

ENoP Manual

Let's Get Ready for EU Funding

Let's Get Ready for EU Funding

Find the most relevant information on EU funding opportunities - short and precise, and easy to digest.

This publication has been published by the European Network of Political Foundations. Co-funded by the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union and the European Network of Political Foundations.



Co-funded by
the European Union

Publisher:

European Network of Political Foundations – ENoP
Rue de l'Industrie 42B
1040 Bruxelles
www.enop.eu

Lead Author:

Susanne Stephan

Design:

Twofold:

Editor:

Jasmina Mršo

Proofreader:

Thomas Golightly

Editorial Support:

Elka Hubenova

© 2023 European Network of Political Foundations. All rights reserved.

FOREWORD

In the dynamic realm of democracy support and development cooperation, securing the necessary resources can be the catalyst that transforms ideas into impactful realities. At the heart of this transformative process lies the crucial role of political foundations – the driving forces that champion democratic values, social equity, and human rights across Europe and beyond.

In this "ENoP Manual – Let's Get Ready for EU Funding" we explore EU funding opportunities tailored for European political foundations. We recognise that while the importance of EU funding is widely acknowledged, the path to accessing it is often shrouded in uncertainty. That is where this manual comes in – a beacon of clarity designed to guide you through the labyrinthine corridors of EU funding.

Within these pages, you will find more than just a guidebook; you will discover a roadmap to empowering your foundation's mission. The author has distilled the complexities of EU structures, funding programs, and application strategies into actionable insights. Whether you are a seasoned advocate or taking your first steps into the realm of EU funding, this manual offers practical advice and strategic approaches that resonate with the ethos of political foundations. From understanding funding priorities to navigating application procedures, each section is meticulously crafted to empower your foundation's journey toward impactful change. Envision this manual as a partner by your side and consider it your go-to resource for deciphering jargon, streamlining processes, and enhancing your foundation's potential for positive transformation.

We look forward to witnessing the stories of success that emerge from your journey through the pages of "ENoP Manual – Let's Get Ready for EU Funding".

Jasmina Mršo

ENoP Publications Coordinator & Editor

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAPs	Annual Action Plans
CERV	Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme
DG	Directorate-General
DG EAC	DG for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture
DG INTPA	DG for International Partnerships
DG JUST	DG for Justice and Consumers
DG NEAR	DG for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations
EC	European Commission
EACEA	European Education and Culture Executive Agency
EEAS	European External Action Service
ENoP	European Network of Political Foundations
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
FPI	Foreign Policy Instrument
IPA	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance
NDICI – Global Europe	Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe
MASPs	Multi-Annual Strategic Plans
MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework
MIPs	Multiannual Indicative Programmes
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OLAF	European Anti-Fraud Office
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals

TABLE OF CONTENTS

8

Introduction

9

PART A: The European Union as an important actor for development cooperation

What is the structure of the European Union?	9
How is the European Commission structured?	10
Which Directorates-General (DGs) are of interest to political foundations and NGOs?	11
What role does the European External Action Service (EEAS) play in EU funding for NGOs and political foundations?	12
What is the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI)?	12

14

PART B: Funding opportunities for political foundations

Which of the EU institutions provide funding for the activities of NGOs and political foundations?	14
How are the funding priorities of the European Union identified?	15
Which funding programs relate to external EU assistance and which relate to internal EU assistance?	17
Funding for non-EU countries	18
Funding for development cooperation projects for non-EU countries	18

What are the thematic topics that could be funded in development cooperation projects?	18
Project types for international development projects	19
What is the difference between a grant and a tender in development cooperation?	20
Is there specific funding for pre-accession countries?	21
Funding for EU countries	22
What is the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV) under the EACEA?	22
Is Horizon Europe of interest to political foundations?	22
Is there specific funding for environmental projects?	23
Is there funding related to education, training and youth?	24

27

PART C: Getting prepared for funding

Can every organisation apply for funding?	27
Are applications the same for all funding programs?	27
Where do you find calls?	28
How can you be prepared?	28
A selection of application documents	30
How do you apply for INTPA projects?	30
PADOR, PROSPECT, OPSYS – what do these means?	31

How big is the project budget and is co-funding required? 31

Timeline – from application to contract signature 31

How much time and resources are needed to set up an application? 31

How do you prepare the Theory of Change? 33

Checklist to make your proposal a success 34

36

Annex

38

About

INTRODUCTION

Political foundations play a crucial role in shaping the political landscape in Europe and beyond. They aim to promote democratic values, social justice, and human rights through their work. However political foundations require financial resources to achieve their goals. Although many political foundations know that funding from the European Union (EU) is available for many of their activities both within Europe and beyond its borders, most political foundations lack the know-how and experience required to access this funding.

This funding manual is designed to provide a user-friendly and practical guide on EU funding opportunities for European political foundations who are members of the ENoP network. It covers relevant topics and areas such as funding programs, distinct types of EU funding programs, an overview of EU funding calendars as well as the documents that are necessary for submission. In addition, the manual provides instructions on how to develop a project structure, gives a list of steps for the successful development of a project concept, and a checklist for a successful application from beginning to end.

Each topic will be explained in detail, providing insight and advice on how to navigate EU funding programs, understand their requirements, and develop successful proposals.

We hope that ENoP members and their partners can benefit from the information contained in this manual.

