



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

## **Call for proposals**

Call for proposals on rights of the child and children's participation  
(CERV-2024-CHILD)

Version 3.0  
15 November 2023



HISTORY OF CHANGES			
Version	Publication Date	Change	Page
1.0	23.08.2023	▪ Initial version (new MFF)	
2.0	18.10.2023	▪ New link to “Keeping Children Safe Child Safeguarding Standards”	11,12,13,16
		▪ New link to CERV Contact Points’ list	25
3.0	15.11.2023	▪ Clarification on the number of topics/priorities that projects must address	7
		▪ Revised point 6 on eligibility (“Specific cases”)	15
		▪	



EUROPEAN EDUCATION AND CULTURE  
EXECUTIVE AGENCY (EACEA)

EACEA.B - Creativity, Citizenship and Joint Operations  
**EACEA.B.3 - Europe for Citizens**

## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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## 0. Introduction

This is a 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 (CERV Regulation [2021/692](#)<sup>1</sup>).

The call is launched in accordance with the 2023-2024 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 budget by the EU budgetary 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-2024-CHILD**

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

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

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

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

<sup>2</sup> Commission Implementing Decision C/2022/8588 of 01/12/2022 concerning the adoption of the work programme for 2023-2024 and the financing decision for the implementation of the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme

- 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

On 24 March 2021 the Commission adopted the EU Strategy on the rights of the child<sup>3</sup> which includes more than 40 actions that the Commission committed to implement.

The work on the strategy was informed by consultations with children (online and offline) and resulted in more than 10.000 replies to an online questionnaire only.<sup>4</sup>

Children were asked among other things about how they felt they were involved in decision making processes. A vast majority of children (70%) would like to participate more in taking decisions that affect their lives. In the Europe Kids wants<sup>5</sup> survey from 2018/19, only 7% of children indicated they felt they were always listened to, including children in vulnerable situations.

The mapping study on child participation in EU democratic and political life, finalised in February 2021<sup>6</sup>, showed that governments are legally obliged to include children or young people's opinion in decision-making processes in only 4 out of 27 countries. It also emphasised how often child participation is not having much impact on governments' decisions.

To tackle all the above, the first thematic area of the EU Strategy on the rights of the child is about child participation, understood as a right for children to be heard and an obligation for adults to facilitate it and organise it in a meaningful, inclusive and safe way<sup>7</sup>.

The Commission has already undertaken and will continue implementing more actions in order to bring children closer to the decision-making processes. One of such initiatives is the set-up of the EU Children's Participation Platform<sup>8</sup> that connects existing and to be created child participation mechanisms. The Commission has also supported child participation at local and national level, including via funding and intends to push for and finance more systemic changes at the local and national level.

Another thematic area of the EU Strategy on the rights of the child is about health and education. Childhood is a crucial stage in life in determining future physical and mental health. However, children's mental health issues are widespread and can sometimes be

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<sup>3</sup> [The EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child and the European Child Guarantee \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> See the report : [Report "Our Europe, Our Rights, Our Future".pdf \(unicef.org\)](#)

<sup>5</sup> [The Europe Kids Want – Eurochild](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Study on child participation \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>7</sup> Article 24 of the Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the European Union and Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child (UNCRC)

<sup>8</sup> [EU Children's Participation Platform | European Union \(europa.eu\)](#) [EU Children's Participation Platform | European Union \(europa.eu\)](#)

linked to isolation, education environment, social inclusion and poverty, and the prolonged use of digital tools. School is recognised amongst the fundamental determinants of mental health of children. The EU Strategy on the rights of the child also identifies children in migration as particularly prone to suffering from mental health problems arising from situations experienced in the country of origin, on the migratory route, from uncertainty or degrading treatment in the country of arrival.

