



## Funding Manual - Innovation Grant

### AU-EU Youth Action Lab

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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.
1. **Organisational capacity:** grants that strengthen stability, resilience, financial security, and capacity building of youth organisations.
2. **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 Innovation 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.

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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.

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.

**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 justice and discrimination against women.

The Youth Action Lab will work with Oxfam in Africa (OIA), an exciting regional platform within Oxfam that 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.

**Innovation grants are best fit for youth led organisations with innovative ideas to tackle intersectional and global challenges.** A total of 32 innovation grants will be made available, spread over three grant opportunities. 7 grants were made available in the first round, **15 grants will be made available in the current round**, and 10 in the last round. Each grant can have a duration of **12 months** and budget available is for a **minimum amount of 30.000 EURO and a maximum amount of 40.000 EURO per grant**.

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 types is best for you!

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

## 2. What should my proposal for an Innovation Grant focus on?

### **What do we mean by innovations, and what innovations can you apply for 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 replicate an activity that is implemented in a different context but not yet in your own context, and test this.
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.

### **2.1 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.

### **2.2 Intersectionality**

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.

The Innovation Grants aim to support youth led 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** such as the SDGs or Agenda 2063
3. Demonstrate innovation by designing, testing, scaling, or improving activities with long-term impact—including piloting new approaches—and **develop a business case to further scale** either directly themselves and/or by promoting results to other youth/stakeholders.

### 2.3 Marginalized youth

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

### 2.4 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.

### 2.5 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 context, the people involved, and the goals of the project. 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 your innovative action.

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 implements 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

### 3. Applying for an Innovation Grant

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

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

- **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) with a clear social mission.
- **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)
- **Your project must be youth-led**: all staff (100%) working on implementing the project should be young people (aged 18-35)
- Your organisation is formally registered in your country, has an organisation bank account and a clear governance structure.
- 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.
- Your proposed activities take 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. 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.
3. You have identified one or more global challenges (linked to the SDGs and Agenda 2030) that you seek to address in your own country/context.
4. You have identified an intersectional approach that is not normally funded.

#### 3.2 What are the steps to follow?

STEP	ACTIVITY	EXPLANATION
<b>GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS</b>		
<b>Step 1: Responding to a Call for</b>	Submit your project proposal via the ON Grip Application	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

<p><b>Proposal (CfP)</b></p>	<p>System <b>by 7<sup>th</sup> January 2026.</b></p>	<p>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><b>Step 1:</b> Sign up to the Power to Voices Platform by making an account: <a href="#">Sign Up Here</a></p> <p><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></p>
<p><b>Step 2:</b></p> <p><b>Online events and other support to grantees</b></p>	<p>Take part in one <b>online</b> events in <b>Nov-2025 covering the following:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction to Innovation Grants</li> <li>2. Proposal writing/Application process, budgeting &amp; Q&amp;A</li> </ol>	<p>As part of additional support to applicants, an online session will be scheduled <b>in November</b> (week 3) to provide clarity, take questions and discuss examples of types of innovations around global challenges, intersectionalities and answer any questions grantees might still have.</p>
<p><b>GRANT SELECTION</b></p>		
<p><b>Step 3:</b></p> <p><b>Selection Process</b></p>	<p>Applications are <b>screened and scored</b> by Oxfam and the <b>Youth Advisory Board (YAB).</b></p>	<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> </ol>

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<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>4. <b>Longlisting:</b> Eligible applications are grouped by country to ensure equitable representation across the 12 African countries.</p> <p>5. <b>Scoring:</b> The YAB scores the applications against the criteria set. As these are <b>powershifting funds 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>		
<p><b>4</b></p> <p><b>Grant award and contracting</b></p>	<p>Highest-scoring applicants are <b>notified and contracted.</b></p>	<p>Selected applicants will be notified by <b>April/May 2026.</b></p> <p>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 <b>two instalments.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Unsuccessful applicants will also be notified and may request short feedback on their application.</li> </ul>

**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 (see Annex 1 – application template questions) 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

Your application will be assessed on the quality and clarity of these sections, so make sure your answers are complete and concise.

### **3.5 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 the following 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 Innovation grant :

#### 3.6 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:

#### Successful applications often:

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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.

- Meet all hard and soft eligibility criteria.
- **Submit all required documents** (narrative form, budget template, and annexes) fully completed, within the deadline.
- Have an intersectional approach and demonstrate innovation by designing, testing, scaling, or improving activities with long-term impact
- Demonstrate how young people, especially marginalized groups, will benefit.
- Provide a sustainability plan to continue activities beyond the grant period.
- Show collaboration and coordination with other organizations or stakeholders.
- Include a complete, clearly written and to the point 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)
- Applying for more than one grant type under the AU-EU Youth Action Lab.

### **3.7 Timeline overview**

- **12 Nov 2025** – Open Launch of the Call for Proposals published
- **20 Nov webinar** - Introduction to Innovation Grants, 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 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.

Communication will take place through different channels:

- **Monthly Progress Monitoring Meetings** with the Oxfam Team to follow up on project implementation and address questions.
- **Regular email exchange** for practical updates and coordination.
- **Power2Voices platform**: an online community for all Youth Action Lab grantees. Here you can:
  - Take part in **monthly social hangouts** with grantees from all four grant types.
  - Share updates, connect with peers, and even take the lead in organising your own learning opportunities.
- Organizations that have been selected to receive grants will be asked to fill out additional information. This will include contact information of “*all individuals from the organization/network who most likely will be involved in the implementation of the grant*” which includes their names and email addresses/phone numbers. (Maximum number: 10 per grantee organisation)

#### 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**. This is 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.

## 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 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.

- 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.

- 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.

## 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.](#)**