



Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV)

Call for proposals

Call for proposals to protect and promote the rights of the child -
CERV-2021-CHILD

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CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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0. Introduction

This is call for proposals for EU **action grants** in the field of rights of the child 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 (Regulation (EU) of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1381/2013 and Regulation (EU) No 390/2014¹).

The call is launched in accordance with the 2021-2022 Work Programme² and will be managed by the **European Commission, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST)**.

 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-CHILD - Call for proposals to protect and promote the rights of the child**

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)

¹ OJ L [...], [date], p. [...].

² Commission Implementing Decision C(2021) 2583 final of 19/04/2021 on the financing of the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme and the adoption of the multiannual work programme for 2021-2022.

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

You are also encouraged to visit the [REC Programme results webpage](#) to consult the list of projects funded previously.

1. Background

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected everyone in society, but has been particularly tough on children, notably those already in a vulnerable situation (e.g. children in care, children with disabilities, children in poverty). It showed how inequalities between various states, regions, groups, family situations, etc. impact directly on children's lives.

Since the outbreak of the pandemic, and especially during the long periods of emergency measures, many children have suffered increased domestic violence (as victims and/or witnesses), have been exposed to a heightened risk of online abuse and exploitation, were deprived of social interactions with their peers, some of regular education and access to necessary services and support.

Social protection systems³ must be working even better in times of crisis and child rights must be part of the first response.

The EU Strategy on the rights of the child and the EU Child guarantee⁴ both adopted on 24 March set up a new policy framework to ensure the protection of rights of all children, and secure access to basic services for vulnerable children.

This call for proposal aims to address the challenges emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic as well as to support actions put forward by the EU Strategy on the rights of the child. Furthermore, the call recognises the need for proposals to equally address the specificities of the situation for girls and boys, in all their diversity.

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

³ See [2020 European Forum on the rights of the child](#) and civil society organisations reports, e.g. [Growing up in lockdown: Europe's children in the age of Covid-19](#); [Averting a lost COVID generation - A six-point plan to respond, recover and reimagine a post-pandemic world for every child](#); [Protect a Generation: the impact of COVID-19 on children's lives](#)

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/rights-child/eu-strategy-rights-child-and-eu-child-guarantee_en

Expected impact

CERV-2021-CHILD - Call for proposals to protect and promote the rights of the child

Objectives

This call for proposals will contribute to responding to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, by promoting ways to mainstream and embed children's rights in the responses to this and any other emergency situations. In parallel, it will promote gender-sensitive responses to the different needs of children following from or heightened by the Covid-19 pandemic. It will also contribute to the implementation of the actions put forward by the EU Strategy on the rights of the child.

Themes and priorities (scope)

There is a wealth of research on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on children, many of which included voices of children on the matter.⁵ Children reported suffering from social isolation, limited possibilities to interact with peers and participate in activities. The results of such research pointed to the fact that children themselves were very rarely or not at all consulted on the measures related to the coronavirus that had a direct impact on children's lives. The situation is even worse if we look at the implementation of such measures (restriction in unsupervised movement after certain hours, online schooling, closure of after school activities, etc.).

The objective of the call is to establish, improve and provide an adequate framework for new and existing mechanisms of child participation at local level. In the establishment, improvement and provision of that framework gender-balanced and age-diversified representation of children should be ensured. Furthermore, the call aims to design concrete actions and activities that will reply to children's needs in time of the pandemic and emergency.

In particular, the call aims at (1) including children in the decision making process about responses to the pandemic measures; (2) identifying, in cooperation with children, what activities and services have been mostly affected and (3) involving children in creating mechanisms to support their needs in order to overcome the negative impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

For example children may identify that the cancellation of the summer camp or school trip has a big negative impact on them and they could propose another way of spending time, which is in line with the local safety measures. Another situation may be the need to adapt public services of a municipality to protect children's health, safety and integrity in situations of vulnerability which stems from lockdowns and school closures. Measure may also include, as an example, reshaping after-school activities. The actions may include setting up or building capacity for support centres at schools, updates of existing support services, peer support groups, etc.

