



# CEI COOPERATION FUND CALL FOR PROPOSALS 2026

Date of publication: 31 March 2026

Deadline for application submission: Friday, 29 May 2026, 12:00 noon (midday) CEST

**IMPORTANT NOTE: Under this Call for Proposals an applicant institution can apply only once.**

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Applicants need to carefully observe the criteria and obligations set by this Call before submitting their proposals. Rejection clauses will apply automatically as explained over the text.

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## 1. BACKGROUND AND PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

The CEI Cooperation Fund co-finances activities aimed at strengthening cooperation among CEI Member States. Activities are organised by institutions of CEI Member States to implement the CEI strategic goals and objectives (supporting European Integration and promoting Sustainable Development) and priorities set by the CEI Guidelines and Rules of Procedure and the CEI Thematic Agenda. They aim at capacity building through knowledge transfer and sharing, in particular from EU CEI Member States to non-EU CEI Member States, and at exchanging experiences and good practices among all CEI Member States by favouring mobility and networking. Moreover, events with political relevance proposed by Member States different from the country holding the annual CEI Presidency, giving visibility to the CEI and aimed at pursuing its strategic objectives, can also be proposed. Particular attention needs to be paid to the involvement of non-EU CEI Member States and to a reasonable balance between participating EU and non-EU CEI Member States.

## 2. AREAS OF INTERVENTION

The applications under this Call for Proposals shall be submitted for contributing to the two following segments, dedicated to short-term and medium-long term activities respectively.

### 2.1. CEI THEMATIC AGENDA

The activities proposed within this segment shall be aimed at the implementation of the CEI Thematic Agenda and shall be organised in the areas of intervention outlined within the specific section of the Plan of Action (<https://tinyurl.com/Plan-of-Action-2024-2026>). Applicants are requested to refer – within the specific section of the Application Form – to the CEI Thematic Agenda, not simply by quoting the relevant parts but by explaining how and why the proposed Cooperation Activity is contributing to meeting the CEI objectives. Copying any part of the above-said document is not admitted and will possibly cause a negative evaluation or rejection of the application.

*Types of short-term eligible activities: meetings, workshops, conferences, trainings (events in general) aimed at creating longer term relations, networks, and partnerships within the region. These activities could also be instrumental to project preparation.*

### 2.2. FOCUSED SECTION

The proposals to be submitted within this segment shall be aimed at contributing to develop forward-looking initiatives and projects, within the specific objectives listed below, indicated by the Committee of CEI National Coordinators. It is expected that the proposed activities would contribute to medium and long-term engagement of applicants, emphasising people-centred approach through development of skills and knowledge, towards:

#### 2.2.1. CAPACITY-BUILDING PROGRAMMES TO STRENGTHEN PREPAREDNESS FOR EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

Proposals within this section should primarily support the development of skills and knowledge among young professionals, public officials, and civil society organisations (CSOs), enhancing their ability to effectively engage with EU policies, processes, and funding instruments within the 12 CEI Thematic Areas of the Plan of Action (good governance; youth, women and other vulnerable groups; health and well-being; connectivity and sustainable mobility; renewable energy, energy efficiency and energy security; circular bioeconomy; environmental protection, risk-reduction and resilience; sustainable communities, cities and territories; entrepreneurship; research and innovation through science diplomacy; media freedom and pluralism and cultural cooperation), thus fostering practical understanding of the European integration processes.

## 2.2.2. CAPACITY-BUILDING PROGRAMMES TO REINFORCE RESILIENCE, EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE, WITH A VIEW TO SUPPORTING UKRAINE’S RECOVERY

Proposals within this section should primarily support efforts related to reconstruction and recovery of Ukraine. Emphasis should be placed on strengthening the capacities of local professionals, public officials, and practitioners to address reconstruction-related challenges, enhance local resilience, and improve crisis management and emergency response, in line with the relevant priority of the CEI Plan of Action concerning Ukraine.

*Types of medium-long term eligible activities: on-the-job training, staff secondment, study visits, peer review missions, assistance in the preparation of strategic documents (development plans, reforms, strategic studies, etc.), technology transfer, technical and capacity building assistance.*

## 3. BUDGET OF THE CALL

The overall indicative budget of this Call for Proposals is **442,000 EUR (four hundred forty-two thousand Euro)**. It is made available by the CEI Cooperation Fund which is financed by annual contributions of all CEI Member States.

The budget of this Call is subdivided as follows:

- **Budget for Segment 2.1.: up to 342,000 EUR (three hundred forty-two thousand Euro)** for proposals aimed at the implementation of the CEI Thematic Agenda, including the ones that meet, over the evaluation phases, with the requirements set for CEI Flagship Events (see [Section 5.4.](#)).
- **Budget for Segment 2.2.: up to 100,000 EUR (one hundred thousand Euro)** for proposals aimed at the implementation of the Focused Section.

Please note that applications can be submitted to one budget segment exclusively, not both.

The CEI reserves the right not to award all available funds, to cancel the Call for Proposals and reject all applications at any time prior to the awarding of CEI contributions, without thereby incurring in any liability.

## 4. CEI CONTRIBUTION

### 4.1. CEILING OF CEI CONTRIBUTION

Applicants can request a CEI contribution for covering eligible expenses (see [Section 5.6.1.](#)) within the ceilings outlines below:

- **Segment 2.1. CEI Thematic Agenda:** applicants can request a CEI contribution of **up to 15,000 EUR (fifteen thousand Euro)**. Any application requesting more than the above-mentioned ceiling will be automatically rejected.
- **Segment 2.2. Focused Section:** applicants can request a CEI contribution of **up to 25,000 EUR (twenty-five thousand Euro)**. Any application requesting more than the above-mentioned ceiling will be automatically rejected.

