



**Connecting
Spheres**

Call for Grant proposals for Civil Society Organisations



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Within the Framework of the Action

*Connecting Spheres: Strengthening CSOs and Networks to
Protect GBV Survivors in all their Diversity*

GA 101139923

Co-funded by the European Union

**OXFAM ITALIA
FONDAZIONE GIACOMO BRODOLINI
OXFAM ITALIA INTERCULTURA**

invite organizations to submit project proposals

Annexes

Annex 1 - Application Form

Annex 2 - Budget

Annex 3 - Eligibility Checklist

Management and Reporting Guidelines

Summary

FOREWORD	4
1. CONTEXT.....	6
2. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION.....	7
3. IMPLEMENTATION MODE	10
4. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	12
4.1 Organisations	12
4.2 Eligibility of project proposals.....	15
4.3 Eligibility of activities	16
4.4 Eligibility of costs	17
5. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA.....	19
6. DOCUMENTS SUPPLEMENTING THE PROJECT PROPOSAL	20
7. ASSESSMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS	21
8. CAPACITY BUILDING	22
9. PERSONAL DATA PROCESSING POLICY	23
10. CONTACTS AND FAQs.....	25
11. ANNEXES	25
12. APPLICABLE LAW AND JURISDICTION.....	25

FOREWORD

This call for proposals and its annexes are part of the Action “**Connecting Spheres: Strengthening CSOs and Networks to Protect GBV Survivors in all their Diversity**” funded by the European Union within the CERV - Citizen, Equality, Rights and Value programme and, more specifically, by means of the CERV-2023-DAPHNE call.

Implemented by Oxfam Italia, Oxfam Italia Intercultura e Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini, Connecting Spheres **intends to strengthen human rights associations, LGBTQIA+ associations, anti-violence, anti-trafficking centres, children rights’ associations and other grass-rooted CSOs that are at the forefront in the fight against inequality and violence affecting LGBTQIA+ people in Italy** (with scale effect at European level) **to effectively prevent and respond to gender-based violence, contributing to a fairer society in which LGBTQIA+ people live free from violence across all spheres of life**¹.

The action includes: (1) the provision of grants to finance project proposals as described in this call; (2) the provision of a capacity-building programme to strengthen CSOs capacities according to their real needs.

In this Call for proposals, the Action “Connecting Spheres” provides a total value of **1,000,000 EUR** allocated to at least **25 projects** in Italy and Europe. In addition to Italian CSOs, at least 5 CSOs from at least 3 other European countries will be supported.

Keywords and Acronyms

- Co-applicant: An organisation other than the Lead applicant, responsible for implementing one or more of the proposed activities and managing an implementation budget. It shall fulfil the same eligibility criteria as the Lead applicant. A maximum of 2 Co-applicants are admitted for each proposal.
- CSOs: Civil Society Organisations
- EU: European Union
- FGB: Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini
- Grant Beneficiaries: The lead applicant of the consortium or the applicant (in the case of a single applicant), along with co-applicant(s), who are selected as grant recipients under this call and will sign the agreement with Oxfam Italia (OIT).
- GBV: Gender-based Violence
- Lead applicant (proposing entity, or applicant): the organisation which submits the

¹ The action is particularly targeted at small and medium-sized grassroots CSOs, for example: LGBTQIA+ rights organizations (organizations whose main mandate and mission is to support LGBTQIA+’s rights and gender equality and/or whose management staff is made up by at least 50% of LGBTQIA+ people); anti-trafficking and anti-violence centres supporting an inclusive protection response for LGBTQIA+ people survivors of gender-based violence; women-led organizations working on GBV prevention and response and gender equality (organizations whose management staff is made up by at least 50% of women); under-funded organizations working on gender-based violence prevention and response and gender equality (organisations that are not already receiving significant funding, grassroots organisations and/or located in remote areas); organizations with a gender expertise working in under-served and under-funded areas to promote LGBTQIA+ rights, children’s rights and/or human rights in general, social and educative services for vulnerable groups, community based organizations; organizations working with the youth (15-24 y) and with a gender expertise; organizations working with migrants and refugees (reception centres for asylum seekers and refugees, migrants associations) and with a gender expertise; youth- led organizations working with youth on gender equality.

application for a grant. In case of a partnership/consortium, the lead applicant is the responsible entity and must be the only one in the Consortium authorised to submit a proposal. If awarded the grant, it is responsible for implementing activities, submitting periodic reports, monitoring, and communicating with Oxfam and FGB.

- LGBTQIA+ : Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersexual, Asexual people. The character "+" indicates all non-heterosexual and non-binary gender identities and sexual orientations not covered by the acronym letters.

- OII: Oxfam Italia Intercultura

- OIT: Oxfam Italia

- Selection Committee: it is responsible for assigning points and evaluating the submitted proposals based on pre-defined criteria. It is made up of experts belonging to the consortium staff of the Connecting Spheres Action (OIT, OII, FGB: 4 members) and coming from outside (1 "Gender Expert" recruited ad hoc) to facilitate the decision-making process.

- Stream: Three areas of actions (services, training, advocacy) that contribute to reaching the general objective. The Organisations taking part in the grant mechanism shall classify their proposals in one or more Stream(s).

- TSEs: Third Sector Entities

- In this Call for Proposals, we use both terms "survivor" and "victim", defined as follows: A survivor of gender-based violence is someone who has experienced violence, harm and injustice due to their gender but focuses on recovery and resilience. The term highlights the individual's strength and empowerment as they move beyond trauma and regain control of their life. A victim of gender-based violence refers to someone who has suffered harm, with the focus on the injustice and the damage experienced. It is important to recognize that individuals may identify as both victims and survivors at different stages of their recovery from gender-based violence.

