



Social Prerogatives and Specific Competencies Lines (SocPL)

Call for proposals

Support for Social Dialogue

SOCPL-2026-SOC-DIALOG

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CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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0. Introduction

This is a Call for proposals for EU **action grants** in the field of social dialogue under the **Social Prerogatives and Specific Competencies Lines (SOCPL)**.

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

- Regulation 2024/2509 ([EU Financial Regulation](#))¹

The call is launched in accordance with the 2026 Work Programme² and will be managed by the **European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL)**.

The call covers the following **topic**:

- **SOCPL-2026-SOC-DIALOG – Support for Social Dialogue**

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

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

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

¹ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (recast) ('EU Financial Regulation') (OJ L, 2024/2509, 26.9.2024).

² Commission Communication [COM\(2025\)870](#) final of 21 October 2025 on the adoption of the 2026 work programme for grants and procurement for prerogatives of the Commission and specific powers conferred on the Commission in the social and employment field.

- 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*).

1. Background

Budget heading 07.20.04.06 is intended to cover for measures **promoting social dialogue at cross-industry and sectoral level** in accordance with Article 154 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), and for developing European social dialogue in its different dimensions of **information exchange, consultation, negotiation and joint action**.

The measures should help the social partner organisations (representatives of management and labour) to contribute to addressing the overarching EU employment and social policy challenges as laid down in particular in:

- the Political Guidelines for the new European Commission 2024-2029 "Europe's Choice" and the announced key priorities, notably in relation to the new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness and to supporting people, strengthening our societies and our social model and the Commission Work Programme 2026;
- the European Pillar of Social Rights; as well as the Porto Social Commitment and the Porto Declaration including the 2030 social headline targets;
- the Commission Communication "Quality Jobs Roadmap";
- the Commission Communication "Strengthening social dialogue in the European Union: harnessing its full potential for managing fair transitions" and the Council Recommendation on strengthening social dialogue in the European Union adopted by the EPSCO Council on 12 June 2023;
- the Tripartite Declaration for a thriving European Social Dialogue, signed at the Val Duchesse Social Partners Summit of 31 January 2024 and the new Pact for European Social Dialogue of 5 March 2025;
- the employment, social and economic challenges as identified in the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan and other key Commission documents, such as Commission Communications "the Competitiveness Compass", the "Clean Industrial Deal", the "EU's Digital Strategy", the "2030 Digital Compass: the European way for the Digital Decade"; the "Union of Skills"; the EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2021- 2027; the European Care Strategy; and the "Action Plan on Labour and Skills Shortages";
- objectives of the Recovery and Resilience Facility and corresponding national Recovery and Resilience plans;
- the Council Recommendation on ensuring a fair transition towards climate neutrality, as well as the Just Transition Mechanism, the Social Climate Fund, the 'Fit for 55' package and the REPowerEU Plan;

- the European Semester's Autumn Package Communication, the Joint Employment Report and the recommendations addressed to the Member States in the context of the European Semester.

The budget heading can be used to finance actions involving representatives of workers' organisations from the Candidate Countries³.

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

Objectives (expected outcome)

This call aims at contributing to the promotion of social dialogue at cross-industry and sectoral level, developing European social dialogue, and building and strengthening the capacity of social partner organisations (both in Member States and candidate countries).

Definitions used in the context of this call:

a) "Social partner organisation" is either an organisation representing workers – often also referred to as "trade union" – or an organisation representing employers. They engage in some form of "social dialogue", discussing and often negotiating such issues as wages, working conditions, training, etc.

b) European-level social partner organisations (or "European-level social partners"): either organisations that are consulted in accordance with Article 154 TFEU (an up-to-date list can be found [here](#)) or other European social partner organisations fulfilling the definition of social partner organisations representing workers (also referred to as trade union) or employers at regional, national or European level that are engaged in "social dialogue" i.e. the discussion and negotiation of wages, working conditions, training, etc. that are not included in this list, but which: (1) demonstrate that they represent several national social partners (fulfilling as well the definition above); (2) have a mandate of these organisations to engage in social dialogue at European level on their behalf; and (3) are involved in the preparation and/or functioning of European social dialogue.

