



Pilot Project

**Media representation and inclusion for
refugees and migrants**

CNECT/2022/8240201

Call for proposals



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology
Directorate Media Policy
Media Convergence and Social Media

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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0. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for EU **action grants** in the field of "Communications Networks, Content and Technology" under the work programme for 2022.

The regulatory framework for this EU Funding Programme is set out in Regulation [2018/1046](#) ([EU Financial Regulation](#)) Pilot project within the meaning of Article 58(2)(a).

The call is launched in accordance with the 2022 Work Programme¹ and will be managed by the **European Commission, Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology (DG CONNECT)**.

The call covers the following **action: Media representation and inclusion for refugees and migrants**

We invite you to read the **call documentation** carefully, and in particular this Call Document, the Model Grant Agreement and all other published annexes, as well as the [EU Grants AGA – Annotated Grant Agreement](#).

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

- the [Call Document](#) outlines the:
 - background, objectives, scope, activities that can be funded and the expected results (sections 1 and 2)
 - available budget, timetable and duration (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 Agreement(s) (section 10)
 - how to submit an application (section 11)
- 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 Commission Decision C/2022/1052 adopted on 25/02/2022 on the financing of pilot projects and preparatory actions in the field of "Communications Networks, Content and Technology" and the adoption of the work programme for 2022.

1. Background

Media (re)presentation and visibility of vulnerable groups like migrants and refugees remains marginal in the mainstream social media across Europe and with a special consideration of the Ukraine situation. The objective remains to identify ways to promote inclusive social media in Europe, and to help these groups creating their own narratives about the place and role of the refugees and migrants in European societies and communities.

This 2nd call gives a particular emphasis to social media representation in various social networks as well as in other relevant channels (e.g. infotainment, gaming etc.). It is a direct follow-up of an ongoing project from a previous call (Re:framing Migrants in the European Media²), which does research on media representation of migrants and refugees, supports a community of inclusive media practices by offering online and offline opportunities for training, knowledge sharing, networking and publishing stories, built a digital platform to facilitate a community of practice, and provides the opportunity for twenty 'tandems' producing 100 media works between media practitioners, migrants and artists.

The objective is to improve visibility of migrants in social media and other relevant channels such as infotainment, online arts/performance and gaming³, to build on the results from the ongoing project (including the web platform activities), and to take it further to promote inclusive social media in Europe. It targets to change current media narratives, to help these groups create their own narratives. In this context, artistic minds with their creative and inclusive thinking, and potentially with a migrant background, should be part of the project.

The project will develop further avenues for assuring an appropriate social media representation of refugees and migrants, how to empower them using current and future platforms/tools, foster their digital literacy, and elaborate on the challenges and possibilities provided by emerging digital technologies, for example VR, XR, virtual worlds and AI. As disinformation is an important aspect, one objective is to analyse and to develop ways to deal with it. In this regard, synergies with the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO⁴) and three new Horizon Europe projects on 'AI Against Disinformation'⁵ can be envisaged. The project may also take into consideration the aims and aspirations of the Media and Audiovisual Action Plan⁶, the European Democracy Action Plan⁷ and the Integration and Inclusion action plan⁸.

² <https://reframingmigrants.eu/>

³ This refers to game elements or newly distributed games diffusing false and biased narratives about migration.

⁴ <https://edmo.eu/>

⁵ Horizon Europe projects 'AI4Trust', 'Vera.AI', 'Titan' (websites under construction)

⁶ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/media-and-audiovisual-action-plan>

⁷ https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy/european-democracy-action-plan_en

⁸ https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/legal-migration-and-integration/integration/action-plan-integration-and-inclusion_en

2. Objectives – Activities that can be funded – Expected impact

Objectives

The pilot project will work on two objectives:

- 1) Leverage on the results of the ongoing project 'Re:framing Migrants in the European Media' on a) planning strategies to address the power asymmetries that characterise the social media information space and b) designing strategies and actions to amplify those voices that are now excluded from the debate.
- 2) Identify and test solutions – showcasing and implementing practical examples – on how migrants can actively participate in shaping their image – and the narratives about them - in social media, infotainment, online performance and gaming channels including immersive media interfaces, including through collaboration with artists.