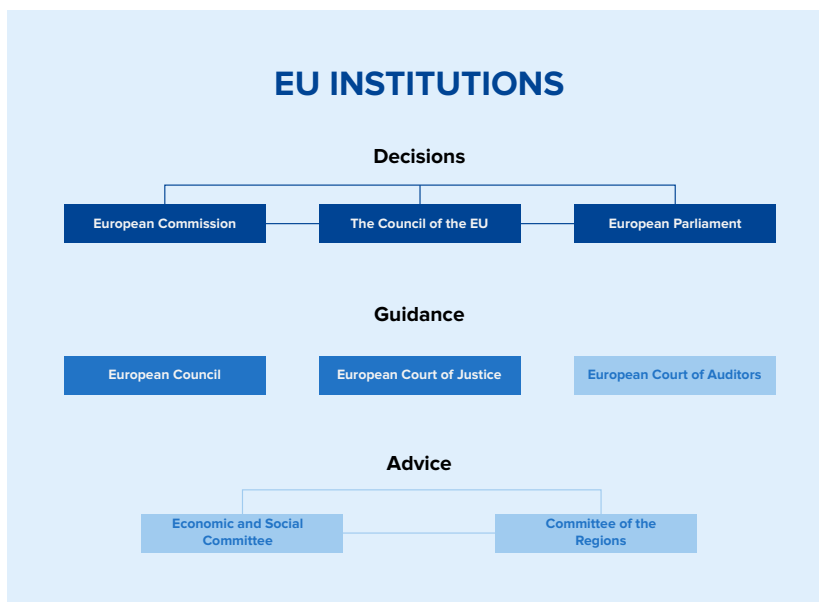
PART A: THE EUROPEAN UNION AS AN IMPORTANT ACTOR FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

STRUCTURE

What is the structure of the European Union?

The EU consists of several key institutions:

1. The European Commission is responsible for proposing and enforcing EU laws and policies.
2. The European Council is composed of the heads of state or government of the EU member states, and is responsible for setting the overall direction and priorities of the EU.
3. The Council of the European Union is composed of ministers from each member state, and is responsible for adopting EU laws and coordinating policies.
4. The European Parliament is directly elected by EU citizens, and is responsible for representing their interests and passing EU laws.
5. The European Court of Justice is responsible for ensuring that EU laws are interpreted and applied consistently throughout the member states.



In addition to these institutions, the EU also has a number of other bodies and agencies that work on specific issues, including the European External Action Service (EEAS), which is responsible for the EU's foreign policy and the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI).

How is the European Commission structured?

The European Commission is the executive branch of the European Union and is responsible for proposing and enforcing EU laws, policies and programmes, and has the following structure:

- The President of the European Commission is the head of the Commission and is responsible for setting the Commission's agenda and representing the EU in international forums.
- The Commission has several Vice-Presidents who support the President and oversee specific policy areas, such as economic and monetary affairs, energy policy, digital policy and foreign affairs.
- The Commission has 27 Commissioners: one from each EU member state including the President and the Vice-Presidents. Each Commissioner is responsible for a specific policy area such as agriculture, environment, transport, justice and education.

PART A: The European Union as an important actor for development cooperation Structure

- The Commission is organised into 33 Directorates-General, which are responsible for specific policy areas and are headed by a Director-General. The responsibilities of these DGs cover a wide range of areas such as agriculture, climate, competition, economics, education, employment, energy, environment, finance, health, justice, migration, research and trade.
- The Commission has several services and agencies that support its work, including the Joint Research Centre (JRC), the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and the European External Action Service (EEAS).

Which Directorates-General (DGs) are of interest to political foundations and NGOs?

Out of the 33 DGs, there are three DGs that are of particular interest to the work of political foundations and NGOs:

1. DG International Partnerships (DG INTPA)

The EU addresses global challenges through international partnerships that uphold and promote European values and interests, and contribute to peace and prosperity in the world. This DG covers cooperation with all third countries, except for the pre-accession beneficiaries and the Eastern and Southern Neighbourhood countries. Thematically, DG INTPA focuses on climate, environment and energy, digital and infrastructure, human development, gender equality, peace and governance, sustainable growth and jobs, and youth. DG INTPA finances the Global Europe: Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI).

2. DG Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR)

The mission of DG NEAR is to take forward the EU's Neighbourhood and Enlargement policies. DG NEAR works closely with DG INTPA and the European External Action Service and the line DGs in charge of thematic priorities.

By implementing assistance actions in Europe's eastern and southern neighbourhood, DG NEAR supports reform and democratic consolidation, and strengthens the prosperity, stability and security around Europe. DG NEAR helps to promote EU values, policies and interests in this region, and to contribute to developing the special relationship of the EU with its neighbouring countries.

3. DG Justice and Consumers (DG JUST)

DG JUST is responsible for EU policy on justice, consumer rights and gender equality. This includes working with civil society for citizens' engagement and participation within EU countries.

What role does the European External Action Service (EEAS) play in EU funding for NGOs and political foundations?

The EEAS is the European Union's diplomatic service and carries out the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy to promote peace, prosperity, security and the interests of Europeans across the globe. The EEAS is an autonomous body but works closely with the European Commission (the President of the EEAS is the Vice-President of the Commission), the European Council, and the Council of the European Union to ensure the coherence and effectiveness of the EU's external action. The EEAS does not directly provide funding for NGOs and political foundations but via its Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI).

What is the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI)?

