



Know-how Exchange Programme (KEP) Call for Proposals 2021

Projects will be co-financed with funding made available by
the CEI Fund at the EBRD, entirely financed by the Italian Government.

Start of project application submission: **Monday, 3 May 2021, 8:00 am CEST**

Deadline of project application submission: **Monday 21 June 2021, 11:59 pm CEST**

Applicants need to carefully observe the criteria and obligations set by this Call before submitting their proposals. Rejection clauses will apply automatically as explained over the text.

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1. Background information

1.1. The Central European Initiative and the CEI Fund at the EBRD

The [Central European Initiative \(CEI\)](#) was founded in Budapest on 11 November 1989. It is a regional intergovernmental forum committed to supporting European integration and sustainable development through cooperation between and among its Member States and with the European Union, international and regional organisations as well as with other public or private institutions and non-governmental organisations. While acting as a platform for political dialogue, the CEI has developed a strong operational, result-oriented approach to regional cooperation. It combines multilateral diplomacy and fund, programme and project. The CEI currently counts 17 Member States: Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, and Ukraine.

In 1992 the Italian Government established the CEI Fund at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), acknowledging the great opportunity the newly created multilateral development bank presented for the objectives of the CEI. The Fund was created “to assist the Bank’s countries of operation in Central and Eastern Europe in their economic and social transformation process.” The KEP is solely financed by the CEI Fund at the EBRD.

1.2. The CEI Know-how Exchange Programme (KEP)

Launched in 2004, the [KEP](#) is a development instrument aimed at supporting the transfer of expertise from organisations in the EU to peers in the non-EU countries within the CEI region. The rationale of the Programme is based on the assumption that the economic development in non-EU countries can be strengthened through the transfer of best practices and benchmarks already in place in more advanced economies. These transfers could have an invaluable impact by ensuring social cohesion and economic dynamism in the region. By co-financing capacity building and technical assistance projects, the KEP offers grants to institutions willing to share their experience with their partners in the non-EU CEI Member States, thus helping non-members to advance on their path towards EU standards and policies. The KEP focuses on areas of intervention where EU CEI countries demonstrate strong-rooted experience, and where beneficiary states exhibit the strongest need for assistance according to the [CEI Plan of Action 2021-2023](#).

2. Rules for this Call for Proposals

2.1 Available amount and general rules

The overall indicative amount for this Call for Proposals is up to a maximum cumulative amount of two hundred fifty thousand euro (250,000 EUR) that will be made available through the CEI Fund at the EBRD, entirely financed by the Italian Government. The CEI reserves the right not to award all available funds, to cancel the Call for Proposals and reject all project proposals at any time prior to the awarding of grants, without thereby incurring any liability. Up to fifteen (15) days before the deadline for submission of project proposals, the CEI reserves the right to amend this Call for Proposals by issuing addenda. Any addendum published at <https://application.cei.int/application/kep-2021/> will become an integral part of the Call for Proposals. If a project proposal has been submitted before the issuing of the last addenda, the applicant has the right to withdraw or substitute, its project proposal within the deadline for the submission of the project proposals.

2.2 Eligibility criteria

Any project proposal awarded under this Call for Proposals shall fully satisfy all the following eligibility criteria:

- Compliance of project objectives.
- Eligibility of applicants.
- Eligibility of know-how providers.

- Eligibility of know-how beneficiaries.
- Eligibility of project activities.
- Eligibility of costs, CEI grant ceiling and percentage of the project total cost.

The CEI electronic submission system helps detect basic eligibility problems, e.g. issues related to the type and number of required partners or their place of establishment. Since the eligibility rules cannot be fully automated, the applicant is to be fully aware of those rules.

The Call requires the participation of at least two partners per proposal. At least one know-how provider and one know-how beneficiary. The applicant institution can coincide with a know-how provider or with a know-how beneficiary institution.

2.2.1 Compliant project objectives

The overall objective of this Call for Proposals is to contribute to the development of the CEI region, bolstering social cohesion and economic dynamism while strengthening cooperation between/among the CEI Member States. A project proposal has to be in line with the [CEI Plan of Action 2021-2023](#). The KEP focuses on areas of intervention where EU CEI countries have demonstrated strong-rooted experience, and where beneficiary states have shown the strongest need for assistance. All project objectives - general and specific - stated in the Application Form must be well defined, attainable and linked to tangible project activities. Overambitious objectives, not directly linked to activities of the project or impossible to post-evaluate, are likely to be poorly scored.