1. CONTEXT

According to ILGA (Report 2022), in Europe significant gaps remains in terms of fundamental **protection of LGBTQIA+ people against discrimination and violence** in nearly half of the EU countries. Currently, 20 countries out of 49 still have no protection system against hate crime based on sexual orientation, while 28 countries have no protection system against violence based on gender identity. According to the same report, despite in Italy there have been improvements in promoting and protecting the rights of the LGBTQIA+ community in the fields of civil society and freedom of expression, **there are still many steps to be taken in the area of promoting equality and non-discrimination, family law and legislation against defamation, violence and hate crimes**. In 2018, the Italian Parliament discussed a Bill aimed to prohibit any form of organization, association, movement or group whose objectives include discrimination or violence based on transphobia or homophobia. The Bill was not approved, leaving Italy without a legislative framework tackling discriminations targeting LGBTQIA+ people. Data at Italian and EU level on violence against LGBTQIA+ people are not collected and analysed systematically, so that the protection response and related policies are poorly fed by evidence. According to Omofobia.org, from May 2021 to April 2022, 148 people reported suffering **homophobic violence** in Italy. The average age of those who experience these incidents is falling. In the age group of 21-30-year-olds, there were more cases of physically aggressive violence. In addition, according to Omofobia.org, in Italy all trans people have experienced transphobia at least once in their life. The National Observatory on Lesbophobia published its report documenting one lesbophobic hate crime per month between 2011 and 2021. In its monitoring activity, the feminist organisation *Non Una Di Meno* identified 112 lesbophobic and transphobic murders nationwide in 2022. These serious situations of harassment, violence and abuse are also reported by the Gay Help Line (a national LGBTQIA+ organisation): cases of domestic violence increased from 35% in 2020 to 42% in 2021. These data concern in particular young people between 13 and 29 years of age. 20% among those who asked for help also needed to be hosted in shelters dedicated to LGBTQIA+ people, which are not sufficient to cover all requests and are concentrated in the Northern area of the country. Increasing violence on LGBTQIA+ people shows that the protection system requires **additional resources to meet the needs of survivors in terms of availability of secure/safe spaces, and additional competences of the protection system to identify and deliver the necessary services**. In 2022, the toll-free number managed by the Gay Help Line received 21,000 emergency calls. 41.6% of the total number of cases suffered homo-transphobic violence in the family after coming out; 31.6% of the victims are young people between 11 and 26 years old. Considering also intersectional needs of **LGBTQIA+ people, migrants and refugees** arriving in Italy are exposed to additional risks both during the journey and in the country of asylum. They often hide their identity or sexual orientation to avoid abuse, but this can make it difficult to be identified and provide asylum and humanitarian service. In Italy, the Commission for the recognition of international protection do not release data on the reasons why people apply for asylum. Nevertheless,

among the 10 largest nationalities for asylum applications in Italy in 2016, 8 of them have very harsh legislation against homosexual and transgender people. Moreover, the Italian reception system does not provide protected environments and specific paths for LGBTQIA+ migrants, not recognizing their needs and vulnerabilities (UNHCR, Periodic Review of Italy, 2018). In this environment still characterized by polarized ideology positions, the voices of LGBTQIA+ communities and their capacity to influence approaches and policies are easily undermined by opposing ideological currents obstructing the results of the advocacy process (Council of Europe 2021). The situation is made even worse by the difficulties in the access to funding opportunities which prevent LGBTQIA+ associations from strengthening their role at political and social level and from promoting a counter-narrative to ideological and populist movements. Based on this, and on the recommendations from frontline operators, activists and institutional representatives, Connecting Spheres activities intend to support CSOs in initiatives to challenge the present situation at country level and provide direct support to GBV survivors or potential victims (**Stream 1**); strengthen their work on eradicating gender stereotypes (**Stream 2**); and expand their advocacy, lobbying, and communication action to foster protection policies to prevent discrimination and violence against LGBTQIA+ people, raise survivors' voices, and strengthen the protagonism of survivors, activists, and the involved associations (**Stream 3**). Recognizing the importance of building an alliance across the Europe and of promoting a broad movement of activists that tackle violence against LGBTQIA+ people countries at a systemic level, in Stream 3, CSOs are encouraged to involve European partners to enhance and exchange best practices.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

The aim of this Call for proposals is to support initiatives to effectively prevent and respond to gender-based violence towards LGBTQIA+ people, considering the specific needs of migrants, refugees, trans women, girls, young people, people with disabilities, and those living in remote and peripheral areas.

The activity streams are as follows:

1. **Strengthening support and referral services**, and the reporting system for LGBTQIA+ survivors or at risk of gender-based violence. More specifically, projects referring to this Stream will contribute to creating and/or strengthening safe spaces for LGBTQIA+ survivors; establish or improve referral systems for LGBTQIA+ people who are victims/survivors or at risk of gender-based violence; strengthen access to appropriate protection, health, legal, and psychological support services by means of cases management, training of professionals, reinforcement of existing networks, and coordination of service providers in the GBV response. Specific actions can be implemented to increase LGBTQIA+ people's and the community's awareness of

available services, and regional and national meetings and events can be organized to share best practices among CSOs working on these issues.

