

Building Collaborative Pathways for Regional Development and Improved Administrative Capacity for EU Cohesion Policy Adoption in Ukraine AND Moldova

GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

IMPACT NETWORKS

Open call for cross-border cooperation

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Call Deadline: 31.10.2026

Submission Platform: <https://eurobridge-uamd.org/>

QUICK LINKS: use the [e following link to download](#) any relevant document for your application:

- **Annex 1:** Development plan (Application form) - TEMPLATE
- **Annex 2:** Declaration of Honour – Eligibility Conditions
- **Annex 3:** Budget Form filled online on the web platform of the project
- **Annex 4:** General conditions for project implementation

Contact email:

Ukraine: odesarda@gmail.com , salamatov2006@gmail.com

Moldova: cmda.proiecte@gmail.com

Romania: andreea.toma@hygia.ro; info@hygia.ro

HISTORY OF CHANGES

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1. ABOUT EUroBridge_UA_MD

EUroBridge_UA_MD "Building Collaborative Pathways for Regional Development and Improved Administrative Capacity for EU Cohesion Policy Adoption in Ukraine AND Moldova" is a project financed by the "**Technical assistance for ERDF, CF and JTF (ERDF-TA-2024-SUPPORTUMBR)**" Programme, under Grant agreement no. 101235791. The project is implemented by a consortium of partners from three countries: Ukraine, Moldova and Romania.

EUroBRIDGE_UA_MD is a project dedicated to facilitating cross-border cooperation between local and regional stakeholders, in the border regions of Ukraine and Moldova. The project aims to strengthen institutional collaboration and cross-border cooperation between Ukraine and Moldova. The focus is on developing a practical and sustainable framework by **supporting joint initiatives, increasing administrative and operational capacities, and facilitating knowledge exchange between regional actors.**

The **EUroBRIDGE_UA_MD Project** will be implemented through a cascade funding mechanism consisting of two open calls.:

- **1st OPEN CALL IMPACT NETWORKS** – the first call, focused on forming and strengthening cross-border networks;
- **2nd OPEN CALL CAPACITY & INNOVATION** – the second call, focused on concrete innovation implementation and capacity development.

The targeted geographic regions of the core partnership are: the oblasts of Chernivtsi, Khmelnytskyi, Vinnytsya, and Odessa (Ukraine) and Moldova. In addition to the core partnership, projects may include additional partners from other oblasts in Ukraine if justified.

2. The EUroBridge_UA_MD FUNDING SCHEME – "CAPACITY & INNOVATION and IMPACT NETWORKS" Programme

2.1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

This Guide sets out the Project's purpose, objectives, eligible areas, target groups, eligibility criteria, the application and competition procedures, the project evaluation and selection process, the provision of grant funding, and the monitoring and reporting of project activities.

The total budget allocated for the **IMPACT NETWORKS OPEN CALL** is **€400,000**, distributed as follows:

Category	Allocated Budget	Est. no. of projects	Max. Grant
Cluster projects	€100,000	At least 2 projects	€50,000/project
Digital Innovation Hub (DIH) Projects	€100,000	At least 2 projects	€50,000/project
Regional Development Agency (RDA) Projects	€100,000	At least 2 projects	€50,000/project
TOTAL	€400,000	Up to 8 projects	

Each category is allocated €100,000, sufficient to fund **at least 2 projects**. The remaining €100,000 constitutes a flexible reserve that is not pre-assigned to any category. Following the completion of the evaluation process, this reserve will be awarded to the **highest-ranked proposals** across all three categories that have not yet received funding, **regardless of entity type**. This mechanism ensures that the best proposals are funded on merit, while guaranteeing a baseline level of support for each eligible entity type.

The maximum amount a joint project composed of at least two partners may receive from IMPACT NETWORKS" call for proposals is up to €50,000.

IMPORTANT:

If the number of proposals within a category that meet the minimum quality threshold is lower than the estimated number of projects to be funded in that category, the remaining budget from the undersubscribed category may be **redistributed** to fund additional high-scoring proposals from another category that have met the quality threshold but could not be funded within their own category's envelope.

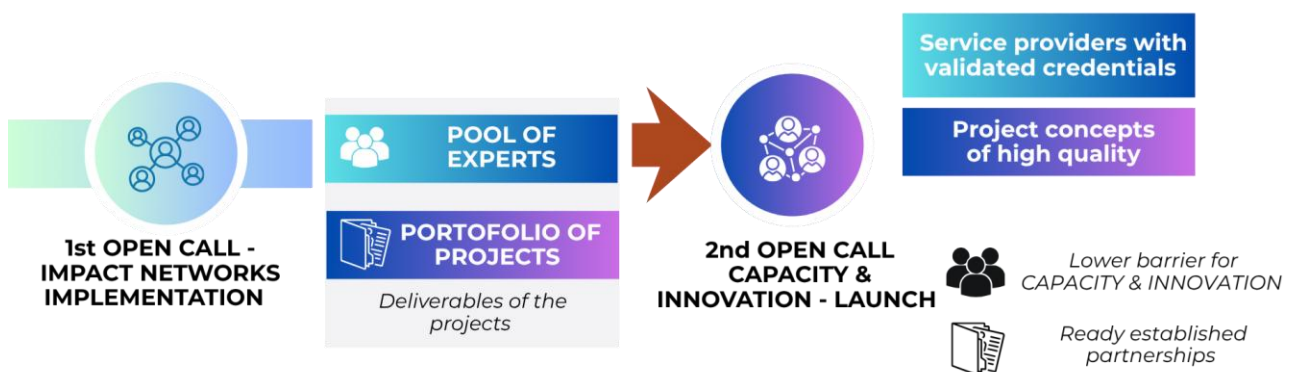
The **IMPACT NETWORKS Open Call** is designed not only to generate immediate cross-border cooperation outcomes, but also to establish the operational and strategic foundations for the second **Open Call – CAPACITY & INNOVATION**.

Two mandatory outputs are expected to ensure this continuity between the two funding stages.

The **Pool of Experts**¹, built collectively by IMPACT NETWORKS beneficiaries through their cross-border cooperation activities, constitutes a curated register of vetted service providers capable of supporting businesses and public authorities in the areas of digitalisation, internationalisation, product development, and business innovation. Projects submitted under **CAPACITY & INNOVATION are encouraged** to include at least one partner drawn from the **Pool of Experts**. As a result, the quality of the **Pool of Experts** developed under IMPACT NETWORKS will directly influence the implementation capacity and potential impact of projects supported under the second call.

