



# Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM)

## Invitation to submit a proposal

European Civil Protection Pool Adaptation grants

(UCPM-2023-ECPP-URC-IBA)

Version 1.0  
11 January 2023



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<b>HISTORY OF CHANGES</b>			
<b>Version</b>	<b>Publication Date</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Page</b>
1.0	dd.mm.2020	▪ Initial version (new MFF).	
		▪	
		▪	
		▪	



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
 Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid  
 Operations (ECHO)  
 Emergency Management and rescEU  
**ECHO.A.02 – Capacities and Operational Support**

## **INVITATION TO SUBMIT A PROPOSAL**

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## Introduction

This is an invitation to submit proposals for EU **action grants, and more specifically adaptation grants**, in the field of the European Civil Protection Pool (ECPP, the Pool) under the **Union Civil Protection Mechanism**.

The regulatory framework for this EU Funding Programme is set out in:

- Regulation 2018/1046 ([EU Financial Regulation](#))
- the basic act (UCPM Decision [1313/2013](#)<sup>1</sup>)

The invitation is launched in accordance with the [UCPM Multi-Annual Work Programme 2021-2025](#)<sup>2</sup> and will be managed by the **European Commission, Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO)**.

The invitation covers the following **topics**:

- **Topic 1: UCPM-2023-ECPP-URC— European Civil Protection Pool Upgrade or repair of ECPP response capacities**
- **Topic 2: UCPM-2023-ECPP-URC-NGEU - European Civil Protection Pool - Upgrade or repair of multipurpose ECPP response capacities to respond to COVID-19 or other health related emergencies**

We invite you to read the call **documentation** carefully, and in particular the present document, the [Model Grant Agreement](#), the [EU Funding & Tenders Portal Online Manual](#) and the [EU Grants AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement](#).

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

- the [present call document](#) outlines the:
  - background, objectives, scope, activities that can be funded and the expected results (sections 1 and 2)
  - available budget and timetable (sections 3 and 4)
  - admissibility and eligibility conditions (including mandatory documents; sections 5 and 6)
  - criteria for financial and operational capacity and exclusion (section 7)
  - evaluation and award procedure (section 8)
  - award criteria (section 9)
  - legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements (section 10)
  - how to submit an application (section 11)
- the [Online Manual](#) outlines the:

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<sup>1</sup> Decision No 1313/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 924).

<sup>2</sup> COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION of 15.12.2022 on the financing of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism and adopting a multiannual work programme for 2021-2025 repealing and replacing Implementing Decision C(2022) 961 final

- procedures to register and submit proposals online via the EU Funding & Tenders Portal ('Portal')
- recommendations for the preparation of the application
- the AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement contains:
  - detailed annotations on all the provisions in the Grant Agreement you will have to sign in order to obtain the grant (*including cost eligibility, payment schedule, accessory obligations, etc.*).

## 1. Background

The Union Civil Protection Mechanism ('the Union Mechanism') governed by Decision No 1313/2013/EU as amended by Regulation 836/2021 (hereafter "Decision No 1313/2013/EU"), strengthens cooperation between the Union and the Member States and facilitates coordination in the field of civil protection to improve the Union's response to natural and human-induced disasters.

*Article 11 of Decision No 1313/2013/EU* defines the legal framework of the European Civil Protection Pool ('ECPP'). The ECPP consists of a pool of voluntarily pre-committed response capacities of the Member States and include modules, other response capacities and categories of experts.

Article 21(2)(c) of Decision No 1313/2013 sets out the eligibility of actions for financial assistance, for the adaptation of Member States' response capacities *"to a state of readiness and availability that makes them deployable as part of the European Civil Protection Pool"*.

[Commission Implementing Decision No 2014/762/EU](#), as amended by Commission Implementing Decision No 2019/570, and hereafter referred to as 'the Implementing Decision', defines the rules for setting up the ECPP. In particular, chapters 4 and 5, and Annexes II, III, IV and V, are relevant for the implementation of the ECPP and the related financing of adaptation costs.

Finally, Council Regulation (EU) No 2020/2094 establishes the European Union Recovery Instrument (Next Generation EU) to support the recovery in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis. Accordingly, the Instrument finances measures for increasing the level of the Union's crisis preparedness and enabling a quick and effective Union response in the event of major emergencies as stipulated in Article 1(2)(e). As such, actions funded from the European Union Recovery Instrument (Next Generation EU) should only be used if it is used for preparedness measures clearly related to the difficulties faced during the COVID-19 crisis with the aim to address the risk of further waves of COVID-19. Funding of activities in third countries or benefitting third countries should only be possible where those activities increase the crisis preparedness of the Union.

**NB:** In the present document, Member States should be understood as EU Member States and UCPM Participating States.

Obligation to commit the capacity to the ECPP when an adaptation grant is granted:

As per Article 2 of the [Implementing Decision \(EU\) 2019/1310](#), a Member State or Participating State receiving Union financial support for the adaptation of a response capacity shall commit the latter to the Pool for a minimum period depending on the total amount of funding received.

The minimum period will be determined as follows, starting from the effective availability of the capacity to the Pool (i.e. after successful completion of the certification process):

- 3 years for capacities receiving up to EUR 300 000 of financial support;
- 5 years for capacities receiving from EUR 300 001 up to EUR 1 000 000 of financial support;
- 7 years for capacities receiving from EUR 1 000 001 up to EUR 2 000 000 of financial support;
- 10 years for capacities receiving more than EUR 2 000 000 of financial support.

