



Funding Manual - Innovation Grant

AU-EU Youth Action Lab

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INTRODUCTION

The AU-EU Youth Action Lab provides the opportunity for youth initiatives in Africa¹ and Europe² to apply for funding through a Call for Proposals to implement own 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 Plan³!

The AU-EU Youth Action Lab is implemented by Oxfam, European Youth Forum (YFJ) and Restless Development Uganda (RD) as the consortium partners.

The Youth Action Lab ambition is to nurture how young people link up across and between the African and European continents. To link youth initiatives to their peers to share, learn and collaborate, and to bring youth voices and solutions to policymakers at different levels, including the European Union and African Union!

The coming 3 years, the Youth Action Lab will launch various call for proposals campaigns 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: as youth initiative you are supported in a powershifting way!

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

1. Nothing about youth without youth – a Youth Advisory Board⁴ of the Youth Action Lab will review and select the proposals to receive funding.
2. We strive for grants that facilitate and nurture stability, resilience, financial security and organisational capacity.
3. We ensure application and reporting mechanisms that makes 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 on joint advocacy initiatives.

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

¹ Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia(Somaliland region), Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

² Countries part of the European Union.

³ https://youth.europa.eu/news/european-commission-launched-youth-action-plan-eu-external-action_en

⁴ The YAB is composed of representatives from 10 out of the 12 focus countries for this call and 2 from Europe. Each year we expect that we will work with 12 YAB members who are selected through an open call and interviews.

This Funding Manual focuses on the Innovation 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 different grant in a next Call for Proposal.
3. If you were not successful and were not awarded a grant in a Call for Proposal round, you can apply again in a next round.

The Innovation Grants are managed by Oxfam. Oxfam is a global movement of people, working together to end the injustice of poverty. That means we tackle the inequality that keeps people poor. Together, we save, protect and rebuild lives when disaster strikes. We help people build better lives for themselves, and for others. We take on issues like land rights, climate change and discrimination against women.

The Youth Action Lab will work with [Oxfam in Africa](#) (OiA), an exciting regional platform, within Oxfam which focuses on the continental perspective. OiA will be the thematic lead for Oxfam in terms of supporting grantees and working with young people to ensure their diverse voices are represented at AU level.

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!

Innovation grants are best fit for youth led organisations with innovative ideas to tackle intersectional and global challenges. A total 32 grants will be made available with **9 grants** to be made in the current grant opportunity. Each grant can have a duration of **12 or 15 months per grant** and budget available is for a **minimum amount of 30.000 EURO and a maximum amount of 50.000 EURO per grant.**

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

1. WHAT SHOULD MY PROPOSAL FOR AN INNOVATION GRANT FOCUS ON?

1.1 What do we mean by innovations and what innovations can you apply funding for?

An innovation is a broad term and often mistaken as only something that is completely new or perhaps something focusing on new technologies. While this could be the case, innovations are so much more!

In the Innovation Grant opportunity, we define innovation as designing, testing, scaling or improving a new or existing activity for young people in their own context with long-term impact. In other words, an impact that will benefit your community and your peers also after your grant project ends:

1. You design a new activity and want to test it in your own context.
2. You want to test to replicate an activity that is implemented in a different context but not yet in your own context.
3. You have already developed and tested a new innovation and want to scale it up beyond your context.
4. You have already developed and tested a new innovation and have specific ideas how to further improve it in your own context.

1.2 Testing in your own context and sharing across Africa and Europe?

The Innovation Grants are specifically for youth organisations that not only want to try something new but seek to connect with their peers and share the results and experience with young people across Africa and Europe. **As such, we aim to fund youth organisations that implement an innovation that is linked to a global challenge!**

With a global challenge we mean an issue that is faced by young people and their communities around the world. For example, the impact of climate change, or the limited representation of young people in decision-making processes. While in each context and for each individual the impacts of a particular challenge can be different, they are linked to the same root-causes.

The Innovation Grants aim to support youth organisations to:

1. Create a **direct result: a positive change** for youth and/or their communities in their own context.
2. Have an envisioned policy and/or practice change that is responding to a **global challenge**
3. Try something new and envision **to develop a business case to further scale** either directly themselves and/or by promoting results to other youth/stakeholders.

1.3 Intersectionality and global challenges

The Innovation Grants specifically aim to provide funding to projects of youth organisations that can sometimes be difficult to find funding for. Youth organisations in general can struggle to find funding that is accessible and makes sense to them. Moreover, activities that do not fully 'fit' into one thematic area (such as climate change or education) can experience additional barriers to apply for funding.

As such, the Innovation Grants will focus on youth activities that have an **intersectional approach**. With this we mean:

1. An activity that works on different thematic areas around the global challenges at the same time. For example, an activity that addresses the impacts of climate change on access to education of young people.
2. An activity that brings together young people from various diverse backgrounds and lived experiences.

1.4 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 as a result of the mix of their identity, socioeconomic backgrounds, location, and/or any other factors that can play a role.

The Innovation 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.

1.5 Sustainability

Applicants will have to explain what continuity the project will have 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 your project period ends. This can take many forms such as:

- Finding other sources of funding to scale up the work.
- Capacity building such as through trainings
- Writing and publicly share a manual that will contribute to the body of knowledge and referral.
- Buddy system
- Merging or transferring some of your activities to local structures in your location or country
- Developing a network of partners: i.e 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.
- And many more!

