



*Cover designed by Freepik*

## **EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND + (ESF+)**

### **CALL CONDITIONS FOR THE ALMA INITIATIVE**

## ABSTRACT

**Call identifier:** Lithuanian European Social Fund Agency (ESFA) as an entrusted entity to implement the ESF SI+ Initiative.

**Open Call title:** European mobility and social inclusion for integrating disadvantaged young people not in employment, education, or training (NEETs).

**Open Publication date:** 15/12/2022

**Deadline:** 15/03/2023 at 5:00 PM CET time zone

**Indicative overall grant budget for the Call:** 15 000 000 EUR

**The form of grant:** it is an action grant which takes the form of a contributions of lump sum, units and financing not linked to costs.

**Expected duration of a project:** 18 months

**The indicative budget for individual grants** is between 300 000 EUR and 650 000 EUR per project, constituting not more than 80% of the project's total budget. A co-financing of at least 20 % must thus come from the Beneficiary's own resources.

**Official Call site:** <https://www.esf.lt/lt>;

<https://ec.europa.eu/european-social-fund-plus/en/esf-social-innovation>

**For submission:**

- Get access to the system - <https://forms.office.com/e/00C1MdpdU>
- Connect to the system - <https://esinnis.sharepoint.com/sites/eSINNIS>

**For support:** [ALMA@esf.lt](mailto:ALMA@esf.lt)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	1
GLOSSARY .....	3
INTRODUCTION .....	4
BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE CALL .....	4
1. BACKGROUND ON ALMA .....	7
2. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS .....	7
2.1 Objectives .....	7
2.2 Who can apply? .....	8
2.3 Scope, financed activities, target group, and expected results .....	9
2.4 Further Guidance .....	12
3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA .....	13
3.1 Eligibility of costs .....	13
3.2 Ineligible costs and contributions .....	18
3.3 Use of simplified costs .....	18
3.4 Other regulations, dissemination and visibility, ownership .....	20
4. FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONAL CAPACITY AND EXCLUSION .....	21
4.1 Financial capacity .....	21
4.2. Operational capacity .....	22
4.3. Exclusion Criteria .....	23
5. ASSESSMENT, SELECTION, AWARD AND DISPUTE SETTLEMENT PROCEDURES ..	25
5.1. Assessment and selection procedure .....	25
5.2. Guiding Principles of Assessment .....	27
5.3. Admissibility and Eligibility Check .....	27
5.4. Restrictions applying to some legal entities .....	28
5.5. Award criteria .....	29
5.6. Complaints about Application rejection .....	31
6. SUBMISSION PROCEDURE .....	32
7. SUPPORT .....	33
8. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS .....	34
8.1 Reporting and payment arrangements .....	34
8.2 Liability regime for recoveries .....	35
8.3 Provisions concerning project implementation .....	35
9. AMENDMENTS .....	35
10. ANNEXES .....	36

## GLOSSARY

**Beneficiary** - legal entity responsible for the overall project implementation and management. It bears the entire financial and legal responsibility vis-à-vis the granting authority.

**ESFA** - Lithuanian European Social Fund Agency selected as the entrusted entity by the European Commission.

**FNLC** - financing not linked to costs. A payment method for grants and repayable assistance wherein the reimbursement of expenditure is based on the fulfilment of pre-established conditions or results to be achieved.

**NEETs** - disadvantaged young people aged 18 to 29 who are not in education, employment, or training.

**Lump sum** - a form of simplified costs, which is determined during the case-by-case assessment of the Application Forms based on the submitted detailed draft budget and in accordance with the predefined terms of agreement on activities and/or outputs, and their completion.

**Partner** – any legal entity taking part in the project on behalf of the Beneficiary and directly accountable to the Beneficiary. The involvement of a Partner does not change the Beneficiary's liability for the proper implementation of the project - the Beneficiary remains solely responsible for the improper implementation of the project due to the Partner's action or inaction.

**Portal** – the electronic portal and exchange system managed by ESFA.

**SCOs** - simplified cost options are an alternative method for calculating the eligible costs of an operation as opposed to the traditional (incurred and paid costs ('real costs')) method. Simplified cost options are calculated according to a predefined method based on outputs, results or some other costs, clearly identified in advance either by reference to an amount per unit or by applying a percentage.

**Unit cost** - a form of simplified cost, which is set for all or part of the eligible costs of an action, based on quantified input, output or results multiplied by the standard price of a unit, established in advance, or determined during the case-by-case assessment of the Application Form on the basis of a submitted detailed draft budget.

## INTRODUCTION

The ESF Social Innovation+ initiative aims to facilitate the transfer and upscaling of innovative solutions to the societal challenges of today. Through supporting transnational cooperation, the initiative aims to expand the best practices in various fields, including employment, education, skills and social inclusion across Europe.

This Call supports the preparation and implementation of the ALMA<sup>1</sup> (Aim-Learn-Master-Achieve) initiative, to promote the social empowerment of disadvantaged young people. The aim is to help them integrate into society and, ultimately, to find their way into the job market by combining support for education, vocational training, or employment in their home country with a work-related learning experience in another EU country. Individual coaching and counselling will be offered at all stages of this initiative. The objective of ALMA is to improve the skills, knowledge, and experience of these young people, but also to boost their self-confidence.

ALMA will be implemented through partnerships and close cooperation between sending and receiving organisations, including public and private employment services, social services, training providers, youth organisations and others involved in selecting participants. The call also contributes to the objectives of the European Year of Skills 2023, promoting the dissemination of skills that empower people to successfully navigate labour market changes and to fully engage in society.

The Call Conditions explain how to get financial support for transnational cooperation aimed at the preparation for and implementation of the ALMA initiative. It will be managed by ESFA, selected as the entrusted entity by the European Commission (hereinafter “the EC”).

## BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE CALL

### **What?**

The purpose of this Call is to help Member States integrate ALMA into their ESF+ programs, by piloting or scaling up ALMA-type operations targeting NEETs in accordance with the ALMA Manual<sup>2</sup>.

The present Call offers a one-off opportunity to support and complement ALMA implementation by testing new measures and building up national and transnational partnerships. Implementers from all Member States will have the opportunity to test the ALMA initiative, regardless of whether ALMA is already included under ESF+ shared management in their country or region or not.

### **Who?**

The Call is addressed to organisations with a legal personality (public and private bodies) established in one of the EU Member States.

---

<sup>1</sup> ALMA initiative: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1549&langId=en>

<sup>2</sup> ALMA Manual of Guidance <https://ec.europa.eu/european-social-fund-plus/en/publications/alma-manual-guidance>

The Applicant must establish a partnership at the national level as well as in at least one other Member State, as further explained below (before or during the project implementation).

### Supported actions and expected results

The Call will fund actions in two phases.

**The 1<sup>st</sup> phase is the Start-up Phase** (maximum 4 months), and financing will be provided for the following activities and results:

Partnership Activities	Deliverables
1) Building up partnerships and defining the roles of actors within a Member State/region.	Signed Memorandum(s) of Understanding (Partnership Agreement(s)) between the Beneficiary and the national Partner(s).
2) Building transnational partnerships with the relevant actors in at least one receiving Member State.	Signed Memorandum(s) of Understanding (Partnership Agreement(s)) between the Beneficiary and the lead Partner organisation from the receiving country (transnational Partner).

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> phase is the Implementation Phase** (maximum 14 months) and financing will be provided for the following activities and results:

Activities	Deliverables
1) <i>Preparation</i> : selection of NEETs and their preparation for mobility.	Final Report “Lessons learned and future plans”, including analysis of the results and impact of the project, lessons learned, recommendations, and future plans.
2) <i>Mobility</i> of the young people (2–6 months of work placement, accommodation, leisure activities etc.). Minimum 2 groups of 8-12 young people should be sent to placements in another Member State.	
3) <i>Follow-up</i> with the young people after their stay abroad, including counselling, professional guidance, etc.	
4) <i>Preparation</i> of the Final Report “Lessons learned and future plans” (including analysis of the results and impact of the project, lessons learned, recommendations, and future plans).	
5) <i>Dissemination</i> of experience and the best practices.	

### Where?

The projects will be implemented within the territory of the EU. Mobility will be the essential place of this project and will be carried out in one or more Member States that offer work placements for the participants. The other activities will take place in the Member State of the Beneficiary.

## Financial support

The overall budget of the Call is 15 000 000 EUR.

A possible grant ranges between 300 000 EUR to 650 000 EUR per project, constituting not more than 80% of the project's total budget. A co-financing of at least 20 % must thus come from the Beneficiary's own resources, and it cannot be financed from the other funds provided by the EC.

The project expenditures can be divided into the following categories:

- Costs related to the organisational set-up (e.g., search of partners, project preparation, management during project implementation, meetings, expert advice and consultancy, translation and interpretation, hire of facilities).
- Costs related to the selection, preparation and training of the participants, as well as to the follow-up activities (e.g., recruitment, preparation, supervision, placement search, debriefing and (re)integration into the labour market or education).
- Costs related to the mobility of individual participants (e.g., travel, accommodation, subsistence, insurance, and social security costs).

Expenditures for activities **in the Start-up phase** can be submitted based on unit cost which are determined in the Decision by the European Commission (hereinafter "Decision")<sup>3</sup> and/or draft budget based on real costs.

