

Guidelines for applicants

Grant-making to ECAS Members in the EU 2024

ANNEX B to the Call for proposals

ECAS Brussels, 15th January 2024

Welcome

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1. INTRODUCTION

This call for proposals, managed by European Citizenship Action Service (ECAS), takes place in the framework of the [EURECA \(European Citizenship Accelerator\) 2024 project](#), co-funded by the Citizenship, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV) of the European Union.

ECAS re-grants, on a competitive basis, to its members - Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), based in the EU, to provide them with an opportunity to contribute to the achievement of ECAS's mission and objectives.

2. CONDITIONS FOR THE RE-GRANTING

2.1 Call for proposals' themes

The call for proposals of 2024 has two different strands:

Lot 1: Tackling disinformation and strengthening CSOs resilience

The *amplification of disinformation attacks* in European societies in recent years is likely to remain a lasting factor in foreign attempts to disrupt the democratic process in Europe. In addition, more complex threats have arisen, such as the increasing use of AI for the creation of engaging disinformation content, using ever more advanced tactics. Many national *populist actors take up and amplify such narratives* for their domestic use - to shrink civic democratic space and distort elections. We expect a surge of disinformation narratives in 2024 particularly related to the EP elections and the concurrent national elections (Parliamentary or Presidential) in nine EU Member States.

To address these challenges, ECAS call for proposals under Lot 1 aims to tackle disinformation narratives and build CSO resilience against disinformation. ECAS will provide its members with a framework to counter disinformation comprised of practical guidelines on how to build coalitions faster in response to emerging narratives.

The expected result is a **strengthened civic capacity to address disinformation, anti-democratic discourse, and populist narratives.**

Lot 2: Ensuring digital transformation that leaves no one behind

The digital transformation process in Europe shapes the way in which we live in the 21st century. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this process as more and more people require access to the internet to work, connect with others, and connect with citizen services. According to the Digital Economy and Society Index, in 2021, only 54% of people aged 16-74 had at least basic digital skills. Moreover, the differentiation in digital skills widens when broken down by age group and whether one lives in an urban or rural area.



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In June 2023, the European Commission (EC) published [a Decision setting out key performance indicators to measure progress towards the digital targets](#) and [Guidance](#) to the Member States which should develop their national strategic roadmaps to achieve the KPIs set by the EC. As Member States will implement those roadmaps during the coming years, engagement by citizens in the process will be of crucial importance both in terms of awareness-raising of the digital targets and concrete recommendations on how the targets will be implemented to ensure an all-inclusive digital transformation that leaves no one behind.

To address these challenges, the ECAS call for proposals under Lot 2 aims to ensure an inclusive digital transformation process through citizen engagement. ECAS will provide its members with Guidelines on digital transformation that leaves no one behind, co-created with stakeholders in 10 Member States.

The expected result is **enhanced digital inclusion to ensure digital transformation that leaves no one behind and/or increased innovation in forms and methods of civic engagement in policymaking** (both digital and offline).

In their proposal, applicants are required to choose **one of the two lots** (see application form).

ECAS will distribute a total of up to 169.000 euros to members applying for the re-granting scheme in 2024. The maximum grant amount for each awarded project will be **15 000 EUR**. Members can apply for the maximum or a lower amount.

2.2 Eligible activities and applicants

The following types of activities of ECAS members in the EU will be eligible for financial support in the two lots:

- awareness raising and outreach campaigns, for the general public and key stakeholders;
- organisation of civic platforms and civic dialogues;
- watchdog, monitoring, lobbying and advocacy activities,
- training and capacity-building of key stakeholders;
- research and analysis, linked to the Call for proposals themes.

All projects' duration should not exceed six months and will need to demonstrate a clear European dimension of their activities.

To be eligible, project activities should not be funded by other financial sources.

Eligible candidates for financial support will be all ECAS members meeting the following requirements:

- registered legal non-profit entities and non-governmental organisations in a Member State of the European Union;



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- respecting EU values as laid down in [Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union](#) and the [EU Charter of Fundamental Rights](#);
- non-affiliated entity(ies), branches, associated partners or sub-contractors of ECAS;
- non-EU-wide networks or umbrella organisations;
- not receiving of funds from bodies which are incompatible with EU values (confirmation in applicants' Declaration of Honour).

