



Funding Manual - Cooperation Grant

AU-EU Youth Action Lab

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1 INTRODUCTION

The AU-EU Youth Action Lab provides the opportunity for youth initiatives in Africa and Europe to apply for funding through the Call for Proposals (CfP) to implement their ideas and solutions linked to global challenges. The Youth Action Lab is funded by the European Union and is part of the ambitions laid out in the EU's Youth Action Plan!

The AU-EU Youth Action Lab is implemented by a consortium of partners: Oxfam, the European Youth Forum and Restless Development Uganda. Together, they aim to connect young people from both continents, encouraging them to collaborate, share knowledge, and raise their voices to influence policy at all levels, from local to international levels, including the African Union (AU) and European Union (EU).

In the coming 3 years, the Youth Action Lab will launch various call for proposals inviting youth in their diversity to apply. The Youth Action Lab has 4 different grant types – each with a different focus, but all with a similar ambition: Support youth initiatives in a powershifting way!

Why do we call it powershifting grants? Because of 3 reasons!

1. Nothing about youth without youth – a Youth Advisory Board¹ of the Youth Action Lab will review and select the proposals to receive funding.
1. We strive for grants that facilitate and nurture stability, resilience, financial security, and organisational capacity.
2. We ensure application and reporting mechanisms that make sense to youth initiatives.

The Youth Action Lab has 4 different grant types:

1. **Innovation Grants:** to support youth initiatives that want to design, test, scale and/or improve innovations that are linked to global challenges.
2. **Entrepreneurship Grants:** to support youth initiatives working on entrepreneurship and employment opportunities.
3. **Representation Grants:** to support young people that face marginalization and work at the grassroots to raise and amplify their voices at different levels.
4. **Cooperation Grants:** to support young people from Africa and Europe to collaborate together on joint advocacy initiatives.

Each grant will last for a period of 12 or 18 months maximum depending on the grant type.

¹ The YAB is composed of 12 young representatives, with 10 selected out of the African Union focus countries and 2 from the European Union. Each year we expect that we will work with 12 YAB members who are selected through an open call.

This **Funding Manual focuses on the Cooperation Grants**. It explains the grant's purpose, helps you determine if you are eligible and walks you through the application process. **Please note that you can:**

1. Only apply to one grant opportunity at a time for each Call for Proposals.
2. Only be awarded one grant contract as an organisation under this program and if you are successful, you will not be considered for any reapplication under the same or a different grant in a next Call for Proposals.
3. If you were not successful and were not awarded a grant in a Call for Proposals round, you can apply again in a next round.

The Cooperation Grants are managed by the [European Youth Forum](#). The European Youth Forum is the biggest platform of youth organisations in Europe, representing over 100 youth organisations that bring together tens of millions of young people. The European Youth Forum works to empower young people to participate actively in society to improve their own lives and advocates for their rights. The European Youth Forum promotes youth participation, making young people catalysts for positive change and contributors of innovative solutions to Europe's challenges.

Still not sure if this is the right grant type you should apply for? Before reading on, you can go to the [Youth Action Lab website](#) to help you decide which of the four grant opportunities is best for you!

Cooperation Grants are the best fit for youth-led organisations who want to engage in cross-continental policy and advocacy work. A total of 18 grants will be made available, with 8 grants to be awarded in the current grant opportunity. Each grant will have a maximum duration of 12 months for the entire 50.000 EURO budget per grant.

Convinced this is the grant you need? Then read the full Funding Manual and APPLY!

2 WHAT SHOULD MY PROPOSAL FOR A COOPERATION GRANT FOCUS ON?

2.1. What is the aim of the Cooperation Grants and why ‘Cooperation’?

Young people around the world often face similar challenges. Some, like climate change and inequality, require global solutions; others, such as lack of education or economic opportunities, demand more localised solutions. Cooperation grants aim to help African and European youth organisations share resources, knowledge and strategies, and to leverage the added value of collaboration, creating a stronger response across continents.

The Cooperation Grants financially support young people, particularly marginalized youth, to empower them to be involved in policymaking and enable cross-continental collaboration.