**A lump sum for the activities of the Start-up phase will be established during the assessment of Application, based on the draft budget submitted and linked to the work packages.**

Expenditures for activities **in the Implementation phase** can be submitted:

- 1) using the EU-level ALMA SCOs and FNLC based on the Delegated Act by the European Commission (hereinafter "the Delegated Act")<sup>4</sup> for the pilot exchanges,
- 2) draft budget based on real costs for the preparation of the Final Report and dissemination of experience and the best practices.

**A lump sum for activities** (project monitoring, preparation of the Final Report, dissemination of experience and the best practices, assessment of achievements of the target group, and evaluation of the project results) **will be established during the assessment of the Application, based on the draft budget submitted and linked to the work packages.**

Lump sums, unit costs and FNLC will be calculated by applying the co-financing rate to the total estimated eligible costs, as set out in [Section 3.1](#) of the Call Conditions. The overall lump sum, together with the unit costs and FNLC, will be fixed in the Grant Agreement as the maximum grant amount.

## Duration and timing

The maximum duration of a project is 18 months after signing the Grant Agreement.

---

<sup>3</sup> European Commission Decision C(2021) 35, 12.1.2021, [https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/unit-cost-decision-travel\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/unit-cost-decision-travel_en.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2022/2175 of 5 August 2022 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council regarding the definition of unit costs and establishment of amounts for financing not linked to costs for certain operations facilitating the integration of young persons into the labor market, education and society in the framework of the 'Aim, Learn, Master, Achieve' (ALMA) initiative, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32022R2175>

## Indicative timetable and deadlines

Call opening	15 December 2022
Deadline for submission	15 March 2023 – 5:00 PM CET time zone
Assessment	March 2023 – July 2023
Information on Assessment results	July 2023
Grant Agreement signature	Between August and September 2023
Start of the projects	Between August and September 2023

## 1. BACKGROUND ON ALMA

ALMA is an active inclusion initiative to empower NEETs by implementing a tailor-made package of measures. ALMA offers these young people counselling in their home country followed by a supervised, work-related learning experience in another EU Member State, with the aim of supporting their integration into society and into the labour market in their home country. ALMA is one of the European Commission initiatives for the European Year of Youth 2022 and a key instrument in implementing the Reinforced Youth Guarantee<sup>5</sup> adopted in 2020.

ALMA builds on a social innovation initiative first implemented in Germany and expanded to several other Members States/regions, including through the Transnational Learning Network Mobility<sup>6</sup> (TLN Mobility). Since 2015, transnational mobility measures have been successfully implemented in eight EU Member States and regions: Spain (Catalonia, Galicia), Czechia, Germany, Poland, Slovenia, Sweden, and Italy (Trento). The mobility programmes have proved remarkable success, with integration rates of up to 60%. The participants are much more likely to finish school, find a training place or a job.

From 2021 through 2027, ALMA will be implemented under shared management in the context of the ESF+ programmes at the national or regional level. The shared management strand is complemented by the present Call under indirect management.

## 2. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

### 2.1 Objectives

The objective of this Call is to help Member States to integrate ALMA into their ESF+ programmes, by piloting or scaling up ALMA-type operations.

**The aim is to support projects within all Member States.** In order to ensure that ALMA is implemented in as many Member States as possible, the award procedure will be competitive, but will also involve geographical criteria. Project selection will be organised in several rounds and based on merits as well as on geographical balance. This means that in each round, **the best (top-ranked) eligible project from each Member State will be selected.** Once the remaining money is

---

<sup>5</sup> European Youth Guarantee <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079&langId=en>

<sup>6</sup> The Transnational Learning Network Mobility <https://www.esf.de/portal/EN/Funding-period-2014-2020/TLN-Mobility/content.html>



insufficient to finance one top-ranked project from each Member State, grants will be awarded to the remaining top-ranked Applications regardless of their country of origin.

Beneficiaries from Member States or regions that already have an experience with ALMA must demonstrate possibilities for scaling up the ALMA programme at the local, regional, national or EU level.

## 2.2 Who can apply?

### **Eligible Beneficiaries**

The ALMA Call is open to legal entities (public or private bodies) established in one of the EU Member States.

If your organisation is already validated by the Central Validation Service, and you have a Participant Identification Code (PIC)<sup>7</sup>, which could be found in the register containing all participants of EU programmes, you don't need to submit the organisation's registration certificate. If you are not validated by the Central Validation Service, please provide the documents proving your organisation's legal status and origin as an Annex to the Application.

**Natural persons and international organisations are NOT eligible to submit Applications.**

**Only organisations that will act as sending organisations may submit Applications** under this Call, and all participant-related costs will be covered by the sending organisation.

### **Partnership at the national level**

It is recommended to involve national Partners with different profiles to ensure the necessary capacity and expertise, including the capacity to demonstrate the impact of the pilot (for example, a research institute, an entity with a track record in social impact measurement, etc.). This is particularly relevant for the recruitment/outreach and follow-up phase as part of the labour market integration.

All possible Applicant that plan to participate in this Call may include a Managing authority or Intermediate body as a Beneficiary or a Partner.

**Potential Beneficiaries and Partners** include:

- 1) NGOs/third-sector/voluntary/youth non-profit organisations,
- 2) local authorities and municipalities,
- 3) job centres, public employment services (PES), employment agencies,
- 4) schools,
- 5) vocational education and training (VET) providers,
- 6) companies, social Partners, representative bodies linked to the labour market, including chambers of commerce and other trade associations,
- 7) agencies responsible for skills validation,
- 8) lifelong-learning research centres and organisations,
- 9) associations and representatives of those involved in VET,
- 10) guidance, consultancy, and information services linked to lifelong learning.

---

<sup>7</sup> Single Electronic Data Interchange Area by the European Commission <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/participant-register>

## **Transnational Partners**

Under this Call, all projects must establish operational partnerships with **at least one Partner from another Member State**. If not concluded by the time of Application submission, the transnational partnership can be finalised during the Start-up phase. A Partner Search Database<sup>8</sup> has been set up to facilitate the search for a transnational Partner. This database includes all project operators selected in the context of the TLN Mobility program.

Finding and selecting companies interested in hosting ALMA participants in the receiving country is essential, and matching companies with participants will require close cooperation between the Partners from the sending and receiving countries.

### 2.3 Scope, financed activities, target group, and expected results

The **maximum duration of a projects is 18 months**.

The project can be implemented no earlier than ESFA publishes the list of projects selected and proposed for financing under this Call. The costs of the project from the date of publication of the list of projects proposed for financing to the date of signing the Grant Agreement of the project are incurred at the risk of the Beneficiary.

**The Start-up Phase (maximum 4 months)** includes the following activities:

1. Building up partnerships and defining roles, responsibilities, and duties of actors within a Member State/region (managing authorities, PES, youth organisations, social Partners, training providers, social services, etc.) in the project, looking for suitable suppliers of training, coaching, or mentoring.
2. Building transnational partnerships with relevant actors in at least one receiving Member State (identifying needs and expectations, finding, and contacting potential Partners, arranging initial meetings with them, establishing transnational relationship, preparing specific mobility plans).

**Deliverables of the Start-up phase** are:

1. Signed Memorandum(s) of Understanding (Partnership Agreement(s)) between the Beneficiary and national Partner(s) defining the roles of the Partners.
2. Signed Memorandum(s) of Understanding (Partnership Agreement(s)) between the Beneficiary and the lead Partner organisation from the receiving country (international Partner) defining the roles of the Partners and the number of intended placements within the scope of the project.

A written Memorandum of Understanding (Partnership Agreement) between the Beneficiary and any of the Partners should cover the following key aspects:

### **General provisions**

- 1) Definitions
- 2) Legal background/scope of the agreement
- 3) Duration of the agreement

---

<sup>8</sup> Partner Search Database: <https://www.esf.de/portal/EN/Funding-period-2014-2020/TLN-Mobility/Partner-Search-Database/content.html>

## **Partnership obligations**

- 1) Obligations of the Beneficiary
- 2) Obligations of the Partner(s)
- 3) Financial agreements
- 4) Project-related communication between the Partners, decision making mechanism
- 5) Project publicity
- 6) Confidentiality and General Data Protection Regulation (hereinafter “GDPR”<sup>9</sup>)

## **Responsibility, liability for unfulfilled obligations, and reparations**

- 1) Nonfulfillment of obligations
- 2) Withdrawal or recovery of unduly paid-out funds
- 3) Project modifications
- 4) Dispute settlement
- 5) Amendment of the partnership agreement

## **Project Partner declaration form (Annex to the Application) is a compulsory Annex to the Memorandum of Understanding (Partnership Agreement).**

A signed Memorandum(s) of Understanding must be submitted with the Application (if signed before the submission of the Application) or with report on the progress of the project in the Portal Reporting tool (if signed in the Start-up phase).

## **Eligible expenses of the Start-up phase**

Expenses in the Start-up phase are meant to be related with the search for Partners, for example:

- 1) travel, accommodation, and subsistence associated with Partners search,
- 2) travel, accommodation, and subsistence associated with visiting potential Partners,
- 3) external advice on drafting Partnership Agreements and other documentation necessary for project implementation,
- 4) staff costs for performing the above-mentioned tasks,
- 5) other costs (e.g., meetings inside the country for building up partnerships, collection of the material (content, translations, etc.)) related to finding Partners.

