



# **Creative Europe Programme (CREA)**

## **Call for proposals**

Video games and immersive content development  
(CREA-MEDIA-2024-DEVVGIM)

Version 1.1  
13 October 2023

<b>HISTORY OF CHANGES</b>			
<b>Version</b>	<b>Publication Date</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Page</b>
1.0	26.09.2023	▪ Initial version.	
1.1	13.10.2023	▪ Replace 'Declaration on European ownership and independence' with 'Information on independence and ownership control'	9
		▪ Footnote added to the criterion on European ownership	10
		▪	



## EUROPEAN EDUCATION AND CULTURE EXECUTIVE AGENCY (EACEA)

EACEA.B – Creativity, Citizens, EU Values and Joint Operations  
**EACEA.B.2 – MEDIA**

### CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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## 0. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for EU **action grants** in the field of the MEDIA Strand under the **Creative Europe Programme**.

The regulatory framework for this EU Funding Programme is set out in:

- Regulation 2018/1046 ([EU Financial Regulation](#))
- the basic act (Creative Europe Regulation [2021/818](#)<sup>1</sup>).

The call is launched in accordance with the 2024 Work Programme<sup>2</sup> and will be managed by the **European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)** ('Agency').

 Please note that this call is subject to the final adoption of the budget by the EU budgetary authority. In case there are substantial changes, we may have to modify the call (or even cancel it).

The call covers the following **topic**:

- **CREA-MEDIA-2024-DEVVGIM – Video games and immersive content development**

Creative Europe MEDIA publishes annual calls for European co-development, European slate development, European mini-slate development and Video games and immersive content development. The same audiovisual work cannot be presented under more than one Call.

We invite you to read the **call documentation** on the carefully, and in particular this Call Document, the Model Grant Agreement, the [EU Funding & Tenders Portal Online Manual](#) and the [EU Grants AGA – Annotated Grant Agreement](#).

These documents provide clarifications and answers to questions you may have when preparing your application:

- the [Call Document](#) outlines the:
  - background, objectives, scope, activities that can be funded and the expected results (sections 1 and 2)
  - timetable and available budget (sections 3 and 4)
  - admissibility and eligibility conditions (including mandatory documents; sections 5 and 6)
  - criteria for financial and operational capacity and exclusion (section 7)
  - evaluation and award procedure (section 8)
  - award criteria (section 9)
  - legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements (section 10)
  - how to submit an application (section 11)

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/818 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing the Creative Europe Programme (2021 to 2027) (OJ L 189, 28.5.2021, p. 34).

<sup>2</sup> Commission Implementing Decision C(2023)6084 of 14/09/2023 amending Implementing Decision C(2021)3563 on the financing of the Creative Europe Programme for 2021-2025 and the adoption of the work programmes for 2021, 2022 and 2023.

- the [Online Manual](#) outlines the:
  - procedures to register and submit proposals online via the EU Funding & Tenders Portal ('Portal')
  - recommendations for the preparation of the application
- the [AGA – Annotated Grant Agreement](#) contains:
  - detailed annotations on all the provisions in the Grant Agreement you will have to sign in order to obtain the grant (*including cost eligibility, payment schedule, accessory obligations, etc*).

You are also encouraged to visit the [Creative Europe Project Results](#) website to consult the list of projects funded previously.

## 1. Background

Creative Europe brings together actions supporting the European cultural and creative sectors.

The general objectives of the Programme are:

- to safeguard, develop and promote European cultural and linguistic diversity and heritage;
- to increase the competitiveness and the economic potential of the cultural and creative sectors, in particular the audiovisual sector.

These goals are pursued through the following specific objectives:

- enhancing artistic and cultural cooperation at the European level, in order to support the creation of European works and strengthen the economic, social and external dimensions and innovation and mobility in Europe's cultural and creative sectors (**CULTURE strand**);
- promoting the competitiveness, scalability, cooperation, innovation and sustainability, including through mobility in the European audiovisual sector (**MEDIA strand**);
- promoting policy cooperation and innovative actions supporting all strands of the Programme, promoting a diverse, independent and pluralistic media environment, and media literacy, thereby fostering freedom of artistic expression, intercultural dialogue and social inclusion (**CROSS SECTORAL strand**).

The general and specific objectives of the Programme take into account the dual nature of the cultural and creative sectors, recognising, on the one hand, the intrinsic and artistic value of culture and, on the other, the economic value of those sectors, including their broader contribution to growth and competitiveness, creativity and innovation. The objectives are pursued in a way that encourages inclusion, equality, diversity and participation, including, where appropriate, specific incentives that encourage the active participation in the cultural and creative sectors of people with disabilities, people belonging to minorities and people belonging to socially marginalised groups, including both the creative process and audience development; and gender equality, in particular as a driver of economic growth, innovation and creativity.

## **2. Objectives – Themes and priorities – Activities that can be funded – Expected impact**

### Objectives

Within the specific objective of promoting competitiveness, scalability, cooperation, innovation and sustainability, including through mobility in the European audiovisual sector, one of the priorities of the MEDIA Strand is:

- to nurture talents, competence and skills and to stimulate cross-border cooperation, mobility and innovation in the creation and production of European audiovisual works, encouraging collaboration across Member States with different audiovisual capacities.

