



Internal Security Fund (ISF)

Call for proposals

Call for proposals on the community engagement and empowerment
programme (CEEP)

(ISF-2026-TF2-AG-CEEP)

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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 prevention and countering of violent extremism (P/CVE) and radicalisation leading to terrorism under the **Internal Security Fund (ISF)**.

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

- Regulation 2024/2509 ([EU Financial Regulation](#))¹
- the basic act ISF Regulation [2021/1149](#)²

The call is launched in accordance with the 2023-25 Thematic Facility Work Programme (³) and will be managed by the **European Commission, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME)**.

The call covers the following **topic: ISF-2026-TF2-AG-CEEP — community engagement and empowerment programme (CEEP)**.

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 (outcomes) (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)
- 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

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 Regulation (EU) 2021/1149 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2021 establishing the Internal Security Fund (OJ L 251, 15.7.2021, p. 94).

³ Commission Implementing Decision C(2022)8334 final of 23.11.2022 on the financing of the components of the Thematic Facility under the Internal Security Fund and the adoption of the work programme for 2023, 2024 and 2025 and 2022. Based on Regulation (EU) No. 2021/1149 establishing the Internal Security Fund (OJ L 251, 15.7.2021, p. 94) – published on [Europa website](#).

- 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

This call builds on the legacy of the **Civil Society Empowerment Programme (CSEP)**⁴ and the work of the **Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)**, while contributing to the ongoing activities of the **EU Knowledge Hub on Prevention of Radicalisation**⁵. It reaffirms the Commission’s commitment to supporting civil society through sustainable, evidence-based actions that help protect individuals and communities from online radicalisation.

The Hamas attacks of 7 October 2023 and the subsequent conflict in Gaza marked a watershed moment for the online extremist landscape in Europe. While jihadist terrorism remains the most lethal form of threat⁶, the attacks triggered **a broad cross-ideological mobilisation online**. In the weeks and months that followed, antisemitic and anti-Muslim narratives surged across mainstream and fringe platforms, amplified through emotionally charged and digitally sophisticated content.

This wave of online hostility has deepened polarisation across the EU, fuelling mistrust, hostility, and identity-based tensions within and between communities. National authorities and local actors have reported increases in hate speech, threats, and harassment, with social divisions intensifying both online and offline. These effects have been particularly visible in schools, universities, and neighbourhoods, where the geopolitical conflict has strained community⁷ relations.

Extremist actors exploit a growing range of digital tools to spread content, evade moderation, and radicalise users — including short-form videos, AI-generated memes, coded language, and video-in-picture formats. Mainstream platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, Discord, and Telegram are routinely abused, while anonymous or fringe forums serve as hubs for operational planning and extremist subcultures. Civil-society partners have warned of the sharp rise in so-called “*awful but lawful*” material — content that, while harmful and potentially radicalising, does not meet the legal threshold for removal.

The EU has taken important steps to address these challenges. The **Terrorist Content Online (TCO) Regulation**⁸ strengthened Member States’ ability to request the swift removal of terrorist content from hosting service providers, while the **Digital Services Act (DSA)**⁹ introduced broader platform-accountability and crisis-response obligations. Through the **EU Internet Forum**, established in 2015, the Commission works closely with the technology sector to reduce the spread of illegal and harmful material, including disguised antisemitic and anti-Muslim content. The Forum also developed the **EU Crisis Protocol**, which enables law-enforcement authorities and online platforms

⁴https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/radicalisation-awareness-network-ran/civil-society-empowerment-programme_en#evaluation

⁵ https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/eu-knowledge-hub-prevention-radicalisation_en

⁶ <https://www.europol.europa.eu/publication-events/main-reports/european-union-terrorism-situation-and-trend-report-2024-eu-te-sat>

⁷ A community is a group of people who share common characteristics, interests or a sense of identity, and who interact with one another within a social or geographic setting. For the purpose of this call, the term refers to such groups when they engage collectively to foster safety, resilience and positive social cohesion.

⁸ L_2021172EN.01007901.xml

⁹ Regulation - 2022/2065 - EN - DSA - EUR-Lex

to react rapidly and in coordination to prevent the viral circulation of terrorist material following an attack.

Despite these advances, extremist tactics continue to evolve faster than the collective ability to counter them. Further capacity-building is needed so that civil-society and local actors can identify, understand, and respond to harmful content in real time.

Young people are at the centre of this challenge. For the purposes of this call, *youth* generally refers to individuals aged 15 to 24, although radicalisation is increasingly observed among younger adolescents. Young people are not only exposed to extremist content online but also actively create and share it. Law-enforcement authorities have documented youth-led extremist cells producing propaganda or planning violence in closed messaging groups¹⁰. At the same time, extremist propagandists deliberately adopt youth-centric formats — such as manga aesthetics, popular music, and “relatable” influencers — to normalise extremist ideas and attract new audiences.

