



# **Internal Security Fund (ISF)**

## **Call for proposals**

on the fight against corruption  
(ISF-2026-TF2-AG-CORRUPT)

**Call version V1.0**  
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**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR JUSTICE AND CONSUMERS

Directorate H – Horizontal Affairs  
**Unit H.3 – Budget, Programmes and Financial Management**

## **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](#))<sup>1</sup>
- the basic act (ISF Regulation (EU) 2021/1149)<sup>2</sup>.

The call is launched in accordance with the 2025-2027 Thematic Facility Work Programme<sup>3</sup> and will be managed by the **European Commission, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST)**.

The call covers the following **topic: ISF-2026-TF2-AG-CORRUPT – Call for proposals on the fight against corruption**.

Each project application under the call must address this 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*).

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<sup>1</sup> 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).

<sup>2</sup> [Regulation \(EU\) 2021/1149 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2021 establishing the Internal Security Fund](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Commission Implementing Decision C\(2025\) 8142 final of 2 December 2025](#) on the financing of components of the Thematic Facility under the Internal Security Fund and the revision of the Work Programme for 2025, 2026 and 2027 [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/a11c8a5c-17d1-4ceb-90c4-5001a8457b6b\\_en?filename=ISF\\_Eight\\_revised\\_2023-2027\\_Work\\_Programme\\_substantial\).pdf](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/a11c8a5c-17d1-4ceb-90c4-5001a8457b6b_en?filename=ISF_Eight_revised_2023-2027_Work_Programme_substantial).pdf)

## 1. Background

Corruption erodes trust in public institutions, damages the delivery of public services and creates a sense of unfairness and mistrust. It is often linked to other crimes, notably money laundering, with illicit gains being concealed through laundering schemes. Fighting corruption effectively relies on a comprehensive approach combining preventive and repressive measures within a robust legal and institutional framework, supported by effective investigations and prosecutions. Preventive measures and awareness-raising campaigns are needed to foster integrity, transparency and accountability and minimise the space for corruption.

This call will contribute to the implementation of the **EU Directive on combating corruption which is expected to be published in the Official Journal in Q2 2026**. The Directive sets EU-wide standards so that a number of acts of corruption are criminalised and defined in the same manner in all Member States. These offences include bribery in the public and private sectors, misappropriation, trading in influence, obstruction of justice, enrichment from corruption offences, concealment and certain serious violations linked to the unlawful exercise of public functions. In addition to aligning definitions of corruption offences, Member States must also ensure effective and proportionate penalties, with maximum terms of imprisonment ranging from at least three to at least five years depending on the offence. To reduce corruption offences and limit corruption risks, Member States are also required to raise public awareness of the harmful effects of corruption and to strengthen transparency and accountability in public administrations.

In the context of the **2025 State of the Union Address**, President von der Leyen announced that the Commission will present a comprehensive **EU Anti-Corruption Strategy in 2026**. This strategy will build on the work already undertaken, in particular the **Anti-Corruption Package** and the **Joint Communication adopted in May 2023**, including the **EU Directive on combating corruption**. The strategy will translate the political commitment and vision into concrete actions aimed at strengthening democracy, the rule of law and the fight against corruption. It will be developed in consultation with national authorities and relevant stakeholders.

On 12 November 2025, the Commission presented the **European Democracy Shield**, setting out a series of measures to empower, protect and promote strong and resilient democracies across the EU. An open civic space is at the core of democratic societies. In this context, the Commission has also put forward an **EU Strategy for Civil Society** to strengthen engagement, protection and support for civil society organisations that play essential roles in democratic life. Through the European Democracy Shield, the Commission will also step up efforts to combat foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI), including by reinforcing capabilities in EU Representations and Delegations abroad and by strengthening international partnerships.

On 12 November 2023, the Commission adopted the proposal<sup>4</sup>, which aims to contribute to the proper functioning of the internal market for activities conducted with the objective of influencing the development, formulation or implementation of policy, legislation or public decision-making processes in the Union ("**interest representation activities**") carried out on behalf of third countries. The proposal establishes harmonised rules to ensure a high level of transparency of such activities when carried out within the internal market. Increased transparency will allow citizens, public decision-makers and other stakeholders to better understand which third countries request the provision of interest representation activities.

