

Guidelines for Applicants

***SCIATUmia* - Breath of the Borderlands**
Sustainable and Circular Inclusive AcTions for
Unheard coMmunities led by
Women ChAngeMakers

Women-led Sustainable Community Actions
Subgranting Scheme
in Nicosia - Cyprus

DEADLINE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS:
[31/1/2026, 23:59 local time]



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Overview - Introduction to the SUBLIME SDGs Project

This Call all is a part of the **SUBLIME SDGs Project** (*SDGs Unite Border Communities as Leaders of Inclusiveness, Mobilisation, and Empowerment*), a four-year Action co-funded by the European Commission under the DEAR program. The project operates in 11 EU countries and Border towns¹, aiming at empowering local authorities, CSOs, women and youth to co-design and implement community actions that foster sustainable development.

The core objective of the project is to empower citizens to co-design and take informed actions that address local and global sustainable development challenges, with a strong emphasis on gender equality and its mainstreaming across all sustainability initiatives. The project adopts a gender equality mainstreaming approach, encouraging the participation of all genders in activities and recognising the unique contribution of women's empowerment to achieving the SDGs at both local and global levels.

Moreover, SUBLIME SDGs seeks to strengthen collaboration among local authorities, women-led groups, and communities across Europe. More information about the project is available on the DEAR Programme [website](#).

Building on this framework, SUBLIME SDGs will provide financial and technical support to women-led initiatives that design and implement participatory community-level actions that foster citizen engagement. These actions should raise awareness and understanding on circular economy, sustainable lifestyles and climate change, while encouraging citizens to adopt sustainable behaviours. Through these efforts, the SUBLIME Project seeks to amplify women-led contributions to local and global climate resilience and inspire lasting, meaningful change.

1. About this opportunity

The *SCIATUmia - Women-led Sustainable Community Actions Subgranting Scheme* offers a unique opportunity for women, minority groups, and intersectional groups working towards the empowerment of all genders to lead sustainable community actions addressing local environmental and social challenges. *SCIATUmia**, invites the aforementioned groups supported by a legally registered CSO to apply for subgrants to

¹Lampedusa and Linosa (Italy), Strass und Steiermark (Austria), Burgas (Bulgaria), Nicosia Development Agency (Cyprus; comprising nine municipalities: Aglantzia, Ayios Dhometios, Dali, Engomi, Lakatamia, Latsia, Strovolos, Tseri and Yeri), Grande-Synthe and North France coastal urban areas (France), West Lesbos (Greece), Kisharsany and Baranya county area (Hungary), Msida (Malta), Hrubieszów (Poland), Tulcea (Romania) and Crnomelj (Slovenia).

implement Sustainable Community Actions promoting circular economy, sustainable lifestyles and climate justice and mobilizing citizens who are yet unaware, insensitive toward and disengaged in local and global challenges.

Through this scheme, Women leaders supported by CSOs can apply for funding to develop and implement creative, community-driven and tangible solutions including hands-on, practical and raising awareness activities targeting local citizens comprising a broad range of community members (e.g. other Civil Society Organizations, migrant organisations, faith communities, sports clubs). The funded projects will focus on key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically **SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities)**, **SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production)**, and **SDG 13 (Climate Action)**. In addition, these activities will highlight the significance of the circular economy for local communities. A core aspect of the scheme is to demonstrate and promote the pivotal role that women play in achieving the SDGs at both local and global levels, in alignment with **SDG 5 (Gender Equality)**.

This funding opportunity **encourages innovation** and sustainable action, empowering women and marginalized groups to drive positive change and create lasting impact in their communities. In addition to financial support, grant recipients will receive mentorship and guidance from experts in sustainable community development, leadership and empowerment, equipping them with the skills needed to ensure the success and sustainability of their projects and guiding leaders to align their actions with values of justice, care, and solidarity.

By participating, women and marginalized groups contribute to tackling the pressing issue of sustainability and justice and gain valuable leadership experience, network with like-minded peers, and develop skills that will benefit their future careers.

The name **SCIATUmia** draws inspiration from the Sicilian word '*ciatu*' (pronounced *sciatu*), which literally means *breath*. On the island of Lampedusa, *sciatu mia* is a tender expression used by grandparents to affectionately address their loved ones, for example, a grandmother calling her granddaughter '*sciatu mia*', meaning 'my breath' or 'my love'. It's a phrase that seals lifelong bonds, much like the act of breathing itself.

