



# **Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV)**

## **Call for proposals**

Operating grants to framework partners active in the areas of Union  
values

CERV-2021-OG-SGA

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

0. Introduction .....	5
1. Background.....	6
2. Objectives — Themes and priorities — Activities that can be funded — Expected impact .....	6
Objectives .....	6
Themes and priorities (scope) .....	6
Activities that can be funded (scope).....	9
Expected impact.....	10
3. Available budget.....	10
4. Timetable and deadlines .....	11
5. Admissibility and documents .....	11
6. Eligibility.....	12
Eligible participants (eligible countries).....	12
Consortium composition .....	14
Eligible activities.....	14
Geographic location (target countries).....	14
Duration .....	14
Ethics and EU values.....	15
7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion.....	15
Financial capacity .....	15
Operational capacity .....	15
Exclusion .....	16
8. Evaluation and award procedure .....	17
9. Award criteria .....	17
10. Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements.....	18
Starting date and project duration .....	18
Milestones and deliverables.....	19
Form of grant, funding rate and maximum grant amount.....	19
Budget categories and cost eligibility rules.....	19
Reporting and payment arrangements.....	20

Prefinancing guarantees .....	21
Certificates .....	21
Liability regime for recoveries .....	21
Provisions concerning the project implementation.....	22
Other specificities .....	22
Non-compliance and breach of contract .....	22
11. How to submit an application.....	22
12. Help .....	23
13. Important .....	24

## 0. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for EU **operating grants** in the field of Union values under the **Citizens, Equality, Rights and Value programme (CERV)**. The regulatory framework for this EU Funding Programme is set out in:

- Regulation 2018/1046 ([EU Financial Regulation](#))
- the basic act<sup>1</sup>.

The call is launched in accordance with the 2021-2022 work programme<sup>2</sup> 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 CERV programme Regulation by the legislative authority. In case there are substantial changes, we may have to modify the call (or even cancel it).

The call covers the following **topic**:

- **CERV-2021-OG—SGA — Operating grants to framework partners active in the area of Union values**

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

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

- the [Call Document](#) outlines the:
  - background, objectives, scope, activities that can be funded and the expected results (sections 1 and 2)
  - timetable and available budget (sections 3 and 4)
  - admissibility and eligibility conditions (including mandatory documents; sections 5 and 6)
  - criteria for financial and operational capacity and exclusion (section 7)
  - evaluation and award procedure (section 8)
  - award criteria (section 9)
  - legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements (section 10)
  - how to submit an application (section 11)
- the [Online Manual](#) outlines the:

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EU) of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme.

<sup>2</sup> [Commission Implementing Decision C/2021/2583 final of 19/4/2021 concerning the adoption of the work programme for 2021-2022 and the financing decision for the implementation of the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme.](#)

- 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. The Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme brings together the former Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme<sup>3</sup> and the former Europe for Citizens programme<sup>4</sup>.

*Every year, an operating grant may be awarded to framework partners to finance their activities, insofar as these are in line with the programme's objectives in the area concerned and the policy priorities that may be established by the Commission. The costs of general administrative expenditure necessary for the running of these organisations may also be covered.*

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

### Objectives

Protecting, promoting and raising awareness on rights by providing financial support to civil society organisations active at local, regional, national and transnational level in promoting and cultivating these rights, thereby also strengthening the protection and promotion of Union values and respect for the rule of law and contributing to building a more democratic Union, democratic dialogue, transparency and good governance.<sup>5</sup>

EU policy initiatives supported: European democracy action plan, EU Citizenship Report 2020, Rule of law report, Strategy to strengthen the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the EU, Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, EU anti-racism action plan, EU Roma strategic framework on equality, inclusion and participation, LGBTIQ Equality Strategy, EU Strategy on the rights of the child, forthcoming EU Strategy on combating antisemitism.

### Themes and priorities (scope)

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<sup>3</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1381/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 establishing a Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme for the period 2014 to 2020 (OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, p. 62)

<sup>4</sup> Council Regulation (EU) No 390/2014 of 14 April 2014 establishing the 'Europe for Citizens' programme for the period 2014-2020 (OJ L 115, 17.4.2014, p.3)

<sup>5</sup> Article 3 - Union values strand of [Regulation (EU) of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme]

These grants aim to support the annual work programmes of European networks, civil society organisations active at EU level and European think tanks that have signed framework partnership agreements with EACEA and are active in one of the following areas: union values, non-discrimination, gender equality, combating racism, xenophobia and all forms of intolerance, rights of the child, preventing and combating gender-based violence and violence against children. These grants also aim to support the annual work programmes of European networks, civil society organisations active at EU level and European think tanks which have signed framework partnership agreements with EACEA and are active in the areas of European remembrance or citizens' engagement. Framework partners may submit a proposal presenting their annual work programme.