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<sup>4</sup> COM(2023) 637 final Proposal for a DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL establishing harmonised requirements in the internal market on transparency of interest representation carried out on behalf of third countries and amending Directive (EU) 2019/1937

According to the **EU Drugs Strategy<sup>5</sup> and the related Action Plan<sup>6</sup>**, corruption fuels every stage of the drug trafficking cycle, undermining the licit economy and often going hand in hand with intimidation and violence. Tackling corruption therefore remains a key priority for dismantling organised crime and drug trafficking networks.

The EU Ports Strategy<sup>7</sup> is a comprehensive framework to step up the competitiveness, resilience, security and sustainability of Europe's ports. It brings together existing and new initiatives, simplified procedures, provides guidance on implementing current legislation and offers recommendations to Member States and stakeholders. According to the Europol **Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment (SOCTA) 2025**, corruption is embedded in the very DNA of organised crime and acts as a key enabler and catalyst for criminal activities. It enables criminals to evade law enforcement, gain economic or political influence, facilitate criminal operations and weaken trust in public authorities and institutions. While grounded in well-known mechanisms, corruption has adapted to broader trends such as digitalisation and the development of crime-as-a-service models. Increasingly visible trends include the targeting of individuals with access to digital systems in public and private entities, the use of digital recruitment tactics and the growing role of corruption brokers.

The **EU Network Against Corruption**, established in 2023, brings together relevant stakeholders in the field of anti-corruption in the EU, including law enforcement authorities, public administrations, practitioners and civil society organisations. The network aims to facilitate the exchange of good practices and strengthen cooperation in relation to both the prevention and repression of corruption.

The Commission is also strengthening the role of the European Union in the international fight against corruption by actively participating in international fora. In this context, the Commission collaborates closely with international organisations that play a key role in shaping anti-corruption policies, including the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the Council of Europe Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), the G20, the OECD and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

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

### Objectives

In line with the European Commission's policies, as set-out above, the objective of this call is to prevent and combat corruption, by supporting actions addressing both its prevention and repression.

### Themes and priorities

Project applications submitted under the present call for proposals must address at least one of the following priorities:

#### **1. Strengthening cross-border and EU-level responses to corruption including the implementation of EU anti-corruption recommendations**

Supporting coordinated, cross-border and EU-level actions to detect, investigate and address corruption, in particular where it is linked to organised crime and

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<sup>5</sup> COM(2025) 743 final COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL on the EU Drugs Strategy

<sup>6</sup> COM(2025) 744 final COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL on the EU Action Plan against drug trafficking

<sup>7</sup> COM(2026) 112 final COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS EU Ports Strategy

affects the security of the Union, its citizens and businesses, including through the implementation of recommendations addressed to Member States in the Rule of Law Reports and the European Semester.

**2. Enhancing prevention, detection, and enforcement capacities**

Supporting the work of Member States' competent authorities and other relevant stakeholders in preventing, detecting, investigating and sanctioning corruption.

**3. Promoting integrity and institutional resilience**

Fostering a culture of integrity and strengthening the resilience of democratic institutions against corruption.

*Scope - activities and outcomes*

Project applications submitted under the present call for proposals should provide for activities supporting the prevention of, and the fight against corruption, in line with the objectives described above, including one or more of the following activities (non-exhaustive list):

