



Pilot Projects and Preparatory Actions (PPPA)

Call for proposals

Preparatory work for counselling structures to
support mobile migrant labour

PPPA-2026-COUNSEL

Version 1.0
12 February 2026



HISTORY OF CHANGES			
Version	Publication Date	Change	Page
1.0	12.02.2026	▪ Initial version.	
		▪	
		▪	
		▪	



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

EMPL.E – Labour Mobility and International Affairs
EMPL.E.1 – Labour Mobility, Public Employment Services, ELA

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

0. Introduction	5
1. Background	6
2. Objectives — Themes and priorities — Activities that can be funded — Expected impact	7
Objectives	7
Themes and priorities (scope)	8
Activities that can be funded (scope).....	8
Expected impact.....	9
Monitoring	9
3. Available budget	9
4. Timetable and deadlines	9
5. Admissibility and documents	9
6. Eligibility	10
Eligible participants (eligible countries).....	10
Eligible participants (eligible entities)	11
Consortium composition	12
Eligible activities.....	12
Geographic location (target countries).....	12
Duration	13
Project budget.....	13
7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion.....	13
Financial capacity	13
Operational capacity	14
Exclusion	14
8. Evaluation and award procedure	15
9. Award criteria.....	16
10. Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements.....	17
Starting date and project duration	18
Milestones and deliverables.....	18
Form of grant, funding rate and maximum grant amount.....	18
Budget categories and cost eligibility rules.....	19
Reporting and payment arrangements.....	20
Prefinancing guarantees	21

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

0. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for EU **action grant** in the field of Labour Mobility.

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 Financing Decision² and will be managed by the **European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion**.

 Please note that this call is subject to the final adoption of the 2026 Work Programme. In case there are substantial changes, we may have to modify the call (or even cancel it).

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
- the [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement](#) contains:

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 Please note that this call is subject to the final adoption of the 2026 annual work programme for the implementation of the pilot projects "Preparatory work for counselling structures to support mobile migrant labour" and "Smart social economic model in tourism".

- 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

[The European Pillar of Social Rights](#) (EPSR) builds upon 20 key principles, structured around three categories: Equal opportunities and access to the labour market, fair working conditions and social protection and inclusion. [The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan](#) adopted at the 2021 Porto Social Summit turns the principles into concrete actions to benefit citizens. It also proposes headline targets for the EU to reach by 2030. This call for proposals supports the implementation of the following key EPSR principles: 3. Equal opportunities; 5. Secure and adaptable employment; 6. Wages; 7. Information about employment conditions and protection in case of dismissals; 8. Social dialogue and involvement of workers; 10. Healthy, safe and well-adapted work environment and data protection.

In line with the 2024-2029 Commission's priorities, [the Competitiveness Compass for the EU](#) was presented in January 2025 with the aim to restore Europe's dynamism and boost its economic growth. To maintain competitiveness and to be prepared for the future, the EU needs to support its citizens in acquiring the skills and competences needed for success in learning, work and life. The [Union of Skills](#) presented in March 2025 as one part of the compass will promote skills and quality jobs and ensure high quality education, training and lifelong learning to fill the skills and labour gaps.

The critical connection between labour mobility and competitiveness is outlined in recent strategic documents. [The Letta report](#) emphasizes enhancing the freedom to move and stay for European citizens, proposing a new Single Market that supports greater integration and reciprocity. It advocates for improved mobility rights, economic opportunities across borders, and inclusive policies that strengthen EU cohesion and solidarity. [The Draghi report](#) highlights the necessity for creating quality jobs as essential for boosting competitiveness and leveraging technology advancements, while also fostering social inclusion. Integrating innovative technologies into the workforce can drive economic growth and ensure equitable access to opportunities, laying the foundation for a more inclusive and competitive society.

A Fair Labour Mobility Package, announced by the European Commission in the 2026 Commission Work Programme, will aim to remove remaining barriers to mobility and simplify processes for mobile citizens, workers, employers and administrations.

Labour mobility of EU and third-country national workers with its different forms, including posting, circular migration, seasonal work, commuting, working in two or more Member States, has become a structural segment of the national labour markets in all EU Member States. Moreover, against the background of the demographic trends, skills and labour shortages and targeted recruitment policies, the number of third-country nationals working temporarily in the EU will probably further increase.