### Themes and priorities (scope)

The MEDIA Strand shall provide support for the following measures:

- Development of audiovisual works by European independent production companies, covering a variety of formats (such as feature films, short films, series, documentaries, narrative video games) and genres, and targeting diverse audiences, including children and young people.

The objective of the support to Video games and immersive content development is to increase the capacity of European video game producers, XR studios and audiovisual production companies to develop video games and interactive immersive experiences with the potential to reach global audiences. The support also aims to improve the competitiveness of the European video games industry and other companies producing interactive immersive content in European and international markets by enabling the retention of intellectual property by European developers.

### Activities that can be funded (scope)

Support will be given to the development (pre-production) of concepts and prototypes of interactive narrative storytelling with original content and/or quality gameplay intended for production and global commercial exploitation via PCs, consoles, mobile devices, tablets, smart phones and other technologies.

The aim is to provide funds to video game production companies and other companies producing immersive content to develop works with a high level of originality and innovative and creative value, and that have a high level of commercial ambition and extensive cross-border potential to reach European and international markets. This will allow for further investment in innovative European content and increase the competitiveness of European companies in the digital global market.

Applications should present adequate strategies to ensure a more sustainable and more environmentally-respectful industry and to ensure gender balance, inclusion, diversity and representativeness.

The following projects are ineligible:

- puzzle games, memory games, sports games, racing games, running games, rhythm/singing/dancing games, social games, quiz games, party games, versus-fighting games, word and spelling games, number games, mind games, even if they have a narrative element;
- projects where professional education, training or therapy is the main objective;
- multimedia art projects and installations;

- immersive tours, events, music videos and immersive experiences used in retail;
- works of a promotional nature being part of a promotional campaign or advertising for a specific, destination (tourism), product and/or brand and institutional productions to promote a specific organisation or its activities;
- projects including pornographic or racist material or advocating violence;
- platforms for games or interactive experiences and websites being, or dedicated specifically to, social platforms, social networking, internet forums, blogs or similar activities;
- tools and software services aimed solely at technological development and/or used solely for further developing already existing game or interactive experience concepts;
- reference works (encyclopedias, atlases, catalogues, databases and similar), "how-to" works (instructional guides, manuals and similar) and (interactive) e-books;
- information or purely transactional services.

### Expected impact

- Increased quality, appeal, feasibility and cross-border potential for selected projects.
- A stronger position on the European and international market for video games developers and companies producing interactive immersive experiences.

### 3. Available budget

The estimated available call budget is **EUR 7 000 000**.

Specific budget information per topic can be found in the table below:

Topic	Topic budget
Video games and immersive content development	<b>EUR 7 000 000</b>

The availability of the call budget still depends on the adoption of the budget 2024 by the EU budgetary authority.

We reserve the right not to award all available funds, depending on the proposals received and the results of the evaluation.

### 4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
Call opening:	3 October 2023
Deadline for submission:	<u>24 January 2024 – 17:00:00 CET</u> (Brussels)
Evaluation:	February - May 2024
Information on evaluation results:	June 2024



GA signature:	October 2024
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## 5. Admissibility and documents

Proposals must be submitted before the **call deadline** (see *timetable section 4*).

Proposals must be submitted **electronically** via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (accessible via the Topic page in the [Search Funding & Tenders](#) section). Paper submissions are NOT possible.

Proposals (including annexes and supporting documents) must be submitted using the forms provided *inside* the Submission System (⚠ NOT the documents available on the Topic page — they are only for information).

Proposals must be **complete** and contain all the requested information and all required annexes and supporting documents:

- Application Form Part A — contains administrative information about the participants (future coordinator, beneficiaries and affiliated entities) and the summarised budget for the project (*to be filled in directly online*)
- Application Form Part B — contains the technical description of the project (*to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed and then assembled and re-uploaded*)
- Part C (*to be filled in directly online*) containing additional project data
- **mandatory annexes and supporting documents** (*templates available to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, assembled and re-uploaded*):
  - detailed budget table (*mandatory template available in the Submission System*)
  - A PDF document with information about film(s)/work(s) to be generated from the Creative Europe MEDIA Database
  - A creative dossier (description of gameplay, information on Graphical User Interface and Head-up Display, level and character design, pictures, graphic bible, script, storyboard, creative director's note, etc.)
  - Rights contract / proof of ownership of rights (and in case of adaptation, rights of adaptation) for the project
  - Supporting documents of co-production, distribution and financing
  - Information on independence and ownership control (*mandatory template available in the Submission System*)
  - Declaration on language of the submitted materials (*mandatory template available in the Submission System*).

Please be aware that since the detailed budget table serves as the basis for fixing the lump sums for the grants (and since lump sums must be reliable proxies for the actual costs of a project), the costs you include **MUST** comply with the basic eligibility conditions for EU actual cost grants (see [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6](#)). This is particularly important for purchases and subcontracting, which must comply with best value for money (or if appropriate the lowest price) and be free of any


conflict of interests. If the budget table contains ineligible costs, the grant may be reduced (even later on during the project implementation or after their end).