Projects can be implemented in partnership with other legal entities (public or private bodies), established in the same or in other EU Member States, if applicants wish so.

All applicants (ECAS members) and their consortium partners (if applicable) will be required to formally commit to comply with European Union values in their Declaration of Honour to be eligible for funding.

In order to be eligible for funding, **project activities should take place in the Member States of the EU.**

2.3 Financial and operational capacity and exclusion

Applicants must have **sufficient capacity** to successfully implement the projects.

A **financial capacity check will** be carried out for selected applicants after the evaluation of proposals.

All applicants are required to provide a **Declaration of financial capacity** (Annex A.4 to the call for proposals) including main figures from their profit and loss accounts and balance sheet of the last two years. In case they are applying in partnership with other organisations, the financial capacity check will be performed for the leading partner of the consortium (ECAS members) only, unless the leading partner expressly requests to rely on the financial capacity of other partners, in which case other consortium partners will have to submit the Declaration as well.

Applicants must also demonstrate that they have the know-how, qualifications and resources to successfully implement the projects (including sufficient experience in projects of comparable size and nature). They will have to show their capacity via the following: **CVs and a list of up to three projects demonstrating capacity and track record in carrying out activities related to the theme of the respective Lot.**

Exclusion

Applicants are requested to declare that all information shared in their application is correct, complete and legitimate and that the legal entity is fully compliant with the eligibility criteria set out in the call, is not subject to any exclusion grounds under the [EU Financial Regulation 2018/1046](#) and has the financial and operational capacity to carry out the proposed project. Applicants (and their consortium partners, if applicable) will be asked to sign a Declaration of Honour (Annex A.3 to the application form).

ECAS will not award a grant to an applicant who:

- is in an exclusion situation established in accordance with the terms of the Declaration of Honour;



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- has misrepresented the information required as a condition for participating in the procedure or has failed to supply that information; or
- was previously involved in the preparation of documents used in the award procedure where this entails a breach of the principle of equal treatment, including distortion of competition, that cannot be remedied otherwise.

3. LEGAL AND FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

3.1 Form of the grant and eligible contributions

Selected beneficiaries (consortia's leaders or sole applicants) will be requested to sign a **Grant Agreement** detailing terms and conditions of the funding (model in Annex C to the call for proposal).

The grant will take the form of a lump sum, reimbursing a fixed amount established by ECAS on the basis of the budget available and the estimates indicated by the beneficiaries in their project for each *work package* (see chapter 3.2).

The grant will not cover operating costs of the member organisations. Only costs incurred during the project duration will be considered eligible.

Applicants are required to propose a **budget** based on an estimation of costs that summarises the planned direct costs of the beneficiary and/or its partners in the following categories, for each work package:

- Personnel costs
- Subcontracting
- Travel, accommodation and subsistence
- Equipment (purchase and renting of equipment, infrastructure or other assets)
- Other goods, works or services, if necessary to implement the action (for instance, consumables and supplies, promotion, dissemination, protection of results, translations, events, publications, etc.).

The amount of the cost categories must be calculated on the basis of an estimation of actual costs, except for travel, accommodation and per diem (subsistence) costs, for which simplified cost options (unit costs) apply (see chapter 3.4 of these Guidelines).

Information on the general cost eligibility criteria can be found in the [Annotated Model Grant Agreement for EU grants](#) provided by the European Commission, **under article 6.1**.

As this is a lump sum grant, at the stage of the reporting, the applicant will be asked to submit only a narrative report clearly demonstrating the completion of the tasks of the project work packages, the related deliverables and Key Performance Indicators, within the period covered by the grant agreement (see chapter 3.2 below). The level of completion of the activities and the achievement of the planned KPIs



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will be the criteria for assessing the eligibility of lump sum contributions agreed upon. Therefore, **applicants are required to identify the link between the amount of each budget line and related project activities in Annex A.2 to the application form.**

Budget transfers between budget lines and work packages are possible, provided that planned activities are completed and Key Performance Indicators are met.