Workers who are posted or take up employment for a short period of time, however, can represent a vulnerable group of workers. Precarious working conditions and structural labour exploitation prevent a proper integration into the labour market, undermine future recruitment efforts as well as fair competition.

The Commission has taken significant steps to ensure fair mobility, including the revised Posting of Workers Directive, which substantiated the principle of "equal pay for equal work" in host Member States further, providing a framework for fair wages, improved accommodations, and protections for temporary agency workers; creation of the European Labour Authority to help Member States to strengthen fairness and compliance in the internal market; addressing subcontracting challenges; introducing the 2020 Guidelines for Seasonal Workers.

The challenges in tackling exploitative conditions and ensuring compliance remain, with specific vulnerabilities of posted and temporary mobile third-country nationals underscoring the urgent need for action. The commitment to fair labour mobility is grounded in the core EU principle of free movement and therefore all stakeholders, including Member States, Social Partners, Commission, and the European Labour Authority should work together.

DG EMPL started initiatives promoting actions with a view to create information centres for migrant and posted workers in 2013 and 2014. Following the successful pilots in 2009 and 2010, similar calls for proposals were launched annually between 2013 and 2021, as well as in 2023, resulting in the funding of 6 to 10 projects per call.

These calls for proposals aimed at: (1) Promoting transnational cooperation and mutual assistance for monitoring the compliance with and enforcement of the applicable rules; (2) Increasing the accessibility, transparency and quality of the information on terms and conditions of employment to be respected, including through the collaboration between stakeholders, in particular social partners; (3) Promoting evidence basis through collection and evaluation of original data on posted workers' working conditions.

Through these calls for proposals, the Commission has over the years co-financed support structures, networks and campaigns tackling undeclared work and exploited workers. Some of the projects focused on provision of information and advice for posted workers and managed to develop efficient support networks for fair mobility in many of the EU Member States. The counsellors working at the information centres have been giving advice on labour and social law to posted workers, exchanging information on laws and regulations, arranging contacts, and helping to solve problems with extrajudicial assertion of claims, mediation with employers and, if necessary, accompaniment and support at court hearings.

In this context, this call for proposals is an integral part of the Commission's overarching mission to build a more inclusive and sustainable growth model. The objective is to create employment opportunities, nurture social cohesion, and champion fairer labour mobility. Through these concerted efforts, the Commission aims to promote a robust and supportive environment for individuals to thrive in their professional journeys.

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

Objectives

Based on the experience gained over 15 years in implementing the above-mentioned calls with more than 50 projects, the Commission found that counselling centres and networks providing direct support to mobile workers have the potential to be highly efficient in supporting fair labour mobility in the EU. It was found, however, that more evidence, in particular a study on mapping practices, identification and assessment of good practices would be necessary to complement the existing knowledge base and to consider appropriate follow-up activities. Therefore, a pilot project was proposed by the European Parliament in 2025³ aiming at further developing the knowledge base about counselling networks and their impact on fair labour mobility, with a special focus on third-country nationals posted and working temporarily in the EU.

This call has two main objectives:

³ A call for proposals "Preparatory work for counselling structures to support mobile migrant labour (PPPA-2025-COUNSEL)" was launched in March 2025. For more details see: [EU Funding & Tenders Portal | EU Funding & Tenders Portal](#)

- Making most of the research already done, it aims at analysing the various challenges which mobile migrant workers may be facing and at monitoring and evaluating the counselling structures in both countries of origin and destination. Special focus shall be placed on risk sectors such as construction, international road transport, domestic care, and seasonal work in hospitality and agriculture, along with the growing group of posted third-country nationals.

- Supporting the running and expansion of a trade union-based transnational counselling network for short-term mobile and migrant workers in at least nine countries (including two to four candidate or potential candidate countries). The establishment of additional counselling centers shall be supported by targeted capacity building measures.

Therefore, the current call for proposals intends to build upon and continue the work carried out in the 2025 pilot project, aiming to enhance support services for mobile migrant labour within the EU. The initiative seeks to expand existing counselling networks and further explore the feasibility of establishing a permanent, European trade-union-based counselling network.

Themes and priorities (scope)

This action supports the setting up of one single transnational cooperation project/initiative aiming at developing activities by a consortium of relevant stakeholders with a significant and lasting impact on workers, companies, and trade unions. The aim of this action is to support social partners to facilitate the access of mobile migrant workers to essential information on their entitlements.