For more information about eligible expenses please see [Section 3.1](#).

**The Start-up phase is not mandatory or could be shorter than 4 months for the Beneficiaries** that have signed Memorandum(s) of Understanding (Partnership Agreement(s)) before Application submission.

**The Implementation phase is compulsory** for all projects to be supported under this Call.

The transition from Start-up phase to Implementation phase will happen when the Beneficiary presents the deliverables from the 1st phase. The eligibility of the deliverables will be assessed with Periodic report in the Portal Reporting tool.

---

<sup>9</sup> Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32016R0679>

**The Implementation phase (maximum 14 months)** includes the following activities:

1. Preparation:
  - ✓ recruitment and selection of the participants,
  - ✓ assessment of needs,
  - ✓ self-assessment activities for the participants,
  - ✓ preparation of the participants,
  - ✓ identification of needs for training courses,
  - ✓ coaching and mentoring programs,
  - ✓ internships,
  - ✓ preparations for traveling abroad.
2. Work-related **learning experience of 2-6 months in an organisation abroad**, including:
  - ✓ preparation of the staff in the receiving organisation,
  - ✓ training and pedagogical programme for the participants,
  - ✓ social and cultural activities,
  - ✓ mentoring, supporting, and monitoring the participants during their stay abroad.

The placements of young people can be organised in one or several receiving countries, simultaneously or in sequence. Each **project should include a minimum of 2 groups of 8-12 young people** to be sent to placements in another Member State.

3. Follow-up activities after the stay abroad:
  - ✓ supporting and monitoring the participants, including counselling and professional guidance,
  - ✓ self-assessment activities for the participants,
  - ✓ integration of the participants into education, training, or employment,
  - ✓ preparing the employers to provide jobs for the participants,
  - ✓ identification of the key lessons from the project.
4. The Final Report “Lessons learned and future plans” (including analysis of the results and impact of the project, lessons learned and recommendations, and future plans).
5. Dissemination of experience and the best practices (please note that the mandatory dissemination activities are specified in [Section 3.4](#)).

**The Deliverable of the Implementation phase** shall be a Final Report including an assessment of achievements of the target group (based on the results of the pre- and post-mobility self-assessment) and lessons learned as well as follow-up activities (A template for the Final Report “Lessons learned and future plans” is provided in **Annex 4**).

### **Eligible expenses of the Implementation phase**

Expenses for activities in the Implementation phase include:

- 1) a daily rate, additional daily amounts for the mobility phase (if relevant), a top-up for the successful participants<sup>10</sup> based on the Delegated Act,

---

<sup>10</sup> Excluding a daily top-up for the participants that receive an allowance from the Beneficiary, which is not covered by this Call.

- 2) expenses related to the project Final Report, monitoring and assessment activities (staff costs and other additional costs, such as meetings, collection of material related to project activities), and
- 3) dissemination of experience and the best practices (such as meetings and seminars, publications, translation of documentation, etc.).

For more information about eligible expenses, please see [Section 3.1](#).

### **Target group**

Projects submitted under this Call should target NEETs who have difficulties accessing work or training for individual or structural reasons (e.g., disability, long-term unemployment, insufficient school performance or vocational skills, migration background, etc.). Beneficiaries are, however, free to include participants from the age of 15, in line with the youth employment thematic concentration (15-29 years) in the context of the ESF+. Organisations that actively address inclusion and diversity and involve participants with fewer opportunities are highly encouraged to apply.

Within this target group, relevant participants will be, for example:

- Early school leavers,
- Low-skilled people,
- Young people without work experience,
- Economically inactive people,
- Young people raised in orphanages,
- Persons with disabilities or other health issues,
- Young people from a disadvantaged or minority background.

Considering the very diverse backgrounds of the participants under this Call, the Beneficiary must ensure that measures are adapted to their specific needs, skills, and competencies, including the accessibility arrangements for people with disabilities and special needs.

### **2.4 Further Guidance**

In order to make a project successful, it is necessary to follow the steps of project set-up and management. For detailed practical information on the project life cycle, please see **Section 6.1 of the ALMA Manual**.

For practical information and recommended steps for selecting participants from disadvantaged backgrounds, please see **Section 6.2 of the ALMA Manual**.

For detailed steps on the participants' preparation for the experience abroad, including mentoring, please see **Section 6.3 of the ALMA Manual**.

The key elements of work-related learning experience abroad are presented in **Section 6.4 of the ALMA Manual**.

Follow-up activity after the work-related learning experience abroad is an essential part of the transnational mobility experience. For detailed practical information and recommended steps for the follow-up activity, please see **Section 6.5 of the ALMA Manual**.

## 3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

### 3.1 Eligibility of costs

This chapter contains explanations and recommendations on the eligibility of costs.

**The eligible expenditures for the project activities** must be incurred during the duration of the project (except costs relating to the submission of the project's Final Report, prepared using the template available in the Portal Reporting tool).

#### **General eligibility conditions**

**General eligibility conditions** are the following:

**1) for unit costs or contributions (if any):**

- they must be set out in the Delegated Act and/or
- they must be set out in the corresponding Decision<sup>11</sup>;
- the units must be:
  - actually used or produced by the Beneficiary or the Partners,
  - necessary for the implementation of the action,
- the number of units must be identifiable and verifiable, in particular supported by records and documentation.

**2) for flat-rate costs or contributions (if any):**

- they must be set out in the Delegated Act and/or
- they must be set out in the Decision,
- the costs or contributions to which the flat rate is applied must be eligible.

**3) for lump sum costs or contributions (if any):**

- they must be set out in the Call Conditions (see [Section 3.3](#)),
- the work must be completed, and the deliverables must be achieved in accordance with the Application,
- the work is properly implemented by the Beneficiary or the Partners,
- the deliverables must be produced during the duration of the action.

**4) for FNLIC (if any):**

- the results must be achieved, or the conditions must be fulfilled as described in Application.

In addition, for direct cost categories (e. g., personnel, travel & subsistence, subcontracting and other direct costs), only the costs that are directly linked to the action implementation, and can therefore be attributed to it directly, are eligible. They must not include any indirect costs (e. g. costs that are only indirectly linked to the action, e. g., via cost drivers).

#### **Specific eligibility conditions for each cost category**

For each cost category, **specific eligibility conditions** are as follows:

---

<sup>11</sup> European Commission Decision C(2021) 35, 12.1.2021, [https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/unit-cost-decision-travel\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/unit-cost-decision-travel_en.pdf)

## **Direct costs**

### **1) Staff costs**

Staff costs are eligible, if they fulfil general eligibility conditions and are related to the staff working for the Beneficiary under an employment contract (or an equivalent appointing act) and assigned to the project. The eligible amounts for staff costs are established on the basis of the standard scale of unit costs defined by the Beneficiary on real cost (See Table No.1 and Table No.2).

They must be limited to gross salaries and other labour-related costs, such as employers' social security contributions etc., if they arise from the national law or employment contract (or an equivalent appointing act) and are calculated based on the costs actually incurred.

The staff costs may also include supplementary payments for personnel assigned to the project (including payments based on supplementary contracts, regardless of their nature), if:

1. they are part of the Beneficiary's usual remuneration practices and are paid in a consistent manner whenever the same kind of work or expertise is required
2. the criteria used to calculate supplementary payments are objective and generally applied by the Beneficiary, regardless of the source of funding used.

### **2) Purchase costs**

**Purchase costs** for the project (including related duties, taxes, and charges, such as non-deductible or non-refundable value-added tax (VAT)), are eligible if they fulfil general eligibility conditions and are bought using the Beneficiary's usual purchasing practices.

Beneficiaries that are "contracting authorities/entities" within the meaning of the EU Directives on public procurement must comply with the Applicable national law on public procurement and follow the principles of transparency, non-discrimination, mutual acknowledgement, proportionality, and equal standing when procuring products and services.

Beneficiaries that fall outside the scope of the EU Directives on public procurement must follow the principles of transparency, non-discrimination, mutual acknowledgement, proportionality, and equal standing when procuring products and services.

No project Partner shall be contracted as a service provider neither by the Beneficiary, nor by any other project Partner (to avoid any conflict of interest in the procurement of services and goods). Any expenses based on such contracts shall be deemed ineligible.

#### **2.1 Travel and subsistence**

Costs for **travel, accommodation** and **subsistence** must be calculated in Annex 2.

All above-listed items are covered by the unit costs and cannot be reported under any other cost type and category. If no staff costs are foreseen and reported, no travel and accommodation costs can be charged.

#### **2.2 Other goods, works and services**

Purchases of other goods, works and services must be calculated as indicated in the Table No. 1 and Table No.2, Section "Documents".

Such goods, works and services include, for instance, costs to collect material, consumables and supplies, dissemination, protection of results, translations, publications, certificates, and financial guarantees.