### 4.2. PERCENTAGE OF CEI CONTRIBUTION

The CEI contribution cannot exceed 50% of the total cost of the application. Applications requesting a CEI contribution exceeding the maximum percentage set above, will be automatically rejected.

### 4.3. CO-FINANCING

The proposed activities must be co-financed by additional resources other than the CEI's, that can be provided in cash or in-kind, either exclusively or by a combination of cash and in-kind resources<sup>1</sup>.

Co-financing may take the form of applicant's own resources (e.g. personnel, administrative costs), income generated by the activity (e.g. registration fees), financial contributions from third parties/donors. In this respect, applicants will have to outline the role of the other donors (if any) in the proposed activity. Please note that a specific, mandatory section of Annex 1 is focusing on the mandatory co-financing: it must always be filled in in all its parts, failing to do so will result in automatic rejection of the application.

## 5. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applications must fulfil **all** the following eligibility criteria:

- Compliance to Areas of Intervention
- Eligibility of Applicants
- Eligibility of Activities
- Participation of CEI Member States (Participation Quorum)
- Eligibility of Expenses

### 5.1. COMPLIANCE TO AREAS OF INTERVENTION

Applications shall refer to one of the areas of intervention as indicated in [Section 2](#). Activities which are not in line with the indications of Section 2 will be automatically rejected.

### 5.2. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

All public and private entities based and registered in CEI Member States (public/public equivalent bodies, NGOs/CSOs, private entities) can apply. International Organisations can also apply. Individuals cannot apply. Applicants shall prove to have sufficient capacity in organisation of international activities and project management (see [Section 15.2](#)). Applicants to [Segment 2.2](#) will not be allowed to outsource the implementation of main project activities.

All applicants shall refer to their legal status within the Application Form, referring to the relevant legislation or act as appropriate. Applicants declaring having international status shall provide documentary evidence or reference demonstrating such status and membership. Different branches or entities of the same organisation established in different States may not submit separate applications under this Call for Proposals. Where more than one such application is submitted, the applicants concerned may be invited to indicate which single application should remain under consideration. Non-Governmental and Civil Society Organisations as well as private entities must include in the Application Package an Official Proof of Registration and a courtesy translation of this document into English (Annex 3 and Annex 4 – see also [Section 6.1](#) and [Section 15.8](#)). This requirement is mandatory for the relevant applicants. This requirement does not apply to public entities.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this call for proposals, in-kind resources are non-cash, other than monetary contributions or inputs, which can be given a cash value at fair market value (FMV). The FMV is the value of property/goods/services as determined by the marketplace (or objective purchasers) rather than as determined by a subjective individual. They do not produce an actual monetary transaction and can consist of donation/provision of goods or services, such as human resources, experts, real property, infrastructure support, office and other supplies, equipment, use of premises/conference rooms/other spaces, other expendable property goods, and services, etc. They shall be reported – in case of awarding of a CEI contribution – through a declaration/statement by the supplier of the in-kind contribution to the organiser of the activity or by the organiser itself if in-kind resources are provided from within the assets of the organisation.

### 5.3. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

- **Segment 2.1. CEI Thematic Agenda:** these are *short-term activities such as meetings, workshops, conferences, trainings (events in general) aimed at creating longer term relations, networks, and partnerships within the region*. These activities could also be instrumental to project preparation and serve as seed contribution for the design of larger international projects, including the preparation of applications in response to EU calls for proposals. Applications organised over multiple interlinked activities and events are admissible, but applicants shall request the CEI support only for one defined portion/event of the programme falling into the set implementation period (see [Section 9.](#)) as the CEI contribution cannot finance multiple activities and events under this segment. Should the applicant not elaborate on this, the CEI reserves the right to reject the application or choose the single portion and related budget lines to be possibly awarded with a CEI contribution.
- **Segment 2.2. Focused Section:** these activities are supposed to be organised over a longer-term period (max 18 months, see [Section 9.](#)) and can be composed of multiple, yet interlinked, actions and sub-actions, including project preparation and project final events for presentation of the outputs to the public. Types of eligible actions could be, for example, *medium-long term activities as on-the-job training, staff secondment, study visits, peer review missions, assistance in the preparation of strategic documents (development plans, reforms, strategic studies, etc.), technology transfer, technical and capacity building assistance*.

Activities can be held in person, from remote or in a hybrid modality. Other types of activities, meeting the primary objectives, can also be taken into consideration. During the evaluation there will be no preference given to one type of activity over the other: apart from observance of the provision of this Call for Proposals and CEI Rules for Allocation of Resources and accuracy in providing comprehensive information over the proposed activity, the extent and quality of regional cooperation in these activities will be taken into consideration.

### 5.4. CEI FLAGSHIP EVENTS

CEI Flagship Events are Cooperation Activities which have added value and strategic relevance in pursuing the CEI mission in the specific sector and ensure high visibility and media outreach to the CEI as an organisation, through high quality contents that are relevant for the CEI constituency. Flagship Events have a large CEI country representation, relevance of attendees and participation by CEI bodies' representatives at appropriate level. One or more sections within the activity/ies defined as Flagship Event/s (e.g. a panel discussion, or a specific topic, or an award) pay particular attention to providing the 'CEI angle' of the topics being dealt within the agenda of the activity. Cooperation with and/or involvement of CEI bodies in definition of the programme/agenda/topics is ensured by the organisers of the activity.

