



## Funding Manual - Entrepreneurship Grant

### AU-EU Youth Action Lab

**Project Number: EuropeAid/177759/DD/ACT/MULTI**

**Contract: NDICI AFRICA/2023/452-545**

*Date: November 2025*



Co-funded by  
the European Union

This project is co-funded by the European Union

A project implemented by  
Oxfam, Restless Development-  
Uganda, European Youth Forum

## 1. Introduction

The AU-EU Youth Action Lab provides the opportunity for youth initiatives in Africa and Europe to implement their ideas and solutions linked to global challenges. Funded by the **European Union** and part of the EU's Youth Action Plan, the Youth Action Lab is implemented by **Oxfam**, the **European Youth Forum**, and **Restless Development Uganda**. Together, they connect young people across continents, encouraging collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and youth voices in policymaking at local, regional, and international levels, including the African Union (AU) and the European Union (EU).

Over three years, the Youth Action Lab will launch various call for proposals inviting youth in their diversity to apply for **powershifting grants**.

### Why powershifting?

1. **Nothing about youth without youth:** proposals are reviewed by a Youth Advisory Board<sup>1</sup> of youth representatives.
2. **Organisational capacity:** grants that strengthen stability, resilience, financial security, and capacity building of youth organisations.
3. **Youth-friendly processes:** 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 social entrepreneurship and employment opportunities.
3. **Representation Grants:** to support young people that face marginalisation 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 months.

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

1. You can only apply to one grant opportunity per Call for Proposals.
2. Each organisation can only be awarded one grant contract under this programme. If successful, you cannot reapply in future calls.
3. If you were not successful in a previous call, you can apply again in a next round and follow the steps as described in this funding manual.

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<sup>1</sup> The YAB is composed of 12 young representatives, with 10 selected out of the African 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.

**The Entrepreneurship 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 justice 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.

**Entrepreneurship Grants are best suited for youth-led social enterprises with a desire to strengthening the economic opportunities for young people and the organisations that they represent.**

A total of 20 grants will be made available with 5 grants made available in the first round, **10 grants in the current grant opportunity**, and 5 in the last call. Each grant can have a duration of 12 months and budget available is for an amount of **30.000 EURO**.

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!

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

## What should my proposal for an Entrepreneurship Grant focus on?

### 2. What do we mean with strengthening economic opportunities of young people and the organisations they represent?

The Entrepreneurship Grants support youth actors in advancing their initiatives to expand economic opportunities for young people. As with all our grant mechanisms, we aim for young people to exchange and learn together across countries and continents.

As such, the Entrepreneurship Grants focus on youth-led actions that address a **three-fold selection** of key challenges young people face around the world (more so in Africa) in their economic participation and taking control of their own future. The three-fold selection is elaborated below:

1. Year 1 CfP Focus- Access to **skills development** opportunities that are according to the needs of young people and local economic realities and support the start-up of new youth-led enterprises.
2. Year 2 CfP Focus- The responsible **growth of youth-led** social enterprises that combines its **social or environmental mission** with **income-generating activities**.
3. Year 3 CfP Focus -An **enabling environment** for young entrepreneurs to start and grow their business.

**During this Call for Proposal the focus will be on the second topic: growth of youth-led social enterprises that combines its social or environmental mission with income-generating activities!** We ask interested youth organisations to submit their ideas to advance responsible growth of their social enterprises in order to sustain their social entrepreneurship objectives for young people and their organisations.

**Social enterprises** are typically a **non-profit, trust, cooperative, or community-based organisation** that combines its **social or environmental mission** with **income-generating activities**. These organisations use trading or service delivery to generate revenue, which is then **reinvested into their projects and community impact**, helping them reduce reliance on donor funding while expanding sustainability.

#### Key features of social enterprises:

- Social/environmental goals drive all activities (mission-first).
- Runs enterprise/trading activities.
- Surpluses are reinvested into the mission (not taken by shareholders).

## 2.1 Why target social enterprises?

Youth-led organizations are on the rise globally, driving innovation, civic participation, community development and **employment through their social enterprises**. However, as these organizations grow, they often face significant challenges in a number of issues including resources to grow their enterprises, capacity and business ethics. There is a clear need for more opportunities that enables them to grow their social enterprises. Especially young people from marginalized communities can face additional barriers to access resources. We can think of gender barriers; especially the lack of access to funds particularly for young women and more so in rural areas. We aim to support youth initiatives that have **an ongoing social enterprise** and are looking for resources to grow that social enterprise.