The mission of the European Commission's Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) is to put EU foreign policy into action, fast and flexibly, in a policy-driven and integrated approach. FPI supports achieving the objectives of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy and its role is to:

- act as first responder to foreign policy needs and opportunities
- help countries cope with crises and maintain peace and security
- observe elections, support democracy and human dignity and the rule of law worldwide
- build alliances and leverage the EU's influence in the world
- prevent trade in conflict diamonds and in goods that could be used for capital punishment or torture
- address threats to international security through the European Peace Facility

PART A: The European Union as an important actor for development cooperation Structure

FPI is responsible for the operational and financial management of the budgets for the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy and for designing and managing actions, as per FPI's mandate, under the relevant strands of the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) – 'Global Europe'.

PART B: FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR POLITICAL FOUNDATIONS

Which of the EU institutions provide funding for the activities of NGOs and political foundations?

a. European Commission (EC)

Several DGs of the European Commission provide funding for NGOs and foundations both within Europe and beyond its borders: DG NEAR, DG INTPA and DG EAC.

b. European Parliament (EP)

The European Parliament provides funding for NGOs and political foundations through its political-group-funding scheme, which is designed to support the work of political parties and foundations at European level.

c. EU Delegations (EUD)

EUDs are responsible for EU programming at national level, as well as for the EU's political and policy dialogue with local authorities, national governments and regional organisations. EU Delegations can publish calls for proposals to support NGOs and civil society organisations in partner countries. These calls for proposals are usually launched as part of the EU's external funding instruments and programmes, such as the NDICI – Global Europe. EU Delegations are responsible for managing these calls for proposals, from the announcement to the selection and implementation of projects independently or jointly with the respective European Commission department in Brussels. Consequently, a good relationship on the ground with EUDs is crucial to influence funding priorities, access information and be correctly pre-positioned in an often competitive environment.

In EUDs, you will find representatives from the EEAS such as the Ambassador and the Political Information and Communication Section as well as representatives

from DG INTPA or DG NEAR. Depending on the size of the EUD, there is also a focal point for human rights, democracy, civil society, youth and gender equality. These are the main drivers of the implementation and mainstreaming of EU policies, programmes and financial instruments in these thematic areas.

How are the funding priorities of the European Union identified?

The process to identify funding priorities is complex. It starts with the seven-year Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) on which multi-annual strategies are based. These in turn translate into Annual Work Programmes for individual countries. Since the priorities for funding in individual countries are based on this MFF, it is important to review these documents at the beginning of the proposal development process to ensure that any planned project is in line with the EU's specific priorities.

a. The Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)

This is a seven-year budget framework that sets out the EU's long-term priorities and funding allocations. It is contained in a unanimously adopted Council Regulation with the consent of the European Parliament. The financial framework sets the maximum amount of spending in the EU budget each year for broad policy areas ('headings') and fixes an overall annual ceiling on payment and commitment appropriations.

This seven-year framework is important for the EU because it provides a stable and predictable framework for funding priorities over a longer period, allowing for better planning and coordination of EU policies and programmes.

b. Multi-Annual Strategic Plans (MASPs)

The Multi-Annual Strategic Plans (MASPs) are documents produced by the European Commission that set out the Commission's strategic priorities and objectives for a specific policy area over a multi-annual period. Every DG publishes a MASP and an annual management plan based on the Commission's political priorities. The MASPs are usually developed for a period of five years, and they provide a framework for the Commission's work in the relevant policy area.

These MASPs are designed to promote policy coherence and ensure that the Commission's initiatives and actions are aligned with its overall objectives. They provide a long-term perspective on policy priorities and help to coordinate the work of different DGs within the Commission. They also serve as a reference

point for stakeholders, including member states, civil society organisations and the private sector.

The strategy papers are updated midterm in the MFF period to take into account changing circumstances and priorities. They also serve as a basis for the annual EU budget process, informing the allocation of funding to specific policies and programmes.

c. Multiannual Indicative Programmes (MIPs)

In addition – and more relevantly for the work of NGOs and political foundations active outside of the EU – there are MIPs that outline the priorities and objectives of the EU's external cooperation with partner countries or regions. These programmes cover a period of several years (usually five to seven years) and provide a framework for the allocation of financial resources and implementation of programmes and projects aimed at achieving the stated goals.

MIPs are developed in consultation with partner countries or regions and are aligned with the EU's overall foreign policy objectives. The programmes are designed to respond to the specific needs and priorities of partner countries or regions and to support their efforts to implement political and economic reforms, strengthen governance and institutions, and enhance social and economic development. They also include measures to promote policy dialogue, capacity building, and the involvement of civil society and other stakeholders in the implementation of EU development cooperation.

The current MIPs cover the period 2021-2027 and are structured by region: Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific, Asia and Latin America.

d. Annual Action Plans (AAPs)

Based on the MIPs, the AAPs set out the specific actions and projects that will be funded under various EU external assistance instruments in a particular year.

The AAPs cover a range of policy areas, such as development cooperation, humanitarian aid, and democracy and human rights. They outline specific projects and programmes that will be implemented in different partner countries, as well as the expected results and indicators for measuring progress towards achieving the objectives.

Which funding programs relate to external EU assistance and which relate to internal EU assistance?

The jungle of funding programs is quite complex. The most important programs for political foundations are shown below, separated if you are interested in working inside or outside the EU.