**Table No.1 “Eligible costs for the Start-up phase”**

<b>Start-up phase</b>		
A detailed calculation procedure is provided in Annex 2		
<b>Eligible direct costs</b>	<b>Calculation methods</b>	<b>Documents</b>
<b>1. Staff cost based on historic data</b>	<p>To define the unit cost, the hourly rate is used, and the calculation is based on the “1,720 hours per full time employee per calendar year” method as follows:</p> $\text{Hourly rate} = \frac{\text{Annual payroll}}{1\,720}$ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Hourly rate:</b> calculated as indicated above, as a unit cost per Beneficiary, in EUR per hour</li> <li>• <b>Annual payroll:</b> total staff costs per employee, or a corresponding position within the Beneficiary organisation, per year, in EUR.</li> <li>• <b>1,720:</b> maximum number of hours per full-time employee per calendar year.</li> </ul> <p>This maximum number of hours is reduced, on a pro-rata basis, for employees working part-time. This maximum number of hours is also reduced, on a pro-rata basis, for reporting periods shorter than 12 months.</p>	<p>Staff costs <b>must be based on data:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. from similar projects, or</li> <li>2. historical personnel salary data provided by the Beneficiary, or</li> <li>3. data about the salary normally applied in the organisation for the same or similar functions or duties (for example, by providing a certificate on the average wages of a specific employee for 12 months, certificate on the average wages of employees of the relevant position (or performing similar functions), or</li> <li>4. publicly available information about the average wages in the Beneficiary organisation or a similar one).</li> </ol> <p><b>Documentation to submit with the Application Form:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Salary calculation certificate for hourly rate for staff using annual working time of 1720 hour.</li> </ul> <p>Beneficiaries must store the supporting documentation, used for the calculations to determine the hourly rate, and produce it upon request during control checks.</p>
<b>2. Travel and subsistence based on unit cost</b>	<b>Travel:</b> as unit costs, in accordance with the method set out in Annex 2 of the Call Conditions falling under the Decision <sup>12</sup> .	

<sup>12</sup> European Commission Decision C(2021) 35, 12.1.2021, [https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/unit-cost-decision-travel\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/unit-cost-decision-travel_en.pdf)



	<p><b>Accommodation:</b> as unit costs, in accordance with the method set out in Annex 2 of the Call Conditions falling under the Decision.</p> <p><b>Subsistence:</b> as unit costs, in accordance with the method set out in of the Call Conditions falling under the Decision.</p>	
<b>3. Other goods, works and services based on real costs</b>	Goods, works, and services included to produce the Start-up Phase deliverables, for instance, costs to collect material (content, translations, etc.), travels and meetings inside the country <sup>13</sup> for building up partnerships and defining the roles of actors, consumables, and supplies.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Calculation certificate for other goods, works and services,</li> <li>2. at least two preliminary commercial offers of service providers, or a summary of price survey, or</li> <li>3. screenshots with the corresponding information published in public information sources (for example, websites), or</li> <li>4. equivalent historical data of earlier projects which would allow to justify the costs.</li> </ol> <p>Note: offers must be equivalent, and the lowest price or price average should be selected.</p>
<p><b>A lump sum for the Start-up phase will be defined after assessment of the detailed draft budget presented in the Application.</b></p>		

**Table No.2 “Eligible costs for the Implementation phase”**

<b>Implementation phase</b>		
A detailed calculation procedure is provided in Annex 3		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Simplification used</b>	<b>Calculation</b>
<i>Preparation activity</i>	Daily rate, with additional daily amounts for the mobility (if relevant), and a top-up for successful participants	Based on the Delegated Act <sup>14</sup>
<i>Mobility activity</i>		
<i>Follow up activity</i>		
Preparation of the Final Report and Dissemination	Detailed draft budget based on real costs	A <b>lump sum</b> for each work packages will be defined after the assessment of detailed draft budget presented in the Application.
<b>Eligible direct costs</b>	<b>Calculation methods</b>	<b>Documents</b>

<sup>13</sup> an exception of travelling which is not determined in the Decision

<sup>14</sup> Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2022/2175 of 5 August 2022 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council regarding the definition of unit costs and establishment of amounts for financing not linked to costs for certain operations facilitating the integration of young persons into the labour market, education and society in the framework of the ‘Aim, Learn, Master, Achieve’ (ALMA) initiative, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32022R2175>

<p><b>1. Staff cost based on historic data</b></p>	<p>To define the unit cost, the hourly rate is used, and the calculation is based on the “1,720 hours per full time employee per calendar year” method as follows:</p> $\text{Hourly rate} = \frac{\text{Annual payroll}}{1\ 720}$ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Hourly rate:</b> calculated as indicated above, as a unit cost per Beneficiary, in EUR per hour</li> <li>• <b>Annual payroll:</b> total staff costs per employee or the specific position of the Beneficiary per year, in EUR.</li> <li>• <b>1,720:</b> maximum number of hours per full time employee per calendar year.</li> </ul> <p>This maximum number of hours is reduced on a pro-rata basis for employees working part-time. This maximum number of hours is also reduced on a pro-rata basis for reporting periods shorter than 12 months.</p>	<p>Staff costs <b>must be based on data:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. from similar projects, or</li> <li>2. historical personnel salary data provided by the Beneficiary, or</li> <li>3. data about the salary normally applied in the organisation for the same or similar functions or duties (for example, by providing a certificate on the average wages of a specific employee for 12 months, certificate on the average wages of employees of the relevant position (or performing similar functions), or</li> <li>4. publicly available information about the average wages in the Beneficiary organisation or a similar one).</li> </ol> <p><b>Documentation to submit with the Application Form:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Salary calculation certificate for hourly rate for staff using annual working time of 1720 hours.</li> </ul> <p>Beneficiaries must store the supporting documentation, used for the calculations to determine the hourly rate, and produce it upon request during control checks.</p>
<p><b>2. Other goods, works and services based on real costs</b></p>	<p>Goods, works, and services included to produce the Implementation Phase deliverables, for instance, costs to collect material (content, translations, etc.), meetings, consumables and supplies, creation of video clip about project results, etc.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Calculation certificate for other goods, works and services,</li> <li>2. at least two preliminary commercial offers of service providers, or a summary of price survey, or</li> <li>3. screenshots with the corresponding information published in public information sources (for example, websites), or</li> <li>4. equivalent historical data of earlier projects which would allow to justify the costs.</li> </ol> <p>Note: offers must be equivalent, and the lowest price or price average should be selected.</p>

## **Indirect costs**

Indirect costs could be defined in the Application as flat rate payments not exceeding 7% of the total eligible direct costs (see also [Section 3.3](#)) that are within the limits of the project budget ceiling.

Indirect costs are general administrative costs – overhead costs incurred in connection with the eligible direct costs for the action. They can include maintenance, stationery, photocopying, postage, telephone and fax costs, heating, electricity or other forms of energy, water, office furniture, insurance, and any other expenditure necessary for the successful completion of the action(s).

### 3.2 Ineligible costs and contributions

**The following costs or contributions** that do not comply with the conditions set out above **are ineligible**:

1. costs related to return on capital and dividends paid by the Beneficiary,
2. debt and debt service charges,
3. provisions for future losses or debts,
4. interest owed,
5. currency exchange losses,
6. bank costs charged by the Beneficiary's bank for transfers from the granting authority,
7. excessive or reckless expenditure,
8. deductible or refundable VAT (including VAT paid by public bodies acting as public authority),
9. costs incurred or contributions for the activities implemented during a suspension of the Grant Agreement,
10. in-kind contributions by third parties,
11. any costs incurred before the project start date and after the project end date, as these project phases are covered by unit costs or (and) lump sums.

### **Co-financing rate**

Under this Call the EU grant may not exceed 80% of the total eligible costs of the action. The Beneficiaries must guarantee their co-financing of the remaining amount through their own resources or from sources other than the EU budget.

Please note that funds from other EU programmes cannot be used as national co-financing source.

### **Double funding**

There is a strict prohibition of double funding<sup>15</sup> from the EU budget. Any action may receive only ONE grant from the EU budget and under no circumstances shall the same costs be financed twice by the Union budget.

### 3.3 Use of simplified costs

The legal basis for the use of SCOs within the ESF+- is laid down in *Articles 53-56* of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060<sup>16</sup>, and it covers flat rates, lump sums and standard scales of units of costs. SCOs

---

<sup>15</sup> See Article 191 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#)

<sup>16</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just

must be calculated using a fair, equitable and verifiable methodology. They are either based on statistical data and historical practices (including experience from the Application of SCOs in other EU programmes), or on policies for similar types of operations and Beneficiaries. The same principles apply for this Call.

For costs related to **the Start-up phase, SCOs and/or the draft budget based on real costs, “The calculator of expenses” (Annex 2)** has been created to support Applicant with producing a draft budget that contains:

1. staff costs based on historic data (use the method based on 1720 hours),
2. travel cost (subsistence, travel and accommodation costs using the unit costs, which are set out in the Decision<sup>17</sup>),
3. additional costs accumulating real cost for travel and meetings in the country<sup>18</sup>, translation, and other services that are necessary for achieving the deliverables of the Start-up Phase.
4. indirect costs that are calculated for all eligible expenses of Start-up phase.

ESFA will assess the Application and will, on the basis of this draft budget and the information provided, establish a lump sum that covers all eligible expenses of this phase.

Please find the instructions on using the “**calculator of expenses**” for this phase in Annex 2.

In this Start-up phase, all Beneficiaries that have established a partnership with one or several transnational Partners are entitled to receive the reimbursement of the above-mentioned lump sum for setting up partnerships and preparing all the expected deliverables of the Start-up phase.

The Application must include the potential country of the international Partner in order to calculate the necessary costs for Start-up and Implementation phases.

