



Internal Security Fund (ISF)

Call for proposals

Call for proposals on Organised Crime
(ISF-2026-TF2-AG-OC)

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Etc...		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 	



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
 DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MIGRATION AND HOME AFFAIRS

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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0. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for EU **action grants** in the field of organised crime 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 (EU) 2021/1149².

The call is launched in accordance with the 2023-2025 Thematic Facility Work Programme³ and will be managed by the **European Commission, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME)**.

The call covers the following **topics**:

- **ISF-2026-TF2-AG-OCDT — Organised crime and drug trafficking**
- **ISF-2026-TF2-AG-THB - Trafficking in human beings**

Each project application under the call must address at least one of these topics. Applicants wishing to apply for more than one topic, must submit a separate proposal under each topic.

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, themes and priorities, scope, activities that can be funded and outcomes, the expected results and impact (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
- 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 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) 2021/1147 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 November 2022 on the financing of components of the Thematic Facility under the Internal Security Fund and adoption of the Work Programme for 2023 - 2027 as last modified by: [Ninth revised 2023-2027 Work Programme \(non-substantial\)](#).

1. Background

Organised crime is one of the most serious security threats to the European Union. As demonstrated in Europol's Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment (EU-SOCTA)⁴, criminal networks evolve rapidly, abusing geopolitical and technological developments. In their efforts to make large profits, criminal networks use extreme violence, corruption and intimidation. They are also highly capable to make connections and conceal their plans, as shown by the dismantling of encrypted communication tools such as ANOM, Encrochat and SkyECC. Economic and financial crimes are key in supporting all criminal activities. The vast revenues obtained through illicit activities are used for other criminal activities or are laundered by professional money laundering syndicates and then used to infiltrate the legal economy. Criminal infiltration has far-reaching and destabilising consequences for society, the rule of law and trust in public authorities. Once organised crime has a hold on society, it becomes even harder to root out: 34 % of the most threatening criminal networks have been active for more than 10 years⁵.

To make a real difference in the fight against organised crime, criminal networks must be dismantled as such. However, the increasing complexity and flexibility of the criminal landscape makes investigations into organised crime particularly challenging, as one member of a network can easily be replaced by others when apprehended. Moreover, criminal networks use sophisticated techniques to hide their assets from detection. They use the services of high-level brokers, who run parallel underground systems that are outside of the formal financial system.

In **ProtectEU, a European Internal Security Strategy**⁶, the Commission has committed itself to intensify the fight against high-risk criminal networks, ringleaders and enablers, by proposing a renewed legal framework on organised crime to respond to the modern reality. In addition, the Commission will continue to support the follow the money approach, by supporting Member States in capacity building and implementation of legislation, notably the 2024 Asset Recovery and Confiscation Directive⁷.

In addition to the fight to dismantle criminal networks, there are **certain specific crimes that require particular attention**, due to their prevalence and damage to citizens and society as a whole.

Firstly, **Drug trafficking including its production** is one of the most lucrative, growing and evolving criminal activities. In the EU, half of the most dangerous criminal networks engage in drug trafficking, and over two thirds use violence. Flows of cocaine to European ports, either directly from Latin America or via West Africa, have increased dramatically in recent years. Although cocaine seizures are on the decline in certain hubs, the lower wholesale prices and higher purity indicates that smuggling routes have adapted. In addition, criminals divert and traffic drug precursors, including designer precursors, to produce synthetic drugs.

Drug use continues to pose serious health challenges in the EU, with young people particularly affected. With cocaine consumption rising and new psychoactive substances emerging, the risks of poisoning and drug-related fatalities increase, totalling nearly 7 500 in 2023. Drug use threatens the health and social stability of various groups, especially those already in vulnerable situations. These developments strain monitoring systems and hinder effective treatment and harm reduction efforts. Finally, drug

⁴ <https://www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/EU-SOCTA-2025.pdf>

⁵ [Europol report on Decoding the EU-s most threatening criminal networks.pdf](#)

⁶ COM/2025/148 final, [EUR-Lex - 52025DC0148 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

⁷ [Directive \(EU\) 2024/1260](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 April 2024 on asset recovery and confiscation, OJ L, 2024/1260, 2.5.2024.

production and trafficking damage the environment via the dumping of toxic chemical waste and the destruction of habitats, impacting local communities' living space and challenging law enforcement in the safe dismantling of drug laboratories and waste dumps.

To tackle these complex and interconnected threats and challenges, a new **EU Drugs Strategy** was proposed on 4 December 2025 and endorsed by the Council on 5 March 2026. In addition, an **Action Plan against Drug Trafficking** was presented by the Commission on 4 December 2025.