### **Union Values**

These grants aim to support the annual work programme of European networks whose activities contribute to the promotion, protection and awareness raising of Union values and the fundamental rights enshrined in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The Framework Partners should support the implementation of the strategy to strengthen the application of the Charter of fundamental rights in the EU<sup>6</sup>, including also strengthening the capacity and ability of civil society organisations and independent human rights bodies to effectively engage in litigation practices to defend people's rights.

### **Promote equality, prevent and combat discrimination**

These grants aim to support the annual work programme of European networks active in the area of non-discrimination and equality which have signed Framework Partnership Agreements with the Commission.

In the field of Roma equality, inclusion, and participation the Framework Partners are asked to focus in their activities on the seven key core areas: equality, inclusion, participation, education, employment, health, and housing of the EU Roma Strategic Framework. The work of the partners should also prioritise the fight against antigypsyism as a key priority with a dedicated non-discrimination objective and also as a cross-cutting priority with the specific objectives underlined above. The partners are equally asked to align their work with the 10-year strategic framework to advance Roma equality in the EU, and to further enhance the scope of the Council Recommendation which includes a comprehensive list of measures to combat discrimination and antigypsyism, advance social inclusion, promote participation and active citizenship, amongst all members of Roma communities with due consideration of gender balance. The partners should be able to support the process of mainstreaming of Roma equality in different policy areas and to increase the capacity of all their members to meaningfully contribute to the development of inclusive reform of public policies by national authorities.

In the area of LGBTIQ equality the Framework Partners are asked to focus on combatting discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics. In the development of their activities the partners are encouraged to take into account relevant contribution to the implementation of the LGBTIQ Equality Strategy and impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the LGBTIQ community.

### **Promote gender equality**

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<sup>6</sup> COM(2020)711.

These grants aim to support the annual work programme of European networks active in the area of gender equality, and in particular those whose work promotes equality between women and men, in all their diversity<sup>7</sup>, under the three pillars of the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 (being free from violence and stereotypes, thriving in a gender-equal economy and leading equally throughout society) as well as advance gender mainstreaming.

### **Combat racist and xenophobic hate crime and hate speech, including online,**

These grants aim to support the annual work programme of European networks active on fighting all forms of racist and xenophobic hate crimes and hate speech such as antisemitism, anti-Muslim hatred and Afrophobia, including online.

Framework partners shall undertake activities in support of the implementation of the 2008 Council Framework Decision on combating racism and xenophobia and all forms of intolerance.

In particular in the area of antisemitism the Framework Partners are asked to focus on preventing and combating all forms of antisemitism and to contribute to the development and implementation of the forthcoming EU strategy on combating antisemitism. They are invited to focus on supporting the mainstreaming of the fight against antisemitism in all relevant policy areas. Activities may include raising awareness of antisemitism among policy makers and the general public, mobilising their members to support victims of antisemitism, collect data on antisemitic incidents; encourage reporting, educate the public about the diversity of Jewish life, and strengthen the resilience of Jewish communities.

### **Protect and promote the rights of the child**

The grants aim to support the annual work programme of European networks aiming at promoting and protecting the rights of the child, and in particular whose work contributes to mainstreaming child rights in all relevant policies, and to the implementation of the thematic priorities of the EU strategy on the rights of the child.

### **Prevent and combat gender-based violence**

The grants aim to support the annual work programme of European networks aiming at preventing and combating all forms of violence against women, as well as violence against other groups at risk, in particular groups at risk of violence in close relationships, and to protect victims of such violence. In particular, the work of European networks will focus on prevention, response and follow-up to all forms of gender-based violence, and can include working with victims, offenders, professionals, decision makers and authorities, stakeholders, the public at large.