These developments occur against the backdrop of a shrinking civil-society presence online and declining moderation capacity among platforms, creating what experts¹¹ describe as a widening “*digital capacity gap*.” Extremists are outpacing prevention practitioners in both reach and skill. **In response, this call seeks to engage and empower communities and civil-society organisations to reinforce their presence in the online space and strengthen the protection of at-risk groups, particularly youth.**

EU Policy Context

The **Community Engagement and Empowerment Programme (CEEP)** contributes to the **Internal Security Fund (ISF)**¹² objectives in several complementary ways. It strengthens **information exchange (objective a)** by creating structured communication and knowledge-sharing channels between civil society, local actors, and EU institutions, mainly via the **EU Knowledge Hub on Prevention of Radicalisation**, mentoring exchanges, and digital threat intelligence outputs that are shared with competent authorities. It contributes to **cross-border cooperation (objective b)** by requiring transnational consortia involving at least three entities from different Member States, supporting coordinated prevention strategies, and promoting EU-wide peer learning among civil-society organisations and practitioners. Finally, it enhances **Member States’ capabilities (objective c)** by improving CSOs’ and local leaders’ ability to prevent and respond to radicalisation through evidence-based digital-resilience training, rapid-response mechanisms, and coordinated community engagement. By linking grassroots prevention work to EU structures and early-warning mechanisms, the call directly supports integrated, multi-stakeholder cooperation that strengthens internal security and resilience across the Union.

This call is anchored in the broader EU strategic framework for preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism, in line with:

- **ProtectEU – European Internal Security Strategy (2025)**¹³, which:
 1. confirms that the terrorist threat remains high due to geopolitical conflicts and online radicalisation;

¹⁰ 2025 CTC Sentinel article “Teenage Terrorists and the Digital Ecosystem of the Islamic State

¹¹<https://icct.nl/publication/strategic-communications-approach-tackling-current-emerging-and-new-violent-extremist>

¹² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:L:2021:251:TOC>

¹³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025DC0148>

2. announces a new **EU Agenda on Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (2025)**;
 3. strengthens the **EU Knowledge Hub on Prevention of Radicalisation**¹⁴ and its prevention toolbox;
 4. reaffirms the importance of the **TCO Regulation**, the **EU Crisis Protocol**¹⁵, and the **EU Internet Forum**¹⁶ for coordinated online responses; and
 5. highlights the disproportionate targeting of minors online, calling for joint efforts by education, technology, and civil-society partners.
- **Terrorist Content Online Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2021/784)**¹⁷ — establishing binding rules for the swift cross-border removal of terrorist content.
 - **Digital Services Act (DSA)** — setting due-diligence and crisis-response obligations for online platforms, complementing the TCO Regulation and Crisis Protocol.
 - **EU Strategy on Combating Antisemitism and Fostering Jewish Life (2021–2030)** — recognising online antisemitism as a serious threat to democracy and security.
 - **Joint Communication “No Place for Hate: A Europe United Against Hatred” (2023)** — calling for coordinated action by institutions, platforms, and civil society to counter hate in all its forms.

In addition, this call reflects the recommendations of the **Commission’s conclusion paper “Project-based collaboration on addressing antisemitism within the context of P/CVE” (2023)**, which stresses the need to strengthen digital-monitoring capacities, foster inter-community dialogue, and build the skills of civil-society organisations to recognise and respond to antisemitic content online¹⁸. Funded projects are expected to contribute to these objectives through improved content awareness, cross-community trust-building and targeted resilience strategies. These efforts highlight that effective prevention requires a blend of online action and offline engagement, ensuring that digital interventions are grounded in trusted local relationships and community resilience.

Lessons from previous EU programmes

This call also draws on the lessons¹⁹ of the **Civil Society Empowerment Programme (CSEP)** — the EU’s first dedicated initiative supporting counter- and alternative-narrative campaigns. Its independent evaluation highlighted the value of **capacity-building and training** for local actors such as teachers, social workers, and small CSOs, as well as the importance of **co-design approaches and creative partnerships** to ensure credible, engaging prevention messages.

The evaluation also underscored the need for **consistent monitoring and evaluation frameworks**, together with **platform-specific and rapid-response capabilities** to address emerging threats.

¹⁴ https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/eu-knowledge-hub-prevention-radicalisation_en

¹⁵ https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-05/EUIF_Factsheet_May_2023.pdf

¹⁶ https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-union-internet-forum_en

¹⁷ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32021R0784&qid=1762532956935>

¹⁸ PBC Antisemitism Recommendations

¹⁹ home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-01/CSEP_final_report_en.pdf

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

Objectives

The call aims to support actions that contribute to **preventing and countering radicalisation leading to violent extremism and terrorism** across the European Union. In particular, it responds to the growing challenge of **online radicalisation**, including the manipulation of youth and vulnerable groups through violent extremist, terrorist, and other harmful content distributed via digital platforms.

The **general objective** is to prevent and counter the spread of violent extremist content online by **strengthening the capacity of civil-society actors** in the EU to respond strategically, creatively, and sustainably to evolving online threats, while combining online engagement with offline community-based activities wherever possible to ensure tangible, locally-anchored impact.

In line with the EU's approach to prevention, the call aims to **empower youth, civil-society organisations (CSOs), educators, and community leaders** to build resilience against extremist recruitment, propaganda and harmful online influence. Particular attention should be paid to **emotional wellbeing, social trust, and the ability of communities to respond constructively to polarising events** both online and offline.