In June 2023, the Commission adopted a Communication on a [new comprehensive approach to mental health](#). This approach is an important step to put mental health on par with physical health and to ensure a new, cross-sectoral approach to mental health issues. EU action on mental health will focus on concrete actions including on protecting children and the young during their most vulnerable and formative years, in a context of increasing pressures and challenges. Measures include a child and youth mental health network, a prevention toolkit for children addressing the key health determinants of mental and physical health, and better protection online and on social media.

Finally, mainstreaming of children's rights is at the heart of the EU Strategy on the rights of the child. It commits to ensure that a children's rights perspective is mainstreamed in all relevant policies, legislation and funding programmes. For real progress to be made on the ground, this strategy needs to be accompanied by commitments and investments at national level. The Commission calls on EU Member States to develop, where not yet available, robust and evidence-based national strategies on the rights of the child, in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, including children, civil society, private and public actors in a multidisciplinary approach, and in synergy with other relevant national strategies and plans. Besides, reliable and comparable data, indicators or benchmarks, are needed to develop evidence-based policies.

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

### Objectives

Supporting, advancing and implementing comprehensive policies to protect and promote the rights of the child, including the right to participate.

Policy initiatives supported: [EU strategy on the rights of the child](#), [European Health Union: a comprehensive approach to mental health](#).

### Themes and priorities (scope)

This call for proposals aims at responding to children's current needs and challenges in the EU. It pays specific attention to the rights of children with specific needs and vulnerabilities, including those who fled the Russian's war of aggression against Ukraine. The call stresses the importance of taking into account gender differences and intersectionality<sup>9</sup> in providing support to children.

This call focuses on the implementation of the actions and recommendations at EU, national and local levels of the EU Strategy on the rights of the child.

**Projects can be national or transnational. Transnational projects are particularly encouraged.**

Projects must address one of the following topics/priorities:

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<sup>9</sup> The combination of gender with other personal characteristics or identities, and how these intersections contribute to unique experiences of discrimination.

## 1. Children's mental health

Children's mental health has emerged as a crucial issue during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Tablets and smartphones, along with social media platforms and messaging apps, have become integral to children's lives, sometimes at the detriment of their mental health. Issues such as bullying (both offline and online), peer, commercial or academic pressures, discrimination, social isolation, addictions, all forms of violence, family circumstances and/or socio-economic vulnerabilities exacerbated during crisis, are among the factors of anxiety and depression that particularly affect children. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among young people between 15-19 years of age<sup>10</sup> after road accidents.

Projects will not address the health dimension itself (e.g. diagnosis, treatment of mental health problems), but rather the dimension of prevention, protection and support to children with mental health issues in a multidisciplinary approach and in connection to the other areas on the rights of the child (e.g. participation, education, social inclusion, access to mental health support, protection, digital environment, etc.). Knowing the importance of empowering children through child participation and that they are in a more difficult situation than adults to express their fears, anxieties and worries, projects shall focus on making sure children are heard and engaged, in full respect of child protection safeguards (through for instance peer-to-peer initiatives or community groups), on prevention of mental health problems and promotion of good mental health habits and activities (e.g. through the training professionals who are in contact with children), and on training and supporting parents, teachers and caregivers.

Projects will refer to the causes of mental health issues and the interactions these issues have on other areas related to the rights of the child (e.g. digital environment, education, social inclusion, poverty, among others). Projects may also focus on the specific needs of children in situations of (multiple) vulnerabilities and facing intersecting forms of discrimination, e.g. children in alternative care, migrant and refugee children, notably unaccompanied and separated children, including those who fled the war in Ukraine.

## 2. Embedding a rights of the child perspective in actions at national and local level

This priority focuses on implementing mainstreaming tools for the rights of the child at national and local level. These tools may be used to:

- gather reliable and comparable data on children, indicators or benchmarks on children's rights that can support development of evidence-based policies;
- implement child-rights budgeting -e.g. include monitoring resources allocated to protection and promotion of rights of the child in national and local budget plans, in a multidisciplinary approach;
- coordinate the programming and implementation of EU funds among relevant stakeholders, including children;
- establish, improve and provide adequate resources for new and existing mechanisms of child participation at local, regional and national level;
- develop strategies on the rights of the child at national level, as well as at local level in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, including children, civil society organisations, private and public actors;
- coordinate efforts to better implement EU and international legal obligations at national and local level.