2.2.2 Eligible applicants

The applicant institution can be registered in [all CEI member states](#).

It might coincide with a know-how provider or with a know-how beneficiary institution.

- If the applicant coincides with a know-how provider, it shall be registered in an EU CEI Member State, namely: Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, the Slovak Republic, and Slovenia.
- If the applicant coincides with a know-how beneficiary, it shall be registered in a non-EU CEI Member State, namely: Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Ukraine.

The following types of applicants are eligible to apply: all public and private sector bodies (not individuals), international and non-governmental organisations operating in the public interest, e.g. national, regional and local authorities, education/research institutions, and environmental organisations. In case of applications from international organisations facilitating cooperation between the know-how providers and the beneficiary institutions in the CEI region, the CEI grant shall be transferred to and managed by this international body. The applicant shall demonstrate and give evidence of experience in project management. The applicant is expected to be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the project for its entire duration. Preference will be given to projects displaying the ability of applicants to integrate or align project proposals into wider frameworks of related interventions.

2.2.3 Eligible know-how providers

The know-how providers shall be registered in an EU CEI Member State, namely Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, the Slovak Republic, and Slovenia. The following types of know-how providers are eligible: all public and private sector bodies (not individuals), international and non-governmental organisations operating in the public interest, e.g. national, regional and local authorities, education/research institutions, and environmental organisations. The know-how provider shall prove to have a broad experience in the specific sector addressed by the project proposal.

2.2.4 Eligible know-how beneficiaries

The know-how beneficiaries shall be registered in a non-EU CEI Member State, namely: Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Ukraine. In case of more than one beneficiary, projects will be assessed on their potential to effectively and sustainably affect all

beneficiaries, according to the overall budget and objectives. Whenever a project engages more than one beneficiary, the project is to address the know-how needs of all beneficiaries.

2.2.5 Eligible activities

Project proposals should present an appropriate range of activities for an efficient and effective transfer of a given know-how. They could be carried out through, but not limited to: on-the-job training, workshops, staff secondment, study tours, peer review missions, assistance in the preparation of strategic documents (e.g. development plans, reforms, strategic studies, etc.), technology transfer, technical assistance. Applicants are requested to clearly state when the activity is expected to begin and end, how it will be organised, who will be responsible for its implementation, and the expected outputs and relation to the project objectives. The applicant shall also describe any planned follow-up activities after the official conclusion of the project. Project proposals are to create an impact through multiple activities and instruments, combining theoretical training (workshops, conferences, etc.) and more practical activities (site visits, on-the-job training, etc.).

All project activities shall take place in the CEI region and the CEI shall approve any exceptions to this rule.

The applicant is required to present a realistic and verifiable work plan and timetable of the envisaged activities, taking into account the necessary time for partners and/or contractors to mobilise resources, etc.

The project implementation should indicatively start after 01 November 2021. The project duration should not exceed 24 (twenty-four) months, while the minimum duration is 6 (six) months.

2.2.6 Eligibility of project costs, CEI grant ceiling and percentage of total cost of project

The estimated total project budget as well as the requested CEI grant shall be Euro-denominated and clearly indicated in the electronic application form and related Annex 1 and Annex 2. In principle, the CEI grant can be requested for any type of costs linked to the project implementation. The applicant is entirely responsible for the calculations leading to the outlined budget estimates including currency conversions, local taxes and levies. The CEI is not responsible for and will not reimburse currency rate variations, nor can the CEI be charged with potential shortages or financial consequences of exchange rate fluctuations and underestimation or disregard of national fiscal regulations by the applicant. Budget calculations in countries not using the Euro currency can take the exchange rate of the National Bank of their country on the day the application is submitted. The CEI grant will be transferred in Euro. The CEI will not be responsible for any depreciation of the transferred instalments of the CEI contribution.

Any grant awarded under this Call for Proposals shall not exceed fifty per cent (50%) of the total cost of a given project, and the maximum grant amount allocated to a single project cannot exceed forty thousand euro (40,000 EUR). The balance must be financed from the project partners' own resources or from other sources, including in-kind contributions.

An in-kind contribution is a non-cash, other than monetary contribution or input which can be given a cash value. In-kinds are expenditures not giving rise to an actual payment: they can take the form of: (i) donation of goods or services, time or expertise, rather than cash or appreciated property; (ii) infrastructure support, office supplies support, equipment support, etc.; (iii) human resources of the applicant and/or project partners.