Activities that can be funded

The following activities should be part of the expected actions of the project:

- Construct relevant and positive online narratives on migration, in collaboration with artists (potentially with a migrant background), influencers, infotainment specialists, game developers, journalists, digital media entrepreneurs and migrants themselves.
- Develop new or modify collaborative practices, peer learning and professional training for migrants, based on recent digital technologies such as AR, VR and AI to improve their coverage in social media and other relevant channels such as infotainment, online performance and gaming.
- Create or extend an existing multidisciplinary community to support migrants' own communication capacity and increase an existing or initiate a sustainable social media ecosystem around the topic.
- Maintain or integrate and enrich the existing web platform from the project 'Re:framing Migrants in the European Media'.

Expected impact

The expected impact of this pilot is concrete collaborations around social media & networks to address the societal challenges relating to migration. These outcomes will include innovative and inclusive artistic participation and real-world experiments that could be first steps to novel solutions on societal or business level, towards a sustainable media representation of migrants. The project will also provide an example of how such concrete artistic and collaborative creations can find their way to an impactful media coverage, including mainstream media.

The project aims to pave the way to integrate trustworthy and meaningful information sharing on migrants into the social media mainstream. The project will thus also produce a mapping of existing good practices (policies, legal basis, instruments, programmes, tools, etc.) related to inclusive social media. New collaborative practices, peer learning and professional training should be planned and offered for newcomers-refugees and migrants to foster their critical social media and internet approaches, knowledge, skills and consumption, in order to enable a change in the way news are created and spread. The extension of a community of knowledge across all EU Member States can evolve through involvement of citizens, local, national and European policymakers, media (public, national and international), migrants, as well as professional and civic platforms and stakeholders engaged in the topic.

3. Available budget

The available call budget is **EUR 490.500**. The EU co-financing is limited to a *maximum of 75% of the total eligible costs*. (see also chapter 10)

Project budget

We expect to fund **1 project** for a maximum grant amount of EUR 490.500. This does not preclude the submission/selection of a proposal requesting a lower amount.

We reserve the right not to award all available funds depending on the proposals received and the results of the evaluation. The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

4. Timetable and deadlines

Indicative timetable and deadline for submission	
Call opening:	January 2023
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>15 March 2023</u>
Evaluation:	April-May 2023
Information on evaluation results:	May-June 2023
GA signature:	Q2-2023
Start date of the project	At earliest 1 July 2023

Duration of project

Project duration should normally range between 15 and 18 months (extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment).

5. Admissibility and documents

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

The mandatory Grant Application Form and other mandatory template documents to be completed are available at <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news-redirect/771999>.

Regarding the submission modality, we refer to section 11.

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) as well as information about the operational capacity of the applicants

- **Application Form Part B** – contains the technical description of the project
- **Mandatory annexes and supporting documents** (*to be submitted together with the application*):
 - Grant Application Form (Part A and Part B) and its annexes:
 - Detailed estimated budget table (Annex 2 to CMGA)
 - Legal entity form⁹ (for all applicants)
 - Bank account form¹⁰ (only for the coordinator)
 - Financial Capacity Check table and Balance Sheet and Profit & Loss supporting documents (please refer to section 7)
 - CVs (standard) of core project team
 - **Additional annexes and supporting documents** (*for information of the applicants and/or to be submitted at a later stage in the procedure*):
 - Model Declaration of honour
 - Model grant agreement and its annex 5-specific rules

Templates are available at <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news-redirect/771999>. You are obliged to use all provided templates to prepare your proposal.

Please note that the amounts entered into the tab “consolidated budget” of the Estimated Budget (Annex 2 to CMGA) table must correspond to the amounts calculated in the tabs of the detailed budget per applicant/affiliated entity. In case of discrepancies, the amounts in the consolidated budget table will prevail.

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)¹¹. Before signing the grant, each beneficiary and affiliated entity will have to confirm this again by signing a declaration of honour (**DoH**¹²). Proposals without full support will be rejected.

Proposals are limited to maximum **30 pages** (Part B). Evaluators will not consider any additional pages. Shorter proposals are welcome.

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

⁹ Template in all EU languages for Legal Entity Form available at: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm

Template in all EU languages for the BAF available at: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/financial_id/financial-id_en.cfm

¹¹ See declaration in Grant Application Form - part A

¹² See Article 196.1 (b) and 137(1) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2018/1046/oj)

6. Eligibility

Eligible participants (eligible countries)

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

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

Proposals may be submitted by any of the following applicants or combinations of:

- profit-making and non-profit organisation (private or public);
- public authorities (national, regional, local)
- universities and educational institutions;
- foundations and European organisations;
- media companies;
- research/technology and art centres;

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

Natural persons — Natural persons are NOT eligible.