Themes and priorities - Scope - activities and outcomes

This call focuses on **primary and secondary prevention**²⁰, supporting initiatives that aim to raise awareness, build resilience, and reduce vulnerability to radicalisation and related harmful behaviours **before individuals engage in or promote violence**. It does *not* cover tertiary prevention activities such as disengagement or rehabilitation.

Key priorities include:

- **Digital resilience** — strengthening the ability of individuals and communities to critically assess and resist extremist content online;
- **Community protective factors** — reinforcing social cohesion, trust, and early-prevention capacities within communities to reduce susceptibility to radicalising dynamics;
- **Multi-ideological scope** — addressing threats linked to jihadist, violent right-wing, violent left-wing, and cross-cutting extremist narratives such as antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred;
- **Youth empowerment** — enabling young people to act as credible messengers, strengthen peer-to-peer prevention, and promote positive alternatives to extremist narratives;

²⁰ Primary prevention refers to interventions aimed at the general population or broad target groups to strengthen resilience, promote protective factors, and reduce the overall risk of radicalisation before any signs of concern appear. It includes awareness-raising, critical-thinking skills, community engagement, and initiatives that address grievances or vulnerabilities at an early stage. Secondary prevention focuses on individuals or groups showing early signs of vulnerability to radicalisation, but who are not yet involved in violent extremist activities. It includes targeted support, mentoring, early-intervention programmes, or community-based mechanisms designed to prevent further progression along the radicalisation pathway.

- **Co-creation and inclusion** — ensuring that projects are designed with, not only for, youth, parents, educators, and affected communities.

Strategic approach

The call follows the **whole-of-society principle** of *ProtectEU*, empowering civil-society organisations, educators, youth practitioners, and community leaders to design and implement **sustainable, evidence-based actions** that address the full spectrum of extremist ideologies — jihadist, violent right-wing, violent left-wing, and cross-cutting forms such as antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred.

At the centre of this approach lies **strategic communication**. In P/CVE, it is not simply about sharing information, but about using communication tools and narratives deliberately to **shift attitudes, influence behaviour, and foster resilience**. This method, refined through the *Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)* — particularly its *Communications and Narratives Working Group* — has shown that credible voices and tailored messaging can strengthen prevention if paired with real-world engagement.

Experience from the *Civil Society Empowerment Programme (CSEP)* confirms that online campaigns are most effective when combined with **offline action**²¹ such as education, dialogue, and opportunities for participation. Projects should therefore apply an **integrated model**, where communication work is substantiated by community-based activities. The **GAMMA+ framework**²² (Goal, Audience, Message, Messenger, Medium, Additional Elements) remains the recommended reference for campaign design.

Finally, **young people** are not only an audience but key partners in prevention. Building on the *RAN YOUNG* platform²³ and the **EU Knowledge Hub mentoring programme**²⁴, projects are expected to adopt **participatory methods** that allow youth to design, lead, and evaluate activities, fostering ownership through peer-to-peer work and creative experimentation.

Together, these principles form the thematic foundation for the three activity streams described below.

Activities

Proposals must include activities from all the three streams described below. Projects may combine or tailor actions according to context, provided that each of the three streams is addressed within a single, coherent intervention logic.

1. Community Training and Engagement Stream

This stream aims to strengthen digital skills, resilience and community engagement among CSOs, youth, and community leaders through structured trainings, practical workshops, and offline outreach.

Activities are grouped into three clusters for clarity, and may include:

A. Capacity-Building and Digital Skills

²¹ Consolidated overview paper: lessons learned from strategic communication and alternative- and counter-narrative campaigns, Authored by Michael Jones, supported by Matt Freear.

²² ran_cn_academy_creating_implementing_effective_campaigns_brussels_14-15112019_en.pdf

²³ RAN YOUNG PLATFORM - European Commission and RAN YOUNG Platform - RAN YOUNG exchange with RAN Practitioners, Online 03-04 October 2023 - European Commission

²⁴ MIGRATION AND HOME AFFAIRS - Mentoring of the Next Generation of P/CVE Practitioners, Policymakers, and Researchers

- Tiered training programmes (foundational to advanced) for CSOs, faith/community leaders, and youth practitioners;
- Thematic modules on digital resilience, narrative design, mental health, gendered dynamics in radicalisation and strategic communication;
- Platform-specific training modules to support effective campaign development and community engagement on key platforms such as TikTok, Telegram and Discord;
- Mental health support and awareness, including training on how to recognise, respond to, and remain resilient in the face of violent extremist content online;
- Developing and delivering e-learning modules or digital training materials that can be hosted on the EU Academy²⁵ platform, contributing to the sustainability and legacy of the call.