Funding Programs for non-EU Countries	Funding Programs for EU Countries*
NDICI – Global Europe – including FPI funding instruments	EACEA's** funding opportunities Erasmus + (EPLUS) Creative Europe (CREA) The European Solidarity Corps (ECS) The Citizens, Equality, rights and Values programme (CERV)
Instrument for Pre-Accession	Horizon (mainly EU countries; small components for cooperation beyond)
	LIFE (Nature, Environment and climate actions)

*mainly EU countries; small components for cooperation beyond

** European Education and Culture Executive Agency

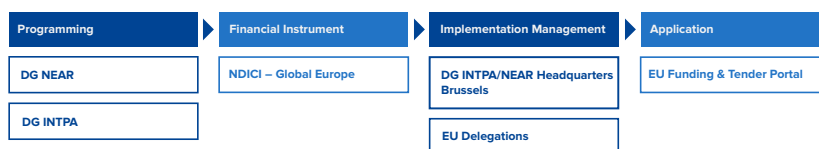
FUNDING FOR NON-EU COUNTRIES

Funding for development cooperation projects for non-EU countries

In 2020, the European Commission simplified and streamlined its EU international cooperation, crisis response and peace-building actions with partner countries in a single financial instrument called the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI – Global Europe).

The new NDICI – Global Europe instrument merges the ten former external financial instruments as well as the European Development Fund into a single financing instrument. It is administered by DG NEAR and DG INTPA and aims to support countries in overcoming long-term developmental challenges. NDICI – Global Europe will also contribute to achieving the international commitments and objectives that the Union has agreed to, in particular the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement.

With an overall allocation of EUR 79.5 billion for the current strategic framework, the NDICI – Global Europe instrument covers EU cooperation with all third countries, except for pre-accession beneficiaries and overseas countries and territories from the geographic programmes.



What are the thematic topics that could be funded in development cooperation projects?

The NDICI has three pillars:

1. The geographic pillar fosters dialogue and cooperation with third countries (European Neighbourhood, Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Americas and the Caribbean)
2. The thematic pillar fosters cooperation in specific thematic areas:

PART B: Funding opportunities for political foundations

- **Civil Society Organisations:** This programme aims to support civil society organisations in developing countries, including through support for their capacity building, advocacy, and engagement in policy dialogue.
- **Human rights, democracy, and governance:** This is the funding mechanism for democracy, human rights, and good governance in developing countries. There is also a focus on political themes, such as voter education, supporting the election process and cooperating with political parties, parliaments and media. Traditionally, it has been a good fit for political foundations.
- **Peace, stability and conflict prevention:** This programme supports conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities in partner countries and regions, funding conflict analysis, mediation, dialogue, and other measures to prevent and resolve conflicts. This pillar falls mainly under the FPI responsibility.
- **Global challenges:** This new programme concentrates on topics such as health, education, empowering women and children, migration and forced displacement, inclusive growth, decent work, social protection, food security and local authorities.

3. The rapid response pillar includes emergency actions and stability in times of crisis. This component is designed to allow the EU to respond more quickly to crises as they arise. This pillar falls mainly under the FPI responsibility.

All three pillars are of interest to political foundations, although the thematic pillars might be the most interesting ones.

Project types for international development projects

a. Grants: the EU regularly publishes calls for proposals on the EU's Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal, inviting organisations to submit project proposals in response to specific objectives and priorities. This includes projects that are selected and managed by EU Delegations around the world or the Commission headquarters in Brussels.

[Visit the portal.](#)

b. Direct Awards: in some cases, the Commission awards funding directly to an organisation without a competitive process, such as in emergencies or when the organisation has a proven track record of success in implementing projects in a particular area.

c. Tenders: EU funding is also published as a tender, i.e. as a commercial/profit-making contract. This includes service contracts which can be of interest to political foundations and NGOs. All tenders (and increasingly calls for proposals, though not yet by all DGs) are published on the Funding and Tender Portal.

d. Framework Contracts (for-profit contracts): the Commission may establish framework contracts with organisations that have been pre-selected based on their expertise and experience in a particular sector or region. The contracts may then be used to commission specific projects or services.

e. Delegated Cooperation: the Commission may also delegate the management of EU funding to other organisations, such as national or international development agencies, in accordance with specific rules and procedures. These agencies will then be the ones to publish calls and contract the implementing partners.

f. Joint Programming: in certain contexts, the Commission may engage in joint programming with other donors and stakeholders to coordinate funding and achieve greater impact in a particular sector or region.

What is the difference between a grant and a tender in development cooperation?

There are a number of differences between a grant and a tender project:

- 1.** Grants are not-for-profit making them accessible for NGOs, whereas tender projects are for-profit and mainly for private companies.
- 2.** Grants are your own projects where you can propose an idea within the context of the call for proposal. In comparison, tender projects are service contracts which you implement for the EC.
- 3.** Usually, several grants are selected within one call for proposal. A service contract is only awarded to the most competitive offer or to one company.
- 4.** The application process and documents differ.

PART B: Funding opportunities for political foundations

	Grant	Tender
Objective	Independent projects of organisations or institutions	Provision of services, work and supplies
Owner	Grant recipient	DG launching the call
EU financial contribution	Co-funding usually required: between 5 % and 50 % of the total grant	100%
Procedure	Call for proposal	Call for tender
Profit possible	No	Yes*

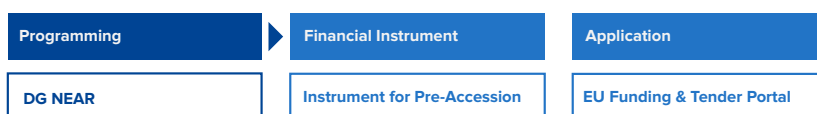
*Profit is usually generated through the margin you calculate in selling your product to the Commission in comparison to the buy-in price. Example of expert days: You buy-in an expert for EUR 250 a day and sell this expert day to the EU for EUR 350.

