

**Google.org Impact Challenge: Strengthening Democracy in Europe**  
**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**About**

**What is the Google.org Impact Challenge: Strengthening Democracy in Europe?**

The Google.org Impact Challenge: Strengthening Democracy in Europe is a €15M open call for European nonprofits, civic entities, academic institutions, and social enterprises to help scale initiatives promoting democratic resilience in the region, including through the use of advanced technology and AI.

**What type of projects are you looking for?**

We are particularly interested to see high-impact proposals leveraging technology in innovative ways, as well as coalitions and partnerships working together to create or scale a solution. We'll also be looking for initiatives focused on:

1. **Protecting election integrity:** For example, supporting cybersecurity for critical infrastructure and building the cyber capacity of nonprofit, non-governmental organisations who work on election-related topics, as well as tackling foreign disinformation through innovative methods such as [prebunking](#).
2. **Supporting voter education:** For example, digital literacy training for voters, or new ways of making civics information more accessible.
3. **Strengthening civic dialogue:** For example, encouraging scaled dialogue and community building to engage in consensus building, or advancing deliberative tech that fosters, supports, and leads to informed decision-making.

**When is the Google.org Impact Challenge: Strengthening Democracy in Europe?**

We will accept applications beginning on 25 June 2024 until 9 August 2024. The organisations selected to receive funding will be announced no earlier than November 2024.

**What will recipients receive?**

Successful applicants may receive anywhere between €250K up to €1M+ in funding and additional support to accelerate their project. Within the application, your project may indicate the amount of funding you wish to apply for in €250K increments.

**Entry & eligibility**

**Who is eligible?**

The Challenge is open to any not-for-profit charity, other not-for-profit organisation, public or private academic or research institution, civic entity, or for-profit social enterprise company with a project that has an explicit charitable purpose. Your organisation or your project's partner organisation must have a registered office in your country of residence in Europe (listed in the [Terms](#)). Unfortunately, individuals without organisational affiliation are ineligible.

**What are the Terms?**

Applicants are required to agree to the Google.org Impact Challenge [Terms](#) when applying to the Challenge. Successful recipients must agree to additional terms to receive funding, which will be provided either directly by Google or through a donor advisor fund (DAF). The number of recipients,

project specifics, amount of funding and the organisations selected are at Google's sole discretion. If funding is made through a DAF, U.S. tax regulations require the DAF sponsor to make its own legal determination regarding whether to accept Google's recommendation to fund a specific organisation.

## **What is a donor advised fund (DAF)?**

A DAF is a charitable giving vehicle administered by a U.S. charity (DAF sponsor), created to manage charitable donations and grantmaking on behalf of a donor / donor advisor (e.g. Google). Once Google makes a donation to a DAF, the DAF sponsor has legal control over the funds as required by U.S. tax regulations. As a DAF advisor, Google may recommend a grant be made to a specific organisation for a specified charitable project, but the DAF sponsor makes its own legal determination about whether to accept Google's recommendation. If funding is being provided through a DAF, the DAF sponsor may contact your organisation to request additional information or documentation as part of its due diligence.

## **Can we apply if we're a for-profit business with a social impact?**

For-profit businesses that are registered or formed under the laws of one of the eligible countries may apply if their suggested project has an explicit charitable purpose and they are willing to open source any IP created (or distributed) with the funding.

## **In what language should I submit my application?**

All applications must be submitted in English as interviews and post-grant support will be conducted in English. We require **at least one** fluent English speaker in your project team and strongly recommend English fluency across your core project team.

## **Can my organisation submit more than one idea?**

We encourage you to strongly consider which project best resonates with our submission criteria and your organisation's strengths. However, if you have two unrelated projects that you feel would each make good candidates, please submit a separate application for each. We will review each project independently. No organisation may submit more than two applications, except as described below.

## **What if I work for a large organisation, like a university, that has many departments - can we submit multiple applications?**

Large organisations like colleges and universities are permitted to submit multiple applications. In the case of colleges and universities, we ask that each Project Manager submit only one proposal. Please note, the Google.org Impact Challenge is not an opportunity to support research proposals. We are looking for projects with clear visions and action plans to create inspiring end impact.

## **Applying with Partners**

### **Can my organisation submit a joint application with another organisation?**

We strongly welcome and encourage collaboration - especially between technical and social sector experts in the form of partnerships and coalitions. The application allows you to specify partners who will be critical to your work, and we ask your partner coalition to select one organisation to be the applicant of record and main point of contact. For the applicant of record, we recommend choosing an organisation within your partnership that has a registered office in your country of residence in Europe and meets the eligibility criteria listed in the [Terms](#).

### **How can I keep the rest of my partners informed throughout the process?**

The applicant of record will be the main point of contact. Whenever you receive information and next steps, we suggest forwarding directly to your partners. If your organisation is asked to provide additional information and/or attend an interview, you may include representatives from your partner organisation to respond.

## **How will my coalition receive funding?**

If your application is selected to receive funding, the applicant organisation will be the sole recipient of funding, but it may sub-fund or subcontract with other organisations to complete the proposed project as long as all organisations comply with the terms of the funding agreement.

## **Confidential information / IP**

### **Will details of the project idea we submit be kept confidential?**

No. Google.org will not treat your application as confidential or proprietary, and the details of your project may be shared with internal or external experts to evaluate your proposal: please do not submit any proprietary or confidential information in your application. If your organisation is selected to receive funding, a summary for your project will be made available to the public on the Google.org Impact Challenge website and/or other Google channels.

### **Who owns the intellectual property created by selected organisations?**

We believe that projects supported by Google.org funding should be able to benefit everyone. If your organisation is selected to receive Google.org support, we will require any intellectual property created (or distributed) with support from Google.org funding be made available to the public for free under a permissive open source licence.

