

Guidelines for Grant Applications

Call Reference CERV STRIVE 2024

Background

Liberties is a network of national-level organizations in 18 EU Member States with a mission to support and encourage the EU and the Member States to respect, protect and promote the values in Article 2 of the Treaty on the EU by supporting civil society organizations' active at local, regional, national levels. Our activities foster solidarity through capacity-building on communications and litigation, collaborating on research, advocacy, awareness-raising, and dissemination activities on EU-wide issues, individually and in synergy with other transnational organizations. Liberties prioritize the topics of the Rule of law, democracy and justice, civic space, populist authoritarianism, media freedom and freedom of expression, privacy, data protection, mass surveillance, artificial intelligence, and fundamental rights in the digital sphere. Liberties' work to strengthen the impact of its Members at the national level contributes to the implementation of rights in other EU policy areas. Building on Liberties' achievements so far, the activities of STRIVE will (1) Foster the network's ability to provide an expert contribution to the promotion and protection of Union values, (2) Strengthen and expand the network, (3) Build Members' capacity to maximize impacts of their work (4) Boost public awareness and engagement on EU values and how to protect them.

Goals

Liberties' specific objectives for the year 2024 are in support of three essential components of our mission: **network development, capacity building, and expert contribution to the rights and values in the EU** - in line with our strategic objectives as defined previously in the framework proposal:

- Specific Objective 1 (SO1): Providing expert contribution to the promotion and protection of fundamental rights and Union values in the EU
- Specific Objective 2 (SO2): Strengthening and expanding the network
- Specific Objective 3 (SO3): Building Members' capacity to maximize impacts on the ground
- Specific Objective 4 (SO4): Boost value-based information and dissemination for enhanced public engagement on rights and values

Regranting Areas and Objectives

The regranting in the scope of CERV-STRIVE 2024 has the following **specific objectives**:

- to support national initiatives furthering the **capacity building** of use of the Charter for Fundamental Rights on the national level
- to support national initiatives in advancing **research** and positioning the Charter in **Fundamental rights litigation**
- to support national initiatives in the use of the Charter through **strategic advocacy and campaigning** related to fundamental rights litigation based on recommendations and findings of the annual Rule of Law reports (EC and Liberties reports)

Expected results

- Developed strong partnerships between national initiatives in the use of the Charter for Fundamental rights
- Increased national research and positioning of the Charter in fundamental rights litigation
- Increased advocacy and campaigns related to the use of the Charter to advance findings of the RoL reports

Timeframe for project implementation

The duration of supported initiatives will be from **6 to 12 months**.

The selection process for applications received in response to this Call for Applications is planned to be finalized by the end of May 2024 and the start of the approved projects is planned for June 2024 at the latest. Liberties reserve the right to change the timeline of the application process, as the evaluation period may vary depending on the number of applicants received and following the EC guidance of the process.

Financial frame

The total amount made available under the Call for Project Proposals is EUR 150.000.

Size of grants:

Any grant requested under this Call must fall between the following minimum and maximum amounts:

- minimum amount: EUR 20.000,00 (including the audit costs of the project),
- maximum amount: EUR 45.000,00 (including the audit costs of the project).

Eligible and non-eligible costs

Eligible costs for funding are:

- Generally eligible expenditures that comply with the principles of sound financial management (principles of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness)
- Reasonable and acceptable as per the approved budget
- Directly related to the program
- Presented and supported by valid documentation (audit report)
- Incurred during the project, from the start date to the end date specified by the contract

Non-eligible costs are:

- Direct litigation costs (e.g. legal fees)
- Activities already financed through other grants
- Debts and debt service charges
- Provisions for losses or potential future liabilities
- Purchase of land, buildings, and vehicles
- Costs for profitable activities
- Cost incurred before the contract signature
- Credits to third parties
- Any other non-eligible costs defined in the grant contract

Eligibility of applicants

All Liberties members are eligible to apply for the project funding.

Grants will be awarded to Liberties members with a **mission and demonstrated experience** in the thematic priorities of this Call.

Proposals directly or indirectly **addressing** lessons learned from the **Charter training** held by Liberties in 2022 and 2023 will be given priority.

APPLICATION PROCESS

To support high-quality applications and to optimize the selection process, the application process for the regrating will have one stage:

- 1) FULL APPLICATION approval stage - Submitted Full Applications will be reviewed and evaluated by three independent experts/evaluators. After the full proposals' evaluation, the Selection Committee will decide on the grants' recipients.
- 2) Applications need to be submitted at liberties@libeties.eu with the title STRIVE 2024 application, all relevant questions need to be submitted to the same email address before 1 April 2024.