At proposal submission, you will have to confirm that you have the **mandate to act** for all applicants. Moreover you will have to confirm that the information in the application is correct and complete and that the participants comply with the conditions for receiving EU funding (especially eligibility, financial and operational capacity, exclusion, etc). Before signing the grant, each beneficiary and affiliated entity will have to confirm this again by signing a declaration of honour (DoH). Proposals without full support will be rejected.

Your application must be **readable, accessible and printable**.

Proposals are limited to maximum **70 pages** (Part B). Evaluators will not consider any additional pages.

You may be asked at a later stage for further documents (*for legal entity validation, financial capacity check, bank account validation, etc*).

 For more information about the submission process (including IT aspects), consult the [Online Manual](#).

## 6. Eligibility

Applications will only be considered eligible if their content corresponds wholly (or at least in part) to the topic description for which it is submitted.

### Eligible participants (eligible countries)

In order to be eligible, the applicants (beneficiaries and affiliated entities) must:

- be legal entities (public or private bodies)
- be established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:
  - Creative Europe Participating Countries:
    - EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs))
    - non-EU countries:
      - listed EEA countries and countries associated to the Creative Europe Programme or countries which are in ongoing negotiations for an association agreement and where the agreement enters into force before grant signature ([list of participating countries](#))
- be established in one of the countries participating fully in the MEDIA Strand of the Creative Europe Programme and be owned directly or indirectly, wholly or by majority participation, by nationals from such countries. When a company is publicly listed, the location of the stock exchange will in principle determine its nationality<sup>3</sup>
- be European video game production companies, XR studios or audiovisual production companies,
- the coordinator must demonstrate recent experience in producing

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<sup>3</sup> The ownership structure will only be verified for proposals entering the Grant Agreement Preparation phase.

internationally distributed works.

Beneficiaries and affiliated entities must register in the [Participant Register](#) — before submitting the proposal — and will have to be validated by the Central Validation Service (REA Validation). For the validation, they will be requested to upload documents showing legal status and origin.

Other entities may participate in other consortium roles, such as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions, etc (*see section 13*).

### *Specific cases*

**Natural persons** — Natural persons are NOT eligible (with the exception of self-employed persons, i.e. sole traders, where the company does not have legal personality separate from that of the natural person).

**International organisations** — International organisations are eligible. The rules on eligible countries do not apply to them.

**Entities without legal personality** — Entities which do not have legal personality under their national law may exceptionally participate, provided that their representatives have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf, and offer guarantees for the protection of the EU financial interests equivalent to that offered by legal persons<sup>4</sup>.

**EU bodies** — EU bodies (with the exception of the European Commission Joint Research Centre) can NOT be part of the consortium.

**Associations and interest groupings** — Entities composed of members may participate as 'sole beneficiaries' or 'beneficiaries without legal personality'<sup>5</sup>. ⚠ Please note that if the action will be implemented by the members, they should also participate (either as beneficiaries or as affiliated entities, otherwise their costs will NOT be eligible).

A European video game production company, XR studio or audiovisual production company is a company whose main objective and activity is video game production/development, (entertainment) software development or audiovisual production (or equivalent). Publishing companies are not eligible applicants.

**Coordinator with recent experience in producing internationally distributed works** — The coordinator must prove that it has produced or developed a video game or (interactive or non-interactive) immersive experience that has been commercially distributed<sup>6</sup> in the period between 01/01/2021 and the deadline for submission of applications. Work-for-hire, i.e. projects for which the development or production work was subcontracted to the coordinator by another company, is not eligible, nor are projects on which a member of the coordinating company has a personal credit. Early Access works are not eligible either because they are not completed works yet and are still being developed. To prove the commercial distribution of the previous work, the coordinator must be able to provide a relevant sales report showing sales in the period between 01/01/2021 and the date of the deadline for submission.

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<sup>4</sup> See Article 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

<sup>5</sup> For the definitions, see Articles 187(2) and 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

<sup>6</sup> The work must have generated revenues, i.e. financial income. These revenues can be generated, for example, from the retail sales of the work, from the sale of in-game items or from advertising.

The coordinator must provide the requested information about the previous work in the dedicated section of the application<sup>7</sup>. In case the previous work in the application does not respect the eligibility criteria, the application will be ineligible even if the coordinator is able to provide information on other previous works that respect the eligibility criteria.

Countries currently negotiating association agreements – Beneficiaries from countries with ongoing negotiations (*see list above*) may participate in the call and can sign grants if the negotiations are concluded before grant signature (with retroactive effect, if provided in the agreement).

EU restrictive measures – Special rules apply for certain entities (*e.g. entities subject to [EU restrictive measures](#) under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)*<sup>8</sup> and entities covered by Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#)<sup>9</sup>). Such entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity, including as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any).

 For more information, see [Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment](#).

### Consortium composition

Applications by single applicants are allowed (single beneficiaries; affiliated entities are allowed, if needed), as well as proposals submitted by a consortium of at least 2 applicants (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities).

### Eligible activities

Eligible activities are the ones set out in section 2 above.

Only activities related to the concept development (pre-production) phase of narrative video games and interactive narrative immersive experiences, regardless of platform or expected distribution method, are eligible. The concept development (pre-production) phase is understood as the phase starting from the first idea until the production of the first playable prototype<sup>10</sup> or first trial version, whichever comes first.

In order to be considered *narrative*, the story must be told or shown throughout the whole game (in-game storytelling) or interactive immersive experience, and not only as an introduction or an ending.