Is there specific funding for pre-accession countries?

The Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) is the means by which the EU has been supporting reforms in the enlargement region with financial and technical assistance since 2007. IPA funds build the capacities of the beneficiaries throughout the accession process and this results in progressive and positive developments in the region.

The general objective of the IPA III instrument is to support the beneficiaries in adopting and implementing the political, institutional, legal, administrative, social and economic reforms required by those beneficiaries to comply with Union values and to progressively align to Union rules, standards, policies and practices with a view to Union membership, thereby contributing to their stability, security and prosperity.

The current beneficiaries are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey. Assistance is also provided through multi-country or regional programmes.



FUNDING FOR EU COUNTRIES

What is the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV) under the EACEA?

The Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV) under the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) was launched in 2021 and will run for seven years until 2027. It seeks to support and develop open, rights-based, democratic, equal and inclusive societies based on the rule of law. That includes a vibrant and empowered civil society, encouraging people's democratic, civic and social participation and cultivating the rich diversity of European society, based on our common values, history and memory.

The CERV programme has four pillars:

1. Equality, rights and gender equality – promoting rights, non-discrimination, equality (including gender equality), and advancing gender and non-discrimination mainstreaming
2. Citizens' engagement and participation – promoting citizens' engagement and participation in the democratic life of the Union, exchanges between citizens of different Member States, and raising awareness of the common European history
3. Daphne - fight violence, including gender-based violence and violence against children
4. Union values - protect and promote Union values

Political foundations that are active at local, regional, national and transnational levels as well as other stakeholders can apply to receive CERV funding for initiatives aimed at citizens' engagement, equality for all and the protection and promotion of rights and EU values. Calls for proposals are also published on the Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal.

[More information](#)

Is Horizon Europe of interest to political foundations?

Political foundations can also apply for projects under Horizon Europe, the EU's principal funding programme for research and innovation. The aim of the

PART B: Funding opportunities for political foundations

programme is to tackle climate change, help to achieve the 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goals and boost the EU's competitiveness and growth.

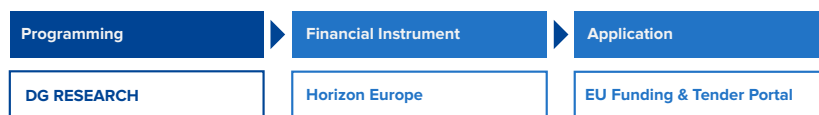
Horizon Europe is structured in three pillars:

1. Excellent Science
2. Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness
3. Innovative Europe

Although relevant calls are published in the sub-programmes of those pillars, the second pillar might be the most relevant for political foundations. It is divided into six clusters:

1. Health
2. Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society
3. Civil Security for Society
4. Digital, Industry and Space
5. Climate, Energy and Mobility
6. Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment

Each of those clusters have dedicated work programmes detailing the aims, eligibility and geographic scope of the calls for the next two years. Besides the three pillars, Horizon Europe introduced five mission areas that operate as a portfolio of actions and have devoted calls. Calls under missions, pillars and clusters open in batches throughout the year and are published on the EU Funding and Tender Opportunities portal.



Is there specific funding for environmental projects?

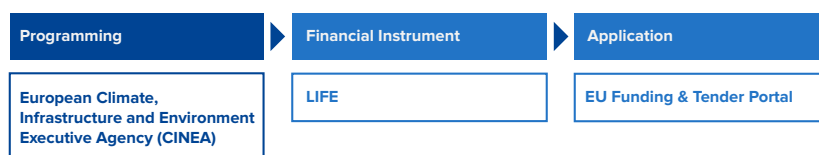
The LIFE programme is an important European instrument for the development and implementation of European nature and environmental policy. LIFE has two

PART B: Funding opportunities for political foundations

components – environment and climate action – each with its own priorities and budgets. Sub-programmes include:

- Environment: Nature and Biodiversity
- Environment: Circular Economy and Quality of Life
- Climate: Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation
- Climate: Clean Energy Transition (CET)

Organisations including political foundations that are legally registered in the EU – as well as in Iceland, Albania, Turkey, Israel and Ukraine – are eligible to apply and the projects need to take place in those countries. Only in exceptional cases does the programme finance activities outside this geographical scope. LIFE grants usually require a high co-financing contribution of around 50 %. In addition, LIFE also offers operating grants for environmental and climate CSOs for EU advocacy work. LIFE is supported by the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA). Calls are published each year on the EU Funding and Tender Opportunities portal.



Is there funding related to education, training and youth?

Erasmus+ is the EU's flagship programme for education, training, youth and sport. It has an estimated budget of EUR 26.2 billion. This is nearly double the funding compared to its predecessor programme (2014-2020). The 2021-2027 programme places a strong focus on social inclusion, green and digital transitions, and promoting young people's participation in democratic life.

It supports the priorities and activities set out in the European Education Area, Digital Education Action Plan and the European Skills Agenda. The programme also:

- supports the European Pillar of Social Rights
- implements the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027
- develops the European dimension in sport

While the programme mostly funds organisations based in the EU, in the European Economic Area and pre-accession countries, access to limited funding is also possible for organisations from outside the EU. Calls are published each year on the EU Funding and Tender Opportunities portal.

What is the European Social Fund Plus?