Applications which have particular merit within the ones submitted under [Segment 2.1.](#), either having a longstanding CEI experience or representing institutions or subjects having a highly reliable background and expertise and meeting the above-mentioned features – ascertained over the evaluation phases – might be selected for merit and characteristics for becoming CEI Flagship Event/s for the year 2027.

It is up to the CEI to decide on awarding an application with the classification of CEI Flagship Event. Applicants must not candidate themselves for this classification.

### 5.5. PARTICIPATION OF CEI MEMBER STATES (PARTICIPATION QUORUM AND GENDER EQUALITY)

Regardless of the type of activity proposed, applicants should pay the utmost attention to the aspects related to participation of attendees from the CEI Member States in the activity proposed.

- **Segment 2.1. CEI Thematic Agenda:** the participation quorum is set by CEI Rules for Allocation of Resources in Rule A5 (*at least half plus one, but in no case less than one third of CEI Member States*)

and therefore the **minimum quorum admitted is the participation of at least six (6) CEI Member States.** Any application envisaging a CEI participation scheme below the minimum allowed quorum will be automatically rejected.

- **Segment 2.2. Focused Section:** the participation should envisage **at least two CEI Member States, but preference will be given to activities involving a larger number of CEI countries and of regional character.** It is requested that activities applying for Segment 2.2.2. involve Ukraine in all phases of the project. Any application envisaging a CEI participation scheme below the minimum allowed quorum and disregarding the mandate concerning Segment 2.2.2. will be automatically rejected.

Higher rating will be given to applications foreseeing the participation of a larger number of CEI Member States. Particular attention will be paid to the involvement of non-EU CEI Member States and to a reasonable balance between participating EU and non-EU CEI Member States. The number of local participants and speakers ought to be in a reasonable proportion to participation from other CEI countries. The CEI regional character should be preserved (in terms of reasonable proportion of CEI participants) in activities involving a large number of third countries.

Please note that the CEI is encouraging gender responsive conduct and gender equality awareness and representation in the activities co-financed with its Funds and Instruments. Applicants are requested to implement gender responsive measures in their proposals. If being awarded of a CEI contribution, as Organisers, they are kindly requested to embrace this CEI policy and apply it to the maximum extent possible in the implementation of the activity, i.e. by trying to include a gender perspective in the concept and outlines of meetings and panels and by encouraging an inclusive participation of attendees. The *CEI Gender Equality Plan* is available on the CEI website at <https://www.cei.int/news/9870/gender-equality-plan-2024-2026>

## 5.6. BUDGET OUTLINE AND ELIGIBILITY OF COSTS

The CEI contribution can finance exclusively eligible costs as outlined in [Section 5.6.1.](#) below. Please note that the CEI reserves the right not to finance the entire requested CEI contribution of eligible costs to a given application.

Applicants shall submit a budget outline of the costs deemed necessary to carry out the proposed activities. They shall indicate which costs are to be borne by own and/or other donors' resources and which costs are requested to be reimbursed by the CEI contribution.

Applicants are requested to carefully refer to the list of expenses and maximum percentage applying to a number of budget lines which are eligible for CEI reimbursement and those which are not ([Sections 5.6.1.](#) and [5.6.2.](#)). Disregard of these indications might possibly cause a negative evaluation of the application.

Please note that the cost estimate of the proposed activity needs to be realistic and reflect actual needs and expenses in a manner which can be verified. Non-motivated, overestimated, and rough, lump sum calculations will be negatively considered. Particular attention shall be paid to the consistency of the budget estimate to the overall description and relevant parts of the Application Form.

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### 5.6.1. ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Please note that eligible expenses must be based on real costs. Costs that do not appear realistic may be rejected/excluded. The CEI reserves the right to refuse and/or limit the funding of specific unit costs if these are considered too high.

- **Segment 2.1. CEI Thematic Agenda:** The budget lines that are eligible for reimbursement by the CEI contribution should mainly focus on facilitating the participation of attendees from the CEI region (e.g. participants and speakers).

Locally borne expenses, which are not influencing international participation, shall only residually be included in the requested CEI contribution and cannot constitute the majority nor entirety of the coverage requested within the CEI contribution.

The budget lines that are eligible to CEI reimbursement encompass, inter alia:

- **Travel and accommodation expenses of CEI participants and speakers:** This budget line refers to travel and accommodation expenses of foreign CEI participants and speakers. Participants from the country of the organising institution are admitted to CEI reimbursement exclusively in activities organised by non-EU CEI Member States that are taking place in the same CEI member country. In no case can representatives of the organising institution, and in particular the project and financial manager, request to be reimbursed for mission costs or fees from any approved CEI contribution. This also applies to cases in which the organising institution and the implementation venue of the activity are located in different localities and/or countries. Please note that participants and/or speakers are classified as 'CEI' when they permanently depend on and officially represent a sending institution based/registered in a CEI country. Nationals of CEI countries living or working for institutions outside the CEI region or participating at 'individual level' cannot be classified as 'CEI participants / speakers'.
- **Local transport costs (for foreign CEI attendees)** connected to the event, including airport transfers as appropriate.
- **Subsistence costs** during the event (meals, coffee breaks and refreshments) up to a reasonable share and not more than 50% of the budget line.
- **Social programmes connected to the activity**, including costs of site visits disciplinarily relevant to the activities, up to a reasonable proportion and amount and not more than 20% of the budget line.
- **Conference material** (pens, notepads, folders, bags) up to a limited proportion of the total budget and amount and not more than 20% of the budget line.
- **Conference venue preparation** such as hall and audio-visual equipment rent.
- **Speakers' fees**<sup>2</sup> up to a reasonable percentage of the overall participation expenses and within the limits set by CEI Rule B8, namely: 50% of each speaker's fee within a ceiling of 500€ for each speaker. Fees for non-CEI speakers must be justified on grounds of expertise.
- With a view to contributing to environmentally safe policies, it is recommended to produce as much electronic documentation as possible and to avoid printing. Shall **printing** costs need to be borne for the activity implementation, the requested CEI reimbursement cannot exceed 20% of the budget line.
- **Text translation** is admitted exclusively from/to English and in very special cases only – when a concrete added value is proven – as the working language of the CEI is English. Applicants are requested to motivate the request as appropriate.
- **Segment 2.2. Focused Section:** In principle, the CEI contribution can be requested for any type of costs linked to the project implementation, within the percentage limits set above.