### **Prevent and combat violence against children**

The grants aim to support the annual work programme of European networks aiming at preventing and combating all forms of violence against children, and at contributing to the implementation of the thematic priorities on violence as specifically defined in the EU strategy on the rights of the child. In particular, the work of EU networks will focus on prevention, response and follow-up to all forms of violence, and can include working with victims, offenders, professionals, decision makers and authorities, stakeholders, the public at large.

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<sup>7</sup> With reference to the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, the expression 'in all their diversity' is used to express that, where women or men are mentioned, these are a heterogeneous groups including in relation to their sex, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics.

### **Promote citizens' engagement and participation**

The grants aim to support the annual work programme of organisations aiming at promoting citizens and representative associations' participation in and contribution to the democratic and civic life of the Union by making known and publicly exchanging their views in all areas of Union action. The final aim is to bring the European Union closer to its citizens and to foster democratic participation through a variety of actions. European citizenship and identity should be developed and advanced by encouraging citizens' understanding of the policymaking process and by promoting civic engagement in the actions of the Union.

The selected organisations should support actions to broadly cover a variety of policy areas, and to contribute to the promotion of EU values, the rule of law, fundamental rights and democracy. A specific focus should be given to the following priorities: the 2024 European Parliament elections; the COVID-19 crisis and its effects on the democratic debate and the enjoyment of fundamental rights; innovative democratic approaches and tools to help citizens make their voices heard and publicly exchange views on all areas of EU action, notably digital tools ('e-democracy'); countering disinformation and other forms of interference in the democratic debate, empowering citizens to make informed decisions by helping them identify disinformation and promoting media literacy, with journalists' involvement; engaging citizens and communities in discussions and action related to our climate and environment.

Activities will give citizens an opportunity to contribute to the implementation of the European democracy action plan the EU Citizenship Report 2020 and shall promote EU citizenship rights.

### **Promote European Remembrance**

The grants aim to support the annual work programme of European organisations commemorating, researching and educating about defining developments and moments in modern European history and at raising awareness among European citizens of their history, culture, cultural heritage and values. The aim is to foster a common culture of remembrance and mutual understanding between people from different countries and backgrounds and strengthen the understanding of the Union, its origins, purpose, diversity and achievements.

In particular the work of European organisations will focus on crimes committed by totalitarian regimes such as the Holocaust, including addressing current challenges of Holocaust denial and distortion, as well as resistance and democratic transition in recent European history.

The organisations should pay particular attention to the forthcoming EU Strategy on combating antisemitism, the EU anti-racism action plan for 2020-2025 and the EU Roma strategic framework on equality, inclusion and participation and their implementation.

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

These grants will fund the networks, organisations or think tanks operating costs and those activities which have EU added value and contribute to the implementation of programme objectives, including analytical activities, training and capacity building activities, conferences, mutual learning, cooperation, awareness-raising, communication and dissemination activities. Applicants must provide a detailed annual work programme for a period of 12 months.

Activities should duly pay attention to a gender perspective, both at design and implementation phase, as this will be taken into account in the evaluation. The partners should also ensure an inclusive and intersectional approach in these

activities for all people, with regards to for instance racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, (dis)ability, age, gender, sex or sexual orientation.

### Expected impact

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

1. Building the capacity of national or regional organisations working in the areas covered by the grant;
2. Building and increasing the capacity of network partners to develop coherent and coordinated activities that promote the relevant policy objectives;
3. Expansion of the network's reach, including new partners;
4. A measurable increase in the impact of the network's activities in the relevant policy areas.

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

5. Building and increasing their capacity to develop coherent and coordinated transnational activities to promote the relevant policy objectives at EU level;
6. A tangible contribution made by the organisation's permanent, usual and regular transnational activities to the relevant policy objectives at EU level and a measurable increase in impact in the relevant policy areas.

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

7. Providing a link between research and policy-making at European level, which helps find solutions to problems;
8. Facilitating interaction between scientists, academia and decision-makers.

### **3. Available budget**

The available call budget is **EUR 20 900 000**. This budget might be increased by maximum 20%.

Specific budget information per policy priority can be found in the table below.