The Cooperation Grants aim to:

- Enable young people, particularly marginalized youth, to become effective advocates for their rights and their priorities, by giving them the financial resources required to dedicate efforts to policy-work on local, national and international stages.
- Provide training and resources to help youth understand how to engage with government institutions and influence policy as active citizens.
- Facilitate connections between youth organisations across Africa and Europe to promote intercultural dialogue and collaborative initiatives.

2.2 Policy and Advocacy

Initiatives should focus on influencing public policies, government, and community decisions. They should also aim to shift societal attitudes to drive positive changes for youth, particularly from marginalized groups, at local, national, or international levels. This involves raising awareness through campaigns, participating in discussions with leaders and organisations (policy dialogue), forming partnerships with other groups (building coalitions), and using social media and other communication tools to ensure youth voices are heard and their needs are considered in decision-making processes.

Project proposals will be aligned with one or more of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ensuring initiatives contribute to global efforts addressing issues such as poverty, education, climate change, and equality. This grant scheme is also suitable for organisations involved in ongoing policy processes within the African Union and European Union, including the Conference of the Parties (COP), North-South Centre activities of the Council of Europe (CoE), and the AU-EU Summit.

2.3 Cross-continental collaboration

Initiatives should promote collaboration between African and European youth, addressing shared challenges such as climate change, gender equality, youth unemployment, among others.

Projects should clearly define a shared goal and show how the collaboration benefits all organisations involved, both in achieving the project outcomes and through knowledge exchange. Emphasizing the mutual exchange of expertise and skills, the collaboration should show how it strengthens each organisation's abilities and increases their overall impact.

2.4 Marginalized youth

All grant mechanisms of the AU-EU Youth Action Lab project aim to especially reach and empower marginalized young people. What do we mean with that?

Young people are a diverse group, and everyone has their own lived experience. In this diversity we can identify common elements that can cause exclusion and barriers to the participation of young people at the social, economic, and/or political level. We can think of the role of gender, young people living with disabilities, refugees, or geographical location such as living in a remote rural area.

With marginalized youth we refer to young people that face exclusion because of the mix of their identity, socioeconomic backgrounds, location, and/or any other factors that can play a role.

The Cooperation Grants aim to especially support youth initiatives that have a focus on marginalized young people. In your proposal, we seek to learn more about your approach to being inclusive and involving different groups of young people in your work. For example, your organisation might represent a specific marginalized group of youth; or the proposed project/activity addresses challenges faced by marginalized communities and works together with marginalized youth on implementing solutions.

Important note: Projects led by marginalized groups will be prioritized.

2.5 Sustainability

Applicants will have to explain the continuity the project after the end of the grant period. In other words, how you foresee your activities to continue or for the results of your activities to create change after the project period ends. This can take many forms such as:

- Finding other sources of funding.
- Capacity building such as through trainings.
- Writing and publicly share a manual.
- Buddy system.
- Developing a network of Partners: Being able to establish strategic partnerships with local, regional, and international organisations to ensure a network of support and resource sharing, helping to sustain and expand the initiative's impact.

- establishing a long-lasting partnership between the organisations,
- The project should aim for concrete policy changes beyond the duration of the grant implementation.
- And many more!

2.6 Types of activities

By advocacy, we mean speaking up for a cause to create change. Your initiative can take many forms and be translated into plenty of activities, such as:

- Organizing policy events with stakeholders.
- Conduct research and sharing findings.
- Facilitating the participation of marginalized youth in policy discussions.
- Hosting events to mobilize support for youth-led projects.
- Launching online campaigns to raise awareness about youth issues.
- Using social media tools to share ideas and work together.
- Connecting youth with EU and AU representatives.
- Create connections with other youth-led initiatives and projects.
- Press releases to engage with media to spread key messages and project updates.

This is not an exhaustive list, and you are free to deviate from these examples. When you choose differently, please explain clearly why and how this relates to the focus of the grant.