## **Project info**

### **What do you mean when you say “project”?**

A project is your organisation’s proposed concept and implementation plan for how you will use technology to help build a more resilient society. If selected as a recipient, Google.org will be supporting the implementation of this project - so we need to know exactly how funding will help realise your plan.

### **Can the project be in the idea stage? Does this have to be a new idea for my organisation?**

Yes - we’re happy to consider early-stage ideas with a clear and feasible plan for implementation that will benefit society. Ideas need not be brand new - in fact, they may already be a work in progress. In all cases, we would like to hear exactly how funding will change the trajectory of your progress toward implementation, scale, and impact.

### **If another organisation is currently implementing a similar concept, can we still submit the idea?**

Yes, but please note that projects will be evaluated in part on their innovative approach and potential to scale. Please tell us how and why your implementation is innovative for the community, why your organisation is uniquely suited to implement the concept in a way that will be more successful, or how you plan to partner with other organisations to achieve success.

### **Over what time period should the funds be spent?**

While we’re looking for projects that have tangible and compelling impact outcomes over the first 12-18 months, funding can be spent over a longer time period with a maximum of 36 months.

**What is the difference between Direct and Indirect costs as referenced in the Budget Breakdown in the Application Questions?**

Direct costs are those that directly impact the execution and success of your project, and are readily identifiable as being linked to a specific activity. Indirect costs are less apparent in their association with particular projects and relate more to the day-to-day operations of your organisation. As general guidance, proposals should submit project budgets with indirect expenses limited to 10-12% of the total budget or less.

Examples include, and are not limited to:

Common Direct Costs	Common Indirect Costs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Project salaries and benefits</li> <li>● Equipment directly related to the projects (e.g. laptops for beneficiaries)</li> <li>● Programming/development costs</li> <li>● Project-related travel</li> <li>● Outreach directly for the project</li> <li>● Supplies directly for the project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Space in an existing facility</li> <li>● Existing Information technology equipment and support (e.g. cloud storage costs)</li> <li>● Depreciation of existing equipment</li> <li>● Communications expenses (e.g. phones)</li> <li>● Administrative office supplies</li> <li>● Administrative time (e.g. management, HR, finance)</li> </ul>

**What does Google mean regarding responsible AI?**

Does the proposed use of artificial intelligence align with Google’s [AI Principles](#)? See Google’s [Responsible AI Practices](#) for practical guidance.

**Process**

**Can I get a copy of the application questions before I fill out the application?**

Yes, you can find a copy of the [application questions here](#).

Please note that the application comprises two response forms. Please read and follow the instructions listed to ensure you successfully submit your application.

**Can we include appendices or additional information to the application?**

The application includes an opportunity to provide links to additional resources. We are not able to accept any attachments beyond those linked as additional materials in the application form.

**Can I save a draft of my application on the site if I want to edit it later?**

No. Applications can’t be saved for later completion, so we recommend drafting your responses in a separate document first and only completing the application form when the entire application is ready for submission.

**How do I make sure my application is successfully submitted?**

The application comprises two response forms. For each form, make sure all required fields are populated and within the given word limits, then click the “Submit” button. You must complete both forms to successfully submit your application. After the completion of the second form, you will see a screen with a message confirming that we received your application. We will process the application and send you a confirmation to the work email address you have provided in the first form within 5 business days.

**I’ve submitted my application. What do I do now?**

# Google.org Impact Challenge

That's great news - thank you for applying. No further action is required. We'll reach out if we require any additional information, and will announce the selected organisations when decisions have been made.

## **Do I need a Google account to apply?**

No, you don't need a Google account.

## **Will every single application be reviewed?**

Yes, we will review all eligible applications received.

## **What if I still have questions after reading the FAQs?**

Please contact us at [strengtheningdemocracyeurope-challenge@google.com](mailto:strengtheningdemocracyeurope-challenge@google.com).

## **Additional resources**

**If my project is not a strong fit for this GIC, what other resources or opportunities does Google have in this space?**

### Funding opportunities

- Google is supporting Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and the European University Institute via The [European Media and Information Fund](#) (EMIF). EMIF provides funding to organisations based in Europe with an objective to support fact-checking and media literacy initiatives, as well as fundamental research projects, with a view to addressing online disinformation in Europe and promoting a more resilient and fact-based digital information ecosystem.
- Google is supporting the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN) at the nonprofit Poynter Institute for the [Global Fact Check Fund](#). The goal of the Fund is to strengthen the operational and engagement capacities of local and regional media organisations to increase the impact of fact checking journalism.
- Google hosts the [Google Academic Research Awards](#) which aims to fund and actively collaborate with researchers, fostering an ecosystem that generates impactful research with real-world applications. The program is open to professors (assistant, associate, etc.) at degree-granting institutions who are advising students and conducting research in the field of technology and computing. Specifically, the [Trust & Safety Research Award](#) focuses on work to improve digital safety across the online ecosystem, and applications open on June 27, 2024.

### Additional resources

- Google News Initiative publishes online [resources](#) including "[Strengthen your digital journalism](#)" which includes "[Find new ways to fight misinformation](#)" that aims to support journalists to explore digital tools that help verify the authenticity and accuracy of online images, videos, and reports. Google News Initiative also publishes [YouTube videos](#) with recorded tutorials on a range of topics, including sharing case studies, best practices, and recordings of events such as Google's Fighting Misinformation Online.
- Google has a robust in-kind donation program and we encourage you to visit [Google for Nonprofits](#) to learn more. The site includes product offerings and programs for nonprofits, such as [Google Workspace for Nonprofits](#), [Google Ad Grants](#), [Google Maps](#), and [YouTube for Nonprofits](#). These tools can help you find new donors and volunteers, work efficiently, and get supporters to take action.