2. **Transforming the social norms that perpetuate gender-based violence** and eradicating gender stereotypes. More specifically, projects referring to this Stream will actively engage community members in primary and secondary violence prevention, in an intersectional perspective, to challenge gender and social norms that perpetuate GBV against LGBTQIA+ people. LGBTQIA+ people and activists will be actors of change in local and regional contexts to promote a change in attitudes and transform social norms. . t Teachers, educators, journalists, human resources managers, and other relevant local stakeholders, along with youth and civil society in general (trying to engage mostly men and boys) will be positively influenced on gender equality and LGBTQIA+ people's rights.
3. **Strengthening the development and implementation of national and international legislation and policies** on gender-based violence (lobbying and advocacy). More specifically, projects referring to this Stream will collect and analyse data on gender-based violence and abuse against LGBTQIA+ people with a focus on the most vulnerable people to understand the community's perception of GBV and improve procedures, protection systems, and laws that prevent the full enjoyment of LGBTQIA+ people's rights. Testimonies will be collected to advocate against violations of LGBTQIA+ people's rights under national and EU laws. Various learning products will be disseminated to document the impact of the project, to campaign for a political and social change, and to support advocacy activities to amend national and international legislation as well as protection and GBV response procedures. Decision makers, services providers, the academic world, and international networks for GBV prevention will be empowered through dissemination of these good practices, the collected results and lessons learnt, and the policy recommendations developed at European level involving CSOs in Italy and in other European countries. Under this Stream, Italian organisations will be encouraged to engage partners in other European countries to cooperate in the implementation of policies, campaigns and communication activities to influence and transform protection systems at the multinational level, valorising good practices and promoting their exchange, in order to broaden their impact on a wider scale.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of illustrative activities that can be developed and implemented by applicants under the three Streams:

Stream 1:

- Provision of gender-sensitive support services and/or set up of referral mechanism for LGBTQIA+ persons, such as support services tailored to the specific needs of victims, including specific medical and psychological support, survivor/victim-centred and

trauma-informed services, access to national helplines, access to justice, increased accessibility of shelters, and comprehensive support for victims of sexual harassment at work.

- Training of professionals and frontline staff working with survivors or people at risk of GBV, supervision of and support to frontline workers to establish trust relationships with survivors, etc.

Stream 2:

- Training, awareness-raising and communication/information's activities to combat stereotypes and the root causes of GBV against LGBTQIA+ persons, e.g. targeted to businesses, journalists, media managers, teachers, school staff, educational institutions, sport centres, and the general public.
- Community mobilisation with direct involvement of the target groups (e.g., working with LGBTQIA+ survivors and/or activists, cultural mediators, key stakeholders, etc.).
- Awareness-raising on gender stereotypes as root causes of gender-based violence, including by involving men and boys, with a focus on gender-based violence against LGBTQIA+ people.

Stream 3

- Provision of free advice, counselling services, watchdog and monitoring activities on EU and international policies in the field of preventing and combating violence against LGBTQIA+ persons.
- Lobbying/advocacy to influence decision-making processes and policies, including revision/adopting/adoption of policies and legislation in the field of preventing and combating GBV against LGBTQIA+ persons.
- Research and analysis aimed at informing policymaking at European and national level, development of tools and standards to support European policies and actions in the field of preventing and combating GBV against LGBTQIA+ persons.
- Promoting the implementation of adopted laws in the field of preventing and combating GBV against LGBTQIA+ people (including minors), and of regulations and Court cases.

Cross-stream activities:

- Strengthening networks and partnerships among CSOs in the field of preventing and combating GBV and/or violence against minors, considering the needs of LGBTQIA+ people.
- Coordination and strategic cooperation between CSOs and other stakeholders, and public or private sector entities at national and international level.

LOCATIONS

Projects referring to Stream 1 and 2 shall be implemented in Italy; projects or activities

referring to Stream 3 will be implemented in Italy and in Europe². The implementation in peripheral, suburban, and rural areas with less protection services and funding opportunities will be considered a plus in the assessment of project proposals.

TARGET

The following is non-exhaustive list of identified Connecting Spheres targets that the awarded projects are expected to collectively contribute to:

Stream 1	1,200	LGBTQIA+ people (migrants and refugees, transgender persons, youth, people living in poverty, social exclusion, and with disabilities) supported through more inclusive services tailored to their needs and referral activities.
	1,500	professionals and operators trained and equipped with appropriate skills to guarantee a prompt, integrated, and effective support to LGBTQIA+ people who are at risk, victims, or survivors of gender-based violence.
Stream 2	5,000	women, men, and non-binary persons, aware of LGBTQIA+ rights in order to eradicate gender stereotypes and promote equal rights. .
Stream 3	200	activists supported and strengthened as actors of change.
	10	protocols, policy documents developed/produced
	1,000	policymakers and public institutions' representatives empowered to defend and promote LGBTQIA+ rights and to eradicate GBV
	25,000	people informed and empowered on protection measures for LGBTQIA+ persons

3. IMPLEMENTATION MODE

The total value of project proposals funding is **1,000,000 EUR** divided as follows:

Stream 1	Stream 2	Stream 3	# Grants	Total amount
Up to 500,000 €	Up to 250,000 €	Up to 250,000 €	Min. 25	1,000,000 €
Italy	Italy	Italy and Europe	Each grant is between 6,000 and 60,000 EUR.	

The call will be open for 12 months from its publishing date. Project proposals can be submitted throughout the years for one or more Streams, with three internal deadlines (each of them with specific features):

²CERV Eligible Countries: EU member countries including overseas countries and territories (OCTs) or non-EU countries adhering to the CERV programme ([list of participating countries](#)). In total, under this Line of Action, it is expected to fund actions implemented in Italy and in at least 3 other European countries.

Proposals submission deadlines	Date	Max. proposal duration	Total funds allocated to each deadline
1st deadline	January 31, 2025	18 months (min. 6)	500,000 EUR
2nd deadline	May 31, 2025	14 months (min. 6)	350,000 EUR
3rd deadline	September 30, 2025	10 months (min.6)	150,000 EUR

During the assessment and awarding procedure, the Selection Committee can choose a different fund allocation if the number of valid proposals submitted for each Stream is insufficient, or for any other reason arising from the context. In addition, in the event of remaining funds to be allocated, eligible preselected organisations may be asked to reschedule activities and budgets before the contract is signed, based on the ranking list and available funds.

Multiple project proposals

At each internal deadline, applicants can only submit one project proposal either as Lead applicant or Co-applicant. A Lead applicant cannot be a Co-applicant of a different proposal, and vice-versa. Each applicant, either Lead applicant or Co-applicant, cannot obtain more than one grant under this call. Organizations that are not selected during the first or second assessment round may submit a new proposal by the following deadline.