The CEI contribution requested for covering human resources (Annex 1 – section 1.1.) cannot exceed 50% of the budget line.

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<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this call for proposals, a “speaker’s fee” shall mean the remuneration payable to an individual for the preparation and delivery of a presentation, lecture, or other contribution to an event.

## 5.6.2. NON-ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

The following costs can be included in the overall budget outline, but by no means can be reimbursed by the CEI contribution. Please note that in-kind resources are not considered as actual expenditures and are not eligible costs for reimbursement out of the CEI contribution.

- **Segment 2.1. CEI Thematic Agenda:** The CEI contribution cannot reimburse organisational or administrative costs (including human resources of the organising institution and all related national and international mission costs in preparation of, during and after the activity, fees/other remunerations for contributing to the activity, overheads, bank fees, courier or postage expenses...), participation costs of non-CEI participants, speakers or other attendees, translations from/to languages both different from English, purchases different from conference material, registration fees, in-kind contributions. Simultaneous interpretation costs and the rent of the related equipment are not eligible to CEI reimbursement either. Web creation, design, and maintenance as well as any human resource cost for design and implementation of promotional activities are not eligible to be reimbursed by the CEI contribution either.
- **Segment 2.2. Focused Section:** Non-CEI attendees cannot be reimbursed by the CEI contribution (with the exception of expert fees as explained by Rule B8). Purchases are not admitted. Applicants to this segment of interventions will not be allowed to outsource the implementation of main project activities.

Participation of invited representatives of CEI bodies cannot be covered by the CEI contribution.

## 5.7. EXCHANGE RATE FLUCTUATIONS AND NATIONAL FISCAL REGULATIONS

The budget of the Application Form shall be outlined in Euro. The applicant is entirely responsible for the calculations leading to the outlined budget estimate including currency conversions and national/local taxes and levies (e.g. VAT). The CEI is not responsible for, or reimbursing, currency rate variations and cannot be charged with potential shortages or financial consequences of exchange rate fluctuations and underestimation or disregard of national fiscal regulations by the applicant. Budget calculations in countries which are outside the Euro zone can take as reference value the exchange rate of the National Bank of their country on the day of submitting the application. The CEI contribution is transferred in Euro. Bank transfers to accounts in a local currency are likely to be automatically converted by the recipient's bank to the currency of the account, using the exchange rate of the date of transaction. In any such cases, the CEI will not be responsible for any possible depreciation of the transferred tranches of the CEI contribution.

For currency conversions to Euro, applicants may also refer to [https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/procedures-guidelines-tenders/information-contractors-and-beneficiaries/exchange-rate-infoeuro\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/procedures-guidelines-tenders/information-contractors-and-beneficiaries/exchange-rate-infoeuro_en)

## 6. SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

### 6.1. APPLICATION PACKAGE

The application procedure envisages the online submission of the Application Form and related documentation through the CEI Electronic Submission System.

The Application Package consists of:

- **Online Application Form**
- **Annex 1 – Budget.** Template in Excel to be downloaded, filled in and uploaded as PDF on the system.

- **Annex 2 – Applicant’s Signature.** Template in Word to be downloaded, filled in, signed and stamped (if possible), and uploaded as PDF on the system.
- **Annex 3 – Official Proof of Registration.** It is meant to provide confirmation that the applicant is eligible according to [Section 5.2.](#) above. Non-Governmental and Civil Society Organisations as well as private entities must include in the Application Package an official proof of registration issued by a competent authority. The document must be uploaded on the system as a PDF file.

Absence of Annex 3 for applicants which must provide it will cause automatic rejection of the application.

**ANNEX 3 DOES NOT APPLY TO PUBLIC ENTITIES**

- **Annex 4 - Courtesy Translation of the Official Proof of Registration into English.** Should the Official Proof of Registration be issued in a language different from English, applicants must provide:
  - a courtesy, non-certified translation of its contents signed by the legal representative or by the authorised legal representative of the applying institution **or**
  - if available, the official version in English from the competent authority issuing Annex 3.The document must be uploaded on the system as a PDF file.

Absence of Annex 4 for applicants which must provide it will cause automatic rejection of the application.

**ANNEX 4 DOES NOT APPLY TO PUBLIC ENTITIES**

- **Annex 5 – Participation Scheme** outlining participation in the Cooperation Activity. Template in Word to be downloaded, filled in and uploaded as PDF on the system.
- **Annex 6 – Proposed work-programme** (to be uploaded as PDF). Absence of Annex 6 for applicants which must provide it will cause automatic rejection of the application. **ANNEX 6 APPLIES TO APPLICATIONS WITHIN SEGMENT 2.2.**

All the parts marked with an asterisk (\*) in the application form are to be filled in to complete the submission procedure. The system will not allow submission of incomplete packages (mandatory fields of Application Form or missing annexes).