3. How to apply

3.1 Application Package

The CEI Application Package is composed of:

- Online Application Form
- Annex 1
- Annex 2

- Annex 3

It shall be completed in accordance with the instructions provided in this Call for Proposals and in the KEP 2021 Application Form Guidelines. The applicant is requested to complete the documents as carefully and as clearly as possible. Please note that:

- The project proposal's assessment will be based only on the Application Form and related Annexes the applicant submits.
- The Application Form and related Annexes must be completed in English.
- Incomplete applications and Annexes will be rejected.
- Under this Call for Proposals, applicants can submit one project proposal only.
- Handwritten Annexes will be rejected.

3.2 Submission

Proposals must be submitted electronically using the CEI Electronic Submission System accessible at <https://application.cei.int/application/kep-2021/>. Access to the CEI Electronic Submission System is subject to registration as a CEI user at <https://application.cei.int/wp-login.php?action=register> .

Who? Proposals must be submitted by a representative/contact person of the project coordinating Organisation/Institution (applicant).

How? Once you have your CEI Login username and password you can start the submission process by logging in at <https://application.cei.int/wp-login.php> and accessing the CEI Electronic Submission System.

The CEI Electronic Submission System is an online wizard that guides you through the preparation of your proposal step-by-step. In order to allow an early preparation of the proposal, please note that the submission process consists of the following parts (additional information is available in the KEP 2021 Application Form Guidelines):

- Project description (be prepared with structured project information including title, implementation period, origin and background, summary and objectives, activities and workplan, results and impact).
- Contact data (be prepared with indication of the project applicant and partners, identification of know-how provider institution(s) and know-how beneficiary institution(s); brief descriptions for each partner, indication of project partners' previous cooperation experience - if applicable).
- Project visibility (be prepared with info on project promotion and dissemination, use of CEI logo)
- Two financial Annexes (be prepared by downloading and filling-in Annex 1 with a breakdown of estimated costs, Annex 2 with co-financing scheme). *Please note that these two templates can be downloaded in Excel format and shall be converted into PDF format by the applicant before uploading.*
- Annex with signature of the applicant's legal representative/authorised legal representative (be prepared: download, fill-in, print and sign Annex 3 template in advance). *Please note that this template can be downloaded in Excel format and shall be scanned into PDF format by the applicant before uploading.*

Filled-in application forms can be saved during the submission procedure while they cannot be modified once they are submitted unless the Call is amended according to point 2.1. of the Call for Proposals. After call closure, the submission is prohibited, and proposals are locked.

3.3 Deadline

The deadline for the submission of project proposals is Monday, 21 June 2021, 11:59 pm (CEST).

Do not wait until the very end to submit. It is highly recommended that applicants submit proposals as early as possible and at least 48 hours before the deadline. This will avoid being confronted with incompatible local

IT configuration settings shortly before the deadline when insufficient time would be left to resolve them. Proposals are safe and secure in our systems and will not be accessed before the deadline of the call. There is no reason to delay submission for fear of disclosure.

3.4 After proposal submission

After proposal submission, the applicant will receive an email confirmation with the reference number assigned to the proposal. There is no further contact between the CEI and the applicants on the proposal until after the completion of the evaluation with the exception of the following cases:

- If the CEI needs to contact the applicant to clarify matters such as eligibility or to request additional information;
- In response to an enquiry or complaint made by the applicant.

4. Evaluation procedure

Project Proposals will be evaluated according to the following steps:

- STEP 1: Administrative check
- STEP 2: Eligibility check
- STEP 3: Evaluation of the Project Proposals

Please note that only proposals passing steps 1 and step 2, will go on to step 3.

4.1 Administrative check

Project Proposals will be checked according to the following criteria. If a proposal does not meet all criteria, it will be rejected.

Rejection clauses	Yes/No
Have all the mandatory parts of the Application Form (including the 3 mandatory Annexes) been filled-in and submitted through the CEI Electronic Submission System?	
Have the 3 mandatory Annexes been filled-in, converted into PDF format and uploaded through the CEI Electronic Submission System?	
Has Annex 1 been signed by the Legal Representative/Authorised Legal Representative of the applicant?	
Have Application Form and the 3 Annexes been completed in English?	
Does the partnership include at least one know-how provider and one know-how beneficiary partner?	

4.2 Eligibility check

Project Proposals will be assessed according to the criteria outlined below. If a proposal does not meet all criteria, it will be rejected.

