant Agreement that will be used (and all other relevant templates and guidance documents) can be found on <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news-redirect/802275>

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 date²⁹ will be after grant signature. Retroactive application can be granted exceptionally for duly justified reasons— but never earlier than the proposal submission date.

Indicative project duration: 14 months.

Milestones and deliverables

The milestones and deliverables for each project will be reflected in Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement.

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*).

The grant will be a budget-based–mixed actual cost grant (actual costs, with unit cost³⁰ 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*).

The costs will be reimbursed at the funding rate fixed in the Grant Agreement (maximum **80%**).

Management costs (i.e. personnel costs for staff coordinating the network, beyond purely financial and editorial tasks) should not represent more than **15%** of the total eligible direct costs of the action.

Online advertising costs should not represent more than **10%** of the total eligible direct costs of the action.

Subcontracting is allowed if duly justified, for tasks that are not core tasks of the action, and should not represent more than **15%** of the total eligible direct costs of the action.

Support to third parties is allowed if duly justified, and should not represent more than **5%** of the total eligible direct costs of the action.

Grants may NOT produce a profit³¹ (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*).

²⁹ The project start date must normally be the first day of a month and later than the entry into force of the agreement. The Commission can decide on another date, if justified by the applicants. However, the starting date may not be earlier than the submission date of the grant application – except if provided for by the basic act or in cases of extreme urgency and conflict prevention (Article 193 EU Financial Regulation 2018/1046).

³⁰ This applies only to category A.4 of the Estimated budget, which is SME owners or natural person beneficiaries (i.e. beneficiaries that are natural persons not receiving a salary).

³¹ This is a standard obligation for all EU grants. It may be unselected only under the following condition of Article 192(3) EU Financial Regulation 2018/1046):

- actions implemented only by non-profit organisations (i.e. all beneficiaries and affiliated entities are non-profit organisations)

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
- D. Other cost categories
 - D.1 Financial support to third parties
- E. Indirect costs

Specific cost eligibility conditions for this call:

- personnel costs:
 - SME owner/natural person unit cost³²: Yes
- subcontracting costs:
 - additional subcontracting rules: Yes
 - subcontracting may not cover core tasks of the action
 - subcontracting shall not exceed 15% of total eligible direct costs of the action
- travel and subsistence unit cost³³: No (only actual costs)
- equipment costs: depreciation
- other cost categories:

³² 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).

³³ 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).

- costs for financial support to third parties: allowed for grants and prizes; maximum amount per third party **EUR 15 000**
- indirect cost flat-rate: **7%** of the eligible direct costs (categories A-D).
-  Applicants' attention is drawn to the fact that if they are receiving an operating grant financed by the EU or Euratom budget, they may not declare indirect costs for the period(s) covered by the operating grant, unless they can demonstrate that the operating grant does not cover any costs of the action. If you intend to also apply for action grants while receiving an operating grant, please make sure that you either have the accounting tools in place to combine them (or that the operating grants pays off — meaning that it covers enough of your general running costs and overheads to compensate the loss of the indirect costs in the action grants).
- VAT: non-deductible VAT is eligible (but please note that since 2013 VAT paid by beneficiaries that are public bodies acting as public authority is NOT eligible)
- other:
 - in-kind contributions for free are allowed, but cost-neutral, i.e. they cannot be declared as cost
 - 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
 - other ineligible costs: No

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** to start working on the project (between **30 and 50%**³⁴ of the maximum grant amount; exceptionally less or no pre-financing). The pre-financing will be paid 30 days from entry into force/starting date/financial guarantee (if required) — whichever is the latest.

There will be one **interim payment** (with detailed cost reporting). Pre-financing and interim payment may not exceed **90%** of the maximum grant amount.

In addition, you may be expected to submit one or more 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 you (your coordinator) to pay back the difference (recovery).

All payments will be made to the coordinator.

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

³⁴ The percentage of the pre-financing payment will be decided during grant preparation.

Please also note that you are responsible for keeping records on all the work done and the costs/units declared. The Grant Agreement contains additional record-keeping rules (*Data Sheet, point 6 and art 20*).

Pre-financing guarantees

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

The guarantee should be in euro and issued by an approved bank/financial institution established in an EU Member State.

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

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

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

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

Certificates

Depending on the type of action, size of grant amount and type of beneficiaries, you may be requested to submit different certificates³⁵. The types, schedules and thresholds for each certificate are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4 and art 24*).

Liability regime for recoveries

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

For beneficiaries, it is one of the following:

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

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

Provisions concerning the project implementation

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

³⁵ See Article 203.4 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#)

Ethics rules: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 14 and Annex 5)*

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

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

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

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 **by the deadline set out under section 4**.

No modification to the application is allowed once the deadline for submission has elapsed. However, if there is a need to clarify certain aspects or to correct clerical mistakes, the Commission may contact the applicant during the evaluation process³⁶.

Applicants will be informed in writing about the results of the selection process.³⁷

The mandatory Grant Application Form and other mandatory template documents to be completed are available at <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news-redirect/802275>.