## **2. Objectives — Themes and priorities - Expected outcomes**

Each grant application must exclusively target one of the following topics.

Under the same topic, a grant application can cover the adaptation of several response capacities when the requested EU contribution per capacity does not exceed 100.000,00 €.

### **Topic 1 - UCPM-2023-ECPP-URC— European Civil Protection Pool Upgrade or repair of ECPP response capacities**

#### *2.1. Objectives*

The objective of the adaptation grant is to upgrade or repair Member States' response capacities to a state of readiness and availability that makes them deployable as part of the ECPP.

Upgrade or repair grant can be:

- 1) The result of an ongoing or completed certification process (in particular to address recommendations made at any stage of this process). If required by Article 2 of the Implementing Decision (EU) 2019/13, see above, an official letter to extend the commitment period in the ECPP must be attached to the grant application (Annex I - Commitment letter).
- 2) Requested before the ECPP certification has started. In this case, the application can only be accepted for evaluation provided that an official letter to commit the capacity in the ECPP signed by the responsible national Civil Protection Authority is attached to the grant application, in line with Article 2 of the Implementing Decision (EU) 2019/13 (see Annex I - Commitment letter).

#### *2.2. Themes and priorities*

In order to contribute to achieving the above general objective, applicants are invited to focus on the following themes and priorities:

- i) All Pool capacities (modules, TAST, ORCs - including Light USAR Teams) are eligible, except i) those targeted under Topic 2 and ii) MUSAR, HUSAR and HCP modules, as, for these capacities, the ECPP already largely exceeds the capacity goals.
- ii) Applicants are strongly encouraged to identify and propose activities that can make the response capacity:

- more digital, with the objective of enhancing its performance in UCPM deployments, and

- greener, in particular through better waste management, higher energy or resource efficiency and lower reliance on fossil fuels.

iii) Where applicable, applicants are requested to propose activities, in their grant applications, that help address gender inequalities or differences and the needs of people living with disabilities.

iv) Each application has to include dedicated communication activities to promote the UCPM and the ECPP, and activities to enhance the EU visibility, in line with the EU visibility and communication manual for civil protection (see below). The minimum EU visibility package must include:

- marking of all equipment procured with the EU logo + “Co-funded by the European Union” (see below the communication and visibility manual),

- patches (model below) to be worn by all the staff members of the capacity,

- EU flags.

These visibility elements must be systematically used in all UCPM deployments and exercises.



### *2.3. Expected outcomes*

- Increased ability of the EU to respond to disasters, through a strengthened European disaster preparedness.

- ECPP capacities are geographically positioned to allow for quick and effective deployment to different risk prone areas.

## **Topic 2: UCPM-2023-ECPP-URC-NGEU - European Civil Protection Pool - Upgrade or repair of multipurpose ECPP response capacities to respond to COVID-19 or other health related emergencies**

### *2.1. Objectives*

The objective of the adaptation grant is to upgrade or repair Member States' COVID-19 or other health related response capacities to a state of readiness and availability

that makes them deployable as part of the ECPP.

Upgrade or repair grant can be:

- 1) The result of an ongoing or completed certification process (in particular to address recommendations made at any stage of this process). If required by Article 2 of the Implementing Decision (EU) 2019/13, an official letter to extend the commitment period in the ECPP must be attached to the grant application (Annex I).
- 2) Requested before the ECPP certification has started. In this case, the application can only be accepted for evaluation provided that an official letter to commit the capacity in the ECPP is attached to the grant application (Annex I).

## *2.2 Themes and priorities*

In order to contribute to achieving the above general objective, applicants are invited to focus on the following themes and priorities:

- i) Multi-purpose COVID-19 or other health related capacities are eligible.

These comprise:

- modules: EMT type 1 fixed and mobile, EMT type 2, EMT type 3; MEVAC; CBRNDET
- ORCs: CBRN decontamination teams, medical evacuation jets air ambulance and medical evacuation helicopter; EMT for specialised care, mobile biosafety laboratories.

Applicants can also submit proposals for health-related capacities that are currently not specifically listed in the Annex III of the Implementing Decision 2014/762, but that can be possibly offered to the Pool in the open category of "Other response capacities necessary to address identified risks". These could include (non exhaustive list):

- Terrestrial and waterborne evacuation means for patients,
- Mobile intensive care units (ICUs),
- Specialized care teams (see WHO typology in their [Blue Book](#): Classification and minimum standards for EMTs),
- Mobile and transportable testing or vaccinations assets etc.

Applicants can also submit proposals to add a health-related or COVID-related component to any kind of response capacity.

ii) Applicants are strongly encouraged to identify and propose activities that can make the response capacity:

- more digital, with the objective of enhancing its performance in UCPM deployments, and
- greener, in particular through better waste management, higher energy resource efficiency and lower reliance on fossil fuels.

iii) Where applicable, applicants are requested to propose activities, in their grant applications, that help address gender inequalities or differences and the needs of people living with disabilities.

iv) Each application has to include dedicated communication activities to promote the UCPM and the ECPP, and activities to enhance the EU visibility, in line with the EU visibility and communication manual for civil protection (see below). The minimum EU visibility package must include:

- marking of all equipment procured with the EU logo + “Co-funded by the European Union” (see below the communication and visibility manual),
- patches (model below) to be worn by all the staff members of the capacity,
- EU flags.

