



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL  
ENVIRONMENT  
Directorate C – Zero Pollution  
ENV.C.3 – Clean Air & Urban Policy



# European Green Capital and Leaf Awards 2027

## Call for Applications Rules of Contest



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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

The European Commission intends to select the winner of the **European Green Capital (EGC) 2027** title and **European Green Leaf (EGL) 2027** title following a Europe-wide contest. This is a contest for an EU prize in the field of environment under the LIFE programme. The regulatory framework for this EU Funding Programme is set out in the:

- Regulation 2024/2509 ((recast) [Regulation - EU, Euratom - 2024/2509 - EN - EUR-Lex](#) (EU financial regulation, recast).
- Basic act, the [LIFE Regulation](#).

The call is launched in accordance with the Multiannual Work Programme LIFE<sup>1</sup> and will be managed by **the European Commission, DG Environment (hereinafter 'DG ENV')**. We invite you to read the call documentation carefully, and in particular the Rules of Contest as well as the attached documents.

You are also encouraged to visit the [European Green Capital and Leaf Awards webpage](#) to consult the list of winning cities funded previously.

The present rules of contest established by the European Commission cover both the **European Green Capital Awards (EGC Award) 2027** and **European Green Leaf Awards (EGL Award) 2027**.

The **European Commission** manages the contest with the support of the European Green Capital and European Green Leaf Awards (**EGCL**) Secretariat.

The award of the financial prizes will be managed solely by [DG ENV](#).

## 1.2 OBJECTIVES THEMES AND PRIORITIES

In 2021, the UN Human Rights Council unanimously passed a resolution recognising the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as a human right. The text also calls on all stakeholders to work together to implement this resolution. The [statement on One Health](#), developed jointly by the global health, food and environment organisations, recognises the close links between health and environment and the need to collaborate across sectors adopting a holistic approach to ensuring clean water, energy and air, safe and nutritious food, taking action on climate change, and contributing to sustainable development.

Cities across Europe are facing enormous environmental and climate challenges. Air pollution continues to be the main environmental cause of adverse health impacts, including premature deaths. Europe's water bodies still face significant pressures. Biodiversity and ecosystems continue to deteriorate. Environmental noise is a continued concern, and inefficient waste management practices mean that significant quantities of valuable resources are lost, hindering the transition to a more circular economy. Cities continue to generate increasing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and at the same time are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The enormous need for a green and just transformation of our societies starts in our cities. It is there, where change management and the ability to adapt and innovate is most urgent. In EU environment policy, the [Circular Economy](#) and [Zero Pollution](#) Action Plans, and the the inter-related EU [Biodiversity](#), [Forests](#) and [Soil](#) strategies - have

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<sup>1</sup> Commission Implementing Decision of 9.7.2021 on the financing of the LIFE programme and the adoption of the work programme for the years 2021 to 2024, Brussels 9.7.2021 C (2021) 4997 final.

delivered key results. The same applies to related strategies, for example the [Farm to Fork](#) and the [Sustainable Finance Agenda](#).

The urban dimension will feature prominently in the mandate of the Commission 2024-2029. This is particularly important for Europe's sustainability and competitiveness objectives and the announced ambitious policy agenda for cities with a focus on key issues such as housing, climate action, digitalisation, mobility, social inclusion and equality.

For change to happen, a fundamental rethink of the relationship between our economy and the natural world is needed. The time for properly taking nature into account in our economy is more urgent than ever.

Many cities have understood this and started a change process for a greener future and better quality of life for their citizens. Those frontrunners can show others how transition can be done and we invite them to apply for the awards.

In connection to the awards, the European Commission initiated the [Green City Accord](#) (GCA) to spur development and action in cities. The 'Green City Accord' launched by the European Commission 2020 is a high-profile environment initiative and complements the [Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy](#) initiative. Over hundred mayors have signed the Accord and committed to take further action on air and water quality and management, waste/circular economy, nature/biodiversity and noise to make their cities cleaner, greener and healthier by 2030. The GCA is a key initiative that supports cities in becoming frontrunners and award winners.

Complementing the efforts in helping cities to becoming climate-neutral, in 2021 the European Commission initiated the [100 Climate-Neutral Cities Mission](#). The selected cities have the ambition to become climate-neutral by 2030 focussing on their CO2 footprints. The [EU Missions on Climate Adaptation, Ocean & Waters and Soil](#) also aim to involve and support cities, on research and innovation combined with new forms of governance, collaboration and citizen engagement. Supporting the transformation of our building stock, the [New European Bauhaus](#) initiative calls on all of us to imagine and build together a sustainable and inclusive future that is beautiful for our eyes, minds, and souls. The Green Capital and Green Leaf Awards operate in close cooperation with those urban initiatives.