B. Community Outreach and Awareness

- Parent-targeted trainings (e.g. “What is your child seeing online?”) and community leader workshops to raise awareness of digital radicalisation trends²⁶ and online manipulation tactics;
- Targeted actions to engage parents and caregivers, raising awareness of online risks, digital manipulation tactics, and intersecting harms (e.g. grooming, CSAM). These activities should address Europol’s recent Intelligence Notification concerning the rise of online cult communities dedicated to extremely violent child abuse²⁷. Applicants should specify how they will reach this audience;
- Offline outreach components to complement digital training and engagement. This may involve local community forums, school-based discussions, or other in-person activities that reinforce digital skills, build trust, and deepen impact. Offline components should not be treated as add-ons, but as essential means of grounding online efforts in real-world relationships and community resilience;
- Practical exercises such as “what to do when you see extremist content online” or scenario-based workshops;
- Practical incentives (e.g. training certificates, paid mentorships, or entry-level opportunities) to encourage sustained youth engagement and professional development.

C. Empowerment, Rapid Response and Evidence-Building

- Empowering CSOs to evolve into knowledge brokers, not only as recipients of capacity-building support, but also as facilitators of dialogue between youth, communities and institutional actors. Projects may include training for CSO staff in community engagement, participatory methods, and advocacy, enabling them to convene regular exchanges between young people and decision-makers (e.g. local authorities, educators, or law

²⁵ <https://academy.europa.eu/>

²⁶ Wherever possible, projects should capitalise on and adapt existing resources developed under the EU Knowledge Hub on Prevention of Radicalisation, ensuring complementarity and avoiding duplication of efforts.

²⁷ Intelligence Notification: Violent online communities threaten children | Europol

enforcement). These dialogues should help translate grassroots insights into meaningful policy reflection or follow-up action;

- Measures to respond to event-driven surges in extremist content (e.g. following terrorist attacks or polarising geopolitical events);
- A clear analytical component to inform the rationale, targeting, and thematic focus of activities. This may include needs assessments, audience analysis, or threat landscape mapping. Where feasible, such an analysis should guide the selection of priority narratives, such as misogynistic or incel-related content, gender-based hate speech, glorification of violence, or the exploitation of geopolitical crises. Projects must balance this evidence base with the ability to act swiftly in response to emerging or crisis-driven extremist content, ensuring agility alongside relevance.

2. **Digital Threat Intelligence Stream**

*This stream **aims to strengthen situational awareness and early warning** on emerging online risks and extremist tactics, supporting the design of effective online responses and first-line interventions by practitioners, policymakers, and other stakeholders. Its goal is to enhance the effectiveness of prevention and intervention efforts by offering up-to-date, actionable intelligence.*

Activities may include:

- Platform-specific trend reports on mainstream channels **such as TikTok, Discord, Telegram** and fringe forums;
- Development and dissemination of digital literacy resources tailored to youth, parents, educators and local actors;
- Responsible collaboration with technology experts and research institutions to improve detection of new extremist trends;
- Sharing of AI-based tools for monitoring and content verification, with awareness of limitations and biases. Any AI-based tools used in project activities should be applied in accordance with EU AI regulations and include oversight by P/CVE practitioners to ensure ethical and contextual accuracy;
- Materials addressing the use of pop culture formats (e.g. manga visuals, Islamic songs) by extremists to attract youth;
- Exploring the use of interactive or gaming-based content formats as innovative tools for engaging youth and conveying preventive messages, drawing on emerging research in this area.

3. **Collaboration and Exchange Stream**

This stream promotes peer learning, mentoring, and policy dialogue between CSOs, youth practitioners, and policymakers through structured networks, mentoring and dialogue platforms.

Activities may include:

- Establishing and facilitating online and offline peer networks for CSOs, youth practitioners, and local actors;
- Collaborative learning activities, mentoring, and experience-sharing events;

- Facilitation of exchange visits under the EU Knowledge Hub mentorship programme²⁸, themed dialogue events, and small-scale local digital campaigns led by community actors to test and refine prevention strategies;
- Structures enabling youth to input into policy discussions through CSO-facilitated roundtables with policymakers or authorities;
- Structures enabling youth practitioners engaged in P/CVE to share frontline insights with EU policymakers in Member States, helping to inform more effective, youth-driven digital prevention strategies at policy level.

Cross-Cutting Requirements for All Activities:

All proposals submitted under this call **must** comply with the following **design and implementation requirements**, which are compulsory and will be assessed during evaluation:

- **Multi-ideological framing** – Activities must address violent extremist content linked to a range of ideologies, including jihadist, right-wing, left-wing, and hybrid or converging threats. Cross-cutting narratives such as antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred must also be explicitly considered;
- **Addressing antisemitism and other hate narratives** – Projects tackling antisemitic narratives should draw on the Commission’s *Project-Based Collaboration* recommendations (2023), strengthening monitoring, inter-community dialogue, and youth-led responses;
- **Participatory co-design and message testing** – All proposals must demonstrate the participatory design and testing of messages with target audiences, following the *GAMMMA+* model (Goal, Audience, Message, Messenger, Medium, Additional Elements). Messages must be co-created and pre-tested with intended audiences, including youth focus groups, to ensure relevance and prevent unintended effects;
- **Ethical and responsible technology use** – Where relevant, projects are encouraged to cooperate with technology partners and research institutions to pilot responsible use of AI-based monitoring, content-verification, or media-literacy tools. Any AI use must comply with EU data-protection and AI-governance rules and include practitioner oversight;
- **Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)** – All projects must include a robust and proportionate M&E framework covering both output and outcome indicators, showing how behavioural or attitudinal change will be assessed. Where feasible, independent evaluation or external review should be foreseen to ensure objectivity and comparability;
- **Integrated capacity-building model** – All projects must integrate capacity-building, narrative development, peer learning, and targeted interventions into a holistic and flexible structure, embedding strategic communication within long-term community engagement and skills development;
- **Whole-of-society and multi-stakeholder approach** – All applicants must demonstrate a whole-of-society perspective engaging civil-society actors, local authorities, educators, communication experts, academia and, where appropriate, law-enforcement authorities;