Consultations with children may take the form of focus groups on the impact, online surveys, school discussions, meetings of a local child council that would lead to developing public policies together with children in different sectors, e.g. public sector, education, health sector etc.

⁵ e.g. [Growing up in lockdown: Europe's children in the age of Covid-19](#); [Averting a lost COVID generation - A six-point plan to respond, recover and reimagine a post-pandemic world for every child](#); [Protect a Generation: the impact of COVID-19 on children's lives](#); [Child advisors assessing the impact of COVID-19](#); [Covid under 19](#); [Children's voices in the time of COVID-19: Continued child activism in the face of personal challenges](#)

The design and implementation of actions should be done in cooperation with girls and boys, in all their diversity, to make sure that the action is well tailored and replies to children's needs. All actions and activities, both at design, consultation and implementation phase, shall ensure that actions are adequate, to the age and gender specific needs of children.

It is strongly encouraged to involve a public authority, including regional and local authorities, to actively participate in the projects. This requirement will be assessed under award criterion "Quality" of the proposed action.

Applying organisations are encouraged to use, disseminate and build on already existing materials (e.g tools, projects' deliverables, handbooks, research, studies, mapping exercises, reports, etc).

Activities that can be funded (scope)

Activities shall include:

- evaluating lessons learned from Covid-19 situation in the context of its impact on children's rights, providing recommendation for mainstreaming rights of the child and putting children's rights and needs at the centre of policy responses in emergency situations at national and/or local level and taking gender-specific aspects into account;
- Surveys, consultations, focus groups and other type of online and offline (if possible) meetings ensuring that children to participate in the assessment of the impact of the pandemic
- Analysis of the input received from children,
- Development of new projects, initiatives for children that takes into account the needs and opinions of children expressed during the consultations
- Capacity building, training activities, information campaigns for relevant local authorities and increasing their awareness about children's rights and needs,
- In cooperation with children, designing, establishing and/or strengthening protocols and mechanisms providing support to children mostly affected by the Covid-19 situation;

Each project should result in a concrete new or adapted action that would derive directly from consultations with children and involve them in the implementation.

Expected impact

1. Increased knowledge about the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on girls and boys, in all their diversity, children, as well as of the public policy responses taken – and lessons learnt for the future.
2. Design and launch of new initiatives at the local level that respond to children's needs.
3. Establishment of protocols ensuring mainstreaming, safeguarding of the rights of the child and by extension promoting gender equality, and supporting children with gender-responsive actions in emergency situations in the future.
4. Increased child participation in decision making processes in emergency situations.
5. Increased stability of child specific and gender-responsive services during the emergency situations.

6. Established or adapted mechanisms supporting well-being of children, their needs and mental health difficulties arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Additional information

Support of public authority

It is strongly encouraged to involve a public authority, including regional and local authorities, to be actively participate in the projects. This support will be expressed through an Annex to the Application, Letter from the public authority supporting the application and will be assessed under the award criterion "Quality".

These public authorities can be: Ministries and/or agencies responsible for children rights/ child protection (e.g. child protection agencies and services), ministries for children, child protection, social services, social protection, justice, children's ombudspersons and/or national human rights institutes for children, responsible regional authorities, municipalities etc. The rationale for the choice must be documented and explained in Part B Project description and implementation.

Child participation

All proposals are expected to respect the **child's right to participate**⁶ and all project activities must clearly integrate and protect the child's right to be heard⁷. Proposals must make children's meaningful and non-discriminatory involvement central and integral in every stage of the project's design, implementation and evaluation. This entails ensuring gender-balanced participation and age diversified participation of both girls and boys.

Child protection/safeguarding policy

If a project foresees direct contact with children, every beneficiary of funding (including partners) needs to provide their child protection/safeguarding policy, if they work directly with children during the project. Each partner must provide their own child protection policy (not a cumulative one per consortium). The applicant and all partners must describe and submit the child protection/safeguarding policy it will adhere to. A child protection and safeguarding policy should safeguard all children, irrespective of ability, ethnicity, faith, gender, sexuality and culture.