- Activities supporting the implementation of anti-corruption recommendations addressed to Member States in the annual Rule of Law reports or in the European Semester; such as developing implementation roadmaps, monitoring tools, or coordination mechanisms between competent authorities;
- Activities improving integrity and anti-corruption in national authorities including through capacity building and trainings, as well as the development of relevant frameworks, tools or practices;
- Activities promoting evidence-based policy making in the field of anti-corruption including through data collection, analysis and the development of relevant methodologies or indicators;
- Activities identifying corruption risks and challenges in the private sector and public sector, including through risk assessments and the measures to mitigate these risks;
- Activities reducing corruption in areas with a high risk of corruption, such as targeted measures addressing vulnerabilities;
- Activities supporting civil society, journalists and citizens to expose and report corruption such as the development or improvement of reporting mechanisms and cooperation framework;
- Activities strengthening democratic frameworks by supporting transparency in democratic decision-making as well as prevention and combating of corruption in democratic processes;
- Activities strengthening key actors developing a culture of integrity, including independent media outlets, and review mechanisms within the state structure and civil society associations, including through awareness-raising and capacity building measures;
- Activities supporting the inclusion and progress of anti-corruption, ethics and integrity education at all educational levels;

- Activities addressing corruption as an enabler of organised crime and as a means to infiltrate the licit economy and the society, including through analytical, preventive or cooperative approaches;
- Activities addressing the structural and/or operational obstacles in the detection, investigation, prosecution and adjudication and sanctioning of corruption, in particular high-level corruption, including through the development of appropriate tools, methodologies or cooperation mechanisms.

Projects must be aiming to achieve one or more of the **following outcomes**:

- Strengthened structural and/or operational approach in the prevention of corruption in the public and private sector;
- Increased implementation of anti-corruption recommendations to Member States highlighted in the annual Rule of Law reports and in the European Semester, as well as the objectives of the Directive on combating corruption.
- Improved data collection and risk management tools that enable mitigation or oversight in areas with high corruption risks;
- Increased understanding of the challenges and good practices in the areas mentioned as priorities, including emerging forms of corruption and new methods used by criminals and criminal networks, and/or risks of infiltration of organised crime through corruption into MS economies, politics and societies at large;
- Development of practical tools supporting the prevention, investigation or prosecution of corruption and measuring the impact of corruption and anti-corruption measures;
- Improved operational solutions in the detection, investigation, prosecution and adjudication and sanctioning of corruption, in particular high-level corruption;
- Improved cooperation between all relevant stakeholders, including government authorities, law enforcement, judiciary, civil society and journalists.

### **Target groups**

This call should ensure they reach the relevant targets involved in the prevention of and fight against corruption, including:

- Civil society, journalists and academics;
- Private sector (e.g. SMEs, large companies and non-profit organisations);
- National authorities, in particular:
  - Specialised anti-corruption authorities both as regards prevention and/or repression of corruption: anti-corruption coordination body, specialised anti-corruption law enforcement or prosecution, audit institutions, tax and competition authorities, FIUs, financial institutions, etc.;
  - Authorities with competences in the field such as ministries;
  - Authorities operating in or linked to areas of high risk of corruption (healthcare, construction, public procurement, etc.).
- Authorities at European level, in particular Europol, Eurojust, EPPO and OLAF.

## **Target countries**

- EU Member States.
- The following non-EU countries (i.e. candidates and potential candidates for EU membership, except Turkey): Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Ukraine.

## **Expected impact**

Projects should aim to achieve one or more of the following impacts.

### **In the short term, the funding is expected to:**

- Increase understanding and dissemination of challenges, risks and good practices in the priority areas identified under this call;
- Enhance communication, coordination and operational cooperation between authorities responsible for the prevention, detection and repression of corruption;
- Improve the availability and use of data, methodologies and tools for measuring corruption risks, trends and the impact of anti-corruption measures. Where applicable, proposals should demonstrate how they build on relevant previous or ongoing EU-funded projects and existing corruption measurement frameworks.

### **In the long term, the funding is expected to:**

- Improve the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of corruption across the EU;
- Contribute to the implementation of EU anti-corruption policy priorities, including recommendations addressed to Member States in the Rule of Law Reports and the European Semester, as well as the objectives of the Directive on combating corruption;
- Reduce the role of corruption as an enabler of organised crime and criminal infiltration into the licit economy;
- Foster a culture of integrity, transparency and accountability across public and private sectors in the EU.

## **Additional considerations applicable to this call/topic**

Projects applications including both national authorities, civil society and/or research institutions as co-applicants in the proposed consortium will be considered as particularly relevant.