Secondly, **trafficking in human beings** constitutes the second most widespread illicit economy in the world⁸. The annual profit generated by forced labour globally is estimated at USD 236 billion annual profit for traffickers, representing almost USD 10 000 profit per victim. While the profits are high and have increased by 37% since 2014, the risks for perpetrators remain low. According to Europol, 55 of the reported most threatening criminal networks engage in trafficking in human beings as (one of) their main activity(-ies). Trafficking is also often linked to other crimes, such as drug trafficking, migrant smuggling, organised property crime, money laundering and document fraud.

Victims are mainly trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation, followed increasingly for labour exploitation, and also for forced begging and forced criminality, among other forms. An increasing trend in trafficking for organ removal has also been observed. Since many of the elements of the crime have moved online, the scale of the real number of victims remain hidden, which in particular affects children. The share of non-EU nationals amongst registered victims of trafficking has reached 64% in 2023 and in 2024, with a high number of victims from Latin America. Despite a slight increase, the number of prosecutions and convictions of traffickers recorded within the EU remains low, especially compared to the number of suspects and of registered victims. In some Member States, over 50% of investigations are not followed by indictment by the prosecution, which shows low effectiveness of the investigations.

The EU Strategy on combating trafficking in human beings 2021-2025 provides for a comprehensive approach by setting key priority actions for the Commission and the Member States, which are linked to reduce the demand that fosters trafficking, to break the criminal model to halt victims' exploitation, to protect and assist the victims, and to address the international dimension. It is expected that the future **new strategy combating trafficking in human beings** to be adopted in Q4 2026 will be built along these four pillars.

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

Project applications submitted under the present call for proposals must complement, integrate, or support already planned actions, notably those within the relevant EMPACT priorities⁹ led by several drivers who are responsible for Operational Action Plans. For instance the OAP on the production, trafficking and distribution of synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances (EMPACT Synthetic Drugs/NPS 2026–2027) is led by Poland. ISF also provides support to these OAPs by providing grants to projects (actions) implemented under these OAPs such as notably:

⁸ Report on the progress made in the European Union in combating trafficking in human beings (Fifth Report), SWD(2025) 4 final, [IMMC.COM%282025%298%20final.ENG.xhtml.1_EN_ACT_part1_v7.docx](#)

⁹ https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/internal-security/law-enforcement-cooperation/empact-fighting-crime-together_en; <https://www.europol.europa.eu/how-we-work/empact>; <https://www.eurojust.europa.eu/empact>

1. The most threatening criminal networks and individuals (project MTCNI), led by Belgium who is also the OAP driver
5. The production, trafficking and distribution of cannabis, cocaine and heroin (project OAP CCH 2026 2027), led by Spain, who is also the OAP driver
6. The production, trafficking and distribution of synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances (project OBLIVION), led by Spain with as OAP driver Poland
8. Trafficking in human beings (project EMPACT THB 2026-2027), led by the Netherlands who is also the OAP driver
9. Firearms and explosives crimes (project EMPACT FI-X), led by Spain who is also the OAP driver

But also the reporting exercises coordinated by Europol

ISF-2026-TF2-AG-OCDT — Organised crime and drug trafficking

Objectives

The general objective of the call for proposals is combating organised crime by **dismantling and disrupting criminal networks, their ringleaders and enablers, as well as several priorities of the EU Drugs Strategy** that contribute to the fight against drug trafficking and preparedness to respond to drug related security threats. Applications should focus on tackling the activities of criminal networks, especially those whose activities represent a greater threat to society.

The call contains **4 horizontal priority areas** (for all organised crimes) and **2 crime-specific priority areas**:

- improving the **intelligence picture on criminal networks**
- facilitating **cross border investigations**
- facilitating **financial investigations**
- supporting **crime prevention measures and tackling criminal infiltration**
- strengthening capabilities to fight **drug production and trafficking**
- strengthening EU and national **preparedness against drug related security threats**.

Themes and priorities - Scope - activities and outcomes

The project applications submitted under the present call for proposals must address **one, but preferably more**, of the following priorities stipulated below.

1. The intelligence picture

A robust intelligence picture on the organised crime landscape is key for prioritizing investigations on most relevant criminal actors and networks. Furthermore, at the strategic level, it can contribute to better equip law enforcement agencies and all stakeholders with adequate tools to target the main criminal actors and groups. However, the intelligence picture on organised crime and networks is insufficiently developed across the EU. To develop it further, it is necessary to ensure that Member States have the capacity to produce strategic, tactical, and operational intelligence that is up to date and that reflects the constantly evolving and flexible nature of criminal networks. Moreover, Member States have diverging methodologies at local, regional and national level to elaborate the intelligence picture and criteria to identify and select high risk targets and criminal networks, making it difficult to compare across the EU the level of threat from organised crime. In addition, cooperation with relevant actors that can contribute to the intelligence picture on organised crime, such as academia, could be further exploited.

