



GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

Call for applications for participation in

the Communication Labs for Belarusian Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) operating outside of Belarus¹

NOTICE

This is an open call for applications to participate in the **Communication Labs**, a dedicated capacity building programme for Belarusian civil society organisations operating outside of Belarus to develop and launch their own communication campaigns with EU support.

Applications for the Communication Labs are accepted online via the **application form** at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CommLab2025>. The deadline for the submission of is **23.00 (CET) on the 7th of April 2025**.

Please check the eligibility criteria before applying. When submitting their applications, the applicants must follow all instructions contained in the Guidelines and complete the online application form. Failure to submit the required information and documentation within the deadline specified may lead to rejection of applications.

Should you have questions regarding your application, please contact us at dc@eapcivilsociety.eu

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¹ In line with the Council Conclusions of 12 October 2020 and of 19 February 2024, and in light of Belarus's involvement in the Russian military aggression against Ukraine, recognised in the European Council Conclusions of February 2022, the EU has stopped engaging with representatives of Belarus public bodies and state-owned enterprises. Should there be a change of the context this may be reconsidered. In the meantime, the EU continues to engage with and, where possible, has stepped up support to non-state, local and regional actors, including within the framework of this regional programme.



Background

The European Union is committed to supporting civil society in Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) and as such channels part of its support through its **Eastern Partnership Civil Society Facility (hereinafter “the Project”)**. In coordination with a range of projects and programmes, the EaP Civil Society Facility project sets out to strengthen the role and increase the capacity of civil society organisations (CSOs) and activists in the Eastern Partnership to engage in the policy making processes and policy dialogue, promote reforms and public accountability, foster local democracy, local development and engage citizens in public debate.

One of the tasks of the Project is to carry out country-specific communication campaigns which aim at raising awareness about the work of CSOs, contribute to a positive public perception of CSOs as actors of change and community mobilisers. To complete this task the Project will organise the **Communication Labs for FF civil society organisations operating outside of Belarus to help them develop and deliver their own communication campaigns**. The Communication Labs seeks to bridge the gap between CSOs and the wider public, fostering a more favourable environment for CSOs activities and partnerships. By helping CSOs to develop their communication skills and strategies, the Labs will enable them to amplify their impact, enhance public awareness and understanding of their work, and strengthen their engagement with various stakeholders.

1. Communication Lab Objectives

Communication Labs are a dedicated capacity building programme for civil society organisations from EaP countries to develop and launch their own communication campaigns with EU support. **The 2025 Communication Labs programme is designed to primarily focus on engaging Belarusian civil society organisations and activists operating outside of Belarus.**

The Communication Labs aim to empower CSOs by providing them with the necessary tools, resources, and mentorship to **develop and implement effective communication campaigns that raise awareness about the work of civil society and promote a positive public perception of CSOs as agents of change and community mobilisers.**

Up to 10 Belarusian civil society organisations operating outside of Belarus will be selected to participate in the Communication Labs with their campaign ideas. As a final stage of the capacity building programme, up to 3 campaign ideas will be selected and will get EU funding for the implementation and launch.

The Communication Labs are designed to achieve several expected outcomes, including:

- **Enhanced Capacity:** Approximately 30 civil society representatives of Belarusian CSOs will develop a deeper understanding of effective communication strategies and gain practical skills in developing and implementing communication and advocacy campaigns. They will acquire knowledge and practice in audience analysis, messaging, storytelling, budgeting, media engagement, and campaign evaluation, while working on their campaign ideas.
- **Strengthened Networks:** The Labs will facilitate networking and collaboration among the participating civil society organisations and activists. Participants will have the opportunity to



build connections, share experiences, and establish partnerships that can extend beyond the Labs.

- **Supported Campaigns:** Up to three campaign ideas will be supported and implemented with EU funding and will benefit from the expertise of the Project team, including the thematic expertise and promotion necessary for successful campaign production and launch.

2. Communication Lab Implementation Process

Up to **10 Belarusian CSOs operating outside of Belarus with ideas for communication campaigns** will be selected through this Call for Applications. The selected organisations will be invited to participate in the Communication Labs. Each organisation shall create a team of up to 3 participants – representatives of the organisation, members of their network or partner organisations, who will be involved in content development for the campaigns. Total number of participants is 30.

The Communication Labs will consist of a series of capacity building and content development activities (both online and offline), delivered by the Project team, Lab mentors and invited speakers.