The **Portfolio of Projects**, produced as a second compulsory output, translates the strategic ambitions of each partnership's Joint Strategic Plan into concrete, actionable project concepts, with defined objectives, identified funding instruments, and named potential partners. The Portfolio functions as a pre-defined pipeline of mature cooperation concepts, providing future applicants with a practical basis for developing high-quality CAPACITY & INNOVATION proposals, reducing preparation time and facilitating the creation of stronger cross-border partnerships.

Together, these two outputs constitute the basis of the **2nd OPEN CALL CAPACITY & INNOVATION**, for which a separate guide for applicants will be published after the closure of this first call.



¹ Identification and Formation of the Pool of Experts

2.2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE USE OF FUNDING

The financial support awarded under the IMPACT NETWORKS Open Call shall be provided in the form of a non-reimbursable grant and may be used solely for the implementation of the activities approved in the Development Plan and the Sub-Grant Agreement.

Beneficiaries shall ensure that the grant funds are used:

- exclusively for achieving the objectives of the approved project;
- in accordance with the approved budget;
- in compliance with the principles of economy, efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and sound financial management;
- in accordance with the applicable national legislation, EU law and the provisions of the Sub-Grant Agreement.

Grant funds shall not be used for:

- personal expenses or private purposes;
- activities that are not included in the approved project;
- transferring or assigning the grant to third parties, except where expressly permitted under the Sub-Grant Agreement;
- covering pre-existing debts or liabilities;
- financing political or electoral activities;
- financing the same eligible expenditure from more than one public or European funding source (double funding).

Failure to comply with these provisions may result in the suspension of payments, financial corrections, partial or full recovery of the grant, and any other measures provided for under the Sub-Grant Agreement.

For the purposes of this Guide, the "Contracting Authority" refers to the Odessa Regional Development Agency (RDAOR), for beneficiaries in Ukraine, and the Municipal Center for Development of Entrepreneurship (MCDE), for beneficiaries in Moldova, acting as the bodies responsible for signing Sub-Grant Agreements with the selected beneficiaries.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE IMPACT NETWORKS OPEN CALL



The objective of the IMPACT NETWORKS call is to fund the implementation of development plans that support people-to-people networks, increase the administrative capacity of partners, and enhance regional competitiveness.

Objective	Facilitate cross-border cooperation among clusters, DIHs, and RDAs in Ukraine and Moldova.
Eligible consortia (CORE PARTNERSHIP)	Partnerships of at least 2 entities (one from the <u>primary eligible area</u> of Ukraine and one from Moldova): Cluster Organisations, DIHs, RDAs, composed of: 1 - Coordinator, submitting the proposal as representative of the consortium; 1 - Project partner(s) The sub-grant agreement will be signed by all partners.
Extended consortium – optional	In addition to the core partnership, projects may include additional partners from Ukraine if justified. Additional Ukrainian partners are eligible, either from the <u>primary eligible areas or other oblasts of Ukraine</u> . These additional partners are considered third (or further) consortium members and do not replace the core partnership requirements.
Eligible territorial coverage - Moldova	The entire territory of Moldova.
Eligible territorial coverage - Ukraine	The <u>primary eligible area</u> comprises the oblasts of Chernivtsi, Khmelnytsky, Vinnytsya, and Odesa . Additional Ukrainian oblasts of Ukraine are eligible where duly justified. The partnership should justify that the addition of Ukrainian partners from the extended eligible area benefits the cross-border area.
Project Duration	6 - 10 months
Max. Grant/Project	€50,000
Payment Structure	• 50% pre-financing within 30 days of SGA signature; • 50% reimbursement (final payment) within 30 days of submission and approval of the final report.

Funding awarded under the **“IMPACT NETWORKS” OPEN CALL** is conditional and is granted for the implementation of the activities and the achievement of the objectives approved in the **Development Plan** and the Sub-Grant Agreement. **The Coordinator** is responsible for submitting the application on behalf of the consortium and serves as the primary point of contact with EUroBridge-UA-MD throughout the evaluation and implementation process.

The **partnerships** will implement the **Development Plan** (submitted through the web application form), which aims to strengthen cross-border cooperation and establish people-to-people networks, enhance the capacities of the participating organisations, support business development and public administration, increase regional competitiveness, and strengthen the project development and management capacities of the partners' network members.

The **DEVELOPMENT PLAN** is the core implementation document of the application. Submitted through the web application form, it defines the compulsory and optional activities (as described in Section 5.2), the expected outputs and the implementation approach that the partnership commits to delivering. Partnerships selected under the **IMPACT NETWORKS Open Call** shall implement the approved **Development Plan** during the 6–10 month implementation period.

4. OPEN CALL DETAILS



4.1. OPEN CALL TIMELINE

The IMPACT NETWORKS open call follows the timeline set out below:

Element	Details
Call Launch	01.08.2026
Application Deadline	31.10.2026
Evaluation & Selection	November 2026 - January 2027
Implementation start	No later than 31 January 2027

All proposals submitted after the deadline or through channels other than the official digital platform will be declared ineligible and will not be evaluated.

4.2. OPEN CALL BUDGET

The maximum grant awarded under the IMPACT NETWORKS open call is **€50,000** per project, covering 100% of the eligible costs declared up to that amount. Co-financing is not mandatory; beneficiaries are not required to contribute their own funds.

Where a partnership chooses to invest additional resources beyond the grant-covered eligible costs, the EUroBRIDGE Consortium's contribution remains capped at **€50,000** and covers only the eligible costs defined in Section 5.3. **Any voluntary co-financing contributed by the partnership must not exceed 20% of the total project budget.**



5. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

All submitted applications will undergo an eligibility check. Proposals that do not meet the criteria below will be excluded from the qualitative evaluation.

To be considered eligible, applications must, at submission stage:

- a) be submitted electronically via the official digital platform indicated in the call announcement;
- b) be submitted before the specified deadline; applications submitted after the deadline will not be considered;
- c) be complete, using the development plan templates provided;
- d) include all mandatory information, declarations, and annexes requested in this Guide for Applicants.

Submitting an application and participating in the evaluation process does not obligate the Contracting Authority to award funding.

Only projects that have been officially approved and for which a Sub-grant agreement has been signed will receive financial support.