Activities that can be funded (scope)

The following mandatory activities to be co-financed:

a) developing new and improving existing practices, working methods, information products and/or advisory forms and formats for the collection and dissemination of user-friendly and specific high-quality information targeted at workers and/or undertakings with respect to the working conditions applicable to posted and mobile migrant workers, including preventing in-work poverty and discrimination based on origin;

b) providing counselling services, which include advice tailored to individual cases and their resolution. Where necessary, the counselling work must be supplemented by an intervention, such as reviewing documents, contacting the employer, or contacting/referring to lawyers to support legal enforcement, etc.;

c) establishing and/or expanding of already existing counselling centres/networks in at least nine countries (including two to four candidate or potential candidate countries), which are aiming at mobile and/or posted workers (EU citizens and third-country nationals);

d) creating/developing and coordinating a network for the counsellors. Such network shall ensure communication, exchanges of good practices as well as knowledge transfer between the counsellors and project partners as well as from the counsellors and project partners to stakeholders at regional, national and EU level. To this end, the network shall set up exchanges spaces and organise events where best practices can be exchanged and/or coordinated training concepts can be implemented;

e) monitoring and evaluating counselling structures in both origin and destination countries and conducting expert interviews at national and European levels, with a special focus on risk sectors and the growing group of posted third-country nationals.

Expected impact

The project is expected to provide a detailed analysis of the challenges faced by mobile migrant labour, particularly in risk sectors and among posted third-country nationals. This will be complemented by the practical implementation and expansion of a transnational counselling network. Further mapping of sector-specific needs for counselling services should be undertaken, enhancing the understanding of existing services. The findings from phase 1 of the pilot project will be refined to prepare recommendations for a possible design for future long-term funding and the establishment of a European counselling network for mobile migrant workers.

Monitoring

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 estimated available call budget is **EUR 1 200 000⁴**.

The availability of the call budget still depends on the final adoption of the 2026 Work Programme

We expect to fund one (1) project.

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:	19 February 2026
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>6 May 2026 – 17:00:00 CET (Brussels)</u>
Evaluation:	May - August 2026
Information on evaluation results:	September 2026
GA signature:	November - December 2026

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 [Calls for proposals](#) section). Paper submissions are NOT possible.

⁴ Please note that this call is subject to the final adoption of the 2026 annual work programme for the implementation of the pilot projects "Preparatory work for counselling structures to support mobile migrant labour" and "Smart social economic model in tourism".

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 (*template to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, assembled and re-uploaded*)
- **mandatory annexes and supporting documents** (*templates to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, assembled and re-uploaded*):
 - detailed budget table/calculator: not applicable
 - CVs (standard) of core project team
 - activity reports of last year
 - list of previous projects (key projects for the last 4 years) (*template available in 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 all 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 maximum **50 pages** (Part B). Evaluators will not consider any additional pages. Shorter proposals are welcome.

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

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

6. Eligibility

Eligible participants (eligible countries)

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

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

- EU candidate countries and potential EU candidate countries⁵

Eligible participants (eligible entities)

Lead applicants, co-applicants and affiliated entities must fall in one of the following categories:

- Social partner organisations at European, national or regional level
- Public authorities
- Non-profit organisations (private or public)
- Research centres/institutes
- Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)
- Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

Social partner organisations at European, national or regional level (in application of Article 200 (2) (c) of the Financial Regulation), and social partner organisations without legal personality are also eligible provided that the conditions of the Financial Regulation related thereto are met.

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

Exceptional funding — Entities from other countries (not listed above) are exceptionally eligible, if the granting authority considers their participation essential for the implementation of the action.

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

International organisations — International organisations are NOT eligible.

Entities without legal personality — Entities which do not have legal personality under their national law may exceptionally participate, provided that their representatives have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf and offer guarantees for the protection of the EU financial interests equivalent to that offered by legal persons⁶.

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'⁷. ⚠ 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).

⁵ The list of EU candidate countries and potential EU candidate countries is available here: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/eu-enlargement_en.