For the costs related **to the Implementation Phase, the use of SCOs and FNLC is mandatory as stipulated in the Delegated Act<sup>19</sup> for ALMA.**

For this phase, another “**calculator of expenses**” (Annex 3) has been created, which includes expenses that can be calculated by:

1. using EU level ALMA SCOs and FNLC for the pilot exchanges.

Please note that the SCOs and FNLC already include indirect costs and cover all the costs of the operation (preparation of the participants, mobility and follow up phases, as well as the daily top-up for successful participants), **so no indirect costs shall be added for this phase.**

2. draft budget based on real cost for preparation of the Final Report, Dissemination of experience and the best practices. Please note that the indirect costs for those activities must be calculated separately.

---

Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy

<sup>17</sup> European Commission Decision C(2021) 35, 12.1.2021, [https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/unit-cost-decision-travel\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/unit-cost-decision-travel_en.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> an exception of travelling which is not determined in the Decision

<sup>19</sup> Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2022/2175 of 5 August 2022 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council regarding the definition of unit costs and establishment of amounts for financing not linked to costs for certain operations facilitating the integration of young persons into the labor market, education and society in the framework of the ‘Aim, Learn, Master, Achieve’ (ALMA) initiative, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32022R2175>

In order to mitigate the risks related to participants dropping out before or during the mobility phase, Beneficiaries will be entitled to at least 70% of the planned budget (i.e. the number of planned participant days x the relevant unit cost from the Delegated Act, excluding the FNLC top-ups), as long as 2 groups of minimum 8 participants have actually been sent abroad. When a group of less than 8 participants is sent abroad, Beneficiaries are still eligible for reimbursements according to SCOs and FNLC, for the actual number of participants.

ESFA will assess each Application and will, on the basis of its draft budget and the information provided, establish a lump sum that covers all eligible expenses for the preparation of the Final Report and dissemination of experience and the best practices.

Please find the instructions on using the “**calculator of expenses**” for this phase in Annex 3.

Under this Call, the Beneficiary bears all costs associated with the activities of project participants, irrespective of whether they are incurred in home or host country. This also means that the Beneficiary is responsible for management, control, and legal compliance.

### 3.4 Other regulations, dissemination and visibility, ownership

#### **Data protection**

The submission of an Application under this Call involves the collection, use and processing of personal data. This data will be processed in accordance with the Applicable law, including the GDPR. It will be processed solely for the purpose of assessing the Application, subsequent management of the grant and, if needed, programme monitoring, evaluation, and communication.

For more details, see *Article 14* of the Grant Agreement.

#### **Record keeping**

The Beneficiary must ensure that both its own organisation and its Partners record and store all the supporting documentation required for an adequate audit trail regarding the expenditure incurred and payments made, so that it can be produced when requested. The records and supporting documents must be made available upon request or in the context of checks, reviews, audits, or investigations.

The records and documents must be correctly archived by the Beneficiary for 5 years following the payment of the balance or, in the absence of such payment, the transaction.

Beneficiaries must keep the original documents. Digital and digitalised documents are considered originals if they are authorised by the Applicable national law. ESFA may accept non-original documents if they offer a comparable level of assurance.

For more details, please see *Article 19* of the Grant Agreement.

#### **Horizontal principles (gender and non-discrimination)**

The projects under this Call must apply the horizontal principles (gender and non-discrimination) established by the European Union.

The projects must take appropriate measures to prevent any discrimination based on gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, or sexual orientation, in accordance with the aims, objectives, and priorities of the Call. Accessibility for people with disabilities should also be properly considered.

These principles aim to ensure that project participants, irrespective of their gender, limited abilities, or any other characteristics, are equally included in project activities. It must be ensured that everyone can develop and empower themselves to work, study or participate in a labour market programme on their own terms.

Please also see *Article 17* of the Grant Agreement.

### **Dissemination and visibility**

The Beneficiary must:

- 1. display the EU flag (emblem) and funding statement** “Co-funded by the European Union” in all communication and dissemination activities related to the action and any supplies or major results funded by the Grant,
- 2. present the project** (including a project summary, the Beneficiary’s contact details, the list of Partners (if any), the European flag and the funding statement, and the project results) on the Beneficiary’s **website** or **social media account**,
- 3. create a video** (up to 2 minutes) about the project (presenting the objectives (the main idea) of the project, its activities, results achieved, etc. It is important to include the European flag and the funding statement).

The emblem and the funding statement are available in the Grant Agreement and on the Europa<sup>20</sup> website or can be downloaded from the EC’s webpage<sup>21</sup>.

Please note that ESFA and the EC reserve the right to make the project results public.

Please also see *Article 16* of the Grant Agreement.

### **Ownership of results**

The results of the project belong to the Beneficiary that generated them. ESFA does not obtain ownership of the results produced during the implementation of the project.

‘Results’ shall be understood as any tangible or intangible effect of a project action, such as data, know-how or information of any form or nature, regardless of whether it can be protected or not, as well as any rights attached to it, including intellectual property rights.

ESFA and the EC may use (free of charge) any non-sensitive information related to the project activities, as well as materials and documents received from the Beneficiaries, for policy, information, communication, dissemination, and publicity purposes — during the action or afterwards.

For more details, please see *Article 15* of the Grant Agreement. The rules governing intellectual property rights are also described in the same Article.

## **4. FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONAL CAPACITY AND EXCLUSION**

### **4.1 Financial capacity**

The Beneficiary must have stable and sufficient recourses to implement the project successfully.

---

<sup>20</sup> [https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/symbols/european-flag\\_en](https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/symbols/european-flag_en)

<sup>21</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/information/logos\\_downloadcenter](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/logos_downloadcenter)

Verification of financial capacity shall NOT apply to the public entities of the Member States<sup>22</sup>.

Please note that **financial capacity of the Beneficiary will be assessed before the Grant Agreement is signed only if the Application is pre-selected for funding.**

Verification of financial capacity will be carried out according to the documents that must be submitted during the preparation of the Grant Agreement. Their analysis will be based on neutral financial indicators.

If the Beneficiary is considered not to have strong financial capacity, no Grant agreement will be signed.

Each pre-selected Beneficiary will be asked to provide the necessary documents, such as:

1. Official annual balance sheets and profit and loss accounts for the last two fiscal years available<sup>23</sup>;
2. For newly created entities: the estimated financial data/financial declaration or an insurance declaration stating the Applicant's financial risks may be submitted instead of the above-mentioned documents.

For more information, please see the Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment<sup>24</sup>.

ESFA may nevertheless request further information or documents at any stage of the procedure to proceed with verifications and take various proportional measures depending on the level of weaknesses identified.

If ESFA considers that financial capacity of the Beneficiary is not satisfactory, ESFA may require:

- further information,
- prefinancing paid in instalments,
- (one or more) prefinancing guarantees (see *Article 22* of the Grant Agreement).

#### 4.2. Operational capacity

The Beneficiary and its Partners must have the know-how, qualifications, and resources to successfully implement the project 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 Beneficiary and its Partners, including operational resources (human, technical, and other) or, exceptionally, the measures proposed to acquire them by the time the task implementation starts.

If the score of the “Quality” criterion is above the threshold, the Beneficiary is considered to have sufficient operational capacity.

---

<sup>22</sup> Including schools, higher education institutions and organisations in the fields of education, training, youth and sport that have received over 50 % of their annual revenue from public sources over the last two years shall be considered as having the necessary financial, professional and administrative capacity to carry out activities under the Programme.

<sup>23</sup> The most recent balance sheet and profit & loss accounts, including assets and liabilities, specifying the currency used.

<sup>24</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/rules-lev-lear-fca\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/rules-lev-lear-fca_en.pdf)

The Beneficiary and Partners will have to show their operational capacity via the following information:

1. Profiles (qualifications and experience) of the staff responsible for managing and implementing the project (Application, Part B, Section 2.3)
2. Description of relevant experience and expertise of the Beneficiary and its Partners (Application, Part B, Section 2.2.)
3. List of previous projects (key projects relating to the subject of the Call in the last 3 years) (“List of the previous projects” template is provided in Annex 5)

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

#### 4.3. Exclusion Criteria

The Beneficiary will be excluded from participating in the Call, if it is found to be in one of the exclusion situations described below, in accordance with Articles 136-141 of the Financial Regulation<sup>25</sup>:

1. 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),
2. in breach of social security or tax obligations (including if done by persons with unlimited liability for the Applicant's debts),
3. guilty of grave professional misconduct<sup>26</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),
4. 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),
5. 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),
6. guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No 2988/95<sup>27</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),

---

<sup>25</sup> Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32018R1046&qid=1535046024012>

<sup>26</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.

<sup>27</sup> Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95 of 18 December 1995 on the protection of the European Communities financial interests, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:31995R2988&qid=1501598622514>



7. created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social, or other legal obligations in the country of origin, or has 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),
8. it has been established by a final judgement or final administrative decision that an entity has been created with the intent referred to in point 7.
9. for the situations referred to in points 3 to 8 above, the Beneficiary is subject to:
  1. facts established in the context of audits or investigations carried out by the European Public Prosecutor's Office after its establishment, the Court of Auditors, the European Anti-Fraud Office or the internal auditor, or any other check, audit or control performed under the responsibility of an authorising officer of an EU institution, of a European office or of an EU agency or body,
  2. non-final judgments or non-final administrative decisions which may include disciplinary measures taken by the competent supervisory body responsible for the verification of the Application of standards of professional ethics,
  3. facts referred to in decisions of persons or entities entrusted with EU budget implementation tasks,
  4. information transmitted by the Member States implementing Union funds,
  5. decisions of the Commission relating to the infringement of Union competition law or of a national competent authority relating to the infringement of Union or national competition law; or
  6. decisions of exclusion by an authorising officer of an EU institution, of a European office or of an EU agency or body.