²⁸ [Mentoring of the next generation of PCVE practitioners, policymakers, and researchers - European Commission](#)

- Applicants must present a clear **ethics and values framework** demonstrating compliance with Article 2 TEU and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, explain how EU visibility will be ensured in all public communication, and outline internal safeguards preventing the participation of entities pursuing illegal or unethical agendas. The consortium agreement must also include standards of ethics, transparency, and EU-visibility obligations to ensure accountability and prevent reputational risk to the Union.

Additional Considerations applicable to this call

The following elements are **not mandatory**, but will strengthen implementation quality, sustainability, and alignment with EU priorities:

- **Complementarity with the EU Knowledge Hub** – Projects should build on and contribute to the EU Knowledge Hub on Prevention of Radicalisation, including sharing practices, participating in mentoring activities, and using existing tools and services. Applicants are encouraged to draw on resources developed under the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) to avoid duplication;
- **Blended online/offline delivery** – Proposals should combine online engagement with offline community-based activities wherever possible. Offline components should reinforce community trust, emotional wellbeing, and ensure that digital interventions have tangible local anchors;
- **Youth engagement and professional development** – To ensure sustained involvement, projects should provide clear pathways for youth participation such as training certificates, mentorship placements, or entry-level opportunities through EU Knowledge Hub mentoring or job-shadowing schemes;
- **CSO's role** - Projects should clearly describe the role of CSOs as knowledge brokers — acting as connectors between youth, communities, and institutional actors — rather than solely as implementers. CSO-led dialogue should translate local evidence into policy reflection at municipal, national and EU levels;
- **Engagement of trusted communication channels** — Proposals may include the use of trusted messengers (e.g. youth workers, educators, community organisations, or relevant online communicators) to support the dissemination of prevention messages, provided that their role, credibility, and safeguards are clearly demonstrated. The focus should be on evidence-based, context-appropriate communication;
- Applicants should describe in the Application Form Part B (section 5.1 “Ethics”) their **internal ethics-compliance system**, including procedures for partner vetting, content moderation, and prevention of reputational or legal risks linked to extremist or discriminatory material;
- **Integration with national and local strategies** – Where relevant, applicants are encouraged to link project activities or outcomes with existing national or local prevention frameworks, education systems, or community institutions to promote long-term uptake and sustainability;
- **Rapid-response preparedness** – Projects should include mechanisms to respond to crisis-driven surges in extremist or polarising narratives (e.g. following terrorist attacks or geopolitical events), building on lessons from the *RAN Crisis Communication* principles and existing EU rapid-reaction protocols;
- **Innovation and continuous learning** – Projects may pilot AI-assisted situational monitoring or early-warning tools to identify emerging online threats, *provided they comply with EU data-protection and AI rules. They should also*

use findings from the evaluation of the Civil Society Empowerment Programme (CSEP) to maximise effectiveness and sustainability;

- **Geographic diversity** – The Commission welcomes proposals with broad geographical coverage and partnerships from multiple Member States (more Member States than the minimum number identified in the eligibility criteria), provided this adds value and coherence to the action design. Consortia should ideally include fewer than ten partners to ensure efficient management and communication, while safeguarding the independence and community-based role of CSOs.

Target groups

This call is open to a wide range of actors engaged in the prevention and countering of violent extremism (P/CVE), with a focus on those able to design and implement sustainable, community-based and digital prevention activities.

Primary target groups (direct beneficiaries):

- Civil-society organisations (CSOs) working in the field of P/CVE, particularly those seeking to expand, professionalise, or innovate their online engagement and communication work;
- Faith and community leaders who play a trusted role in shaping local narratives and supporting community resilience;
- Youth practitioners and young leaders already active in CSOs or community initiatives, as well as young people with an interest in prevention and civic engagement (e.g. students in secondary schools or universities).

Secondary and supporting target groups:

- Parents, caregivers, and educators, who influence young people's online and offline environments and can act as early detectors of risks;
- Local actors and first-line responders such as teachers, social workers, youth mentors, and community mediators who interact directly with at-risk individuals or groups.

Indirect beneficiaries:

- Public authorities, policymakers, and law-enforcement representatives who will benefit from strengthened cooperation and insights generated through project results and the EU Knowledge Hub.

Target countries

- The main activities are expected to take place in the Member States of the European Union.

Expected impact

The action is expected to deliver the following outcomes:

Short-term impacts:

- Increased capacity of CSOs and community leaders to detect, understand, and respond to violent extremist content online;

- Enhanced digital literacy, mental-health awareness and emotional resilience among youth and parents exposed to manipulative online narratives;
- Improved collaboration and knowledge-sharing between actors engaged in preventing radicalisation across EU Member States.