5.1. ELIGIBLE BENEFICIARIES - LEGAL STATUS AND ORGANISATION TYPOLOGY

Applicants must indicate both their **legal status** (i.e. the legal form under which the applicant is established and registered under the national legislation of the respective country); and the **organisation typology** they represent, (i.e. the functional role or ecosystem organisation on whose behalf the application is submitted).

The partners share joint responsibility for implementing the project, ensuring the proper use of funds, and achieving the agreed-upon results.

5.1.1 Legal status

The applicant must be a legal entity established in accordance with the national legislation of Moldova or Ukraine.

In order to be considered eligible, the applicants (**Lead Partner** and **Project Partner(s)**) should be registered as one of the eligible legal statuses, under the national legislation of Moldova or Ukraine:

- **Public Association/Public Organisation:** registered under the Law of Ukraine “On Public Associations” (No. 4572-VI) or established as a non-commercial organisation under the Law on Non-Commercial Organisations No. 86/2020 of Moldova (including public associations and equivalent forms) or;
- **Association or Union of Legal Entities:** Established under the Civil Code of Ukraine and/or the Law of Ukraine “On Public Associations” (including public unions and associations of enterprises), or under the Law on Non-Commercial Organisations No. 86/2020 of Moldova (including associations or unions of legal entities and equivalent forms) or;

- **Employers' Association or Business Association:** Established under the Law of Ukraine “On Organisations of Employers” and/or the Law on Public Associations, or under the Law on Employers’ Organisations No. 976/2000 and the Law on Non-Commercial Organisations No. 86/2020 of Moldova.
- **Foundation or other Non-profit Organisation:** Established under the Civil Code of Ukraine and the Law on Charitable Activities and Charitable Organisations (including foundations and charitable organisations), or under the Law on Non-Commercial Organisations No. 86/2020 of Moldova (including foundations and equivalent non-profit forms).
- **Chamber of Commerce and Industry:** Established under the Law of Ukraine “On Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Ukraine” or under the Law on Chambers of Commerce and Industry No. 393/1999 of Moldova.
- **Public Institution:** Established under the Civil Code of Ukraine and relevant public sector legislation (including state or municipal institutions), or under the Civil Code of Moldova and the Law No. 436 of June 28, 2006 on local public administration; Law No. 98 of May 4, 2012 on specialized central public administration, as well as other legislative and regulatory acts governing the activities of public institutions.
- **RDA established under national legislation:** Recognised under the Law of Ukraine “On Principles of State Regional Policy” and relevant governmental acts establishing RDAs, or under the Law of Moldova No. 438/2006 on Regional Development (including the national network of RDAs).
- **Limited Liability Company or equivalent legal entity:** Established under the Law of Ukraine on Limited and Additional Liability Companies (including LLCs – TOV), or under the Civil Code of Moldova and the Law on Limited Liability Companies (including SRL and equivalent commercial entities).

The legal status declared in the application must correspond **to the entity's official registration documents** and be supported **by relevant registration or establishment documents** at project submission.

5.1.2 Organisation typology

Applicants must represent one of the following three entity types. Eligibility must be demonstrated through either external audit reports, official recognition, activity plans, project history, or equivalent verifiable evidence, as specified for each category type.

- **Cluster Organisations:** representative entity of a cluster as defined in COMMISSION REGULATION (EU) No 651/2014, namely the entity representing structures or organised groups of independent parties (such as innovative start-ups, small and medium-sized enterprises and large enterprises, as well as research and knowledge dissemination organisations, non-profit organisations and other affiliated economic operators) designed to stimulate innovative activity by promoting the sharing of equipment and the exchange of knowledge and expertise and by effectively contributing to knowledge transfer, networking, information dissemination and collaboration between enterprises and other organisations in the cluster. The entity must be recognised as such following an **external audit** and/or have a **valid profile on the European Cluster Collaboration Platform**² and/or

² <https://www.clustercollaboration.eu/>

have included **proof of the cluster's activity for at least 1 year** (initiatives, events, projects, communication in accordance with the COMMISSION REGULATION 651/2014).

- **Digital Innovation Hubs:** DIHs are consortia set up to be one-stop shops designed to support businesses and public sector organisations in their digital transformation journey, providing access to advanced digital technologies and expertise. The consortium must be recognised as such through at least one of the following:
 - participation in a national selection, accreditation, or designation process; and/or
 - participation in a European-level selection or initiative (including EU-supported DIH frameworks where applicable);

The application must be submitted by the legally registered entity acting as the DIH representative or coordinating body which can prove through formal documentation the mandate of the applicant entity to represent the DIH consortium.

- **RDA:** is an entity (usually under public law or with mixed public-private status) created to plan, coordinate and implement economic and social development policies and programs at the level of a region. The applicant must be formally recognised as a RDA under the applicable national legal and institutional framework of the respective country (Ukraine or Moldova), and must demonstrate **legal establishment under national regional development legislation**.

IMPORTANT:

For Ukrainian organisations operating at national level (i.e. registered in Kyiv or with national-wide scope of activities), acting as CORE partners, they must clearly demonstrate that their activities **extend to and meaningfully cover the targeted regions of Ukraine**, namely the **oblasts of Chernivtsi, Khmelnytsky, Vinnytsya, and Odesa**.

Applicants must cumulatively fulfil the following eligibility conditions:

a) be a legal entity established in accordance with the national legislation of Moldova or Ukraine and fall within one of the eligible legal entity categories described in Section **5.1.1 (Legal Status)**;

b) belong to one of the eligible organisation types:

- Cluster Organisation;
- DIH Representative;
- RDA;

c) have their registered office and/or carry out operational activities in Moldova or in one of the primary eligible oblasts of Ukraine (Chernivtsi, Khmelnytsky, Vinnytsya and Odesa) for **Core Partners**. Organisations from the extended eligible oblasts of Ukraine may participate as Additional Partners, where applicable;

d) participate in a cross-border partnership composed of at least two Core Partners, including at least one eligible organisation from Moldova and one from the primary eligible areas of Ukraine;

e) demonstrate sufficient operational and managerial capacity to implement the proposed **Development Plan**. Relevant experience may be demonstrated through the profiles or CVs of the key persons involved in the implementation of the proposal;

f) be a legally registered organisation with sufficient operational and financial capacity to implement the proposed activities, as demonstrated by the most recent available financial statements;

g) have no outstanding debts to the national public budget at the date of submission of the application;

h) not be subject to insolvency, liquidation or similar legal proceedings, and not be affected by unresolved legal disputes or internal governance conflicts that could jeopardise the implementation of the project.

