

## Grant scheme for CEMR member associations to promote and support Twinning activities

### Introduction

Since its establishment in 1951, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) has been a driving force in promoting Twinning as a powerful tool for building bridges between communities, transcending borders, and fostering mutual understanding and cooperation. Over time, the concept of Twinning has evolved beyond cultural exchanges, encompassing a wide range of collaborative initiatives. These forms of Twinning include the exchange of best practices and the joint development of tangible projects that address specific challenges faced by Local and Regional Governments.

Building on the success of the 2024 pilot phase, CEMR is pleased to launch the second sub-granting scheme with support from the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme. This call for project proposals is open to CEMR's member associations and aims to further strengthen twinning exchanges and activities between EU Local and Regional Governments. The focus is on promoting EU values and addressing key challenges related to democracy, citizen participation, gender equality, and inclusion.

### Call for project proposals

In the framework of the Operating Grant, project - **SPICE - Empowering LRGs for Sustainable Policy Implementation and Civic Engagement in Europe**, funded by the European Commission (EC) under the Grant Agreement number 101194556, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) is launching a sub-granting scheme, targeting its member associations. This call seeks to promote Twinning between subnational governments by providing financial support for initiatives submitted by CEMR's national associations.

A total of four project proposals will be selected and funded. Each selected proposal will receive a lump sum grant up to €30,000.

The applicants must apply individually, not as part of a consortium.

### Overall objectives of this call for project proposals:

- To foster Twinning between EU Local and Regional Governments through the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)'s member associations selected;
- To promote both traditional and/or new methods of Twinning, with the view of enhancing exchanges and encourage the establishment of new partnerships between Local and Regional Governments.
- To promote the CEMR's Matchmaking Platform to sub-national governments, to boost new Twinning and cooperation.
- To foster the use of Twinning and transnational cooperation as tool to promote EU values and address challenges on democracy, citizens participation, gender equality and/or inclusion.
- To implement concrete activities on Twinning and addressing the challenges mentioned above, in the countries of the selected associations.

### Eligible applicant entities:

The applicant must meet all the criteria outlined in the footnote, and as per below:

- Be a CEMR national association;
- Be established in a MS of the EU;
- Be a legal entity, or an association representing LRGs and for non-profit making;
- Be directly responsible for the preparation/ management of the action.

### Target groups and beneficiaries of the actions:

The project proposals' activities must directly involve Local and Regional Governments.

### Eligible activities:

The project proposals, to be eligible, must include activities focusing on **fostering Twinning and transnational cooperation between EU Local and Regional Governments, promoting EU values and addressing one or more of the following thematic areas: democracy, citizens participation, gender equality, inclusion.**

Different types of activities which may be eligible (non-exhaustive list):

- Info sessions, national and transnational events in the format of awareness-raising activities, workshops focusing on informal learning, training/ capacity building backed up by training materials (etc.);
- Meetings and exchanges between LRGs on specific challenges and potential solutions (political or technical level), meetings to discuss twinning and sign MoU (memorandum of understandings) between cities/towns/subnational governments (etc), meetings and exchanges between communities, civil society, etc;
- Communication, promotion and dissemination activities: video content, animations, campaign, (etc.);
- Data gathering on Twinning and/or partnerships in a specific territory.

#### **Minimum requirements:**

To justify the use of the lump sum, each sub-grantee and proposal must meet the following minimum requirements:

- a) **At least 3 in-person activities.** These activities should align with the primary objectives of the call and could include for instance events, training, conferences, workshops, or exchanges.
- b) **A minimum overall number of 120 participants (in-person)** must be engaged in these activities.
- c) **A minimum of one new partnership must be established** between Local and Regional Governments of different countries. The Matchmaking Platform can be used to support the process of matching between sub-national governments.

#### **Deliverables:**

- e) Each subgrantee must submit **proof of the new partnership between LRGs**, which can be a Twinning Agreement, Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), Letter of Intent (LoI), or Cooperation Agreement, between two LRGs from different countries by the end of the implementation period.
- f) The beneficiaries of the sub grant will provide the necessary **reports (narrative), accompanied by the justificatory documents** including photos/pictures of each activity;
- g) **A database or list of participants from subnational governments interested in finding a partner**, facilitated by the promotion of the matchmaking platform and the activities carried out through the sub-grant, and seeking potential future cooperation opportunities (**min 20% of participants, i.e. 24 representatives**).
- h) Only costs related to EU based activities are eligible.

#### **Consequences of non-implementation or partial implementation:**

If the activities are not implemented, or are only partially implemented, or the required supporting documents are not submitted, the sum of the sub-grant will be adjusted. This adjustment will be based on the budget submitted at the time of the proposal. This implies that financial support can be lost or limited if the conditions are not met.