International organisations — International organisations are not eligible.

Entities without legal personality — Entities which do not have legal personality under their national law may exceptionally participate, provided that their representatives have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf, and offer guarantees for the protection of the EU financial interests equivalent to that offered by legal persons¹³.

EU bodies — EU bodies (with the exception of the European Commission Joint Research Centre) can NOT be part of the consortium.

Affiliated entities¹⁴

Legal entities having a legal or capital link with applicants, which is neither limited to the action nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation, may take part in the action as affiliated entities, and may declare eligible costs as specified in section

¹³ See Article 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

¹⁴ In accordance with Article 187 FR, entities **that satisfy the eligibility criteria** and that do not fall within one of the situations referred to in Articles 136(1) and 141(1) FR and that have a link with the applicant, in particular a legal or capital link, which is neither limited to the action nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation, will be considered as entities affiliated to the applicant.

10. For that purpose, applicants shall identify such affiliated entities in the application form –Part A.

Associations and interest groupings — Entities composed of members may participate as 'sole beneficiary'¹⁵ or 'beneficiaries without legal personality'¹⁶. ⚠️ Please note that if the action will be implemented by the members, they should also participate as beneficiaries or as affiliated entities, otherwise their costs will NOT be eligible.

EU restrictive measures — Special rules apply for certain entities (e.g. 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, third parties giving in-kind contributions (for free), subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any).

Consortium composition

Proposals must be submitted **by a consortium** consisting of at least five applicants/beneficiaries (affiliated entities do not count for the minimum number of applicants) which complies with the following conditions:

Minimum five independent entities from **four** different eligible countries.

Eligible activities

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

If applicable, 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*).

Financial support to third parties is NOT allowed.

Geographic location (target countries)

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

Ethics

Projects must comply with:

- highest ethical standards and
- applicable EU, international and national law.

¹⁵ See Article 187.1 (a) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#)

¹⁶ For the definitions, see Articles 187(2) and 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

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).

Security

No specific rules. Please refer to the general provisions in the MGA (Art. 13).

7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion

Financial capacity¹⁹

Applicants must have **stable and sufficient resources** to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share. Organisations participating in several projects must have sufficient capacity to implement all these projects.

The financial capacity check will be carried out on the basis of the documents you will be requested to submit together with your application *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, except for single applicant or coordinator.

In the event of an application grouping several applicants (consortium), **the below thresholds apply to each applicant.**

In the case of legal entities forming **one** applicant (the "sole applicant" or "sole beneficiary"), as specified in section 6, the below requirements apply to each one of those entities.

The financial capacity of the applicants or "sole applicant/beneficiary" or the coordinator will always be assessed based on documents to be provided under point 7.b).

The individual applicants' financial capacity will be assessed based on the following supporting documents to be submitted with the application:

- a) Low value grants (\leq EUR 60 000):
 - a declaration on their honour²⁰
- b) Grants > EUR 60 000:
 - a declaration on their honour²¹

AND

¹⁹ See Articles 196(1) (c)(d) and 198(2), (4) and (5) of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#)

²⁰ To be declared via the coordinator at proposal submission stage, and to be confirmed via the signed DoH at grant signature stage. Please refer to section 5.

²¹ See above footnote.

- the profit and loss account as well as the balance sheet for the last 2 (two) financial years for which the accounts were closed;
- for newly created entities: the business plan might replace the above documents;
- the Financial Capacity check table provided for in Annex to the application form, filled in with the relevant statutory accounting figures mentioned above.

On the basis of an analysis of the documents submitted, if we consider that the financial capacity of an applicant is **weak or insufficient**, we may:

- request further information;
- impose 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*);
- decide to give pre-financing paid in instalments;
- request (one or more) pre-financing guarantees (*see below, section 10*);
- propose no pre-financing or reduce the pre-financing;
- decide to reject the participation of the applicant in the proposal and request reallocation of the tasks to another applicant of the consortium or his replacement without compromising the quality of the proposal.

If the financial capacity of the consortium as a whole or of the coordinator or “sole applicant/beneficiary” is considered **insufficient**, the Authorised Representative Officer of the Commission may reject the application.