Medium-term impacts:

- Greater consistency and quality in online prevention activities and alternative and counter-narrative efforts, with independently verified outcome data and lessons integrated via the EU Knowledge Hub;
- Rapid and coordinated practitioner response to crisis-driven spikes in extremist content;
- Increased reach and credibility of youth and CSO-led prevention efforts, particularly on youth-oriented platforms.

Long-term impacts:

- Improved ability to monitor, analyse, and counter multi-ideological extremist content online, including through responsible cooperation with technology partners that use AI tools to help detect and understand new online threats;
- Strengthened resilience of communities and individuals against radicalisation through integrated online–offline approaches;
- Better integration of grassroots insights into national and EU-level prevention policies.

3. Available budget

The available call budget is **EUR 5 000 000**.

We reserve the right not to award all available funds depending on the proposals received and the results of the evaluation.

4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
Call opening:	26 February 2026
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>27 May 2026 – 17:00:00 CET</u> <u>(Brussels)</u>
Evaluation:	June – August/September 2026
Information on evaluation results:	September/October 2026
GA signature:	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.

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*)
- Application Form Part C — contains additional project data and the project's contribution to EU programme key performance indicators (*to be filled in directly online*)
- **mandatory annexes and supporting documents** (*templates to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, assembled and re-uploaded*):
 - list of previous projects (key projects for the last 4 years, not limited to EU-funded projects): template available in Part B but to be **submitted as a separate annex**.
 - detailed budget table: **not applicable**
 - CVs of core project team: **not applicable**
 - activity reports of last year: **not applicable**

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 without annexes). Evaluators will not consider any additional pages.

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

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

6. Eligibility

Eligible participants (eligible countries)

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

- be legal entities:

- public bodies or, by the competent authority's mandate, a public or non-public implementing agency or body of a Member State participating in the ISF
 - non-profit-making public/private entities
 - profit-making entities
 - international organisations
- be established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:
 - EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs)), excluding Denmark²⁹.

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. The rules on eligible countries do not apply to them. International organisations can participate co-beneficiaries regardless of their geographical location. However, being based in an eligible country does not contribute to the fulfilment of the minimum number of eligible countries required in the eligibility criteria related to the consortium composition.

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 persons³⁰.

EU bodies — EU bodies 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'³¹. ⚠ Please note that if the action will be implemented by the members, they should also participate (either as beneficiaries or as affiliated entities, otherwise their costs will NOT be eligible).

Countries currently negotiating association agreements — Beneficiaries from countries with ongoing negotiations for participation in the programme (*see list of participating countries above*) may participate in the call and can sign grants if the negotiations are

²⁹ In accordance with Articles 1 and 2 of Protocol No 22 on the position of Denmark, annexed to the TEU and to the TFEU, Denmark is not taking part in the adoption of Regulation (EU) 2021/1149 and is not bound by it or subject to its application.

³⁰ See Article 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

³¹ For the definitions, see Articles 190(2) and 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

concluded before grant signature and if the association covers the call (i.e. is retroactive and covers both the part of the programme and the year when the call was launched).

Israeli applicants — With regard to Israeli entities, please follow the Guidelines on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards³².

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)³³. 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 2020/2092³⁴. Such entities are not eligible to participate in any funded role (beneficiaries, affiliated entities, subcontractors, recipients of financial support to third parties, etc).

Currently the following measure is in place: Impact of the Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/2506 of 15 December 2022 on measures for the protection of the Union Budget against breaches of the principles of the rule of law in Hungary

Following the [Council Implementing Decision \(EU\) 2022/2506](#), as of 16th December 2022, no legal commitments (including the grant agreement itself as well as subcontracts, purchase contracts, financial support to third parties etc.) can be signed with Hungarian public interest trusts established under Hungarian Act IX of 2021³⁵ or any entity they maintain.

Affected entities may continue to apply to calls for proposals. However, in case the Council measures are not lifted, such entities are not eligible to participate in any funded role (beneficiaries, affiliated entities, subcontractors, recipients of financial support to third parties). In this case, co-applicants will be invited to remove or replace that entity [and/or to change its status into associated partner. Tasks and budget may be redistributed accordingly.

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

Consortium composition

Proposals must be submitted by:

- minimum 3 applicants (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities) from 3 different EU Member States, among which at least two should be civil society organisations from at least two different EU Member States.

The following entities can NOT apply as coordinator:

³² Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#) on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards (OJ C 205 of 19.07.2013, pp. 9-11).

³³ 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](#).

³⁴ 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).

³⁵ As Act IX of 2021 can be amended, the applicants should always refer to the latest update of the relevant Hungarian Act, available in the national legal database NJT.hu (<https://njt.hu>).

- profit making entities
- international organisations³⁶.

Eligible activities

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

Financial support to third parties is not allowed.

Other important considerations

Projects should take into account the results of projects supported by other EU funding programmes. The complementarities must be described in the project proposals (Part B of the Application Form).

Projects should comply with EU policy interests and priorities (*such as environment, social, security, industrial and trade policy, etc*) and refrain from carrying activities that may harm the reputation of the EU.