These visibility elements must be systematically used in all UCPM deployments and exercises.



### *2.3 Expected outcomes*

- Increased ability of the EU to respond to the disaster, through a strengthened European emergency preparedness to COVID-19 and other health related emergencies.
- ECPP capacities are geographically positioned to allow for quick and effective deployment to different risk prone areas.

### **3. Available budget**

The total indicative budget earmarked for the co-financing of projects under this direct grant award is estimated at EUR 7 100 000.

Allocation of funds per topic:

- Topic 1 - MFF: EUR 2.8 million
- Topic 2 - ERI (NGEU): EUR 4.3 million (for Covid-19-or other health related capacities).

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

#### 4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines	
Opening:	19 January 2023
<b>Deadline for submission:</b>	<b>20 April 2023 – 17:00:00 CET (Brussels)</b>
Evaluation (tentative):	May - July 2023
Information on evaluation results (tentative):	July - August 2023
GA signature (tentative):	September - October 2023

#### 5. Admissibility and documents

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

Proposals must be submitted **electronically** via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (accessible via the link in the invitation letter). Paper submissions are NOT possible.

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

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

- Application Form Part A — contains administrative information about the participants (future coordinator, beneficiaries and affiliated entities) and the summarised budget for the project  
(*to be filled in directly online*)
- Application Form Part B — contains the technical description of the project  
(*mandatory word template to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed and then assembled and re-uploaded as PDF*)
- **Mandatory annexes** and supporting documents (*to be uploaded*):
  - detailed budget table (*mandatory excel template available in the Submission System*) *to be submitted both on the portal and as Excel file to [ECHO-EUROPEAN-CIVIL-PROTECTION-POOL@ec.europa.eu](mailto:ECHO-EUROPEAN-CIVIL-PROTECTION-POOL@ec.europa.eu)*
  - Detailed project schedule as detailed GANNT chart in Excel or MS Project to [ECHO-EUROPEAN-CIVIL-PROTECTION-POOL@ec.europa.eu](mailto:ECHO-EUROPEAN-CIVIL-PROTECTION-POOL@ec.europa.eu)
  - activity reports of last year: not applicable to public authorities, mandatory for private entities
  - list of previous projects (key projects for the last 4 years) (*template available in Part B*)

- letter of support (see template available with Part B) from the competent national civil protection authority of each country that will benefit from the action (except for participants which themselves are the national authority)
- Commitment letter to the ECPP (where relevant) – please see Annex I

The Description of the Action and the annexes must be drafted in one of the EU official languages. However, in order to facilitate assessment by evaluators, applicants are encouraged to submit their application in English.

Please note that the amounts entered into the summarised budget table (filled in directly online) must correspond to the amounts calculated in the detailed budget table. In case of discrepancies, the amounts in the online summarised budget table will prevail.

At proposal submission, you will have to confirm that you have the **mandate to act** for all applicants. Moreover, you will have to confirm that the information in the application is correct and complete and that the participants comply with the conditions for receiving EU funding (especially eligibility, financial and operational capacity, exclusion, etc.). Before signing the grant, each beneficiary and affiliated entity will have to confirm this again by signing a declaration of honour (DoH). Proposals without full support will be rejected.

Your application must be **readable, accessible and printable**.

Proposals are limited to maximum **70 pages** (Part B). Evaluators will not consider any additional pages.

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

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

## 6. Eligibility

### 6.1. Eligible participants (eligible countries)

Proposals may be submitted by Member States' or Participating States' competent authorities or other entities authorised by the Member State or Participating State to register the response capacity to the European Civil Protection Pool and to request and receive financial support from the Commission on behalf of that Member State or Participating State.

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

- be legal entities (public or private bodies)
- be established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:
  - EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs))
  - UCPM Participating States: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia and Türkiye ([list of participating countries](#)).

All participants and affiliated entities must register in the [Participant Register](#) — before submitting the proposal. The participants and affiliated entities proposed to be awarded a grant will have to be validated by the Central Validation Service (conducted by Research Executive Agency) before the signature of the grant agreement. For the validation, they will be requested to upload in the Participant Register documents showing their legal status and origin.

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

### *Specific cases*

Natural persons are NOT eligible.

International organisations — International organisations are eligible. The rules on eligible countries do not apply to them.

Entities without legal personality — Entities which do not have legal personality under their national law may exceptionally participate, provided that their representatives have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf, and offer guarantees for the protection of the EU financial interests equivalent to that offered by legal persons<sup>3</sup>.

EU bodies can NOT be part of the consortium.

Associations and interest groupings — Entities composed of members may participate as 'sole beneficiaries' or 'beneficiaries without legal personality'<sup>4</sup>. ⚠ Please note that if the action will be implemented by the members, they should also participate (either as beneficiaries or as affiliated entities, otherwise their costs will NOT be eligible).

Countries currently negotiating association agreements — Beneficiaries from countries with ongoing negotiations may participate in the call and can sign grants if the negotiations are concluded before grant signature (with retroactive effect, if provided in the agreement).