### **1.3 OBJECTIVES EGC AWARD AND EGL AWARD**

The EGC Award was launched in 2010 and has become a well established EU initiative empowering cities to provide a better environment for their citizens. The EGL Award for cities below 100 000 inhabitants was launched in 2015 in order to reach out to more cities.

The EGC Award and EGL Awards are a recognition for cities for their comprehensive effort to increase the quality of life of their citizens for the climate and for the environment that directly affects them. The Awards seize the co-benefits of environmental action at all levels and with a network of likeminded cities of past winners and finalists, the group of frontrunning cities is growing. The network is an added value for cities, it gives access to actors at EU level, city peers and help from a dedicated Secretariat.

Throughout the Awards year, winning cities are supported by the Commission and by the EGCL Secretariat dealing with day to day tasks.

Vilnius (Lithuania) is the European Green Capital 2025 and Treviso (Italy) with Viladecans (Spain) are both winners of the European Green Leaf Award 2025.

**The objectives of the EGC Award and EGL Award are to:**

- a. Recognise and publicly acknowledge cities that have a consistent record of working towards high environmental standards;
- b. Encourage cities to intensify and speed up current targets and commit to ambitious goals for further environmental improvement and sustainable development;
- c. Engage citizens in embracing change, inspire others and promote experience and best practice in other European cities.

All European cities have the incentive to improve the quality of life for their citizens and reduce their impact on the environment. The key message of the awards is to recognise the frontrunning cities and motivate others to do more.

More information on both awards is available here:

- [https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/urban-environment/european-green-capital-award\\_en](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/urban-environment/european-green-capital-award_en)

Social media channels:

- Facebook: [EuropeanGreenCapitalAward](#)
- Twitter: [@EUGreenCapital](#)
- LinkedIn: [@EU Green Capital](#)

## **1.4 AVAILABLE BUDGET**

The prize budget is as follows:

- **EGC Award**
  - The **title** of EGC 2027 to one winning city.
  - A **financial prize**<sup>2</sup> of EUR 600.000<sup>3</sup> to the winning city (one winner)
- **EGL Award**
  - The **title** of EGL 2027 to one or two winning cities.
  - A **financial prize**<sup>4</sup> of EUR 200.000<sup>5</sup> per winning city (max. 2 winners)

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<sup>2</sup> The proposed financial prize will follow the rules on prizes as set out in the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the Union [Regulation - EU, Euratom - 2024/2509 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

<sup>3</sup> The availability of the resources for awarding the financial prize is subject to the adoption of the EU 2025 Budget and its amendments.

<sup>4</sup> The proposed financial prize will follow the rules on prizes as set out in the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the Union [Regulation - EU, Euratom - 2024/2509 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

<sup>5</sup> The availability of the resources for awarding the financial prize is subject to the adoption of the EU 2025 Budget and its amendments.

## 2 TIMETABLE AND ADMISSIBILITY/DOCUMENTS

### 2.1 INDICATIVE TIMETABLE AND DEADLINES

Timetable and deadlines (only for informative purposes but subject to changes)	
Opening:	15 January 2025
Deadline for submission:	15 April 2025 at 23:59 CET (Brussels)
Evaluation:	April-June 2025
Evaluation results:	June 2025
Jury and Award:	Autumn 2025

### 2.2 ADMISSIBILITY AND DOCUMENTS

The Application Form can be downloaded in English from the [registration portal](#), after submitting the required information on basic city contacts and data.

Applications must be submitted before the call '**deadline for submissions**' mentioned above. Late applications will not be accepted. Notification emails acknowledging **receipt** of submitted applications will be sent to applicant cities by the European Green Capital and European Green Leaf Awards Secretariat within two working days. It is essential that applicants ensure that they receive such a receipt. If they do not receive this confirmation e-mail, they should please write to [info@europeangreencapital.eu](mailto:info@europeangreencapital.eu) or [info@europeangreenleaf.eu](mailto:info@europeangreenleaf.eu) as soon as possible to make sure their application has been submitted correctly.

Applications must be submitted **electronically in PDF format** via the online Application Portal: [https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/application\\_portal\\_2027\\_awards](https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/application_portal_2027_awards)

Applications must be **complete** and contain all the requested information and all required annexes and supporting documents.

Your application must be **readable, accessible, printable**.

The signatory of the application should be the mayor or highest ranking city representative, authorised by national law to legally represent the city.

You may be asked at a later stage for further documents (for legal entity validation, bank account validation, ethics review, etc).

## 3 ELIGIBILITY AND EXCLUSION

### 3.1 ELIGIBILITY

The European Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail.<sup>6</sup> Any official statement or conduct from an applicant city that questions these principles or values may result in the application being rejected.

