

ILGA-Europe call for project proposals

Supporting strong communications by LGBTI organisations

For LGBTI organisations and groups in Europe and Central Asia

Deadline for applications: Sunday, May 29, 23:59 (CET)

Summary

- ILGA-Europe launches a new communications programme to foster stronger and more strategic communications across the European and Central Asian LGBTI movement.
- As part of this programme, we invite project proposals from LGBTI organisations and groups in Europe and Central Asia.
- We expect to make up to five multi-year project grants (each grant for the period of 2.5 years) to LGBTI organisations to develop and strengthen their communications work.
- Organisations should be able to demonstrate their existing communications experience and have a clear vision on how to develop communications as a strategic area of work.
- Grantee partners will have access to various learning opportunities and will be asked to share their own learning with ILGA-Europe and with the wider LGBTI movement.
- The webinar for prospective applicants will be organised on May 12, 12:00 (CET). [Register here](#) to get more information and ask any questions you have about the call and the application process.

Introduction

ILGA-Europe is excited to launch a multi-year programme to foster stronger and more strategic communications across the European and Central Asian LGBTI movement and to contribute to collective thinking on shaping public conversations and changing public attitudes. Over the coming three years, ILGA-Europe will do this through different activities, including financial support and consultancy to build strong communication abilities, grants to support targeted communication initiatives, peer learning spaces, and a growing network of communications practitioners and experts.

As part of this programme, ILGA-Europe is opening this call for proposals for multi-year project grants to support LGBTI organisations in strengthening their own strategic communication capacities. The aim of these grants is to support organisations to make communications into one of the core functions in their work and to amplify their existing communications skills and experiences. Participating organisations are also expected to become 'anchor organisations' or 'hubs of knowledge', which can share learning with other LGBTI groups in the region. Whilst the strengthening of grantee partners' own communications work will be at the core of the supported projects, the 'anchor organisations' will take active part in efforts that aim at establishing a *successful communications culture* across the region.

Why this call?

Throughout our work, we have seen that an increasing number of LGBTI organisations and groups were committed and felt the need to develop their communications in a more strategic way. [The assessment of communications needs](#) launched in 2019 suggested that 1) existing capacities to

undertake this work are currently inadequate and 2) there is a huge untapped potential of the movement's communications ability, as we see a great wealth of communications knowledge and experience in the movement on which we can build to grow the movement's communication capacity.

For a long time, we have been offering support through analysis of message and framing on LGBTI issues, grants to support narrative development and message testing, trainings and [materials on strategic communications](#) for LGBTI organisations, skills-boost activities on basic communications skills, and facilitation of a Facebook group of LGBTI communicators, among other activities. And now we are introducing this programme, which aims to effectively close the gap between inadequate resources and the wealth of existing experience by supporting various LGBTI organisations and groups in building communications functions.

Aim of the call

The aim of the call is to contribute to stronger communications work by LGBTI organisations and groups in Europe and Central Asia. We will support projects focused on the following goals:

1. Establishing communications as one of the pillars of organisation's work, including by accessing resources to build and strengthen communications capacity within the organisation;
2. Developing and implementing tactical and strategic communications activities, such as campaigns, the development of new narratives, testing, enhancing the organisation's presence on social media, relationship building with the media, etc.;
3. Supporting communications learning within and between LGBTI organisations and groups and disseminating communications skills and experiences across the broader LGBTI movement.

Who is this call for?

This call is for LGBTI organisations that:

- Are LGBTI-run organisations in Europe or Central Asia. To ensure the greatest potential learning, we aim to select a diverse cohort of grantee partners that work in different regions and that have complementary approaches to communications.
- Have some experience with communications and can demonstrate it with a track record of communications work. A track record may include previous campaigns carried out, work done to frame and test message narratives or other communication activities that were part of a larger plan to affect change. For us it is important to understand what communication work was done previously, what was the learning that has come from that work and how that learning informs future communications work.
- Can share initial ideas on how to develop their communications as a functional area of work across the organisation's work. We will prioritise applications that demonstrate organisational thinking above those that focus on specific projects or actions. We seek to support organisations in establishing roles/practices/tools/solutions that can live beyond the project's lifetime and that have the potential to enhance the organisations overall communications culture in a longer-term perspective.
- Demonstrate an ambition for bringing a change in public attitude or shifting a public narrative through longer-term development of the communication culture.
- Are interested in collective thinking and discussions about strategic communication and shaping public narratives in Europe and Central Asia.
- Are willing to become 'anchor organisations' and share their learning with ILGA-Europe and the wider LGBTI movement.