<b>Call topic</b>	<b>Policy priorities</b>	<b>Budget</b>
CERV-2021-OG-SGA	Union values	EUR 20 900 000
	Promote and protect Union Values	EUR 1 100 000
	Promote equality, prevent and combat discrimination	EUR 4 100 000
	Promote gender equality	EUR 1 600 000
	Combat racism, xenophobia and all forms	EUR 2 600 000

	of intolerance	
	Protect and promote the rights of the child	EUR 1 200 000
	Promote European remembrance	EUR 1 700 000
	Promote citizens' engagement and participation	EUR 6 000 000
	Prevent and combat gender-based violence	EUR 1 600 000
	Prevent and combat violence against children	EUR 1 000 000

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

#### 4. Timetable and deadlines

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

#### 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 (to be filled in directly online) containing additional project data including mandatory indicators
- **mandatory annexes and supporting documents** (*to be uploaded*):
  - detailed budget table
  - CVs (standard) of core project team: not applicable
  - activity reports of last year: not applicable
  - list of previous projects (key projects for the last 4 years)
  - for participants with activities involving children: their child protection policy covering the four areas described in the [Keeping Children Safe Child Safeguarding Standards](#)

 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.

The child protection policies must be available online and transparent to everyone who comes in contact with the organisation. They must include clear information about the recruitment of staff (including trainees and volunteers) and include background checks (vetting). They must also include clear procedures and rules to staff, including reporting rules, and continuous training.

At proposal submission, you will have to confirm that you have the **mandate to act** for all applicants. Moreover you will have to confirm that the information in the application is correct and complete and that the participants comply with the conditions for receiving EU funding (especially eligibility, financial and operational capacity, exclusion, etc). Before signing the grant, each beneficiary and affiliated entity will have to confirm this again by signing a declaration of honour (DoH). Proposals without full support will be rejected.

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

Proposals are limited to maximum **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**

### *Eligible participants (eligible countries)*

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

- be legal entities, private non-profit organisations (private bodies);
- be established in a Member State of the European Union;

- be a beneficiary of a Framework Partnership Agreement within the Call CERV-2021-OG-FPA — European networks, civil society organisations active at EU level and European think tanks in the areas of Union values;
- for priorities: **Promote and protect Union values; Promote equality, prevent and combat discrimination; Promote gender equality; Combat racism, xenophobia and all forms of intolerance; Protect and promote the rights of the child; Prevent and combat gender-based violence and violence against children:** be an established formal network with own legal personality or represent (as joint secretariat or officially appointed coordinator) an established formal network, **organised at European level and with member organisations/bodies or authorities from at least 14 EU Member States;**
- for priority **Preventing and combating gender-based violence,** be an established formal network with own legal personality or represent (as joint secretariat or officially appointed coordinator) an established formal network, **organised at European level and with member organisations/bodies or authorities from at least 14 EU Member States;** the networks active in the area of **female genital mutilation (FGM)** must have member organisations/bodies or authorities in at least **12 EU Member States;**
- for priority **Promoting citizens’ engagement and participation,** be an established formal network with own legal personality or represent (as joint secretariat or officially appointed coordinator) an established formal network, **organised at European level and with member organisations/bodies or authorities from at least 14 EU Member States,** or an **established civil society organisation active at EU level with activities in at least 14 Member States or a European think tank;**
- for priority **Promoting European remembrance** be an established formal network with own legal personality or represent (as joint secretariat or officially appointed coordinator) an established formal network, **organised at European level and with member organisations/bodies or authorities from at least 14 EU Member States,** or an **established civil society organisation active at EU level or a European think tank;**
- The applicant must be a single applicant; in case of networks only the network or the organisation appointed as the joint secretariat/officially appointed coordinator may submit an application; the member organisations are not eligible to apply;
- The applicant’s statutory aims must fall under one of the objectives of the programme as set out in the Work Programme 2021-2022.

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 persons<sup>8</sup>.

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

Associations and interest groupings — Entities composed of members may participate as 'sole beneficiaries' or 'beneficiaries without legal personality'<sup>9</sup>. ⚠ Please note that if the action will be implemented by the members, they should also participate (either as beneficiaries or as affiliated entities, otherwise their costs will NOT be eligible).

EU restrictive measures — Special rules apply for certain entities (*e.g. entities subject to [EU restrictive measures](#) under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)*<sup>10</sup> and entities covered by Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#)<sup>11</sup>). Such entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity, including as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any).

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

### Consortium composition

Only applications by single applicants are allowed.

### Eligible activities

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

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*).

Financial support to third parties is not allowed.