The Entrepreneurship Grants aim to support youth organisations to:

1. **Create a direct result:** the responsible growth opportunities for a youth-led social enterprise in a given context are strengthened and a distinct gap is addressed.
2. **Share their experiences and results with (youth) actors** beyond their own context and nurture networks and connections with youth (entrepreneurs).

The Youth Action Lab aims to **reach and empower marginalised young people;** those who face barriers to full participation in social, economic, or political life. These barriers can take many forms and depend on the context.

In your proposal, explain:

- Which groups of marginalised youth you will involve
- How they are marginalised in your context
- How your project will support their participation and leadership

**Important note:** projects led by marginalised groups particularly young women will be prioritised.

## 2.2 Sustainability

Applicants will have to explain how their project will continue after the end of the grant period. In other words, how the activities or results will remain impactful and create change beyond the project timeline.

Describe how the results of your project will continue or inspire change beyond the funding period. This could relate to how outcomes remain relevant, visible, or useful once the grant has ended.

Projects should focus on locally led or adapted solutions addressing marginalized communities. They should build local connections among key actors like women entrepreneurs, private sector, and public services, forming strong partnerships and ecosystems to ensure sustainability beyond the project life.

## 2.3 Types of activities

Your proposal can have a diversity of activities that build upon each other. We are excited to receive your ideas!

Activities can take many forms depending on the social enterprise venture that you wish to grow. In your proposal, describe the activities you plan to implement and explain how they are linked to your goals/objectives, and the involvement of young people.

There is no fixed formula: you are free to design activities in the way that best fits your project, as long as you show clearly how they contribute to the growth of your social enterprise.

While the Entrepreneurship Grants are broad in their focus, please note that the following types of organizations or activities **are not** considered eligible for this grant:

- Purely for-profit SMEs whose social impact is incidental or token
- NGOs that are entirely donor funded with no enterprise activities
- Idea stage projects with no operational trading track record

### 3 Applying for an Entrepreneurship Grant

#### 3.1 Am I eligible to apply for an entrepreneurship grant?

The Entrepreneurship Grants have the following **'hard' criteria** when it comes to eligibility:

1. Your organisation must be a **non-profit**, operating as a Trust, Community Based Organisation (CBO), or as a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)/Civil Society Organisation(CSO) or Cooperative with a clear social/environmental mission. The social enterprise activity exists to sustain and advance that mission, not as a side business.
2. **Your organisation must be youth-led:** young people (aged 18-35) represent the organisation's governance and have primary decision-making power over the organisation's direction and programmes (100% is aged 18-35) and are directly involved in designing and carrying out activities (>80% is aged 18-35)
3. **Your project must be youth-led:** all staff (100%) working on implementing the project should be young people (aged 18-35)
4. Your organisation is formally registered in your country, has an organisation bank account, a clear governance structure and has been operating for at least 12 months.
5. You can show evidence of community programmes and revenue-generating activities.
6. **Income-generating activities:** you run a trading arm or enterprise with income that supplements donor support and contributes to financial sustainability of the organisation.
7. **Social/environmental impact:** you can demonstrate measurable impact (jobs for youth, improved livelihoods, affordable services, environmental gains). You have at least basic systems for tracking and reporting results.
8. **Profit use & reinvestment:** all or most surpluses are reinvested into the mission or scaling of the enterprise. No private shareholder payments of profit.
9. 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.
10. Your proposed activities take place in one or more of the above 12 countries.

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

1. 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.
2. You are eager to engage in a genuine cross-continental partnership, with all organisations contributing, learning, and sharing insights from the collaborative process-sharing your ideas and results from growing your social enterprise.
3. The organization should have good standing in the social enterprise community, shown by memberships or partnerships with national or local professional bodies, government, or private sector groups.