Operational capacity²²

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, which is to be submitted together with the application:

- 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 3 years)

²² See Article 198(3) and (6) of EU Financial Regulation 2018/1046

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

In the event of an application grouping several applicants (consortium), the above requirements shall apply to the combined capacity of all members of the consortium. Combined capacity means that individually, each member of the consortium should comply with the criteria corresponding to its task in the project.

In the case of legal entities forming **one** applicant (the "sole applicant/beneficiary"), as specified in section 6.1, the above requirements apply to each one of those entities.

Exclusion

Applicants who are subject to an **EU exclusion decision** or in one of the following **exclusion situations** that bar them from receiving EU funding can NOT participate²³:

- 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 misconduct²⁴ (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of EU Regulation [2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation, 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).

²³ See Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

²⁴ Professional misconduct includes: violation of ethical standards of the profession, wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility, false declarations/misrepresentation of information, participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition, violation of IPR, attempting to influence decision-making processes or obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain advantage.

Applicants will also be refused if it turns out that²⁵:

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

8. Evaluation and award procedure

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


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

For proposals with the same score a **priority order** will be determined according to the following approach:

- 1) The ex aequo proposals 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'. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on their scores for the criterion 'Budget-cost effectiveness'.
- 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. These factors will be documented in the panel report.

The verification of the financial capacity will be done only for the highest ranked proposals.

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, 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).

²⁵ See Article 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

9. Award criteria

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

Relevance (20 points):

- Does the proposal demonstrate understanding of the socio-political context of migrants and the social media environments, including used and applicable technologies?
- Does the proposal address the two objectives (a) and (b) in a credible manner, and also build on the publicly available results of the ongoing project 'Re:framing Migrants in the European Media' ?

Quality (30 points):

Project design and implementation:

- Is there a clear and ambitious plan for creative solutions and testing these on how social media and other relevant sectors such as infotainment channels, online performance and gaming in light of improving their conditions' representation and inclusion for migrants can be improved?
- Does the consortium demonstrate a connection to a variety of geographical areas with relevant migration problems in Europe?

Project team and cooperation arrangements:

- Do the partners present the required complementarity of competences necessary for the project?
- Does the proposal describe appropriate procedures and problem-solving mechanisms for cooperating within the project teams and consortium?

Impact (40 points):

- Are the proposed activities likely to make a change towards a better social media representation and inclusion for migrants?
- Does the proposal convince in establishing/extending a lasting a multidisciplinary community to support migrants' own communication possibilities and to encourage sharing of trustworthy information about migrants?

Budget-cost effectiveness (10 points):

- Is there a realistic and well-described allocation of financial and human resources per partner, per objective, and per work package?
- Are sufficient resources made available to engage a wider community (e.g. non-consortium stakeholders)?

Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score
Relevance	12	20
Quality	18	30
Impact	24	40
Budget-cost effectiveness	06	10
Overall (pass) scores	60	100

Maximum points: 100 points.

Overall threshold: 60 points.

Proposals scoring less than the individual threshold indicated above for any award criterion AND the minimum overall threshold less than the one indicated above, will be considered of insufficient quality and rejected.

Proposals that pass the individual thresholds **AND** the overall threshold will be considered for funding – within the limits of the available call budget (i.e. up to the budget threshold) and the number of projects to be funded, as announced in section 3. 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 <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news-redirect/771999>.

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 date²⁶ will be after grant signature. Retroactive application can be granted exceptionally for duly justified reasons— but never earlier than the proposal submission date.

Form of grant, funding rate and maximum grant amount

²⁶ The project start date must normally be the first day of a month and later than the entry into force of the agreement. The Commission can decide on another date, if justified by the applicants. However, the starting date may not be earlier than the submission date of the grant application – except if provided for by the basic act or in cases of extreme urgency and conflict prevention (Article 193 EU Financial Regulation 2018/1046).

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

The grant will be a budget-based–mixed actual cost grant (actual costs, with unit cost²⁷ 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 (maximum **75%** on consortium level). For each partner the minimum required co-funding is **10%**).

Grants may NOT produce a profit²⁸ (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). For-profit organisations must declare their revenues and, if there is a profit, we will deduct it from the final grant amount (*see art 22.3*).