3 APPLYING FOR A COOPERATION GRANT

3.1. Am I eligible to apply for a Cooperation Grant?

The Cooperation Grants have the following **‘hard’ criteria** when it comes to eligibility:

- You submit your proposal as a team of at least 2 organisations, including an organisation established in one of the 12 eligible African countries and an organisation established in the European Union. One of the organisations will be the lead applicant, while the other(s) will be collaborator(s). Independent applications are not allowed.
- Your organisation must be youth-led (run by young people aged 18-35), meaning young people are the decision makers.
- You are a youth organisation that is formal: you are legally registered in your country, have an organisation bank account and a clear governance structure.

- You are located and registered in the European Union or one of the 12 African Youth Action Lab focus countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia (Somaliland region), Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
- The lead applicant must have experience working on collaborative projects with at least one partner organisation.

The Cooperation Grants also have a number of **‘soft’ criteria** that can help determine not only if your organisation is eligible but also if the Cooperation Grants are a fit for your project idea!

1. You are eager to learn from the cross-continental partnership. This includes a willingness to explore new methodologies and share insights that arise from the collaborative process.
2. You are aware of potential power dynamics and are willing to address and manage these dynamics constructively. This includes ensuring equitable participation and decision-making within the partnership, as well as recognizing and mitigating any imbalances that may affect the collaboration’s effectiveness and fairness.
3. You are passionate to link with young people across Africa and Europe to exchange and learn on your activities and results, for example through participating in the Youth Action Lab’s Digital Platform and Annual Learning Events.

3.2. The timeline and steps in applying for a Call for Proposals.

Creating your consortium

Organisations in the EU and in one of the 12 AU countries will need to apply for the grant together. One organisation will be called **‘lead applicant’**, while the other(s) will be the **‘collaborator(s)’**. Here’s what you need to know:

Lead applicant:

- Submits the project proposal.
- Acts as the main contact point throughout the project.
- Compiles and submits progress reports.

Collaborator(s):

- Work(s) closely with the lead applicant on all aspects of the project.
- Contribute(s) to the proposal and project execution and reporting.

Key considerations:

- **Shared responsibility:** While the lead applicant will handle administrative responsibilities and be accountable for communication and reporting, all consortium members are equally involved in project activities. Ensure that roles and expectations are clearly defined to avoid misunderstandings and delays.
- **Risk management:** The lead applicant is responsible for ensuring that all consortium members meet their obligations. If a collaborator does not fulfill their responsibilities, the lead applicant must address this issue promptly to prevent project delays or complications.
- **Power dynamics:** Be mindful of power dynamics within the consortium. The lead applicant should foster an environment of equitable participation and decision-making, recognizing and addressing any imbalances that may affect the partnership's effectiveness.
- **Financial contribution:** The lead applicant will receive a slightly larger financial contribution than the collaborator(s). Keep this in mind when preparing your budget to ensure that it reflects the responsibilities and financial needs of each partner.

Steps to proceed:

- Form your consortium by identifying at least one partner organisation on the other continent that shares a common cross-continental topic. Decide which organisation will be the lead applicant and which will be the collaborator(s).
- Collaboratively write the project proposal, detailing the project's goals, activities, and budget.
- Submit the completed proposal by the deadline through the **ON Grip Application System**.

We will organize two online events in **January** and **February 2025** to assist you with matchmaking and proposal writing. Participation in these events is encouraged but optional. A database of interested organisations will also be provided to help you find potential partners. You can have access to it by filling out [this form](#).

Important: Your consortium must include at least one organisation from Africa and one from Europe.

What are the steps to follow?