In addition, in order to be eligible for funding, the costs:

- must correspond to the total amount as set out in the Grant Agreement
- must relate to work carried out in accordance with the description of the action as set out in the Grant agreement during the eligibility period
- must not be already funded by other funding sources
- must be expressed in Euros.

3.2 Work Packages, Milestones, Deliverables and KPIs

Project activities should be formulated within a solid strategic framework and be structured in one to three max. **work packages** (see Application Form). A work package means a major sub-division of the project. Each work package is accompanied by an objective (expected outcome) and should list its activities, deliverables and KPIs.

A **dedicated budget** should correspond to each work package (see budget categories indicated in the chapter above). The non-completion of a work package may entail a reduction of the final grant amount.

Deliverables are project outputs to be submitted to ECAS (e.g., publication, leaflet, progress report, brochure, list, website etc.); they should be described accurately in the Application Form as non-completion of them may entail a reduction of the grant. The project should foresee a maximum of 6 deliverables. Further details are provided in the Application Form's instructions.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are quantifiable indicators to assess the achievement of planned projects' results and impact against objectives and targets. They should show ambition and be realistic at the same time, since their attainment will be taken into consideration in the establishment of the initial budget, as well as the final assessment of the projects (after reporting) and the approval of the final grant amount.

3.3 Payment arrangements

The project payment scheme will be based on a **project risk assessment** and will combine risk mitigation measures with the provision of funds to ECAS grantees. ECAS will perform an initial risk assessment of the applicants approved for funding, taking into account:

1. The capacity of the applicant, based on:
 - 1.1. Experience in managing projects with a similar amount of funding;
 - 1.2. Financial stability of the organization(s) in view of the project implementation;



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- 1.3. Existence of a permanent team (persons employed)
2. Planned budget in view of any gaps or weaknesses identified.

The risk assessment scores will range from 1 to 5, being:

- 1 - Very low risk
- 2 - Low risk
- 3 – Medium Risk
- 4 – High risk
- 5 – Very high risk

The usual **project payment scheme** will include a pre-payment of 80% of the grant and a final payment (after reporting) of 20%.

However, if the risk assessment score of a given applicant is high or very high, a payment scheme with reduced advance payment may apply.

The awarded grant takes the form of a lump sum contribution for the completion of work packages and achievement of Key Performance Indicators. The financial support will be reduced accordingly in case of non delivery or unsatisfactory quality of the planned deliverables or non achievement of the planned KPIs.

Payments will be made in accordance with the schedule and modalities set out in the Grant Agreement. They will be made in Euro to the bank account indicated by the beneficiary.

Beneficiaries (consortia's leaders or single entities) are signatories of the agreement and take complete responsibility for executing the proposed activities.

After grant signature, beneficiaries will receive an advance payment to start working on the project. The advance payment will be paid no later than 30 days from entry into force of the Grant Agreement. A final payment (payment of the balance) will be settled after final reporting on the project, in accordance with the schedule and modalities set out in the Grant Agreement.

3.4 Additional information on budget calculation

Specific criteria to calculate costs for each budget category are detailed at **art. 6.2 of the [Annotated Model Grant Agreement for EU grants](#)**.

The general method for estimation and calculation of **personnel costs** for EU projects consist in dividing the provisioned total amount of the cost of the person working on the project during the reporting period by day equivalents ($=215 / 12 \times n$. of months covered by the project duration) to determine the daily rate, and then multiplying the result for the actual/planned number of days worked for the project by the employee.

For simplicity, the following formula can be used to estimate the costs of each employee working on the project:



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Overall cost of the employee for the organization
for the period of the project
(incl. social security charges, taxes, etc.)

n. days worked by the
employee on the project

X

Tot. number of days worked by the employee
in the period of the project (including to other projects
and without vacation, sick leave, public holiday, etc.)

Subcontracting costs must be based either on the best value for money or the lowest price and not be subject to conflict of interest. They may only cover a limited part of the action.

Travel, accommodation and subsistence costs (per diem) must be calculated, for each travel and person travelling, in accordance with the methodology set out in the [European Commission Decision C\(2021\)35 and C\(2023\)4928](#) and the table annexed to the Grant Agreement (Annex 2a available [here](#)).