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

Projects that do not focus on the priorities covered by this call will be assessed as non-relevant but can still be eligible, if they address an evidence-based, currently topical corruption issue of significant relevance to the EU.

The European Commission manages the "EU Network Against Corruption" which brings together all types of stakeholders. The creation of any networks or groupings of various

actors is thus not encouraged under this call for proposals. However, applicants are welcome to link their activities to those of the EU Network Against Corruption.

Projects are expected to demonstrate concrete links with priorities in these areas. They should bring an added value to the EU as a whole and not only focus on one specific Member State. Projects should involve a suitable number of EU Member States and ensure alignment of objectives and outcomes. Projects can be implemented at local, regional or national level and should support the work carried out by Member States' competent authorities and/or stakeholders.

Applicants should ensure that results of the projects are accurately and effectively disseminated and sustainable for the achievement of the objectives of the action. Projects should include a clear, targeted and accurate dissemination strategy, sustainable and with results that can guarantee a long-term impact on the target groups and/or general public.

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 included in Annex VIII, regulation 2021/1149, in particular as regards the Specific Objectives in Article 3.

Any action under this call for proposals shall respect and shall be implemented in line with the rights and principles enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Applications should pay appropriate attention to the effects of the project on individual rights and freedoms, as well as to possible remedies. In addition, any action under this call for proposals should comply with all relevant ethical principles and all applicable international, EU and national law on ethical issues while carrying out the project.

### 3. Available budget

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

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

### 4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
Call opening:	28 May 2026
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>24 September 2026 – 17:00:00 CET (Brussels)</u>
Evaluation:	October 2026-March 2027
Information on evaluation results:	March-April 2027 <sup>8</sup>
Grant Agreement signature:	May/June 2027

<sup>8</sup> 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.

## 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.

Proposals (including annexes and supporting documents) must be submitted using the forms provided *inside* the Submission System (⚠ NOT the documents available on the Topic page — they are only for information).

Proposals must be **complete** and contain all the requested information and all required annexes and supporting documents:


- Application Form Part A — contains administrative information about the participants (future coordinator, beneficiaries and affiliated entities) and the summarised budget for the project (*to be filled in directly online*)
- Application Form Part B — contains the technical description of the project (*template to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, assembled and re-uploaded*)
- Application Form Part C — contains additional project data and the project's contribution to EU programme key performance indicators (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 all participants comply with the conditions for receiving EU funding (especially eligibility, financial and operational capacity, exclusion, etc). Before signing the grant, each beneficiary and affiliated entity will have to confirm this again by signing a declaration of honour (DoH). Proposals without full support will be rejected.

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

Proposals are limited to maximum **50 pages** (Part B without annexes). Evaluators will not consider any additional pages.

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

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

## 6. Eligibility

### Eligible participants (eligible countries)

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

- be legal entities:
  - public bodies or, by the competent authority's mandate, a public or non-public implementing agency or body of a Member State participating in the ISF
  - non-profit-making public/private entities
  - profit-making entities
  - International organisations
- be established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:
  - EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs)), excluding Denmark<sup>9</sup>
  - non-EU countries<sup>10</sup>:

legal entities established in the following third countries can participate only as part of a consortium composed of at least 2 independent legal entities, at least 1 of which is established in an eligible EU Member State: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Ukraine.

Beneficiaries and affiliated entities must register in the [Participant Register](#) — before submitting the proposal — and will have to be validated by the Central Validation Service (REA Validation). For the validation, they will be requested to upload documents showing legal status and origin.

Other entities may participate in other consortium roles, such as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions, etc (*see section 13*).

### *Specific cases and definitions*

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

**International organisations** — International organisations<sup>11</sup> 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

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<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> A non-EU country is a country, which is not an EU Member State.

<sup>11</sup> The term "international organisations" is used as defined in Article 159 of the EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#)

offer guarantees for the protection of the EU financial interests equivalent to that offered by legal persons<sup>12</sup>.