Themes and priorities (scope)

Actions that address the following themes will be particularly welcome:

- actions aimed at preparing negotiations of autonomous social partner agreements to be concluded at EU level and at supporting their implementation at national level;
- actions related to the implementation of the work programmes of the existing European Social Dialogue Committees;

Relevant themes for this call are:

- the employment, social and economic challenges as identified in the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan, the Quality Jobs Roadmap and other key Commission documents; the contribution of social dialogue and collective bargaining to the implementation of EU legislation in the area of employment and social affairs; the adaptation of social dialogue, in particular collective

³ Where reference is made to the Candidate Countries in this call for proposals, it concerns the Candidate Countries at the time of the deadline for the submission of applications of this call for proposals.

bargaining, to changes in employment and work-related challenges, such as:

- quality jobs, including fair working conditions and health and safety at work, anticipation, preparation and management of change and restructuring;
 - just transition to a climate-neutral economy;
 - digitalisation including artificial intelligence and algorithmic management;
 - labour shortages and skills development including re- and upskilling; skills intelligence, and skills recognition across the EU;
 - strengthening collective bargaining, including on adequate minimum wages;
 - new forms of work including platform work;
 - modernisation of the labour market, job creation and job matching, youth employment; job transitions; employment in SMEs;
 - intra-EU labour mobility, attracting talents in line with the needs of our economies and labour market;
 - modernisation of social protection systems, including access to social protection for those in non-standard forms of employment and the portability of social security rights;
 - reconciliation of work and family life, gender equality, action in the field of anti-discrimination, healthier and longer working lives, active inclusion and decent work;
 - involvement of social partners in the European Semester;
 - tackling the employment, social and economic consequences of crisis situations.
- building and strengthening the capacity of social partner organisations.

Activities that can be funded (scope)

This call will be used to finance consultations, meetings, negotiations and other actions, as outlined in the Communication on *Strengthening social dialogue in the European Union: harnessing its full potential for managing fair transitions* (COM(2023)40) and the *Council Recommendation on strengthening social dialogue in the European union* (C/2023/1389).

European social dialogue refers to discussions, consultations, negotiations and joint actions involving organisations representing either side of industry (employers or workers).

The following categories of actions are targeted:

- a) measures to prepare European social dialogue, such as preparatory surveys, meetings and conferences;
- b) measures regarded as part of social dialogue within the meaning of Articles 154 and 155 TFEU, such as preparatory meetings for negotiations or activities relating to the implementation of negotiated agreements and other negotiated

outcomes;

- c) measures to disseminate, promote and monitor European social dialogue activities and outcomes, e.g. through European or national events, peer learning or reviews, studies and (paper or electronic) publications (including the translation);
- d) measures to improve the coordination, functioning and effectiveness of European social dialogue, including through the identification and development of joint approaches by the social dialogue committees, such as the exchange of good practice and related joint training events;
- e) measures by social partners aiming to support and/or improve their contribution to EU policy design and implementation, particularly on priority areas mentioned in Section 1;

Projects proposed **jointly** by employers' and workers' organisations, which aim at implementing (parts of) the **work programme of European social dialogue committees**, as well as measures to foster the implementation of EU level social partner agreements at EU or national level, or the implementation of other social dialogue outcomes, notably framework of actions or guidelines, reinforce their impact and visibility, and support their follow-up and reporting are a **high priority**.

Strengthening **synergies** and exchanges between European sectoral social dialogue committees and/or between the sectoral committees and the cross-industry level, including through projects developing a **multi-sectoral approach** on themes of common interest, is also considered a priority.