Each Annex must be uploaded as a PDF file not exceeding 2MB size.

*A **Pre-submission Checklist** is available for downloading, allowing applicants to cross-check respect of administrative requirements of this Call (in particular, limitations, eligibility sections and rejection clauses), prior to actual submission of their application. This document does not need to be annexed to the Application Package.*

Applicants can save the application as a draft within the system and complete it at a later stage by logging into their account, then clicking on “your application” on the upper right-hand side of the screen. Applicants can revise their applications at any time before clicking on the “submit” button. Drafts cannot be submitted after the Call’s closure. Applications submitted cannot be modified after submission. Still, after submission, the documentation can be viewed by the applicant by logging into the system and clicking on “your application” on the upper right-hand side of the screen.

The Application Package shall be completed in accordance with the instructions provided in this Call for Proposals at [Section 15.](#) The applicant is requested to complete the documents as carefully and as clearly as possible. Please note that:

- the assessment of the application will be based exclusively on the Application Form and Annexes submitted;

- the Application Form and Annexes must be completed in English (exceptions: applicant name in national language; Annex 3);
- incomplete applications and Annexes will be rejected;
- under this Call, applicants can submit one application only;
- handwritten Annexes will be rejected;
- should the current application be a follow-up of already CEI-supported activities, the innovative aspects and adequate motivations will need to be highlighted in the application.

Disregarding any of the above might turn into a negative evaluation or automatic rejection of the application.

## 6.2. DEADLINE

Applications must be submitted no later than **Friday, 29 May 2026, 12:00 noon (midday) Central European Summer Time (CEST)**. Late submissions will not be considered.

## 6.3. SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

Applications must be exclusively submitted electronically using the CEI Electronic Submission System accessible at <https://application.cei.int>. Access to the CEI Electronic Submission System is subject to registration as a CEI user at <https://application.cei.int/wp-login.php?action=register>

**Who?** Applications must be submitted by a representative/contact person of the applicant organisation.

**How?** Once you have your CEI Login username and password you can start the submission process by logging in at <https://application.cei.int/wp-login.php> and accessing the CEI Electronic Submission System.

Under this Call for Proposals an applicant institution can apply only once. Should an applicant institution submit more than one Application Package, all the applications submitted will be rejected. Furthermore, should an applicant be partner/beneficiary in applications different from that submitted by it, the CEI reserves the right to reject this other application or to exclude the concerned partner/beneficiary.

## 6.4. ASSIGNMENT OF REFERENCE NUMBER

Upon completion of the online submission procedure, the applicant (logged-in CEI user) will receive by email the Reference Number of the application (**302.5.2027.xxx**), assigned to it automatically and univocally by the system. Applicants will need to keep the Reference Number for monitoring the further appraisal and notification phases. There is no further contact between the CEI and the applicants until after completion of the evaluation with the exception of the following cases: (i) if the CEI needs to contact the applicant to clarify matters such as eligibility or to request additional information; (ii) in response to an enquiry or complaint made by the applicant.

## 7. EVALUATION PROCEDURE

The evaluation procedure consists of two steps:

- STEP 1: Administrative Check
- STEP 2: Evaluation of Applications

### 7.1. ADMINISTRATIVE CHECK

This first step is carried out to determine whether the applications submitted comply with the administrative and eligibility criteria set out by this Call, according to the grid below. Please note that one negative answer suffices to reject the application automatically.

Administrative Check   Application of rejection clauses		Yes / No
1	Have all parts of the Application Form been filled in (including the mandatory Annexes completed in all their parts according to templates and indications of this Call) and submitted as indicated through the CEI Electronic Submission System? <i>ANNEX 3 AND ANNEX 4 DO NOT APPLY TO PUBLIC ENTITIES, ANNEX 6 APPLIES TO APPLICATIONS WITHIN SEGMENT 2.2.</i>	
2	Is the ceiling of the CEI contribution in line with the conditions set at <a href="#">Section 4.1.</a> ?	
3	Is the percentage of the CEI contribution to the overall budget in line with the conditions set at <a href="#">Section 4.2.</a> ?	
4	Is co-financing information in line with the conditions set at <a href="#">Section 4.3.</a> ?	
5	Is the Applicant eligible according to <a href="#">Section 5.2.</a> ?	
6	Is the participation scheme / quorum in line with the conditions set at <a href="#">Section 5.5.</a> ?	
7	Is the activity being organised within the implementation period set by <a href="#">Section 9.</a> ?	
8	Is the activity being organised in a CEI Member State as set by <a href="#">Section 10.</a> ?	

Upon completion of the Administrative Check, the roster of applications proceeding to the evaluation phase will be published on <https://application.cei.int/application/cf2026/>. The list of those which have failed meeting the criteria will be published as well. No direct notification to applicants will occur at this stage.

## 7.2. EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications proceeding to the evaluation phase will be assessed according to the Evaluation Criteria set out in the grid below.

	Evaluation Criteria	Score (1-5)*
1	<b>Alignment</b> of the proposed activity to the priorities set by the CEI Thematic Agenda	
2	<b>Quality</b> of the information reported in the Application Form	
3	<b>Objectives</b> (is the proposed activity likely to meet the envisaged goals?)	
4	<b>Impact</b> (is the proposed activity likely to have a follow-up?)	
5	Applicant's <b>expertise</b> in the area of the proposed activity and past experience	
6	<b>Relevance</b> of attendance as outlined in Annex 5	
7	<b>Participation</b> from CEI Member States **	
8	<b>Budget</b> (is the budget clear, consistent and detailed, sound, and cost-effective? Is the coverage of the CEI contribution requested for eligible budget lines and percentages?)	
9	<b>Co-financing</b> (is the envisaged co-financing scheme sound and effective?)	
10	<b>Communication and CEI Visibility</b> (is the CEI visibility and promotion adequate?)	
	<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>	<b>.../50</b>

**\*Evaluation score:** each criterion is appraised on a scale from 1 to 5, where 5 is the highest possible score, and 1 is the lowest, as follows: *Excellent: 5 points | Very Good: 4 points | Good: 3 points | Satisfactory: 2 points | Not satisfactory: 1 point.* The maximum overall score is **50/50**. Applications scoring at least **35/50** will be considered for co-financing.