STEP	ACTIVITY	EXPLANATION
GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS		
Step 01	Responding to the Call for Proposal (CfP)	<p>Submit your project proposal by March 2025 through the ON Grip Application System. This system will guide you through the narrative and financial application questions.</p> <p>In the CfP, applicants are encouraged to join the ‘Power to Voices’ online community to receive updates on the application process, and to connect with other youth organisations:</p> <p>Step 1: Sign up to the Power to Voices Platform by making an account: Sign Up Here</p> <p>Step 2: Go to the AU-EU Youth Action Lab Community and click on ‘follow’ to become a member of the group, via this link: AU-EU Youth Action Lab Community Power to Voices</p>
Step 02	Online events and other support to grantees	<p>First event in January 2025 (introduction) and second event in February 2025 (proposal writing, budgeting, Q&A). You can also register your organisation in the matchmaking database.</p>
GRANT SELECTION		
Step 03	Longlisting and Application Assessments	<p>All grants must be submitted in English² responding to the CfP. Note: You can only apply to 1 CfP at a time and submit a single application for your selected CfP! In case you submit multiple applications to 1 or more CfPs, only the first application will be considered.</p> <p>After receiving all applications, the Youth Action Lab ‘Youth Advisory Board’ and the European Youth Forum team will go through a process of screening:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine the eligibility of each application. 2. Score each application according to the submitted narrative and financial proposal according to set selection criteria. 3. The highest scoring proposals will be notified, and we will engage together in a due diligence and an ‘organisational

² Cooperation Grants must be submitted in English due to the collaborative nature of the projects, the trainings provided, and the need for effective communication between grantees.

		assessment’ process. This process will take place over a period of around six weeks.
GRANT AWARD		
Step 04	Offer of Grant Award and Agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · After the due diligence and organisational assessment is completed with a positive result, the grant award process will start. · Successful applications will receive the official grant award notification and together we will sign a Grant Agreement. The ambition is to notify organisations during April or May 2025. · The signing of the Grant Agreement is followed by the first financial transfer and a first meeting (Inception Meeting) with selected grantees in May 2025 to discuss the project proposal and the next steps. · The financial transfer for cooperation grants will be made in 2 transfers and will take into account the proposal’s planning and set milestones. · Unsuccessful applicants will be notified. Applicants will have the option to ask for a brief assessment of their application should they choose. The ambition is to answer assessment detail requests within two weeks.

3.3. Using the ‘ON Grip’ Online System to submit your application.

There are unique hyperlinks for each of the four grant types. Clicking on any of the hyperlinks will lead you to the ON Grip application webform. From there, follow these steps:

- Create an account on the ON Grip Community portal. Note: You will first need to create an account before you can continue to fill out your application.
- Once you create an account, you will receive an email to log into the ON Grip Community portal.
Note: Any first-time visit requires a password set. Subsequent visits require the username and password.
- In the Community portal, you will be able to continue to write your application. You will see a green banner at the top of your screen with various tabs. Click on the tab “My Applications”, where a newly created application should be awaiting completion and submission.

- Once you have submitted your application, you will not be able to edit it anymore, so make sure you are happy with your answers!
- After the Call for Proposals is closed, we will review all applications on ON Grip. You will receive a message with the final decision of your application typically around **six weeks** after the call is closed.

3.4. Narrative application question focus

You will make your application based on the narrative application template provided in the ON Grip Application System above. The application form guides the process with specific questions and instructions given on the form.

The application has the following sections to be completed:

1. Organisation information and Contact Details
2. Additional Organisation Details
3. Project Relevance and Justification
4. Deliverables & Project Activities
5. Capacity
6. Monitoring and Evaluation
7. Risk Management
8. Project Budget
9. Annexes

You must answer all sections and adhere to the instructions and guidance provided. You will be assessed based on your application. It is important that you adhere to the suggested length/page numbers.

3.5 Budget Minimum Requirements

- All applicants are to use the budget template that has been provided in the application package. All three worksheets provided on the template should be filled in i.e., the Detailed Budget, Summary Budget and Budget Justification.
- The description of items must be sufficiently detailed. All columns for each budget line must be completed showing the cost per category, number of units and the unit value specified for each item depending on the indications provided. The budget has to include costs related to the project as a whole.
- The budget must be established in euro. Costs and unit values are rounded to the nearest euro.
- For all Human Resources costs, you need to indicate the percentage alongside the description of the positions whether fulltime or part time (FTE).