Projects must respect European Commission policy regarding reputational matters (*e.g. activities involving capacity building, policy support, awareness raising, communication, dissemination, etc*)³⁷.

Duration

Projects must have a duration of 24 months (extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment).

Maximum EU Grant amount

Requested EU contribution to the project's budget ("maximum EU grant amount" per project) ranges between EUR 1 000 000 and EUR 1 500 000 (to support a smaller number of larger-scale, broader geographic reach, high-impact projects capable of delivering EU-level visibility and tangible security benefits).

Ethics

Projects must comply with:

- highest ethical standards
- EU values based on Article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union and Article 21 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and
- other applicable EU, international and national law.

Applications should pay appropriate attention to the effects of the project on individual rights and freedoms, and indicate the measures taken to limit or or remedy such effects.

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

Projects involving ethics issues may be made subject to specific ethics rules.

Security

³⁶ The term "international organisations" is used as defined in Article 156 of the FR (Euratom 2018/1046);

³⁷ See, for instance, Guidance on funding for activities related to the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of Union legislation and policy.

Projects involving EU classified information must undergo security scrutiny to authorise funding and may be made subject to specific security rules (detailed in a security aspects letter (SAL) which is annexed to the Grant Agreement).

These rules (governed by Decision [2015/444](#)³⁸ and its implementing rules and/or national rules) provide for instance that:

- projects involving information classified TRES SECRET UE/EU TOP SECRET (or equivalent) can NOT be funded
- classified information must be marked in accordance with the applicable security instructions in the SAL
- information with classification levels CONFIDENTIEL UE/EU CONFIDENTIAL or above (and RESTREINT UE/ EU RESTRICTED, if required by national rules) may be:
 - created or accessed only on premises with facility security clearing (FSC) from the competent national security authority (NSA), in accordance with the national rules
 - handled only in a secured area accredited by the competent NSA
 - accessed and handled only by persons with valid personnel security clearance (PSC) and a need-to-know
- at the end of the grant, the classified information must either be returned or continue to be protected in accordance with the applicable rules
- action tasks involving EU classified information (EUCI) may be subcontracted only with prior written approval from the granting authority and only to entities established in an EU Member State or in a non-EU country with a security of information agreement with the EU (or an administrative arrangement with the Commission)
- disclosure of EUCI to third parties is subject to prior written approval from the granting authority.

Please note that, depending on the type of activity, facility security clearing may have to be provided before grant signature. The granting authority will assess the need for clearing in each case and will establish their delivery date during grant preparation. Please note that in no circumstances can we sign any grant agreement until at least one of the beneficiaries in a consortium has facility security clearing.

Beneficiaries must ensure that their projects are not subject to national/third-country security requirements that could affect implementation or put into question the award of the grant (*e.g. technology restrictions, national security classification, etc*). The granting authority must be notified immediately of any potential security issues.

Overview eligibility conditions

Consortium composition – minimum number of	
Entities	3
Member States participating in ISF(*)	3

³⁸ See Commission Decision 2015/444/EU, Euratom of 13 March 2015 on the security rules for protecting EU classified information (OJ L 72, 17.3.2015, p. 53).

Consortium composition – participation of public bodies (**) is always eligible as coordinator or beneficiary	
Consortium composition – participation of non-profit-making public entities as	
Coordinators	Yes
Beneficiaries/affiliated entities	Yes
Consortium composition – participation of non-profit-making private entities as	
Coordinators	Yes
Beneficiaries /affiliated entities	Yes
Consortium composition – Participation of International Organisations as	
Coordinators	No
Beneficiaries	Yes
Consortium composition – participation of profitmaking entities as	
Coordinators	No
Beneficiaries /affiliated entities	Yes
Consortium composition – participation of legal entities established in third countries	
Coordinators	No
Beneficiaries	No
Duration of projects (in months)	
	24
Minimum and Maximum EU Grant amount per project (Requested EU contribution)	
Minimum (EUR)	1 000 000
Maximum (EUR)	1 500.000

(*) The rules on eligible countries do not apply to International organisations. International organisations can participate as beneficiaries regardless of their geographical location. However, being based in an eligible country does not contribute to the fulfilment of the minimum number of eligible countries required in the eligibility criteria related to the consortium composition.

(**) public bodies or, by the competent authority's mandate, a public or non-public implementing agency or body of a Member State participating in the ISF.

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
- list of previous projects (key projects for the last 4 years not limited to EU-funded projects) (*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 participate³⁹:

- 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 misconduct⁴⁰ (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of EU Regulation [2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decisionmaking- 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 resisted⁴¹ 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.

³⁹ See Articles 138 and 143 of EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

⁴⁰ '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.

⁴¹ '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.

Applicants will also be rejected if it turns out that⁴²:

- 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 a **two-step evaluation procedure**.

For all eligible applications, in the first step, there will be a pre-selection on the basis of the Relevance award criterion only. In the second step, the successful proposals will be assessed against the full set of award criteria.

An **evaluation committee** 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 (for each topic) against the operational capacity and award criteria (*see sections 7 and 9*) and then ranked according to their scores.