⁶ See Article 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

⁷ For the definitions, see Articles 190(2) and 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

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)⁸. 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 2020/2092⁹. 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

Proposals must be submitted by a consortium of at least three (3) applicants (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities), which complies with the following conditions:

- The **lead applicant must be established in an EU Member State** whilst co-applicants can also be established in associated Candidate Countries and Potential Candidate Countries.
- Composed of **minimum three (3) independent entities** from **at least two (2) different eligible countries**

Affiliated entities can take part in the consortium and must satisfy the eligibility criteria as all applicants.

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 should consider 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*). 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*).

Financial support to third parties is not allowed.

Geographic location (target countries)

Proposals must relate to activities taking place in at least nine (9) eligible countries out of which at least one (1) must be an EU-Member State and at least two (2) and a

⁸ 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](#).

⁹ 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).

maximum of four (4) must be an EU candidate country or potential EU candidate country.

Duration

The project should normally range between 12 and 18 months.

A project of longer duration may be accepted in duly justified cases. Extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment.

Project budget

Project budgets (requested grant amount) may not exceed the maximum call budget as indicated in section 3 above.

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 projects.

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

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

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

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

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

- further information
- an enhanced financial responsibility regime, i.e. joint and several responsibility for all beneficiaries or joint and several liability of affiliated entities (*see below, section 10*)

– prefinancing paid in instalments

– (one or more) prefinancing guarantees (*see below, section 10*)

or

– propose no prefinancing

– 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) (*template available in Part B*).

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 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)
- 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)

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.

- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of EU Regulation [2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- 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 rejected 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** (which may be 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) Projects focusing on a theme that is not otherwise covered by higher ranked projects will be considered to have the highest priority.
- 2) 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 'Impact'.

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](#).

When these scores are equal, priority will be based on their scores for the criterion 'Quality'.

- 3) If this does not allow to determine the priority, a further prioritisation can be done by considering the overall project portfolio and the creation of positive synergies between projects, or other factors related to the objectives of the call. These factors will be documented in the panel report.
- 4) After that, the remainder of the available call budget will be used to fund projects across the different topics in order to ensure a balanced spread of the geographical and thematic coverage and while respecting to the maximum possible extent the order of merit based on the evaluation of the award criteria.

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. Full 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 will be 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:

1. Relevance (35 points):

- Clarity and consistency of the action
- Objectives and extent to which they match the themes and priorities and objectives of the call
- Contribution to the EU strategic and legislative context
- European/trans-national dimension
- Impact/interest for a number of countries (EU or eligible non-EU countries); possibility to use the results in other countries; potential to develop mutual trust/cross-border cooperation

2. Quality (35 points):

- Logical links between the identified problems, needs and solutions proposed (logical frame concept)
- Quality of the consortium and project teams

- Appropriate procedures and problem-solving mechanisms for cooperating within the project teams and consortium
- Methodology for implementing the project (concept and methodology, organisation of the work (procedures and allocation of resources), management, involvement of subcontractors, timetable, risks and risk management, monitoring, and evaluation)
- Cost effectiveness (sufficient/appropriate budget for proper implementation; best value for money)

3. Impact (30 points):

- Ambition and expected long-term impact of results on target groups/general public
- Appropriate dissemination strategy
- Possibility to use the results in other countries
- Sustainability of results after EU funding ends.

Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score
Relevance	24	35
Quality	24	35
Impact	22	30
Overall (pass) scores	70	100

Maximum points: 100 points.

Individual thresholds per criterion: 24/35, 24/35 and 22/30 points.

Overall threshold: 70 points.

Proposals that pass the individual thresholds AND the overall threshold will be considered for funding — within the limits of the available 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](#).

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*.

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 Pilot Projects 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 remain “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.

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 (requested grant amount): *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 costs that were *actually* incurred for your project (NOT the *budgeted* costs). For unit costs and flat-rates, you can charge the amounts calculated as explained in the Grant Agreement (*see art 6 and Annex 2 and 2a*).

The costs will be reimbursed at the funding rate fixed in the Grant Agreement (**90%**).