- The budget costs should be based on principle of Reasonable, Allowable and Allocable costs.
- All costs incurred during the project implementation should be verifiable from the grantee's records and necessary for the performance of the project.

Budget Specific Requirements

- Budget **at least 5% of grant awarded** towards Technical Support (capacity building and institutional strengthening of your organisation).
- All grantees are to budget for **one link and learn activity**³ for two representative(s) per organisation -flight, accommodation and per diems for a 5-day event(3 days of workshop including 2 days of travel).
- The rest of the funds will be allocated to your activities, administration and human resources in line with your proposal.
- The budget allocation will be assessed, among other criteria, on the amounts allocated to project activities, human resources, and other organisational support to ensure that the budget planning matches the objectives. We will not accept budgets that are dedicated fully to human resource costs.

Compulsory Budget Template

Please ensure that your application includes the completed budget template provided. Applications that do not adhere to this format will not be considered.



[Click here to download](#)

3.6. What makes a successful application?

What makes a successful application?

- Meeting both the hard and soft eligibility criteria.
- Clearly capturing the policy and advocacy focus of your project.
- Demonstrating a clear approach to cross-continental cooperation, ensuring the topic is relevant to both continents and that both organisations benefit equally.
- Showing how your project benefits marginalized groups. Being part of a marginalized group can give you priority.

³ The AU-EU Youth Action Lab will provide an in-person link and learn activity each year for all grantees of the four grant types.

- Providing a clear approach to ensuring the sustainability of your project’s results and continuation of activities after the grant period.

What are unsuccessful factors?

- Not meeting the eligibility criteria.
- Submitting an application in the wrong format or leaving key questions unanswered.
- Including unreasonable costs.
- In general, purchase of motor vehicles, land or buildings is not allowable;
- Being an applicant of another grant type under the AU-EU Youth Action Lab.

4 OVERALL GRANT MANAGEMENT

4.1. Overall communication

The AU-EU Youth Action Lab grants are designed to do more than just provide funding—they aim to help young people from Africa and Europe grow their skills and build connections. By being part of the Cooperation Grants, you will get more than financial support!

The European Youth Forum will manage the Cooperation Grants. As a Cooperation Grantee, you will have a program coordinator who will be your main point of contact throughout your project.

- The lead applicant will be the primary contact, but all organisations involved will communicate regularly with the program coordinator.
- Expect to stay in touch through emails, monthly online calls, and a community platform called Power2Voices. This platform will allow you to interact with other grantees, share ideas, and get support.

Together, we will explore how coaching and mentorship can provide value to your work or learning and capacity development needs. Trainings will be offered, and the program coordinator will also be available for any practical questions you might have regarding your grant implementation, spending, etc.

The Cooperation Grants aim to connect young people from different countries and continents. You will be expected to join our online community on Power2Voices, where we will hold monthly learning exchanges. You can even take the lead in organizing learning opportunities with other grantees across the project!

4.2. Trainings & support

The Youth Action Lab organizes annual face-to-face Link and Learn event. As Grantee, you are expected to participate in the event and share your own learning and knowledge with your peers from Africa and Europe! You might also get the chance to attend other in-person trainings.

In some cases, the policy and advocacy staff members of the European Youth Forum will be available to support you, depending on the topic of your project.

The Cooperation Grants provide capacity building opportunities based on the needs and interests you as an organisation identify. In your proposal you will be asked to allocate at least 5% of your total budget to engage in capacity development opportunities. You can be fully propositional in this – for example you know of a great training opportunity for your staff members that you propose to engage in. In case you have specific capacity-development needs but have difficulty finding the right party or opportunity to answer to your needs, the European Youth Forum will provide support in providing an overview of potential service providers that you can engage with.

5 CONTRACTING, REPORTING AND FINANCIAL TRANSFERS

The Grant Arrangement will be a binding document that outlines the period required to complete the project, the grant size awarded based on the approved application, workplan and budget. The Grant Agreement further outlines the requirements under the grant including Reporting Requirements, Sexual Exploitation Abuse and Harassment (SEAH), Conflict of Interest as well as other terms and conditions.

