EUROPEAN CAPITALS OF INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

Guidance Note for applicants

Please read these guidelines carefully before you start filling in the application form. You will find here all the necessary information that will help you fill in the sections in the application form correctly and describe your activities successfully.

BASIC INFORMATION

Language: Applicants are encouraged to submit the application in English, in order to facilitate the review of the proposals and speed up the evaluation process. It should be noted, however, that proposals submitted in any of the **EU official languages** will be accepted and translated using an automated translation system.

Mode of delivery of applications: via the online tool

Deadline: 26 February 2027 (12.00 CET)

HOW TO FILL IN THE APPLICATION

Your application should be as clear and precise as possible so the independent experts and the European Jury will be able to evaluate your efforts in the area of diversity and inclusion.

Make sure that you have **clearly presented** your **approach and strategy** with regards to diversity and inclusion and that you have detailed key **innovative activities** that led to your achievements in this field. Indicate the time frame of the activities: when they were launched, progress made in their implementation, and what the future developments will be. Keep in mind that the Award is for the range of activities being implemented by your local authority, not merely for a single activity.

Please focus on **specifics, facts and numbers**. Give **examples**, including **qualitative and quantitative information**.

The indicated maximum number of characters available for each answer includes spaces.

A/ LOCAL AUTHORITY IDENTITY

Short description of your local authority (town, city or region)

Include here some basic information about your local authority, its history, economy and population, in particular those aspects of relevance to diversity and inclusion. Specifically, it would be of interest to establish a picture of: the challenges faced by the local authority, such as levels of economic prosperity or infrastructural barriers to accessibility etc.; and the diversity of the local authority population and recent changes in this regard, such as the arrival of a significant number of migrants,

or ageing of the population, etc. It would be useful to note any particular barriers in the local or national context that hinder your initiatives on any specific ground of discrimination.

B/ NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE INITIATIVES

Please identify key diversity and inclusion initiatives you have undertaken or are undertaking, addressing the full range of these. These initiatives could be to: enhance the situation[1] and experience[2] of specific groups exposed to discrimination (on the grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and/or LGBTIQ+ identity); and/or address the particular needs[3] of these groups.

Where possible, these initiatives should demonstrate a comprehensive approach across the grounds of discrimination, and, within this, an intersectional approach. The initiatives should identify and pursue an ambitious vision for change in the approach to diversity and inclusion pursued by your local authority.

For each key initiative, include brief detail on:

- its aims, objectives, and strands of action;
- stakeholders involved and beneficiaries targeted;
- resources allocated and committed;
- all policy fields covered; and
- the start date and end date.

Where appropriate, be explicit if your initiatives are targeted at specific groups exposed to discrimination (based on grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and/or LGBTIQ+ identity), including any focus on the intersections between these grounds of discrimination. It would be useful to note any particular strategy that your initiatives are connected with.

The initiatives should demonstrate a coherent approach to diversity and inclusion across a range of policy fields by the local authority, alongside an ambitious vision for addressing diversity and inclusion issues as an employer, within the local authority workforce.

Section B of the application form may be used for promotional purposes (publication on the Award website, in a brochure, etc.), so please be as clear as possible in your description.

C/ OWNERSHIP / LEVEL OF COMMITMENT

Please describe your overall approach to diversity and inclusion in terms of the overarching policy statement, strategy or action plan that you implement for this area, and the organisational structures and systems in place to drive this implementation.

Please describe your overall approach, including, for example, giving some detail on:

- High-level policy statements on and commitments to diversity and inclusion.
- Dedicated strategy to drive and guide your action on diversity and inclusion, or the incorporation of a diversity and inclusion strand within a wider strategy or policy framework for the local authority, and the level of investment involved in this/these.

[1] 'Situation' refers to disadvantage experienced by these groups, whether of an economic, social, political or cultural nature.

[2] 'Experience' refers to the nature and quality of the interactions for these groups with the wider population and with organisations in the public and private sectors.

[3] 'Particular needs' refer to the needs that arise for these groups related to their identity and how they choose to live out their identity across each of the grounds of discrimination.