- Demonstrate the capacity to successfully implement projects, both substantively and administratively.

This call might NOT be a match for organisations that:

- Have no or little experience in communications or have no communications capacity. Later this year, we will launch a thematic call for proposals to support the development of campaigns and message testing. Keep an eye out for these opportunities!
- Propose specific communication ‘projects’ (such as one-off campaigns, or specific actions to develop message frames). Whilst we value organisations doing such work, it should not be the only thing a project focuses on as we will prioritise projects that demonstrably aim to establish a communication culture beyond a single project.
- Propose a project with the main focus on the development of communication channels for the organisations (i.e. development of a website or a podcasts series), without providing a clear understanding of how this work will feed into larger strategic communications objectives. Ideally, projects will include a variety of communication tools and channels. If organisations haven’t done this yet, they are encouraged to take time to assess their own needs and capacity early on in the project and select specific tools/channels later on.
- Already have strong communications departments in place (e.g. have dedicated staff with secured funding for communications work and planned activities). The intention of this call is to provide necessary resources for the organisations that do have experience and vision but lacking the resources for the next step.

What does the participation entail?

1) We will provide 4-5 project grants of up to €65.000 each (in total) for 2.5 years.

Grants will be awarded in 3 phases, first covering the period July-December 2022, and then 12 months in 2023 and 12 months in 2024. The first 6 months will provide space for grantee partners to think about the precise focus of work in the remaining two years.

The funding will allow grantee partners to develop a strong communication function within their organisations, which can for instance include establishing a full-time paid communications position and developing communication as a central area of work within the organisation. The work can also include the development of communication strategy and plans in relation to other areas of work of the organisation, which allows the organisation to implement various communication related projects.

2) We will support the grantee partners throughout the process with regular check-ins and coaching.

We understand that this call implies more effort and commitments than regular project funding. We understand that ‘knowing what you do not know’ can be a difficult place to begin, so throughout the whole programme, but especially in the first year, we will work with you to develop your plan with peer-learning, coaching and trainings.

3) We will organise capacity building and learning activities with external experts and provide spaces for peer-learning.

We expect learning to be an important element of the programme! We will actively seek to support grantee partners by linking them up with external experts on needs that they may have in terms of strengthening their own capacities. Throughout the duration of the project, ILGA-Europe will offer a variety of capacity enhancing activities (webinars, skill boosts, trainings, workshops at the ILGA-Europe conference etc.). When relevant and appropriate, grantee partners under this call will be invited to benefit from trainings or to share their own learning.

4) We will support the grantee partners to become ‘anchor organisations’ and to share their learning with the wider LGBTI movement.

We are looking for organisations that have the potential to successfully make communications a central area of work within their organisation and, as a result, increase the impact of communications as a tool to influence public opinion, build support for work, etc. We understand that organisations across Europe and Central Asia work in very diverse contexts and have different communication priorities. For many groups communications not only help to leverage institutional advocacy, but also play a role in building effective alliances, or in increasing public support. Our hope is to support a diversity of organisations working in different regions, this way we hope to increase the overall potential for learning from this work.

With this project, we want to support organisations in building communications practices and experiences that can serve as examples for other organisations (i.e. within their region, or in relation to a particular area of work that an organisation may focus on). We are referring to potential applicants as ‘anchor organisations’ and we hope that ‘anchor organisations’ can share their learning from this work with the wider LGBTI movement. ILGA-Europe will facilitate most of this learning, though ‘anchor organisations’ in some cases can get additional funding if they take it on themselves to support other organisations in their learning. We also expect that applicants commit to being part of a network of organisations that collectively thinks about how to effectively strengthen the communications work within the European and Central-Asian LGBTI movement (in effect, the network will likely meet once a year and occasionally online).

How will we select organisations?

While evaluating the applications, we will take into account all the information listed in the section ‘Who is this call for?’ In addition, we will consider the following:

- ILGA-Europe will pay particular attention to projects that are submitted by organisations working in challenging circumstances where their work has been severely affected by anti-LGBTI, anti-gender and anti-rights attacks.
- Organisations should commit to sharing their learning with other LGBTI organisations in Europe and Central Asia and actively participate in ILGA-Europe communications Network.
- Our hope is that the group of selected grantee partners will mirror this diversity of ways in which communications plays a role in the work of LGBTI organisations, so that the learning can be shared widely across the LGBTI movement. We are also looking to fund organisations that work across a diversity of sub-regions.