It is also possible to benefit from European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) support. These funds are managed by the managing authorities in an EU region or country. In the 2021-2027 funding period, the new ESF+ will focus more on the idea of a more social Europe, bringing together the previous ESF, the previous European Aid Fund for the Most Deprived (FEAD), the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) and the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI).

The main objective of the ESF+ is to contribute to a social Europe and to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights. The ESF+ will invest in 3 main areas:

1. education, training and lifelong learning
2. the effectiveness of labour markets and equal access to quality employment
3. social inclusion, health and combatting poverty

Any public or private organisation that is a legal entity can apply to deliver an ESF+ project in response to a call published at the Funding and Tender Portal.

What is the Creative Europe programme?

Creative Europe invests in actions that reinforce cultural diversity and respond to the needs and challenges of the cultural and creative sectors. It might not be the most straightforward funding instrument for political foundations, but it definitely has some space which could still be of interest.

The main objectives of the programme are to safeguard, develop and promote European cultural and linguistic diversity and heritage, and to increase the competitiveness and economic potential of the cultural and creative sectors, in particular the audiovisual sector.

The Creative Europe programme is divided into three strands:

1. Culture Strand: initiatives promoting and enhancing artistic and cultural cooperation at European level, such as literature, cultural heritage and music.

PART B: Funding opportunities for political foundations

2. Media Strand: initiatives encouraging the competitiveness, innovation and sustainability of the European audiovisual sector such as policy support, awareness raising, and engaging with audiences. This cluster also contains support for dialogue, consultation with stakeholders, promotion and outreach activities.
3. Cross-sectoral Strand: cross-sectoral transnational policy cooperation between different cultural and creative sectors.

The Creative Europe programme 2021-2027 has a budget of EUR 2.44 billion, compared to EUR 1.47 billion from the previous programme (2014-2020).

[Calls are published on this website.](#)

PART C: GETTING PREPARED FOR FUNDING

Can every organisation apply for funding?

Non-governmental, civil society and non-profit organisations are eligible for EU funding where their areas of activity relate to EU policies. However, it is important to check the eligibility criteria in the call for proposal for specific guidance. Each call has its own eligibility criteria. For many projects financed under NDICI – Global Europe for instance, your organisation needs to be registered for a certain period of time or needs to provide financial reports from auditors from the last three years as an applicant organisation. In other projects, a consortium together with local partners is required. It is also worth checking if a co-funding amount from a source other than the EU is required. All this is stated in the call for proposal that the EU publishes on the Funding and Tender Portal.

Are applications the same for all funding programs?

Unfortunately, application processes, application documents, and application systems vary between the different funding programs. Applications for funding for development cooperation (NDICI – Global Europe, IPA) follow the same path. However, other programs such as LIFE or Horizon Europe apply different procedures.

This guide concentrates on presenting the application process for development cooperation programs, since major parts of funds for political foundations are allocated through these programs. For further guidance on other programs, check the websites of the respective program as provided in the Annex of this guide.

Where do you find calls?

In the future, the EU will launch all their projects on one platform: the Funding and Tender Portal. However, this is still in transition so calls are currently still published on different platforms:

[Funding and Tender Portal.](#)

[Calls for Proposals and Tenders](#) (Phasing out).

If you are interested in finding calls for different thematic areas, [check this website.](#)

How can you be prepared?

In the majority of cases, you have to wait until a suitable call is published by the EU to apply for funding. This applies to all funding programs. However, you can already get prepared beforehand to minimise stress during the application phase.

1

2

3

4

Register your organisation

Document your References

Look for Partners / Your Role

Monitor Calls

1. Register your organisation

If you are working in the area of development cooperation, the most important step to do is to register your organisation in the PADOR (Potential Applicant Data Online Registration) system. Since the eligibility to apply is only determined after the application has been reviewed in the final step, we recommend that you review your own eligibility to apply as well as that of your partners early on and in a self-critical manner using the qualification criteria mentioned in chapter 2.1 of the guidelines.

[Visit PADOR.](#)

The following information is required:

- Registration documents (stamped registration extract translated into one of the EU languages)
- Statutes or articles of the organisation

- Legal Entity file published together with the call
- VAT Number
- Self-evaluation for applicants, co-applicants and affiliated entities regarding their internal Policy and Procedures against Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEA-H)
- For lead applicants: financial reports of the last three years including audit reports, the financial information form published together with the call.

[For further information on required documents.](#)

2. Document your References

You will have to prove your experience in ‘project references’ which form part of the full narrative application. It is advisable to prepare these documents beforehand to showcase your experience to potential partners as well as to save time later on. The document requires you to provide a short description (half a page) of objectives and outputs, duration, budget and partners for each project implemented during the last three years.

3. Look for Partners / Your Role

In addition to getting registered in the Funding and Tender Portal, you need to think about your role in a project. Would you like to be the lead applicant or act as a co-applicant? This question depends on your experience and capacity in managing international funds, your financial capacity, and the overall responsibility you would like to have. As the lead applicant, you bear the overall responsibility for the project and can be held liable for ineligible costs by the EU. For smaller organisations, it is usually recommended to start as a co-beneficiary.

Independent of which role you would like to play in the project, it is advisable to think of suitable partners you would like to build a partnership with.

[Check the partner search database offered at the Funding and Tender Portal for more information.](#)

4. Monitor Calls

If you are looking for EU funding, you should screen the Funding and Tender Portal every week to find out which calls have been published. Talk to the EU Delegations or to your national contact point, read the annual strategy papers

to find out what the topics of interest are to you, and talk to partners. EU money is about networking and knowing ahead of time what to expect.

