
Call for proposals

Lesbian Economic Power (Non-EU), 2026 – Funding Stream 2

*This call for proposals is aimed at EL*C member organisations based outside of the EU (see the concrete list of countries under the “Eligibility Criteria” section). In case your organisation is based in the EU, please read our [Lesbian Economic Power \(EU\), 2026 call for proposals](#).*

EL*C - EuroCentralAsian Lesbian* Community is happy to announce its Lesbian Economic Power (EU), 2026 call for proposals! Our goal is to build capacities of EL*C member organizations outside of the European Union, in Europe and Central Asia, and support them in Empowering lesbians through Employment and Entrepreneurship and in Establishing Sustainable Income-Generating Models for Lesbian Organisations.

Within this call, we have two funding streams, and you must choose one.

In case you are interested in Funding Stream 1 (Empowering Lesbians through Employment and Entrepreneurship), please read [the dedicated page](#).

Please note that EL*C uses the term lesbian as inclusive of cis, trans and intersex women, and non- binary persons who self-identify as lesbian, bisexual, and queer.

Core information

Please note that within this call, EL*C approaches funding not as a traditional grant, but as an investment into the long-term sustainability, resilience and economic empowerment of lesbian-led organisations (NGO’s). We are interested in supporting ideas and business initiatives that have the potential to contribute to the long-term sustainability of the NGO’s by strengthening their economic independence, generating income, and creating opportunities for the lesbian community.

- **Application deadline:** 23:59 CEST on June 8th, 2026.
- **Length of the project:** 24 months
- **Start date** should be between November 15 and December 15, 2026.
- **Investment size:** between 5,000 EUR and 50,000 EUR, depending on the provided financial plan, EL*C’s evaluation and assessment of the application and the availability of funds. We expect most of the investments to be no more than 30,000 EUR.
- **No co-funding is necessary.**

The grant period for supported projects will be 24 months. However, applicants are expected to present a



business proposal that reflects a five-year business horizon. In other words, while EL*C direct support will cover the first two years of implementation, the proposal should demonstrate how the business is expected to develop, generate income, and contribute to the organization's sustainability over a total period of five years.

EL*C will monitor supported business initiatives for five years in order to assess their development, sustainability, and longer-term contribution to organizational resilience. Applicants should therefore provide information not only on what will happen during the grant period, but also on the expected trajectory of the business after the grant ends.

Eligibility criteria

Applicants meeting the following eligibility criteria will be considered for funding:

- Approved full member organization of EL*C at the time the call is being launched *(an organization is an approved full member after going through a separate application process for membership and receiving a formal notification about approval of membership)*
- Non-profit and non-governmental, civil society organization (registered and unregistered)
- Based in and working in the following countries:
 - Central Asia: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan
 - Europe: Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Russia, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine
 - South Caucasus: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia
- Fully completed application form, financial plan and the signed declaration of honor, submitted before the deadline.

Applicants found ineligible will be informed within 2 weeks after the application deadline.

Project objectives to be supported under Funding Stream 2

Sustainable Income-Generating Models for Lesbian Organizations

While Funding Stream 1 focuses on individual lesbians, Funding Stream 2 prioritizes the sustainability of lesbian organizations themselves, recognizing that long-term movement resilience depends on financial autonomy and organizational stability.

This stream will support lesbian organizations in designing, piloting, and scaling income-generating business initiatives - including social enterprises, cooperatives, or service-oriented business model - that can fund core operations of the organization, reduce reliance on short-term external funding, and strengthen their advocacy and community engagement.



By funding these activities, EL*C aims to empower lesbian organizations to generate their own income, expand their autonomy, and stabilize their presence in often-hostile and/or underfunded environments. These models may also serve as community hubs, safe employment spaces, and examples of queer economic solidarity in action.

Please note that Funding Stream 2 will be prioritized, with more resources allocated to it, given the strategic importance of building long-term sustainability of the lesbian movement.

In case you are interested in Funding Stream 1 (Empowering Lesbians through Employment and Entrepreneurship), please read [the dedicated page](#).