Actions are expected to contribute to **the priorities and activities of European social dialogue**. Particular emphasis is put on the following objectives :

- contributing to the implementation and monitoring of the 2023 Council Recommendation on social dialogue;
- strengthening the **involvement of social partners in the European Semester**;
- further developing and strengthening the membership of European social partner organisations;
- building and reinforcing the **capacity** of national (cross-industry and/or sectoral) social partners to engage in national social dialogue and to participate in and contribute to European social dialogue, in particular in those Member States where social dialogue is underdeveloped e.g. through information and training seminars aiming at developing legal expertise or organisational/administrative skills, or at expanding membership and representativeness.

Activities funded under this call for proposals should respect gender equality and anti-discrimination principles.

Access for people with disabilities shall be guaranteed.

Expected impact

Proposals are expected to contribute to strengthening the capacity of social partners organisations (both in Member States and candidate countries) to address, at EU/transnational level, challenges related to changes in employment and working conditions as well as challenges related to their effective participation in social dialogue.

To ensure EU added value, proposals shall demonstrate a clear EU or transnational dimension. This includes the involvement of several social partners from different EU Member States. Furthermore, proposals must analyse challenges that affect multiple Member States or the European Union as a whole and develop comprehensive strategies to address these challenges.

Proposals are expected to contribute to the promotion of social dialogue at cross-industry and sectoral level in accordance with Title X of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), and to the development of European social dialogue in its different dimensions of information exchange, consultation, negotiation and joint action.

In line with point 2.5 of the application template “Project management, quality assurance and monitoring and evaluation strategy”, the application shall include a description of evaluation methods and indicators (quantitative and/or qualitative) to monitor and verify the achievement of the main expected results. These indicators should be realistic, measurable and relevant. Their level of achievement or deviations thereof must be detailed and justified in the final reporting.

3. Available budget

The available call budget is **EUR 13 250 000**

The Commission expects to fund between 25 and 40 proposals.

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:	21 January 2026
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>15 April 2026 – 17:00:00 CET</u> <u>(Brussels)</u>
Evaluation:	April – September 2026
Information on evaluation results:	October 2026
GA signature:	December 2026

5. Admissibility

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). **No** modification to the format of these documents is allowed.

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 (coordinator, beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners) 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 as PDF in the system*)⁴
- **mandatory annexes and supporting documents** (*templates available to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, assembled and re-uploaded*):
 - detailed budget table/calculator: not applicable
 - CVs of core project team
 - activity reports of last year: not applicable
 - list of previous projects (key projects relating to the subject of the call in the last 3 years) (*template available in Part B*)
- **additional Special annexes** (*assembled within the Application Form Part B*):
 - letter of commitment: for consortia where the coordinator is not a social partner organisation at European level, the coordinator must provide a written commitment signed by the participating European-level social partner organisation and confirming its involvement.
 - The letter template can be downloaded from EU Funding & Tenders Portal and must be assembled within the Application Form Part B.

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** (please check carefully the layout of the documents uploaded).

Proposals are limited to **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](#).

⁴ Partners/participants declared in the part A and part B must be identical/similar.

6. Eligibility

Eligible participants (eligible countries)

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

- be legal entities (public or private bodies);
- be established and registered in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:
 - EU Member States
 - non-EU countries (not for coordinator and single applicant):
 - Candidate countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Türkiye and Ukraine

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 and definitions

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 as co-applicant only (other beneficiaries) and they undertake to comply with their obligations under the grant agreement. The rules on eligible countries do not apply to them.

Entities without legal personality (including social partner organisations) — 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 persons⁵.

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'⁶. ⚠ 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).

Social partner organisations — These include notably the European social partner organisations that are consulted in accordance with Article 154 TFEU (for the list, see [List of consulted organisations](#)) as well as other European-level social partner organisations that are not included in this list, but who are involved in the preparation and launch of European social dialogue at sector level. Social partner organisations

⁵ See Article 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

⁶ For the definitions, see Articles 190(2) and 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

without legal personality are eligible provided that the conditions for entities without legal personality (*see above*) are met.

EU restrictive measures — Special rules apply for 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)⁷. 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).

EU conditionality measures — Special rules apply for entities subject to measures adopted on the basis of EU Regulation 2020/2092⁸. Such entities are not eligible to participate in any funded role (beneficiaries, affiliated entities, subcontractors, recipients of financial support to third parties, etc.)