In Lampedusa, *ciatu* also evokes the sea breeze, that vital wind that carries memory, care, and connection across generations and borders. It's a metaphor for regeneration, for the invisible yet powerful forces that sustain life and community.

The addition of *mia* or *mio* (meaning *mine*) reinforces the personal and relational dimension: something that comes from you, belongs to you, and connects you to others. It reflects the spirit of women-led actions rooted in care, solidarity, and territorial belonging.

By choosing **SCIATUmia** as the title of this call, we honor the breath of the borderlands: the voices of women, the winds of change, and the intimate power of community transformation.

2. Context and Objectives of the Call

The call aligns with the EU's objectives on gender equality within the Sustainable Development Goals. Promoting women's leadership supports both environmental sustainability and gender equality.

The European Commission's Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025 highlights the role of young women in climate action and notes that green policies affect women and men differently, for example in exposure to energy poverty, transport access, and opportunities for climate refugees. Women are under-represented in environment-related sectors, particularly in decision-making roles.

UN recommendations for the EU's 2026–2030 Gender Equality Strategy emphasize encouraging women's leadership in green and circular economy fields (UNIRIC 2025).

The European Institute for Gender Equality² provides examples of gender mainstreaming in the European Green Deal, useful for policymakers integrating ecological sustainability and gender parity. Policies should promote both environmental and gender goals, starting at the local level.

Research³ by ICLEI Europe (in the frame of SUBLIME Project) in ten countries found that many local initiatives lack explicit frameworks combining sustainability with gender equality. Local authorities are encouraged to integrate gender considerations to enhance community well-being.

The SUBLIME Project also mapped local stakeholders⁴ in EU border towns and islands, documenting actions related to gender equality (SDG 5), sustainable communities (SDG 11), environmental responsibility (SDG 12), and climate action (SDG 13). A local survey revealed that over 60% of respondents supported increased female representation in local political decision-making roles, fewer than 40% were satisfied with current representation, and less than 1% preferred reduced representation.

These results underscore the importance of acknowledging women's contribution in sustainable actions that aim to achieve both ecological sustainability and gender equality.

² EIGE (2024), Good practices on gender mainstreaming in the European Green Deal: Towards a more gender- equal and greener Europe, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

³ https://capacity4dev.europa.eu/library/gender-equality-across-10-eu-towns-countries_en

⁴ <https://sublime-sdgs.eu/project/localmapping/>

Overall Objective

The **general objective** of the call is to *empower citizens in EU border towns and islands to co-design and implement informed actions tackling local and global sustainable development challenges, act as Ambassadors for sustainable lifestyles and climate actions, and promote gender equality and inclusion.*

Specific Objective

The **specific objective** of the call is to *support innovative **women-led actions** that generate a significant **territorial impact** by addressing **sustainability challenges** relevant to **local communities** within the **targeted geographical area**.*

These actions should:

- Align with the SUBLIME Project's overarching goals.
- Prioritize local impact by addressing the specific needs and priorities of the communities involved.

3. Target Audience of the awarded proposals

Each proposal will explicitly engage and empower at least **250 community members**, providing them with opportunities to participate in addressing sustainable challenges and promoting circular economy, sustainable lifestyles, and climate justice within their communities. Women-led groups committed at the local level are expected to submit proposals that foster active participation among:

- **Other civil society organisations, migrant organisations, faith communities, sports clubs, etc.**
- **Disengaged or unaware individuals** who are not yet involved in sustainable community actions but can contribute meaningfully through education, training, and targeted engagement strategies.
- **Marginalised and underserved groups** facing barriers to participation in community-driven initiatives and decision-making processes.

By engaging these target groups, the call aims not only to raise awareness of sustainability issues, but also to create spaces and opportunities for diverse voices and perspectives to shape local sustainability and resilience.

4. Priorities and Expected Results

The SCIATUmia Sub-granting Scheme aims to achieve tangible and meaningful outcomes through the funded initiatives. Priority will be given to projects that deliver the following expected results:

Women Empowerment

- Women, including young women, are empowered to take leadership roles in designing and implementing community-focused sustainable actions, strengthening their agency and capacity to influence local development.