In all cases, the work must be intended for commercial exploitation.

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<sup>7</sup> i.e. the Creative Europe MEDIA Database. The Electronic Submission System contains a link to the Creative Europe MEDIA Database where applicants must create a dossier containing information on both the previous work(s) and the work(s) submitted for funding.

<sup>8</sup> Please note that the EU Official Journal contains the official list and, in case of conflict, its content prevails over that of the [EU Sanctions Map](#).

<sup>9</sup> Commission guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#) on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards (OJEU C 205 of 19.07.2013, pp. 9-11).

<sup>10</sup> Playable prototype is understood as Alpha version, Beta version or Trial version. The Alpha version is one of the first iterations of the work. The Alpha version is usually not complete and most likely unstable and comes before the Beta version. The Beta version is an improved and more stable iteration of the Alpha version after a first phase of testing and debugging. The Beta version usually contains most features of the work, but still needs testing and debugging. The Beta version can be closed (restricted group of invited testers) or open (to a larger public). The Trial version is understood as the first iteration of the first playable level of a work. It can be played, tested and used for seeking financial partners.

The coordinator or, in case the application is submitted by a consortium, (one of) the eligible partner(s) must own the majority of the rights related to the project. No later than on the day of the deadline for submission of applications, the coordinator or, in case the application is submitted by a consortium, (one of) the eligible partner(s) must have a duly dated and signed contract<sup>11</sup> covering the rights to the artistic material included in the application. If the project is an adaptation of an existing work (literary, audiovisual, comic book, etc.), the coordinator or, in case the application is submitted by a consortium, (one of) the eligible partner(s) must also hold the majority of the rights relating to the rights of adaptation to this work with an option agreement or transfer of rights contract duly dated and signed.

The start of the production<sup>12</sup> phase of the submitted project has to be scheduled at least 10 months after the day of the deadline for submission of applications. The production phase starts once the first playable prototype or the first trial version is available, whichever comes first.

If the work has an interoperable standard identifier, such as ISAN or EIDR, it must be indicated in the application. In any case, for all projects selected for funding such an identifier must be created before the end of the action period.

Projects must comply with EU policy interests and priorities

Financial support to third parties is not allowed.

#### Duration

Projects should not normally exceed 36 months.

Extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment.

#### Ethics

Projects must comply with:

- highest ethical standards and
- applicable EU, international and national law.

They may not include pornographic or racist material or advocate violence.

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<sup>11</sup> The following types of contracts will be accepted:

- an option agreement concerning the transfer of rights between the author and the company, of an adequate duration to cover the whole development schedule and clearly setting out the conditions for exercising the option; or
- a contract transferring the rights from the author to the company.

The option agreement or transfer of rights contract can be replaced by:

- a unilateral declaration of the transfer of rights to the company where the author is the producer, a shareholder or an employee of the company;
- a co-production or co-development agreement duly dated and signed by the parties and clearly showing that the applicant company holds the majority of the rights at the date of the application.

<sup>12</sup> Production is understood as the phase starting from the testing and debugging of the first playable prototype or Trial version until the end of the production of the Gold Master or equivalent. The Gold Master is the completed final version of a work from which physical and/or digital copies will be made. The Gold Master is equivalent to Release to Manufacturing or Ready to Market (RTM) and to Release Candidate.

## 7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion

### Financial capacity

Applicants must have **stable and sufficient resources** to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share. Organisations participating in several projects must have sufficient capacity to implement all these projects.

The financial capacity check will be carried out on the basis of the documents you will be requested to upload in the [Participant Register](#) during grant preparation (*e.g. profit and loss account and balance sheet, business plan, audit report produced by an approved external auditor, certifying the accounts for the last closed financial year, etc*). The analysis will be based on neutral financial indicators, but will also take into account other aspects, such as dependency on EU funding and deficit and revenue in previous years.

The check will normally be done for all coordinators, except:

- public bodies (entities established as public body under national law, including local, regional or national authorities) or international organisations
- entities active in cultural and creative sectors that have received over 50% of their annual revenue from public sources over the last two years
- if the project requested grant amount is not more than EUR 60 000.

If needed, it may also be done for affiliated entities.

If we consider that your financial capacity is not satisfactory, we may require:

- further information
  - an enhanced financial responsibility regime, i.e. joint and several responsibility for all beneficiaries or joint and several liability of affiliated entities (*see below, section 10*)
  - prefinancing paid in instalments
  - (one or more) prefinancing guarantees (*see below, section 10*)
- or
- propose no prefinancing
  - request that you are replaced or, if needed, reject the entire proposal.

 For more information, see [Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment](#).

### Operational capacity

Applicants must have the **know-how, qualifications** and **resources** to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share (including sufficient experience in projects of comparable size and nature).

This capacity will be assessed together with the 'Project Management' award criterion, on the basis of the competence and experience of the applicants and their project teams, including operational resources (human, technical and other) or, exceptionally, the measures proposed to obtain it by the time the task implementation starts.

If the evaluation of the award criterion is positive, the applicants are considered to have sufficient operational capacity.

Applicants will have to show their capacity via the following:

- general profiles (qualifications and experiences) of the staff responsible for managing and implementing the project
- description of the consortium participants.