**3.2 The timeline and steps in applying for a call for proposal**

STEP	ACTIVITY	EXPLANATION
<b>GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS</b>		
Step 1: responding to a Call for Proposal (CfP)	Submit your project proposal via the ON Grip Application System <b>by 7<sup>th</sup> January 2026.</b>	Applications will be made through a provided link to the <b>ON Grip Application System</b> . The ON Grip online environment will take you through the narrative and financial application questions and elements of your proposal. 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: <b>Step 1:</b> Sign up to the Power to Voices Platform by making an account: <a href="#">Sign Up Here</a> <b>Step 2:</b> Go to the AU-EU Youth Action Lab Community and click on ‘follow’ to become a member of the group, via this link: <a href="#">AU-EU Youth Action Lab Community   Power to Voices</a>
Step 2: Online events and other support to grantees	Take part in <b>one online</b> event in <b>Nov–2025 covering the following:</b> 1. Introduction to Innovation Grants 2. Proposal and writing/application process, budgeting & Q&A	As part of additional support to applicants, an online session will be scheduled <b>in November</b> to provide detailed guidance on preparing strong entrepreneurship grant applications, clarify eligibility and criteria, offer practical advice on drafting proposals, and respond to any questions applicants may have to help them submit competitive applications.
<b>GRANT SELECTION</b>		
Step 3: Selection Process	Applications are <b>screened and scored</b> by Oxfam and the <b>Youth Advisory Board (YAB)</b> .	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Applications must be submitted in English, French or Portuguese only<sup>2</sup></li> <li>2. Each organisation may only submit one application per CfP - if multiple are submitted, only the first will be considered.</li> <li>3. <b>Screening:</b> Applications are checked for eligibility</li> <li>4. <b>Longlisting:</b> Eligible applications are grouped by country to ensure equitable representation across the 12 African countries.</li> <li>5. <b>Scoring:</b> The YAB scores the applications against the criteria set. As these are <b>powershifting funds</b></li> </ol>

<sup>2</sup> 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.

		<p><b>designed by young people for young people</b>, the YAB holds final decision-making power.</p> <p>6. <b>Due diligence:</b> The highest-scoring applicants are asked to provide further documents. Organisational capacity assessments and, where needed, site visits are carried out. Consortium partners may involve their local offices, with on-the-ground support from YAB members.</p>
<b>GRANT AWARD</b>		
Step 4	Offer of Grant Award and Agreements	<p>Selected applicants will be notified by <b>April/May 2026</b>. The next steps are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Signing of the <b>Grant Agreement</b></li> <li>· Receiving the <b>first financial transfer</b></li> <li>· Taking part in an <b>online inception meeting</b> as part of the onboarding and launch of the project implementation.</li> </ul> <p>Grants will be disbursed in two <b>instalments</b></p>

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

Applications for the Entrepreneurship Grant must be submitted through the **ON Grip Application System**. Each grant type has a unique application link, which takes you directly to the correct online form. To use ON Grip, follow these steps:

- Click on the grant application link on our website. This will lead you to a page to **create an account** on the ON Grip Community Portal. You will receive a confirmation email with a link to set your password.
  - Note: Any first time visit requires a password set. Subsequent visits require the username and password. Your username is the email address with which you registered.
  - **If you have already created an ON Grip account from our previous funding round, you should follow these same steps to reactivate your account.**
- **Log in** and go to the “My Applications” tab, where a new application form will be available for you to complete.
- **Fill in all required sections**, including both the narrative and budget templates. The system guides you through each section step by step.
- **ON Grip automatically saves your progress** each time you click off of a text box. You can return and edit your application until you click “Submit”.
- **Submit your application** before the deadline. Once submitted, you will no longer be able to edit it.

After the Call for Proposals closes Oxfam and the Youth Advisory Board will review all applications in ON Grip. Keep an eye on your account for an update on the status of your application.

If you encounter technical difficulties with the platform, you can contact the support email provided on the AU-EU Youth Action Lab website. Please provide screenshots and the name of your organisation in your email.

### 3.4. Narrative application question focus

Your application will be based on the narrative application template available in the ON Grip application system. The application form is divided into sections with specific questions and guidance. You are expected to answer all sections fully and follow the instructions given on the form.

The application has the following sections to be completed:

1. How did you find out about us?
2. Project Budget and Documents
3. Organisational Information and Contact Details
4. Project Bio/Information
5. Project Description
6. Risk Management
7. Certification

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.

### Budget Minimum Requirements

All applicants must use the budget template provided in the application package. The template has two worksheets (detailed budget, summary budget) and all must be completed.