This could include:

- Enhancing the intelligence picture on criminal networks, including mapping the groups and the links between different crime areas, criminal networks' infiltration into the legal economy, *modus operandi* and level of sophistication.
- Stimulating, promoting and facilitating the collection and sharing of information on criminal actors and criminal networks at national and EU level.
- Enhancing the capacity of competent authorities to develop the intelligence picture on criminal networks in cooperation with different stakeholders.
- Promoting the alignment of methodologies to elaborate the intelligence picture and of the criteria and processes to identify and select high risk targets and criminal networks.
- Developing of IT tools that facilitate a reinforced intelligence picture.

Projects must complement, integrate, or support already planned actions, notably those within the EMPACT priority Most Threatening Criminal Networks and Individuals (MTCNI) and the reporting exercises coordinated by Europol.

2. Cross border investigations

Providing law enforcement and judicial authorities with the knowledge, skills and means to carry out more effective cross border investigations into organised crime groups and networks considering evolving criminal *modus operandi* and business models.

This could include:

- Facilitating the exchange of knowledge for law enforcement authorities on analysis of large unstructured data sets and the collection and handling of evidence.
- Promoting and supporting operational initiatives on cross border and joint investigations on high-risk criminal actors and criminal networks active in EU, including in regions with an important presence of organised crime groups.
- Supporting the exchange of information and best practices between law enforcement and/or judicial authorities, including regarding training, sharing of practical guidelines and templates on international investigative tools, analysis papers or guidelines aiming at enhancing investigations and prosecutions in relation to high-risk criminal actors and networks.
- Training on and supporting the use of the investigative tools and information exchange channels, (such as: Information Exchange Directive, automated data exchange under the Prüm framework, SIENA, SIS).
- Facilitating raising awareness, using and handling main EU tools and channels to support actions and investigations on organised crime with the purpose of promoting cross border investigations (e.g. Siena, Prüm, new Information Exchange Directive, Europol High Value Targets/ Operational Task Force, Joint Investigative Teams, Joint Action Days, European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats EMPACT, European Investigative Order, European Arrest Warrant, etc.).

3. Financial investigations

Promoting the use of financial investigations, aimed at enabling a better use of financial intelligence by law enforcement authorities, to enable competent authorities to build the financial profile of criminal networks.

This could include:

- Supporting financial investigations on corporate structures used for money laundering and infiltrating the legitimate economy.
- Facilitating cooperation with the private sector.

- Facilitating the analysis of relevant account and transaction data and its cross-checking against different datasets (open sources and public databases, including police or judicial databases).
- Developing tools for the secure electronic transmission of transaction records to law enforcement authorities.
- Developing virtual currency analysis.
- Increasing knowledge of conducting financial investigations and financial trails in the framework of investigations on high-risk criminal networks.
- Developing tools for supporting investigations on organised crime facilitating gathering financial and asset tracing information.

4. **Crime Prevention**

Supporting projects on improving knowledge, allowing for networking and exchange of experiences among a broad range of stakeholders in all EU Member States on crime prevention at EU level in order to reduce the risk of crimes occurring, including by setting up barriers to prevent criminals from committing crimes.

This could include:

- Facilitating the exchange and further development of knowledge and best practices on **crime prevention** for policymakers and practitioners at national, regional and local level (with specific focus on prevention of organised crime), supporting cooperation among a broad range of relevant stakeholders at national, regional and local level, supporting the practical implementation of evidence-based practices across the EU and advising EU institutions and bodies on aspect of crime prevention, including in particular organised crime.
- Preventing and disrupting criminal infiltration through the use of the **administrative approach**, which enables local authorities to intervene to stop crime from occurring. Projects could aim at facilitating local to local authorities' cooperation with each other and with law enforcement, provide training to local and police authorities, facilitate the mapping of possible activities to build barriers against criminal activities, and promote a culture of prevention and early intervention regarding the infiltration of organised crime in the legal economy.
- Projects aimed at identifying best-practices and implementing targeted prevention activities addressing the growing violence related to organised crime, including drug trafficking, with a particular attention to protecting young people from recruitment into crime, including via digital tools.

5. **Drug related priorities:**

a. Drug production and trafficking

This could include:

- Projects that support the **implementation of actions in the EU Action Plan against drug trafficking to be included in the implementation framework of the EU Drugs Strategy**, such as but not exclusively those focussed on: a) monitoring and controlling international transport routes (air including general aviation, maritime, land) including drones and submersibles; b) civil-military cooperation e.g. on interdiction operations; c) innovation in detecting illicit drugs and psychoactive substances and their precursors in view of new concealment techniques inter alia in postal items and via express services. or to counter the use of transportation modalities; d) multidisciplinary information sharing between customs and (other) law enforcement authorities or between law enforcement/customs and the private sector; e) drug trafficking in and from prisons; f) setting up fusion centres and joint operational mechanisms with key third countries.