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

Public bodies, Member State organisations, international organisations and entities active in cultural and creative sectors that have received over 50% of their annual revenue from public sources over the last two years are exempted from the operational capacity check.

### Exclusion

Applicants which are subject to an **EU exclusion decision** or in one of the following **exclusion situations** that bar them from receiving EU funding can NOT participate<sup>13</sup>:

- bankruptcy, winding up, affairs administered by the courts, arrangement with creditors, suspended business activities or other similar procedures (including procedures for persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- in breach of social security or tax obligations (including if done by persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- guilty of grave professional misconduct<sup>14</sup> (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of EU Regulation [2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decisionmaking- or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).

Applicants will also be rejected if it turns out that<sup>15</sup>:

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<sup>13</sup> See Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

<sup>14</sup> Professional misconduct includes: violation of ethical standards of the profession, wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility, false declarations/misrepresentation of information, participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition, violation of IPR, attempting to influence decision-making processes or obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain advantage.

- during the award procedure they misrepresented information required as a condition for participating or failed to supply that information
- they were previously involved in the preparation of the call and this entails a distortion of competition that cannot be remedied otherwise (conflict of interest).

## 8. Evaluation and award procedure

The proposals will have to follow the **standard submission and evaluation procedure** (one-stage submission + one-step evaluation).


An **evaluation committee** (assisted by independent outside experts) will assess all applications. Proposals will first be checked for formal requirements (admissibility, and eligibility, *see sections 5 and 6*). Proposals found admissible and eligible will be evaluated (for each topic) against the operational capacity and award criteria (*see sections 7 and 9*) and then ranked according to their scores.

For proposals with the same score (within a topic) a **priority order** will be determined according to the following approach:

Successively for every group of *ex aequo* proposals, starting with the highest scored group, and continuing in descending order:

The *ex aequo* proposals within the same topic will be prioritised according to the scores they have been awarded for the award criterion 'Relevance'. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on their scores for the criterion 'Dissemination'. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on their scores for the criterion 'Quality of content and activities'.

All proposals will be informed about the evaluation result (**evaluation result letter**). Successful proposals will be invited for grant preparation; other ones will be put on the reserve list or rejected.

 No commitment for funding — Invitation to grant preparation does NOT constitute a formal commitment for funding. We will still need to make various legal checks before grant award: *legal entity validation, financial capacity, exclusion check, etc.*

**Grant preparation** will involve a dialogue in order to fine-tune technical or financial aspects of the project and may require extra information from your side. It may also include adjustments to the proposal to address recommendations of the evaluation committee or other concerns. Compliance will be a pre-condition for signing the grant.

If you believe that the evaluation procedure was flawed, you can submit a **complaint** (following the deadlines and procedures set out in the evaluation result letter). Please note that notifications which have not been opened within 10 days after sending will be considered to have been accessed and that deadlines will be counted from opening/access (*see also [Funding & Tenders Portal Terms and Conditions](#)*). Please also be aware that for complaints submitted electronically, there may be character limitations.

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<sup>15</sup> See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).



## 9. Award criteria

The **award criteria** for this call are as follows:

### **Relevance: Relevance of the project in relation to the call's objective and targeted projects (35 points)**

- Originality and creativity of the concept against existing work, including originality of the story (10 points)
- Level of innovation, i.e. the extent to which the project pushes the boundaries of the existing offer proposing "cutting edge" technique and content, such as use of new or latest technologies or platforms, innovation in gameplay, level of immersion and interactivity, innovation in visual/graphic approach, innovative use of cinematography and viewing (15 points)
- Adequacy of the strategies presented to ensure a more sustainable and environmentally-respectful industry (5 points)
- Adequacy of the strategies to ensure gender balance, inclusion, diversity and representativeness, either in the project/content or in the way of managing the activity (5 points)

### **Quality of content and activities: Quality of content and level of integration of the narrative (25 points)**

- Quality of storytelling
- Quality of visual approach (as shown through e.g. artwork, mock-ups, sketches, mood boards)
- Quality of the graphic and sound design
- Accessibility measures for users with disabilities and other impairments
- For non-immersive video games:
  - Quality and originality of the gameplay
  - Integration between gameplay and storytelling
  - Quality of the level and character design
- For interactive immersive video games and experiences:
  - Quality of the immersive experience
  - Level and quality of interactivity

### **Project management: Adequacy of the development and financing strategy and feasibility potential of the project (20 points)**

- Adequacy of the development strategy (10 points):  
Adequacy of the development plan, schedule, development budget and foreseen partnerships to the needs of the project
- Adequacy of the financing strategy and feasibility potential of the project (10 points):
  - Adequacy of the financing strategy compared to the estimated production costs in terms of awareness of the suitable potential financial partners
  - Experience or ability of the applicant to secure the necessary co-financing
  - Potential to attract distributor(s)/publisher(s)
  - Sales potential and revenue streams

**Dissemination: Potential for European/international exploitation and distribution and quality of the marketing strategy (20 points)**

- Potential for European/international exploitation and distribution (10 points):
  - Transnational appeal taking into account the subject and the type of game or experience
  - Potential to cross borders taking into account:
    - the experience and the diversity of the creative team
    - the story and characters or intended cast
    - the localization strategy
  - Relevance of the distribution strategy in view of the distribution methods foreseen, the choice of platform/media, the identified target audience, and the distribution partners in place or envisaged
- The marketing strategy allowing to reach audiences at an early stage. This includes the definition of unique selling points (USP), target audiences and markets, innovative marketing and audience engagement tools, promotional activities (10 points)

Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score
Relevance	N/A	35
Quality of content and activities	N/A	25
Project management	N/A	20
Dissemination	N/A	20
<b>Overall (pass) scores</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>

Maximum points: 100 points.