Grant value

Grants will be assigned based on the CSOs/consortium's average income of the previous 2 years (maximum 40% of said income). The grant value **may in no case be lower than 6,000 EUR nor exceed 60,000 EUR**. The term "Average income" refers to the last two financial statements approved, and indicates the average total income obtained from whatever source and making up the yearly income statement and/or statement of accounts and/or balance sheet. It also includes financial revenues (e.g. interest, coupons) or real estate revenues (e.g. rents). For example:

- To apply for a 60,000 EUR grant, the average total income of the last two years must be at least 150,000 EUR
- To apply for a 40,000 EUR grant, the average total income of the last two years must be at least 100,000 EUR
- To apply for a 6,000 EUR grant, the average total income of the last two years must be at least 15,000 EUR

In the case of a consortium (1 Lead applicant and 1/2 Co-applicants), the total income of the member organisations will be considered, i.e. their cumulative value, so that smaller organisations can also implement larger projects in partnership. However, a proportional breakdown principle will be adopted whereby the budget share managed by each consortium organisation shall not exceed 40% of its average income of the last two years. Example of a consortium consisting of 2 organisations:

- If they have an average income of 50,000 EUR and 15,000 EUR respectively over the last two years, for a total 65,000 EUR, the consortium can apply for a total grant of 26,000 EUR. The first organisation will manage 20,000 EUR and the second 6,000 EUR.

4. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Eligibility criteria are essential criteria that proposing organisations (Lead applicants and Co-applicants) must fulfil in order for their proposal to be considered for assessment. Organisations that do not fulfil or do not comply with one of the eligibility criteria will not be included in the final evaluation. Eligibility criteria pertain to:

- Eligibility of **organisations**
- Eligibility of **proposals**
- Eligibility of **costs**

4.1 Organisations

Organisations may apply as single applicants or in partnerships, and in different roles (for more details see Section 1 of the attached **Management and Reporting Guidelines**, "1. Lead Applicant, Co-applicant, and Associated partner roles", page 1):

- **Lead applicant** (or single applicant or proposing entity): the organisation which submits the application for a grant. In case of a partnership/consortium, the lead applicant is the responsible entity and must be the only one in the Consortium authorised to submit a proposal. If awarded the grant, it is responsible for implementing activities, submitting periodic reports, monitoring, and communicating with Oxfam and FGB.
- **Co-applicant**: An organisation other than the Lead applicant, responsible for implementing one or more of the proposed activities and managing an implementation budget. It shall fulfil the same eligibility criteria as the Lead applicant. A maximum of 2 Co-applicants are admitted for each proposal.
- **Associated partner**: An organisation (e.g. a non-profit-making organisation, public body, or university) other than the Lead applicant and the Co-applicant that is not subject to the same eligibility criteria as the aforementioned but shall participate in the project activities without autonomously managing any budget share (that is, without receiving funding nor incurring expenses in its own name). Costs incurred by Associated partners CANNOT be classified as eligible costs. Associated partners may participate because they are interested in contributing to the objectives of the action, or to gain visibility, or because they are engaged in an ongoing cooperation with one of the partners. Associated partners are no consortium members. The Lead applicant is responsible towards OIT, OII, and FGB for the work performed by the Associated partners.

Applicants shall fulfil the following eligibility criteria, each according to their role. The fulfilment of eligibility criteria must be declared in the dedicated Checklist attached to this Call (Annex 3) and can be verified in the Due diligence phase before signing the Agreement with the Grantees.

b) The Lead Applicant/Single Applicant:

- Must have been legally established for at least two years when submitting the project proposal.

- Must be a non-corporate Third Sector Entity (TSE) as established by Italian Legislative Decree 117/2017 - Third Sector Code as amended, or a Foundation, a recognised or non-recognised association, a committee, a non-TS entity (Articles 14-42 of the Italian Civil Code).
- Must not be a beneficiary, Lead applicant, Co-applicant, or Associated partner in a project funded by the Connecting Sphere programme GA101139923, or a recipient of contributions or grants from OIT, OII or FGB for projects/programmes/initiatives launched before the submission of the project proposal.
- Must have its registered office in Italy.
- Must have operational capacity in Italy and optionally in other European countries.
- Must be directly responsible for presenting and implementing the project as well as for reporting, monitoring, and evaluating activities without acting as an intermediary.
- Must not meet any of the following exclusion criteria:
 - o grounds for exclusion pursuant to Article 136³ and 141⁴ of the [EU Financial Regulation 2018/1046](#);
 - o connection, affiliation or other relationship with political organisations or political parties;
 - o conflict of interest with OIT, OII, FGB, consortium partners or prospective suppliers.
- Must be a small or medium-sized organisation with an average income below or equal to 500,000 EUR in the last 2 years.
- Must have fulfilled its obligations regarding the payment of social security contributions and/or taxes in accordance with the legal provisions in force in the relevant country, or be fully tax exempt (in this case, it shall specify the reason for being legally exempt).
 - c) The Co-applicant:
 - *Must have been legally established for at least two years when submitting the project proposal.*
 - *Must be a non-corporate Third Sector Entity (TSE) as established by Legislative Decree 117/2017 - Third Sector Code as amended, or a Foundation, a recognised or non-recognised association, a committee, a non-TS entity (Articles 14-39 of the Italian Civil Code); or in case of a non-Italian entity, legally registered as a non-profit-making third-sector entity (e.g, a CSO) under its respective national law and/or EU law.*
 - *Must not be a beneficiary, Lead applicant, Co-applicant, or Associated partner in a project funded by the Connecting Sphere programme GA101139923, or a recipient of contributions or grants from OIT, OII or FGB for projects/programmes/initiatives launched before the submission of the project proposal.*
 - *Must have its registered office in Italy (Streams 1 and 2) or in one of the CERV⁵ eligible*