Beneficiaries **will also be refused for funding** if<sup>28</sup>:

1. during the award procedure they misrepresented information required as a condition for participating or failed to supply that information,
2. 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).

**All Beneficiaries must submit with the Application a declaration confirming that the Beneficiary and the project Partners (if Applicable) do not fall under one of the exclusion criteria mentioned above.** This declaration is included in the Application available in the Portal. Please note that the declaration must be duly signed by the Beneficiary's legal representative for the Application to be considered eligible during the Eligibility Check. For more information, please see [Section 2.3](#).

During the selection procedure and prior to the final decision of the Selection Committee on the grant award, ESFA will check the Beneficiaries in the Early Detection and Exclusion System (EDES), the system established by the EC to reinforce the protection of the Union's financial interests and to ensure sound financial management<sup>29</sup>. If a Beneficiary is detected in the EDES,

---

<sup>28</sup> See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

<sup>29</sup> See Article 142, EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

ESFA notifies the Beneficiary, who has then the opportunity to present a defence before the final decision of the Selection Committee, in compliance with the principle of proportionality.

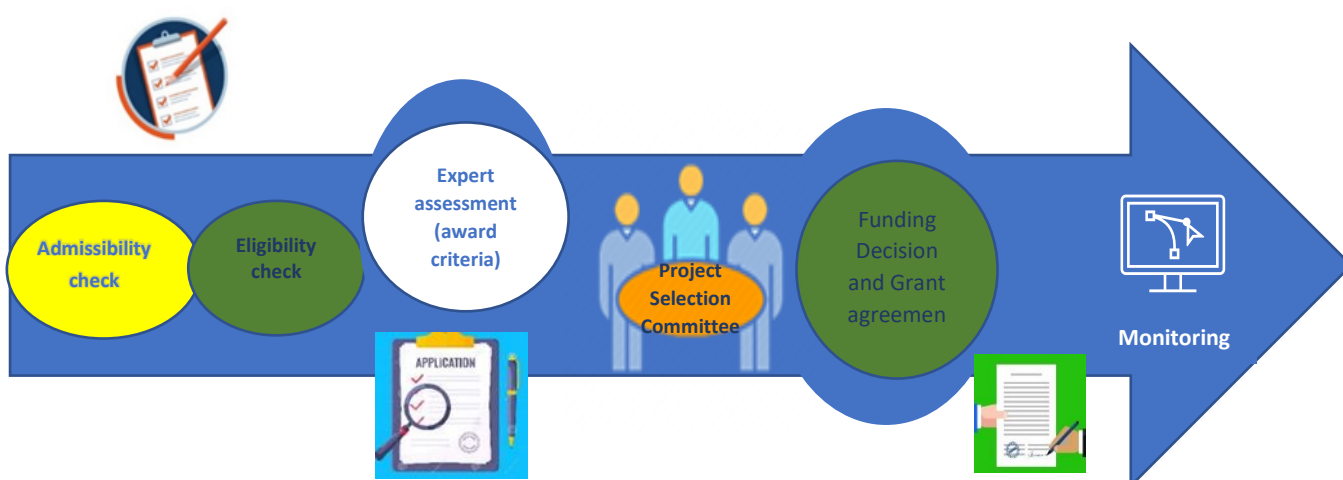
If the Beneficiary declares one of the situations of exclusion listed above, it must indicate the measures it has taken to remedy the exclusion situation, thus demonstrating its reliability. These may include technical, organisational, and staff-related measures intended to correct the conduct and prevent further occurrence, compensation of damage, or payment of fines, taxes, or social security contributions. **The relevant documentary evidence which illustrates the remedial measures taken must be provided in an Annex to the declaration.** This does not apply for situations referred in point 4 of exclusion situation.

Administrative sanctions may be imposed on Beneficiaries, who are guilty of misrepresentation, if any of the declarations or information provided as a condition for participating in this procedure prove to be false.

## 5. ASSESSMENT, SELECTION, AWARD AND DISPUTE SETTLEMENT PROCEDURES

### 5.1. Assessment and selection procedure

Figure 1. Process of assessment of the Application



### Formal requirements

Applications will first be checked for formal requirements (admissibility and eligibility check). The Applications not meeting the admissibility and eligibility conditions will be rejected. The final decision on the rejection of the Applications will be taken by the Project Assessment Committee (hereinafter “PAC”).

The Applications found admissible and eligible will be assessed against the award criteria. In parallel, legal checks (legal entity validation, operational capacity and exclusion) will be carried out.

### **Experts' appointment and tasks**

Applications will be assessed qualitatively against the award criteria by at least two experts, one of them being an independent external expert. ESFA has established its own database of external experts. The experts available via the Commission's Funding and Tender Portal can be used as well.

The appointed experts will assess the extent to which the Application meets the award criteria and will score the Application against the award criteria (for more information on the award criteria, maximum and threshold points, please see [Section 5.5](#)). The experts can make suggestions for reducing the budget. The experts must have no oral or written communication with both the Beneficiary and the Partners. In case of any problems arising during the assessment, experts should contact ESFA. ESFA will decide whether the Beneficiary needs to provide additional information or clarifications, or if the Application should be assessed in the form it has been submitted.

### **Calculation of the final score**

The final score for the Application will be the average of the scores of the two assessments against the award criteria. If the difference between the overall scores, given by the two assessors for the same Application, does not exceed 20 points, one of the assessors will prepare a consolidated assessment report. If the difference between the two overall scores for the same Application exceeds 20 points, a third assessor will be appointed. The final score will then be determined by the two assessments with the least difference between their overall scores, and the most extreme assessment will be excluded from the consolidated assessment. This requirement shall not apply to cases where both experts have scored the Application below the thresholds for acceptance.

### **Selection procedure**

The selection of projects will be made and the final decision for funding will be taken by a selection panel called the Project Selection Committee (hereinafter "PSC"). The results of Application assessment will be presented at the PSC meeting. PSC will examine the reasons for the rejected Applications, will rank the Applications with the passing scores, and will set the order of priority for the Applications with equal scores. Where Applications received the same scores, their order of priority shall be determined by the scores for the following award criteria, in diminishing sequence of importance: "Quality", "Impact", and "Relevance".

Project selection will be organised in several rounds and based on merits as well as on geographical balance. This means that in each round, **the best (top-ranked) eligible project from each Member State will be selected**. Once the remaining money is insufficient to finance one top-ranked project from each Member State, grants will be awarded to the remaining top-ranked Applications regardless of their country of origin.

Applications that pass the individual thresholds and the overall threshold will be considered for funding — within the limits of the available budget. The other Applications will be put on the reserve list or will be rejected.

### **Communication of the selection results**

Each Beneficiary will be informed about the assessment result. Successful Applicant will be invited for Grant Agreement preparation. The other ones will be put on the reserve list or rejected. Rejected Applicant will receive an Assessment summary report including reasons for rejection and information on the possibility of complaint.

If the Beneficiary believes that the assessment procedure was flawed, it can submit a complaint following the deadlines and procedures set out in the Assessment Summary Report (for more information, please see [Section 5.6](#). “Complaints about Application rejection”).

### **Grant Agreement**

Grant Agreement preparation will involve a dialogue in order to fine-tune the technical and financial aspects of the project and may require extra information from the Applicant side. It may also include adjustments to the Application in order to address recommendations of the experts, the PSC, or other concerns. Compliance will be a pre-condition for signing the Grant Agreement.

Beneficiaries, whose Applications have been proposed for a budget reduction by the experts, will be sent a letter with an Application for budget cuts, including the reasons for the proposed reduction. If the Beneficiary does not respond or refuses to accept the budget cuts by the set deadline, the Application will be rejected.

### 5.2. Guiding Principles of Assessment

The guiding principles of assessment are the following:

- Transparency: Funding decisions are based on clearly described rules and procedures. Beneficiaries receive adequate feedback on the outcome of the assessment of their Applications.
- Fairness and impartiality: All Applications are treated equally. They are assessed impartially on their merits, irrespective of their origin, the identity of the submitting entity, the Partners, or any team member.
- Confidentiality: All Applications, associated annexes and related data, knowledge and documents submitted to ESFA are treated with the strictest confidentiality.
- Efficiency and speed: The assessment process, preparation, and award of grants are dealt with as priority matters.

ESFA will liaise on a regular basis with the independent experts to make sure that assessment rules and procedures are appropriately understood and to avoid any conflicts of interest. During the assessment, experts are asked to check each Beneficiary and Partners behind the Applications, and declare any conflicts of interest, so that such Applications are not assigned to them.

