



FAQ – CfP: Business Partnership Challenge 2024

May applicants registered in the UK apply for funding?

No, applicants registered in the UK cannot apply for funding. Only applicants registered in Austria, in the European Economic Area (EU, Norway, Liechtenstein or Iceland) or in Switzerland can apply.

Can one applicant, headquartered in Austria/EEA+, submit several proposals for the Business Partnership Challenge, in different partner countries?

We recommend that each applicant should focus on only one project proposal. Within the framework of one project, it is also possible to work in different partner countries.

An applicant that submits more than one project proposal must be able to provide an own contribution of at least 50 percent of the project costs for each project proposal submitted. This will be considered in the partner assessment.

Are international organisations eligible for funding?

According to point 2 of the invitation of the call for proposals, international organizations are not included in the group of potential applicants.

However, international organizations may provide their services to fulfill specific tasks as external service providers if the procurement rules are met (see General Terms and Conditions 1.3.3.).

Guyana and Panama are candidates for graduating the OECD DAC list. Will you consider projects for these two countries?

As a minimum project duration of three years is required, projects in Guyana, Panama, Nauru and Montserrat cannot be considered for funding. These countries are in the process of graduating. It is likely that starting from January 2026 they will no longer be eligible for official development aid (ODA).

Is the funding geographically restricted (are there any focus countries?) or can these activities be anywhere as long as they sustainably improve the living conditions of people in the global south?

The intervention/project has to be implemented in a country of the Global South, this includes all the countries on the OECD/DAC list of ODA recipients (see previous answer regarding project in Guyana, Panama, Nauru and Montserrat)
https://www.entwicklung.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Dokumente/Unternehmen/DAC-List-of-ODA-Recipients-for-reporting-2024-25-flows.pdf



Focus countries of the ADA are Armenia, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Georgia, Moldova, Mozambique, Uganda, the region of the Western Balkans and Palestine.

It would be interesting to know what kind of projects would be considered here.

Eligible projects must contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and improve the living conditions of people living in countries of the Global South, preferably in least developed countries (LDCs). Contributions to each of the 17 individual SDGs are eligible. However, each project must include:

- SDG 8: creating decent jobs and generating income for the local partners and other local stakeholders and
- SDG 9: supporting local small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) and entrepreneurs.

Other SDGs the project may contribute to,

- generating income from sustainable agricultural production (SDG 2),
- providing demand-oriented vocational education and training (SDG 4),
- promoting gender equality (SDG 5),
- providing access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy (SDG 7),
- applying sustainability principles to commercial operations (SDG 12),
- taking action to combat climate change and its impacts (SDG 13).

Projects should include/evoke the following:

- act as systemically as possible and thereby enable sustainable structural change (i.e. strengthen capacities, network local and international partners or implement international norms and standards);
- be as inclusive as possible, involving many local actors and thus reducing the number of people benefiting from the project
- trigger innovative processes or contribute to solving challenges in countries in the Global South.

Would this project idea be fundamentally suitable?

The Business Partnership Challenge 2024 is based on a competitive selection process. Therefore, it is not possible to provide feedback on specific project proposals.

How should we deal with partners/beneficiaries who are involved in the project but cannot contribute to a budget themselves?

An applicant can allocate parts of the grant to third parties to carry out parts of the project as “sub-grantees”. This must be described in a grant application. The applicant is responsible towards ADA for the actions and omissions of the sub-grantee. The applicant contractually obliges the sub-grantee to comply with the applicant’s obligations and ensures that the sub-grantee complies with its obligations.

What does “50% in cash” mean, which is not financed by the ADA but must be contributed by the applicant?

Please see Annex 09b) Guidance for budget preparation:



The project budget is part of the grant application and includes the costs for the entire project, regardless of the portion financed by the ADA.

Up to 50% of the project costs included in the budget can be financed by the ADA. The remaining 50% must be financed by the applicant as its own contribution. In-kind services/benefits in kind that do not involve a cash flow are not part of the budget.

Could you pls clarify the specific reason why applicants from non-EEA+ countries are explicitly excluded from the Business Partnership Challenge?

ADA supports the private sector in developing countries by co-financing projects of companies headquartered in EEA+.

Is it possible to benefit from the Program in partnership with an EEA+ based project partner?

If companies are registered in countries that do not belong to EEA+, they are only eligible for the BPC 2024 if they participate in a consortium together with a partner company registered in EEA+.