Costs for the **purchase of equipment** can be budgeted for the portion of the depreciation costs allocable to the project, not for the entire the purchase price. The costs of **equipment rental** for the project period can be budgeted at full cost, as long as the rental cost is not greater than the depreciation cost if the equipment was purchased.

All **other purchase costs** (goods, works and services) must be calculated on the basis of an estimation of actual costs.

Indirect costs must be calculated and will be reimbursed at the fixed flat rate of 7% of the eligible direct costs.

4. TIMELINE AND DEADLINES

Timetable (indicative)	
Call opening	15 th January 2024
Deadline for submissions	15 th March 2024
Evaluation	End of March/April 2024
Information on evaluation results	End of April 2024
Grant Agreement signature and kick-off meeting	May 2024
Projects' implementation	From May to mid-November 2024 (max. 6 months)
Projects' reporting	Until 29 th November 2024



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5. ADMISSIBILITY AND DOCUMENTS

Applying consortium leaders/single entities are required to register their organisation in the EU Funding & Tenders Portal and get a Participant Identification Code (PIC) following the instructions available at this link:

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/participant-register>

Proposals should be submitted electronically and include completed **application form** and **annexed documents** listed in it.

The application form and mandatory annexes must be completed in all parts and submitted **in English**. The Application Form includes **information about the applicant**, the **technical description of the project** and **budget (separate annex in Excel)** justifying the requested financial support amount for implementation of project activities for each work package of the project. The latter should include an explanation of the relation to project activities for each budget line. The Excel template comprises multiple sheets to be completed with the budget breakdown for each work package, and an overview that will be automatically filled with the total amount for each work package.

Page and characters limits are clearly stated in the Application Form's template. Applicants are required to comply with the limits indicated. If any applicant submit an application that exceeds the specified page limit, it will be required to shorten and re-submit the application. Any excess page will be disregarded by the evaluation panel.

Applicants are also required to annex **CVs** of their project staff and collaborators, as well as a list of their relevant projects as part of the Application Form.

In addition, applicants and their consortium partners (if any) must sign and submit a **Declaration of Honour** (Annex A.3) confirming that they meet the eligibility requirements for the call and stating that their projects would not breach Union values, promote values contradictory to Union values and/or engage into activities contradictory to Union values. The Declaration will state that breaches will make the (potential) beneficiaries liable to exclusion, administrative sanctions or cancellation of funding.

Furthermore, applicants are requested to submit a **Declaration of financial capacity** (Annex A.4) signed by their legal representatives and including main figures from their profit and loss accounts and balance sheet of the last two years, which will be assessed in case of positive evaluation and pre-selection of their proposal.

The completed Application Form and Annexes should be submitted as a single merged PDF file, except for the budget table, which should be in Excel format.

After the deadline for submitting the proposals, the ECAS staff will check if the applications are duly completed in all parts. **In the event of identified instances of administrative non-compliance, the applicant will be allowed to correct them within five working days.**



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6. DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY (DEIA)

Applicants are required to demonstrate how they would mainstream Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) in the project cycle. This means integrating a DEIA dimension in the **design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of project activities**.

Diversity is the wide range of attributes within a person, group or community which makes them distinctive. Dimensions of diversity consider that each individual is unique and recognizes individual differences.

Equity is the fair treatment and access to equal opportunity (justice) that allows the unlocking of one's potential, leading to the further advancement of all peoples. The equity pursuit is about the identification and removal of barriers to ensure the full participation of all people and groups.

Inclusion is ensuring that all individuals are equally supported, valued, and respected. This is best achieved by creating an environment in which all individuals feel welcomed, safe, respected, valued, and are supported to enable full participation and contribution.

Accessibility is the provision of flexibility to accommodate needs and preferences, and refers to the design of products, devices, services, or environments that empower the greatest number of people to participate in the activities in question in the most effective ways possible.

The activities shall seek to **reduce the level of discrimination suffered by particular groups** (as well as those at risk of multiple discrimination via intersectional lenses) and to produce equitable outcomes for all individuals impacted by the project.