- Projects to counter **drug production** in the EU including the use of (imported) precursors and to look into export of illicit drugs and psychoactive substances from the Union.
- Projects supporting the **resilience of the logistic hubs**, including through activities aimed at identifying, disseminating and implementing best practices as well as via operational cooperation between law enforcement, customs authorities and between private entities and public sector authorities, such as the European Ports Alliance – the public-private partnership to fight drug trafficking through ports- , with a view to reinforce the instruments available to prevent, identify and investigate drug trafficking.

b. Preparedness against drug related security threats

This could include:

- Projects to reinforce real time risk assessments, risk awareness and increase swift follow-up actions in view of **anticipating and addressing security threats and prevent health, social and environmental harms** due to the production and availability of illicit drugs and psychoactive substances, in particular new substances.

As regards, these two drugs related priorities, concrete and operational type of projects, that have a direct and positive impact in drug related hotspots, should be prioritised.

Activities and outcomes

Project applications submitted under the present call for proposals should include one or more of the following **activities** (non-exhaustive list):

- a. analytical, monitoring and evaluation activities, including threat, risk and impact assessments, which are evidence-based and consistent with priorities and initiatives identified at Union level. Furthermore, projects monitoring the implementation of Union law and Union policy objectives in the Member States should also be taken into account.
- b. developing measures, tools and methodologies aimed at improving prosecution and criminal judicial proceedings, including the setting-up of networks of specialised prosecutors, for exchanging information and best practices, training to judicial authorities; elaboration of material, such as analysis papers or guidelines, aimed at supporting the work of judicial authorities.
- c. activities promoting networking, public-private partnerships, mutual confidence, understanding and learning, identification and dissemination of best practices and innovative approaches at Union level, training and exchange programmes.
- d. activities supporting the development of methodological, notably statistical, tools and methods and common indicators.
- e. the acquisition, maintenance and/or further upgrading of technical equipment, expertise, secure facilities, infrastructures, related buildings and systems, especially ICT systems and their components at the Union level, including for the purpose of European cooperation on cyber security and cybercrime, notably the European Cybercrime Centre.
- f. prevention and awareness raising activities, including communication campaigns.
- g. particularly innovative activities developing new methods, deploying new technologies with a potential for transferability to other Member States, or transferring and adapting existing tools across Member States, especially projects aiming at testing and validating the outcome of Union funded security research projects.

For actions in relation to and in third countries, the following types of activities are eligible under this call for proposals:

- a. actions improving security cooperation and coordination between law enforcement authorities, other authorities and, where applicable, international

organisations, including joint investigation teams, special investigative units, fusion centres as well as civil-military cooperation and any other form of cross-border joint operation, access to and exchange of information and interoperable technologies.

- b. networking including where applicable the private sector and civil society, mutual confidence, understanding and learning, identification, exchange and dissemination of EU values, fundamental rights and international law in fighting organised crime and drug trafficking, know-how, experience and good practice, information sharing, shared situation awareness and foresight, contingency planning and interoperability.
- c. improving resilience in vulnerable sectors for criminal abuse, technical assistance, exchange, training and education of staff and experts of relevant authorities.
- d. awareness raising, dissemination and communication activities.
- e. threat, risk and impact assessments.

Target groups:

The project applications should ensure they reach the relevant targets, including:

- general public, and/or
- social and educational services, and/or
- law enforcement and other security-oriented authorities, and/or
- private sector and/or
- civil society organisations.

Target countries

- EU Member States.
- non-EU countries: in particular countries of origin and transit of illicit flows towards the EU and countries which are relevant for the fight against criminal networks active in European illicit markets and countries of origin and transit. These include the following regions: Western Balkans, Latin-America and the Caribbean (LAC), West-Africa, Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA), Eastern Partnership and the following countries: United Arab Emirates, Türkiye, Ukraine, United States, China, India, Afghanistan.

Expected impact

Projects should aim to achieve one or more of the following outcomes:

In the short-term, the funding is expected to:

- increase understanding of the nature and modus operandi of criminal networks and key actors and enablers including in vulnerable sectors in society and specific situations such as in prisons.
- increase monitoring of transportation modalities, routes, and online and detection and interdiction of illicit flows such as illicit drugs.
- enhance coordination of law enforcement and other security-oriented authorities in cross-border operations and support multi-stakeholders coordinated responses.
- increase involvement of the private sector and civil society and other relevant (non-law enforcement) stakeholders in preventing and combating organised crime and drug production and trafficking.
- increase the availability and use of innovations and technical tools for law enforcement inter alia for detection objectives such as production sites and concealed illicit goods.