How should employees who work on the project and incur these costs be budgeted?

Please see: Annex 09b) Guidance for budget preparation

Months, days or hours that employees work on the project are budgeted under *staff costs – employees*.

Employees are persons who have a contractual employment relationship with a monthly salary payment.

Costs for employees: the gross wages and salaries as well as the related taxes and the employer's share of social security contributions for the applicant's employees deployed for the project must be budgeted. Other payments or non-cash benefits for employees are only eligible for funding if they are provided for by law or collective agreement in a general and legally binding manner. Other payments or non-cash benefits granted to employees without a general legal basis are not eligible for funding.

The rates for the employees of the Recipient are to be calculated according to the following formulas (1 working day consists of 8 working hours):

Under the rate, the maximum prime costs on an hourly, daily or monthly basis that can be taken from your accounting can be budgeted.

The number is the number of hours, days or months that the employee works on the project.

The working time must be recorded in a time sheet (see Appendix 1), stating the date, hours and type of activity



The Auditor verifies based on original documents that all necessary supporting documents for employees' costs are available and these costs are reported correctly. Specifically, the auditor verifies a) the existence of employment contracts in accordance with the relevant national legislation, b) that the reported employees' costs are calculated correctly in accordance with the approved Project Budget and respective provisions of the General Terms and Conditions, c) that only actually paid employees' costs have been claimed under the Financial Report and this has been evidenced by the respective supporting documents.

Please see:

(https://www.entwicklung.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Dokumente/Zivilgesellschaft/GL_ExpenditureVerification_June2023.pdf , p. 3)

Can “in kind” services/benefits in kind be included in the budget?

In-kind services/benefits in kind that do not involve any cash flow are not part of the budget.

Under Consortia it says that only contributions made by partners would be considered as “own contributions”. This means that local partners would be part of the consortia and hence also sign the contract if we want that their contributions are also considered as “own contributions”?

This is correct. Please consider that a consortium declaration must be signed by all partners. Please see Annex 08c)

Must local partners who are applicants and hence sign the contract submit the registry of association, FHF and proof of creditworthiness?

Yes, provided that a local partner claims more than EUR 100,000 of the grant.

Moreover, would an applicant that is ECHO accredited and/or has a Strategic Appraisal (under the ADA-CSO funding scheme) need to provide these documents?

ADA recognizes certain accreditations as partner assessment, namely a

- Valid EU Pillar Assessment,
- ECHO Humanitarian Partnership Certificate 2021-2027 and/or
- GCF accreditation.

ADA's own accreditation for humanitarian measures (HuHi) in ADC/Nexus projects through which civil society organisations get pre-authorized to implement ADC-funded projects in the field of humanitarian assistance and crisis response, is also recognised.

This means, if an ADA partner assessment is less than 3 years old, or one of the beforementioned accreditations are available, there is no need to conduct another partner assessment at this point.

This is not valid for a Strategic Appraisal. Here a Partner Assessment has to be done and also a FHF und a Proof of Creditworthiness have to be submitted for a new application.



It would be interesting to know which role NGOs can have in this call for proposals. Can NGOs be part of the consortium in partnership with e.g. a corporate partner, and what status do NGOs have in an application - are they consortium partners / applicants or do they have a different status?

NGOs can be applicants if they are registered in the EEA+.

Applicants eligible to apply for funding are, exclusively,

- enterprises,
- voluntary associations and non-profit foundations, under the proviso that development cooperation forms part of their statutory purposes and actual business activities, as well as
- chambers, under the proviso that they engage in development cooperation in the meaning of section 2 par. 3 of Austria's Development Cooperation Act,
- in the European Economic Area (Austria/EEA+) or Switzerland.

The applicant has been in existence for more than three years and has the administrative, technical, and financial capacity to successfully carry out a project.

NGOs registered in EEA+ or local NGOs can be part of a consortium:

Consortia: If at least one partner meets the requirements stated above, additional partners are qualified to participate in the project financially or with contributions of other monetary value. For calculation of the funding amount, the contributions made by these partners are also considered their own contributions.

Please consider that a consortium declaration must be signed by all partners. Please see Annex 08c).