A child protection policy should include standards that cover four broad areas (for more information please see "[Child safeguarding standards and how to implement them](#)")

- policy: how the organisation is committed to preventing, protecting and responding to harm to children
- people: clear responsibilities and expectations on its staff and associates and supports them to understand and act in line with these

⁶ Aligned with Article 24 of the Charter, relevant EU law and the UN Convention on the rights of the child

⁷ As set out in UNCRC Article 12 and General Comment No 12

- procedures: the organisation creates a child-safe environment through implementing child safeguarding procedures that are applied across the organisation
- accountability: the organisation monitors and reviews its safeguarding measures. What are the mechanisms in place within the organisation.

A child protection policy should must include clear information about the recruitment of all staff – including trainees and volunteers, including background checks (vetting).

A child protection policy must include clear procedures and rules to staff, including reporting rules, and continuous training on this should be in place.

The child protection policy should be available online, i.e. transparent to all those who come in contact with the organisation.

The child protection policy document is to be submitted as Annex to the application and will be assessed under ethics.

Gender Mainstreaming

All proposals are expected to integrate a gender equality perspective to their design, implementation, monitoring, communication and dissemination of results. Data should be disaggregated by sex when collected and disseminated. Proposals, which indicate strong deficiencies in this aspect will be regarded of lower quality.

Geographical scope and partnership

All projects under this call can be **either local, national or transnational** and should be elaborated in close partnership with and/or be led by appropriate key players. Applicants must document that they have the prior commitment of participating key players.

Monitoring and evaluation

Appropriate attention has to be given to developing a robust evidence base and involving reliable monitoring, evaluation and reporting procedures. This should include defining the expected **impact** of the activity in measurable terms and defining a robust methodology and indicators to measure the impact of the activity. Furthermore, all data collected must be disaggregated by sex and allow for gender-responsive monitoring.

Sustainability of projects and dissemination of results

Applications should also include a clear communication, dissemination and sustainability plan, with measures to maintain and monitor results after the end of funding. Applicants should also describe the potential for scaling up the measure, should the activities produce the expected results. The projects should aim at ensuring their durability, including through the involvement of the relevant authorities in the project itself, and appropriate dissemination, including at the end of funding (by promoting and enabling access to their results to the widest possible audience).

Bibliography

1. [Compilation previously funded projects on violence against children and the rights of the child, 2013 – present](#)
2. [EU strategy on the rights of the child](#)
3. Report: [Our Europe, Our Rights, Our Future](#)
4. [United Nations Convention on the rights of the child](#)
5. [General Comment no 12 \(2009\) on the right of the child to be heard](#)

Child participation

1. [Report from the study on child participation in EU political and democratic life and its accessible version.](#)
2. [Council of Europe Recommendation on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18 \(2012\)](#)
3. Council of Europe: [child participation assessment tool](#)
4. [The Lundy model of child participation:](#)
5. [Inclusion Europe participation rights children with disabilities](#)

Child safeguarding policies

1. [Keeping Children Safe standards](#)
2. [Comic Relief's safeguarding framework](#)

3. Available budget

The available call budget is **EUR 2.160.000**. This budget might be increased by maximum 20%.

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:	20 April 2021
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>7 September 2021 – 17:00:00 CET</u> (Brussels)
Evaluation:	September – January 2022
Information on evaluation results:	January - February 2022
GA signature:	March – May 2022

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: not applicable
 - CVs (standard) of core project team
 - activity reports of last year of the coordinator
 - list of previous projects (key projects for the last 4 years) of the coordinator
 - 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 **45 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 (public or private bodies)
- be established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:
 - EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs))
 - non-EU countries:
 - listed EEA countries and countries associated to the CERV Programme ([associated countries](#)) or countries which are in ongoing negotiations for an association agreement and where the agreement enters into force before grant signature
- other eligibility conditions:
 - the project can be either national or transnational;
 - the application must involve at least two organisations (applicant and partner);
 - the EU grant applied for cannot be lower than EUR 75.000;
 - organisations which are profit-oriented must submit applications in partnership with public entities or private non-profit organisations.