Only the information and supporting documents necessary to verify compliance with the above eligibility criteria **shall be required at the application stage**. Where justified, additional supporting documents may be requested during the contracting phase.

The partnership proposed at the application stage should normally remain unchanged throughout the evaluation and contracting process. Exceptionally, duly justified changes may be accepted by the Contracting Authority, provided that they do not affect the eligibility of the partnership, the quality of the proposal or the outcome of the evaluation. If the Lead Partner withdraws or fails to sign the Sub-Grant Agreement within the prescribed deadline and no eligible replacement is approved, the funding offer shall be withdrawn and the next highest-ranked proposal on the reserve list may be invited to proceed to contracting.

5.2. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES FOR FUNDING

Eligible activities must directly contribute to the objectives of the **IMPACT NETWORKS call**: strengthening cross-border networks, increasing administrative capacity, and enhancing regional competitiveness. Activities must be implemented jointly by the **Lead Partner** and the **Project Partner(s)** and must reflect a genuine cross-border cooperation dimension, not two parallel national activities.

5.2.1 Activities supporting the mandatory outputs

Each funded partnership shall implement a **Development Plan** leading to the delivery of three mandatory outputs:

- **Joint Strategic Plan;**
- **Portfolio of Projects;**
- **Pool of Experts.**

These outputs are intended to strengthen cross-border cooperation under the **IMPACT NETWORKS** Open Call and to provide the strategic and operational foundation for the second Open Call, **CAPACITY & INNOVATION**.

The **Development Plan** should reflect the partnership's objectives, thematic focus and territorial context. Applicants are encouraged to propose activities that are proportionate to their

needs and capable of delivering the required outputs. Eligible activities may include, but are not limited to, the following:

A. Joint Strategic Planning and Portfolio Development

Activities supporting the preparation of a **Joint Strategic Plan** and an embedded **Portfolio of Projects** may include:

- bilateral cooperation meetings and working sessions between the Ukrainian and Moldovan partners to identify common priorities, shared challenges and cooperation opportunities;
- consultations with relevant stakeholders, where appropriate, to collect information supporting the preparation of the Joint Strategic Plan;
- analysis of the territorial and sectoral context, including needs assessments, mapping of cooperation opportunities and identification of relevant funding instruments;
- joint preparation, review and validation of the Joint Strategic Plan;
- identification, prioritisation and further development of project concepts to be included in the Portfolio of Projects;
- preparation and refinement of the Portfolio of Projects as an integral part of the Joint Strategic Plan;
- communication and dissemination activities, where relevant, to promote the Joint Strategic Plan and the Portfolio of Projects among stakeholders identified by the partnership.

The list above is indicative rather than exhaustive. Applicants may propose alternative or complementary activities, provided that they are justified, contribute to the objectives of the call and lead to the delivery of the mandatory outputs.

Joint Strategic Plan

The Joint Strategic Plan is the strategic framework developed jointly by the Ukrainian and Moldovan partners and submitted as part of the Development Plan. It identifies shared priorities, common challenges and opportunities for cooperation within the eligible cross-border area and defines a coordinated framework for future collaboration.



Rather than being an end in itself, **the Joint Strategic Plan** is expected to provide a practical basis for future cross-border initiatives by supporting the identification of investment priorities, cooperation opportunities and project concepts that may subsequently be developed under the **CAPACITY & INNOVATION Open Call** or through other relevant funding instruments.

Portfolio of Projects

The Portfolio of Projects is a structured collection of project concepts or initiatives jointly developed by the partnership to support the implementation of the **Joint Strategic Plan**. It translates the strategic priorities identified by the partnership into a pipeline of potential cooperation initiatives that may be further developed under future funding opportunities. Each project concept should, where relevant, describe its objectives, expected results, potential funding opportunities and the organisations that may contribute to its implementation.



The Portfolio of Projects is intended to serve as a practical and evolving resource for the partnership, facilitating the preparation of future project proposals under the **CAPACITY & INNOVATION Open Call** and other relevant national or international funding programmes.

B. Identification and Formation of the Pool of Experts

Partnerships are expected to identify and document relevant expertise available within their cross-border innovation ecosystem in order to facilitate future cooperation and knowledge transfer. This activity contributes to the establishment of a **Pool of Experts**, which serves as a reference resource for future applicants under the **CAPACITY & INNOVATION Open Call**.

Depending on the partnership's thematic focus, objectives and existing networks, eligible activities may include, but are not limited to:

- identifying organisations and professionals capable of providing specialised services relevant to the partnership's priority areas;
- engaging with potential service providers through meetings, networking activities or other appropriate forms of consultation;
- collecting information on the expertise, experience and service areas of potential experts;
- documenting and organising the identified expertise in a structured format that can be shared with future beneficiaries.

Pool of Experts

The **Pool of Experts** is a non-exclusive reference database of organisations and professionals identified by the partnership through its cooperation activities. It is intended to facilitate access to expertise that may support future projects in areas such as innovation, digitalisation, business development, capacity building or other themes relevant to the partnership.



The composition and thematic coverage of the **Pool of Experts** may differ between partnerships, reflecting their specific objectives, sectors and territorial context. **Inclusion in the Pool of Experts** does not constitute accreditation, certification, preferential treatment or a guarantee of future contracting.

Likewise, applicants under the **CAPACITY & INNOVATION Open Call** are encouraged - but not required - to make use of the Pool of Experts where its expertise is relevant to their proposed activities. The existence or use of the Pool shall not constitute an eligibility or evaluation criterion under future calls.

C. Communication and Visibility

Applicants should ensure that their **Development Plan** includes proportionate communication and visibility activities appropriate to the scale and objectives of the proposed project.

Eligible communication activities may include, but are not limited to:

- communication of project activities and results to relevant target groups;
- preparation of communication materials;
- organisation of dissemination or networking events, where appropriate;

- online communication through websites and social media channels.

Successful applicants shall comply with the communication and visibility requirements applicable to EU-funded projects. Detailed implementation requirements, including the use of the EU emblem, project logo and visibility rules, will be provided in the **Communication and Visibility Guidelines** and in the Sub-Grant Agreement.

5.2.2 Additional eligible activities

In addition to the activities supporting the three mandatory outputs, partnerships may include complementary activities that strengthen cross-border cooperation, enhance institutional capacity and contribute to the objectives of the **IMPACT NETWORKS** Open Call.