Individual thresholds per criterion: N/A.

Overall threshold: 70 points.

Proposals that pass the individual thresholds AND the overall threshold will be considered for funding – within the limits of the available budget (i.e. up to the budget ceiling). Other proposals will be rejected.

**10. Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements**

If you pass evaluation, your project will be invited for grant preparation, where you will be asked to prepare the Grant Agreement together with the EU Project Officer.

This Grant Agreement will set the framework for your grant and its terms and conditions, in particular concerning deliverables, reporting and payments.

The Model Grant Agreement that will be used (and all other relevant templates and guidance documents) can be found on [Portal Reference Documents](#).

**Starting date and project duration**

The project starting date and duration will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 1*). Normally the starting date will be after grant signature. A retroactive

starting date can be granted exceptionally for duly justified reasons – but never earlier than the proposal submission date.

Project duration: *see section 6 above.*

### Milestones and deliverables

The milestones and deliverables for each project will be managed through the Portal Grant Management System and will be reflected in Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement.

- WP 1 – Artistic development (narrative part, characters, graphic approach, etc.) (mandatory)
- WP 2 – Technical development (GUI, HUD, etc.) (mandatory)
- WP 3 – Financing, distribution and marketing activities (mandatory)

During the implementation of the project, the following deliverables must, as a minimum, be provided:

- WP 1 – Updated creative development (treatment, script, bible, game design document)
- WP 1 and/or 2 – Update on key crew/casting
- WP 2 – Link to prototype / trial version / trailer / teaser if produced
- WP 3 – Updated financing/budget and production schedules
- WP 3 – Updated distribution and marketing strategies

### Form of grant, funding rate and maximum grant amount

The grant parameters (*maximum grant amount, funding rate, total eligible costs, etc*) will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 3 and art 5*).

Project budget (maximum grant amount): EUR 200.000 per project. The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

The grant will be a lump sum grant. This means that it will reimburse a fixed amount, based on a lump sum or financing not linked to costs. The amount will be fixed by the granting authority on the basis of the estimated project budget and a funding rate of 60%.

### Budget categories and cost eligibility rules

The budget categories and cost eligibility rules are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 3, art 6 and Annex 2*).

*Budget categories for this call:*

- Lump sum contributions<sup>16</sup>

*Specific cost eligibility rules for this call:*

- the lump sum amount must be calculated in accordance with the methodology set out in the lump sum decision and using the detailed budget table provided

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<sup>16</sup> [Decision](#) of 26 May 2021 authorising the use of lump sums for actions under the Creative Europe Programme.

- the lump sum calculation should respect the following conditions:
  - for lump sums based on estimated project budgets: the estimated budget must comply with the basic eligibility conditions for EU actual cost grants (see [AGA – Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6](#))
  - for lump sums based on estimated project budgets: costs for financial support to third parties: not allowed
  - for lump sums based on estimated project budgets: costs may only be related to the eligible activities, i.e. the development phase and not the production phase of narrative video games and interactive narrative immersive experiences. The development phase is understood as the phase starting from the first idea until the production of the first playable prototype<sup>17</sup> or first trial version, whichever comes first.

### Reporting and payment arrangements


The reporting and payment arrangements are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4 and art 21 and 22*).

After grant signature, you will normally receive a **prefinancing** to start working on the project (float of normally **70%** of the maximum grant amount; exceptionally less or no prefinancing). The prefinancing will be paid 30 days from entry into force/financial guarantee (if required) — whichever is the latest.

There will be no interim payments.

**Payment of the balance:** At the end of the project, we will calculate your final grant amount. If the total of earlier payments is higher than the final grant amount, we will ask you (your coordinator) to pay back the difference (recovery).

All payments will be made to the coordinator.

 Please be aware that payments will be automatically lowered if one of your consortium members has outstanding debts towards the EU (granting authority or other EU bodies). Such debts will be offset by us — in line with the conditions set out in the Grant Agreement (see *art 22*).

Please also note that you are responsible for keeping records on all the work done.

### Prefinancing guarantees

If a prefinancing guarantee is required, it will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4*). The amount will be set during grant preparation and it will normally be equal to or lower than the prefinancing for your grant.

The guarantee should be in euro and issued by an approved bank/financial institution established in an EU Member State. If you are established in a non-EU country and would like to provide a guarantee from a bank/financial institution in your country, please contact us (this may be exceptionally accepted, if it offers equivalent security).

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<sup>17</sup> Playable prototype is understood as Alpha version, Beta version or Trial version. The Alpha version is one of the first iterations of the work. The Alpha version is usually not complete and most likely unstable and comes before the Beta version. The Beta version is an improved and more stable iteration of the Alpha version after a first phase of testing and debugging. The Beta version usually contains most features of the work, but still needs testing and debugging. The Beta version can be closed (restricted group of invited testers) or open (to a larger public). The Trial version is understood as the first iteration of the first playable level of a work. It can be played, tested and used for seeking financial partners.