**EU bodies** — EU bodies cannot be part of the consortium.

**Associations and interest groupings** — Entities composed of members may participate as 'sole beneficiaries' or 'beneficiaries without legal personality'<sup>13</sup>. ⚠️ Please note that if the action will be implemented by the members, they should also participate (either as beneficiaries or as affiliated entities, otherwise their costs will NOT be eligible).

**Countries currently negotiating association agreements** — Beneficiaries from countries with ongoing negotiations 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).

**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)<sup>14</sup> and entities covered by Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#)<sup>15</sup>*. Such entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity, including as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any).

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 2021<sup>16</sup> or any entity they maintain.

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

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

### [Consortium composition](#)

Proposals must be submitted by minimum 2 applicants (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities) from 2 different eligible countries

<sup>12</sup> See Article 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

<sup>13</sup> For the definitions, see Articles 190(2) and 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

<sup>14</sup> Please note that the EU Official Journal contains the official list and, in case of conflict, its content prevails over that of the [EU Sanctions Map](#).

<sup>15</sup> Commission guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#) on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards (OJEU C 205 of 19.07.2013, pp. 9-11).

<sup>16</sup> 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>).

- the following entities canNOT apply as coordinator:
  - international organisations irrespective of their country of establishment;
  - entities established in non-EU countries

### Eligible activities

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

Financial support to third parties is not allowed

### Other important considerations

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

Projects must 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*)<sup>17</sup>.

### Duration

Projects must have a duration of 24 months.

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

### Maximum EU Grant amount

Requested EU contribution to the project's budget ("maximum EU grant amount" per project) must range between EUR 600 000 and EUR 2 000 000.

The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

### Ethics

Projects must comply with:

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

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

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<sup>17</sup> See, for instance, [Guidance on funding for activities related to the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of Union legislation and policy](#).

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](#)<sup>18</sup> 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.

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<sup>18</sup> 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

<b>Consortium composition – minimum number of</b>	
Entities	2
Member States participating in ISF (*)	1
<b>Consortium composition – participation of public bodies (**) is always eligible as coordinator or beneficiary</b>	
<b>Consortium composition – participation of non-profit-making public entities as</b>	
Coordinators	Yes
Beneficiaries/affiliated entities	Yes
<b>Consortium composition – participation of non-profit-making private entities as</b>	
Coordinators	Yes
Beneficiaries /affiliated entities	Yes
<b>Consortium composition – Participation of International Organisations as</b>	
Coordinators	No
Beneficiaries	Yes
<b>Consortium composition – participation of profitmaking entities as</b>	
Coordinators	Yes
Beneficiaries /affiliated entities	Yes/No
<b>Consortium composition – participation of legal entities established in third countries [(***)]</b>	
Coordinators	No
Beneficiaries	Yes (limited to EU candidate countries and potential candidates, except Turkiye)
<b>[Maximum] Duration of projects (in months)</b>	
	24
<b>[Minimum and] [Maximum] EU Grant amount per project (Requested EU contribution)</b>	
Minimum (EUR)	600 000
Maximum (EUR)	2 000 000

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

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

(\*\*\*) [legal entities established in third countries can participate only as part of a consortium composed of at least 2 independent legal entities, at least 1 of which is established in an EU Member State

## 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 participate<sup>19</sup>:

- bankruptcy, winding up, affairs administered by the courts, arrangement with creditors, suspended business activities or other similar procedures (including procedures for persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- in breach of social security or tax obligations (including if done by persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- guilty of grave professional misconduct<sup>20</sup> (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No [2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation,

<sup>19</sup> See Articles 138 and 143 of EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

<sup>20</sup> '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)

- created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).
- intentionally and without proper justification resisted<sup>21</sup> 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 that<sup>22</sup>:

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

## 8. Evaluation and award procedure

The proposals will have to follow a **two-step evaluation procedure**.

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

An **evaluation committee** will assess all applications. Proposals will first be checked for formal requirements (admissibility, and eligibility, *see sections 5 and 6*). Proposals found admissible and eligible will be evaluated (for each topic) against the operational capacity and award criteria (*see sections 7 and 9*) and then ranked according to their scores.