EU restrictive measures — Special rules apply for certain entities (e.g. *entities subject to [EU restrictive measures](#) under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)*<sup>5</sup> and entities covered by Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#)<sup>6</sup>). Such entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity, including as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any).

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

### *6.2. Consortium composition*

Applications by single applicants are allowed (single beneficiaries; affiliated entities and other participants are allowed, if needed).

<sup>3</sup> See Article 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

<sup>4</sup> For the definitions, see Articles 187(2) and 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

<sup>5</sup> Please note that the EU Official Journal contains the official list and, in case of conflict, its content prevails over that of the [EU Sanctions Map](#).

<sup>6</sup> Commission guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#) on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards (OJEU C 205 of 19.07.2013, pp. 9-11).

### 6.3. Eligible activities

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

#### Activities that can be funded (scope)

Below follows a non-exhaustive list of potential activities for which the related costs may be considered eligible for an adaptation grant, provided that the application demonstrates these activities specifically relate to the capacity's participation in UCPM deployments:

- Activities related to improved autonomy and self-sufficiency of the respective module, TAST or other response capacity,
- Activities related to a faster transportability, e.g. lighter equipment, solutions to reduce volume by new containers and packaging equipment, EU standardised pallets;
- Activities related to enhanced safety and security, e.g. personal protection equipment or other personal equipment;
- Activities related to communication tools, e.g. satellite communication equipment, ICT equipment and relevant applications, radios;
- Activities related to interoperability and enhanced readiness for deployment, e.g. training, including "train the trainers", in view of enlarged roster of staff, development and translation of standard operating procedures, IT tools for registration of the staff on roster, and individual internal team drills;
- Activities related to communication and EU visibility: please refer to the EU visibility and communication manual for civil protection:



Communication\_and\_Visibility\_Manual\_Civil

- Activities linked to forming multinational response capacities, e.g. workshops, trainings, development of common methodologies or standards, common standard operating procedures;
- Activities specifically related to the certification process that cannot be covered by or are not undertaken as part of other EU-funded activities, e.g. obligatory training courses that are not available under the UCPM training programme, exercises that are not part of MODEX or other types of exercises co-financed by the UCPM;
- Project management activities, e.g. organisation of events, procurement, capacity monitoring and review, reporting, financial management.

Projects must comply with EU policy interests and priorities (such as environment, social, security, industrial and trade policy, etc.).

### 6.4. Ineligible activities

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

- Activities related to the development of new capacities,
- Activities related to the regular maintenance of response capacities,

- Activities covered by other EU-funded grants (e.g. under the WHO grant - Support to the Emergency Medical Teams (EMT) Initiative (mentorship and classification process, standard setting and training support); MODEX

Financial support to third parties is not allowed.

### *6.5. Geographic location (target countries)*

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

### *6.6. Security*

Projects involving EU classified information must undergo security scrutiny to authorise funding and may be made subject to specific security rules (detailed in a security aspects letter (SAL) which is annexed to the Grant Agreement).

These rules (governed by Decision [2015/444](#)<sup>7</sup> and its implementing rules and/or national rules) provide for instance that:

- projects involving information classified TRES SECRET UE/EU TOP SECRET (or equivalent) can NOT be funded
- classified information must be marked in accordance with the applicable security instructions in the SAL
- information with classification levels CONFIDENTIEL UE/EU CONFIDENTIAL or above (and RESTREINT UE/ EU RESTRICTED, if required by national rules) may be:
  - created or accessed only on premises with facility security clearing (FSC) from the competent national security authority (NSA), in accordance with the national rules
  - handled only in a secured area accredited by the competent NSA
  - accessed and handled only by persons with valid personnel security clearance (PSC) and a need-to-know
- at the end of the grant, the classified information must either be returned or continue to be protected in accordance with the applicable rules
- action tasks involving EU classified information (EUCI) may be subcontracted only with prior written approval from the granting authority and only to entities established in an EU Member State or in a non-EU country with a security of information agreement with the EU (or an administrative arrangement with the Commission)
- disclosure of EUCI to third parties is subject to prior written approval from the granting authority.

Please note that, depending on the type of activity, facility security clearing may have to be provided before grant signature. The granting authority will assess the need for clearing in each case and will establish their delivery date during grant preparation. Please note that in no circumstances can we sign any grant agreement until at least one of the beneficiaries in a consortium has facility security clearing.

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<sup>7</sup> See Commission Decision 2015/544/EU, Euratom of 13 March 2015 on the security rules for protecting EU classified information (OJ L 72, 17.3.2015, p. 53).

Further security recommendations may be added to the Grant Agreement in the form of security deliverables (*e.g. create security advisory group, limit level of detail, use fake scenario, exclude use of classified information, etc.*).

Beneficiaries must ensure that their projects are not subject to national/third-country security requirements that could affect implementation or put into question the award of the grant (*e.g. technology restrictions, national security classification, etc.*). The granting authority must be notified immediately of any potential security issues.

## 7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion

### 7.1. Financial capacity

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

The financial capacity check will be carried out on the basis of the documents you will be requested to upload in the [Participant Register](#) during grant preparation (*e.g. profit and loss account and balance sheet, business plan, audit report produced by an approved external auditor, certifying the accounts for the last closed financial year, etc.*). The analysis will be based on neutral financial indicators, but will also take into account other aspects, such as dependency on EU funding and deficit and revenue in previous years.