NGOs registered in EEA+ or local NGOs can be subgrantees:

An applicant can allocate parts of the grant to third parties to carry out parts of the project as "sub-grantees". This must be described in a grant application. The applicant is responsible towards ADA for the actions and omissions of the sub-grantee. The applicant contractually obliges the sub-grantee to comply with the applicant's obligations and ensures that the sub-grantee complies with its obligations.

NGOs registered in EEA+ or local NGOs can be external service providers:

Please see procurement rules (GTC pt. 1.3.3).

Please consider a French NGO lead applicant partnering with an NGO co-applicant established in the EU. Would the co-applicant be eligible if their Iraq office, which would implement the project in-country, was effectively a branch of the NGO's US entity? There is a Memorandum of Understanding between the EU and US NGO entities, but they remain separate legal entities.

Please see the answer to the previous question.

**Do local partners have to be part of a consortium, or can they also "just" be sub-grantees?
And do they have to submit also an FHF etc.?**



Please see the answer to pre-previous question.

The local partner must submit an FHF if it claims EUR 100.000 or more of the grant.

What project start date should be expected/planned?

Fall 2024

Is it possible to co-fund the project (50% of the total budget) through another ongoing project? Meaning: instead of a 50% cash co-financing, the ADA project would be part of a greater programme, and would that suffice as co-financing?

The own contribution must be provided by the applicant not by other donors or other projects. The Project is primarily financed by the applicant, and ADA provided up to 50% of the project cost.

Are NGOs eligible (and encouraged) to apply for the project, or only Companies (for-profit) are eligible?

Applicants eligible to apply for funding are, exclusively,

- enterprises,
- voluntary associations and non-profit foundations, under the proviso that development cooperation forms part of their statutory purposes and actual business activities, as well as
- chambers, under the proviso that they engage in development cooperation in the meaning of section 2 par. 3 of Austria's Development Cooperation Act,
- in the European Economic Area (Austria/EEA+) or Switzerland.

Is it possible to receive information on the Business Partnership Challenge 2024 also in French?

Unfortunately, this is not possible. The entire funding process of Business Partner Challenge 2024 is in English.

Is funding possible for already existing projects?

No, funding is only possible for new projects. Please consider the criterion of additionality which means that each project must provide added value that would not be generated without the grant.

Are activities that comply with European regulations eligible?

Activities for the sole purpose of meeting legal obligations are not eligible for funding.

Can you please send me the presentation about the Business Partnership Challenge 2024?

The presentation is available on our website.

Can we ask for a grant that is lower than EUR 500.000 if we already have covered the rest of our needs for the project with other sources.



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No, the minimum grant amount is EUR 500.000 per project.

Are there limitations on what is considered own / match funding; must it be own funding as per definition or can it be also third-party funding from other sources than ADA?

Own contribution means that at least 50 % of the total project costs must be provided by the applicant, not by other donors or other projects.

Can equipment produced by the recipient be considered in the budget?

Equipment or services produced or provided by the Recipient itself may be charged at cost only (without any markup). In-kind services/benefits in kind that do not involve any cash flow are not part of the budget.

Can the project be implemented in Venezuela or Spain?

Please take a look at the [DAC List of ODA recipients](#). Since Spain is not on the list, the project cannot be implemented in there. As far as Venezuela is concerned, since Venezuela is on the list as an upper middle-income country and territory, projects are possible there.

Are electronic signatures accepted?

The short application and the budget must be signed manually by authorised signatory (name of signatory also in block capitals) and may be submitted as pdf file and MS word file.

How old can the Financial Health Form (FHF) be?

The FHF is used to assess if the applicant has been in existence for more than three years and if it has the financial capacity to successfully carry out a project. To assess the applicant's financial health, the figures from the most recently available balance sheet must be provided (preferably from 2023/ 2022/ 2021). If the figures for 2023 are not yet available, at least those for the years 2022/ 2021/ 2020 must be provided.

Are we able to apply if the business is based in South Asia or in the US?

No. Only applicants with headquarters in the European economic area or Switzerland are eligible to apply for funding.

What if your project budget is lower and only about 200,000 USD?

Only projects with a volume of EUR 1 million or more are eligible.

What is the threshold turnover for qualification for an applicant?



This depends on several factors (see [point 2](#)). In any case, the applicant must be registered in the EEA or in Switzerland, have been in existence for at least three years and have the necessary administrative, technical and financial resources to successfully carry out the project. This refers to the fact that the applicant is expected to bear at least 50% of the total project costs, i.e. at least 500,000 euros for project volume of 1 million euros.