**\*\*Participation score** (grid criterion nr 7): participation is appraised on a scale from 1 to 5, where 5 is the highest possible score, and 1 is the lowest, as follows: *all CEI Member States: 5 points | more than two-thirds of CEI Member States: 4 points | respecting the half-plus-one quorum: 3 points | below the half-plus-one quorum: 2 points | minimum allowed quorum: 1 point.*

At the end of the evaluation, applications will be ranked based on the total score reached in the evaluation grid. Proposals for awarding CEI contributions will be made based on this ranking, within the limits of the available budget. During the process of evaluation, the CEI may, at its discretion, ask any applicant for clarifications. The request for clarifications from the CEI and related replies must be in writing.

## 8. NOTIFICATION

As stated in Rule C4 (CEI Rules for Allocation of Resources), the decision on allocation of CEI contributions is taken by the Committee of CEI National Coordinators (CNC). The Secretariat will notify directly both the applicants who are awarded with a CEI contribution and those who are not. The direct notification will occur by email exclusively at a date following the CNC decision. The applicants will then need to formally express their acceptance of the Terms of Reference of the awarded CEI contribution by returning a copy of the document, signed, and sealed by their legal representative, to the CEI Executive Secretariat.

## 9. IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD AND PROGRESS IMPLEMENTATION REPORTING

The activities within this Call shall be implemented as follows:

- **Segment 2.1. CEI Thematic Agenda:** activities must be implemented **from 1 January to 31 December 2027**. Please note that the CEI contribution cannot finance multiple events under this segment (see [Section 5.3](#)). In activities being carried out over longer implementation periods a possible CEI contribution can be approved only for a portion being implemented within the above said implementation period. The exact date and venue of the proposed activity shall be referred to in the Application Form; generic information is not acceptable.
- **Segment 2.2. Focused Section:** activities **must start by 1 March 2027 and shall be completed by 1 September 2028**. Applicants shall outline a clear work-programme of the proposals taken place over multiple activities/periods and fill-in Annex 6 accordingly (this annex is mandatory for applicants under this budget segment). In case of approval of a CEI contribution, the organiser of the activity undertakes the duty to submit **Progress Implementation Report(s)**, outlining the project activities undertaken so far and related costs incurred in.
  - In Cooperation Activities lasting less than twelve months the submission of one Progress Implementation Report is mandatory. The report should be submitted at the midpoint of the implementation period.
  - In Cooperation Activities lasting more than twelve months, Progress Implementation Reports must be submitted twice.

In case Progress Implementation Report(s) or monitoring of the project implementation by the CEI reveal serious obstacles in the implementation of the activity that cannot be mitigated and are liable to have a major unfavourable impact on the implementation and objectives of the activity, the CEI might request for refunding of the advance payment, reduce or cancel the disbursement of the Final Payment.

## 10. LOCATION

Activities must take place in CEI Member States. The use of the CEI contribution for activities taking place outside the CEI Member States is not admitted.

## 11. CONTACT

Any question regarding the Call for Proposals shall be addressed – up to five (5) days before the deadline for submission – exclusively in written form by email to [applications.coopfund@cei.int](mailto:applications.coopfund@cei.int) quoting as subject **CF Call 2026 – Questions**. Answers will be provided no later than five (5) days before the deadline for submitting applications. Pre-screening of applications and/or project ideas before official submission is not admitted.

## 12. IT ASSISTANCE

IT assistance for submission and system-related issues is available from the launch of the Call until 48 hours before the application deadline—specifically until Wednesday, 27 May 2026 at 12:00 (noon) CEST—between 09:00 and 16:00 on weekdays.

IT assistance includes support with accessing the online application platform, resolving login or password issues, addressing system errors, and troubleshooting file upload or submission malfunctions.

Applicants are strongly advised to submit their applications sufficiently in advance. The CEI cannot guarantee the availability or proper IT support services and troubleshooting in the final 48 hours before the deadline and cannot be held liable for technical issues occurring during that period.

## 13. AMENDMENTS TO THE CALL

Up to fifteen (15) days before each deadline for submission of applications, the CEI reserves the right to amend this Call for Proposals by issuing addenda. Any addendum published within the Call for Proposals webpage at <https://application.cei.int/application/cf2026/> will become an integral part of the Call for Proposals. If an application has been submitted before the issuing of the last addenda, the applicant has the right to withdraw or substitute its proposal within the deadline for the submission.

## 14. DEBRIEFINGS

Any request for clarifications regarding discarded applications is to be addressed by email to [applications.coopfund@cei.int](mailto:applications.coopfund@cei.int) for understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal if needed. No additional information will be disclosed.