In the design and delivery of project activities, DEIA shall be ensured by **promoting and monitoring access, participation, and positive impacts among diverse groups** and by foreseeing possible **remedial action** that redresses any inequality and discriminatory effects in the implementation of planned activities.

The project must ensure a balanced and equal representativeness of genders, as well as the inclusion of groups at risk of discrimination and social exclusion through the project activities. To this end, the applicant should **integrate DEIA considerations** in the assessments of the **target groups' needs**, the definition of **indicators** measuring the achievement of the project's objectives, the definition of **results/outcomes** and of **critical risks**, the design of **communication** messages and materials.

The project assessors will evaluate the applicants' expertise and capacity to integrate the gender and non-discrimination perspective in their activity and recommend additional training/capacity building, if needed.



7. EVALUATION AND AWARD PROCEDURE

Any project proposal that is found to meet the administrative eligibility criteria will be subject to a qualitative assessment according to preliminary announced criteria.

Award criteria for evaluation of project proposals are:

- 1. Compliance and relevance of the project *vis à vis* the objectives of the call and the needs of target groups:** extent to which the proposal matches the priorities and objectives of the call; clearly defined needs and robust needs assessment; clearly defined target group; envisaged results bringing positive change for target groups and enhancing coordination, cooperation and capacity of CSOs in the areas defined by the call – *max 30 points*
- 2. Quality, feasibility and sustainability:** clarity and consistency of project; logical links between the identified problems; needs and solutions proposed; adequate risk analysis and risk management; ethical issues properly addressed; feasibility of the project within the proposed time frame; long-term sustainability of project results – *max 30 points*
- 3. Capacity of the applicant:** experience of the applicant and its project team in managing similar projects successfully; adequate qualifications, know-how and resources – *max 20 points*
- 4. Economy of budget and realistic forecast of costs:** financial feasibility (sufficient/appropriate budget for proper implementation; cost-effectiveness); costs being in line with good housekeeping practice when spending public money and not excessive; minimum use of financial resources to produce the maximum quality - *max 10 points*
- 5. Gender equality and non-discrimination:** applicants' expertise and capacity to integrate the gender equality and non-discrimination perspectives in their activity. – *max 10 points*.

Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score
Relevance and compliance with call's objectives and needs	15	30
Quality, feasibility and sustainability	15	30
Capacity and team of the applicant	10	20
Economy of the budget and realistic cost forecast	5	10
Gender equality and non-discrimination	5	10
Overall pass score	50	100

Maximum points: 100 points

Individual thresholds:

- Relevance and compliance with call's objectives and needs: 15
- Quality, feasibility and sustainability: 15
- Capacity and team of the applicant: 10
- Economy of the budget and realistic cost forecast: 5



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- Gender equality and non-discrimination: 5

Overall threshold: 50 points

Submitted project proposals will be evaluated by two impartial evaluation experts working independently from each other. The quantitative assessment on each criterion will be supported by a short and clear justification. The final score of the project proposal is the average of the scores given by the two experts. In case the lower score given is 30%+ less than the higher one and the project proposal has obtained the minimum score determined in the Guidelines for Applicants, the project will be referred to a third evaluator for arbitration. The final score of the project proposal will be calculated as the average of the two nearest score values.

Each evaluation expert will sign a declaration on conflict of interest. A ranked projects' list will be submitted for review by the Selection Committee (SC). The SC consists of ECAS' Executive Director, ECAS' Chairperson of the Board of Directors and ECAS' Treasurer, all of them with long-standing proven experience and expertise in working in the fields of EU rights and values and knowledge of the civil society sector.

The SC approves funding for the projects - taking into account their ranking by points and the available budget for the call. The proposed project budgets will be assessed in view of complying with the principles of effectiveness, efficiency and economy. The SC may, by reasoned decision, propose a change in the ranking of projects in justified cases, including in relation to the requirements of the call, the achievement of the objectives, priorities and indicators of the call.

ECAS will provide all applicants with an **evaluation letter**, including the scores of the criteria.

The results of the call will be published on a tailored page of the ECAS **website**, including legal name and country of the grantees, grant awarded, project title and duration, short project summary, target group.

8. HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION

Project proposals must be submitted by **15th March 2024** through the submission page on the ECAS website.

Please Include your PIC (Participant Identification Code) and complete the Application Form and mandatory annexes in English. Only applications using the provided template will be considered eligible. Once the proposal is submitted, you will receive a confirmation e-mail. If you do not receive a confirmation e-mail, it means your proposal has NOT been submitted.

Queries related to technical issues can be sent by email to anita.marullo@ecas.org before **11th March 2024**. We cannot guarantee that emails will be answered after this date.

A Q&A (Questions and Answers) section will be posted on the ECAS website and updated regularly. All applicants will be informed of the results of the evaluation process by email by the end of April 2024. The results will then be published on the ECAS dedicated website.



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9. GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

As part of the grant-making process, ECAS will conduct the following information sessions:

- An **informational webinar** for all its eligible members following the publication of the Call for proposals to explain the objectives of the call, the procedure and the requirements, with a special emphasis on the integration of the gender equality and non-discrimination perspectives in the project proposals and the adherence to EU values. The recording will be made available on the ECAS' website.

- An **in-person kick-off meeting** of the selected grantees will take place in Brussels, tentatively scheduled for May 2024, during which the grantees will present their projects; explore the potential for synergies, mutual support and multiplication of the project results among themselves. ECAS will clarify the grantees' contractual obligations and will explain in detail all concepts related to:
 - Avoiding conflict of interest
 - Confidentiality and security obligations
 - Ethics
 - Giving visibility to the EU funding
 - Information obligations
 - Reporting and record-keeping
 - Adherence to EU values
 - Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) perspectives

- A **tailored webinar on gender equality and non-discrimination mainstreaming** may be organised if the evaluation of the project proposals reveals insufficient expertise and capacity of the selected grantees to integrate this perspective in their activities.

In the course of the application, ECAS team will not provide individual consultations for the preparation of a specific project; **Q&A responses** in written form will be made available to all applicants.

10. PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA

The reply to any call for proposals involves the recording and processing of personal data (such as name, e-mail, and address). Such data will be processed pursuant [to Regulation \(EU\) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016](#) on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and the free movement of such data. Unless indicated otherwise, the questions and any personal data requested that are required to evaluate the application in accordance with the call for proposal will be processed solely for that purpose.



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11. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND PROCEDURE FOR COMPLAINTS

ECAS applies a policy of equal opportunities and accepts applications without discrimination on the ground of sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation.

In the course of the application, the ECAS team will not provide individual consultations for the preparation of a specific project; Q&A responses in written form will be made available to all applicants. If your proposal is rejected and you believe that the rejection was a result of a procedural error, you can submit a **complaint** within 5 working days and following the procedures set out in the **evaluation result letter**.

Complaints will be subject to the following conditions:

- Complaints must be limited to procedural aspects, not on the merits of the proposal. The complaint must relate to the evaluation procedure, admissibility or eligibility checks and demonstrate a procedural irregularity, factual error, manifest error of assessment. Mere repetitions of the content of the proposal or disagreements with the result or reasoning of the evaluation will not be considered.
- Only one request for review per proposal will be considered. The request cannot refer to the evaluation of proposals submitted by other applicants or under different or previous calls.
- Review requests will not automatically trigger a re-evaluation of the proposal. Re-evaluations will only be carried out if the complaint demonstrates that the procedural irregularity, factual error or manifest error of assessment affects the decision on whether to fund the proposal. Thus, for example, a problem relating to one of the evaluation criteria will not lead to a re-evaluation if, even by adding the maximum points under this criterion, the final score of the proposal would still remain below the threshold for funding.
- Re-evaluations will be made on the proposal as it was originally submitted; no additional information will be admitted. Re-evaluations will be partial (limited to the criterion affected by the error) or full (when the whole evaluation has been recognized as flawed) - depending on the case.
- The score following a re-evaluation may be lower than the original score.
- All requests for review will be treated as confidential.



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12. CONSORTIUM MANAGEMENT

If the awarded project is carried out in consortium with multiple partners, the ECAS member leading the consortium will be the sole signatory of the grant agreement ('Beneficiary') and the only responsible for its implementation. Any consortium partner should give a **mandate** (see Annex C) to the beneficiary for engaging and representing it for the implementation of the action, and commit to carry out the action as set out in the Grant Agreement.