Number of applications and grants per applicant

A member organization **may not** submit more than **1** application under this call for applications.

PUBLIC CALL TIMELINE

Call for Application Calendar	Deadline
Published Call for Applications (Liberties website, Basecamp, newsletters)	28.02.2024.
Questions regarding Call for Application	1.04.2024.
Answers to questions regarding the Call for Application posted on the Liberties website, Basecamp	15.04.2024.
Submission of Full Application*	1.05. 2024.
Announcement of Full Application selection results*	1.06. 2024.
Signature of grant award contracts*	15.06. 2024.

**Tentative plan*

EVALUATION CRITERIA

EVALUATION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

As part of the administrative evaluation, Liberties reserves the right to verify information and documents submitted by applicants, with authorized providers of such services.

The administrative and eligibility compliance check will be conducted by Liberties staff, and only the applications that pass this check will be provided to the evaluators for assessment. The assessment of the

applications performed by the evaluators will be used by Liberties in the process of selecting the best proposals.

Before the commencement of the evaluation procedure, the evaluators should have become acquainted with the Guidelines for Applicants for the respective Call, and the guidelines for evaluation that Liberties will provide to them.

The evaluators shall provide an unbiased assessment of the substance of the project’s applications evaluated. They will provide scores for each application evaluated. Based on the scores assigned to each application form, Liberties will be able to identify the best applications that will be considered for funding. Each evaluator shall fill in and sign a detailed evaluation grid for each application proposal evaluated. They must provide a comment for each subsection of the evaluation grid and a summary of the assessments, including comments on the strengths and weaknesses of each full application.

Each application must be assessed on its own merits and not by comparing different applications. Evaluators are expected to bring their own experience of the sector and project implementation to the evaluation of each proposal.

The evaluators shall perform their tasks fairly and impartially, adhering to the rules on impartiality, confidentiality, and prevention of conflict of interest.

The evaluators are bound by a Declaration of Impartiality and Confidentiality to be signed before starting the assessment. If an evaluator believes there might be a situation of conflict of interest concerning one or more applicants, they must inform the contracting authority immediately.

Also, strict confidentiality is required from the evaluators involved in the implementation of this contract, notably on the assessments of individual applications.

The application will be evaluated against the criteria set below. The evaluation will be conducted by three independent evaluators with proven knowledge and record of the region and fundamental rights issues.

The application will receive an overall score out of 50 maximum points using the breakdown in the evaluation grid below.

The evaluation criteria are divided into headings and subheadings. Each subheading will be given a score between 1 and 5 as follows: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.

CRITERIA	Score	
1. Relevance of the project	Sub-score	20
1.1 How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the call for applications? How is the proposal relevant to the specific themes/sectors/areas or any other specific requirements and guidance stated in the guidelines for applicants? Are the expected results of the project aligned with the expected results defined in the guidelines for applicants?	5	
1.2 How relevant is the proposal to the particular needs and constraints of the target country and/or relevant sectors? Are there any value-added aspects and synergy with other relevant initiatives in the country/region and what are the efforts to avoid duplication?	5	

CRITERIA	Score	
1.3 Have the final beneficiaries and target groups been strategically chosen and clearly defined? Have their needs (as rights holders and/or duty bearers) and constraints been clearly defined and does the proposal address them appropriately?	5	
1.4 Does the proposal contain particular added-value elements (e.g. innovation when it comes to the use of the Charter on a national level, best practices, constructive partnerships with authorities, relevant bodies; promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities, needs of marginalized population, environmental protection)?	5	
2. Design of the project	Sub-score	30
2.1 How coherent is the overall design of the project? Does the proposal indicate the expected results to be achieved by the project? Does the intervention logic explain in a convincing way how the expected results will be achieved? Are the results indicators measurable and gender-sensitive?	10	
2.2 Does the design reflect an analysis of the problems involved and the capacities of the relevant stakeholders?	5	
2.3 Does the design consider external factors (risks and assumptions) and include plans to adapt to such risks materializing, or assumptions not being fulfilled?	5	
2.4 Are the activities feasible and consistent with the expected results (including timeframe)? Are results realistic?	5	
2.5 Is there a strong EU aspect of the project?	5	
TOTAL SCORE	50	