Rejection clauses	Yes/No
Are the project objectives compliant with the criteria set out in section 2.2.1 of this Call for Proposals?	
Does the applicant fulfil the criteria set out in section 2.2.2 of this Call for Proposals?	
Does the know-how provider fulfil the criteria set out in section 2.2.3 of this Call for Proposals?	
Does the know-how beneficiary fulfil the criteria set out in section 2.2.4 of this Call for Proposals?	
Are project activities compliant with the criteria set out in section 2.2.5 of this Call for Proposals?	

Is the grant request in line with the criteria set out in section 2.2.6, i.e. it shall not exceed 50% of the project total cost and the requested amount does not exceed 40,000 EUR?	
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4.3 Evaluation of the Project Proposals

The evaluation of the project proposals will be carried out according to the Evaluation Grid below. At the end of the evaluation, project proposals will be ranked according to a merit point system. To assist in the examination, evaluation, and comparison of the project proposals and qualification of the applicants the CEI may, at its discretion, ask any applicant for clarifications. The request for clarifications from the CEI and replies shall be in writing. No change in the substance of the project proposal shall be sought, offered, or permitted. If an applicant does not provide clarifications of its project proposal by the date and time set by the CEI, its project proposal may be rejected. Any attempt by an applicant, direct or indirect, to interfere and/or breach the confidentiality of the tendering, evaluation and awarding process may result in the rejection of the applicant's proposal.

Scoring guidelines: the evaluation grid is divided into subsections. Each question is answered on a scale from 0 (zero) to 10 (ten), where 10 is the highest possible score, and 0 is the lowest. These scores are added to give the total score for the section concerned. The maximum overall score is 100. In order to be considered for funding, proposals must score above 65.

Evaluation Grid		Maximum score
1	Does the applicant have sufficient experience in project management?	10
2	Does the know-how provider have sufficient knowledge and technical expertise of the issues to be addressed?	10
3	How relevant is the proposal to the KEP objectives and to one or more of the CEI priorities outlined in the CEI Plan of Action 2021-2023?	10
4	Does the project proposal appropriately address the needs of the know-how beneficiary and contribute to the effective building up of its expertise?	10
5	Are the proposed activities coherent, appropriate, practical, and consistent with the objectives and results as laid down in the application form?	10
6	Does the project proposal present objectively verifiable indicators related to the outcome of the action?	10
7	Are the proposed activities clear and feasible in the given timeframe?	10
8	To what extent are the benefits of the project likely to continue after the cease of the current funding?	10
9	What is the quality of the proposed communication plan and the CEI's visibility?	10
10	Are the estimated costs coherent with the project activities and expected results?	10
Maximum total score		100

5. Approval procedure and CEI grant

5.1 Approval procedure

The Committee of CEI National Coordinators will approve CEI grants on the basis of ranking and the availability of resources of this Call for Proposals.

5.2 Awarding of grants and Grant Agreement

If a proposal is successful, the applicant will receive a notification on the selection for funding. Applicants will be informed on the amount of the approved CEI grant and related conditions. Applicants will be requested to

sign a Grant Agreement on the terms of project implementation and management of the CEI grant. The Grant Agreement enters into force on the day of the last signature. Typically, applicants sign first, followed by the CEI-Executive Secretariat. The results of the call including the ones related to the Administrative and Eligibility checks will be published at <https://application.cei.int/application/kep-2021/>.

6. Timetable

- Publication of the Call for Proposals: Monday, 3 May 2021, 8:00 am (CEST)
- Deadline for submission of project proposals: Monday, 21 June 2021, 11:59 pm (CEST)
- Tentative awarding of grants: End of October 2021

7. Contact and Support

For any questions regarding the KEP Call for Proposals 2021 please write to kep@cei.int. Questions shall be sent in English no later than seven (7) days before the submission deadline. Answers will be provided no later than three (3) days before the deadline for submitting proposals. All questions received and related answers will be published on <http://application.cei.int/kep-2021/> in order to give a fair, transparent and equal treatment to all applicants. In the interest of equal treatment for applicants, the CEI does not provide any support and/or assistance for the creation of the project partnership.

8. Debriefings

Any requests for clarifications regarding discarded project proposals are to be addressed to kep@cei.int. A formal debriefing meeting at the appropriate level, and with the relevant staff and the project applicant, will be organised to discuss strengths and weaknesses of the project proposal. No additional information will be disclosed.