The beneficiary must have appropriate resources to implement the action and implement the action under its own responsibility. If it relies on partners or subcontractors, it retains sole responsibility towards ECAS and the European Union bodies.

Project's costs will be eligible only as long as the applicant/beneficiary and partners are eligible.

Beneficiaries are recommended to require partners to sign an internal consortium agreement, covering for instance:

- the internal organisation of the consortium
- different distribution keys for the payments and financial responsibilities in case of recoveries (if any)
- any rules on rights and obligations related to ownership of results additional to the Grant Agreement
- settlement of internal disputes
- liability, indemnification and confidentiality arrangements between the beneficiaries.

In addition, the beneficiary must ensure that its contractual obligations also apply to partners and subcontractors.

13. COMMUNICATION, DISSEMINATION AND VISIBILITY OF THE EU FUNDING

Successful applicants must promote their project and its results by providing targeted information to multiple audiences (including the media and the public), in accordance with their project description in Annex A – Application Form and in a strategic, coherent and effective manner.

Before engaging in a communication or dissemination activity expected to have a major media impact, the grant beneficiaries must inform ECAS.

Applicants and their eventual partners are requested to commit – in case of selection – to acknowledging the European Union's contribution in all publications or in conjunction with activities for which the grant is used. In this respect, beneficiaries are required to give prominence to the name and emblem of the European Union on all their publications and other products realised under the co-funded project. Where appropriate, they should also use the ECAS visuals. Examples of the appropriate EU logos are given in the Model Grant Agreement (Annex C to the call for proposals).



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14. ETHICS, EU VALUES AND DUE DILIGENCE

Applicants are required to describe how they would address potential **ethical issues** that may arise during the project implementation, in order to carry out the activities in compliance with the highest ethical standards and the applicable EU, international and national law on ethical principles. They are also requested to explain the measures that would apply for **protection of personal data and child protection** (if applicable) during the implementation of the project activities. Furthermore, applicants must ensure the **respect of of EU values** (such as respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and human rights, including the rights of minorities).

More details on how to ensure full compliance on these aspects, and about consequences of non-compliance, are given in the Model Grant Agreement (Annex C).

The evaluation experts will assess the applicants and their eventual partners' reputation (including if they are aware of any facts and circumstances of violations of European values by the applicant and the proposed project team). In case of doubts that an applicant does not fully demonstrate that its activities are in line with European values, a member of the grant management team will carry out additional verification after the evaluation and before approval of the proposed ranking by the Selection Committee. The check will include verification of the profile of the organisation(s) in the Trade Registry and register of non-profit organisations, their current articles of association, annual activity reports, composition of governing bodies; a review of their online presence, including their social media channels and those of their key personnel and trustees/board members. In case more detailed information is needed to make a conclusion, the applicant will be required to provide additional evidence of its work in the field of protection of European values, including references. The eventual signature of a grant agreement will be subject to the outcome of the **due diligence process**, including requests for additional information to facilitate transparency.

If a project proposal has a direct or indirect impact on children and their rights, the applicant should make sure that its project is based on a child rights approach, i.e. that all the rights of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the Optional protocols, are promoted, respected, protected and fulfilled. The project should address children as rights holders and should ensure their participation in the design and implementation of the project. If applicants propose a project implying direct contacts with children, they will have to provide a **child protection policy** in line with the [Keeping Children Safe Child Safeguarding Standards](#).

15. CONFIDENTIALITY, SECURITY AND RIGHTS TO USE RESULTS

Project deliverables can be **public, sensitive or EU classified**.



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In principle, a maximum of deliverables should be available for public dissemination. However, applicants and grant beneficiaries may require to keep confidential any data, documents or other material identifying them as sensitive (“SEN”) in the Application Form and/or in the Grant Agreement. In that event, sensitive information can be disclosed only to the applicant/beneficiary personnel or other project participants, and to ECAS / the European Commission.