### 5.3. Admissibility and Eligibility Check

Once submissions of Applications are closed, the admissibility and eligibility check of Applications is carried out by ESFA. Admissibility and eligibility check will ensure that only high-quality Applications which are in line with requirements set out in the Call Conditions enter the assessment phase and qualify for funding. In this stage, it is checked whether the Applications meet the established admissibility conditions and eligibility criteria. Failure to comply with one of the admissibility and eligibility requirements may lead to the rejection of the Application.

To be considered admissible, an Application must be:

- submitted before the Call deadline,
- submitted electronically via ESFA Portal. Paper submissions are NOT possible,
- readable and accessible,

- complete and must contain all the requested information, annexes, and supporting documents specified in the Call Conditions. Applications (including annexes and supporting documents) must be submitted using the forms provided inside the ESFA Portal. Only the information provided in the Application and the approved Annexes will be taken into consideration during the assessment.

For mandatory annexes and supporting documents, please see [Section 6](#).

Beneficiaries are encouraged to submit their project Application in English in order to facilitate the treatment of the Applications and to speed up the assessment process. However, Applications submitted in any of the official languages of the EU will be accepted<sup>30</sup>. In this case, Applications should be accompanied by an executive summary in English. It should be noted that the assessment of Applications against the award criteria is done on the basis of the English version of the Application. The quality of the translation will not be guaranteed, and the translation of the Application may not fully reveal the content of the text in the original language, therefore it is considered to be at the Beneficiary's risk. Moreover, the Grant Agreement, as well as the project management, formal reporting, key deliverables, and all communication with ESFA shall be in English.

If any of the admissibility requirements is not met, the Application shall be deemed inadmissible, no eligibility check of the Application is commenced, and the Application is rejected.

To be considered eligible, an Application must:

1. involve only the eligible Beneficiary and Partners indicated in the Call (see [Section 2.2](#));
2. involve only the Beneficiary and Partners established in the eligible countries indicated in the Call (see [Section 2.1](#));
3. not involve legal entities subject to EU restrictive measures (see [Section 5.4](#));
4. not exceed the maximum requested amount of funding indicated in the Call (see [Section 4.1](#));
5. not exceed the maximum project duration indicated in the Call (see [Section 2.3](#));
6. involve only eligible activities set out in the Call (see [Section 2.3](#));
7. involve activities only in eligible countries indicated in the Call (see [Section 2.3](#));
8. involve contribution to the project with own funds or funds from other sources at least to the percentage level of the project cost specified in the Call (see [Section 3.1](#)).

If any of the eligibility requirements is not met, the Application shall be deemed ineligible, and no further assessment shall be undertaken.

The reasons for non-admissibility or non-eligibility of the inadmissible or ineligible projects are recorded and communicated to Applicants at the end of the admissibility and eligibility check.

#### [5.4. Restrictions applying to some legal entities](#)

Special rules apply to entities from certain countries (e. g., entities subject to EU restrictive measures<sup>31</sup> under the Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Article 215 of the

---

<sup>30</sup> 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 7](#)).

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.sanctionsmap.eu/#/main> Please note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The source of the sanctions stems from legal acts published in the Official Journal (OJ). In case of discrepancy between the published legal acts and the updates on the website, it is the OJ version that prevails. 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

Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU), or entities covered by the Commission Guidelines No 2013/C 205/05<sup>32</sup>. Such entities shall not be eligible to participate in the project in any capacity.

## 5.5. Award criteria

Applications that are declared eligible and admissible will be subject to an assessment against the award criteria.

Particular attention will be paid to the following aspects:

- identification of the young people, who, with the right support, would benefit most from the participation in terms of integration into education, vocational training, and employment,
- relevance of the Partners for the success of the project, involvement of managing authorities, public employment services, and job centres,
- relevant learning and development plans, including intercultural, linguistic, and vocational training, as well as mentoring and follow-up arrangements.

### **Applications will be assessed based on the following award criteria:**

- **Relevance** (Max 20 points, threshold 10 points): project contribution to the specific objectives of the ESF+ and to the general objectives of the Call; needs analysis; logical links between the identified needs, problems, and objectives (logical frame concept); complementarity with other actions and the value added; clear future use of pilot results; added value at EU level.

- **Quality** (Max 30 points, threshold 15 points):

- **Project design and implementation:** methodology for implementing the project (concept and methodology, programme of activities, objectives and expected results (outputs and outcomes)); feasibility of the project within the proposed time frame; progress monitoring; cost effectiveness (sufficient/appropriate budget for proper implementation; best value for money).

- **Project team and cooperation arrangements:** quality of the partnership and project teams; experience of working with disadvantaged groups, psycho-pedagogical skills, mentoring and intercultural skills; clear distribution of roles and tasks; appropriate management structure, decision-making mechanism, and communication.

- **Quality assurance and monitoring:** project staff skills; operational capacity of the Beneficiary and Partners; measures for quality monitoring and evaluating; gender and non-discrimination mainstreaming; outreach and engagement methods for mobility participants; risks and risk management.

- **Impact** (Max 20 points, threshold 10 points): expected long-term impact of results on the target group and at local, national, regional, or international level; methodology to measure the impact; promotion of gender equality and non-discrimination; dissemination and visibility; sustainability of results after EU funding ends.

---

<sup>32</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)

Scale for assessing the Application award criteria:

Max. number of points for a criterion	Range of scores			
	Very good	Good	Fair	Weak
30	26-30	21-25	15-20	0-14
20	17-20	14-16	10-13	0-9
10	If the Application meets a 10-points criterion, it receives 10 points for that criterion. If the Application does not meet a 10-points criterion, it receives 0 points for that criterion.			

Additional points will be awarded to projects if they meet the following award criteria:

- **Award criterion “Project target group – most vulnerable NEETs” (10 points):**

The project addresses the needs of the most vulnerable young people (long-term unemployed, inactive in the labour market and not registered as unemployed), as well as young people who, due to a physical or mental disability, are unable to find a job for a long time (long-term unemployed - unemployed for more than 12 months). If the Beneficiary claims points for this criterion, the target group of the project must be at least 50% of the most vulnerable participants described in this paragraph. The Beneficiary must ensure that the proportion of the most vulnerable participants is maintained throughout the life of the project.

- **Award criterion “Quality of the national network” (10 points):**

The project creates a network of national Partners, which involves different actors (employment agencies, job centres, public authorities (e.g., social services, departments of culture and leisure, and departments of education), youth organisations, social services and VET providers, NGOs, schools, and companies) to ensure access to the different types of expertise required, and to ensure that different activities can be carried out efficiently and effectively.

An Application receives points under this criterion if Managing or Intermediate bodies are Beneficiaries or Partners of the Application.

If the Application qualifies for points for partnerships, the Beneficiary must ensure that Memorandums of Understanding (Partnership Agreements) are signed with the Partners indicated in the Application (either before submission of the Application or in the Start-up phase).

If there is a change of a Partner during the implementation of a project, the Beneficiary must ensure that a Partner replacing the original Partner indicated in the Application is at least equally experienced and will be able to perform the assigned functions.

- **Award criterion “Newcomer to ALMA programme” (10 points):**

An Application receives points under this criterion if Beneficiaries are from regions which are newcomers to the ALMA programme and had not implemented ALMA type projects in 2014-2020 programming period<sup>33</sup>.

**Maximum of total award criteria points: 100 points.**

**Overall threshold: 50 points.**

<sup>33</sup> In the period of 2014-2020 projects similar to ALMA were implemented in Spain (Catalonia, Galicia), Czech Republic, Italy (Trento), Germany, Poland, Slovenia, Sweden), <https://www.esf.de/portal/EN/Funding-period-2014-2020/TLN-Mobility/National-Regional-Calls/content.html>

Please note that if an Application scores less than overall threshold (50 points) or does not pass the minimum score threshold for any of the award criteria, as explained in the consolidated assessment report, it is rejected.

## 5.6. Complaints about Application rejection

If the Beneficiary believes that rejection of its Application was based on a flaw in the selection procedure, the Beneficiary has a right to submit a complaint. Only the Beneficiary can file a complaint.

Complaints will be subject to the following conditions:

1. Complaints must be limited to procedural aspects, not on the merits of the Application. The complaint must relate to the assessment procedure, admissibility or eligibility checks and demonstrate a procedural irregularity, factual error, manifest error of assessment, or abuse of powers (e. g., lack of coherence between the scores and comments, lack or inadequate reasoning of the conclusions, the existence of a conflict of interest, breach of the limits of discretion, etc). Mere repetitions of the content of the Application or disagreements with the result or reasoning of the assessment will not be considered.
2. Only one request for review per Application will be considered. The request cannot refer to the assessment of Applications submitted by another Applicant.
3. Review requests will not automatically trigger a re-assessment of the Application. Re-assessment will only be carried out if the complaint demonstrates that the procedural irregularity, factual error, manifest error of assessment, or abuse of powers affects the decision on whether to fund the Application. Thus, for example, a problem relating to one of the assessment criteria will not lead to a re-assessment if, even by adding the maximum points under this criterion, the final score of the Application would nevertheless remain below the threshold for funding.
4. Re-assessment will be made on the Applications as they were originally submitted; no additional information will be admitted. Depending on the case, re-assessment can be partial (limited to the criterion affected by the error) or full (when the whole assessment has been recognised as flawed). Re-assessment may be assigned to the same assessment panel or a new one, depending on the internal procedures of ESFA.

All complaints received will be dealt with confidentially.