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

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

- 1) The *ex aequo* proposals within the same topic will be prioritised according to the scores they have been awarded for the award criterion 'Relevance'. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on their scores for the criterion 'Impact'. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on their scores for the criterion 'Quality'.
- 2) If this does not allow to determine the priority, a further prioritisation can be done by considering the overall project portfolio and the creation of positive synergies between projects, or other factors related to the objectives of the call..
- 3) After that, the remainder of the available call budget will be used to fund projects across the different topics in order to ensure a balanced spread of the


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<sup>21</sup> '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.

<sup>22</sup> See Article 143 of the EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

geographical and thematic coverage and while respecting to the maximum possible extent the order of merit based on the evaluation of the award criteria.

All proposals will be informed about the evaluation result (**evaluation result letter**). Successful proposals will be invited for grant preparation; the other ones will be put on the reserve list or rejected.

 **No commitment for funding** — Invitation to grant preparation does NOT constitute a formal commitment for funding. We will still need to make various legal checks before grant award: *legal entity validation, financial capacity, exclusion check, etc.*

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

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
<b>Overall (pass) scores</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>

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.

The following deliverables will be mandatory for all projects:

- A mid-term progress report
- A final project 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 cost<sup>23</sup>: Yes
  - volunteers unit cost<sup>24</sup>: Yes (without indirect costs)
- travel and subsistence unit cost<sup>25</sup>: Yes<sup>26</sup>
- equipment costs: depreciation + full cost for listed equipment

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<sup>23</sup> 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).

<sup>24</sup> Commission [Decision](#) of 10 April 2019 authorising the use of unit costs for declaring personnel costs for the work carried out by volunteers under an action or a work programme (C(2019)2646).

<sup>25</sup> 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.

<sup>26</sup> 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.

- other cost categories:
  - costs for financial support to third parties: not allowed; maximum amount per third party EUR 60 000, unless a higher amount is required because the objective of the action would otherwise be impossible or overly difficult to achieve and this is duly justified in the Application Form
  - 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](#).
- 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:
  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 toolbox<sup>20</sup>;
  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.

### 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

n/a

#### Non-compliance and breach of contract

The Grant Agreement (chapter 5) provides for the measures we may take in case of breach of contract (and other non-compliance issues).



For more information, see [AGA – Annotated Grant Agreement](#).

### **11. How to submit an application**

All proposals must be submitted directly online via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System. Paper applications are NOT accepted.

Submission is a **2-step process**:

#### **a) create a user account and register your organisation**

To use the Submission System (the only way to apply), all participants need to [create an EU Login user account](#).

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

#### **b) submit the proposal**

Access the Electronic Submission System via the Topic page in the [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.

### Use of Artificial Intelligence

When considering the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools for the preparation of the proposal, it is imperative to exercise caution and careful consideration. The AI-generated content should be thoroughly reviewed and validated by the applicants to ensure its appropriateness and accuracy, as well as its compliance with intellectual property regulations. Applicants are fully responsible for the content of the proposal (even those parts produced by the AI tool) and must be transparent in disclosing which AI tools were used and how they were utilised.

Specifically, applicants are required to:

- Verify the accuracy, validity, and appropriateness of the content and any citations generated by the AI tool and correct any errors or inconsistencies.
- Provide a list of sources used to generate content and citations, including those generated by the AI tool. Double-check citations to ensure they are accurate and properly referenced.
- Be conscious of the potential for plagiarism where the AI tool may have reproduced substantial text from other sources. Check the original sources to be sure you are not plagiarizing someone else's work.
- Be respectful of personal data and confidential information by not entering these on AI platforms that are not managed on proprietary servers.

- Acknowledge the limitations of the AI tool in the proposal preparation, including the potential for bias, errors, and gaps in knowledge.

## 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
- [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 Call and Topic pages regularly, since we will use them 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: [JUST-ISF-ANTICORRUPTION-CALL-1@ec.europa.eu](mailto:JUST-ISF-ANTICORRUPTION-CALL-1@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 Call and Topic pages regularly.** We will use them 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](#).