Inclusive Community Engagement and Participation

- Projects actively mobilize disengaged, unaware, or marginalized groups in sustainable community actions. This includes migrants and refugee populations, youth not engaged in civic education, citizens unaware of SDGs, circular economy, or climate change, elderly populations, people with low digital literacy, ethnic and linguistic minorities, LGBTIQA+ individuals, people with disabilities, unemployed or economically disadvantaged groups, and groups focused on the intersection between identities.
- Participatory projects actively engage diverse community members and stronger connections are established between women-led initiatives and local stakeholders, fostering collaboration and collective ownership of sustainable solutions.

Enhanced Sustainable Development Awareness

- Local communities demonstrate increased understanding of sustainable development issues such as climate change, gender equality, circular economy, sustainable lifestyle and social inclusion.

Tangible change in the territorial context

- Actions generate a tangible change in the targeted geographical area.

Sustainable and Scalable Solutions created

- Innovative and practical actions addressing local sustainability community challenges are developed, offering models for scalability and replication in other contexts.
- Initiatives are designed to ensure lasting impact beyond the funding period.

Advancing the 2030 Agenda, justice, care and solidarity

- Actions contribute meaningfully to the achievement of SDG 5 - Gender Equality at the local level.
- Proposals also demonstrate how activities advance at least one additional SDG of the following list: SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities; SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production; SDG 13 – Climate Action.
- Actions are aligned with the principles of justice, care, and solidarity.

5. Activities that can be funded

To be eligible for co-funding, proposed actions under this call must align with the objectives and expected results of the present Call for Proposals. Applicants are expected to present activities tailored to address their communities' specific needs and challenges. Proposals must clearly identify and define their target group(s). Applicants must show all the activities they consider necessary to achieve the objectives of this call for proposals in relation to existing national and/or local needs and challenges to obtain tangible results in the context where the selected projects will be implemented.

Proposals should focus on women-led activities capable of engaging a minimum of **10 community leaders (70% women)** through direct active participation and reaching at least **250 community members** in the local context.

Eligible Activities *(not an exhaustive list)*

Different types of activities may be funded under this scheme.

Green and circular community actions

- Community repair cafés, upcycling actions, recovering textiles or organic waste into marketable products (e.g., compost, crafts, fashion products);
- Clean-up initiatives, community gardens, and kitchens using surplus food;
- Toy and childcare item swaps, equipment exchanges, water saving actions, etc.

Community awareness campaigns on sustainable lifestyle, conscious consumption & green habits

- Educational workshops, fun-learning sessions, or social media campaigns designed to inform and engage the public on circular economy & waste reduction (e.g. community swap events and plastic-free campaigns);
- Sustainable food actions (e.g. joint cooking sessions using donated or rescued food, followed by shared meals or distribution to vulnerable groups);

- Eco-mobility literacy, energy- and water-saving workshops (e.g. workshops teaching elderly women how to use energy-efficient appliances);
- Women/Youth Sustainability Club and other awareness-raising initiatives.
- Climate fairs, eco-festivals, exhibitions, sustainable living labs, eco-mindfulness sessions, storytelling circles, etc., aiming at engaging the broader community.

Innovative engagement actions:

- Interactive activities, gamification, or hackathons to co-design local solutions to sustainable development challenges.
- Art-based advocacy projects, such as mural painting initiatives or theatre performances, focusing on sustainable community development challenges, etc.

Capacity building and training:

- Workshops or seminars to enhance the skills and knowledge of women leaders and their teams in areas such as advocacy and communication for gender equality, and sustainability practices.

Other activities:

- Any other activity deemed necessary to achieve the objectives of the call.

Activities non-eligible for funding (not an exhaustive list)

Applicants should note that the following types of activities are not eligible for funding under this scheme. This list, while not exhaustive, highlights the key exclusions to ensure alignment with the objectives and values of the call:

Political Activities:

Initiatives directly affiliated with or supporting political parties, their candidates, or their campaigns.

Activities in Conflict with EU Values:

Projects that contradict the fundamental principles and values of the European Union, including respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law, and human rights.

Exclusive or Individualised Initiatives:

Activities aimed solely at benefiting a limited group of individuals without broader community engagement, such as covering personal training fees or offering private benefits to select participants.

Commercial or Profit-Oriented Ventures:

Projects primarily designed for profit-making purposes or commercial gain.

Infrastructure or Capital Investments:

Activities involving the purchase or construction of infrastructure, buildings, or vehicles.

Applicants are encouraged to design proposals that align with the overarching goals of fostering community engagement, promoting sustainability, and addressing **gender and environmental justice**. Any activities that fall outside these guidelines may be deemed ineligible for funding.