Beneficiaries and affiliated entities must register in the [Participant Register](#) — before submitting the proposal — and will have to be validated by the Central Validation Service (REA Validation). For the validation, they will be requested to upload documents showing legal status and origin.

Other entities may participate in other consortium roles, such as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions, etc (*see section 13*).

Specific cases

Natural persons — Natural persons are NOT eligible (with the exception of self-employed persons, i.e. sole traders, where the company does not have legal personality separate from that of the natural person).

International organisations — International organisations are eligible. The rules on eligible countries do not apply to them.

Entities without legal personality — Entities which do not have legal personality under their national law may exceptionally participate, provided that their representatives have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf, and offer guarantees for the protection of the EU financial interests equivalent to that offered by legal persons⁸.

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'⁹. ⚠ 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).

Countries currently negotiating association agreements — Beneficiaries from countries with ongoing negotiations (*see above*) may participate in the call and can sign grants

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

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

if the negotiations are concluded before grant signature (with retroactive effect, if provided in the agreement).

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)*¹⁰ and entities covered by Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#)¹¹). Such entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity, including as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any).



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

Consortium composition

Proposals must be submitted by a consortium of at least 2 organisations (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities)

Eligible activities

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

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

Financial support to third parties is not allowed.

Geographic location (target countries)

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

Duration

Projects should normally range between 12 and 24 months (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

¹⁰ 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](#).

¹¹ 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).

individuals¹². 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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- further information
 - an enhanced financial responsibility regime, i.e. joint and several responsibility for all beneficiaries or joint and several liability of affiliated entities (*see below, section 10*)
 - prefinancing paid in instalments
 - (one or more) prefinancing guarantees (*see below, section 10*)
- or
- propose no prefinancing

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

- request that you are replaced or, if needed, reject the entire proposal.



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

Operational capacity

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

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

Applicants will have to show their 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 participate¹³:

- 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 misconduct¹⁴ (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)

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

¹⁴ 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.

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

Applicants will also be refused if it turns out that¹⁵:

- 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 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 topic will be prioritised according to the scores they have been awarded for the award criterion 'Relevance'. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on their scores for the criterion '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.*

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

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

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

9. Award criteria

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

- **Relevance:** extent to which the proposal matches the priorities and objectives of the call; clearly defined needs and robust needs assessment; clearly defined target group, with gender perspective being appropriately taken into account; contribution to the EU strategic and legislative context; European/trans-national dimension; impact/interest for a number of countries (EU or eligible non-EU 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 between partners, 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 — Project design and implementation	n/a	40
Impact	n/a	20
Overall (pass) scores	70	100

Maximum points: 100 points.

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

Overall threshold: 70 points.

Proposals that pass the individual threshold for the criterion 'Relevance' AND the overall threshold will be considered for funding — within the limits of the available 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: between 12 and 24 months (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: 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, with unit cost and flat-rate elements). This means that it will reimburse ONLY certain types of costs (eligible costs) and costs that were *actually* incurred for your project (NOT the *budgeted* costs). For unit costs 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 (**90%**).

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

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

Budget categories and cost eligibility rules

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

Budget categories for this call:

- A. Personnel costs
 - A.1 Employees, A.2 Natural persons under direct contract, A.3 Seconded persons
 - A.4 SME owners and natural person beneficiaries
 - A.5 Volunteers
- B. Subcontracting costs
- C. Purchase costs
 - C.1 Travel and subsistence
 - C.2 Equipment
 - C.3 Other goods, works and services
- E. Indirect costs

Specific cost eligibility conditions for this call:

- personnel costs:
 - SME owner/natural person unit cost¹⁶: Yes
 - volunteers unit cost¹⁷: Yes (without indirect costs)
- travel and subsistence unit cost¹⁸: Yes
- equipment costs: depreciation
- other cost categories:
 - costs for financial support to third parties: not allowed; maximum amount per third party EUR 60 000, unless a higher amount is required because the objective of the action would otherwise be impossible or overly difficult to achieve and this is duly justified in the Application Form
- indirect cost flat-rate: 7% of the eligible direct costs (categories A-D, except volunteers costs, if any)
- VAT: non-deductible VAT is eligible (but please note that since 2013 VAT paid by beneficiaries that are public bodies acting as public authority is NOT eligible)

¹⁶ 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).