1.6 Types of activities

Your proposal can have a diversity of activities that build upon each other. We are excited to receive your ideas! As general guidance, we can identify three broad types of activities:

1. **Meaningful youth participation in decision-making**
 - For example: a new methodology for young people to monitor the commitment of decision-makers to increase access to quality education.
2. **Implementation of a youth-driven solution**
 - For example: implementation of a new climate resilience approach in each context.
3. **Sharing and scaling of a distinct activity with other youth organisations beyond their own context**
 - For example: development of an online learning product

The activities you propose can be a mixture of the broad types of activities above and do not need to ‘fit in one box’.

Each Innovation Grant will provide the opportunity to develop the capacity of your organisation based on your own needs! In your application you will be asked to identify your own needs and your proposal on how to address them (for example through a training or learning exchange).

While the Innovation Grants are broad in their focus, please note that the following activities **are not** part of the ambition to provide support to:

1. A youth initiative that does not respond to a global challenge and implement an initiative that is only relevant to a single context.
 - For example: improvement of a road to increase access to education.
2. Have a sole focus on direct service delivery in the implementation of a youth-driven solution.
 - For example: provision of contraceptives to young people in a community

2. APPLYING FOR AN INNOVATION GRANT

2.1 Am I eligible to apply for an innovation grant?

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

1. Your organisation is youth-led: young people (age 18 to 35) are the decision makers.
2. 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.
3. You are located and registered in 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.
4. Your proposed activity takes place in one or more of the above 12 countries.

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

1. You are an organisation that is active at the sub-national, national or regional level.
2. Your organisation is 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. You have identified one or more global challenges that you seek to address in your own country/context.

2.2 The timeline and steps in applying for a call for proposal

STEP	ACTIVITY	EXPLANATION
GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS		
Step 01	Responding to a Call for Proposal (CfP)	<p>A CfP is released annually in January, and an organisation has upto six to eight weeks to respond and submit their application.</p> <p>Applications will be made through a provided link to the ON Grip Application System. The ON Grip online environment will take you through the narrative and financial application questions and elements of your proposal.</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 Q & A and other support to grantees	As part of additional support to applicants, an online session will be scheduled before close of applications in early February to provide clarity, take questions and discuss examples of types of innovations around global challenges and answer any questions grantees might still have.
GRANT SELECTION		
Step 03	Shortlisting and Application Assessments	<p>Applications can be submitted in English, French and Portuguese only. 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’s ‘Youth Advisory Board’ and the Oxfam 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 assessment’ process.
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 in April 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 innovation grants will be made in two 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 by the end of May 2025.

2.3 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. NB - 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. NB - 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 platform. You will receive a message with the final decision of your application typically around **six weeks** after the call is closed.

2.4 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. Sustainability of the Project
9. Project Budget
10. Additional Questions (optional)

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.

2.5 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.

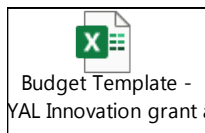
- For all Human Resources costs, you need to indicate the percentage alongside the description of the positions whether fulltime or part time (FTE).
- The budget costs should be based on principle of Reasonable, Allowable and Allocable costs.
- All costs incurred during the project implementation should 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).
- Budget for **one link and learn activity** for **two representatives** of your 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 needs 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](#)

2.6 What makes a successful and unsuccessful application?

These factors are only provided as a guide to inform potential applicants of whether or not their application is clearly focused to the CfP and within the framework of the grant type- it is not an exhaustive list:

What makes a successful application?

- Meeting both the hard and soft eligibility criteria.
- Clearly capturing the innovativeness of your project i.e. the design, testing, scale up and improvement proposed.
- Showing how your project benefits marginalized groups.
- Providing a clear approach to ensuring the sustainability of your project's results and continuation of activities after the grant period.
- Showing how the organisation will work and coordinate with others in inter and intra cooperation.
- Showing the relevance of the proposed project to the ambitions of the fund
- Add more..

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.

3. OVERALL GRANT MANAGEMENT

3.1 Overall Communication

All grant mechanisms that form part of the AU-EU Youth Action Lab have a capacity development ambition and connect young people across Africa and Europe. Being part of the Innovation Grants is so much more than receiving financial support!

The Innovation Grants will be managed and coordinated by Oxfam in Africa.

- As Innovation Grantee you will connect with Oxfam’s Grants and MEAL Coordinator who will be your main point of contact throughout your project.
- You can expect regular communication with Oxfam through mail, online calls and other check in moments guided by the AU EU Youth Action Lab Monitoring Plan.
- Grantees will connect through 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. Your focal point will also be available for any practical questions you might have regarding your grant implementation, spending, monitoring and reporting.

The Innovation Grants aim to connect young people from different countries. As such as Grantee you will be expected to join our project’s online community on the Power2Voices digital platform. On a monthly basis we will provide interactive sharing and learning exchanges between the current grantee cohort you are part of and beyond. Moreover – as interactive digital platform you can take lead yourself in setting up learning opportunities and engagement with the other grantees across the Youth Action Lab project!

3.2 Training and Support

The Youth Action Lab organizes annual face-to-face Learning Events. As Grantee you are expected to participate in the event and share your own learning and knowledge with your peers from Africa and Europe!

The Innovation Grants provide capacity development opportunities based on the needs and interests you as an organisation identify. In your proposal you will be asked to budget for 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, Oxfam will provide support in providing an overview of potential service providers that you can engage with.

4 CONTRACTING, REPORTING AND FINANCIAL TRANSFERS

The Grant Agreement 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**. 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.

Second disbursement will be sent after completing the following milestones.

- acknowledgement of receipt and bank statement from the first disbursement,
- bi-annual narrative report (the assessment of report by Oxfam) completed,
- variance report and (the assessment by Oxfam) completed,
- risk register
- request for second and final disbursement

Any further details will be based on the Y.A.L Monitoring Plan and the requirements for further data/information to be collected.

5 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:

- Oxfam 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.

6 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.