- Organisational structure(s) in your local authority that hold responsibility to implement, coordinate and monitor diversity and inclusion policies and actions, such as establishing or allocating responsibility to one or more departments and/or cross-departmental coordination committees, and the resources and staff allocated to these organisational structures.
- Systems for mainstreaming a focus on diversity and inclusion in all your policies, programmes and regulations. In identifying these, it would be useful to identity steps taken to: set standards for how to implement these systems; build staff capacity to implement these systems; and resource implementation of these mainstreaming systems.
- Initiatives to give leadership to and engage external sectors, such as the private sector, in addressing diversity and inclusion.
- If your local authority has signed a Diversity Charter and is a member of the national Diversity Charter; and if your local authority is a member of any networks with a focus on diversity and inclusion.

D/ IMPACT

Please identify how your key diversity and inclusion initiative(s) have improved the situation and experience of people exposed to discrimination (on the grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and/or LGBTIQ+ identity) and/or addressed their particular needs since the start of the initiative(s).

In doing so, please identify the most important indicators and targets set for each initiative (if possible, per target group) and how these align with their aims and objective. Please include key quantitative and/or qualitative data to demonstrate the short-term outputs, the medium-term outcomes and the long-term impacts achieved by your initiatives. Please identify how and by whom any external verification of these data on outputs, outcomes and impacts is done.

This assessment of effectiveness and impact must refer to the initiatives mentioned in Section B/ Nature and Scope of the Initiatives.

E/ QUALITY AND SUSTAINABILITY OF INITIATIVES

1. **How do you monitor, evaluate and ensure the quality of diversity and inclusion initiatives?**

The quality of diversity and inclusion initiatives is key to their positive impacts on the situation and experience of those groups exposed to discrimination and inequality (on the grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and/or LGBTIQ+ identity).

Please present the evaluation and monitoring mechanisms set up in your local authority to track and assure quality for these initiatives during and after their implementation. Please present the mechanisms in place to extract and apply the learning from these initiatives, to build on current initiatives and to inform future initiatives. Please identify who is involved in these mechanisms. You could also indicate whether your initiatives are related to or aligned with any national and/or European strategies and the standards set by these.

2. **How do you ensure the sustainability and continuity of diversity and inclusion initiatives so as to ensure continuity of the effort in the initiatives being taken and action to build on these initiatives?**

Ensuring sustainability for diversity and inclusion initiatives involves maintaining continuity of effort, and securing ongoing financial investment and human resources so the results achieved are maintained and developed further, including through change in political mandates.

Please describe the steps taken to ensure the sustainability and continuity of the initiatives taken and to build on the results achieved, identifying plans, processes, actions, human resources and funding in place or to be put in place to achieve this sustainability.

F/ INVOLVEMENT OF PEOPLE EXPOSED TO DISCRIMINATION

1. **For each of the target groups identified, describe the participative structures and processes in place to ensure their involvement (on the grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and/or LGBTIQ+ identity). Please identify if these or other structures and processes involve their representative organisations, as well as diversity experts. Please identify if this involvement encompasses the planning, implementation and evaluation of your initiatives, strategies and policies addressing diversity and inclusion.**

Please describe the participative approaches implemented by your local authority to ensure this involvement by providing some detail on the structures and processes for interaction with the target group and for engagement with representative organisations and relevant experts, identifying who is involved in these, what are the target groups and the grounds of discrimination addressed, the regularity of their convening, and the extent of their influence.

2. **Describe the actions to resource and support these representative organisations (for the grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and/or LGBTIQ+ identity). Please identify resources and supports that are provided to underpin their effective and ongoing involvement in your initiatives and your strategies and policies addressing diversity and inclusion and if representative organisations are involved in this decision-making process. Please identify the nature and scale of these resources and if these supports are ongoing and provided annually.**

Please identify these actions taken by your local authority in this regard, providing some detail on the nature and scale of this ongoing support for representative organisations and their involvement in the decision making. Please explain how these actions help to form and sustain their endeavours, and to engage effectively with your local authority. This would include in-kind support, funding for their initiatives, and core funding for their organisation building and sustenance, noting the grounds of discrimination covered by these representative organisations.