Eligible activities

Activities that may receive financial support are the following:

- Development of business plans and feasibility studies tailored to the organization's mission, context, and capacity
- Design and incubation of social enterprises or cooperatives, including models that align with the organization's goals (e.g., queer-friendly co-working spaces, LBQ cultural products, training services, etc.), but also other profitmaking models that are outside of those goals
- Marketing and branding activities for income-generating products or services
- Legal and administrative support, including costs related to registration, permits, and compliance with local business laws
- Procurement of essential goods, equipment, or services, such as office space rental, production machinery, IT infrastructure, or materials for product development
- Hiring of key personnel or consultants to operationalize and manage income-generating activities
- Training of employees or any other capacity development necessary for the income-generating activity
- Any other activity necessary for the launch and the running of the income-generating activity

Regranting cannot be included.

Guidance on Financial Planning

Submitting a financial plan is mandatory as part of this application. Please find all details and expectations below.

The financial plan should enable the EL*C to assess whether the business idea is financially realistic, appropriately costed, and likely to generate income over time.

Technical instructions

EL*C won't provide a fixed template; applicants should use their own.

The financial plan should cover two different timeframes: first, the detailed 24-month grant period; and second, the broader five-year business horizon. The first two years should be presented in greater detail, while years 3 to 5 may be presented in a summarized but still credible and sufficiently explained format.

Please note that the financial plan must contain all the elements listed below.

Required contents

- a) **Startup investment costs**, if applicable. Provide a breakdown of one-time or initial costs needed to set up or launch the business, and indicate which of these costs are expected to be covered by EL*C's investment.
- b) **Operating costs**. Provide a breakdown of recurring costs during the 24-month investment period and, where possible, the expected cost structure for years 3 to 5.
- c) **Revenue projections**. Show projected revenue from the business, including expected income streams, sales volumes or client numbers, pricing assumptions, and projected revenue over time. Revenue projections should cover the full five-year period.
- d) **Cash flow forecast**. Provide a cash flow projection showing when money is expected to come in and when expenses are expected to be paid out. A monthly cash flow forecast for the 24-month grant period is strongly recommended.
- e) **Profit and loss projection**. Provide an estimate of whether the business is expected to operate at a surplus or deficit. This should clearly cover the first 24 months and should also indicate the expected position in years 3 to 5.
- f) **Break-even analysis**. Explain what level of sales or income is needed to cover costs and when the business is expected to reach this point, if applicable.
- g) **Main financial assumptions**. List the key assumptions behind the projections, such as expected number of customers, price per unit, demand growth, production costs, staffing levels, exchange rates, seasonality, or market fluctuations.
- h) **Use of grant funds**. Clearly indicate how the requested amount will be used during the 24-month grant period and why these investments are necessary.
- i) **Contribution of other resources**. If the business will also rely on other resources, indicate these separately, such as the organization's own contribution, in-kind support, volunteer time, existing assets, co-financing, or already-generated earned income.
- j) **Sustainability outlook**. Include a short note explaining how the business is expected to become sustainable over a five-year period, including when it may begin generating steady income, whether it is expected to cover its own running costs, and how income may support the NGO's

work over time.

Suggested presentation format

- Detailed financial projections for months 1–24 (in Excel or other spreadsheet application).
- A summarized year-by-year projection for years 3, 4, and 5 (in Excel or other spreadsheet application).
- A short narrative note explaining the key assumptions and logic behind the numbers (in Excel or other spreadsheet application OR in Word or similar applications).

EL*C may use the financial plan, together with narrative reporting and follow-up requests, to monitor the development of supported business initiatives over a five-year period.

Selection criteria and selection process

We will acknowledge the receipt of the application.

Eligible applications under Funding Stream 2 will be assessed by the Selection Committee (comprised by EL*C Board Members and aided by business experts) based on the overall quality, relevance, feasibility, and sustainability potential of the proposed income-generating initiative. Only a select number of EL*C Board Members will take part in this work, in particular those who do not have any conflict of interest in relation to potential applicants.

The assessment will focus on the extent to which the proposal presents a clear and credible business idea, demonstrates a realistic understanding of the market and operating context, and shows potential to contribute to the long-term financial sustainability of the applicant organization.