In the long-term, the funding is expected to:

- have increased operational capacity of law enforcement and other security-oriented authorities to fight organised crime and drug production and trafficking,

including an improved capability to trace and untangle complex money laundering schemes as well as illicit flows of goods.

- enhance risk assessments and risk awareness and resilience measures in view of anticipating, preventing and tackling organised crime and drug related crimes.
- have improved cross-border cooperation including with key third countries and information exchange (including where possible and applicable with the private sector) and sharing of challenges and good practices in fighting against organised crime.
- have improved detection, identification and referral of victims of crime in the context of cross-border operational actions, as well as improved protection of victims in criminal proceedings, in cooperation with civil society organisations.

Additional considerations applicable to this call/topic

Project applications including a meaningful participation of civil society organisations and the private sector in the proposed consortium will be considered as particularly relevant.

Proposals should demonstrate a sound methodology with practical implementation measures, notably by providing examples on envisaged activities and the experience the beneficiaries have in implementing these.

Projects should be operational in nature and address major shortcomings or challenges related to the implementation of actions set out in the strategies and action plans mentioned in Section 1.

The European Commission welcomes proposals with broad geographical scope engaging applicants from diverse regions across the EU.

The European Commission welcomes proposals involving applicants from more Member States than the minimum number identified in the eligibility criteria, when relevant for the design of the action.

ISF-2026-TF2-AG-THB — Trafficking in Human Beings

Objectives

The overall objective of the action is to dismantle organised criminal networks engaged in trafficking in human beings (THB) in the EU, including poly criminal networks, by strengthening operational cooperation including with third countries, establishing cooperation and partnership with the private sector in particular with the online platforms, enhancing financial investigations, improving criminal justice effectiveness, and ensuring a robust victim-centred approach throughout the criminal justice chain.

Themes and priorities - Scope - activities and outcomes

- Exploring the links between trafficking in human beings and other forms of serious crime, including migrant smuggling, corruption and drug trafficking.
- Increasing the detection and early identification of victims of trafficking, including in the online environment and improve detection of trafficking for all forms of exploitation, in particular for sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, forced begging and forced criminality, trafficking for the purposes of organ removal and the trafficking and exploitation of children.
- Enhancing cooperation with online platforms, technology providers, financial service providers and other private actors through structured public-private partnerships;
- Intensifying cross-border cooperation between law enforcement authorities and judicial authorities by facilitate joint investigations, coordinated prosecutions,

and the use of EU cooperation instruments and by strengthening information exchange and coordination in complex cross-border THB cases.

- Increasing the systematic use of parallel financial investigations in THB cases and by improving tracing, freezing, confiscation, and recovery of criminal assets;
- Improving overall prosecution and conviction outcomes by enhancing the specialised knowledge of prosecutors and judges regarding the specificities of THB, including evidentiary challenges, and the cross-border access to online evidence.
- Improving the referral of trafficking victims to support services, following operational anti-trafficking actions, including cooperation between law enforcement authorities and victims' support services. Guarantee victim rights and victim protection throughout the criminal proceedings.
- Improving the protection of victims in criminal proceedings.
- Promoting awareness raising, including measures addressing the demand that fosters trafficking in human beings.

Activities and outcomes

Project applications submitted under the present call for proposals should include one or more of the following **activities** (non-exhaustive list):

- a. analytical, monitoring and evaluation activities, including threat, risk and impact assessments, which are evidence-based and consistent with priorities and initiatives identified at Union level. Furthermore, projects monitoring the implementation of Union law and Union policy objectives in the Member States should also be taken into account.
- b. developing measures, tools and methodologies aimed at improving prosecution and criminal judicial proceedings, including the setting-up of networks of specialised prosecutors, for exchanging information and best practices, training to judicial authorities; elaboration of material, such as analysis papers or guidelines, aimed at supporting the work of judicial authorities.
- c. activities promoting networking, public-private partnerships, mutual confidence, understanding and learning, identification and dissemination of best practices and innovative approaches at Union level, training and exchange programmes.
- d. activities supporting the development of methodological, notably statistical, tools and methods and common indicators.
- e. the acquisition, maintenance and/or further upgrading of technical equipment, expertise, secure facilities, infrastructures, related buildings and systems, especially ICT systems and their components at the Union level, including for the purpose of European cooperation to tackle cybercrime, notably the European Cybercrime Centre.
- f. prevention and awareness raising activities, including communication campaigns.
- g. particularly innovative activities developing new methods, deploying new technologies with a potential for transferability to other Member States, or transferring and adapting existing tools across Member States, especially projects aiming at testing and validating the outcome of Union funded security research projects.