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

Consortium composition

Applications by both single applicants and consortia are allowed.

Single applicants

The single applicant must be a European social partner organisation. However, a national or regional social partner can submit a project as single applicant, provided that the European level is guaranteed by the involvement of a European social partner as affiliated or associated partner.

Affiliated entities and associated partners may be part of a single applicant proposal.

Consortia applicants

In case of consortia, the coordinator must be a social partner organisation at European, national or regional level.

To be eligible as consortium, actions must include a coordinator and at least one other beneficiary (excluding affiliated entities and associated partners).

If a social partner organisation representing workers is the coordinator, the participation of at least one social partner organisation representing employers is mandatory.

When the coordinator is a social partner organisation at national or regional level, the consortium must include at least:

(1) one organisation from a different eligible country to that of the coordinator

and

(2) a European-level social partner organisation.

At least one of the organisations mentioned in the above paragraph must participate

⁷ 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](#).

⁸ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2092 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2020 on a general regime of conditionality for the protection of the Union budget (OJ L 325, 20.12.2022, p. 94).

as other beneficiary, while the other(s) can participate as other beneficiary, affiliated entity(ies) of the coordinator or of the other beneficiary or associated partner(s).

Other entities may participate in other consortium roles, such as affiliated entities, associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions, etc.

Other beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners must fall within one of the following categories: social partners and Business Representative organisations, non-for-profit organisation; universities and research institutes; public authorities; international organisations.

Eligible activities

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

Eligible 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.*). Projects must also respect EU values and European Commission policy regarding reputational matters (*e.g. activities involving capacity building, policy support, awareness raising, communication, dissemination, etc.*).

Activities directed at EU institutions and their representatives should not entail a reputational risk for the European Union. Should a reputational risk for the EU transpire, such activities will not be considered as eligible.

Financial support to third parties is not allowed.

Geographic location (target countries)

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

Duration

Projects should normally range between 12 and 36 months.

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

Project budget

Project budgets (maximum grant amount) are expected to range between EUR 150 000 and EUR 700 000 per project.

This does not however preclude the submission/selection of proposals requesting other amounts. The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

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 one or more participants' 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 the participants 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 capacity via the following information:

- general profiles (qualifications and experiences)⁹ of the staff responsible for managing and implementing the project (CVs of the proposed persons who will perform the main tasks, notably project manager and key personnel)
- description of the consortium participants
- list of previous projects (key projects relating to the subject of the call in the last 3 years)
- For the project manager of the coordinator:
 - C1 level of English, French or German (for speaking, reading, listening and writing – describing the knowledge level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages);
 - a minimum of 2 years of experience in the field of social dialogue and/or industrial relations;
 - a minimum of 2 years of experience in project management.

The CV must include a specific section on experience clearly showing how the conditions above are met.

- For consortia where the coordinator is not a social partner organisation at European level, the coordinator must provide a written commitment signed by the participating European-level social partner organisation and confirming its involvement (see above Section 5).

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

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 participate¹⁰:

- 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 misconduct¹¹ (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)

⁹ Including the knowledge of languages according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

¹⁰ See Articles 138 and 143 of EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

¹¹ 'Professional misconduct' includes, in particular, the following: violation of ethical standards of the profession; wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility; breach of generally accepted professional ethical standards; false declarations/misrepresentation of information; participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition; violation of IPR; attempting to influence decision-making processes by taking advantage, through misrepresentation, of a conflict of interests, or to obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain an advantage; incitement to discrimination, hatred or violence or similar activities contrary to the EU values where negatively affecting or risking to affect the performance of a legal commitment.

- 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).
- intentionally and without proper justification resisted¹² an investigation, check or audit carried out by an EU authorising officer (or their representative or auditor), OLAF, the EPPO, or the European Court of Auditors.

Applicants will also be refused if it turns out that¹³:

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

8. Evaluation and award procedure


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

An **evaluation committee** will assess all applications based only on the information included in the application forms. 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 total scores.