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

Budget categories and cost eligibility rules

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

Budget categories for this call:

- A. Personnel costs
 - A.1 Employees,
 - A.2 Natural persons under direct contract,
 - A.3 Seconded persons
 - A.4 SME owners and natural person beneficiaries
- B. Subcontracting costs
- C. Purchase costs
 - C.1 Travel and subsistence
 - C.2 Equipment
 - C.3 Other goods, works and services
- D. Other cost categories
 - D.1 Financial support to third parties
- E. Indirect costs


²⁷ This applies only to category A.4 of the Estimated budget, which is SME owners or natural person beneficiaries (i.e. beneficiaries that are natural persons not receiving a salary).

²⁸ This is a standard obligation for all EU grants. It may be unselected only under the following condition of Article 192(3) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#)):

- actions implemented only by non-profit organisations (i.e. all beneficiaries and affiliated entities are non-profit organisations)

Specific cost eligibility conditions for this call:

- personnel costs:
 - SME owner unit cost²⁹: Yes
- subcontracting costs:
 - additional subcontracting rules: Yes
 - ⊖ subcontracting may not cover core tasks of the action
- travel and subsistence unit cost³⁰: No (only actual costs)
- equipment costs: depreciation allowed
- 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).

 Applicants' attention is drawn to the fact that if they are receiving an operating grant financed by the EU or Euratom budget, they may not declare indirect costs for the period(s) covered by the operating grant, unless they can demonstrate that the operating grant does not cover any costs of the action. If you intend to also apply for action grants while receiving an operating grant, please make sure that you either have the accounting tools in place to combine them (or that the operating grants pays off — meaning that it covers enough of your general running costs and overheads to compensate the loss of the indirect costs in the action grants).

- VAT: non-deductible VAT is eligible (but please note that since 2013 VAT paid by beneficiaries that are public bodies acting as public authority is NOT eligible)
- other:
 - in-kind contributions for free are allowed, but cost-neutral, i.e. they cannot be declared as cost
 - project websites: communication costs for presenting the project on the participants' websites or social media accounts are eligible; costs for *separate* project websites are not eligible

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 **pre-financing** to start working on the project (float of normally **60%** of the maximum grant amount; exceptionally less or no pre-financing). The pre-financing will be paid 30 days from entry into force/starting date/financial guarantee (if required) — whichever is the latest.


²⁹ 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).

³⁰ Commission [Decision](#) of 12 January 2021 authorising the use of unit costs for travel, accommodation and subsistence costs under an action or work programme under the 2021-2027 multi-annual financial framework (C(2021)35).

One interim payment can be foreseen in which case pre-financing and interim payment may not exceed 80% of the maximum grant amount. In case no interim payment will be foreseen in the Grant Agreement, you will be expected to submit one progress report not linked to payments at mid-term.

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

All payments will be made to the coordinator.

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

Please also note that you are responsible for keeping records on all the work done and the costs/units declared. The Grant Agreement contains additional record-keeping rules (*Data Sheet, point 6 and art 20*).

Pre-financing guarantees

If a pre-financing 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 pre-financing for your grant.

The guarantee should be in euro and issued by an approved bank/financial institution established in an EU Member State.

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

Pre-financing 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) are sent to us in time to make the pre-financing (scanned copy via e-Mail 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.

Certificates

Depending on the type of action, size of grant amount and type of beneficiaries, you may be requested to submit different certificates³¹. 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*).

³¹ See Article 203.4 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#)

For beneficiaries, it is one of the following:

- limited joint and several liability with individual ceilings — *each beneficiary up to their maximum grant amount*
 - unconditional joint and several liability — *each beneficiary up to the maximum grant amount for the action*
- or
- individual financial responsibility — *each beneficiary only for their own debts.*

In addition, the granting authority may require joint and several liability of affiliated entities (with their beneficiary).

Provisions concerning the project implementation

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)*

Communication, dissemination and visibility of funding: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 17 and Annex 5)*

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

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 **by the deadline set out under section 4**.

No modification to the application is allowed once the deadline for submission has elapsed. However, if there is a need to clarify certain aspects or to correct clerical mistakes, the Commission may contact the applicant during the evaluation process³².