¹⁷ 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).

¹⁸ 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).

- other:
 - in-kind contributions for free are allowed, but cost-neutral, i.e. they cannot be declared as cost
 - kick off meeting: costs for kickoff 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](#).

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 **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.

In addition, you will 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 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: EC-CERV-CALLS@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.
- **Consortium roles** — When setting up your consortium, you should think of organisations that help you reach objectives and solve problems.

The roles should be attributed according to the level of participation in the project. Main participants should participate as **beneficiaries** or **affiliated entities**; other entities can participate as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions. **Associated partners** and third parties giving in-kind contributions should bear their own costs (they will not become formal recipients of EU funding). **Subcontracting** should normally constitute a limited part and must be performed by third parties (not by one of the beneficiaries/affiliated entities). Subcontracting going beyond 30% of the total eligible costs must be justified in the application.

- **Coordinator** — In multi-beneficiary grants, the beneficiaries participate as consortium (group of beneficiaries). They will have to choose a coordinator, who will take care of the project management and coordination and will represent the consortium towards the granting authority. In mono-beneficiary grants, the single beneficiary will automatically be coordinator.
- **Affiliated entities** — Applicants may participate with affiliated entities (i.e. entities linked to a beneficiary which participate in the action with similar rights and obligations as the beneficiaries, but do not sign the grant and therefore do not become beneficiaries themselves). They will get a part of the grant money and must therefore comply with all the call conditions and be validated (just like beneficiaries); but they do not count towards the minimum eligibility criteria for consortium composition (if any).
- **Associated partners** — Applicants may participate with associated partners (i.e. partner organisations which participate in the action but without the right to get grant money). They participate without funding and therefore do not need to be validated.
- **Consortium agreement** — For practical and legal reasons it is recommended to set up internal arrangements that allow you to deal with exceptional or unforeseen circumstances (in all cases, even if not mandatory under the Grant Agreement). The consortium agreement also gives you the possibility to redistribute the grant money according to your own consortium-internal principles and parameters (for instance, one beneficiary can reattribute its grant money to another beneficiary). The consortium agreement thus allows you to customise the EU grant to the needs inside your consortium and can also help to protect you in case of disputes.

- **Balanced project budget** — Grant applications must ensure a balanced project budget and sufficient other resources to implement the project successfully (*e.g. own contributions, income generated by the action, financial contributions from third parties, etc*). You may be requested to lower your estimated costs, if they are ineligible (including excessive).
- **No-profit rule** — Grants may NOT give a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). This will be checked by us at the end of the project.
- **No double funding** — There is a strict prohibition of double funding from the EU budget (except under EU Synergies actions). Outside such Synergies actions, any given action may receive only ONE grant from the EU budget and cost items may under NO circumstances declared to two different EU actions.
- **Completed/ongoing projects** — Proposals for projects that have already been completed will be rejected; proposals for projects that have already started will be assessed on a case-by-case basis (in this case, no costs can be reimbursed for activities that took place before the project starting date/proposal submission).
- **Combination with EU operating grants** — Combination with EU operating grants is possible, if the project remains outside the operating grant work programme and you make sure that cost items are clearly separated in your accounting and NOT declared twice (see [AGA — Annotated Model Grant Agreement, art 6.2.E](#)).
- **Multiple proposals** — Applicants may submit more than one proposal for *different* projects under the same call (and be awarded a funding for them).

Organisations may participate in several proposals.

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

- **Resubmission** — Proposals may be changed and re-submitted until the deadline for submission.
- **Rejection** — By submitting the application, all applicants accept the call conditions set out in this 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](#).