Applications **must** be submitted in the correct form, duly completed and dated. The following application documents: **GAF Part A and B and the Estimated Budget table** must be submitted in **one original paper copy** (no additional paper copies required) signed³⁸ by the person authorised to enter into legally binding commitments on behalf of the applicant organisation.

An electronic version of the Application Form Part A and B, Estimated budget and all other annexes and documents must be provided on USB stick together with the original signed paper copy requested. The electronic version (pdf) of the Grant Application Form Part A and B must not be a scan of the paper version but must be **searchable (machine readable)**.

Where applicable, additional information considered necessary by the applicant may be included as an annex on the USB stick (brochures, etc.), but assessment will be based on information included in the application form (therefore please limit the

³⁶ *Articles 151 and 200(3) EU Financial Regulation 2018/1046*

³⁷ *Article 200 EU Financial Regulation 2018/1046*

³⁸ Blue ink" handwritten signature or "Qualified Electronic Signature (QES) within the meaning of Regulation (EU) No 910/2014 (eIDAS Regulation).

number and size of additional documents and attachments).

Please structure the information on the USB key by type of documents and applicants as follows:

- 1-GAF-Grant Application Form – Part A
- 2-GAF-Grant Application Form – Part B
- 3-Estimated Budget
- 4-LEF-Legal Entity Form + supporting documents (all applicants with one subfolder per applicant)
- 5-BAF-Bank Account Form + supporting documents (coordinator only)
- 6-Financial capacity_(when relevant) including Financial capacity excel + 2 years annual accounts (Balance sheet and Profit & Loss) with one subfolder per applicant/entity composing the "sole applicant/beneficiary"
- 7-Declaration on standards and independence
- 8-Other documents (CV, annual activity reports ...) with one subfolder per applicant when relevant.

Folders and documents title should clearly refer to its content and name of related applicant.

Applications **must** be sent to the following address:

European Commission

Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content & Technology (DG CNECT)

Unit CNECT.I.3 – Audiovisual Industry and Media Support Programmes

For the attention of the Head of Unit (BRU-L51)

Reference: Call CNECT/ 2023/9573146 – Youth media

B-1049 BRUSSELS

Belgium

- **by post**³⁹ (evidence will be constituted by the postmark), or
- **by courier service** (evidence will be constituted by date of deposit slip), or
- **by hand-delivery**. It is compulsory for security reasons to address it to **the central mail department of the Commission** as follows:

European Commission

Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content & Technology

Unit CNECT.I.3 – Audiovisual Industry and Media Support Programmes

Reference: Call CNECT/ CNECT/2023/9573146 – Youth media

Avenue du Bourget, 1

B-1140 BRUSSELS (Evere),

Belgium

In this case, proof of submission of the proposal will take the form of a receipt signed and dated by the official of the Commission's central mail department who takes delivery of the documents. The department is open from 08.00 to

³⁹ Applicants are advised to keep the payment receipt with date and time from the post office in order to be able to prove that the proposal has been sent within the deadline.

17.00 on Mondays to Thursdays and from 08.00 to 16.00 on Fridays. It is closed on Saturdays, Sundays and Commission holidays.

In addition to the above:

applicants **must** send an **E-mail** before the deadline set out under section 3 to the following email address: CNECT-NEWSMEDIA@ec.europa.eu **to inform us about your submission on paper.**

Applications sent only by E-mail will not be accepted.

The proposal must keep to the **page limits** (see section 5).

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):

- FAQs on the Call page (for call-specific questions in open calls).

Please also consult the Call page regularly, since we might use it to publish addendums to the call documents, if needed (e.g. extension of call deadline, or other).

Contact

Questions and requests for clarifications should be sent to the following email address: CNECT-NEWSMEDIA@ec.europa.eu.

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

The Commission is not bound to reply to requests for additional information received less than six working days before the deadline for submitting applications set in section 3.

The answers will also be published in the FAQs section on: <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news-redirect/802275>

- **Mandatory annexes and supporting documents** (to be submitted together with the application on specific support):
 - **Paper and USB stick**
 - Grant Application form Part A and Part B (signed scan in pdf and original searchable pdf on the USB)
 - Estimated Budget of the action (Annex 2 to CMGA) (signed scan in pdf and original excel file on the USB)
 - **USB Stick only**
 - Legal entity form + required supporting documents⁴⁰ (for all applicants)(in pdf scans)

⁴⁰ Copies of official supporting documents: resolution, law, register(s) of companies, official gazette, vat registration, etc.