Projects should be consistent with the action plan submitted for the framework partnership. **Only applications that have first been awarded a framework partnership will be considered eligible.**

### Geographic location (target countries)

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

### Duration

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<sup>8</sup> See Article 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

<sup>9</sup> For the definitions, see Articles 187(2) and 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

<sup>10</sup> Please note that the EU Official Journal contains the official list and, in case of conflict, its content prevails over that of the [EU Sanctions Map](#).

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

The foreseen duration of activities under specific grant agreements is 12 months. The eligibility period is one year and corresponds to the financial year of the beneficiary (extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment).

### Ethics and EU values

Projects must comply with:

- ethical principles
- 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 (see [Non-discrimination mainstreaming instruments, case studies and ways forward](#)). They should also seek to reduce levels of discrimination suffered by particular groups (as well as those at risk of multiple discrimination) and to improve equality outcomes for individuals<sup>12</sup>. Proposals should integrate gender and non-discrimination considerations in proposals and target a gender-balanced representation in project teams and activities. It is also important that individual data collected by the beneficiaries are broken down by sex ([sex-disaggregated data](#)), disability or age whenever possible.

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

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

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

### Financial capacity

n/a

### Operational capacity

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

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

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<sup>12</sup> [Non-discrimination mainstreaming– instruments, case studies and way forwards](#)

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

Applicants will have to show their operational 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)

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

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

### Exclusion

Applicants which are subject to an **EU exclusion decision** or in one of the following **exclusion situations** that bar them from receiving EU funding can NOT participate<sup>13</sup>:

- bankruptcy, winding up, affairs administered by the courts, arrangement with creditors, suspended business activities or other similar procedures (including procedures for persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- in breach of social security or tax obligations (including if done by persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- guilty of grave professional misconduct<sup>14</sup> (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No [2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation,

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<sup>13</sup> See Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

<sup>14</sup> Professional misconduct includes: violation of ethical standards of the profession, wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility, false declarations/misrepresentation of information, participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition, violation of IPR, attempting to influence decision-making processes or obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain advantage.

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

Applicants will also be refused if it turns out that<sup>15</sup>:

- during the award procedure they misrepresented information required as a condition for participating or failed to supply that information
- they were previously involved in the preparation of the call and this entails a distortion of competition that cannot be remedied otherwise (conflict of interest).

## 8. Evaluation and award procedure

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

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

For proposals with the same score (within a 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 budget envelope 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 grant.

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

## 9. Award criteria

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<sup>15</sup> See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

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

- **Relevance:** extent to which the proposal matches the priorities and objectives of the call; 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; possibility to use the results in other countries (potential for transfer of good practices); potential to develop mutual trust/cross-border cooperation (40 points)
- **Quality:** clarity and consistency of project; logical links between the identified problems, needs and solutions proposed (logical frame concept); methodology for implementing the project with gender perspective being appropriately taken into account (organisation of work, timetable, allocation of resources and distribution of tasks, risks & risk management, monitoring and evaluation); ethical issues are addressed; feasibility of the project within the proposed time frame; financial feasibility (sufficient/appropriate budget for proper implementation; cost-effectiveness (best value for money) (40 points)
- **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
<b>Overall (pass) scores</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>

Maximum points: 100 points.

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

Overall threshold: 70 points.

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

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

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

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

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

### Starting date and project duration

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

Project duration: one year which corresponds to the financial year of the beneficiary. (extensions will be possible only exceptionally, for duly justified reasons and through an amendment).

### Milestones and deliverables

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

Beneficiaries will have to ask attendees in events to participate in the EU Survey on Justice, Rights and Values. This survey allows the granting authority to closely monitor training, mutual learning and awareness-raising events. The beneficiaries will receive a link to the survey, to be forwarded to the attendees. They will then have access to the results of the survey linked to their project and can use it for their project evaluation. The granting authority will aggregate the results of all the projects financed under the CERV programme.

### Form of grant, funding rate and maximum grant amount

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

Project budget (maximum grant amount): No limit. The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

The grant will be a budget-based mixed actual cost grant (actual costs). 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).