## 15. GUIDELINES FOR APPLICATION FORM COMPLETION

Applications must be submitted exclusively through the CEI Electronic Submission System accessible at <https://application.cei.int>. Access is permitted to CEI registered users only. The CEI user registration is available at <https://application.cei.int/wp-login.php?action=register>

The CEI Electronic Submission System is an online wizard that guides applicants through the preparation of applications. The applicant, in accordance with the instructions provided in these Guidelines and over the Call, shall complete the Application Package in English. In most parts of the online Application Form, a maximum number of characters (spaces included) is foreseen. To allow an early preparation of the proposal please note that the Application Package is composed of the online Application Form and Annexes as explained over [Section 6.1](#). **Each Annex must be uploaded as a PDF file not exceeding 2MB size.** Applicants can save the application as draft within the system and complete it at a later stage by logging each time into their account on the system, by clicking up on the right of the screen on the tab “your application”. They can revise their applications at any time before clicking on the “submit” button. Applications cannot be revised after submission. See instructions for compilation below. Fields marked with (\*) are mandatory.

### 15.1. GENERAL INFORMATION

**(\*) Title:** Enter the title of the proposed activity. It must reflect the purpose of the proposal and should be relevant enough to become its trademark. (max 200 characters)

**(\*) Type of activity:** Please specify as appropriate, taking into consideration the indications given within [Section 2](#). of the Call on Areas of Intervention (*Thematic Agenda*: short-term activities such as meetings, workshops, conferences, trainings - events in general - aimed at creating longer term relations, networks, and partnerships within the region; *Focused Section*: medium-long term activities e.g. on-the-job training, workshops, staff secondment, study visits, peer review missions, assistance in the preparation

of strategic documents such as development plans, reforms, strategic studies, etc., technology transfer, technical and capacity building assistance). (max 300 characters)

**(\*) Country:** Select the CEI country in which the applicant organisation is based. International Organisations not based in the CEI region shall select 'other' and fill-in the field below.

**For International Organisations:** Please indicate where the headquarters of the applicant organisation are based.

**(\*) Applicant:** Please indicate:

- the name of the applicant organisation in the national language
- the name of the applicant organisation in English (in absence of an official English name, please provide a translation)

**(\*) Budget to which the proposal is applying:** Please indicate to which budget segment the proposal is applying. Please note that the proposal can be submitted to one budget segment exclusively, not both.

**(\*) Envisaged date of implementation:** For proposals under the first budget segment: please refer to an exact date of the proposed activity. Generic information will not be accepted. For proposals under the second budget segment: please refer to the starting and concluding date of the activity. The proposed detailed work-programme must be outlined in Annex 6.

**Notes:** For proposals under the first budget segment: in case of longer programmes or actions, please define which is the portion requesting CEI support. Please note that the CEI does not finance multiple events. Generic information will not be accepted. (max 500 characters)

**(\*) Venue/location:** Please indicate the venue/location of the proposed activity. Please note that activities must take place in CEI Member States. (max 200 characters)

**(\*) Total budget:** Please indicate the total budget of the activity in EUR.

**(\*) Requested CEI contribution:** Please indicate the amount of the requested CEI contribution in EUR

**(\*) % to the total cost of the project:** Please refer to the percentage of the requested CEI contribution with respect to the total budget of the activity

**Registration fee:** If a registration fee is applied to participants, please indicate here the amount of the fee in Euro, to which categories of participants it is applied, which budget lines are to be covered by the registration fee. Please indicate the revenue from registration fees in the budget co-financing scheme, as appropriate. (max 500 characters)

## 15.2. APPLICANT

**(\*) Description of the applicant:** Please provide a concise description of the applicant including background information and main activities. (max 2500 characters)

**(\*) Legal status of the applicant:** Please indicate the legal status of the applicant (public/public equivalent body, private entity, NGO/CSO, international organisation, other)

**Other (specify):** If none of the categories above applies, please indicate which is the legal status of the applicant. (max 1000 characters)

**Legal status of the applicant – documentation:** Please refer to type of documentation attached as registration proof, if applicable. Please note that for certain categories of applicants the submission of Annex 3 and 4 is mandatory. (max 1000 characters)

**(\* Past experience in the field of the proposed activity):** Please describe your past experience in carrying out actions within the field of the proposed activity. Please refer to the capacity gained in project management and organisation of international activities. (max 2000 characters)

**Past experience with the CEI (if applicable):** Please state whether you have been applicant, recipient, partner, or beneficiary, directly or indirectly, in any CEI activities/projects of any kind in the past. If applicable, please provide the relevant details (e.g. Reference Number, title, amount of CEI contribution received, etc.). (max 2000 characters)

### 15.3. APPLICANT'S CONTACT DETAILS

**(\* Applicant's contact details):** \*Name of the applicant institution, \*Address, Website

**(\* Legal representative of the applicant institution):** \*Ms/Mr, \*Name, \*Surname, \*Position, \*Phone, \*Email

**(\* Person responsible for the implementation and final reporting):** \*Ms/Mr, \*Name, \*Surname, \*Position, \*Phone, \*Email

**(\* Person responsible for financial management and final accounting):** \*Ms/Mr, \*Name, \*Surname, \*Position, \*Phone, \*Email

### 15.4. PARTICIPATION

The fields below are to be filled in within the Application Form. Additional information is to be provided into Annex 5 – Participation Scheme. Please note that the CEI is encouraging gender responsive conduct and gender equality awareness and representation in the activities co-financed with its Funds and Instruments. Applicants are kindly requested to consider possible gender responsive measures in their proposals. Please remember that a participation quorum applies to both sections as explained over Section 5.5.

**(\* CEI Countries):** Please indicate from which CEI Member States the attendees to the activity are coming.

**Other:** Please refer to additional participation.

**International Organisations:** Please refer to participation from International Organisations.

### 15.5. CONTRIBUTION TO THE CEI PLAN OF ACTION

**This section must be filled in by all applicants.**

**(\* CEI Thematic Agenda Objective):** Please refer to the objective of the CEI Thematic Agenda in which you consider your proposal to better fit in. Please restrict your choice to one objective.