Applicants are encouraged to select only those activities that are relevant to their thematic priorities, territorial context and cooperation objectives. The categories presented below illustrate the scope of eligible support and may be combined or adapted according to the needs of each partnership.

Activities outside these categories **may be considered eligible where they are duly justified, directly contributing to the objectives of the Open Call.**

D. Networking and Cross-border Collaboration

Eligible activities may include:

- organisation of cross-border networking events, such as conferences, thematic forums, matchmaking events and brokerage sessions involving relevant ecosystem actors from Ukraine and Moldova;
- study visits, exchange programmes and peer-learning activities between the partner organisations and their respective networks;
- participation in European cooperation platforms, thematic events, Interreg initiatives and other relevant international networking opportunities supporting the objectives of the Development Plan;
- establishment of joint working groups, thematic communities or task forces addressing shared cross-border challenges.

E. Analysis, Research and Strategic Development

Eligible activities may include:

- studies, analyses and research supporting the preparation and implementation of the Development Plan;
- territorial, sectoral or thematic assessments relevant to cross-border cooperation;
- preparation of common strategies, action plans or policy recommendations related to the partnership's objectives;
- institutional capacity-building activities, organisational development and governance improvement measures;
- mapping of funding opportunities, cooperation initiatives and investment programmes relevant to the partnership.

F. Digital and Technological Cooperation

Eligible activities may include:

- development, adaptation or integration of digital tools supporting cross-border cooperation and the implementation of the Development Plan;
- digitalisation of organisational processes and services directly linked to the approved project;
- deployment of digital solutions improving collaboration, project management or delivery of the mandatory outputs;
- acquisition of small-scale equipment strictly necessary for the implementation of the approved Development Plan, subject to the eligibility conditions and financial limits defined in Section 5.3.1.

5.3. ELIGIBILITY OF COSTS - BUDGET CATEGORIES AND COST ELIGIBILITY RULES

The budget categories eligible for funding under the **IMPACT NETWORKS Open Call** are described in this Guide. Detailed financial provisions and implementation rules will be set out in the Sub-Grant Agreement concluded with successful applicants.

To be considered eligible, costs must:

- be directly related to the implementation of the approved Development Plan;
- be necessary for achieving the approved project objectives and expected results;
- be incurred by the beneficiary during the implementation period;
- be reasonable, proportionate and compliant with the principles of sound financial management;
- be identifiable, verifiable and supported by appropriate accounting and supporting documents;
- comply with the applicable national legislation, EU rules and the provisions of the Sub-Grant Agreement.

Only expenditure that demonstrably contributes to the implementation of the approved **Development Plan** may be financed.

The Contracting Authority reserves the right to declare ineligible any expenditure that cannot be adequately justified or that does not contribute directly to the approved objectives, activities or expected results of the project.

5.3.1 Budget categories for this call

5.3.1 Budget Categories

The following budget categories are eligible for funding under the **IMPACT NETWORKS Open Call**:

A. Personnel Costs

- A.1 Employees (staff employed under an employment contract)

- A.2 Natural persons engaged under a direct contract

B. Subcontracting Costs

Costs related to external service providers engaged to perform specific tasks that cannot be adequately carried out by the beneficiary's own staff.

C. Purchase Costs

- C.1 Travel and Subsistence
- C.2 Equipment
- C.3 Other Goods, Works and Services

5.3.2 Specific Cost Eligibility Conditions

A. Personnel Costs

Personnel costs are eligible where they relate to staff directly involved in the implementation of the approved **Development Plan**.

Eligible personnel costs shall be calculated on the basis of the actual gross remuneration paid by the beneficiary, including mandatory social contributions and other statutory employment costs, in accordance with the beneficiary's usual remuneration practices and applicable national legislation.

The time devoted to project activities shall be adequately documented through timesheets or equivalent records.

B. Subcontracting Costs

Subcontracting is permitted where specific expertise or services are required that cannot reasonably be provided by the beneficiary's own organisation.

Subcontracting shall:

- comply with the applicable national procurement legislation;
- ensure transparency, equal treatment and sound financial management;
- demonstrate best value for money;
- be properly documented.

Project coordination and overall project management responsibilities may not be subcontracted.

C.1 Travel and Subsistence

Travel and subsistence costs directly related to the implementation of the approved Development Plan are eligible.

Travel costs shall be reimbursed using the unit costs established by **Commission Decision C(2021)35 of 12 January 2021**, applying the unit cost tables and calculator made available by the Contracting Authority, where applicable.

Travel and subsistence costs are eligible provided that they:

- are directly linked to approved project activities;
- are necessary for achieving the project objectives;
- comply with the applicable unit cost rules;
- are adequately documented where required under the applicable financial rules.

C.2 Equipment

Equipment is eligible only where it is directly required for the implementation of the approved **Development Plan** and contributes to the achievement of the project's objectives.

The full purchase cost of equipment may be declared eligible, subject to the following conditions:

- equipment costs shall not exceed **20% of the total eligible project budget**;
- procurement shall comply with the applicable national procurement legislation and the principles of transparency, equal treatment and sound financial management;
- the beneficiary responsible for the ownership of each item shall be identified and the equipment shall be registered in the beneficiary's asset inventory, indicating the project as the funding source;
- eligible equipment may include laptops, desktop computers, workstations, tablets, printers, scanners, audio-visual equipment and other ICT equipment directly required for project implementation.

Where equipment is intended to be shared between partners, the application shall clearly indicate the beneficiary responsible for ownership together with the proposed arrangements for its use during the implementation period.

The purchase of vehicles, construction works, large-scale infrastructure or investment-oriented assets is not eligible under this Open Call.

C.3 Other Goods, Works and Services

Costs for goods, works and services necessary for the implementation of the approved **Development Plan** are eligible, provided that they:

- directly contribute to the approved project objectives and outputs;
- comply with the applicable procurement rules;
- represent best value for money.

5.3.3 Other Eligibility Conditions

VAT

Non-deductible VAT may be considered eligible where it is actually and definitively borne by the beneficiary and cannot be recovered under the applicable national legislation.

VAT that is recoverable, reimbursable or otherwise reclaimable shall not be considered eligible.

Specific VAT provisions applicable to beneficiaries established in Moldova shall apply in accordance with Government Decision No. 246 of 8 April 2010, as amended, and any subsequent applicable legislation.

In-kind Contributions

In-kind contributions are permitted where relevant to the implementation of the project. However, they shall not constitute eligible expenditure, shall not be reimbursed from the grant and shall not be included in the financial reporting of eligible costs.

