

European Solidarity Corps Quality Label**GUIDELINES FOR BUDGET ALLOCATION****Call 2025**

This document defines detailed rules for budget allocation to Quality Label lead organisations, in line with the framework established in European Solidarity Corps (ESC) Programme Guide.

As specified in the Programme Guide, at budget allocation stage there is no quality assessment. All eligible grant requests have to receive funding. The awarded grant amount per applicant shall depend on a number of elements, as defined for budget allocation rules in the Programme Guide:

- the total budget available for allocation
- the estimated budget required to implement the requested activities
- the minimum and maximum grant amounts established for all applicants
- the score of the Quality label for lead organisation
- applicant's performance (progress report score, budget absorption and final report score of the last completed ESC51 project, if available)
- the quality performance, policy priorities and thematic areas addressed by the activities applied for

1. TOTAL BUDGET AVAILABLE FOR ALLOCATION

Total budget available for allocation for ESC	2 541 365,00 EUR
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Specific amounts will be reserved for budget categories based on reimbursement of real costs. Beneficiaries can make requests for this type of costs during the implementation of the grant agreement, by submitting a written request to the National Agency. In case of need, the National Agency may further increase these specific reserved amounts. For ESC, if part of these reserved funds is left unused, the National Agency may distribute it in an (optional) second round.

The rest of the available budget will be apportioned between the following applicable allocation components as follows¹:

¹ Exceptionally, the specified amounts may be lowered if the budget required for exceptional costs is higher than originally foreseen; if all applicants have already been allocated the requested amounts according to the rules set out in this document; or if a minor correction is required due to rounding rules.

Minimum grants amount	At least 1 800 000,00 EUR
Qualitative performance, policy priorities and thematic areas	At least 691 365,00 EUR
Exceptional costs and Inclusion support for participants	At least 50 000,00 EUR

2. ESTIMATING THE BUDGET REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT THE REQUESTED ACTIVITIES

The National Agency will calculate the budget required to implement activities requested by each applicant, on the basis of unit costs defined in the Programme Guide and historical data on grant amounts for similar activities.

An estimation cannot be performed for all actual costs that are highly dependent on each specific case, namely exceptional costs. Requests for this type of costs will be assessed based on the description, justification and estimated amount provided by the applicant as part of the application.

In all cases, the awarded grant shall not be higher than the estimated budget required to implement all activities requested by the applicant. As an exception, real costs (exceptional costs) will not count towards the maximum awarded grant amount.

3. BUDGET ALLOCATION RULES

3.1 GENERAL PROVISIONS

If the total budget available for allocation is not sufficient to provide each applicant with the budget required to implement their requested activities, then a competitive allocation will take place as described below. However, if the total available budget is sufficient to fully address requests of all applicants, then the budget allocation rules described in the paragraph below will not apply.

The competitive budget allocation will take place in multiple phases. In each phase, the available budget will be divided between eligible applicants based on their score on the relevant criterion. Applicants that receive the full budget required to implement their requested activities (or that reach their maximum grant amount) will not participate in further allocations. Available funds will be allocated to applicants based on the corresponding allocation rules. All allocated amounts will be rounded to the nearest whole Euro.

3.2 SETTING THE MINIMUM GRANT AMOUNT

A minimum grant amount will be provided to each applicant. The purpose of the minimum grant amount is to allow all organisations to implement a sufficient number of activities and progress towards the objectives set in their Activity Plan.

The minimum grant amount for individual applicant organisations shall be: **30 000 EUR**. The single minimum grant amount for all applicants is calculated on the basis of the average grant per project (ESC11) for the previous programme period.

Grant requests which are estimated to be lower than minimum grant amount will be fully awarded.

If sufficient funds are available, the National Agency may increase the minimum grant amount after the submission deadline. This information will be published on the National Agency's website.

In view of future calls, the applicants should make sure to request an appropriate number of activities according to what they are able to implement. Failing to use the awarded funds during the implementation of the grant agreement can lead to low past performance and therefore a lower grant amount in future calls.

3.3 SETTING THE MAXIMUM GRANT AMOUNT

No maximum grant has been set for 2025.

In addition to the general rules on maximum grants, the awarded grant for applicants under observation may be further limited by the National Agency in accordance with the specific decision on establishment of observation measures.

The National Agency may also limit the grant amount awarded to applicants who deviate considerably from the annual targets set in their Activity Plans.

In all cases, the awarded grant amount shall not be higher than the estimated budget required to implement all activities requested by the applicant. As an exception, cost category 'exceptional costs' will not count towards the limits set by the rules on maximum grant amount.

3.4 QUALITATIVE PERFORMANCE, POLICY PRIORITIES AND THEMATIC AREAS

The National Agency will allocate the budget according to the assessment of the qualitative performance, the policy priorities and thematic areas addressed by the activities applied for. The purpose of this assessment is to ensure that the budget is allocated to applicants that deliver good quality activities, while also enhancing them to gradually progress towards the objectives of their Activity Plan.

The National Agency will calculate per applicant a score by taking into account the parameters below.

- the evaluation score of the applicant's Quality Label application - 40% of the score.
- the policy priorities score, calculated based on the number of policy priorities that the applicant will tackle through each activity - 10% of the score. The proportion of young people with fewer opportunities taking part in activities has to be factored in for this calculation. This ensures that the inclusive dimension of the programme is reflected in the budget allocation criteria.

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- the beneficiary final report evaluation score of the last completed accredited project (ESC51), if available - 50% of the score. If no final report is available, the National Agency may give more weight to the evaluation score of the applicant's accreditation/Quality Label application.

The total score for qualitative performance, policy priorities and thematic areas will be calculated per activity and averaged per project.

After this assessment, the budget will be divided among the applicants in proportion to their total score. The calculation will take into account the total estimated budget required to implement the requested activities², the minimum and the maximum grant amounts available. This ensures that the calculated grant amount is proportional to the size of the budget requested by each applicant.

4. TOTAL AWARDED GRANT AMOUNT AND TARGETS FOR DELIVERY

For each applicant, the total awarded grant amount will be the sum of amounts they have received in each allocation phase. If any requests for real costs (exceptional costs) have been approved by the National Agency, these amounts will be added to the total awarded grant amount.

Before issuing a grant agreement, the National Agency will calculate appropriate targets for delivery. If the applicant has been awarded the full budget required to implement their requested activities, then the activities requested in the application will become the targets for delivery. If the awarded grant amount is lower than the full budget required to implement the requested activities, then the targets will also be lowered proportionally to ensure that the applicant is able to deliver them.

The National Agency has to ensure that the awarded grant amount corresponds to the number of units. In any case, at least one participant in each activity type requested by the applicant shall be maintained.

The National Agency can make some modifications to the proportional adjustment in order to allow for a better fit between the awarded budget and target activities, to maintain at least one participant in each activity type requested by the applicant, and to comply with any limitations defined in the Programme Guide.

Beneficiaries are able to implement the target activities with a wide flexibility, while remaining within the scope of their approved Activity Plan and Programme Guide rules. Delivery of agreed activities and targets will be evaluated at the final report stage.

² Excluding the scores that would equal zero for a specific applicant.