For actions in relation to and in third countries, the following types of activities are eligible under this call for proposals:

- a. actions improving police cooperation and coordination between law enforcement authorities and, where applicable, international organisations, including joint investigation teams and any other form of cross-border joint operation, access to and exchange of information and interoperable technologies.
- b. networking, including where applicable the private sector and civil society, mutual confidence, understanding and learning, identification, exchange and dissemination of EU values, fundamental rights, international law, know-how,

- experiences and best practices, information sharing, shared situation awareness and foresight, contingency planning and interoperability.
- c. exchange, training and education of staff and experts of relevant authorities.
- d. awareness raising, dissemination and communication activities.
- e. threat, risk and impact assessments.

Target groups:

The project applications should ensure they reach the relevant targets, including:

- general public,
- social and educational services,
- law enforcement authorities,
- civil society organisations,
- private sector including the online platforms.

Target countries:

- EU Member States.
- non-EU countries: in particular countries of origin and transit of illicit flows towards the EU and countries which are relevant for the fight against criminal networks active in European illicit markets and countries of origin and transit of victims and perpetrators of trafficking in human beings. These include the following regions: Western Balkans, Latin-America and the Caribbean (LAC), West-Africa, Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA), Eastern Partnership and the following countries: United Arab Emirates, Türkiye, Ukraine, Moldova, China, Afghanistan Bangladesh and Pakistan.

Expected impact

Projects should aim to achieve one or more of the following outcomes:

In the short-term, the funding is expected to:

- increase understanding of the nature and modus operandi of criminal networks and key actors and enablers.
- enhance coordination of law enforcement authorities in cross-border operations and support multi-stakeholders coordinated responses.
- increase involvement of civil society and other relevant (non-law enforcement) stakeholders in preventing and combating organised crime.
- increase the availability and use of technical tools for law enforcement.

In the long-term, the funding is expected to:

- have increased operational capacity of law enforcement authorities to fight organised crime, including an improved capability to trace and untangle complex money laundering schemes.
- have improved cross-border cooperation and sharing of challenges and best practices in fighting against organised crime.
- have improved detection, identification and referral of victims of crime in the context of cross-border operational actions, as well as improved protection of victims in criminal proceedings, in cooperation with civil society organisations.

Additional considerations applicable to this call

Project applications including a meaningful participation of civil society organisations and the private sector in the proposed consortium will be considered as particularly relevant.

Proposals should demonstrate a sound methodology with practical implementation measures, notably by providing examples on envisaged activities and the experience the beneficiaries have in implementing these.

Projects should be operational in nature and address major shortcomings or challenges related to the implementation of actions set out in the strategies and action plans mentioned in Section 1.

The European Commission welcomes proposals with broad geographical scope engaging applicants from diverse regions across the EU ideally by involving applicants from more Member States than the minimum number identified in the eligibility criteria, when relevant for the design of the action.

3. Available budget

The available call budget is **EUR 16 550 000**. Specific budget information per topic can be found in the table below.

Topic	Topic budget
1 —Organised crime and drug trafficking	EUR 14 000 000
2 - Trafficking in human beings	EUR 2 550 000

We reserve the right not to award all available funds or to redistribute them between the call topics, depending on the proposals received and the results of the evaluation.

4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
Call opening:	13 May 2026
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>03 September 2026 – 17:00:00 CET</u> <u>(Brussels)</u>
Evaluation:	September – December 2026
Information on evaluation results:	December 2026 ¹⁰
GA signature:	February 2027

5. Admissibility and documents

Proposals must be submitted before the **call deadline** (see *timetable section 4*).

Proposals must be submitted **electronically** via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (accessible via the Topic page in the [Search Funding & Tenders](#) section. Paper submissions are NOT possible.

¹⁰ In the interest of equal treatment of applicants, the Commission cannot provide any information on the outcome of the call for proposals before the official announcement of the results.

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 the project's contribution to EU programme key performance indicators (KPI) (*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 the participants comply with the conditions for receiving EU funding (especially eligibility, financial and operational capacity, exclusion, etc). Before signing the grant, each beneficiary and affiliated entity will have to confirm this again by signing a declaration of honour (DoH). Proposals without full support will be rejected.

Your application must be **readable, accessible and printable**. (please check carefully the layout of the documents uploaded)

Proposals are limited to 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 Denmark¹¹,
- non-EU countries¹² as long as relevant for the call for proposals as defined in the “Scope” section above.

NB: legal entities established in third countries can participate only as part of a consortium composed of at least two independent legal entities, at least one is established in an EU Member State.

Co-beneficiaries and affiliated entities are allowed, public or private, as long as they are established in the EU Member States (except for Denmark) or the third countries or a geographical area/countries of interest as defined in the “Scope” section above.

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 organisations¹³ are eligible. The rules on eligible countries do not apply to them. International organisations can participate as 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 persons¹⁴.

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’¹⁵.  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 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

¹¹ 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.