What are the projects considered priority projects for consideration?

From a content point of view, projects are possible in various areas of economic life (agriculture, education, renewable energies, ...) as long as they make a significant and sustainable contribution to achieving the SDGs (especially SDG 8 and 9).

However, the project must not, either directly or indirectly, support the production or proliferation of weapons or munitions. Projects aiming at the production of or trading in dangerous goods or environmentally harmful substances are also excluded from funding. More information on the exclusion of certain goods and services can be found here: [Funding Guidelines on Business Partnerships](#) and the [EGSIM Exclusion list](#) (Annex, p. 31).

Projects that have potential, adverse, significant, irreversible and/or cumulative negative environmental, gender or social risks and impacts will not be considered for funding (more information: [EGSIM Manual](#) p. 23).

Can future expected key figures also be entered when completing the Financial Health Form?

No. For the assessment of financial health, the latest available figures (preferably 2023-2021, at least 2022-2020) are to be provided and verified by an external/internal auditor or tax consultant.

Does this mean that we have to be able to prove that we have at least 500,000 euros in our bank account?

No. The point is that we must be able to assess on the basis of meaningful figures that the applicant has the necessary financial resources to successfully complete the project. Therefore, applicants must submit the Financial Health Form which is used to assess if the applicant has been in existence for more than three years and if it has the financial capacity to successfully carry out a project.

To assess the applicant's financial health, the figures from the most recently available balance sheet must be provided (preferably from 2023/ 2022/ 2021). If the figures for 2023 are not yet available, at least those for the years 2022/ 2021/ 2020 must be provided. Whether the money is in the bank account or not is of secondary importance for the assessment. In any case, sufficient funds must be available to cover the agreed part of the project costs.

Does the local partner also have to be owned by local people?

No, this is not a prerequisite. It is possible, for example, for subsidiaries of an EEA+ company to participate in the project.

Can partners who are not registered in the EEA+ also be represented in the consortium?



Yes, this is possible, provided that one applicant (usually the lead member of the consortium) is registered in EEA+.

Do guarantees have to be obtained from the local partner(s)?

This depends on the role the local partner has in the project:

1. Local partner is part of a consortium: In this case, a consortium declaration must be signed by all partners. The main applicant (leading member of the consortium) undertakes to represent - through its authorized representative - all members towards ADA in all matters arising out of or in connection with the implementation of the Grant Agreement (e.g. contract amendments) with legal effect and without any limitations.

If the local partner receives funding of 100,000 euros or more, it is also obliged to submit documents to prove its financial health (financial health form, proof of creditworthiness, commercial register extract, annual financial statements for the last three years).

2. Local partner is sub-grantee: In this case, the applicant passes on parts of the grant to a third party (local partner). The applicant is in turn responsible for the actions and omissions of the sub-grantee towards ADA. The applicant contractually obliges the sub-grantee to comply with the applicant's obligations and ensures that the sub-grantee complies with its obligations.

3. Local partner is commissioned through a tendering process: Please take a look at our general contractual conditions and especially at points 1.3.3. and 1.3.4.

Could a local partner (NPO and/or cluster) as sub-grantee have an independent sub-budget and are there any restrictions regarding the size of the budget?

Are sub-grantees allowed to contribute their own in-kind contributions (personnel services)?

There is no separate budget sheet for sub-grantees. All project costs must be presented on the same budget sheet.

The grant funds shall be used efficiently, economically and solely for the purpose for which they are provided.

The Applicant is responsible for project budget. This includes the parts of the budget which will be passed on to the subgrantee.

Sub-grantees are allowed to contribute cash-based contributions to the project, usually in the form of personnel services.

If machines (at cost) are included in the budget as an in-kind service - how must the internal cash flow (of production) be presented? Is it enough if internal cost accounting provides evidence of this?

A cost accounting must be submitted for material costs that are included in the company's budget. Depending on the contribution in kind and the amount of the budget item, this is checked individually.



Please note General Terms and Conditions point 1.3.5:

Equipment or services produced or provided by the Recipient itself may be charged at cost only (without any markup). Where used machinery is purchased from third parties, the amounts charged shall not exceed the amounts paid and invoiced to the Recipient. Where the Recipient provides used machinery from its existing stock, solely the substantiated book value shall be charged.