Complaints must be submitted to ESFA. All complaints must be submitted in English, **in writing e-mail** to the following address:

European Social Fund Agency of Lithuania (ESFA)  
M. Katkaus str. 44,  
LT-01109 Vilnius, Republic of Lithuania  
Email: [complaints@esf.lt](mailto:complaints@esf.lt)

The Beneficiary is required to provide as much detail relevant to the complaint as possible, including (if relevant) any documents and correspondence.

This is the first opportunity to get a complaint resolved. ESFA will examine the complaint and provide answers to it.



Complaints must be raised **within 20 working days after the event in question**. Complaints received after this deadline will not be taken into consideration. ESFA shall respond not later than within 30 working days after receiving the complaint. If a complaint is very complex, it may occasionally be necessary to extend the time limit. If this is the case, the complainant will be kept informed about the progress of the investigation, the reasons for the delay, and the new deadline. The above complaints procedure and timeframes shall not prejudice the start-up or ongoing implementation of activities financed by the action “ESF Social Innovation+”.

In case the complaint is justified, the case will be sent back to the PSC to review the project Application and its assessment.

If the response provided by ESFA is considered unsatisfactory by the complainant, disputes concerning the complaint shall be settled in accordance with the procedure established by the laws of the Republic of Lithuania in the Vilnius City District Court or the Vilnius Regional Court, depending on the nature of the claims.

## 6. SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

All Applications must be submitted directly online via Portal. Paper Applications shall not be NOT accepted.

The Application **must be submitted before the Call deadline 15/03/2023 at 5:00 PM CET**. After this deadline, the system is closed, and Applications can no longer be submitted.

Submission of the Applications is a **2-step process**:

- 1. Create a user account.** In order to use the Portal (the only way to apply), all Applicant need to create a user account.
- 2. Submit the Application.**

Access the Portal via the Call topic page. Applications (including Annexes and supporting documents) **must be submitted using the forms** provided inside the Portal. Applications **must be complete** and contain all the requested information and all required Annexes and supporting documents in the parts, as follows:

- 1. Application Form Part A:** contains administrative information about the participants (Beneficiary, Partners), the summarised budget for the project and the timetable.
- 2. Application Form Part B:** contains the technical description of the project.
- 3. Mandatory Annexes and supporting documents** (*upload them as PDF files or Excel tables for the detailed budget*):
  1. The calculator of expenses for the Start-up phase (**Annex 2**);
  2. The calculator of expenses for the Implementation phase (**Annex 3**);
  3. List of previous projects (**Annex 5**);
  4. Signed declaration of the Beneficiary and/or Partners;
  5. The organisation's registration certificate (if Applicable);
  6. Signed Memorandums of Understanding (Partnership Agreements) with international and national Partners, including Partner declarations (if Applicable).

Documents must be uploaded to the **right category (right Call)** in the Portal, otherwise the Application might be considered incomplete and thus inadmissible.

At Application submission, the Beneficiary will have to confirm that the information in the Application is correct and complete and comply with the conditions for receiving EU funding (especially eligibility, financial and operational capacity, exclusion, etc).

At a later stage, the Beneficiary may be asked for additional documents (for validation of a legal entity, financial capacity check, bank account validation, etc).

Once the Application is submitted, the Beneficiary will receive a **confirmation e-mail** (with the date and time of the Application submission). If the Beneficiary doesn't receive this confirmation e-mail, it means that the Application has NOT been submitted. If the Beneficiary believes this is due to a fault in the Portal, the Beneficiary should immediately file a complaint via the e-mail address [IThelp@esf.lt](mailto:IThelp@esf.lt) explaining the circumstances and attaching a copy of the Application (and, if possible, screenshots to prove the malfunction of the Portal or the Beneficiary's attempts to submit the Application).

## 7. SUPPORT

Many answers can be found in the Call Conditions and other related documentation mentioned above.

Please also visit the ESFA (<https://www.esf.lt/en/>) and the EC (<https://ec.europa.eu/european-social-fund-plus/en/esf-social-innovation>) websites regularly, since we will use them to publish Frequently Asked Questions and Call Updates, if necessary.

More useful information could be found on ALMA Network, which provides support to Managing Authorities and Implementing Bodies that are interested in launching and implementing their own mobility programs under ALMA. For more information about the network please visit [www.tln-mobility.eu](http://www.tln-mobility.eu)

### **For submission support:**

For individual questions concerning the Portal, please contact **the IT Helpdesk:** [IThelp@esf.lt](mailto:IThelp@esf.lt)

**Non-IT related questions** should be sent to the following email address: [ALMA@esf.lt](mailto:ALMA@esf.lt)

Questions on Application submission must:

1. be sent **at the latest 7 days before the submission deadline** (see [Section 6](#))
2. clearly indicate the reference of the Call and the topic to which the question relates.

Call-specific questions must be sent **at the latest 10 days before the submission deadline** (see [Section 6](#)).

For any additional information about the ALMA initiative, please refer to the following useful links:

1. [How to make ALMA work | European Social Fund Plus \(europa.eu\)](#)
2. [ALMA \(Aim, Learn, Master, Achieve\) - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - European Commission](#)
3. [Learning from experience: integrating disadvantaged young people through mobility schemes', European Commission \(2022\)](#)
4. [Technical meeting for the launch of the ALMA-initiative - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#) (including recording of the event and Most Frequently Asked Questions & Answers)
5. [GOOD PROSPECTS FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE - Streaming Service of the European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)
6. [Resources: ESF ALMA Webinar \(next-ma.eu\)](#) and [recording](#)
7. [Europäischer Sozialfonds für Deutschland - TLN Mobility \(esf.de\)](#)

## 8. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

### 8.1 Reporting and payment arrangements

The Beneficiary will have to report regularly to ESFA on the progress of the project (e.g., deliverables, outputs/outcomes, critical risks, indicators, etc.), via the Portal Reporting Tool and in accordance with the timing and conditions stated in the Grant Agreement. For payment requests, the Beneficiary shall provide a report (prepared using the template available in the Portal Reporting Tool). Reporting periods will be defined in the Data Sheet of the Grant Agreement (point 4).

Payments shall be made to the Beneficiary only.

The payment of the grant usually consists of prefinancing instalments and the final payment (the balance). The aim of the prefinancing is to provide a cash flow to the Beneficiary. Please note that risk assessment of the project will be carried out before signing the Grant Agreement. In case of acceptable risks, the frequency, and the amounts of the foreseen prefinancing may be adjusted, and an additional prefinancing may be provided. The specific prefinancing frequency, amount and requirements shall be defined in the Grant Agreement.

According to the maximum possible duration of the project (18 months), two prefinancing instalments (plus an additional prefinancing, if any) and the final payment are planned:

- **the first (initial) prefinancing** payment of 50% of the grant.
- **the second prefinancing** payment of 30% of the grant.

Where the spending of the previous prefinancing will be less than 70%, the amount of next prefinancing payment will be reduced by the difference between the 70% ceiling and the amount used.

- **the final payment** (payment of the balance).

There will be **no interim payments**.

The specific prefinancing frequency, amount and requirements will be defined in the Grant Agreement. For more details, see *point 4 of the Data Sheet* and *Articles 20 and 21* of the Grant Agreement.

## 8.2 Liability regime for recoveries

The Beneficiary shall be liable to ESFA for the total value of the grant paid out, including the amounts transferred by the Beneficiary to its Partners. In the event of a recovery order for full or partial reimbursement of the grant to ESFA, the Beneficiary shall be responsible for the reimbursement of the grant.

Recoveries will be made, if — at the Grant Agreement or the Partner termination, final payment or afterwards — it turns out that ESFA has paid too much and needs to recover the amounts undue.

For more details see the Grant Agreement *Data Sheet point 4.3, Chapter 4 Section 1 and Article 21 and*.

## 8.3 Provisions concerning project implementation

In certain cases, for objective reasons which could not be foreseen by the Beneficiary at the time of the submission and appraisal of the Application, the time limit for the implementation of the project **activities may be extended**, in accordance with the procedure laid down in *Article 36* of the Grant Agreement, but **for not more than 6 months**.

For more details about the amendment provisions, see *Articles 5 and 36* of the Grant Agreement.

If the Beneficiary breaches any of obligations under the Grant Agreement, ESFA will take measures provided in *Chapter 5* of the Grant Agreement.

For more details about the consequences of non-compliance, please see *Chapter 5* of the Grant Agreement.

### ***No-profit principle***

The grant may not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit<sup>34</sup> for the Beneficiary. Profit is defined as a surplus of the receipts (the Union grant, and the revenue generated by the action) over the eligible costs incurred by the Beneficiary, when the request is made for payment of the balance. If there is a profit, it will be deducted from the final grant amount.

For more details see the Grant agreement *Data Sheet point 4.2 and Article 21.3.3*.

## 9. AMENDMENTS

Any amendment to these Call Conditions, including their Annexes, shall be set out in writing, and shall be published in the same place as the Call Conditions.

---

<sup>34</sup> See Article 192 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#)

## 10. ANNEXES

1. Annex 1\_The Grant Agreement template
2. Annex 2\_The calculator of expenses for the Start-up Phase.
3. Annex 3\_The calculator of expenses for the Implementation Phase.
4. Annex 4\_ Final Report “Lessons learned and future plans” template.
5. Annex 5\_ “List of previous projects” template.