#### **Evaluation procedure:**

The selection committee inside the CEMR secretariat is composed of 4 CEMR staff members: Director of Projects and Programmes, Director of Policy and Impact, Head of Finance and Administration, and Twinning Officer. The committee will conduct the scoring of the applications received and select the project proposals to be awarded.

## Selection criteria:

The committee will select only the applications satisfying the below criteria:

- Entities fulfilling the criteria under the eligible applicants section described above;
- A **strong interest and commitment to engage on Twinning**, highlighted in the submitted proposal;
- A specific **focus on** one or more of the following areas: **democracy, citizens' participation, gender equality or inclusion**.
- **Scoring** of the applications of the entities fulfilling the above criteria and establishing a ranking based on the following criteria (quality of the project - 100-point score basis):

A) RELEVANCE (40 points)

B) PROGRAMME (30 points)

C) IMPACT (30 points)

D) Overall scoring: Minimum: 50 points and Maximum: 100 points.

Please find below more details on the evaluation criteria to help the applicant in the project development phase.

Criteria	
ELIGIBILITY	Obligatory
The applicant is fulfilling the conditions under the eligible applicant entities criteria section	Obligatory
The applicant is fulfilling the conditions under target groups and beneficiaries of the action's criteria section	Obligatory
PROJECT EVALUATION	<b>Points</b>
<b>a) Relevance</b>	40 points
The suggested activities openly address the objectives of the call for proposals, focusing on Twinning	
The suggested activities address one or more of the identified relevant thematic areas (democracy, citizens participation, gender equality or inclusion)	
The suggested activities are relevant to the target group and beneficiaries	
<b>b) Programme</b>	30 points
Effectiveness: the work programme responds to the objectives of the proposed action, it is realistic and applies an appropriate methodology.	
Efficiency: The activities suggested are credible in terms of adequacy between the budget, human resources, proposed activities and expected results and the budget presented is appropriate, efficient and realistically balanced	
The experience of twinning is well described and linked with the suggested activities	
<b>c) Impact</b>	30 points
The target group is clearly defined, including both direct and indirect beneficiaries, and the expected results effectively address their needs.	
The expected results are well defined.	
The sustainability of the actions is taken into consideration and addressed in	

the proposal.	
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**Award criteria:**

- Minimum score per criterion: Proposals scoring less than 50% of the maximum score for any award criterion will be considered of insufficient quality and rejected;
- Proposals that pass the criterion thresholds and the overall threshold will be considered for funding, in accordance with the lump sums available, as mentioned in the call for proposals;

Rejected applicants will have ten days from notification of the result of the selection process to request further clarification on their evaluation.

**About the budget available:**

- 4 project proposals will be selected and receive funding;
- Funding is provided as lump sums of maximum 30,000 € per proposal.
- Projects duration should not be longer than 6 months (from 1 June 2025 to 30 November 2025).

**Form of the grant and payments:**

The grant will be provided as a **lump sum**.

The submitted projects proposals must include detailed information on the **planned activities and associated budget**, aligned with the criteria described above, including eligibility ones and minimum requirements. Eligible costs are of the same nature as those of CEMR, including staff costs, travel and subsistence, event/training/meeting expenses, and communication activities.

*The grant will be paid in 2 instalments, via bank transfer:*

- Prefinancing of 40% of the grant against the submission and acceptance of the concept note for the deliverables agreed;
- Balance payment to be made after completion of the activities and before 31.12.2025.

The report of activities will be done on a regular basis and the final reports (narrative) including the accompanying and supporting documents such as photos/pictures and its outreach (online links, publications, agendas, list of participants, etc) will be provided to CEMR, at the end of the implementation period.

**Communication & visibility:**

The selected projects must fully respect the visibility and communication requirements of the EU, these include the appropriate logo and the reference “with the financial support of the EU” in all publications, references, documents, news, agendas and in any visibility and communication action regarding the project.

**Indicative timeline for application and results:**

- March-April 2025: Info session on the call for proposal, including a Q&A session
- **20/05/2025 : Extended deadline to submit project applications (by midnight);**
- May 2025: Results on the applications

**How to apply?**

- Download the application form in English annexe 1;
- Download the budget template in English annexe 2;
- Submit your project proposal and the budget via email to [twinning@ccre-cemr.org](mailto:twinning@ccre-cemr.org), **Twinning Project Proposal**”.

**Contact:**

All the questions related to the present call for proposals can be addressed to the following email address: [twinning@ccre-cemr.org](mailto:twinning@ccre-cemr.org), until the extended deadline.