A few things about activities and costs that we will support

1. Applicants can include costs for a variety of communications activities, such as (but not excluded to):
 - Work to influence narratives through audience insight and research, message development and testing, trialling dissemination methods, etc;
 - Campaigning activities to raise awareness on the realities, needs and rights of LGBTI communities (including for instance to raise awareness on issues or communities that remain unseen by larger audiences);
 - Creation of content for diverse communication channels, including podcasts, blogs, websites and/or community portals, opinion articles, media releases or other work with the media, etc.
2. We understand that establishing communications as a core function requires proper involvement, and we encourage organisations to establish a specific communication position, if such a position isn’t already in place yet. We understand that such costs might be the largest cost that is budgeted for. If this is the case, we encourage applicants to describe how this grant

could be leveraged with other funding that may be used to cover costs for specific activities, such as campaigns, etc. Pre-existing funding commitments are not necessary.

3. We also welcome costs for activities that help generate a communications culture within the organisation. This can include training activities for staff and/or volunteers, or other efforts that help nourish skills and capacities, or the development of communication strategies. Applicants will need to demonstrate thinking on how the learning will be effectively applied in concrete forthcoming work.

How will you be working with ILGA-Europe?

Project management and support

ILGA-Europe works hard to make sure that there is efficient communication with grantee partners and that project administrative requirements don't take up a disproportionate amount of time! Yet, here are the things that you should expect us to ask from you.

- Once grantee partners are selected, we will work with them to discuss any questions or doubts, look together at the planning for the project and revise the budget if needed.
- During the implementation of projects, we are available to support you in case you experience problems or need advice on how to go about aspects of the work. We can work together to make changes to the project as required.
- Participation in the learning opportunities provided by ILGA-Europe and our communications network is expected from grantee partners.
- During the project's implementation, we will have regular contacts with grantee partners (every 3 months). We expect our partners to commit to these regular conversations with ILGA-Europe staff to discuss project's implementation, threats, opportunities, and possible capacity building needs. Conversations will include an update on the progress made and any issues that might be relevant for the continuation of the project (incl. overall national context in which the project is being implemented, and applicant overall strategy for change).
- You will need to report financially on how the funds are being spent. We will ask for a preliminary report and a final report for each phase of the project. To manage this grant your organisation needs to have an accounting and financial management system in place that allows to track income and expenditures per project/funder and across multiple years. You will be asked to report in Excel and support your expenditures with records: contracts, procurement documents, invoices, timesheets, proof of payment, documentation of exchange rates. For more information, please contact ILGA-Europe. Guidance on reporting financial and administrative requirements is available on the call page and will be further provided to successful applicants, including through a webinar.
- An annual narrative report is also foreseen, as well is a final narrative report.
- You are also expected to participate in various evaluation efforts around the project. For example, in other programmes participants have found it valuable to attend peer-learning and sharing meetings online throughout the project, and contribute quotes/examples to written resources to be shared (confidentially) with other members in the movement.

Budget & scope

- We will fund up to five projects that last 2.5 years for a total amount of €65.000 per organisation. Applicants should propose a reasonable plan on how to distribute the budget over the 2.5 years. See above a non-exhaustive list of activities that the project could include.
- We request applicants to fill-out the budget template. For the first six months, a more detailed budget is required, whilst for the remaining 24 months we ask applicants to provide an

estimate across larger budget categories, without detailed calculations (see the budget template for instructions). Grantee partners will be asked to submit more detailed activity plans for the remaining 24 months towards the end of these first six months.

- Additional funding will be available to the grantee partners willing to share their learning on communications with other organisations to cover costs of trainings, peer-learning activities or job-coaching. ILGA-Europe will work on a plan for these activities with grantee partners in year one, once the projects are underway. There is no need to include this in your budget.

How to apply?

- To apply please submit your application and budget to svetlana@ilga-europe.org.
- Proposals should be submitted using the attached application form and budget template.
- Proposals should be submitted before May 29, 2022, Sunday, 23:59 (CET).
- We will review your applications and decide on projects to be supported on June 17.
- We will inform all applicants about the results of the review via the email address provided in the application by June 21.
- Administrative work will take place throughout the end of June - first part of July to prepare for the launch of the project. Successful applicants should be available to respond to requests during that period.
- We expect the projects to start in mid-July.

If you have any questions in the preparation of your project proposal, please contact Svetlana Zakharova, ILGA-Europe's Senior Programmes Officer (svetlana@ilga-europe.org)

NB Not sure whether this is the right call for you, or where to begin with the application? Register for a 60-min session where we will talk through the thinking behind the call and you will have plenty of time to ask questions about it. The session will take place on May 12, 12:00 CET (save the date and don't forget [to register here](#)).