Double Funding

No expenditure may be financed more than once.

Any cost that has already been financed, in whole or in part, from another EU programme or any other public funding source shall be considered ineligible.

General Principles

All eligible costs must:

- be directly linked to the implementation of the approved Development Plan;
- be necessary, reasonable and proportionate;
- be incurred during the project implementation period;
- comply with applicable national legislation and EU rules;
- be identifiable, verifiable and supported by appropriate accounting records and supporting documentation.

5.3.4 Ineligible Costs and Activities

The following costs and activities are not eligible for funding under the **IMPACT NETWORKS Open Call**.

Ineligible activities

The Programme does not support activities related to:

- the production, processing or distribution of tobacco products;
- the production of distilled alcoholic beverages, except for products protected by a recognised geographical indication or designation of origin;
- the manufacture, trade or maintenance of weapons, ammunition, military equipment or other restricted dual-use goods;
- gambling or betting activities.

Ineligible expenditure

The following expenditure shall not be considered eligible:

- debts, interest on debts or financial liabilities;
- provisions for future losses or liabilities;
- expenditure financed from another EU programme or any other public funding source (double funding);
- the purchase of land or buildings;
- foreign exchange losses;
- loans or financial transfers to third parties;
- fines, penalties, litigation costs and legal dispute expenses;
- the purchase of second-hand equipment;
- construction, rehabilitation or modernisation of buildings or infrastructure;
- the purchase or leasing of vehicles;
- expenditure not directly related to the approved Development Plan;
- expenditure incurred outside the approved implementation period;
- expenditure incurred in breach of the applicable national legislation or EU rules;

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- general organisational operating costs that cannot be directly attributed to the implementation of the approved project.

Where national legislation permits cash payments, such expenditure shall only be eligible if expressly authorised by the applicable financial rules of the Programme and properly documented.

Where an application includes ineligible expenditure, the Contracting Authority may remove the relevant costs during the evaluation or contracting process. Where ineligible activities constitute a substantial or integral part of the proposed project, the application may be declared ineligible.

6. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Applicants must submit their proposals through the official **EUroBridge_UA_MD application portal** before the deadline. The platform includes a Q&A section and access to the Helpdesk – Assistance Centre. **The application may be submitted in Romanian, Ukrainian, or English.**



The complete application consists of the following documents:

Document	Lead partner	Project partner(s)
1. Development Plan - completed online directly on the official digital platform.	✓ Submits on behalf of partnership	-
2. Declaration of Honour - Eligibility Conditions, signed by each member of the partnership, uploaded in PDF format.	✓	✓
3. Certificate of registration, articles of incorporation, or bylaws confirming legal status .	✓	✓
4. Proof of entity type recognition - external audit certificate, ECCP profile, national/European competition recognition, proof under national legislation, or (for Ukrainian clusters) documented evidence of cluster activity during the last year of activity per Regulation (EU) No 651/2014.	✓	✓
5. <i>(only for core Ukrainian organisations with national scope, as core member)</i> Evidence of regional operational presence in the primary eligible areas (Chernivtsi, Khmelnytsky, Vinnytsya, and Odesa), demonstrating concrete engagement within the targeted regions	✓ If applicable	✓ If applicable
5. Financial situations for the closed financial year or interim financial	✓	✓

year, for each member of the partnership.		
6. Tax certificate - issued by the competent national tax authority confirming no outstanding debts to the national public budget, consolidated budget, or local budget, valid as of the application date.	✓	✓
7. CVs of at least 2 key staff members directly responsible for the preparation and implementation of the proposal, demonstrating a minimum of 2 years of relevant experience.	✓ at partnership level	
8. Activity report for the previous year of activity , demonstrating operational continuity and relevance to the objectives of the call.	✓	✓

*A partnership must submit only one proposal under this call. An organisation must be **Leader and/or partner** in only one proposal under this call.*

Incomplete applications, applications missing required information or documents, or applications not submitted in accordance with the submission instructions may be deemed ineligible and excluded from evaluation. If an application is incomplete or requires clarification, the applicant will be notified in writing. **The applicant must provide the requested clarifications within 5 business days of the notification date.** Failure to comply within the specified timeframe will result in the rejection of the application.

7. EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURE

Submitted applications are evaluated within the allocated category.



The evaluation will be carried out in two stages: **STAGE 1 – eligibility check** and **STAGE 2 – qualitative evaluation**. The evaluation is carried out by the **Evaluation Quality Board (EQB)**, contracted by the EUroBRIDGE consortium, composed of external experts.

Members of the **EQB** shall be selected based on relevant expertise, professional experience, independence, and absence of conflict of interest. Each proposal is assessed by **two external EQB members**, ensuring a balanced and thorough review. Key aspects such as technical feasibility, alignment with programme objectives, and potential impact are considered.

COMPOSITION OF THE EQB

The **EQB** comprises external reviewers, contracted by the EUroBRIDGE consortium. The external experts are engaged to ensure impartiality, ethical standards, and confidentiality throughout the evaluation process. Each proposal is assessed by two external EQB members, to ensure a balanced and thorough review.

To ensure impartiality, consortium partners involved in the governance, supervision, or validation of the evaluation process shall not participate in the evaluation, ranking, or complaint review of proposals submitted by organisations with which they are affiliated or where a conflict of interest may arise. All members external experts must sign a declaration of impartiality and absence of conflict of interest prior to accessing any proposal.

The internal consortium members act as an **oversight mechanism** of the evaluation process, ensuring that the process has been properly implemented according to the approved procedure. The process ensures ethical standards, confidentiality, and impartiality throughout the evaluation.

7.1. EVALUATION PROCESS

This section describes the procedure, timeline, and criteria used to evaluate and select proposals submitted under the IMPACT NETWORKS open call. The evaluation process is designed to ensure transparency, impartiality, and equal treatment of all applicants.

The evaluation process begins immediately after the submission deadline and consists of two successive stages: **(1) an administrative and eligibility check**, followed by a **(2) qualitative evaluation of eligible proposals**. Only proposals that pass the eligibility check will proceed to qualitative evaluation.

Stage	Deadline
Call publication	August 2026

Deadline for submission	October 2026
Communication of results	December 2026 - January 2027
Signature of Sub-Grant Agreements	January 2027
Project implementation start	January 2027

7.2 SELECTION AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

The Contracting Authority may request clarifications during the evaluation process. The clarifications requested may not substantially alter the content of the application initially submitted.