In reviewing applications, the Selection Committee will in particular consider the following main elements:

1. The first element is the **relevance and strategic fit of the proposal**. The Committee will assess whether the proposed income-generating activity is appropriate to the applicant organization's context, capacities, and long-term sustainability needs, and whether it is a suitable model for helping strengthen the organization's autonomy and resilience over time.
2. The second element is the **clarity and quality of the business concept**. The Committee will assess whether the proposal clearly explains the product, service, or business model being proposed, the problem or opportunity it seeks to address, the target customers or market, and the value proposition of the initiative.
3. The third element is the **feasibility of the proposed business model and implementation approach**. This includes an assessment of whether the proposal presents a realistic operational plan, an achievable timeline, appropriate use of resources, and a credible strategy for launching, testing, or growing the business during the grant period.

4. The fourth element is the **financial viability and sustainability potential of the initiative**. The Committee will consider whether the proposal and accompanying financial plan demonstrate a realistic understanding of costs, revenue generation, financial risks, and the path toward longer-term sustainability. Particular attention will be paid to whether the proposal reflects a credible five-year business perspective, recognizing that the grant itself will support a two-year implementation period while EL*C will monitor the development of the business over a five-year period.
5. The fifth element is the **organizational capacity to deliver the initiative**. The Committee will assess whether the applicant organization has, or is likely to secure, the people, skills, partnerships, and management arrangements needed to implement and oversee the proposed income-generating activity effectively.
6. The sixth element is the **understanding of risks and mitigation measures**. The Committee will review whether the applicant has identified the principal financial, operational, legal, contextual, and security-related risks affecting the business model, and whether reasonable mitigation strategies are proposed.
7. The seventh element is the **potential contribution to the long-term sustainability of the organization**. The Committee will assess whether the initiative is likely, if successful, to generate meaningful income and strengthen the organization's ability to sustain its lesbian-focused work beyond the duration of grant funding.

In addition to the quality of the proposal, EL*C will prioritize applications from lesbian-led and lesbian-focused organizations, in particular organizations whose work is predominantly focused on lesbians and lesbian communities.

Applications that pass the initial stage of application evaluation will be invited to an interview as part of the assessment process. The purpose of the interview will be to allow the further assessment of the proposal, clarify key aspects of the business idea, and better understand the applicant organization's preparedness and capacity to implement the initiative.

Applicants selected after the interviews will work together with experts to further develop and refine their project concepts and implementation details, if needed. Based on these refined concepts, the Selection Committee will make the final decision on which business initiatives will be supported.

EL*C may also, at any stage of the evaluation and selection process, request additional information, clarifications, or supporting documentation from applicants where this is deemed necessary for the assessment of the proposal.

Eligible applicants will be informed about the grant decision as soon as possible. Awarded projects will also be announced on the [EL*C Grants Program's webpage](#).

How to apply?



You need to submit the completed **application form, financial plan, and the signed Declaration of Honor** before **23:59 CEST on June 8, 2026**, to the following email address: grants@lesbiangenius.org
Please make sure not to send it last minute, as it may take a few minutes for different mail servers to send the emails.

You can download the application form, and other useful documents from the [EL*C Grants Program's webpage](#).

Info sessions and questions

EL*C will provide online information sessions in English about the call for proposals. You may register for the information sessions [HERE](#). It is sufficient to join only one session, as the information provided will be the same in each session. Following your registration, we will send you the link to the information session.

- May 14 at 12:00 CEST
- May 18 at 10:00 CEST

A **Question and Answers document** will be available on the [EL*C Grants Program's webpage](#), with updates after every information session.

In addition, if you cannot find an answer to your question in this document, in the Q&A file or during the information sessions, you may also send an email to grants@lesbiangenius.org any time prior to June 1st, 2026. We will regularly update the Q&A document with responses sent to your questions.

Complaints Mechanism

In case you would like to appeal the decision of the Selection Committee, you will have five calendar days after the notification email about the grant decision has been sent. The complaint has to be sent to grants@lesbiangenius.org, and will be shared by staff with a three-member Appeal Committee consisting of one of EL*C co-directors and two Selection Committee members, who did not review the application. The Appeal Committee will review and decide about the complaint within ten calendar days.

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