Additional Obligations

The SUBLIME project enhances networking and knowledge sharing, fostering connections between women-led initiatives and creating opportunities for sharing experiences, tools, and lessons learned to amplify the overall impact of the scheme.

That is why when preparing the plan of activities and the budget, applicants must ensure their commitment to engage in **Capacity Development and Networking activities**. In fact, meetings and capacity-building sessions will be organised during the implementation phase. For example, grant recipients shall attend capacity-building meetings online and in person with at least one designated project staff member to enhance their management skills.

- 15 hours webinar to finalise the selected proposals in full versions before the start of the action (February/March 2026);
- Periodic meetings with their support CSOs;
- Monthly short Check-in meetings with the national partner of SUBLIME (March-December 2026);
- An international meeting in Malta, with costs covered by the organisers, in September 2026.

6. Eligible Applicants

The applicant must meet some eligibility criteria to be eligible for a grant under this call for proposals. It is extremely important to consider that natural persons (e.g. individual women) cannot submit alone; they need a non-profit civil society organisation with a legal personality established in the country for the submission process. **SCIATUmia** invites women's groups and civil society players to develop fruitful collaborations at the local levels.

Eligibility Criteria

- The application should be submitted by a legally registered not-for-profit civil society organisation.
- The legal applicant acts as a support entity of one or more women who will propose and lead the action. These women may be members, volunteers, or even individuals unaffiliated with the organisation.
- The legal applicant must be based in Cyprus. **Priority will be given to local CSOs registered in Nicosia**, one of the 11 European territories of the SUBLIME SDGs partnership.
- The legal applicant must not have previously benefited, either directly or indirectly, from a project funded under the DEAR Programme (Call for Proposals 2022 - for instance, through the financial support to third parties of a DEAR-funded action).
- Only one project proposal can be funded for each applicant under this call for proposals.

Applicants may participate alone or in a consortium with other entities that will not manage a budget but will actively support the implementation of the action.

7. Location

Activities must be implemented in Nicosia - Cyprus but can extend the outreach and involve the target audience of the actions in the surrounding areas as well.

At least the 50% of the activities shall be implemented in Nicosia.

8. Project duration

The financed proposal shall start at the latest in March 2026. Activities that began before the signature of the agreement date cannot be funded.

Each proposed action must have a minimum implementation period of two (2) consecutive months. All actions should be concluded by 31.12.2026.

9. Size of the financial support per Country

The overall indicative amount of the total cost of the actions that can be funded under this call for proposals 20.540,00. With this total amount, a minimum of 2 proposals is expected to be funded.

The funds availability is indicated in the following table:

Geographical Area	Total Amount	Minimum total cost per proposal	Maximum total cost per proposal
Nicosia	20.540,00	5,135.00	10,270.00

It is important to note that each proposal must include **10% co-financing**. Specifically, the grant requested may cover up to 90% of the total eligible costs, with the remaining 10% to be financed from non-EU sources, such as private funds or contributions from other funding agencies among others.

Successful applicants must report on the entire project budget, including the 90% EU grant and the 10% co-financing contribution.

The contracting authority reserves the right not to award all available funds if insufficient numbers or low-quality proposals are received. On the other hand, the contracting authority will consider funding additional initiatives in case of unassigned resources.

10. Eligibility of Costs

Only eligible costs can be considered for a grant. Eligible costs must be based on real costs proven by supporting documents.

Eligible direct costs are:

- They are incurred during the project's implementation, as specified in the sub-grant contract. Therefore, costs relate to activities performed during the implementation period.
- They are indicated in the overall budget.
- They are necessary for the implementation of the project.
- They are identifiable and verifiable, in particular being recorded in the accounting records of funds' beneficiaries and determined according to the applicable accounting standards of their Country.
- They comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation.

Note: all the criteria above must be followed as they are cumulative.

Non-eligible costs are:

- Debts and debt service charges.
- Provision of losses and potential future liabilities.

- Costs declared by the grantees but financed by another action or programme receiving an EU grant.
- Purchases of lands or buildings.
- Purchase of vehicles.
- Currency exchange losses.
- Office rent.
- Taxes, including VAT, unless the grantee can demonstrate they cannot reclaim them.
- Credit to third parties.
- Lump-sum or self-certified expenses (all expenses incurred must be supported by appropriate supporting documents)
- In-kind contributions (e.g. valorisation of existing equipment, donations, volunteer works, etc.). In-kind contributions cannot be considered for the co-financing quote of the 10%.