Budgets should follow these rules:

- Provide a clear description for each item (cost category, number of units, unit value).
- Indicate costs in your **local currency**, and the final column must be in **euros (EUR)**. Use the official [European Commission exchange rate \(Inforeuro\)](#) to calculate conversion.
- Staff costs must indicate the percentage of time (FTE) for each position.
- Costs must be **reasonable, allowable, and allocable** to the project.
- All costs must be verifiable in your organisation's records and necessary for implementation.

### Budget Specific Requirements

- Budget **at least 5% of grant awarded** towards Technical Support (capacity building and institutional strengthening of your organisation).

- Budget for the mandatory **link and learn activity**<sup>3</sup> for up to **two representatives** per organisation. The event will take place in **one of the 12 African focus countries** (exact location to be confirmed).
  - Costs should cover flights, accommodation and per diems for a 5-day event (3 days of workshop and 2 days of travel). When budgeting, find average costs for flights and accommodation in one of the focus countries furthest from you.
- The remaining funds will be allocated to your project activities, administration and human resources in line with your proposal.
- The budget will also be assessed on how funds are distributed across activities, human resources, and organisational support, to ensure alignment with your project’s objectives. Budgets that allocate funds exclusively to staff costs will not be accepted.

### 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 BUDGET TEMPLATE](#)



Budget Template -  
YAL Entrepreneurship

### 3.5 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:

#### Successful applications often:

- Meet all hard and soft eligibility criteria (youth-led, nonprofit/social enterprise, registered in eligible countries).
- Clearly addresses youth economic opportunities through social enterprise growth.
- Demonstrates how young people, especially marginalized groups, will benefit.
- Provides a sustainability plan to continue activities beyond the grant period.
- Shows collaboration and coordination with other organizations or stakeholders.
- Includes a complete, well-formatted application with a reasonable and eligible budget.

#### Unsuccessful applications often:

- Do not meet the eligibility criteria.
- Are incomplete, in the wrong format or leave key questions unanswered.
- Include unreasonable or ineligible costs (e.g. purchase of motor vehicles, land or buildings)

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<sup>3</sup> 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.

- Applying for more than one grant type under the AU-EU Youth Action Lab.

### 3.6 Timeline overview

- **12 Nov 2025** – Open Launch of the Call for Proposals published
- **20 Nov webinar** - Introduction to Entrepreneurship Grants and Proposal writing/application process, budgeting & Q&A
- **07 Jan 2026** – Application deadline
- **Jan–April 2026** – Review by Oxfam and YAB & Due Diligence
- **April 2026** – Results announced & grant agreements signed
- **May 2026 – April 2027** – Grant implementation period
  - Monthly online progress calls (per consortium/joint)
  - Monthly social hangouts with all grant types (via Power2Voices)
- **Nov/Dec 2026** – In-person Link & Learn event (one of the 12 African focus countries, location TBC)

## 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 Innovation Grants, you will get more than financial support!

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

- As Entrepreneurship Grantee you will connect with Oxfam’s Grants and MEAL Coordinator who will be your main point of contact throughout your project.

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 Entrepreneurship 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!

### 4.2 Training and Support

All Innovation Grantees will take part in an **Online Inception Meeting** to kick off and onboard all the AU-EU Youth Action Lab Grantees. This training will give you the chance to meet and exchange with other grantees, deepen your understanding of the Innovation Grants, and strengthen your collaboration.

The Youth Action Lab also organises **annual face-to-face Link and Learn event**, an in-person cross-continental gathering where all grantees come together to share experiences and learning. You are expected to participate and should budget for up to two representatives, the event will be in one of the 12 focus countries in Africa.

Beyond these activities, other in-person or online activities may be offered during the programme.

You must allocate at least **5% of your budget** to capacity development. You are free to propose activities (e.g. staff training).

## 5. Contracting, Reporting and Financial Transfers

Once selected, you will sign a **Grant Agreement**. This binding document sets out:

- the approved project duration, workplan, and budget,
- the grant amount awarded, and
- key requirements, including reporting, safeguarding (SEAH), conflict of interest, and other terms and conditions.

The Grant Agreement will be a binding document that outlines the period of time 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, 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.

- the grant agreement and all annexes signed
- signed off budget and workplan,
- completed Bank Information Form,
- completed Grantee Information Sheet.

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
- progress on the MEAL framework.
- 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.

## 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](mailto: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.

**[CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD a sample filled application.](#)**