³"Exclusion criteria and decisions on exclusions" page 166 ff

⁴"Rejection from an award procedure" page 177 ff

⁵EU member countries including overseas countries and territories (OCTs) or non-EU countries adhering to the

- countries (Stream 3).*
- *Must have operational capacity in Italy (Streams 1 and 2) or in one or more European country(ies) (Stream 3).*
 - *Must not meet any of the following exclusion criteria:*
 - o grounds for exclusion pursuant to Article 136⁷ and 141⁸ of the EU Financial Regulation 2018/1046;
 - o connection, affiliation or other relationship with political organisations or political parties;
 - o conflict of interest with OIT, OII, FGB, consortium partners or prospective suppliers.
 - *Must be a small or medium-sized organisation with an average income below or equal to 500,000 EUR in the last 2 years.*
 - *Must have fulfilled its obligations regarding the payment of social security contributions and/or taxes in accordance with the legal provisions in force in the relevant country, or be fully tax exempt (in this case, it shall specify the reason for being legally exempt).*

In addition, at least one of the consortium members (Lead applicant and/or Co-applicant) must demonstrate at least 2 years' experience in at least one of the following fields:

- o **prevention and combating gender violence**
- o **promotion and protection of women's rights**
- o **promotion and protection of LGBTQIA+ people's rights**

d) The Associated partner:

- *Must be a non-profit-making entity (a non-corporate TSE as per Leg. Decree 117/2017, a Foundation, a recognised or non-recognised association, a committee, a non-TS entity, a public body, a university, a research centre).*
- *Must not be a beneficiary, Lead applicant, Co-applicant, or Associated partner in a project funded by the Connecting Sphere programme GA101139923, a recipient of contributions or grants from OIT, OII or FGB for projects/programmes/initiatives launched before the submission of the project proposal;*
- *Must not meet any of the following exclusion criteria:*
 - o grounds for exclusion pursuant to Article 136⁵ and 141⁶ of the EU Financial Regulation 2018/1046.
 - o connection, affiliation or other relationship with political organisations or political parties.

CERV programme ([list of participating countries](#)).

⁶CERV Eligible Countries: EU member countries including overseas countries and territories (OCTs) or non-EU countries adhering to the CERV programme ([list of participating countries](#)).

⁷ "Exclusion criteria and decisions on exclusions", page 166 ff.

⁸ "Rejection from an award procedure" page 177 ff.

- conflict of interest with OIT, OII, FGB, consortium partners or prospective suppliers.

When submitting its proposals, the Associated partner shall:

- Fill in a section of the project document (Narrative Application Form - Annex 1) specifying its experience in the intervention area and its role within the proposal (Section B, par. 1.7).
- Certify the fulfilment of eligibility criteria by filling in and signing the Checklist (Annex 3).

4.2 Eligibility of project proposals

To be eligible for assessment, the submitted projects must meet the following requirements:

#	Criteria	Description	Stream 1	Stream 2	Stream 3
1	Duration	The project has a planned duration that meets the scheduled deadlines.	For all Streams: 1st deadline Min. 6 - Max. 18 months 2nd deadline Min. 6 - Max. 14 months 3rd deadline Min. 6 - Max. 10 months		
2	Consortium	Min. and max. number of applicants for each proposal.	Max. 3 applicants (1 Lead applicant e 2 Co-applicants)		
3	Number of submitted proposals	Only one proposal submitted for each intermediate deadline. Only one funded proposal.	At each intermediate deadline, applicants can only submit a proposal either as Lead applicant or as Co-applicant. A Lead applicant cannot be a Co-applicant of a different proposal, and vice-versa. Each applicant (either Lead applicant or Co-applicant) cannot obtain more than one grant under this Call.		
4	Package content	The project proposal is complete with (only) all required	Annex 1 - Application Form Annex 2 - Budget Annex 3 - Eligibility Checklist Last 2 approved Financial Statements		

	annexes, duly completed and signed as per the call for proposals.	2 CVs of staff members involved in the project Letters of support to the project from institutions, and a Letter of Undertaking to form a consortium signed by the Lead applicant and Co-applicant, may be attached to the call documents.	
5	Submission	The proposal was submitted within the deadline (date and time) via the online form.	1. Submitted by 31/01/2025 2. Submitted by 31/05/2025 3. Submitted by 30/09/2025
6	Implementation area	Activity implementation in the eligible countries	Italy Italy Europe (CERV Eligible Countries) ⁹
7	Budget	The proposal complies with budget restrictions indicated in section 3 and 4.4 of the Call and in the Annexes (Annex 2 - Budget; Management and Reporting Guidelines)	- Min. contribution 6,000 EUR - Max. contribution 60,000 EUR - The requested contribution does not exceed 40% of the SCO/Consortium's average income of the last 2 years - Max 10% indirect costs/Max 80% human resources/Max 5% renovation of dedicated spaces - Eligible costs

4.3 Eligibility of activities

The activities contained in the project proposals shall:

- Be **directly implemented by the Consortium** (Lead applicant, Co-applicant, Associated partner) > no additional funding to third parties is permitted.

⁹CERV Eligible Countries: EU member countries including overseas countries and territories (OCTs) or non-EU countries adhering to the CERV programme ([list of participating countries](#)).

- Be performed within the **implementation** period of the project.
- Be **reasonable**, justified, and in compliance with the requirements of sound financial management (economy and efficiency).
- Comply with **applicable law** in the relevant country.
- Be **in line with the objectives and Streams** set forth in paragraph 1.

Par. 4 "Description of the Action" provides an illustrative list of possible activities. In addition, other activities may be regarded as eligible by the Selection Committee provided that they contribute to reaching the project goals and meet the aforementioned criteria.