A selection of application documents

What kind of application documents have to be submitted depends on two things: what kind of project you are applying to (grant or tender) and the specific funding program. Check the application and administrative supporting documents for each specific program and call for proposal. You will find them in the guidelines of the call for proposal.

How do you apply for INTPA projects?

In the majority of cases, political foundations apply to a 'grant project'. This usually requires a narrative application, a budget and a logical framework. Most calls are divided into two-stage procedures. In this case, you will have to submit a five-page concept note first. Only after a positive evaluation will a full application be required. Nowadays, applications are submitted online via the PROSPECT system.

Concept Note	Full Application
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5-page short concept (description of the action and relevance)• Declaration by applicant• Budget figure in PROSPECT total and % of EU funding• Application uploaded in PROSPECT as a PDF file <p>Pre-requisite: registration on PADOR.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 23-page Description of Action (DoA)• Logical Framework• Budget with narrative• Mandate of applicant and co-applicant• Declaration of Honour• Upload in PROSPECT (DoA and logical framework as a PDF; Budget as an Excel file)

PADOR, PROSPECT, OPSYS – what do these means?

These acronyms represent the technical platforms that the EU uses when it comes to development cooperation with third parties. In the future, these platforms will be combined into a single entry point into the Funding and Tender Portal.

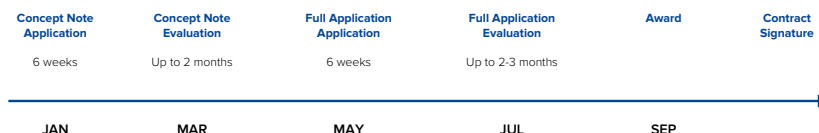


How big is the project budget and is co-funding required?

There is no standard budget size. Depending on the funding program, budgets can vary from EUR 250 000 to more than EUR 4 million.

Timeline – from application to contract signature

Applying for EU money requires time. From the time a call is published until contract signature, between eight and ten months can easily go by. Below is a typical timeline for a two-stage procedure (concept note and full application). This schedule can be used as guidance regardless of whether it is a grant or a tender project.



How much time and resources are needed to set up an application?

EU applications are definitely time-consuming. You can easily plan for 80 hours until your final product is ready. Be realistic about your capacities to not give up in the middle of the application.

The approach displayed below should be observed during the compilation of a full application as well as upon submission of a concept note. In general, you

PART C: Getting prepared for funding

can distinguish four phases. The first phase is to get a deep understanding of the call for proposal. The next step should only be taken with a clear picture about the intention of the call and its framework in mind. The second phase is the decision phase. In this phase, you brainstorm whether you have a suitable idea that matches the objectives of the call, about your role in the project, the selection of partners, and if you have the means to apply for the project as well as to implement it later on. If these questions are positively answered, then you are able to start elaborating on the proposal itself.

<p>Read the Guidelines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective of call • Eligibility to apply • Partners • Budget (co-funding?) • Duration • Application Procedure • Deadline 	<p>Brainstorm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do I have an idea that fits my experience and the call? • What role would I like to play (lead or partner?) • Cooperation? • Do I have the necessary means (HR, co-funding?) • Can we implement our idea within the given conditions (time, budget?)
<p>Time: approximately 2 hours</p>	<p>Time: approximately 15 hours</p>

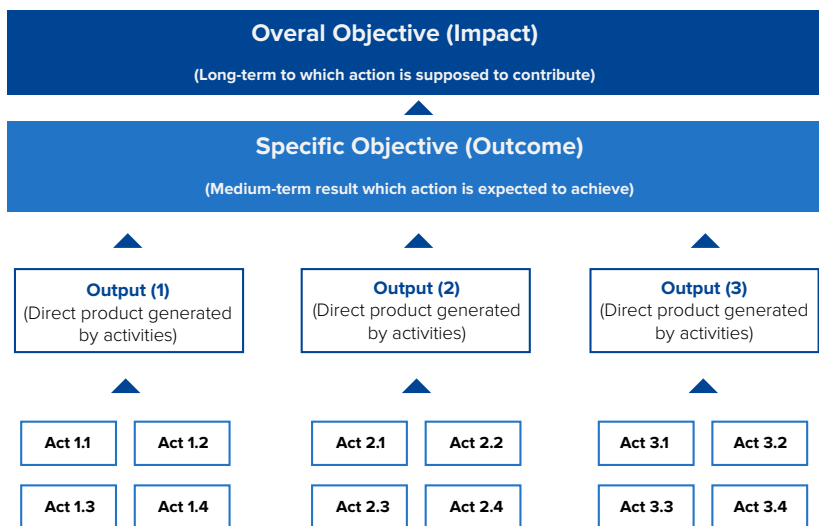
<p>Concept Note</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start working on the intervention logic & Theory of Change • Relevance to the objectives of the call • Definition of target group • Activities • Partners and their experience • What is the size of your budget? • Register in PADOR • Submit online PROSPECT 	<p>Full Application</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elaborate on the description of the action • Prepare detailed budget with narrative • Prepare logical framework • Upload supporting documents
<p>Time: approximately 30 hours</p>	<p>Time: approximately 60 hours</p>

It is advisable to start uploading the application documents one day before the deadline. Sometime the system breaks down due to overload. Check if you have uploaded all the necessary files and double-check that all files can be opened.

How do you prepare the Theory of Change?