Following the capacity building and mentorship sessions, participants will submit their campaign strategies to the Selection Committee. The Project's Selection Committee **will select up to 3 campaigns to receive EU support for development and launch.**

The Communication Labs will have two major stages:

- Stage 1. Communication Labs: Capacity Building, Mentorship and Content Development – **10 CSOs (May-July 2025)**
- Stage 2. Campaign Production, Launch & Evaluation – **up to 3 CSOs (September 2025 – March 2026)**

Stage 1. Communication Labs: Capacity Building, Mentorship and Content Development

1.1 Capacity Building (Offline and Online) and Networking:

A **2-day offline Kick-Off Session of the Communication Lab** will be organised in Poland. The Kick-Off Sessions are preliminary scheduled for **23-24 May 2025** (*the dates are tentative and can be rescheduled*). This event will be focused on: 1) introducing the Lab programme, pitching the campaign ideas, networking and matchmaking of participants and mentors, and 2) building the participants' understanding of effective communication campaigns and establishing their campaign objectives and goals. This practical session will be followed by individual mentoring sessions and a series of webinars.

1.2 Mentorship: Refining Communication Campaign Concepts:

The Communication Lab will continue with webinars and online teams' consultations with the Lab mentors. Each team will work with a dedicated mentor who will be helping the team to:

- Refine the concept and objectives of their proposed communication campaigns.
- Identify target audiences and key messages aligned with the overall goal.



- Develop strategies, campaign plans, and implementation timelines.
- Define campaign budgets, ensuring cost-effectiveness and resource optimisation.
- Prepare media outreach plans to maximise campaign visibility and engagement.
- Establish Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the campaigns.

The webinars and teams' individual work with mentors will be organised in several modules delivered in June-July 2025. Each module will have one or more specific deliverables – key elements of a communication campaign strategy. By the end of the Lab, the teams will combine the deliverables from each module into their draft campaign strategies, which will include the campaign implementation plan, preliminary budget, draft campaign materials, draft media plan, and a list of campaign key performance indicators (KPIs). Participating teams will submit their finalised campaign strategies to the Selection Committee.

1.3 Final Presentation and Networking

A one-day Final Event will be organised in Poland (preliminary in mid-September 2025), where participants will present their campaigns, and the Comm. Labs winners will be announced. Based on the potential impact and alignment with the Lab's overall goal, **the Selection Committee will propose up to three campaigns to be supported.** The decision of the Selection Committee will be submitted for approval to the Contracting Authority. **The selected CSOs (up to 3 organisations) will be invited for the 2nd stage of the Communication Labs.** The decision of the Contracting Authority on the CSOs and campaigns to be supported (winners), and the amount of the financial support is final.

Stage 2. Communication Labs: Campaign Production, Launch & Evaluation

The selected organisations will have 2 months to produce the materials for their communication campaign(s) under the supervision of the Project team. The Project will provide support and cover the costs of production and implementation of the selected communication campaign(s): design, printing/production, social media advertising, etc.

Upon completion of the production phase, the selected campaigns will be launched through various channels. It is expected that the launch will involve a coordinated effort across several relevant platforms, including social media platforms, mainstream media, indoor and outdoor advertisement, offline events.

The Project will implement a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the implementation and results of the communication campaigns. Key pre-defined metrics such as reach, engagement, public perception, and awareness will be measured. Feedback from target audiences and stakeholders will be collected to gather insights and lessons learned.

3. Cost of Participation

The cost of participation in the Communication Labs will be covered by the European Union.



4. Financial Support Available to Winner(s)

The type and amount of support for the winners for the production and implementation of the selected communication campaigns will be determined on a case-by-case basis depending on the needs, scope of the campaign, materials to be designed and produced, as well as in accordance with the terms of the memoranda of co-operation between the GDSI, the leader of the consortium implementing the EU-funded EaP Civil Society Facility, and the successful CSO. **The expected maximum amount of support per campaign is EUR 8,000.** The funding for production and implementation of the campaign will be transferred to the official bank account of the successful CSOs. Please note that the funds are provided in euros and not any other currency.

5. Eligibility Criteria

Participation in the Communication Labs is open to Belarusian civil society organisations operating outside of Belarus. The programme is designed to support CSOs in exile in developing and implementing impactful communication campaigns while fostering collaboration and capacity building among participants.

For organisations with team members located in Belarus, participation in the online components of the programme—such as webinars, mentoring sessions, and collaborative content development—may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Decisions regarding their involvement will take into account the overall context and the ability to ensure smooth and effective collaboration with other participants.