7.2.1 Administrative and eligibility check - STAGE 1

The administrative and eligibility check will be conducted by the EUroBRIDGE Consortium within a maximum of **15 working days** following the submission deadline. The check will verify that each proposal:

- was submitted via the official digital platform before the deadline;
- was submitted in the required language and using the correct application templates;
- includes all mandatory documents listed in Section 6 of this Guide;
- is submitted by a partnership that meets all eligibility conditions set out in Section 5 of this Guide, including entity type, geographic coverage, partnership structure, financial standing, and management capacity.

Eligibility is assessed on a pass/fail basis. Proposals that fail any eligibility condition will be declared ineligible and will not proceed to qualitative evaluation. No partial eligibility is permitted.

Applicants may be requested, **on a single occasion**, to provide clarifications or missing administrative documents within a **maximum of 5 working days of receiving the request**. This possibility is limited to minor administrative omissions, it may not be used to supplement or modify the substantive content of the proposal, to remedy a missing eligibility condition, or to submit documents that were explicitly required at submission stage.

7.2.2 Qualitative evaluation - STAGE 2

Proposals that pass the eligibility check will be assessed by the **EQB**. Each eligible proposal will be evaluated against the criteria below. Evaluators assign scores on a scale of 0 to 15 for each sub-criterion.

Total maximum score: 75 points. Minimum pass threshold: 37.5 points.

Award Criterion	Minimum Score	Maximum Score
Relevance & Alignment	7.5	15
Technical Quality of the Work Plan	7.5	15
Expected Results & Sustainability	7.5	15
Capacity of Partners	7.5	15
Budget & Cost-Effectiveness	7.5	15
TOTAL	37.5	75

Detailed evaluation criteria

1. Relevance and Alignment (0–15)

The proposal demonstrates a clear understanding of the cross-border challenges and opportunities, is relevant to the objectives of the **IMPACT NETWORKS** Open Call and provides added value for cross-border cooperation between Ukraine and Moldova.

2. Technical Quality of the Development Plan (0–15)

The proposed methodology, activities and implementation approach are coherent, feasible and appropriate for achieving the objectives of the Development Plan within the proposed implementation period.

3. Expected Results and Sustainability (0–15)

The proposal demonstrates clear and realistic expected results, contributes to strengthening cross-border cooperation and includes appropriate measures to ensure the sustainability of the partnership and its outputs beyond the project duration.

4. Capacity of the Partnership (0–15)

The partnership demonstrates the necessary expertise, organisational capacity and relevant experience to successfully implement the proposed Development Plan.

5. Budget and Cost-effectiveness (0–15)

The proposed budget is realistic, proportionate and consistent with the planned activities and expected results, while complying with the financial rules of the Open Call.

7.2.3 Scoring and ranking

The final score of each proposal will be calculated as the **average of the two individual assessments**. Where the two scores differ **by more than 15 points on the total**, a reconciliation meeting will be convened to review and discuss the divergence. Where consensus cannot be reached, a third assessor from the **EQB** will be appointed to provide a casting opinion.

Following the completion of the evaluation process, proposals will be ranked in order of their final scores. The highest-ranked proposals within the available budget for each beneficiary

category will be selected for funding, subject to the flexible reserve mechanism described in Section 2.1.

7.2.4 Tie-Breaking Procedure

In the event that two or more proposals obtain the same total score (ex aequo), priority will be determined by applying the following criteria:

- **Award criterion scores:** proposals will be prioritised according to the scores awarded under the criterion "Relevance & Alignment". Where these scores are equal, priority will be based on the scores for "Expected Results & Sustainability", followed by "Technical Quality of the Work Plan".

The final ranking list will result from the decision taken by consensus of the **EQB**, with the participation of the EUroBRIDGE consortium partners. Any concerns of procedure breach will be initiated during the Steering Committee of the "CAPACITY & INNOVATION and IMPACT NETWORKS" programme.

The evaluation reports will be prepared in English.

7.3. COMMUNICATION OF EVALUATION RESULTS

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of the evaluation by email. The notification will include:

- the final score obtained by the proposal;
- a brief summary of the evaluators' assessment for each criterion;
- the decision to fund or not to fund the proposal;
- where applicable, a proposed adjustment to the requested grant amount.

Selected applicants must confirm their acceptance of the funding offer and of the Sub-Grant Agreement terms and conditions **within 5 working days of receiving the communication of selection**. Failure to respond within this deadline may result in withdrawal of the funding offer, in which case the next highest-ranked proposal on the reserve list may be invited to contract.

The results of the eligibility check will be communicated to all applicants via email. Applicants who do not pass the eligibility check will be informed of the reasons for ineligibility of their proposal. The results of the qualitative evaluation will be communicated to all applicants (qualified for this second evaluation step) through an email including the respective evaluation report summary. Successful applicants will be invited to sign a Sub-Grant Agreement (SGA).

The final ranking list will be published online on the RDAOR and MCDE websites and on the HELPDESK – Assistance Centre page, 15 days after beneficiaries are privately notified of the results.

Each proposal receives an Evaluator's Report detailing the justification for the assigned score. This ensures transparency and provides valuable feedback to applicants.

7.4. COMPLAINTS

The EUroBRIDGE-UA_MD partners are committed to ensuring that the evaluation and selection process is conducted with the highest standards of transparency, impartiality, and procedural fairness. This section sets out the rights of applicants to seek clarification, request a review of the evaluation outcome, and submit a formal complaint where they consider that a procedural error has occurred. Applicants are encouraged to read this section carefully before submitting any enquiry or complaint, as the procedures and deadlines set out below are strictly enforced.

7.4.1 Request for clarification following the eligibility check

Where it is determined that an application contains minor administrative omissions or requires factual clarification as part of the eligibility check, the applicant will be notified in writing with a precise description of the information required. The applicant must provide the requested clarification **within 5 working days** of the date of notification.

This opportunity is strictly limited to administrative completeness. It may not be used to supplement, correct, or modify the substantive content of the proposal, to remedy a failure to meet an eligibility condition, or to submit documents that were explicitly required at submission stage and are entirely absent from the application. Failure to provide the requested information within the specified timeframe will result in the application being declared ineligible without further consideration.

7.4.2 Request for review following communication of results

Applicants who have received the communication of results and consider that a material error has been made in the assessment of their proposal, whether in the eligibility check or in the qualitative evaluation, may submit **a written request for review** to the EUroBRIDGE Consortium.