For proposals with the same score (within a topic or budget envelope) a **priority order** will be determined according to the following approach:

Successively for every group of *ex aequo* proposals, starting with the highest scored group, and continuing in descending order:

- 1) The *ex aequo* proposals within the same 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'. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on their scores for the criterion 'Quality'.
- 2) 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..
- 3) 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. Compliance will be a pre-condition for signing the grant.

⁴² See Article 143 EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

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:

- 1. Relevance:** clarity and consistency of the objectives and scope of the project seen against the objectives and expected impact/outcomes (if applicable) as identified in section 2; contribution to the relevant EU strategic and documents and/or action plans and legislative context; previous results in the field; European/trans-national dimension (30 points)
- 2. Quality:** logical links between the identified problems, needs and solutions proposed; methodology for implementing the project (concept and methodology, timetable, monitoring and evaluation); expertise and quality of the consortium and project teams; management structures and procedures; risks and risk management; feasibility of the project within the proposed time frame; cost effectiveness and best value for money (50 points)
- 3. Impact:** expected short-term and long-term impact of results on target groups/general public; degree of ambition and innovation; appropriate communication strategy, including visibility of EU funding; appropriate dissemination strategy for ensuring sustainability and long-term impact; sustainability of results after EU funding ends; replicability/usability/potential for amplification of the results (20 points).

Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score
Relevance	21	30
Quality	n/a	50
Impact	n/a	20
Overall (pass) scores	70	100

Maximum points: 100 points.

Individual thresholds for the criterion 'Relevance': 21/30 points.

Overall threshold: 70 points.

Proposals that pass the individual threshold for the criterion 'Relevance' AND the overall threshold will be considered for funding — within the limits of the available 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: 24 months (extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment).

KPIs, milestones and deliverables

Project proposals should provide key performance indicators (KPIs), both qualitative and quantitative, with baseline and targets to be used to monitor the implementation and to assess the result of the project, as well as measure the outputs and results of the project against programme performance indicators, relevant to the action, included in Annex VIII of Regulation (EU) ISF: 2021/1149, in particular as regards the Specific Objectives stated in Article 3.

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.

The following deliverables will be mandatory for all projects:

- A mid-term progress report

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
- E. Indirect costs

Specific cost eligibility conditions for this call:

- personnel costs:
 - SME owner/natural person unit cost⁴³: Yes
 - volunteers unit cost⁴⁴: Yes (without indirect costs)
- travel and subsistence unit cost⁴⁵: Yes⁴⁶
- 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)
- divers:
 - in-kind contributions for free are allowed, but cost-neutral, i.e. cannot be declared as cost

 **Volunteers costs** — Volunteers costs are not a classic cost category. There are no costs because volunteers work for free, but they may nonetheless be added to the budget in the form of a pre-fixed unit cost (per volunteer) and thus allow you to benefit from the volunteers' work for the grant (by increasing the amount of reimbursement up to

⁴³ 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).

⁴⁴ 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).

⁴⁵ 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).

⁴⁶ 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.

100% of the normal costs, i.e. cost categories other than volunteers). More information is available in the [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6.2.A.5](#).

Specific cost eligibility rules for this call:

- Equipment and other goods, works and/or services related to 5G/6G mobile network communication equipment, and other technologies linked to the evolution of European communication network must:
 - a. not be subject to security requirements by third country/ non-associated third country that could affect the implementation of the action (e.g. technology restrictions, national security classification limiting the use of the equipment, etc.);
 - b. comply with (cyber-)security guidance issued by the Commission, in particular communications on the 5G toolbox²⁰;
 - c. apply (cyber-)security requirements throughout the life cycle, including the selection and award procedure and criteria for purchases, the use, and also the related services, including installation, upgrading or maintenance;
 - d. ensure (cyber-)security by adequately protecting the availability, authenticity, integrity, and confidentiality of stored or transmitted or processed data or the functions or services offered by, or accessible via, that equipment.

Reporting and payment arrangements

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

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

There will be no interim payments. There will be one or more **additional prefinancing payments** linked to a prefinancing report.

In addition, you will be expected to submit one or more progress reports not linked to payments.

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

All payments will be made to the coordinator.

 Please 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 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

Security rules: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 13 and Annex 5)*

Ethics rules: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 14 and Annex 5)*

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
- limited communication and visibility to protect persons involved: No

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

- EU restrictive measures: Yes

- durability: Yes
- specific rules for humanitarian actions: No
- specific rules for blending operations: 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 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 [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 4 parts, as follows:

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

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

Documents must be uploaded to the **right category** in the Submission System, otherwise the proposal 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: HOME-ISF@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 organisations which participate in the action but without the right to get grant money). They participate without funding and therefore do not need to be validated.
- **Consortium agreement** — For practical and legal reasons it is recommended to set up internal arrangements that allow you to deal with exceptional or unforeseen circumstances (in all cases, even if not mandatory under the Grant Agreement). The consortium agreement also gives you the possibility to redistribute the grant money according to your own consortium-internal principles and parameters (for instance, one beneficiary can reattribute its grant money to another beneficiary). The consortium agreement thus allows you to customise the EU grant to the needs inside your consortium and can also help to protect you in case of disputes.

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

This includes:

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

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

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