The check will normally be done for all beneficiaries, except:

- public bodies (entities established as public body under national law, including local, regional or national authorities) or international organisations
- if the individual requested grant amount is not more than EUR 60 000.

If needed, it may also be done for affiliated entities.

If we consider that your financial capacity is not satisfactory, we may require:

- further information
  - an enhanced financial responsibility regime, i.e. joint and several responsibility for all beneficiaries or joint and several liability of affiliated entities (*see below, section 10*)
  - pre-financing paid in instalments
  - (one or more) pre-financing guarantees (*see below, section 10*)
- or
- propose no pre-financing
  - request that you are replaced or, if needed, reject the entire proposal.



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

### 7.2. Operational capacity

Applicants must have the **know-how, qualifications** and **resources** to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share (including sufficient experience in projects of comparable size and nature).

This capacity will be assessed together with the 'Quality' award criterion, on the basis of the competence and experience of the applicants and their project teams, including operational resources (human, technical and other) or, exceptionally, the measures proposed to obtain it by the time the task implementation starts.

If the evaluation of the award criterion is positive, the applicants are considered to have sufficient operational capacity.

Applicants will have to show their capacity via the following information:

- the description of the applicants provided in Part B Project Technical Description
- applicants' activity reports of last year
- list of previous projects (key projects for the last 4 years)

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

Public bodies, Member State organisations and international organisations are exempted from the operational capacity check.

### *7.3. Exclusion*

Applicants which are subject to an **EU exclusion decision** or in one of the following **exclusion situations** that bar them from receiving EU funding can NOT participate<sup>8</sup>:

- bankruptcy, winding up, affairs administered by the courts, arrangement with creditors, suspended business activities or other similar procedures (including procedures for persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- in breach of social security or tax obligations (including if done by persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- guilty of grave professional misconduct<sup>9</sup> (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No [2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)

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<sup>8</sup> See Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

<sup>9</sup> Professional misconduct includes: violation of ethical standards of the profession, wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility, false declarations/misrepresentation of information, participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition, violation of IPR, attempting to influence decision-making processes or obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain advantage.

- created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).

Applicants will also be refused if it turns out that<sup>10</sup>:

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

## 8. Evaluation and award procedure

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

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

All proposals will be informed about the evaluation result (**evaluation result letter**).

Successful proposals will be invited for grant preparation; the other ones will be put on the reserve list or rejected.

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

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

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

## 9. Award criteria

The award criteria facilitate the evaluation of proposals in relation to the set objectives and priorities. They enable the selection of proposals which the Contracting Authority can be confident will comply with its objectives and priorities.

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<sup>10</sup> See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

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

Topic 1 - **UCPM-2023-ECPP-URC— European Civil Protection Pool Upgrade or repair of ECPP response capacities**

– **Relevance (maximum 30 points):**

Criteria
Clarity and consistency of project and objectives, including logical links between the identified problems, needs and solutions proposed.
Relevance of the proposed activities, training etc.
Innovative solutions that can help better tackle current and future challenges.
Comparative relevance (why funding this upgrade/repair brings better international deployability compared to national one and a higher value to the EU)

– **Quality (maximum 40 points):**

Criteria
Concept and methodology for implementing the project (quality assurance, project management, project schedule, monitoring and evaluation).
Risk assessment and management, mitigation measures.
Consortium governance and decision-making process. Quality of the project teams in terms of expertise, skills, responsibilities
Cost effectiveness (sufficient/appropriate budget for proper implementation; best value for money)

– **Impact (maximum 30 points):**

Criteria
Strengthening the European disaster preparedness and response by adapting the capacity to new operating conditions and international deployability.
Use of solutions to minimise the environmental impact during the deployment of the capacity as well as digital ones.
Capacity to operate in culturally and context relevant way without any discrimination including of gender, age, religion, sexual orientation or disability.
Strategy for communication/ dissemination and visibility of funding

**Topic 2 - UCPM-2023-ECPP-URC-NGEU - European Civil Protection Pool - Upgrade or repair of multipurpose ECPP response capacities to respond to COVID-19 or other health related emergencies**

**– Relevance (maximum 30 points):**

Criteria
Clarity and consistency of project and objectives, including logical links between the identified problems, needs and solutions proposed.
Relevance of the proposed activities, training, certification/classification plan etc.
Innovative solutions that can help better tackle current and future challenges.
Comparative relevance (why funding this upgrade/repair brings better international deployability compared to national one and a higher value to the EU)
Comparative relevance (why funding this upgrade/repair brings better response to Covid-19 or other health related emergencies)

**– Quality (maximum 40 points):**

Criteria
Concept and methodology for implementing the project (quality assurance, project management, project schedule, monitoring and evaluation).
Risk assessment and management, mitigation measures.
Consortium governance and decision-making process. Quality of the project teams in terms of expertise, skills, responsibilities
Cost effectiveness (sufficient/appropriate budget for proper implementation; best value for money)

**– Impact (maximum 30 points):**

Criteria
Strengthening the European disaster preparedness and response to Covid-19 and other health related emergencies by adapting the capacity to new operating conditions and international deployability.
Use of solutions to minimise the environmental impact during the deployment of the capacity as well as digital ones.
Capacity to operate in culturally and context relevant way without any discrimination including of gender, age, religion, sexual orientation or disability.
Strategy for communication/ dissemination and visibility of funding

Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score
Relevance	15	30
Quality	20	40
Impact	15	30
<b>Overall (pass) scores</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100</b>

Maximum score: 100 points.