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.

¹² Resisting an investigation, check or audit' means carrying out actions with the goal or effect of preventing, hindering or delaying the conduct of any of the activities needed to perform the investigation, check or audit, such as refusing to grant the necessary access to its premises or any other areas used for business purposes, concealing or refusing to disclose information or providing false information.

¹³ See Article 143 EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

 **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 they match the themes and priorities and objectives of the call; extent of the European/trans-national dimension (through consortium participation, impact, interest for a high number of countries including EU or eligible non-EU countries); possibility to use the results in other countries; potential to develop mutual trust/cross-border cooperation; potential to contribute to the development and implementation of social dialogue committees' work programmes by both sides of the industry (**Max. 30 points**)
- **Quality:**
 - **Project design and implementation:** logical links between the identified problems, needs and solutions proposed (logical frame concept); methodology for implementing the project (concept & methodology, link with the development of evidence on workplace issues; management, procedures, timetable, risks & risk management, monitoring and evaluation, including indicators); feasibility of the project within the proposed time frame; cost effectiveness (sufficient/appropriate budget for proper implementation; best value for money); coherence of the budget between different sections in the application; presentation of the budget in the required format and with mandatory details; clarity and consistency of project, objectives and planning; mainstreaming of equality and non-discrimination aspects in the project's activities and methodology (**Max. 25 points**)
 - **Project team and cooperation arrangements:** design of the consortium (including the balanced participation of both sides of the industry); design of the project teams; quality of the internal working arrangements; appropriate procedures and problem-solving mechanisms for cooperating within the project teams and/or consortium. (**Max. 20 points**)
 - **Impact:** ambition and expected long-term impact of results on target groups through project outcomes like guidelines, recommendations, toolkits; degree of transnationality of the planned impact; appropriate dissemination strategy, including making the project's core deliverables available and planning their

deployment as appropriate; sustainability of results after EU funding ends, including with the participation of both sides of the industry (**Max. 25 points**)

Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score
Relevance	16	30
Quality — Project design and implementation	13	25
Quality — Project team and cooperation arrangements	11	20
Impact	13	25
Overall (pass) scores	60	100

Maximum points: 100 points.

Individual thresholds per criterion: 16/30, 13/25 and 11/20 points.

Overall threshold: 60 points. Proposals that pass the individual thresholds AND the overall threshold will be considered for funding — within the limits of the available call budget (i.e. up to the budget ceiling). 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](#).

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.

There are 3 available options for the dissemination level of your deliverables:

- **Public** — fully open (automatically posted online on the Project Results platforms)
- **Sensitive** — limited (not public) under the conditions of the Grant Agreement
- **EU classified** (EUCI) – under Decision 2015/444

EU classified is not necessary under the SOCPL programme, therefore you should only use Public and Sensitive. All main deliverables demonstrating progress in the implementation of the project as well as all results generated from it must be **public**. In few exceptional cases, some deliverables that originate from the internal management systems of the beneficiary might remained “sensitive”.

Please double check if your “public” deliverables can really be published on the Portal (a signed attendance list should not be public for instance) and modify the dissemination level if necessary.

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: *see section 6 above*.

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: *see section 6 above*.

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 ONLY costs you *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 at **90%**.

You can apply for a higher project funding rate (**95%**) if your project is a “priority action”, i.e. concerns:

- social dialogue actions involving negotiations in accordance with Articles 154 and 155 TFEU,
- meetings to prepare for negotiations of agreements in accordance with Articles 154 and 155 TFEU or joint social partner actions relating to the implementation of the agreements resulting from these negotiations

Grants may NOT produce a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs).

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 and art 6*).