- Bank account form + required supporting document⁴¹ (only for the coordinator) (in pdf scans)
 - Financial Capacity Check table and BS and P&L Account supporting documents (please refer to section 7) (Financial capacity check table: original excel file. Supporting documents: pdf)
 - CVs (standard) of core project team (please refer to section 7) (in pdf)
 - Activity reports of last year (in pdf)
 - Declaration on standards and independence (in original pdf if qualified electronic signature (QES), in pdf scan(s) if blue handwritten signature)
 - other annexes.
- **Other documents** (*for information of the applicants and/or to be submitted at a later stage in the procedure*):
- Model Declaration of honour⁴²
 - Model grant agreement and its annex 2a-unit costs SME owners and annex 5-Specific rules

(e-signed)
Ingrid Mariën-Dusak
Authorising Officer by sub-delegation
Directorate I

⁴¹ A copy of RECENT bank statement. Please note that the bank statement has to confirm the 'ACCOUNT NAME', 'ACCOUNT NUMBER/IBAN' and 'BANK NAME'.

⁴² Not mandatory at application stage, however, if you decide to provide them with your application, please provide them on the USB key (in original pdf if qualified electronic signature (QES), in pdf scan(s) if blue handwritten signature).

13. Important

IMPORTANT

- **Consortium roles** — When setting up your consortium, you should think of organisations that help you reach objectives and solve problems.

The roles should be attributed according to the level of participation in the project. Main participants should participate as **beneficiaries** or **affiliated entities**; other entities can participate as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions. **Associated partners** and third parties giving in-kind contributions should bear their own costs (they will not become formal recipients of EU funding). **Subcontracting** should normally constitute a limited part and must be performed by third parties (not by one of the beneficiaries/affiliated entities).
- **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 (just like beneficiaries); but they do not count towards the minimum eligibility criteria for consortium composition (if any). Entities that satisfy the eligibility criteria and that do not fall within one of the situations referred to in Articles 136(1) and 141(1) FR and that have a link with the applicant, in particular a legal or capital link, which is neither limited to the action nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation, will be considered as entities affiliated to the applicant (See Article 187.1 (b) EU Financial Regulation 2018/1046).
- **Sole beneficiaries** - Associations and interest groupings (EEIG): Entities composed of members may participate as 'sole beneficiary' (see Article 187.1 (a) EU Financial Regulation 2018/1046). Please note that if the action will be implemented by the members, they should also participate (either as beneficiaries or as affiliated entities (if foreseen in the call), otherwise their costs will NOT be eligible). A "sole" beneficiary is a legal entity, whether established specifically or not for the action, and which is:
 - formed of several legal entities complying with the eligibility, non-exclusion and selection criteria set out in this call for proposals, and implementing together the proposed action;
 - and whose participating members are identified in the grant application (Part A and B)
- **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 may implement action tasks but in contrast to affiliated entities they do not need to have a capital or legal link to a beneficiary and cost incurred by Associated Partners can NOT be declared as eligible cost. In contrast to third parties giving in-kind contributions, the associated partners are fully named in the grant agreement and may implement important tasks by themselves. Entities that do not request funding or are not eligible for funding may participate in an action as Associated Partners, for example out of interest in contributing to the objectives of the action, gaining visibility, or participating due to ongoing (scientific) cooperation with a beneficiary. As with any other participant that does not sign the grant agreement, the beneficiaries need to ensure (e.g. through the consortium agreement) that Associated Partners implement their assigned action tasks in accordance with the grant agreement. The tasks must be set out in Annex 1.

- **Consortium agreement** — For practical and legal reasons it is recommended to set up internal arrangements that allow you to deal with exceptional or unforeseen circumstances (in all cases, even if not mandatory under the Grant Agreement). The consortium agreement also gives you the possibility to redistribute the grant money according to your own consortium-internal principles and parameters (for instance, one beneficiary can reattribute its grant money to another beneficiary). The consortium agreement thus allows you to customise the EU grant to the needs inside your consortium and can also help to protect you in case of disputes.
- **Balanced project budget** — Grant applications must ensure a balanced project budget and sufficient other resources to implement the project successfully (*e.g. own contributions, income generated by the action, financial contributions from third parties, etc*). You may be requested to lower your estimated costs, if they are ineligible (including excessive).
- **No-profit rule** — By default, 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. An exception to this rule is foreseen in **Article 192(3) EU Financial Regulation 2018/1046**.
- **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 only where the applicant can demonstrate in the grant application the need to start the action before the grant agreement is signed (in this case, no costs can be reimbursed for activities that took place before the 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](#)). In order to demonstrate that the operating grant does not cover any costs of the action, the beneficiary should:
 - a. use *analytical cost accounting that allows to separate all costs (including overheads)* attributable to the operating grant and the action grant. For that purpose the beneficiary should use *reliable accounting codes and allocation keys* ensuring that *the allocation* of the costs is done in a *fair, objective and realistic way*.
 - b. *record separately*:
 - all costs incurred for the operating grants (i.e. personnel, general running costs and other operating costs linked to the part of its usual annual activities), and
 - all costs incurred for the action grants (including the actual indirect costs linked to the action)

If the operating grant covers the entire usual annual activity and budget of the beneficiary, the latter is not entitled to receive any indirect costs under the action grant.

- **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. In this case, please clearly indicate that the re-submitted proposal is the one to be evaluated.
- **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. 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](#).