¹² A non-EU country is a country, which is not an EU Member State.

¹³ The term “international organisations” as defined in Article 159 of the EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#)

¹⁴ See Article 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

¹⁵ For the definitions, see Articles 190(2) and 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards¹⁶.

As regards Georgia recent changes to the legal and regulatory environment affect the implementation of the call and activities supported under it. No projects directly benefitting the Georgian authorities – which include central government, local authorities, agencies and state-owned enterprises – will be allowed. However, if required, regional capacity building events benefitting more than one country involving Georgia can take place at technical level but only outside Georgia. The costs of participation for these public officials and similar persons cannot be covered by the EU grant. Assistance to civil society, independent media and countering disinformation is nevertheless possible. Regarding this, do note that under the revised laws, Georgian participants could face criminal liability if they participate or get their travel/accommodation paid for participation in EU-funded events without pre-authorization by Georgian authorities. Particular caution is therefore required before deciding to invite or fund the participation of Georgian individuals or organisations. A case-by-case risk assessment should be conducted to evaluate whether their participation might be considered to fall under the remit of the law.

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)*¹⁷ and *entities covered by Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#)*¹⁸. 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 2020/2092¹⁹. 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 2021²⁰ 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.

¹⁶ 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).

¹⁷ 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](#).

¹⁸ Commission guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#) on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards (OJEU C 205 of 19.07.2013, pp. 9-11).

¹⁹ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2092 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16/12/2020 on a general regime of conditionality for the protection of the Union budget (OJ L 325, 20.12.2022, p. 94).

²⁰ 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>).



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

Consortium composition

Proposals must be submitted by:

- minimum 2 applicants (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities) from 2 different participating Member States
- the following entities can NOT apply as coordinator:
 - profit making entities
 - international organisations²¹

Eligible activities

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

The following activities are not considered as eligible for funding under this call:

- Research activities

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*)²².

Duration

Projects must have a maximum 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) must range between EUR 1 million and EUR 3 million (EUR 2.55 million for proposals submitted under the Trafficking in human beings topic).

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.

²¹ The term "international organisations" as defined in Article 159 of the EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#);

²² See, for instance, [Guidance on funding for activities related to the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of Union legislation and policy](#).

Applications should pay appropriate attention to the effects of the project on individual rights and freedoms, and indicate the measures taken to limit 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 21 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

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

Security

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](#)²³ 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.]

²³ 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).

Overview table of Eligibility conditions

	Topic 1	Topic 2
Consortium composition — minimum number of		
Entities	2	2
Member States participating in ISF(*)	2	2
Consortium composition — participation of public bodies (**)		
Coordinators	YES	YES
Beneficiaries/affiliated entities	YES	YES
Consortium composition — participation of non-profit-making public entities as		
Coordinators	YES	YES
Beneficiaries/affiliated entities	YES	YES
Consortium composition — participation of non-profit-making private entities as		
Coordinators	YES	YES
Beneficiaries /affiliated entities	YES	YES
Consortium composition — Participation of International Organisations as		
Coordinators	NO	NO
Beneficiaries	YES	YES
Consortium composition — participation of profit making entities as		
Coordinators	NO	NO
Beneficiaries /affiliated entities	YES	YES
Consortium composition — participation of legal entities established in third countries (***)		
Coordinators	NO	NO
Beneficiaries	YES	YES
Duration of projects (in months)		
	24	24
Minimum and Maximum EU Grant amount per project (Requested EU contribution)		
Minimum (EUR)	1 000 000	1 000 000
Maximum (EUR)	3 000 000	2 550 000

(*) The rules on eligible countries do not apply to International organisations. International organisations can participate 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.

(***) As stated in the ISF regulation, legal entities established in third countries can participate only as part of a consortium composed of at least two independent legal entities, at least one of which is established in an EU Member State. However, since this call requires the participation of at least two EU Member States the consortium should be composed of at least three independent legal entities, at least two of which are established in two different EU Member States.

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 participate²⁴:

- 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 misconduct²⁵ (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No [2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making- or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation,

²⁴ See Articles 138 and 143 of EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

²⁵ '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.

decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).

- intentionally and without proper justification resisted²⁶ an investigation, check or audit carried out by an EU authorising officer (or their representative or auditor), OLAF, the EPPO, or the European Court of Auditors.

Applicants will also be refused if it turns out that²⁷:

- 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** (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 (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.*

²⁶ '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.

²⁷ See Article 143 of the EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

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

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

9. Award criteria

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

- **Relevance:** 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 documents and/or action plans and legislative context; previous results in the field; European/trans-national dimension (30 points)
- **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)
- **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 call budget. Other proposals will be rejected.

10. Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements

If you pass evaluation, your project will be invited for grant preparation, where you will be asked to prepare the Grant Agreement together with the EU Project Officer.