Budget categories for this call:

- A. Personnel costs
 - A.1 Employees
 - A.2 Natural persons under direct contract
 - A.3 Seconded persons
 - A.4 SME owners and natural person beneficiaries
- B. Subcontracting costs
- C. Purchase costs
 - C.1 Travel and subsistence

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

Specific cost eligibility conditions for this call:

- personnel costs:
 - SME owner/natural person unit cost¹⁴: No
 - volunteers unit costs¹⁵: No
- travel & subsistence unit costs¹⁶: Yes¹⁷
- equipment costs: depreciation
- other cost categories:
 - costs for financial support to third parties: not allowed
 - 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)
- other:
 - in-kind contributions for free are allowed, but cost-neutral, i.e. they cannot be declared as cost
 - kick off meeting: costs for kick off meeting or general information session 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

Reporting and payment arrangements

The reporting and payment arrangements are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4 and art 21 and 22*).

¹⁴ 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).

¹⁵ 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).

¹⁶ 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).

¹⁷ See [EU Grants AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement](#), art 6 on eligible costs: travel and subsistence costs must be declared using the unit cost according to Annex 2a of the grant agreement. If a particular instance of travel, accommodation or subsistence in the action is not covered by one of the unit costs mentioned in Decision C(2021)35 the actual costs may be used.

Payment of the grant is generally made in **prefinancing** instalments and a final payment (the balance).

The aim of the prefinancing is to provide the beneficiaries with a float. The prefinancing remains the property of the EU until the payment of the balance. The frequency and size of prefinancing will depend upon the project duration but may be adjusted in case of risk.


The payment schedule is normally as follows:

- **actions of 12 months:** one prefinancing payment of 70% paid within 30 days from the entry into force of the grant agreement or after receiving the financial guarantee (if required), whichever is the latest
- **actions between 12 to 24 months:** prefinancing payments linked to annual reporting periods will be made as follows:
 - an initial prefinancing payment of 40% paid within 30 days from the entry into force of the grant agreement or after receiving the financial guarantee (if required), whichever is the latest
 - a second prefinancing of 40% after receiving an additional prefinancing report. Where the consumption of the previous prefinancing is less than 70%, the amount of the new prefinancing payment will be reduced by the difference between the 70% ceiling and the amount used
- **actions between 24 to 36 months:** prefinancing payments linked to annual reporting periods will be made as follows:
 - an initial prefinancing payment of 30% paid within 30 days from the entry into force of the grant agreement or after receiving the financial guarantee (if required), whichever is the latest
 - a second and third prefinancing of 40% and 20% after receiving additional prefinancing reports. Where the consumption of the previous prefinancing is less than 70%, the amount of the new prefinancing payment will be reduced by the difference between the 70% ceiling and the amount used.

There will be no interim payments.

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

All payments will be made to the coordinator.

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

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 to 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 normally requested from the coordinator, for the consortium. They must be provided during grant preparation, 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 (*Art 23*).

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

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

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

- specific rules for financial support to third parties: NO

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). Excel upload is sometimes possible, depending on the file type.

Please make sure your application is complete with all the relevant information required and relevant to enable the evaluation committee to assess your proposal.

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).
- the AGA – [Annotated Grant Agreement](#)

Please also consult the Topic page regularly, since we will use it to publish call updates.

Contact

For individual questions on the Portal Submission System and / or any uploading queries, please contact the [IT Helpdesk](#).

Non-IT related questions directly related to the text and content of the Call for proposals should be sent to the following email address:

- call-specific questions : EMPL-VP-SOCIAL-DIALOGUE@ec.europa.eu



Please:

- send your questions at the latest 7 days before the submission deadline (*see section 4*).
- 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 CANNOT 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).
- **Completed/ongoing projects** — Proposals for projects that have already been completed will be rejected; proposals for projects that have already started will be assessed on a case-by-case basis (in this case, no costs can be reimbursed for activities that took place before the project starting date/proposal submission).
- **No-profit rule** 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 cumulations of funding/no double funding**— It is strictly prohibited to cumulate funding from the EU budget (except under 'EU Synergies actions'). Outside such Synergies actions, any given action may receive only ONE grant from the EU budget and cost items may under NO circumstances be declared under two EU grants; projects must be designed as different actions, clearly delineated and separated for each grant (without overlaps).
- **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](#).