There are three sets of eligibility criteria, relating to:

- (1) the Lead Applicant representing a CSO.
- (2) the applying civil society organisation.
- (3) the ideas of communication campaigns.

6.1 Eligibility of the Lead Applicant (representative of the applying CSO)

- be a citizen of Belarus, in exceptional cases citizens of other EaP countries are eligible.
- be above 18 years old.
- be a current member or employee of the Belarusian civil society organisation registered outside of Belarus (a CSOs applying for this Call).
- have a relevant role and level of responsibility within the organisation which would allow him / her to lead the proposed campaign, such as a communication lead, director or manager.
- must demonstrate a clear understanding of the organisation's goals, mission, and activities, as well as its potential to engage in communication and advocacy campaigns.
- have a working knowledge of written and spoken English.
- assume responsibility and show commitment for the communication campaign idea, be able to lead the team with the skills required to develop and launch the campaign.

Please note that you will need to attach the recent CV of the Lead Applicant to the application form.



6.2 Eligibility of the Applying Civil Society Organisation

To be eligible for the Communication Labs, the applying Belarusian civil society organisation (CSO) must:

- be officially registered and operating outside of Belarus: in an EU member state or in one of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova or Ukraine).
- have a clear mandate and proven track record (at least two years) of working on issues related to social change, community engagement, or advocacy with a focus on Belarus, the EU, or EaP countries.
- commit to actively participating in all phases of the Communication Labs, including capacity building, content development, and campaign implementation.

Preference will be given to organisations that demonstrate a collaborative and inclusive approach, particularly those engaging grassroots initiatives, rural-based organisations, or organisations that have been EU grantees.

6.3 Eligibility of the Ideas of Communication Campaigns

The proposed ideas for communication campaigns may include awareness raising or advocacy campaigns delivered through social media campaigns, organisation of gatherings and events on specific topics, etc. If appropriate and relevant (including as timing), proposed communication campaigns may integrate into wider efforts at national and international level related to annual international days such Democracy Day, Labour Day, Human Rights Day, Anti-Corruption Day, the 16 days of Campaign against GBV, International Day of Volunteering, Water, Environment and Climate Change Day etc.

The topics and the formats of the campaigns should be proposed by CSOs/Lead Applicants in their applications.

- The proposed communication campaign idea should align with the overall goal of raising awareness about civil society organisations as agents of change and community mobilisers.
- The campaign idea must address a societal issue of relevance and significance for Belarusian citizens, the EU or the EaP countries, focusing on positive impact and community engagement.
- The campaign idea can generate lasting effects beyond its immediate implementation.

Applicants meeting these eligibility criteria will have the opportunity to participate in the Communication Labs, receive mentorship and capacity building, and potentially secure support for the implementation of their impactful communication campaigns.

When applying with communication campaign ideas, applicants should provide a comprehensive yet concise description of their proposed campaign. The proposal should encompass the following key components:

- **Campaign Objectives and Impact:** Clearly state the goals of the campaign. What change or impact do you aim to achieve through the proposed campaign?



- **Societal Issue:** Describe the societal issue or challenge that the campaign seeks to address. Provide context and relevance to the citizens of Belarus, Belarusians abroad or other target audiences.
- **Relevance to Civil Society:** Explain how the campaign aligns with the objectives of civil society organisations and contributes to the overall goal of raising awareness and promoting positive change.
- **Target Audience:** Define the specific target audience(s) for the campaign.
- **Novelty and Uniqueness:** Highlight any unique aspects of the campaign that set it apart and make it stand out in addressing the chosen societal issue.

It's important to note that the campaign ideas submitted during the application process are considered as initial drafts. Once selected, the chosen campaign ideas will undergo a comprehensive process of development, refinement, and improvement throughout the duration of the Labs.

Ineligible ideas of communication campaigns

The following types of campaigns are **ineligible**:

- **Political Propaganda Campaigns:** Campaigns that are designed to promote a specific political party, candidate, or ideology will not be eligible. The focus of the Communication Labs is on promoting civil society and positive societal change, rather than advancing political agendas.
- **Hate Speech or Discriminatory Campaigns:** Campaigns that promote hate speech, discrimination, or harm towards any individual, group, or community based on factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, religion, or sexual orientation will not be considered.
- **Illegal Activities or Unlawful Behaviour:** Campaign ideas that involve or encourage illegal activities, unethical behaviour, or violations of laws and regulations will not be eligible for participation. The Communication Labs aim to support initiatives that contribute to positive and legal societal change.
- **Commercial or Business Promotion Campaigns:** Campaigns that solely aim to promote a commercial product, service, or business entity are not aligned with the objectives of the Communication Labs, which focus on promoting civil society and community engagement.
- **Personal Promotion or Vanity Projects:** Campaigns that primarily seek to promote an individual's personal brand, reputation, or achievements, without a clear and meaningful societal impact, will not be eligible.
- **Negative or Destructive Messaging:** Campaign ideas that spread negativity, fear, or destructive messages without offering constructive solutions or positive engagement will not be considered.