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

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

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

### Budget categories and cost eligibility rules

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

*Budget categories for this call:*

- A. Personnel costs
  - A.1 Employees, A.2 Natural persons under direct contract, A.3 Seconded persons
  - A.5 Volunteers
- B. Subcontracting costs
- C. Purchase costs
  - C.1 Travel and subsistence

- C.2 Equipment
- C.3 Other goods, works and services

*Specific cost eligibility conditions for this call:*

- personnel costs:
  - volunteers unit cost<sup>16</sup>: Yes (without indirect costs)
- travel and subsistence unit cost<sup>17</sup>: Yes
- equipment costs: depreciation
- other cost categories:
  - costs for financial support to third parties: not allowed
- 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
  - kick off meeting: costs for kick-off meeting organised by the granting authority are eligible (travel costs for maximum 2 persons, return ticket to Brussels and accommodation for one night) only if the meeting takes place after the project starting date set out in the Grant Agreement; the starting date can be changed through an amendment, if needed
  - project websites: communication costs for presenting the project on the participants' websites or social media accounts are eligible; costs for *separate* project websites are not eligible
  - other ineligible costs: No

 **Volunteers costs** — Volunteers costs are not a classic cost category. There are no costs because volunteers work for free, but they may nonetheless be added to the budget in the form of a prefixed unit cost (per volunteer) and thus allow you to benefit from the volunteers' work for the grant (by increasing the amount of reimbursement up to 100% of the normal costs, i.e. cost categories other than volunteers). More information is available in the [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6.2.A.5](#).

**Indirect costs** — For operating grants, there is no differentiation between direct and indirect cost (because the grant aims to a large extent the financing of costs which would normally be considered 'indirect', i.e. general management costs, general running costs etc). Receiving an operating grant may however make you ineligible for receiving indirect costs in your EU action grants. If you intend to also apply for action grants, 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).

*Reporting and payment arrangements*

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<sup>16</sup> Commission [Decision](#) of 10 April 2019 authorising the use of unit costs for declaring personnel costs for the work carried out by volunteers under an action or a work programme (C(2019)2646).

<sup>17</sup> Commission [Decision](#) of 12 January 2021 authorising the use of unit costs for travel, accommodation and subsistence costs under an action or work programme under the 2021-2027 multi-annual financial framework (C(2021)35).

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 **prefinancing** to start working on the project (float of normally 80% of the maximum grant amount; exceptionally less or no prefinancing). The prefinancing will be paid 30 days from entry into force/financial guarantee (if required) – whichever is the latest.

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

All payments will be made to the coordinator.

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

### Prefinancing guarantees

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

The guarantee should be in euro and issued by an approved bank/financial institution established in an EU Member State. If you are established in a non-EU country and would like to provide a guarantee from a bank/financial institution in your country, please contact us (this may be exceptionally accepted, if it offers equivalent security).

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

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

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

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

### Certificates

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

### Liability regime for recoveries

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

For beneficiaries, it is one of the following:

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

*grant amount for the action*

or

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

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

#### *Provisions concerning the project implementation*

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

- rights of use on results: Yes

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

- additional communication and dissemination activities: Yes

#### *Other specificities*

n/a

#### *Non-compliance and breach of contract*

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



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

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

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

Submission is a 2-step process:

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

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

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

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

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

Submit your proposal in 3 parts, as follows:

- Part A includes administrative information about the applicant organisations (future coordinator, beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners) and the summarised budget for the proposal. Fill it in directly online

- Part B (description of the action) covers the technical content of the proposal. Download the mandatory word template from the Submission System, fill it in and upload it as a PDF file
- Annexes (see section 5). Upload them as PDF file (single or multiple depending on the slots; the budget table can be uploaded as Excel file).

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

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

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

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

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

## 12. Help

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

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

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

### Contact

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

Non-IT related questions should be sent to the following email address: [EACEA-CERV@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EACEA-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).
- **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 double funding** (*n/a for FPAs*) — There is a strict prohibition of double funding from the EU budget (except under EU Synergies actions). Outside such Synergies actions, any given action may receive only ONE grant from the EU budget and cost items may under NO circumstances declared to two different EU actions.
- **Completed/ongoing projects** — Proposals for projects that have already been completed will be rejected; proposals for projects that have already started will be assessed on a case-by-case basis (in this case, no costs can be reimbursed for activities that took place before the project starting date/proposal submission).
- **Multiple proposals** — Applicants may submit more than one proposal for *different* projects under the same call (and be awarded a funding for them).

Organisations may participate in several proposals.

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

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

- **Transparency** — In accordance with Article 38 of the [EU Financial Regulation](#), information about EU grants awarded is published each year on the [Europa website](#).

This includes:

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

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

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