G/ WHY DOES YOUR LOCAL AUTHORITY DESERVE THE AWARD?

Please explain why your approach and your results in relation to diversity and inclusion are innovative and significant, and why you believe you deserve the Award.

Please state what your local authority is especially proud of. You may indicate what distinguishes your diversity and inclusion strategies, policies and initiatives, and which elements are especially worth being promoted as good examples for other local authorities.

H/ OBLIGATORY PART for applications for the SPECIFIC AWARD: COMBATING RACISM

1. **Please describe your local authority's overall vision for equality, inclusion and participation of people with a high risk of racial and/or ethnic discrimination[4]. Please specify if this vision embraces an intersectional approach and if so, provide details.**

Give some indication of what your local authority's vision for equality, inclusion and participation of people with a high risk of racial and/or ethnic discrimination is. You can describe your commitment to

[4] Reference to 'racial and ethnic origin' is made in line with EU and international legal terminology. The Commission emphasises, however, the common understanding that 'races' are purely based on socially constructed ideas and it rejects the notion of biological 'races'.

progress and achieve that vision. If your vision embraces an intersectional approach, please provide a short description.

2. **Please describe your local authority's overall strategy and policy for advancing equality, inclusion and participation of people with a high risk of racial and/or ethnic discrimination. Describe as well specific strategies, key initiatives, mainstreaming systems and institutional structures that were or are being implemented**.

This can include a description of:

- a high-level policy statement;
- strategy or an action plan;
- key initiatives;
- organisational structures that drive implementation of actions;
- initiatives that engage external actors.

Please provide a brief detail on each strategy/document that you mention and how it contributes to advancing equality, inclusion and participation of people with a high risk of racial and/or ethnic discrimination.

Please identify the target groups[5] and any intersectional dimension across the grounds of sex, age, disability, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, and LGBTIQ+ identity.

Please explain who your target group is. If your work includes an intersectional dimension, please include its brief description.

Please specify how your initiatives improved situation, experience of people with a high risk of racial and/or ethnic discrimination and if they addressed their particular needs. Please specify the impact of these initiatives (if possible, for each of the identified target groups) in terms of main indicators and targets set for these initiatives, and key quantitative and/or qualitative data on their short-term outputs, medium-term outcomes and long-term impacts.

Please describe the most important indicators and targets set for initiatives that you mentioned in this section of the application form. Explain how these align with their aims, objectives and particular needs of your target groups. Please include key quantitative and/or qualitative data to demonstrate the short-term outputs, the medium-term outcomes and the long-term impacts achieved by your initiatives. Please identify how and by whom any external verification of these data on outputs, outcomes and impacts is done.

3. **For each of the target groups identified, please describe the structures and/or processes for involving them in your local authority's initiatives advancing equality, inclusion and participation of people with a high risk of racial and/or ethnic discrimination, and for engaging with them and with their representative organisations.**

   Please identify if these structures and processes encompass the design, implementation, monitoring and review of your key initiative(s) and of any strategies or policies that underpin these initiatives.

[5] For instance, the Anti-racism strategy 2026-2030 mentions different forms of racism and people affected by it, such as (not limited to): anti-Black racism, antigypsyism, antisemitism, anti-Asian racism, anti-Muslim hatred.

Please describe the participative approaches implemented by your local authority to ensure this involvement by providing some detail on the structures and processes for interaction with the target group and for engagement with representative organisations and relevant experts, identifying who is involved in these. Please mention the regularity of their convening and the extent of their influence, in particular on design, implementation, monitoring of your key initiatives, strategies and policies that you mention in this section of the application form.

I/ SUPPORTING MATERIALS – OPTIONAL

In addition to **the information provided in the online application form and the Declaration of honour, which is compulsory and should be signed and uploaded in the application form**, you are invited to upload a 10-slide PowerPoint presentation highlighting and illustrating (e.g. with pictures) the strong points of your application.

J/ CONTACT PERSON AND POSTAL ADDRESS

Provide here all necessary contact details for the person in your administration responsible for this application.