Target audience (TA)

The campaigns to be developed within the framework of the Communication Labs are expected to target one of three types of audiences, reflecting the realities of Belarusian civil society and its diverse outreach needs. These audiences are:

1. People in immigration, relocation, exile, or migrants (diaspora) from Belarus.



2. People inside Belarus.
3. EU stakeholders.

6. How to Apply and the Procedures to Follow

To apply for the Communication Labs, the applicants need to:

1. Check the eligibility criteria.
2. Collect all necessary supporting documents as described above.
3. Fill in the **online application form** at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CommLab2025> and submit it before 23.00 (CET) on the 7th of April 2025.

Number of applications per applicants

The applicant may **not** submit more than one application for this Call for applications.

Language Requirements:

- **Language of Application:** English is the designated language for all aspects of the application process and communication with the EaP Civil Society Facility team (the organisers). This includes submitting the application form, correspondence with the organisers, and participation in any online sessions or webinars related to the Communication Labs.
- **Campaign Language:** The language of the campaign materials—whether written content, visuals, or audiovisual elements—should be tailored to the target audience of the campaign. To ensure the messages resonate effectively, materials should primarily be developed in the language(s) most accessible and relevant to the intended audience, ensuring clarity, understanding, and meaningful engagement.
- **Language of Communication with Teams and Mentors:** While the application and formal communication should be conducted in English, communication between participating teams and assigned mentors can be facilitated in the Belarusian language (whenever it is possible). This approach is intended to create a comfortable and conducive environment for meaningful interaction and guidance.

Questions and requests may be sent by e-mail no later than five working days before the deadline for the submission of applications to dc@eapcivilsociety.eu.

To ensure the equal treatment of applicants, the Selection Committee cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of applicants or proposed communication campaign ideas.

No individual replies will be given to questions. All questions and answers as well as other important notices to applicants will be published at <https://eapcivilsociety.eu>, as appropriate. It is therefore advisable to consult the above-mentioned website regularly in order to be informed of the questions and answers published.



7. Steps and Criteria for Evaluation of Applications

All applications will be assessed according to the following steps and criteria.

Step 1: Administrative Checks of Submitted Applications

The following will be assessed:

- **Compliance with the submission deadline:** If the deadline has not been met, the application will be rejected automatically.
- **Application Completeness:** Ensure that all required sections of the application form are properly filled out.
- **Eligibility Check:** Verify that the Lead Applicant, applying CSO, and proposed campaign idea meet the specified eligibility criteria.

If any of the requested information is missing or is incorrect, the application may be rejected on that **sole** basis and the application will not be evaluated further. The applications that pass the first administrative check will be further evaluated.

Step 2: Evaluation of CSO and Lead Applicant Capacity and Experience

The quality of the applications, including the capacity of the applicants, will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria in the evaluation grid below:

- **CSO Experience and Capacity:** Assess the applying CSO's track record, experience, and capacity in implementing relevant projects or initiatives.
- **Lead Applicant's Role:** Evaluate the Lead Applicant's role, responsibilities, and alignment with the organisation's goals.
- **Commitment to Participation:** Consider the CSO's and applicant's commitment and ability to actively engage in all stages of the Communication Labs.

Step 3: Evaluation of Communication Campaign Ideas

The communication campaign ideas will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria in the evaluation grid below:

- **Relevance to Objectives and Priorities:** Assess how well the campaign idea aligns with the EU priorities and the overall goal of the Comm.Labs
- **Societal Impact and Clarity of Problem Definition:** Evaluate the potential societal impact of the campaign idea and connection between the identified problem and the proposed solution.
- **Long-term Effect:** Consider the potential for lasting impact, such as changes in behaviour, attitudes, or policy outcomes, beyond the immediate campaign timeline.
- **Feasibility:** Asses how realistic and achievable the proposed campaign is in terms of its timeline, resources, budget, and capacity of the implementing organisation.