Applicants will be informed in writing about the results of the selection process.³³

The mandatory Grant Application Form and other mandatory template documents to be completed are available at <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news-redirect/771999>

Applications **must** be submitted in the correct form, duly completed and dated. The

³² Articles 151 and 200(3) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#)

³³ Article 200 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#)

following application documents: **GAF Part A and B and the Estimated Budget table** must be submitted in **one original paper copy** (no additional paper copies required) signed³⁴ by the person authorised to enter into legally binding commitments on behalf of the applicant organisation.

An electronic version of the Application Form Part A and B, Estimated budget and all other annexes and documents must be provided on USB stick together with the original signed paper copy requested. The electronic version (pdf) of the Grant Application Form Part A and B must not be a scan of the paper version but must be **searchable (machine readable)**.

Where applicable, additional information considered necessary by the applicant may be included as an annex on the USB stick (brochures, etc.), but assessment will be based on information included in the application form (therefore please limit the number and size of additional documents and attachments).

Please structure the information on the USB key by type of documents and applicants as follows:

- 1-GAF-Grant Application Form –Part A
- 2-GAF-Grant Application Form –Part B
- 3-Estimated Budget
- 4-LEF-Legal Entity Form + supporting documents (all applicants with one subfolder per applicant)
- 5-BAF-Bank Account Form + supporting documents (coordinator only)
- 6-*Financial capacity*_(when relevant) including Financial capacity excel + 2 years annual accounts (Balance Sheet and Profit & Loss) with one subfolder per applicant/entity composing the “sole applicant/beneficiary”
- 8-*Other documents* (CV, annual activity reports ...) with one subfolder per applicant when relevant

Folders and documents title should clearly refer to its content and name of related applicant.

Applications **must** be sent to the following address:

European Commission

Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content & Technology (DG CNECT)

Unit CNECT.I4 – Media Convergence and Social Media

For the attention of the Head of Unit (BRU-L51)

Reference: Call CNECT/2022/8240201

B-1049 BRUSSELS

Belgium

- **by post**³⁵ (evidence will be constituted by the postmark), or
- **by courier service** (evidence will be constituted by date of deposit slip), or

³⁴ Blue ink” handwritten signature or “Qualified Electronic Signature (QES) within the meaning of Regulation (EU) No 910/2014 (eIDAS Regulation).

³⁵ Applicants are advised to keep the payment receipt with date and time from the post office in order to be able to prove that the proposal has been sent within the deadline

- **by hand-delivery.** It is compulsory for security reasons to address it to **the central mail department of the Commission** as follows:

*European Commission
Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content & Technology
Unit CNECT.I4 – Media Convergence and Social Media
Reference: Call CNECT/2022/3482066
**Avenue du Bourget, 1
B-1140 BRUSSELS (Evere), Belgium***

In this case, proof of submission of the proposal will take the form of a receipt signed and dated by the official of the Commission's central mail department who takes delivery of the documents. The department is open from 08.00 to 17.00 on Mondays to Thursdays and from 08.00 to 16.00 on Fridays. It is closed on Saturdays, Sundays and Commission holidays.

In addition to the above:

applicants **must** send an **e-mail** before the deadline set out under section 3 to the following email address: CNECT-I4@ec.europa.eu **to inform us about your submission on paper.**

Applications sent only by E-mail will not be accepted.

The proposal must keep to the **page limits** (see section 5)

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):

- FAQs on the Call page (for call-specific questions in open calls).

Please also consult the Call page regularly, since we might use it to publish addendums to the call documents, if needed (e.g. extension of call deadline, or other).

Contact

Questions and requests for clarifications should be sent to the following email address: CNECT-I4@ec.europa.eu

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

The Commission is not bound to reply to requests for additional information received less than six working days before the deadline for submitting applications set in section 3.

The answers will also be published in the FAQs section on: <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news-redirect/771999>

- **Mandatory annexes and supporting documents** (to be submitted together with the application on specific support):
 - **Paper and USB Stick**
 - Grant Application form Part A and Part B (signed scan in pdf and original searchable pdf on the USB)

- Estimated Budget of the action (Annex 2 to CMGA) (signed scan in pdf and original excel file on the USB)
- **USB Stick only**
 - Legal entity form + supporting documents³⁶ (for all applicants) (in pdf scans)
 - Bank account form + supporting document³⁷ (only for the coordinator) (in pdf scans)
 - Financial Capacity Check table and BS and P&L supporting documents (please refer to section 7) (Financial capacity check table: original excel file. Supporting documents: pdf)
 - CVs (standard) of core project team (please refer to section 7) (in pdf)
 - activity reports of last year (*in pdf*)
 - (other annexes).
- **Other documents** (*for information of the applicants and/or to be submitted at a later stage in the procedure*):
 - Model Declaration of honour
 - Model grant agreement and its annex 2a-unit costs SME owners and annex 5-Specific rules

(e-signed)
Ingrid Mariën-Dusak
Authorising Officer by sub-delegation
Directorate I

³⁶ copies of official supporting documents : resolution, law ,register(s) of companies, official gazette, vat registration, etc.