Amounts blocked in bank accounts will NOT be accepted as financial guarantees.

Prefinancing guarantees are formally NOT linked to individual consortium members, which means that you are free to organise how to provide the guarantee amount (*by one or several beneficiaries, for the overall amount or several guarantees for partial amounts, by the beneficiary concerned or by another beneficiary, etc*). It is however important that the requested amount is covered and that the guarantee(s) are sent to us in time to make the prefinancing (scanned copy via Portal AND original by post).

If agreed with us, the bank guarantee may be replaced by a guarantee from a third party.

The guarantee will be released at the end of the grant, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the Grant Agreement.

### Certificates

Depending on the type of action, size of grant amount and type of beneficiaries, you may be requested to submit different certificates. The types, schedules and thresholds for each certificate are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4 and art 24*).

### Liability regime for recoveries

The liability regime for recoveries will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet point 4.4 and art 22*).

For beneficiaries, it is one of the following:

- limited joint and several liability with individual ceilings — *each beneficiary up to their maximum grant amount*
  - unconditional joint and several liability — *each beneficiary up to the maximum grant amount for the action*
- or
- individual financial responsibility — *each beneficiary only for their own debts*.

In addition, the granting authority may require joint and several liability of affiliated entities (with their beneficiary).

### Provisions concerning the project implementation

IPR rules: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 16 and Annex 5)*:

- different rights of use of the granting authority on materials, documents and information received for policy, information, communication, dissemination and publicity purposes: Yes

Communication, dissemination and visibility of funding: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 17 and Annex 5)*:

- additional communication and dissemination activities: Yes
- special logos: Yes

Specific rules for carrying out the action: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 18 and Annex 5)*: n/a

### Other specificities

n/a

### Non-compliance and breach of contract

The Grant Agreement (chapter 5) provides for the measures we may take in case of breach of contract (and other non-compliance issues).

 For more information, see [AGA – Annotated Grant Agreement](#).

## **11. How to submit an application**

All proposals must be submitted directly online via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System. Paper applications are NOT accepted.

Submission is a **2-step process**:

### **a) create a user account and register your organisation**

To use the Submission System (the only way to apply), all participants need to [create an EU Login user account](#).

Once you have an EU Login account, you can [register your organisation](#) in the Participant Register. When your registration is finalised, you will receive a 9-digit participant identification code (PIC).

### **b) submit the proposal**

Access the Electronic Submission System via the Topic page in the [Search Funding & Tenders](#) section (or, for calls sent by invitation to submit a proposal, through the link provided in the invitation letter).

Submit your proposal in 4 parts, as follows:

- Part A includes administrative information about the applicant organisations (future coordinator, beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners) and the summarised budget for the proposal. Fill it in directly online
- Part B (description of the action) covers the technical content of the proposal. Download the mandatory word template from the Submission System, fill it in and upload it as a PDF file
- Part C containing additional project data. To be filled in directly online.
- Annexes (*see section 5*). Upload them as PDF file (single or multiple depending on the slots). Excel upload is sometimes possible, depending on the file type.

The proposal must keep to the **page limits** (*see section 5*); excess pages will be disregarded.

Documents must be uploaded to the **right category** in the Submission System otherwise the proposal might be considered incomplete and thus inadmissible.

The proposal must be submitted **before the call deadline** (*see section 4*). After this deadline, the system is closed and proposals can no longer be submitted.

Once the proposal is submitted, you will receive a **confirmation e-mail** (with date and time of your application). If you do not receive this confirmation e-mail, it means your proposal has NOT been submitted. If you believe this is due to a fault in the

Submission System, you should immediately file a complaint via the [IT Helpdesk webform](#), explaining the circumstances and attaching a copy of the proposal (and, if possible, screenshots to show what happened).

Details on processes and procedures are described in the [Online Manual](#). The Online Manual also contains the links to FAQs and detailed instructions regarding the Portal Electronic Exchange System.

## 12. Help

As far as possible, ***please try to find the answers you need yourself***, in this and the other documentation (we have limited resources for handling direct enquiries):

- [Online Manual](#)
- FAQs on the Topic page (for call-specific questions in open calls)
- [Portal FAQ](#) (for general questions).

Please also consult the Topic page regularly, since we will use it to publish call updates. (For invitations, we will contact you directly in case of a call update).

### Contact

For individual questions on the Portal Submission System, please contact the [IT Helpdesk](#).

Non-IT related questions should be sent to the following email address: [FACEA-MEDIA-DEVVGIM@ec.europa.eu](mailto:FACEA-MEDIA-DEVVGIM@ec.europa.eu).

Please indicate clearly the reference of the call and topic to which your question relates (*see cover page*).

## 13. Important



### IMPORTANT

- **Don't wait until the end** — Complete your application sufficiently in advance of the deadline to avoid any last minute **technical problems**. Problems due to last minute submissions (*e.g. congestion, etc*) will be entirely at your risk. Call deadlines can NOT be extended.
- **Consult** the Portal Topic page regularly. We will use it to publish updates and additional information on the call (call and topic updates).
- **Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Exchange System** — By submitting the application, all participants **accept** to use the electronic exchange system in accordance with the [Portal Terms & Conditions](#).
- **Registration** — Before submitting the application, all beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners must be registered in the [Participant Register](#). The participant identification code (PIC) (one per participant) is mandatory for the Application Form.
- **Consortium roles** — When setting up your consortium, you should think of organisations that help you reach objectives and solve problems.