Individual thresholds: 50% per criterion.

Overall threshold: 65 points.

Proposals that pass the individual thresholds AND the overall threshold will be considered for funding — within the limits of the available call budget. Other proposals will be rejected.

The applications will be **ranked** according to their total score. Should two or more proposals obtain equal total scores, they will be ranked according to their score for criterion “Impact”, then if a tie remains, according to their score for criterion “Quality”.

In addition to the above-mentioned award criteria, when awarding the projects, the Commission reserves the right to take into account the geographical repartition of the capacities to ensure an optimal coverage of the EU. In case of competing proposals within the same geographical area, proposals with the same overall score will be ranked according to their score for criterion “Impact”.

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

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

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

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

### 10.1. Starting date and project duration

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

The initial project duration: **maximum of 24 months**.

### 10.2. Milestones and deliverables

The milestones and deliverables for each project will be managed through the Portal Grant Management System and will be reflected in Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement.

The following deliverables are mandatory for all projects:

- Progress reports at mid term
- SOPs and factsheet for newly committed capacities at the end of project
- Progress report on the WHO classification process for capacities not yet verified by WHO – with the progress and final report
- Progress report on the INSARAG classification process for Light USAR Teams not yet verified by INSARAG – with the progress and final report
- Final report at the end of the project

### **10.3. Form of grant, funding rate and maximum grant amount**

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

Project budget (maximum grant amount): No minimum or maximum limit. The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

The grant will be a budget-based mixed actual cost grant (actual costs, with unit cost and flat-rate elements). This means that it will reimburse ONLY certain types of costs (eligible costs) and costs that were *actually* incurred for your project (NOT the *budgeted* costs). For unit costs and flat-rates, you can charge the amounts calculated as explained in the Grant Agreement (*see art 6 and Annex 2 and 2a*).

The costs will be reimbursed at the **funding rate** fixed in the Grant Agreement (**75%**).

Upgrade: The EU financial contribution will be defined by applying a maximum co-financing rate of 75 % to the eligible costs incurred and declared by the beneficiary and its affiliated entities provided that these do not exceed 50% of the average cost of developing the capacity (cf. Annex II is used as a reference for the estimated average cost of developing a capacity).

In case the capacity is not listed in this Annex, the applicant has to provide in the application or as a supporting document the total actual cost (equipment, staff and training included) of developing such capacity.

Repair: The EU financial contribution will be defined by applying a maximum co-financing rate of 75 % to the eligible costs incurred and declared by the beneficiary.

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

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

### **10.4. Budget categories and cost eligibility rules**

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

*Budget categories for this call:*

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

**Specific cost eligibility conditions for this call:**

Personnel costs:

- SME owner/natural person unit cost<sup>11</sup>: Yes
- volunteers unit cost<sup>12</sup>: No

Travel and subsistence unit cost<sup>13</sup>: Yes

Equipment costs: full cost

The costs of purchasing, developing, and/or operating new response capacities in a disaster situation are not eligible

Indirect costs flat rate: 7% of the eligible direct costs (categories A-D, except volunteers costs and exempted specific cost categories, if any)

VAT: VAT is not eligible

Costs for financial support to third parties are not allowed.

In-kind contributions for free are allowed, but cost-neutral, i.e. they cannot be declared as cost.

Visibility, communication: costs linked to the visibility of the project are eligible (stickers, patches etc.); costs for presenting the project on the participants' websites or social media accounts are eligible but costs for *separate* project websites are not eligible.

### **10.5. Reporting and payment arrangements**

The reporting and payment arrangements are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4 and art 21 and 22*).

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<sup>11</sup> Commission [Decision](#) of 20 October 2020 authorising the use of unit costs for the personnel costs of the owners of small and medium-sized enterprises and beneficiaries that are natural persons not receiving a salary for the work carried out by themselves under an action or work programme (C(2020)7715).

<sup>12</sup> Commission [Decision](#) of 10 April 2019 authorising the use of unit costs for declaring personnel costs for the work carried out by volunteers under an action or a work programme (C(2019)2646).

<sup>13</sup> Commission [Decision](#) of 12 January 2021 authorising the use of unit costs for travel, accommodation and subsistence costs under an action or work programme under the 2021-2027 multi-annual financial framework (C(2021)35).

After grant signature, you will normally receive a **pre-financing** corresponding to 70% of the maximum grant amount to start working on the project. The pre-financing will be paid 30 days from entry into force of the grant agreement or of the financial guarantee (if required) — whichever is the latest.

There will be no **additional pre-financing payments** linked to a pre-financing report.

In addition, you will be expected to submit one or more progress reports not linked to payments.

**Payment of the balance:** At the end of the project, the Commission will calculate the final grant amount on the base of the final report submitted by the Coordinator. If the total of earlier payments is higher than the final grant amount, the Commission will ask the Coordinator) to pay back the difference (recovery).

All payments will be made to the Coordinator.