11. Application Procedure & Timeline

The application process consists of the following steps:

1. Submission of a **brief application form**.
2. Selection process
3. After the selection process is concluded, representatives from the selected proposals are required to attend an online capacity-building path to enhance and refine their proposal. During the training, the selected organisations will be able to further develop the project using new design and management skills. This structured approach ensures that the selected initiatives are developed into well-aligned full proposals fostering high-quality project implementation. Participation is mandatory for at least one person from each selected proposal.

The following table describes the application procedure and implementation flow.

Timetable		
Step 1: information, submission, selection and signature of the grant agreement		
Info-session	19/12/2025 10:00	Individual women, as well as women and other genders representing civil society organizations, are invited to attend the

		information session to explore the detailed guidelines and share creative ideas for sustainable community projects.
Submission of proposals	31/1/2026, 23:59 local time	Applicants shall submit their brief application form in Greek or English in the provided template and shall attach their statute and registration act proving their eligibility and the legal geographical location.
Selection Process	January 2026	The selection process will include the following steps: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Initial Screening: All submitted applications will be reviewed to ensure completeness and compliance with eligibility criteria. Evaluation by Selection Committee: The contracting authority will establish an evaluation committee to evaluate the proposals based on established criteria listed and an assessment grid. Communication of selected application(s): Selected initiatives for funding will be informed at latest by the end of January 2026.
Grant Agreement signature	February 2026	All applicants will proceed with contractual agreements by the end of February 2026.
Step 2: Capacity development and training		
Training	February/ March 2026	Selected applicants will participate in a dedicated training session starting in late February 2026, designed to enhance their capacity to further develop and implement their proposals. Participants will acquire new knowledge to be reflected in their project applications.
Submission of the revised application form and Logical Framework	March 2026	Following the training, the selected brief application forms will be further developed and a Logical Framework will be formulated. Beneficiaries will work closely with assigned mentors to shape their ideas, incorporating the

		<p>knowledge, tools, feedback and skills acquired during the training.</p> <p>The revised application form and the Logical Framework will then be submitted by the end of March 2026 for review as part of the subgrant agreement process.</p>
<p>Step 3: Projects implementation</p>		
<p>Running funded initiatives</p>	<p>March to December 2026</p>	<p>By the end of March 2026 all the funded initiatives are expected to start up. The implementation period can go maximum until December 2026.</p>
<p>Step 4: Reporting</p>		
<p>Reporting phase</p>	<p>By the end of January 2027</p>	<p>Final project reporting, including financial and activity reports, as the grant agreement outlines.</p> <p>Subgrantees must be available to provide the right of access to financial evidence for their expenditures in case auditors will ask for it.</p> <p>The Final Project Report must be submitted no later than 31 January 2027.</p>

12. Κριτήρια Αξιολόγησης και Διαδικασία Επιλογής

Applications will be evaluated by a selection committee composed of experts in project design and management, as well as sectoral specialists. The primary focus will be on the relevance of the project idea and its alignment with the objectives of the call. The evaluation will also consider the priority criteria described in Paragraph 4 of these Guidelines and will equally assess the effectiveness, efficiency, and cost-benefit ratio of the proposed action.

If, upon review, it is found that the proposed action does not meet the eligibility criteria described above, and/or if the information provided is incorrect or incomplete, the application will be rejected on this sole basis.

Important Notes

All applicants will be informed about the selection process results by the **end of January 2026**.

If the examination of the applications shall reveal that **the proposed action does not meet the eligibility criteria** set above, and /or if the information provided is incorrect and/or not all mandatory is provided, the applications shall be rejected on this sole basis.

13. Contacts and information sessions

Applicants are offered assistance via the *SCIATUmia Contact Point* indicated in the table below.

Geographical Area	Contact	Info session	Location of the info session	Hours (local national time)	Registration for info session
Nicosia – Cyprus	iiacovou@anel.com.cy 22489105	19/12/2025	Nicosia Multipurpose Municipal Center	10:00 – 13:30	-

14. List of annexes

The following annexes are mandatory components of the application.

1. Annex A – Application form & Budget.
2. Annex B – Declaration of non-award of other EU DEAR grants.
3. Annex C – Declaration of other entities involved.
4. Statute and registration of the applicant organization.