The following activities are always **ineligible**:

- Individual sponsorships for taking part in workshops, seminars, conferences, and congresses.
- Actions involving only or primarily individual scholarships for study or training courses.
- Support to political parties' campaigns and activities.

Mutual training support (capacity sharing)

Whenever possible, organisations having training experience and capacity and/or technical expertise in one of the Streams shall be invited to support the development of technical capacities of other organisations involved, either by providing training (capacity sharing) or by building partnerships. If provided, this training activity can be included in the requested contribution.

4.4 Eligibility of costs

In order to be eligible and **accepted in the assessment phase**, the proposed costs **must fulfil the following criteria**:

- Be incurred by the consortium members (Lead applicant and Co-applicant) mentioned in the project document > no funding to third parties is permitted.
- Be necessary for project implementation and clearly connected to project activities and the achievement of goals.
- Be reasonable, justified, and in compliance with the requirements of sound financial management (economy and efficiency).
- Be clearly stated in the Project Budget (Annex 2) as per the Budget form instructions.

Ineligible costs

The following costs are not eligible:

- Costs related to real estate refurbishment not exclusively pertaining to the project.
- Financial contributions (e.g. for funding other projects or setting up companies or other organisations).
- Costs for the creation of the organisation's new websites not exclusively dedicated to project activities.
- Financial costs, bank fees not exclusively pertaining to the project, agency fees,

- amortisation, contract registration fees, taxes, leasing.
- Food vouchers, donations and monetary prizes, and more generally, all expenses not supported by a payment receipt.
 - General expenses (e.g. office rent, utilities, stationery, condominium, etc.) other than those included in indirect costs (max. 10% of direct costs).
 - Any costs not implying a monetary disbursement (e.g. valorisation of goods and services and of voluntary work, buildings provided for project activities).
 - Costs for the purchase and/or construction of real estate infrastructure.
 - Lump sum reimbursements to volunteers pursuant to Art. 17 par. 4 of the Third Sector Code
 - Travel expenses (transport, food and lodging) of persons not involved in project initiatives.
 - Expenses reported and reimbursed in other project initiatives and/or to other funders.
 - Costs incurred by entities other than the approved consortium members (Lead applicant and Co-applicant), including entities associated to the project partners.
 - Planning costs of the submitted proposal.
 - Fines or refund of damages caused by staff members.
 - Penalties for wrong calculation, late payment or non-payment of taxes.

More details are contained in the attached Management and Reporting Guidelines, par. 7, page 6.

Other costs

The Guidelines and Budget (Annex 2) include the following macro-categories of costs: Human resources; Travel, food and lodging; External services/consultants; Material purchase; Indirect costs. Costs other than those listed above may be accepted by the Selection Committee provided that they meet the aforementioned eligibility criteria. More details are contained in the attached Management and Reporting Guidelines, par. 5 "Envisaged cost categories", page 5 and in Annex 2 - Budget.

Maximum percentages of cost categories

When submitting their proposals, applicants shall comply with the following percentage shares:

- Human resources: max. 80% of direct costs.
- Costs of building renovations pertaining to the project activities: max. 5% of direct costs.
- Indirect costs (administration, fixed expenses): max. 10% of total direct costs.

More details of cost categories are provided in Annex 2 - Budget and in the attached Management and Reporting Guidelines, par. 5 "Envisaged cost categories", page 5.

OIT, OII and FGB enjoy absolute discretion as to the technical assessment of the existence

and/or relevance of eligibility and ineligibility requirements set out in par. 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4.

5. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

When analysing and selecting the received proposals and awarding grants, and with absolute discretion in this matter, the Selection Committee¹⁰ will apply the following assessment criteria divided into 2 categories:

For the project: max 60 points

- Relevance: Compliance with the Call's objectives, streams, and identified needs.
- Feasibility: Activities and technical/financial management methods are clearly defined, realistic, and capable of achieving positive results with a realistic schedule.
- Sustainability: Ownership and involvement of target groups, synergies with ongoing and/or alternative activities to ensure project continuity.
- Efficiency: Matching of activities and budget, realistic costs, satisfactory proportion between estimated costs and expected results.
- Community involvement and empowerment: Significant participation of the identified target group including consultation mechanisms, collecting feedback from those involved during project formulation and implementation, and addressing them.
- Gender project framework (approach/methodology/perspective), approaches and activities to strengthen LGBTQIA+ leadership, intersectional approach, approach to gender-based violence.
- Beneficiaries and geographical areas of intervention: To what extent the proposal targets (mainly or exclusively) suburban, peripheral and rural areas characterised by a scarcity of services, and/or more marginalised groups such as migrants, refugees, minors, transgender, intersex, people with disabilities, etc. Under Stream 3, the implementation in another European country will be positively evaluated.
- Capacity sharing: To what extent the involved organisations plan to actively participate in capacity-sharing activities by sharing their skills and expertise with other organisations (through partnership, capacity-building activities, etc). Under Stream 3, a partnership between an Italian organisation and one or more organisations from other European countries will be positively evaluated.

For the applicant(s)(Lead applicant and Co-applicant): max. 40 points

- The organisation's structure (e.g. managed by LGBTQIA+ people), mandate or purpose in the field of gender equality

¹⁰ The Selection Committee is responsible for assigning points and evaluating the submitted proposals based on pre-defined criteria. It is made up of experts belonging to the consortium staff of the Connecting Spheres Action (OIT, OII, FGB: 4 members) and coming from outside (1 "Gender Expert" recruited ad hoc) to facilitate the decision-making process.