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

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

Budget categories and cost eligibility rules

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

Budget categories for this call:

- A. Personnel costs

- A.1 Employees
- A.2 Natural persons under direct contract
- A.3 Seconded persons
- A.4 SME owners and natural person beneficiaries
- A.5 Volunteers
- B. Subcontracting costs
- C. Purchase costs
 - C.1 Travel and subsistence
 - C.2 Equipment
 - C.3 Other goods, works and services
- D. Other cost categories
 - D.1 Financial support to third parties: not allowed
- E. Indirect costs

Specific cost eligibility conditions for this call:

- personnel costs:
 - SME owner/natural person unit cost¹⁴: No
 - volunteers unit cost¹⁵: No
- travel and subsistence unit cost¹⁶: -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 and exempted specific cost categories, if any)
- VAT: non-deductible/non-refundable VAT is eligible (but please note that since 2013 VAT paid by beneficiaries that are public bodies acting as public authority is NOT eligible)
- other:
 - in-kind contributions for free are allowed, but cost-neutral, i.e. they cannot be declared as cost
 - kick-off meeting: costs for kick-off meeting organised by the granting authority are eligible (travel costs for maximum 2 persons, return ticket to Brussels and accommodation for one night) only if the meeting takes place

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)7115).

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 31 July 2024 C(2024)5405 that amended the Decision C(2021)35 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.

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.

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*).

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 and 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

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 you or 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 and the costs declared.

Prefinancing guarantees

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

The guarantee should be in euro and issued by an approved bank/financial institution established in an EU Member State. If you are established in a non-EU country and

would like to provide a guarantee from a bank/financial institution in your country, please contact us (this may be exceptionally accepted, if it offers equivalent security).

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

Prefinancing guarantees are 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 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

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

- durability: No

Other specificities

Consortium agreement: Yes

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 [Calls for proposals](#) 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.

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 may 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](#)
- Topic Q&A on the Topic page (for call-specific questions in open calls; not applicable for actions by invitation)
- [Portal FAQ](#) (for general questions).

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

Contact

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

Non-IT related questions should be sent to the following email address: EMPL-PPPA-2026-COUNSEL@ec.europa.eu.

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

13. Important



IMPORTANT

- **Don't wait until the end** — Complete your application sufficiently in advance of the deadline to avoid any last minute **technical problems**. Problems due to last minute submissions (*e.g. congestion, etc*) will be entirely at your risk. Call deadlines can NOT be extended.
- **Consult** the Portal Topic page regularly. We will use it to publish updates and additional information on the call (call and topic updates).
- **Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Exchange System** — By submitting the application, all participants **accept** to use the electronic exchange system in accordance with the [Portal Terms & Conditions](#).
- **Registration** — Before submitting the application, all beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners must be registered in the [Participant Register](#). The participant identification code (PIC) (one per participant) is mandatory for the Application Form.
- **Consortium roles** — When setting up your consortium, you should think of organisations that help you reach objectives and solve problems.

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

- **Coordinator** — In multi-beneficiary grants, the beneficiaries participate as consortium (group of beneficiaries). They will have to choose a coordinator, who will take care of the project management and coordination and will represent the consortium towards the granting authority. In mono-beneficiary grants, the single beneficiary will automatically be coordinator.
- **Affiliated entities** — Applicants may participate with affiliated entities (i.e. entities linked to a beneficiary which participate in the action with similar rights and obligations as the beneficiaries, but do not sign the grant and therefore do not become beneficiaries themselves). They will get a part of the grant money and must therefore comply with all the call conditions and be validated (just like beneficiaries); but they do not count towards the minimum eligibility criteria for consortium composition (if any). If affiliated entities participate in your project, please do not forget to provide documents demonstrating their affiliation link to your organisation as part of your application.
- **Associated partners** — Applicants may participate with associated partners (i.e. partner organizations 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 cumulation 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 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 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 the others (or they will be rejected).
- **Resubmission** — Proposals may be changed and re-submitted until the deadline for submission.
- **Rejection** — By submitting the application, all applicants accept the call conditions set out in this this Call document (and the documents it refers to). Proposals that do not comply with all the call conditions will be rejected. This applies also to applicants: All applicants need to fulfil the criteria; if any one of them doesn't, they must be replaced or the entire proposal will be rejected.
- **Cancellation** — There may be circumstances which may require the cancellation of the call. In this case, you will be informed via a call or topic update. Please note that cancellations are without entitlement to compensation.
- **Language** — You can submit your proposal in any official EU language (project abstract/summary should however always be in English). For reasons of efficiency, we strongly advise you to use English for the entire application. If you need the call documentation in another official EU language, please submit a request within 10 days after call publication (for the contact information, see *section 12*).

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

This includes:

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

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

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