<sup>10</sup> The [State of the World's Children 2021](#) [State of the World's Children 2021](#): On My Mind – Promoting, protecting and caring for children's mental health, Regional brief: Europe, UNICEF, 2021



Too many children feel left out of decision-making and simply not heard<sup>11</sup>. Under this priority, the Commission aims to promote an inclusive and systemic participation of children at the local, national and EU levels to ensure that children's voices are heard and listened to, especially in matters that affect them. This is in line with the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child – notably the establishment of the Child Participation Platform (the Platform)<sup>12</sup>. The implementation and activities of the Platform could be a starting point for activities under this priority. Projects need to avoid duplicating the existing structures such as the Platform, but rather complement and support the activities already undertaken or planned at local and national level.

Activities may include training and the production of training material for professionals, the design and implementation of child participation mechanisms in schools, city councils, children advisory boards, and the establishment of consultation mechanisms with children at local level, with an aim to join the Platform.

Projects need to be practical, with real impact on children's right to participate. Mapping of existing mechanisms or repository of good practices will not be considered as practical. Projects should build on existing resources, guidelines and previously funded projects in this area<sup>13</sup>.

This priority will focus on enhancing the understanding of democratic rights, which starts in childhood. Citizens need a good understanding of democratic processes to be able to participate in them. Educational toolkits explaining the notions of democracy, the rule of law, fundamental rights and their interdependence would be important to that effect. Creative learning and modern pedagogical methods, including using existing digital games, apps or story-telling and other participatory methods could complement traditional educational tools, making abstract notions more relatable for children of different age groups. However, the creation or development of new online games or apps will not be funded by this call.

Projects should propose innovative actions and approaches, focusing on the needs and challenges faced by targeted groups in a gender-sensitive way.

<sup>11</sup> The Europe Kids Want survey, *Sharing the view of children and young people across Europe*, UNICEF and Eurochild. 2019

<sup>12</sup> EU Children's Participation Platform | EU Children's Participation Platform (europa.eu)

<sup>13</sup> For previous projects, search [Projects & Results \(europa.eu\)](#)

### Activities that can be funded (scope)

Activities may include:

- Mutual learning, trainings, exchange of good practices, cooperation and networking;
- Dissemination and awareness raising, including social media or press campaigns;
- Capacity building and training activities of national, regional and local authorities;
- Training activities and awareness raising sessions for children;
- Design and implementation of protocols, development of working methods and tools.

The design and implementation of actions should be done **in cooperation with children**, to make sure that the action is well tailored to children's needs. As a good practice, organisations that already work with children could consult them on the project proposal and include reflections/references to this process in the applications. Voice of children can also be brought in based on available reports and documents recording children's opinions and 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. Thus, applicants should conduct and include in their proposal [a gender analysis](#), which maps the potential different impact of the project and its activities on children, including from a gender perspective. Thereby, unintended negative effects of the intervention on children of all ages should be forestalled (do no-harm approach)<sup>14</sup>.

Organisations are expected to provide the mandatory annex with **child protection policies** (see below). This is valid for those partners that will be working directly with children (this should be clearly indicated in the proposal) and will be assessed under the award criterion (2) quality of proposed actions and under ethics.

Applying organisations are encouraged to use, disseminate and build on already existing materials (e.g. tools, projects' deliverables<sup>15</sup>, handbooks, research, studies, mapping exercises, reports, etc.) and to explain how they will do so in the proposal.