³⁷ a copy of RECENT bank statement. Please note that the bank statement has to confirm the 'ACCOUNT NAME', 'ACCOUNT NUMBER/IBAN' and 'BANK NAME

13. Important

IMPORTANT

- **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).

- **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 (just like beneficiaries); but they do not count towards the minimum eligibility criteria for consortium composition (if any). Entities that satisfy the eligibility criteria and that do not fall within one of the situations referred to in Articles 136(1) and 141(1) FR and that have a link with the applicant, in particular a legal or capital link, which is neither limited to the action nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation, will be considered as entities affiliated to the applicant (See Article 187.1 (b) EU Financial Regulation 2018/1046).
- **Sole beneficiaries** - Associations and interest groupings (EEIG): Entities composed of members may participate as 'sole beneficiary' (see Article 187.1 (a) EU Financial Regulation 2018/1046). Please note that if the action will be implemented by the members, they should also participate (either as beneficiaries or as affiliated entities (if foreseen in the call), otherwise their costs will NOT be eligible). A "sole" beneficiary is a legal entity, whether established specifically or not for the action, and which is:
 - formed of several legal entities complying with the eligibility, non-exclusion and selection criteria set out in this call for proposals, and implementing together the proposed action;
 - and whose participating members are identified in the grant application (Part A and B)
- **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 may implement action tasks but in contrast to affiliated entities they do not need to have a capital or legal link to a beneficiary and cost incurred by Associated Partners can NOT be declared as eligible cost. In contrast to third parties giving in-kind contributions, the associated partners are fully named in the grant agreement and may implement important tasks by themselves. Entities that do not request funding or are not eligible for funding may participate in an action as Associated Partners, for example out of interest in contributing to the objectives of the action, gaining visibility, or participating due to ongoing (scientific) cooperation with a beneficiary. As with any other participant that does not sign the grant agreement, the beneficiaries need to ensure (e.g. through the consortium agreement) that Associated Partners implement their assigned action tasks in accordance with the grant agreement. The tasks must be set out in Annex 1.

- **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** — By default, 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. An exception to this rule is foreseen in **Article 192(3) EU Financial Regulation 2018/1046**.
- **No double funding** — There is a strict prohibition of double funding from the EU budget (except under EU Synergies actions). Outside such Synergies actions, any given action may receive only ONE grant from the EU budget and cost items may under NO circumstances be declared to two different EU actions.
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 only where the applicant can demonstrate in the grant application the need to start the action before the grant agreement is signed (in this case, no costs can be reimbursed for activities that took place before the 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 Model Grant Agreement, art 6.2.E](#)). In order to demonstrate that the operating grant does not cover any costs of the action, the beneficiary should:
 - a. use *analytical cost accounting that allows to separate all costs (including overheads) attributable to the operating grant and the action grant*. For that purpose the beneficiary should use *reliable accounting codes and allocation keys* ensuring that *the allocation of the costs is done in a fair, objective and realistic way*.
 - b. *record separately*:
 - all costs incurred for the operating grants (i.e. personnel, general running costs and other operating costs linked to the part of its usual annual activities), and
 - all costs incurred for the action grants (including the actual indirect costs linked to the action)

If the operating grant covers the entire usual annual activity and budget of the beneficiary, the latter is not entitled to receive any indirect costs under the action grant.

- **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. In this case, please clearly indicate that the re-submitted proposal is the one to be evaluated.
- **Rejection** — By submitting the application, all applicants accept the call conditions set out in this Call Document (and the documents it refers to). Proposals that do not comply with all the call conditions will be **rejected**. This applies also to applicants: All applicants need to fulfil the criteria; if any one of them doesn't, they must be replaced or the entire proposal will be rejected.
- **Cancellation** - There may be circumstances which may require the cancellation of the call. In this case, you will be informed. 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](#).