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

Please also note that you are responsible for keeping records on all the work done and the costs declared.

#### **10.6. Pre-financing guarantees**

If a pre-financing guarantee is required, it will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4*). The amount will be set during grant preparation and it will normally be equal or lower than the pre-financing for your grant.

The guarantee should be in euro and issued by an approved bank/financial institution established in an EU Member State. If you are established in a non-EU country and would like to provide a guarantee from a bank/financial institution in your country, please contact us (this may be exceptionally accepted, if it offers equivalent security).

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

Pre-financing guarantees are formally NOT linked to individual consortium members, which means that you are free to organise how to provide the guarantee amount (*by one or several beneficiaries, for the overall amount or several guarantees for partial amounts, by the beneficiary concerned or by another beneficiary, etc.*). It is however important that the requested amount is covered and that the guarantee(s) are sent to us in time to make the pre-financing (scanned copy via Portal AND original by post).

If agreed with us, the bank guarantee may be replaced by a guarantee from a third party.

The guarantee will be released at the end of the grant, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the Grant Agreement.

#### **10.7. Certificates**

Depending on the type of action, size of grant amount and type of beneficiaries, you may be requested to submit different certificates. The types, schedules and thresholds for each certificate are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4 and art 24*).

A CFS must be provided for each beneficiary and affiliated entity when the requested EU contribution at interim or final payment is EUR 325 000 or more.

#### **10.8. Liability regime for recoveries**

The liability regime for recoveries will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet point 4.4 and art 22*).

For beneficiaries, it is one of the following:

- limited joint and several liability with individual ceilings — *each beneficiary up to their maximum grant amount*
- unconditional joint and several liability — *each beneficiary up to the maximum grant amount for the action*

or

- individual financial responsibility — *each beneficiary only for their own debts.*

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

#### **10.9. Provisions concerning the project implementation**

Security rules: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 13 and Annex 5)*

Intellectual property rights (IPR) rules: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 16 and Annex 5):*

- rights of use on results: Yes

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

- additional communication and dissemination activities: Yes
- limited communication and visibility to protect persons involved: Yes
- visibility in field operations outside the EU: Yes

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

- zero tolerance: Yes
- transfer of assets at the end of the action: No
- EU restrictive measures: Yes

#### **10.10. Non-compliance and breach of contract**

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

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

## 11. How to submit an application

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

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

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

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

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

### b) submit the proposal

Access the Electronic Submission System through the following links – one per topic:

Topic 1 UCPM-2023-ECPP-URC:

<https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/submission/manage/screen/submission/create-draft/28807?topic=UCPM-2023-ECPP-URC>

Topic 2 UCPM-2023-ECPP-URC-NGEU:

<https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/submission/manage/screen/submission/create-draft/28807?topic=UCPM-2023-ECPP-URC-NGEU>

(the links are also provided in the invitation letter).

Submit your proposal in 3 parts, as follows:

- Part A includes administrative information about the applicant organisations (future coordinator, beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners) and the summarised budget for the proposal. Fill it in directly online
- Part B (description of the action) covers the technical content of the proposal. Download the mandatory word template from the Submission System, fill it in and upload it as a PDF file
- Annexes (*see section 5*). Upload them as PDF file (single or multiple depending on the slots). Excel upload is sometimes possible, depending on the file type.

The **project acronym** should follow the structure (max 20 characters):

Topic 1 - ECPP-2023

Topic 2 – ECPP-T2-2023

The proposal must keep to the **page limits** (*see section 5*); excess pages will be disregarded.

Documents must be uploaded to the **right category** in the Submission System otherwise the proposal might be considered incomplete and thus inadmissible.

The proposal must be submitted **before the call deadline** (see section 4). After this deadline, the system is closed and proposals can no longer be submitted.

Once the proposal is submitted, you will receive a **confirmation e-mail** (with date and time of your application). If you do not receive this confirmation e-mail, it means your proposal has NOT been submitted. If you believe this is due to a fault in the Submission System, you should immediately file a complaint via the [IT Helpdesk webform](#), explaining the circumstances and attaching a copy of the proposal (and, if possible, screenshots to show what happened).

Details on processes and procedures are described in the [Online Manual](#). The Online Manual also contains the links to FAQs and detailed instructions regarding the Portal Electronic Exchange System.

## 12. Help

As far as possible, **please try to find the answers you need yourself**, in this and the other documentation (we have limited resources for handling direct enquiries):

- [Online Manual](#)
- [Portal FAQ](#) (for general questions).

For invitations, we will contact you directly in case of a call update.

### Contact

For individual questions on the Portal Submission System, please contact the [IT Helpdesk](#).

Non-IT related questions should be sent to the following email address: [ECHO-EUROPEAN-CIVIL-PROTECTION-POOL@ec.europa.eu](mailto:ECHO-EUROPEAN-CIVIL-PROTECTION-POOL@ec.europa.eu)



Please:

- send your questions at the latest 7 days before the submission deadline (see section 4)
- indicate clearly the reference of the call and topic to which your question relates (see cover page).