### Expected impact

- Making children aware of their right to participate and have their voices heard;
- Making child participation mechanisms inclusive and systemic;
- Implementing actions and recommendations of the EU Strategy on the rights of the child;
- Improving capacity building, the exchange of good practice, training on the rights and needs of children;
- Defining guidelines and guidance and improving data collection;
- Improving allocation, planning and monitoring of resources and funds on promotion and protection of the rights of the child;
- Raising awareness of, and investing in capacity building;
- Providing adequate support to children with specific vulnerabilities.

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<sup>14</sup> For more information see section Ethics and EU values

<sup>15</sup> For previous projects, search [Projects & Results \(europa.eu\)](https://europea.eu)

### Support of public authority

It is strongly encouraged to involve a public authority, including regional and local authorities, to actively participate in the projects. This support will be expressed through an Annex to the application (Letter from the public authority) and will be assessed under the award criterion 2 Quality.

### Mainstreaming

Projects funded under this call shall seek to promote rights of the child, as foreseen in the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child<sup>16</sup> and gender equality. Rights of the child and gender mainstreaming means integrating a rights of the child and a gender perspective in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of a project, as appropriate. Consequently, the applicant shall take the necessary steps to ensure that child-related issues and gender equality are taken into account by paying attention to the situation and particular needs of women and men, girls and boys, and of vulnerabilities of children. It is, for example, essential that projects do not silence, stereotype, stigmatise, lay the blame on or discriminate against any group. Projects should contribute to empowering children in all their diversity, and to ensuring that they all achieve their full potential and enjoy the same rights.

### Child participation and protection

All proposals are expected to respect the child's right to participate<sup>17</sup> and all project activities must clearly integrate and protect the child's right to be heard<sup>18</sup>. Proposals must make children's involvement central and integral in every stage of the project's design, implementation and evaluation.

**Child protection policies** will be also assessed **for projects directly involving children**. This assessment will be integrated into the award criteria and will also be considered under ethics (i.e. proposals, which directly involve children and fail to provide a diligent child protection policy, will be regarded as less relevant and of lower quality). Organisations that plan working directly with children must have a child protection policy (mandatory annex to the submission package) covering the four areas described in [the Keeping Children Safe Child Safeguarding Standards](#). This policy must be available online and transparent to everyone who comes in contact with the organisation. It must include clear information about the recruitment of staff (including trainees and volunteers) and include background checks (vetting). It must also include clear procedures and rules to staff, including reporting rules, and continuous training. It should be clearly indicated in the application which partners will directly work with children.

### Bibliography

#### **Rights of the child:**

[EU strategy on the rights of the child \(2021-2024\)](#)

[Report: Our Europe, Our Rights, Our Future](#)

[Database on projects funded under REC and CERV programmes](#)

[United Nations Convention on the rights of the child](#)

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<sup>16</sup> [The EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child and the European Child Guarantee \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>17</sup> Aligned with Article 24 of the Charter, relevant EU law and the UN Convention on the rights of the child

<sup>18</sup> As set out in UNCRC Article 12 and General Comment No 12

## Child safeguarding policies:

[Keeping Children Safe standards](#)

[Comic Relief's safeguarding framework Child Participation](#)

## Child participation:

- [General Comment no 12 \(2009\) on the right of the child to be heard](#)
- [Report from the study on child participation in EU political and democratic life and its accessible version.](#)
- [Council of Europe Recommendation on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18 \(2012\)](#)
- Council of Europe: [child participation assessment tool](#)
- [The Lundy model of child participation](#)
- [Inclusion Europe participation rights children with disabilities](#)

## Comprehensive approach to mental health

European Health Union: a [new comprehensive approach to mental health \(2023\)](#)

## 3. Available budget

The available call budget is **EUR 12 000 000**.

The availability of the call budget still depends on the adoption of the budget 2024 by the EU budgetary authority.