- Proved competence in the involved Stream(s)
- Working experience in the project geographical area(s)
- Project management skills
- Financial management skills

The Selection Committee will meet to examine the proposals and award scores based on the selection criteria described above. In case of extremely contrasting evaluations by different Selection Committee members, proposals may be re-discussed, and the final score adjusted. A proposal will be deemed eligible if it is given more than 65 points, including at least 39 for the proposal and 26 for the applicant(s). The Selection Committee will draw up a ranking of successful proposals. The ones with the highest score will be considered **eligible and pre-selected** until funding for the deadline is exhausted. A **reserve list** of the 5 highest-ranked eligible and unsuccessful proposals will also be established. If the pre-contract checks for one of the applicants (including the Lead applicant, single applicant or Co-applicant) proves negative due to insufficient capacity or lack of documents declared in the application process, its project proposal will be considered ineligible and replaced by the following one in the reserve list. In addition, in the event of remaining funds to be allocated, eligible preselected organisations may be asked to reschedule activities and budgets before the contract is signed, based on the ranking list and available funds.

6. DOCUMENTS TO BE SUBMITTED

The project proposal must provide all the necessary information to allow its correct final assessment. It must include the following **mandatory documents** to be uploaded as 5 separate files **of max. 2 MB each**:

- Annex 1 - Narrative Application Form (filled in as per the instructions contained in the form and signed; in PDF/A format)
- Annex 2 - Budget (filled-in Excel document)
- Annex 3 - Eligibility Checklist (filled in and signed; in PDF/A format)
- The last 2 approved Financial Statements of the Lead applicant and Co-applicant (1 PDF file)
- 2 CVs of staff members involved in the project (1 PDF file)

In addition:

- Applicants may enclose letters of support to the project from institutions, in a single PDF file.
- If deemed as useful, applicants in partnership with 1 or 2 Co-applicants may also fill in and submit a Letter of Undertaking to form a consortium, using the template provided at the "Resource" section of the [Connecting Spheres website](#). This annex is optional.

Proposals shall be submitted in Italian for Stream 1 and 2, in Italian or English if they fall even partially under Stream 3.

Submission of project proposals

Project proposals, including all required documentation, must be filled in and submitted using the dedicated section on the Call page, available here: <https://connectingspheres.oxfam.it/bando/>, no later than September 30, 2025 at 11:59 pm according to the following intermediate deadlines:

Proposals submission deadlines	Date and time	Max. proposal duration
1st deadline	31/01/2025 at 11:59 pm	18 months
2nd deadline	31/05/2025 at 11:59 pm	14 months
3rd deadline	30/09/2025 at 11:59 pm	10 months

When submitting the online form, applicants will receive an **automatic confirmation of receipt** as proof of the project proposal submission.

7. ASSESSMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS

For each intermediate deadline, the process will be divided into phases as detailed below:

Phase	Description	Responsibility
1. Administrative check	Proposals are received, filed, and checked. In case of incomplete or missing documentation, a specific request is sent to the relevant applicant which must send the missing documents within 3 working days. If it fails to do so, the application will automatically be considered ineligible. Non-Italian organisations may be asked to provide translations of certain documents (e.g. CVs and financial statements).	OIT and OII
2. Eligibility requirements verification and shortlisting	The Gender Justice team of OII and OIT shall assess the eligibility criteria. Proposals that do not meet the eligibility criteria shall be rejected, and the respective applicants will be informed at the end of the selection process. The reasons for ineligibility will be recorded on the long-list template and filed as part of the documentation. A shortlist of eligible proposals will be shared with the Selection Committee for validation.	OIT and OII
3. Final assessment and selection	Technical assessment based on the selection criteria mentioned in par. 5.	Selection Committee
4. Pre-	At the end of the assessment and selection process, all	OIT and OII

<p>notification and Due diligence</p>	<p>applicants shall receive a notification of their results indicating that the proposal is either “eligible and pre-selected”, “eligible and on the reserve list”, “eligible but not selected” or “ineligible”.</p> <p>Pre-selected applicants are subject to a Due Diligence assessment before the Agreement is signed, to verify the declarations made in the project proposal and that applicants possess the minimum capacity to implement the action. Non-Italian organisations may be asked to provide translations of certain documents (e.g. CVs and balance sheets).</p> <p>Rejected proposals will receive detailed and individual information about their assessment and applicants will be invited to re-submit their project idea.</p>	
<p>5. Confirmation and notification</p>	<p>In case of a positive Due Diligence: Confirmation of pre-selected organisations and invitation to sign the Agreement.</p> <p>In case of a negative Due Diligence: Selection of the next proposal in the reserve list.</p>	<p>OIT and OII</p>
<p>6. Minor revisions</p>	<p>Minor budget and proposal revisions to align activities with project results, objectives, and indicators in a common language and facilitate monitoring.</p>	<p>Selection Committee</p>
<p>7. Signing the Agreement and project start</p>	<p>The Agreement between OIT and the Grantee regulates the initiative implementation (start of activities, modifications, etc.), payments, reporting, and other conditions as indicatively described in the Management and Reporting Guidelines attached to this Call for Proposals. The approved project proposal, the budget, the Communication and Visibility Guidelines, and the templates to be used for technical and financial reporting will also be attached to the Agreement. If the selected organisation has no Code of Ethics of its own, in addition to signing the Agreement with its annexes it shall endorse Oxfam's Code of Ethics and Conduct until the conclusion of the sub-granting agreement.</p>	<p>Grantee and OIT</p>

8. CAPACITY BUILDING

The capacity-building programme is established according to the needs and skills detected in the Due Diligence phase. It shall involve **at least 30 CSOs** (25 beneficiaries and 5 additional CSOs that could be interested in the project) and be built on a co-defined training programme. Various methodologies will be used in the programme, such as training on the job, coaching, case studies, interactive scenarios, peer learning, mentoring and

networking, individual and intensive sessions, group training (involving at least 5 CSOs), national and international exchange initiatives. These methodologies intend to 1) promote the exchange of good practices, 2) strengthen national and international protection networks, 3) improve the impact of CSOs planned activities, and 4) use innovative methods and achieved results.

