



## **European Solidarity Corps Quality Label GUIDELINES FOR BUDGET ALLOCATION FOR ESC51 Call 2026**

This document outlines guidelines based on the rules for budget allocation to Quality Label lead organisations, in line with the frameworks established in the European Solidarity Corps<sup>1</sup> (ESC) Programme Guide. The process presented here supplements and elaborates on the rules laid down, with due consideration to key differences relating to the nature of actions, duration of projects and number of rounds.

As specified in the Programme Guide, the budget is allocated to projects after their quality has been assessed through Quality Label and therefore no qualitative assessment takes place at the budget allocation stage. All positively evaluated grant requests should receive funding, provided the applicants remain eligible under the call conditions and are not in an exclusion situation. The awarded grant amount per applicant shall depend on a number of elements, as defined for budget allocation rules in the Programme Guide:

- the total budget available for allocation
- the estimated budget required to implement the requested activities
- the minimum and maximum grant amounts established for all applicants
- the score of the Quality Label for lead organisation
- applicant's performance (progress report score, budget absorption and final report score of the last completed ESC51 project, if available)
- the quality performance, policy priorities and thematic areas addressed by the activities applied for

### **1. TOTAL BUDGET AVAILABLE FOR ALLOCATION**

The total budget available for allocation for ESC is published in the national open call on the website: <https://www.suntsolidar.eu/ghiduri-si-apeluri> (2026, „Apelul național la propuneri pentru proiecte”).

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<sup>1</sup> European Solidarity Corps Guide 2026: [Reference documents and resources | European Youth Portal](#)

<b>Total budget available for allocation for ESC according to the national call</b>	4.852.695 EUR
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The Romanian National Agency has decided that for ESC<sup>51</sup> there will be a single selection round, during which the entire budget allocated to the action will be distributed.

Specific amounts per programme will be reserved for budget categories based on reimbursement of real costs. Beneficiaries can make requests for this type of costs during the implementation of the grant agreement, by submitting a written request to the National Agency. In case of need, the National Agency may further increase these specific reserved amounts. For ESC, if part of these reserved funds is left unused, the National Agency may distribute it in an (optional) second round.

The rest of the available budget will be apportioned between the following applicable allocation components as follows<sup>2</sup>:

Minimum grants amount	At least 1.180.000 EUR
Qualitative performance, policy priorities and thematic areas	At least 3.657.695 EUR
Exceptional costs and Inclusion support for participants	At least 15.000 EUR

## **2. ESTIMATING THE BUDGET REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT THE REQUESTED ACTIVITIES**

The National Agency will calculate the budget required to implement activities requested by each applicant, on the basis of unit costs defined in the Programme Guide and historical data on grant amounts for similar activities.

An estimation cannot be performed for all actual costs that are highly dependent on each specific case, namely exceptional costs. Requests for this type of costs will be assessed based on the description, justification and estimated amount provided by the applicant as part of the application.

In all cases, the awarded grant shall not be higher than the estimated budget required to implement all activities requested by the applicant. As an exception, real costs (exceptional costs) will not count towards the maximum awarded grant amount.

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<sup>2</sup> Exceptionally, the specified amounts may be lowered if the budget required for exceptional costs is higher than originally foreseen; if all applicants have already been allocated the requested amounts according to the rules set out in this document; or if a minor correction is required due to rounding rules.

### **3. BUDGET ALLOCATION RULES**

#### **3.1 GENERAL PROVISIONS**

If the total budget available for allocation is not sufficient to provide each applicant with the budget required to implement their requested activities, then a competitive allocation will take place as described below. However, if the total available budget is sufficient to fully address requests of all applicants, then the budget allocation rules described in the paragraph below will not apply.

The competitive budget allocation will take place in multiple phases. In each phase, the available budget will be divided between eligible applicants based on their score on the relevant criterion (see section 3.4). Applicants that receive the full budget required to implement their requested activities (or that reach their maximum grant amount) will not participate in further allocations. Available funds will be allocated to applicants based on the corresponding allocation rules. All allocated amounts will be rounded to the nearest whole Euro.