A request for review is not an appeal against the score awarded by evaluators on grounds of disagreement with their judgement. It is a procedural mechanism designed to correct demonstrable errors of fact or process. For example, where an eligibility criterion was incorrectly applied, where a score was calculated incorrectly, or where a criterion was assessed against information not present in the proposal. Disagreement with the evaluators' professional assessment of the quality of a proposal does not constitute grounds for a review request.

Procedure

The request for review must be submitted in writing - in English, Ukrainian, or Romanian - to the **HELPDESK – Assistance Centre** contact address **within 5 calendar days** of the date on which the communication of results was sent. The 5-day period begins on the day after the communication is sent, regardless of when the applicant opens or reads the notification.

The request must include, at minimum, the following information:

- the full name, registered address, and contact details of the applying organisation;
- the title and reference number of the proposal concerned;

- a clear and specific identification of the alleged error, general dissatisfaction with the outcome is not sufficient;
- the specific criterion, eligibility condition, or procedural rule that the applicant considers to have been incorrectly applied;
- any supporting evidence or documentation the applicant wishes to submit in support of the request, with a brief explanation of its relevance.

Incomplete requests, anonymous requests, or requests that do not identify a specific procedural or factual error will not be considered.

Review process

Requests for review will be examined by **EQB** reviewers not involved in the original assessment. The review mechanism will assess whether the alleged error occurred and, if so, what corrective action is warranted.

The review mechanism may:

- confirm the original eligibility decision or score, where no error is found;
- correct a calculation error or procedural irregularity and adjust the score or eligibility decision accordingly;
- refer the proposal for re-evaluation by a different evaluator, where a material assessment error is confirmed.
- where a review or complaint results in a re-evaluation, the re-evaluation is conducted by evaluators within the **EQB** who were not involved in the original assessment of the proposal, applying the same procedural rules and scoring criteria used in the original evaluation.

The review mechanism will communicate its decision in writing **within 10 working days** of receipt of the request. Where additional time is required - for example, where a re-evaluation is necessary - the applicant will be informed, with an indication of the revised timeline. The decision of the review mechanism is final and constitutes the last stage of the internal complaints procedure.

The outcome of the review process and its effect on the final ranking list, if any, will be communicated to the applicant concerned and, where the ranking is affected, reflected in the updated ranking list.

7.5. PROCEDURE FOR SIGNING GRANT AGREEMENTS WITH BENEFICIARIES

Selected projects will be contracted under a Sub-Grant Agreement signed between:

- the Odessa Regional Development Agency (RDAOR)
- the Municipal Center for Development of Entrepreneurship (MCDE);
- the Project Leader;
- The Project Partner (s).

The sub-grant agreement will govern:

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- the rights and obligations of the parties;
- implementation responsibilities;
- rules for the eligibility of expenses;
- reporting procedures;
- monitoring and control mechanisms;
- rules for the recovery of funds;
- the financial and contractual liability of the beneficiaries.

Each Contracting Authority will ensure financial management, payment processing, monitoring, and verification of expenses related to beneficiaries in its country:

- Municipal Center for Development of Entrepreneurship – for beneficiaries in Moldova;
- Odessa Regional Development Agency – for beneficiaries in Ukraine.

Following the applicant's confirmation of acceptance of the funding offer, the beneficiary shall sign the Sub-Grant Agreement within **5 working days**, after which the EUroBRIDGE shall countersign within 10 working days. Where a justified partner replacement request is under review, these deadlines are suspended until the replacement is approved or rejected.

The need for separate state registration of projects implemented by Ukrainian beneficiaries as international technical assistance projects will be clarified during the contracting process in accordance with Ukrainian legislation.

8. HELPDESK – ASSISTANCE CENTRE

Applicants can access direct support (via email, phone, or contact form/AI assistant on project web platform) in their national language (Ukrainian or Romanian) for guidance on entrepreneurship, digitalisation, and partner identification.

The Assistance Centre provides support for:

- questions related to eligibility and the application procedure;
- identification of suitable cross-border partners;
- guidance on eligible activities and budget planning;
- technical assistance for using the digital submission platform.

All questions submitted to the Helpdesk will be consolidated and published periodically as FAQs on the official platform, to ensure transparency and equal access to information for all applicants.

Questions related to the eligibility criteria, application procedure, or any other aspect of this Guide may be submitted to the [HELPDESK – Assistance Centre](#) from the date of publication of the call until **5 working days** before the submission deadline.

All questions and answers of general relevance will be published on the official RDAOR and MCDE websites in an anonymised format, so that all applicants benefit equally from the clarifications provided.

9. CONFIDENTIALITY, IPR AND DATA PROTECTION

9.1. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS (IPR)

All intellectual property rights arising from activities carried out under the funded project, including outputs, reports, tools, methodologies, and any other materials produced with grant funding, remain the property of the beneficiary or beneficiaries that produced them. The EU does not acquire any intellectual property rights over project outputs by virtue of providing financial support under this call.

There are no IPR obligations toward the European Commission. However, any communication or publication of the beneficiaries shall clearly indicate that the project has received funding from the EU and the EUroBRIDGE, therefore displaying the EU and logo on all printed and digital material, including websites and press releases.

9.2. CONFIDENTIALITY AND GDPR DATA PROTECTION

Personal data and information provided in the application form are collected and processed for the purpose of evaluating applications, managing the IMPACT NETWORKS open call, and providing support to innovation ecosystem organisations within the framework of the EUroBridge-UA-MD project.

The data collected may include, in particular:

- the name of the applicant organisation and its contact details;
- the name and contact details of the designated contact person;
- the registration number of the organisation;
- financial and organisational information (number of employees, annual turnover).

All personal data will be processed in accordance with applicable EU and national data protection legislation, including Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (General Data Protection Regulation – GDPR).

By submitting an application to the IMPACT NETWORKS open call, applicants:

- acknowledge and accept the processing of their personal data as described above;
- consent to the storage and use of their personal data for the purposes of implementing EUroBridge-UA-MD project objectives and activities;
- accept that anonymised or aggregated data may be used for reporting, monitoring, and dissemination purposes in line with funding requirements.

Submitting an application implies full, complete, and unconditional acceptance of the rules set out in this section.

ANNEXES

Annex 1 Web application form template to be filled online

Annex 2 Declaration of Honour to be signed and uploaded

Annex 3 Budget Form template filled online on the web platform of the project

Annex 4 General conditions for project implementation