EU classified information (EUCI) refers to any information or material designated by an EU security classification, whose unauthorised disclosure could cause varying degrees of prejudice to the interests of the Union or of one or more of the Member States. In the (unlikely) event that any project deliverable contains EU-classified information, the parties must handle classified information in accordance with the applicable EU, international or national law on classified information (in particular, [Decision 2015/44416](#) and its implementing rules).

Deliverables which contain classified information must be submitted according to special procedures agreed with ECAS and the European Commission. More details are available in the Model Grant Agreement and [here](#).

ECAS and the European Commission have the right to use non-sensitive information relating to the project, materials and documents received from the beneficiaries (notably summaries for publication, deliverables, as well as any other material, such as pictures or audio-visual material, in paper or electronic form) for policy, information, communication, dissemination and publicity purposes — during the project or afterwards. If materials or documents are subject to moral rights or third party rights (including intellectual property rights or rights of natural persons on their image and voice), the beneficiaries must ensure that they comply with their obligations specified in the Grant Agreement (in particular, by obtaining the necessary licences and authorisations from the rights holders concerned).

16. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

A conflict of interest is considered to exist whenever the exercise of functions impartially and objectively may be compromised for reasons related to personal and family life, political or national affinity, personal connection to applicants/beneficiaries, economic interest or any other interests.

The **Model Grant Agreement** explains the requirement to avoid conflicts of interests in the process of implementing initiatives, applicants and beneficiaries must take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the Agreement could be compromised for reasons involving family, emotional life, political or national affinity, economic interest or any other direct or indirect interest. They must formally notify ECAS without delay of any situation constituting or likely to lead to a conflict of interests and immediately take all the necessary steps to rectify this situation, as stated in their Declaration of Honour.

ECAS will immediately notify the European Commission of any situation that represents or may give rise to a conflict of interest, including any steps taken / planned to remedy that situation.

17. INFORMATION OBLIGATION, REPORTING AND RECORD KEEPING

The grant beneficiaries (consortium leaders or sole organisation) must provide any information requested in order to proper implementation of the action and compliance with the other obligations described in the Grant Agreement .

The information provided must be accurate, precise and complete and in the format requested.

Notably, the beneficiaries must immediately inform ECAS of any event or circumstance that may affect the implementation of the project.

Furthermore, beneficiaries and their partners (if any) must keep records and other supporting documents to prove the proper implementation of the work plan as set out in the grant agreement (proper implementation of the work and/or achievement of the results as described in the Application Form). Beneficiaries and eventual partners do not need to keep specific records on the actual costs incurred.

At the conclusion of the projects, beneficiaries are requested to submit a final report, including a narrative report, report on completion of Work Packages, the planned deliverables and achievement of KPIs. If results (deliverables and KPIs) are not attained in the quantity planned and the necessary quality, the grant will be reduced.

Mandatory templates are provided in the Grant Agreement.

18. LIST OF ANNEXES TO THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Applicants are invited to carefully read and complete the following annexes to the call for proposals.

- ❖ **Application form** (Annex A), including templates for mandatory annexes, and a separate Excel file with budget table (Annex A.2, containing multiple Excel sheets for the work packages);
- ❖ **Guidelines for applicants** (Annex B) , including further details on the call for proposals' requirements, instructions for filling in the application forms and annexes, a detailed description of the project selection process, evaluation criteria/grid with weights, information about the decision-making procedure, procedure for Q&A and complaints mechanism, obligations related to avoidance of conflict of interest, confidentiality and security, ethics, visibility to EU funding, information and record keeping;
- ❖ **Model Grant Agreement** outlining terms and conditions (Annex C) for receiving funding, including a description of the reporting and payment procedures, with a template for the final technical report.



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- ❖ **Template for the final executive summary** on project results' and impacts, to be published in the EU Funding & Tenders portal.



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Guidelines for Applicants

Grant-making to its ECAS Members
in the EU 2024

ECAS Brussels, 15th January 2024

European Citizen Action Service

BeCentral
Cantersteen 12
B-1000 Brussels, Belgium
info@ecas.org

Twitter: @ecas_europe
Facebook: ecas.europe
LinkedIn: ECAS – European Citizen Action Service

Welcome