All costs incurred during the project implementation should be verifiable from the Grantee's records and necessary for the performance of the project.

Grant Disbursements will be done **twice in the life of the project period**. The first disbursement will be sent on the following conditions/milestones:

- Fully executing the Grant Agreement and all annexes
- Signed off budget and workplan,
- Completed Bank Information Form,
- Completed Grantee Information Sheet.

The second disbursement will be sent after completing the following milestones:

- Receipt and bank statement from the first disbursement,
- Bi-annual narrative report and the assessment of report completed,
- Variance report and the assessment completed,
- Risk register,
- Request for second and final disbursement.

6 DETAILS ON ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The AU-EU Youth Action Lab aims to support as many youth-led organisations as possible through a competitive application-based grant. To receive funding, organisations must submit an application, which will be reviewed using an open and transparent assessment method.

As these are powershifting funds co-designed by young people for young people, the Youth Advisory Board (YAB) holds decision-making power in the selection process. The process includes the following steps:

- The European Youth Forum and the YAB will screen applications based on eligibility criteria. This screening will take up to one week, with a possible extension depending on the number of applications received.
- During the longlisting process the applicants are grouped according to eligibility countries – this is done to ensure that there will be equitable representation across the 12 eligible African countries and European Union member states.
- The highest-scoring proposals will be notified and asked to complete forms and provide additional details for contracting.
- A Due Diligence and an organisational capacity assessment will be conducted to verify applicants' governance and accounting protocols.
- Where applicable, site-visits may be undertaken as part of the assessment process to ensure that applicants have minimum governance and accounting protocols and/or to review existing programming.
- The consortium partners will collaborate with its various country offices for this including on ground support by the YAB members.

7 STATEMENT ON INTEGRITY

The AU-EU Youth Action Lab has a “zero-tolerance” to any forms of misconduct (whether sexual, financial or interpersonal in nature). This means that the Youth Action Lab, supported through the policies of Oxfam, European Youth Forum and Restless Development Uganda ensures that safeguarding, financial management and interpersonal behaviour is addressed in agreements, programs with partners and grantee organisations, suppliers, and contractors. Organisations receiving Youth Action Lab funding shall have mechanisms in place to manage allegations of misconduct including prevention, detection, investigations & reporting. This includes safeguarding misconduct, such as sexual exploitation abuse, sexual harassment or child abuse, corruption misconduct, such as fraud, theft, bribery, money laundering, terror financing or aid diversion or nepotism, and interpersonal misconduct, such as bullying, intimidation, harassment or discrimination.

During organisational assessments before signing the grant agreement we will jointly reflect on the policies, code of conduct and mechanisms your organisation has in place (taking into account the size of your organisation and grant amount) and reflect on potential capacity development needs to address misconduct. Organisations receiving Youth Action Lab funding shall report any allegations of misconduct within the overall AU-EU Youth Action Lab project or any of its grantees at integrity@oxfamnovib.nl or using the [webform found here](#). All reports received will be investigated and, if substantiated, acted upon within a reasonable timeframe and in accordance with the policies of Oxfam. If your concern involves a Youth Action Lab grantee, the respective project partner that manages the relationship with the grantee (Oxfam in Africa, European Youth Forum or Restless Development Uganda) will coordinate following laid down procedures in each individual organisation. In all cases, all reported cases and actions taken will be shared with Oxfam Novib as contract-holder with the donor. If for some reason the handling of the complaint is not possible or the organisation is unwilling, then the lead agency (Oxfam) will manage this process. The partner organisations manage complaints in a manner that balances respect for due process with a survivor-centred approach in which the survivor’s wishes, safety, and well-being remain the priorities in all matters and procedures.

If your concern relates to the functioning/inappropriate action of any member of the AU-EU Youth Action Lab project, the project’s Consortium Manager will coordinate the investigation, following the relevant policies and processes of Oxfam.

If the concern is directly related to the behaviours of the Consortium Manager it will go to the AU-EU Youth Action Lab Steering Committee.