## 13. Important



### IMPORTANT

- **Don't wait until the end** — Complete your application sufficiently in advance of the deadline to avoid any last minute **technical problems**. Problems due to last minute submissions (e.g. congestion, etc.) will be entirely at your risk. Call deadlines can NOT be extended.
- **Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Exchange System** — By submitting the application, all participants **accept** to use the electronic exchange system in accordance with the [Portal Terms & Conditions](#).
- **Registration** — Before submitting the application, all beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners must be registered in the [Participant Register](#). The participant identification code (PIC) (one per participant) is mandatory for the Application Form.
- **Consortium roles** — When setting up your consortium, you should think of

organisations that help you reach objectives and solve problems.

The roles should be attributed according to the level of participation in the project. Main participants should participate as **beneficiaries** or **affiliated entities**; other entities can participate as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions. **Associated partners** and third parties giving in-kind contributions should bear their own costs (they will not become formal recipients of EU funding). **Subcontracting** should normally constitute a limited part and must be performed by third parties (not by one of the beneficiaries/affiliated entities). Subcontracting going beyond 30% of the total eligible costs must be justified in the application.

- **Coordinator** — In multi-beneficiary grants, the beneficiaries participate as consortium (group of beneficiaries). They will have to choose a coordinator, who will take care of the project management and coordination and will represent the consortium towards the granting authority. In mono-beneficiary grants, the single beneficiary will automatically be coordinator.
- **Affiliated entities** — Applicants may participate with affiliated entities (i.e. entities linked to a beneficiary which participate in the action with similar rights and obligations as the beneficiaries, but do not sign the grant and therefore do not become beneficiaries themselves). They will get a part of the grant money and must therefore comply with all the call conditions and be validated (just like beneficiaries); but they do not count towards the minimum eligibility criteria for consortium composition (if any).
- **Associated partners** — Applicants may participate with associated partners (i.e. partner organisations which participate in the action but without the right to get grant money). They participate without funding and therefore do not need to be validated.
- **Consortium agreement** — For practical and legal reasons it is recommended to set up internal arrangements that allow you to deal with exceptional or unforeseen circumstances (in all cases, even if not mandatory under the Grant Agreement). The consortium agreement also gives you the possibility to redistribute the grant money according to your own consortium-internal principles and parameters (for instance, one beneficiary can reattribute its grant money to another beneficiary). The consortium agreement thus allows you to customise the EU grant to the needs inside your consortium and can also help to protect you in case of disputes.
- **Balanced project budget**— Grant applications must ensure a balanced project budget and sufficient other resources to implement the project successfully (*e.g. own contributions, income generated by the action, financial contributions from third parties, etc.*). You may be requested to lower your estimated costs, if they are ineligible (including excessive).
- **No-profit rule** — Grants may NOT give a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). This will be checked by us at the end of the project.
- **No double funding** — There is a strict prohibition of double funding from the EU budget (except under EU Synergies actions). Outside such Synergies actions, any given action may receive only ONE grant from the EU budget and cost items may under NO circumstances declared to two different EU actions.
- **Completed/ongoing projects** — Proposals for projects that have already been completed will be rejected; proposals for projects that have already started will be assessed on a case-by-case basis (in this case, no costs can be reimbursed for activities that took place before the project starting date/proposal submission).
- **Combination with EU operating grants** — Combination with EU operating grants is possible, if the project remains outside the operating grant work programme and you make sure that cost items are clearly separated in your accounting and NOT declared twice (see [AGA — Annotated Model Grant Agreement, art 6.2.E](#)).
- **Multiple proposals** — Applicants may submit more than one proposal for *different* projects under the same call (and be awarded a funding for them).

Organisations may participate in several proposals.

BUT: if there are several proposals for *very similar* projects, only one application will be accepted and evaluated; the applicants will be asked to withdraw one of them (or it will be rejected).

- **Resubmission** — Proposals may be changed and re-submitted until the deadline for submission.
- **Rejection** — By submitting the application, all applicants accept the call conditions set out in this Call Document (and the documents it refers to). Proposals that do not comply with all the call conditions will be **rejected**. This applies also to applicants: All applicants need to fulfil the criteria; if any one of them doesn't, they must be replaced or the entire proposal will be rejected.
- **Cancellation** — There may be circumstances which may require the cancellation of the call. In this case, you will be informed via a call or topic update. Please note that cancellations are without entitlement to compensation.
- **Language** — You can submit your proposal in any official EU language (project abstract/summary should however always be in English). For reasons of efficiency, we strongly advise you to use English for the entire application. If you need the call documentation in another official EU language, please submit a request within 10 days after call publication (for the contact information, *see section 12*).
- **Transparency** — In accordance with Article 38 of the [EU Financial Regulation](#), information about EU grants awarded is published each year on the [Europa website](#).

This includes:

- beneficiary names
- beneficiary addresses
- the purpose for which the grant was awarded
- the maximum amount awarded.

The publication can exceptionally be waived (on reasoned and duly substantiated request), if there is a risk that the disclosure could jeopardise your rights and freedoms under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights or harm your commercial interests.

- **Data protection** — The submission of a proposal under this call involves the collection, use and processing of personal data. This data will be processed in accordance with the applicable legal framework. It will be processed solely for the purpose of evaluating your proposal, subsequent management of your grant and, if needed, programme monitoring, evaluation and communication. Details are explained in the [Funding & Tenders Portal Privacy Statement](#).

**Annex I – Commitment letter**

**Annex II – Average costs of developing the capacities**