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:	15 November 2023
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>26 March 2024 – 17:00:00 CET</u> <u>(Brussels)</u>
Evaluation:	April-June 2024
Information on evaluation results:	September 2024
GA signature:	December 2024

## 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](#)). 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 (KPI) (*to be filled in directly online*) containing additional project data including mandatory indicators
- **mandatory annexes** (*templates available to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, assembled and re-uploaded*):
  - Detailed budget table
- **supporting documents** (*to be uploaded*):
  - CV (standard) of core project team
  - Activity reports of last year (coordinators only)
  - List of previous projects (key projects for the last 4 years) (*template available in Part B*)
  - For participants with activities involving children: their Child Protection Policy (CPP) covering the four areas described in the [Keeping Children Safe Child Safeguarding Standards](#). **It should be clearly indicated in the application which partner(s) will work directly with children.**

 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.

Please be aware that since the **detailed budget table** serves as the basis for fixing the lump sums for the grants (and since lump sums must be reliable proxies for the actual costs of a project), the costs you include **MUST** comply with the basic eligibility conditions for EU actual cost grants (see [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6](#)). This is particularly important for purchases and subcontracting, which must comply with best value for money (or if appropriate the lowest price) and be free of any conflict of interests. If the budget table contains ineligible costs, the grant may be reduced (even later on during the project implementation or after their end).

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 **70 pages (Part B)**. Evaluators will not consider any additional pages.

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



For more information about the submission process (including IT aspects), consult the [Online Manual](#).

## 6. Eligibility

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

### Eligible participants (eligible countries)

In order to be eligible, the applicants must:

- a) Lead applicants and co-applicants must be legal entities (public or private bodies) or an international organisation.
- b) Lead applicants must be non-profit making. Organisations which are profit-oriented may apply only in partnership with public entities or private non-profit organisations.
- c) Applicants must be formally established in one of the eligible countries i.e.:
  - EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs);
  - non-EU countries:
    - countries associated to the CERV Programme or countries which are in ongoing negotiations for an association agreement and where the agreement enters into force before grant signature ([list of participating countries](#)).

### Other eligibility criteria:

- d) Activities must take place in any of the eligible countries.
- e) The EU grant applied for **cannot be lower than EUR 100 000**.
- f) The project can be either national or transnational; the application must involve at least two applicants (lead applicant and at least one co-applicant not being affiliated entity or associated partner).

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 persons<sup>19</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>20</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).

**Countries currently negotiating association agreements** — Beneficiaries from countries with ongoing negotiations (see above) may participate in the call and can sign grants 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)<sup>21</sup> and entities covered by Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#)<sup>22</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*

Proposals must be submitted by a consortium of at least 2 applicants (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities or associated partners).

### *Eligible activities*

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

<sup>19</sup> See Article 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#)

<sup>20</sup> For the definitions, see Articles 187(2) and 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#)

<sup>21</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>22</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)



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.

#### Geographic location (target countries)

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

#### Duration

Projects should normally not exceed 24 months.

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

#### Ethics and EU values

Projects must comply with:

- highest ethical standards and
- 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, girls and boys 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>23</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](#) (please see Section 2 ).

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

#### Financial capacity

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<sup>23</sup> [Non-discrimination mainstreaming– instruments, case studies and way forwards](#)



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

### Operational capacity

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

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

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

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

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

- applicants' activity reports of last year
- list of previous projects (key projects for the last 4 years).

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>24</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>25</sup> (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No [2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).

Applicants will also be refused if it turns out that<sup>26</sup>:

- during the award procedure they misrepresented information required as a condition for participating or failed to supply that information

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<sup>24</sup> See Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#)

<sup>25</sup> Professional misconduct includes: violation of ethical standards of the profession, wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility, false declarations/misrepresentation of information, participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition, violation of IPR, attempting to influence decision-making processes or obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain advantage

<sup>26</sup> See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

- 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.*

**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, including adherence to EU values; 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, and notably the EU Strategy on the rights of the child; European/transnational 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
<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. A retroactive starting date can be granted exceptionally for duly justified reasons but never earlier than the proposal submission date.

Project duration: maximum 24 months (*see section 6 above*).