#### **3.2 SETTING THE MINIMUM GRANT AMOUNT**

A minimum grant amount will be provided to each applicant. The purpose of the minimum grant amount is to allow all organisations to implement a sufficient number of activities and progress towards the objectives set in their Activity Plan.

The Romanian National Agency has decided to set a single minimum grant amount of 20.000 EUR. The decision is made based on the average reported costs in the previous programme, correlated with the minimum number of activities involving both teams and individual volunteering, the resulting amount being rounded up.

Grant requests which are estimated to be lower than minimum grant amount will be fully awarded.

If sufficient funds are available, the National Agency may increase the minimum grant amount after the submission deadline. This information will be published on the National Agency's website.

The NAs advises applicants that, in view of future calls, they should make sure to request an appropriate number of activities according to what they are able to implement. Failing to use the awarded funds during the implementation of the grant agreement can lead to low past performance and therefore a lower grant amount in future calls.

#### **3.3 SETTING THE MAXIMUM GRANT AMOUNT**

The Romanian National Agency has decided to set a single maximum grant of 150.000 EUR. The decision is made based on the average reported costs in the previous program, correlated with the

average financial and managerial capacity of youth NGOs and public institutions in order to develop a good quality programme.

The National Agency may also further limit the awarded grant amount for applicants under observation in accordance with the specific decision on establishment of observation measures. Applicants that have completed their last ESC51 project with an absorption rate below **90%** will receive at most the grant amount that they were able to absorb.

The National Agency may also limit the grant amount awarded to applicants who deviate considerably from the annual targets set in their Activity Plans.

In all cases, the awarded grant amount shall not be higher than the estimated budget required to implement all activities requested by the applicant. As an exception, the cost category for 'exceptional costs' will not count towards the limits set by the rules on maximum grant amount.

### **3.4 QUALITATIVE PERFORMANCE, POLICY PRIORITIES AND THEMATIC AREAS**

The National Agency will allocate the budget according to the assessment of the qualitative performance, the policy priorities and thematic areas addressed by the activities applied for. The purpose of this assessment is to ensure that the budget is allocated to applicants that deliver good quality activities, while also enhancing them to gradually progress towards the objectives of their Activity Plan.

The National Agency will calculate per applicant a **total score** by taking into account the criteria below.

- the evaluation score of the applicant's **Quality Label application** (at least 20% of the score).
- the **policy priorities** score, calculated based on the number of policy priorities that the applicant will tackle through each activity (at least 10% of the score). The proportion of young people with fewer opportunities taking part in activities has to be factored in for this calculation. This ensures that the inclusive dimension of the programme is reflected in the budget allocation criteria.
- average or the arithmetic mean of the **ESC50 progress report** score and the beneficiary **final report** evaluation score of the last completed ESC51 project, if available (at least 50% of the score). If neither progress report nor final report are available, the National Agency may give more weight to the evaluation score of the applicant's Quality Label application.

The **total score** for qualitative performance, policy priorities and thematic areas will be calculated per activity and averaged per project.

After this assessment, the budget will be divided among the applicants in proportion to their total score. The calculation will take into account the total estimated budget required to implement the

requested activities<sup>3</sup>, the minimum and the maximum grant amounts available. This ensures that the calculated grant amount is proportional to the size of the budget requested by each applicant.

#### **4. TOTAL AWARDED GRANT AND TARGETS FOR DELIVERY**

For each applicant, the total awarded grant will be the sum of amounts they have received in each allocation phase. If any requests for real costs (exceptional costs) have been approved by the National Agency, these amounts will be added to the total awarded grant.

Before issuing a grant agreement, the National Agency will calculate appropriate targets for delivery. If the applicant has been awarded the full budget required to implement their requested activities, then the activities requested in the application will become the targets for delivery. If the awarded grant is lower than the full budget required to implement the requested activities, then the targets will also be lowered proportionally to ensure that the applicant is able to deliver them.

The National Agency has to ensure that the awarded grant corresponds to the number of units. In any case, at least one participant in each activity type requested by the applicant shall be maintained.

Beneficiaries are able to implement the target activities with a wide flexibility, while remaining within the scope of their approved Activity Plan and Programme Guide rules. Delivery of agreed activities and targets will be evaluated at the final report stage.

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<sup>3</sup> Excluding the scores that would equal zero for a specific applicant.