When submitting their proposals, applicants (particularly the organisation's with demonstrated expertise) will be invited to indicate their availability to possibly contribute to the project by providing training support to other CSOs and sharing their expertise in one or more fields/topics. In the project form (Annex 1 - Application Form), each applicant can provide a short description of the training it can offer.

In the Due Diligence phase, the Selection Committee will perform an in-depth assessment of applicants' training needs by means of a participative analysis (questionnaires and focus groups). The assessed needs will be discussed with the participating CSOs, and a capacity-building programme collectively drawn. When signing the Agreement, the beneficiaries shall undertake to participate in the programme.

9. PERSONAL DATA PROCESSING POLICY

Oxfam Italia, based in Via C. Concini n. 19 - 52100 Arezzo (AR), FC 92006700519, e-mail privacy@oxfam.it, in its capacity as data controller (hereinafter "data controller"), will process personal data in the following ways and for the following purposes pursuant to Articles 13-14 of the EU-Regulation 2016/679 (hereinafter referred to as "GDPR").

Object and purpose of data processing

Personal data provided at all stages of participation in this Call for proposals, from the collection of project proposals to project assessment and implementation, will be processed by Oxfam Italia as data controller and by Oxfam Italia Intercultura and Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini as partners and external data processors, for the purposes of implementing the Call for proposals "Projects for Civil Society Organisations" within the framework of the action "Connecting Spheres: Strengthening CSOs and networks to protect GBV survivors in all their diversity" as illustrated in this document.

Processing methods and data storage period

Personal data is processed in relation to the activities indicated in Article 4, par. 2 of the GDPR. Personal data is subject to both paper and electronic and/or automated processing carried out in such a way as to guarantee its security and confidentiality and in compliance with the applicable law, guided by the principles of fair and lawful processing.

Oxfam Italia will process personal data for the time required to fulfil the purposes, and in no case for more than 10 years from project end. Personal data may be deleted at any time upon the owner's request.

Categories to which data may be disclosed

Personal data may be made available to:

- Oxfam employees and collaborators authorized to process data, both in Italy and abroad.
- The funding body, the project partners, and other entities taking part in the project's management and reporting activities.
- External companies or entities (e.g. banks, professionals, consultants, etc.) carrying out activities outsourced to them by Oxfam Italia, in their capacity as external data processors.

Oxfam Italia may communicate personal data without the need for express consent (Art. 6 GDPR, letters b) and c)) to supervisory bodies, judicial authorities, insurance companies for the provision of insurance services, and those entities that are legally entitled to mandatory communication in order to fulfil the aforementioned purposes. These entities will process data in their capacity as independent data controllers.

Profiling

When the user interacts with Oxfam Italia's website, information is collected and stored by means of cookies and resources are used on the user's device. These technologies are referred to as "Tracking Tools". Oxfam Italia uses tracking tools managed directly by the data controller (commonly called "first-party" tracking tools) and tracking tools enabling services provided by third parties (commonly called "third-party" tracking tools). The kind of tracking tools used is indicated in the Cookie Policy.

Data transfer

Personal data are stored on servers situated in the European Union. It is in any case understood that the data controller may also move the servers to countries outside the EU if necessary. Where this is the case, the data controller hereby guarantees that data transfer to non-EU countries will take place in compliance with the applicable law, subject to signing the standard contractual clauses provided for by the European Commission.

Nature of data provision and consequences of non-response

The provision of data is optional. The data subject may therefore decide not to provide any data or subsequently refuse to allow the processing of data already provided; in which case he/she will not be able to take part in the project activities.

Rights of the data subject

The data subject has the rights set out in Articles 15-22 GDPR, namely the rights to:

- Access the personal data being processed and obtain their correction, integration or deletion or, under certain conditions, the restriction of their processing.
- In specified cases, to oppose the processing and/or revoke consent.
- Obtain an updated list of Data Processors.

- File a complaint with the Supervisory Authority.

The data subject may exercise these rights at any time by sending a registered letter with acknowledgement of receipt to the Data Processor - Via Pierluigi da Palestrina, 26R - 50144 Florence or by sending an e-mail to: privacy@oxfam.it

10. CONTACTS AND FAQs

For more details, please only contact the following address: info.connectingspheres@oxfam.it

Oxfam Italia will **publish weekly explanations of general interest in the FAQ (frequently asked questions) area** of the [Connecting Spheres website](#). They are an integral part of the information contained in this document. A brief appointment with the Helpdesk activated by Oxfam can also be booked at info.connectingspheres@oxfam.it.

For information regarding the presentations of the Call and to read all news about the Connecting Spheres Action, please visit <https://connectingspheres.oxfam.it/en/>

11. ANNEXES

- **Annex 1 - Application Form** containing a short description of applicants and their project proposal. The form shall be filled in, signed, and uploaded following the instructions in section 6 of the Call for proposals.
- **Annex 2 - Budget** composed of a page for each Stream, a summary page highlighting the Lead applicant's and Co-applicant's total shares, and compilation instructions. The document shall be filled in and uploaded following the instructions in section 6 of the Call for proposals.
- **Annex 3 - Eligibility Checklist** containing three charts (for the Lead applicant, Co-applicant, and Associated partner respectively) with the criteria required to be eligible for assessment by the Selection Committee. The charts shall be filled in, signed, and uploaded following the instructions in section 6 of the Call for proposals.
- **Management and Reporting Guidelines** containing a general indicative description of the project's management and reporting methods. These will be further detailed in the Agreement. The Guidelines can be a useful support for drawing up the project proposal.

12. APPLICABLE LAW AND JURISDICTION

This Call for proposals is governed by Italian law. Any disputes arising from this regulation are subject to the ordinary Italian judicial authorities and to the exclusive competence of the Court of Florence.

This project is co-funded by the European Union. However, the views expressed are solely those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the European Union's opinions.