### 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.

Examples of work-packages, activities and deliverables that proposals might include (non-exhaustive list):

<b>Work Package</b>	<b>Management, administration and coordination (<i>recommended</i>)</b>  This work package could group activities related to the planning, management, administration, coordination and evaluation of the project
Typical activities (non exclusive)	For example: Planning & preparation, meetings (offline and online), evaluation, quality control, coordination activities, preparation of reports, monitoring of gender equality and diversity throughout the project etc.
Typical deliverables (non exclusive)	For example: Agenda or minutes of meetings, evaluation and/or quality control reports, conception / planning reports, gender equality and diversity mapping report, memorandum of understanding in project implementation etc

<b>Work Package</b>	<b>Communication and dissemination (<i>recommended</i>)</b>  This work package could group communication and dissemination activities aiming at ensuring visibility of the activities of the project and a wide dissemination of its results
Typical activities (non exclusive)	For example: Communication/dissemination campaigns, promotional events, production of communication/dissemination material, etc. Use of gender-sensitive language, use of interfaces to allow access to people with disabilities.
Typical deliverables (non exclusive)	For example: Communication plan/strategy, website, newsletters, publications/ brochure (digital and using recycled paper), social media posts, banner, branding, statistical analysis of website, public relationship and presentation speeches, press reviews, etc.

<b>Work Package</b>	<b>Capacity building</b>  This work package could group diverse type of capacity building activities in the area of the rights of the child and children's participation.
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Typical activities (non exclusive)	For example: training, training of trainers, apprenticeship activities, mentoring programmes, master classes, incubators programmes, etc.
Typical deliverables (non exclusive)	<p>For example: Schedule of mentoring programmes (digital and with recycled paper), evaluation of training courses, mentoring course programme, presence lists, etc.</p> <p>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 weblink to the survey, to be forwarded to the attendees. They will have access to the survey results for 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</p>

<b>Work Package</b>	<b>Networking and knowledge sharing</b>
	This work package could group networking and knowledge sharing activities, including policy/research/innovation in the area of the rights of the child and children's participation.
Typical activities (non exclusive)	For example: Conferences, workshops, symposia, seminars (all in eco-sustainable venues), research, studies, policy analysis, surveys, laboratories, market access activities, etc
Typical deliverables (non exclusive)	For example: Programme/agenda of conferences, presence list of workshops, conference conclusions/reports, analysis of surveys, study papers, policy papers etc (digital or using recycled paper).

Additional work packages may be added according to the activities foreseen in the project.

#### 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): the EU grant applied for **should not be lower than EUR 100 000**.

The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

The grant will be a lump sum grant. This means that it will reimburse a fixed amount, based on a lump sum or financing not linked to costs. The amount will be fixed by the granting authority on the basis of the estimated project budget and a funding rate of **90%**.

#### 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:*

- **Lump sum contributions**<sup>27</sup>

*Specific cost eligibility rules for this call:*

- the lump sum amount must be calculated in accordance with the methodology set out in the lump sum decision and using the detailed budget table/calculator provided;
- the lump sum calculation should respect the following conditions:
  - for lump sums based on estimated project budgets: the estimated budget must comply with the basic eligibility conditions for EU actual cost grants (see [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6](#))

This is particularly important for purchases and subcontracting, which must comply with best value for money (or if appropriate the lowest price) and be free of any conflict of interests. If the budget table contains ineligible costs, the grant may be reduced (even later on during the project implementation or after their end).

- Personnel costs:

- o Volunteers unit cost<sup>28</sup>: Yes (without indirect costs)

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 — [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.

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<sup>27</sup> [Decision](#) of 30/09/2022 authorising the use of lump sums for actions under the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (2021-2027)

<sup>28</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)



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

Please also note that you are responsible for keeping records on all the work done.

### 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 EU Login user account](#).

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

**b) submit the proposal**

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

Submit your proposal in 4 parts, as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 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 help related to this call you may contact the [CERV Contact Point](#) of your country. 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 clearly indicate 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.

- **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](#).