This Grant Agreement will set the framework for your grant and its terms and conditions, in particular concerning deliverables, reporting and payments.

The Model Grant Agreement that will be used (and all other relevant templates and guidance documents) can be found on [Portal Reference Documents](#).

Starting date and project duration

The project starting date and duration will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 1*). Normally the starting date will be after grant signature. Retroactive application can be granted exceptionally for duly justified reasons but never earlier than the proposal submission date.

Project duration: 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 of the Regulations.

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.

All projects it is mandatory to provide a mid-term progress report.

Form of grant, funding rate and maximum EU grant amount

The grant parameters (*maximum EU grant amount, funding rate, total eligible costs, etc.*) will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 3 and art 5*).

Maximum EU Grant amount per project (Requested EU contribution) : *see section 6 above*. The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

The grant will be a budget-based mixed actual cost grant (actual costs, with unit cost and flat-rate elements). This means that it will reimburse ONLY certain types of costs (eligible costs) and costs that were *actually* incurred for your project (NOT the *budgeted* costs). For unit costs 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 of Model Grant Agreement*).

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 (*not applicable*)
- E. Indirect costs

Specific cost eligibility conditions for this call:

- personnel costs:
 - SME owner/natural person unit cost²⁸: Yes
 - volunteers unit cost²⁹: Yes (without indirect costs)
- travel and subsistence unit cost³⁰: Yes³¹
- equipment costs: depreciation + full cost for listed equipment
- 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 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 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:

²⁸ Commission [Decision](#) of 20 October 2020 authorising the use of unit costs for the personnel costs of the owners of small and medium-sized enterprises and beneficiaries that are natural persons not receiving a salary for the work carried out by themselves under an action or work programme (C(2020)7715).

²⁹ 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).

³⁰ Commission Decision C(2021)35 amended by Commission [Decision](#) C(2024)5405 Final 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.

³¹ 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 Commission Decision (and its addenda) the actual costs may be used.

1. 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.);
2. comply with (cyber-)security guidance issued by the Commission, in particular communications on the 5G toolbox²⁰;
3. 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;
4. 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**.

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. The Grant Agreement contains additional record-keeping rules (*Data Sheet, point 3 and art 20*).

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. Prefinancing guarantees are formally NOT linked to individual consortium members, which means that you are free to organise how to provide the guarantee amount (*by one or several beneficiaries, for the overall amount or several guarantees*

for partial amounts, by the beneficiary concerned or by another beneficiary, etc). It is however important that the requested amount is covered and that the guarantee(s) 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 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 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).

Questions **received later than 7 calendar days before the deadline** for submitting applications will not be answered. In the interest of equal treatment of applicants, the Commission cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of applicants or actions.

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, and if your project is selected, you will have to provide documents demonstrating their affiliation link

Associated partners — Applicants may participate with associated partners (i.e. partner organisations which participate in the action but without the right to get grant money). They participate without funding and therefore do not need to be validated.

Consortium agreement — For practical and legal reasons it is recommended to set up internal arrangements that allow you to deal with exceptional or unforeseen circumstances (in all cases, even if not mandatory under the Grant Agreement). The consortium agreement also gives you the possibility to redistribute the grant money according to your own consortium-internal principles and parameters (for instance, one beneficiary can reattribute its grant money to another beneficiary). The consortium

agreement thus allows you to customise the EU grant to the needs inside your consortium and can also help to protect you in case of disputes.

Balanced project budget — Grant applications must ensure a balanced project budget and sufficient other resources to implement the project successfully (e.g. own contributions, income generated by the action, financial contributions from third parties, etc). You may be requested to lower your estimated costs, if they are ineligible (including excessive).

No-profit rule — Grants may NOT give a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). This will be checked by us at the end of the project.

No 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 declared to two different EU grants. Projects must be designed as different actions, clearly delineated and separated for each grant (without overlaps).

Completed/ongoing projects — Proposals for projects that have already been completed will be rejected; proposals for projects that have already started will be assessed on a case-by-case basis (in this case, no costs can be reimbursed for activities that took place before the project starting date/proposal submission).

Combination with EU operating grants — Combination with EU operating grants is possible, if the project remains outside the operating grant work programme and you make sure that cost items are clearly separated in your accounting and NOT declared twice (see [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6.2.E](#)).

Multiple proposals — Applicants may submit more than one proposal for different projects under the same call (and be awarded a funding for them). Organisations may participate in several proposals. BUT: if there are several proposals for very similar projects, only one application will be accepted and evaluated; the applicants will be asked to withdraw one of them (or it will be rejected).

Resubmission — Proposals may be changed and re-submitted until the deadline for submission.

Rejection — By submitting the application, all applicants accept the call conditions set out in this 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](#).