Scoring and Evaluation Grid:

Applicants will be scored based on the above criteria, with a maximum total score of 45 points. The evaluation process will be transparent, fair, and objective, ensuring that selected campaign ideas have the potential to create meaningful impact and contribute to the objectives of the Communication Labs.

Applications will be examined and evaluated by the Selection Committee with the possible assistance of external assessors. Once the Selection Committee has completed its work, the list of applicants to be invited to the Communication Labs is submitted for approval to the relevant EC authorities.

The evaluation criteria are divided into headings and subheadings. Each subheading will be given a score between 0 and 5 as follows: 0 = no valid response / no relevance; 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.

Subheading	Max. Scores	
1. CSO and Lead Applicant Experience and Capacity	Sub-score	15
1.1 Relevant Experience: To what extent does the CSO's previous experience align with the theme of the proposed campaign?	5	
1.2 Position and responsibility: How central is the Lead Applicant's role within the CSO, and how does it correlate with the objectives of the proposed campaign?	5	
1.3 Motivation and commitment to participate in the Communication Labs	5	
2. Relevance and Impact of the Campaign Idea		30
2.1 Alignment with Objectives: To what extent does the proposed campaign idea align with the goals of the Communication Labs and its focus on raising awareness and promoting the work of civil society?	5	
2.2 Relevance to EU Priorities: How well does the campaign idea align with the EU's post-2020 priorities for the Eastern Partnership , such as democracy, rule of law, human rights, gender equality, climate action, social inclusion, etc.?	5	
2.2 Addressing Societal Needs: How well does the campaign idea target and address specific societal or community needs?	5	
2.3 Clarity of Problem Definition: How clearly and strategically are the specific needs or problems to be addressed defined within the campaign idea? Is there a clear connection between the identified problem and the proposed solution?	5	
2.4 Long-Term Effects: To what extent does the proposed campaign demonstrate potential for the expected impact, such as changes in behaviour, attitudes, or policy outcomes, beyond the immediate campaign timeline?	5	
2.5 How realistic and achievable is the proposed campaign in terms of its timeline, resources, budget, and capacity of the implementing organisation? Does the applicant demonstrate a clear plan for implementation?	5	
TOTAL SCORE		45

The Selection Committee will shortlist up to 10 best scoring applications. The shortlisted participants will be informed by email of the evaluation results and invited to join the Communication Labs (see Section 2 "Communication Lab Implementation Process" for more details).



8. Intellectual Property Rights and Liabilities

Authors of the winning ideas of communication campaigns keep the intellectual property rights and subsequent liabilities with regards to the developed products, including the liability to observe international and national copyright laws.

9. EU Visibility

The CSOs receiving the EU funding must take all necessary steps to publicise the fact that the European Union has financed the selected communication campaigns except in cases where a visibility waiver is granted due to safety or effectiveness considerations. While implementing the selected communication campaigns, the CSOs receiving the EU funding must comply with the objectives and guarantee the visibility of the EU financing as specified in the Communication and Visibility Requirements for EU External Actions (https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/knowledge-hub/communicating-and-raising-eu-visibility-guidance-external-actions_en). The selected CSOs will be provided with support from the EaP Civil Society Facility project team in complying with the EU visibility requirements, and furthermore, will be required to acquire prior approval from the EaP Civil Society Facility project team for use of any visibility materials.

10. Complaints

At any time during the process of applying for the Communication Labs, applicants may raise an issue or complaint. Complaints should be made in writing and submitted to the EaP Civil Society Facility team at dc@eapcivilsociety.eu with the subject title 'complaint'. A response will be sent within 10 working days. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response, the matter will be formally discussed with the representatives of the European Union and the team will respond accordingly.

11. Tentative Timetable of the Communication Labs

Steps	Timeframe
Launch of the Call for Applications for CSOs	17 March 2025
Deadline to request clarifications on the Call	1 April 2025
Deadline for receiving applications	7 April 2025
Notification of selected applicants	30 April 2025
Communication Lab: 2-days Kick-off event	23-24 May 2025 (TBC)
Communication Lab: participants work on their communication campaigns with mentors + online capacity building sessions	June – July 2025
Communication Lab: submission of campaigns by participants for evaluation	12 August 2025 (TBC)
Communication Lab: Final events, announcement of campaigns to be supported	Mid/end September 2025



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Communication Lab: finalisation and production of comm. materials for selected campaigns	September-October 2025 (to be adapted depending on campaigns selected)
Selected Campaigns' Launch & Promotion	November 2025 – March 2026 (to be adapted depending on campaigns selected)
Monitoring and evaluating the campaigns	March 2026