**(\* Description):** Please explain how and why the proposed activity is contributing to meeting the objectives outlined in the CEI Thematic Agenda, including cross-cutting references to other objectives, if applicable. (max 3000 characters)

### 15.6. CONTRIBUTION TO THE FOCUSED SECTION

**This section must be filled in exclusively by applicants to the related portion of the overall budget.**

**Focused Section Objective:** Please refer to the objective of the Focused Section in which you consider your proposal to better fit in. The choice is restricted to one objective.

**Description:** Please explain how and why the proposed activity is contributing to meeting the selected objective of the Focused Section, including cross-cutting references to other objectives, if applicable.

Please pay particular attention to describing the role of the institutions involved and the added value for the beneficiary target groups of the proposed activity. (max 3000 characters)

## 15.7. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

**(\* Background:** Please provide a brief description of the motivations that led to the presentation of the current proposal. Should the proposal be a follow-up of any other activity please elaborate on that as well. (max 2000 characters)

**(\* Content/topic description:** Please describe the content of the proposed action. Define the main subjects that will be dealt with in the activity, with particular attention to providing the ‘CEI angle’ of those topics in the envisaged agenda. Please pay particular attention to appropriate, practical and consistent information. Nonspecific and abstract, overambitious information is to be avoided. (max 3000 characters)

**(\* Objectives:** Please describe the objectives you intend to reach with the proposed action, with particular attention to appropriate, practical and consistent information. Nonspecific and abstract, overambitious goals are to be avoided. (max 2000 characters)

**(\* Impact:** Please elaborate on the expected impact and follow-up of the action for consolidation of the results achieved therein. Nonspecific and abstract, overambitious goals are to be avoided. (max 2000 characters)

**(\* Communication, promotion and dissemination:** Please describe which activities you are planning to promote the proposed action and ensure CEI visibility in its framework, as well as the dissemination actions of the activity outputs. (max 2000 characters)

**(\* CEI involvement:** Please indicate whether you intend to involve/invite any CEI representatives (see the CEI website for more information) in the activity. (max 1000 characters)

**(\* Contribution to UN Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals (if applicable):** Please refer to whether and to which extent the proposed action meets with the Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations Agenda 2030. Please refer to the main related SDG and, if none matches, indicate that as well. (max 1000 characters).

**Other information (if applicable):** Please provide any information you deem important for better understanding the proposed action. (max 2000 characters)

## 15.8. ANNEXES

**Each Annex must be uploaded as a PDF file not exceeding 2MB size.**

For technical reasons, in uploading the Annexes on the system, if possible, maintain the file name of the template. Otherwise, please be sure to:

- use Latin characters
- avoid accents
- avoid long file names (max 50 characters)

**(\* Annex 1- Budget:** The template of Annex 1 is provided in Excel format. Please fill it in by providing information, as applicable and as appropriate, concerning the resources needed for implementing the proposed action, including those requested to the CEI. Please carefully read the list of expenses which are eligible for CEI reimbursement and those which are not ([Section 5.6.](#)). A guiding info is also available on the various fields of the chart: you are kindly requested to pay particular attention to it during formulation of the budget outline. Both the Budget Outline and the Expected Co-financing Scheme shall be filled in, absence of a filled-in Co-financing scheme will result in automatic rejection of the application (see [Section 6.1.](#) and [Section 4.3.](#)). Download the template, fill it in, and upload it as PDF into the system.

**(\*) Annex 2 - Applicant's signature:** The template of Annex 2 is provided in Word format. It must be signed by the Legal Representative or the Authorised Legal Representative of the applicant institution. Download the template, include the applicant's letterhead (if possible), fill it in, print it, have it signed, stamped (if possible), and upload it as PDF into the system.

**Annex 3 - Official proof of registration:** Annex 3 is meant to provide confirmation that the Applicant is eligible according to [Section 5.2](#). Non-Governmental and Civil Society Organisations as well as private entities must include in the Application Package an official proof of registration issued by the competent authority. The document must be uploaded on the system as a PDF file. **ANNEX 3 DOES NOT APPLY TO PUBLIC ENTITIES**

**Annex 4 - Courtesy translation of the official proof of registration into English:** Should the Official Proof of Registration be issued in a language different from English, applicants should provide:

- a courtesy, non-certified translation of its contents signed by the legal representative or by the authorised legal representative of the applying institution or
- if available, the official version in English from the competent authority issuing Annex 3.

The document must be uploaded on the system as a PDF file. **ANNEX 4 DOES NOT APPLY TO PUBLIC ENTITIES**

**(\*) Annex 5 – Participation scheme:** The template of Annex 5 is provided in Word format. Please provide information on the expected participation in the Cooperation Activity (i.e. number of expected/invited participants, from which countries and institutions they will come from, which role they will have in the activity, the gender responsive actions taken with respect to participation). Download the template, fill it in, and upload it as PDF into the system.

**Annex 6 – Proposed work-programme:** Applicants to Segment 2.2. shall outline a clear work-programme of the proposals taking place over multiple activities/periods and submit it as Annex 6 (to be uploaded as PDF) **ANNEX 6 APPLIES TO PROPOSALS WITHIN SEGMENT 2.2.**

## 16. EU GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR) 2016/679

View the CEI [Information on the protection of personal data and the use of cookies pursuant to Regulation \(EU\) 2016/679 \("GDPR"\)](#)