The roles should be attributed according to the level of participation in the project. Main participants should participate as **beneficiaries** or **affiliated entities**; other entities can participate as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions. **Associated partners** and third parties giving in-kind contributions should bear their own costs (they will not become formal recipients of EU funding). **Subcontracting** should normally constitute a limited part and must be performed by third parties (not by one of the beneficiaries/affiliated entities). Subcontracting going beyond 30% of the total eligible costs must be justified in the application.

- **Coordinator** — In multi-beneficiary grants, the beneficiaries participate as consortium (group of beneficiaries). They will have to choose a coordinator, who will take care of the project management and coordination and will represent the consortium towards the granting authority. In mono-beneficiary grants, the single beneficiary will automatically be coordinator.
- **Affiliated entities** — Applicants may participate with affiliated entities (i.e. entities linked to a beneficiary which participate in the action with similar rights and obligations as the beneficiaries, but do not sign the grant and therefore do not become beneficiaries themselves). They will get a part of the grant money and must therefore comply with all the call conditions and be validated (just like beneficiaries); but they do not count towards the minimum eligibility criteria for consortium composition (if any).
- **Associated partners** — Applicants may participate with associated partners (i.e. partner organisations which participate in the action but without the right to get grant money). They participate without funding and therefore do not need to be validated.
- **Consortium agreement** — For practical and legal reasons it is recommended to set up internal arrangements that allow you to deal with exceptional or unforeseen circumstances (in all cases, even if not mandatory under the Grant Agreement). The consortium agreement also gives you the possibility to redistribute the grant money according to your own consortium-internal principles and parameters (for instance, one beneficiary can reattribute its grant money to another beneficiary). The consortium agreement thus allows you to customise the EU grant to the needs inside your consortium and can also help to protect you in case of disputes.



- **Balanced project budget** — Grant applications must ensure a balanced project budget and sufficient other resources to implement the project successfully (*e.g. own contributions, income generated by the action, financial contributions from third parties, etc*). You may be requested to lower your estimated costs, if they are ineligible (including excessive).
- **No-profit rule** — Grants may NOT give a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). This will be checked by us at the end of the project.
- **No double funding** — There is a strict prohibition of double funding from the EU budget (except under EU Synergies actions). Outside such Synergies actions, any given action may receive only ONE grant from the EU budget and cost items may under NO circumstances be declared to two different EU actions.
- **Completed/ongoing projects** — Proposals for projects that have already been completed will be rejected; proposals for projects that have already started will be assessed on a case-by-case basis (in this case, no costs can be reimbursed for activities that took place before the project starting date/proposal submission).
- **Combination with EU operating grants** — Combination with EU operating grants is possible, if the project remains outside the operating grant work programme and you make sure that cost items are clearly separated in your accounting and NOT declared twice (see [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6.2.E](#)).
- **Multiple proposals** — Applicants may submit more than one proposal for *different* projects under the same call (and be awarded a funding for them). Organisations may participate in several proposals. BUT: if there are several proposals for very *similar* projects, only one application will be accepted and evaluated. The applicants will be asked to withdraw one of them (or it will be rejected).

Creative Europe MEDIA published annual calls for European co-development, European slate development, European mini-slate development and Video games and immersive content development. The same audiovisual work cannot be presented under more than one Call.

- **Resubmission** — Proposals may be changed and re-submitted until the deadline for submission.
- **Rejection** — By submitting the application, all applicants accept the call conditions set out in this this Call Document (and the documents it refers to). Proposals that do not comply with all the call conditions will be **rejected**. This applies also to applicants: All applicants need to fulfil the criteria; if any one of them doesn't, they must be replaced or the entire proposal will be rejected.
- **Cancellation** — There may be circumstances which may require the cancellation of the call. In this case, you will be informed via a call or topic update. Please note that cancellations are without entitlement to compensation.
- **Language** — You can submit your proposal in any official EU language (project abstract/summary should however always be in English). For reasons of efficiency, we strongly advise you to use English for the entire application. If you need the call documentation in another official EU language, please submit a request within 10 days after call publication (for the contact information, see *section 12*).

- **Transparency** — In accordance with Article 38 of the [EU Financial Regulation](#), information about EU grants awarded is published each year on the [Europa website](#).

This includes:

- beneficiary names
- beneficiary addresses
- the purpose for which the grant was awarded
- the maximum amount awarded.

The publication can exceptionally be waived (on reasoned and duly substantiated request), if there is a risk that the disclosure could jeopardise your rights and freedoms under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights or harm your commercial interests.

- **Data protection** — The submission of a proposal under this call involves the collection, use and processing of personal data. This data will be processed in accordance with the applicable legal framework. It will be processed solely for the purpose of evaluating your proposal, subsequent management of your grant and, if needed, programme monitoring, evaluation and communication. Details are explained in the [Funding & Tenders Portal Privacy Statement](#).