When starting to elaborate on the project application, it is best to start thinking about the Theory of Change. What impact will your project have on the target country and target group? How is this relevant to the call for proposal?

The Theory of Change should be reflected in the intervention logic. A good logic is key for success. If you plan your project together with partners, a brainstorming/ planning session is recommended. The graphic below provides insight on the logic of an EU-funded project.



The Theory of Change forms the following causality:

If we wish to contribute to the overall objective/impact, then we must achieve the specific objective/outcome.

If we wish to achieve the specific objective, then we must deliver the specified results/outputs.

If we wish to deliver the results/outputs, then the specified activities must be implemented.

If we wish to implement the specified activities, then we must apply the identified inputs/resources.

Checklist to make your proposal a success

The following is a checklist of prerequisites for a successful application:

Recommendations for your concept:

Be relevant. Demonstrate relevance towards the objectives of the EU guidelines, the target region and target groups ('slightly relevant' is not sufficient).

- ☑ Present a good intervention logic, where the different components help to achieve the next level (from activities to outputs, from outputs to outcome, from outcome to impact)
- ☑ Clearly present your target group. Quantify and provide details. Example: 340 women (disaggregated by age) of saving clubs in XYZ regions in Zimbabwe.
- ☑ Partners should have sufficient experience and financial capacities. Work packages are divided according to capabilities; no 'one-partner' show. Decision-making structures are clearly described.
- ☑ The activity plan should be precise and detailed and provide information on how, when, what and who. Project monitoring is an integral part of implementation.
- ☑ Present a convincing dissemination plan (multiplying of results, outreach, visibility).

Recommendations for your budget:

- ☑ Respect the maximum contribution by the EU.
- ☑ Elaborate on a realistic human resource structure reflecting your real costs including side costs. A personnel structure which appears overloaded constitutes grounds for disqualification. Guideline: a maximum of 40 % of the project amount.

PART C: Getting prepared for funding

- ☑ Only budget costs for infrastructure and office which are in proportion to the project.
- ☑ The activity plan should be clearly reflected in the budget.

Remember the administrative documents

Check that your project application has no administrative irregularities (administrative documents are complete and are signed finally and absolutely, the documents are certified if necessary, etc.).

ANNEX

DG International Partnerships (DG INTPA): https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/index_en

DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR): https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/index_en

DG Justice and Consumers (DG JUST): https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/justice-and-consumers_en

EEAS: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/international-cooperation-partnership_en

FPI: https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/foreign-policy-instruments_en

The Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF): https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/eu-budget/long-term-eu-budget/2021-2027_en

Multi-Annual Strategic Plans (MASPs): https://commission.europa.eu/publications/strategic-plans-2020-2024_en

Multiannual Indicative Programmes (MIPs): https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/funding-and-technical-assistance/funding-instruments/global-europe-programming_en

Annual Action Plans (AAPs): https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/action-plans_en

Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI – Global Europe): https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/funding-and-technical-assistance/neighbourhood-development-and-international-cooperation-instrument-global-europe-ndici-global-europe_en

The Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA): https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/overview-instrument-pre-accession-assistance_en

The Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV): https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/justice-and-consumers/justice-and-consumers-funding-tenders/funding-programmes/citizens-equality-rights-and-values-programme_en

LIFE Programme: https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/life_en

Erasmus+ programme: <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/en>

Horizon Europe: https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en

Creative Europe: <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe/about-the-creative-europe-programme>;

calls published: Calls are published on this website: <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/funding/calls?>

PADOR: [https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/display/ExactExternalWiki/e-Calls+PADOR-Partner Search \(europa.eu\)](https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/display/ExactExternalWiki/e-Calls+PADOR-Partner+Search+(europa.eu))

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

ABOUT

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Susanne Stephan is an international consultant specialising in project and team management for international development projects. She has over 20 years of experience as a project manager, consultant, mediator, and trainer in intercultural settings. Susanne is a business economist by training and has worked with international donors such as the European Union since the beginning of her career. She has designed, managed, and monitored dozens of projects funded by the European Union, often in partnership with political foundations, international NGOs, or on-the-ground partners.

ABOUT THE EDITOR

Jasmina Mršo is the publications coordinator and policy officer at the European Network of Political Foundations (ENoP). She has a background in local politics and is an expert in working with political foundations and political parties. She is also a skilled capacity-building trainer and moderator and has organised many local and international events. Policy areas that interest her are gender equality and women's participation in political parties, development cooperation, EU's foreign policy initiatives, especially concerning EU enlargement.

ABOUT ENoP

The European Network of Political Foundations - ENoP serves as an umbrella network and information hub for political foundations on topics related to democracy and development cooperation. ENoP brings together 46 political foundations from 19 European countries, active in Europe and with over 130 local offices in partner countries. Although independent in nature, ENoP is a cross-party network, and its broad spectrum of affiliation corresponds to the political representation in the European Parliament. As such, the Network reflects the political diversity of the European democratic landscape and gives ENoP a unique approach.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For their insights that were crucial in writing this Manual, we would like to acknowledge and especially thank former ENoP Coordinator **Denis Schrey** from the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, the ENoP **Working Group EU Funding** and all active **ENoP Members**.

Navigate EU funding effortlessly with this concise guide tailored for European political foundations. Explore EU structures, funding programs, and application strategies to amplify your foundation's impact in democracy support and development cooperation. Empower your organisation to secure resources, drive change, and make a lasting difference. Your roadmap for successfully empowering political foundations for EU funding starts here



**Co-funded by
the European Union**