This call for entries to the contest for the EGC Award and EGL Awards 2027 are open to the following applicants:

- Applicant cities from EU Member States as well as from European third countries that are associated to the LIFE programme at the time of closure of the present call.
- Cities from EEA countries can also participate in the call and win the award but the prize money will only be given to countries that are associated to the LIFE programme at the time of closure of the present call.<sup>7</sup>
- For the EGC: Applicant cities from the countries listed above which have more than 100 000 inhabitants.
- For the EGL: Applicant cities from the countries listed above from 20 000 and below 100 000 inhabitants.
- In countries where there is no city with more than 100 000 inhabitants, the largest city is eligible to apply.
- For the purposes of this contest, a 'city' is understood to be an (1) urban area, including metropolitan areas (excluding agglomerations that combine more than one otherwise eligible cities<sup>8</sup>), and must encompass an (2) administrative unit governed by a city council or another form of democratically elected body. In case of doubt whether an entity is a city or not, the applicant will be asked to show the status of the city in question in accordance with its national law.
- For population data, Eurostat will be the source of reference. For countries not covered by Eurostat, the Commission will perform specific checks when assessing the eligibility criteria, and might ask any concerned cities to prove they comply with this requirement.
- In any given year, cities can apply for either the EGC Award or EGL Award, but not both at the same time.
- Past winners of the EGC Award or EGL Award titles may not re-apply.

### 3.2 EXCLUSION

Applicants subject to an **EU exclusion decision** or in one of the following **exclusion situations** that bar them from receiving EU funding **CANNOT** participate<sup>9</sup>: The following exclusion criteria apply:

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<sup>6</sup> Article 2 of the Treaty of the European Union.

<sup>7</sup> Those EEA countries that have not acceded to the LIFE programme will receive the award title but not the material prize.

<sup>8</sup> An agglomeration is understood to be a grouping of cities/towns/municipalities or other entities that form one or several urban areas, however not governed by the same city council).

<sup>9</sup> See Article 138 FR.s

- Bankruptcy, winding up, affairs administered by the courts, arrangement with creditors, suspended business activities or other similar procedures (including procedures for persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts).
- In breach of social security or tax obligations (including if done by persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts).
- Guilty of grave professional misconduct<sup>10</sup> (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the prize).
- Committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the prize).
- Shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decisionmaking or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the prize).
- Guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of EC Regulation [No 2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decisionmaking or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the prize).
- Created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decisionmaking or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the prize).

Applicants will also be refused if it turns out that<sup>11</sup>:

- During the award procedure they misrepresented information required as a condition for participating or failed to supply that information.
- They were previously involved in the preparation of the call and this entails a distortion of contest that cannot be remedied otherwise (conflict of interest).

Applicants must sign the declaration of honour stating that they are not in any of the situations above.

## 4 EVALUATION AND AWARD PROCEDURE

The evaluation process comprises **two steps**:

1. A technical evaluation carried out by a **Panel of Experts**.
2. A final assessment by the **Jury** that takes into consideration the experts' technical opinion and factors presented by the Commission.

On the basis of the evaluation by the Jury, the Commission, as the awarding authority, will decide on the award of the prize.

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<sup>10</sup> Professional misconduct includes: violation of ethical standards of the profession, wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility, false declarations/misrepresentation of information, participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting the contest, violation of IPR, attempting to influence decision-making processes or obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain advantage.

<sup>11</sup> See Article 143 FR



## 4.1 THE PANEL OF EXPERTS – ROLE AND COMPOSITION

The European Commission sets up the panel of seven experts, one expert per indicator, following a public call for applications. The members of the Panel of Experts are bound by a contract.

The Panel of Experts provides a technical assessment (based on objective, reliable and comparable information) and prepares the ground work for the selection of the cities to be awarded with the title of EGC and EGL.

**The final decision on which cities will be short-listed lies with the Commission** (guided by, not bound by, the assessment of the Panel of Experts)<sup>12</sup>.

Members of the **Panel of Experts** are individuals appointed in their personal capacity who act independently and in the public interest. They must disclose any circumstances that could give rise to a conflict of interest by submitting a 'declaration of interests' ('DOI') form on the basis of the standard DOI form for expert groups. The Commission is committed to ensure that experts do not have a conflict of interest.

The **Panel of Experts** will meet a maximum of three times per evaluation cycle.

## 4.2 THE JURY

The **jury** is appointed by the European Commission (as represented by the Director General of DG ENV – note that the Director General of DG ENV is the authorising officer responsible for awarding the financial prize).

The **jury** will be composed of some of the following organisations<sup>13</sup>:

- The European Commission's Directorate-General for Environment (Chair).
- The European Parliament.
- The European Committee of the Regions and / or the European Economic and Social Committee.
- The European Environment Agency.
- Environmental non-governmental organisations.

For transparency purposes, information about the composition of the Jury will be posted on the awards website site prior to the deliberations. Any attempt to contact a member of the jury will result in automatic rejection of the applicant city.

All applicants will be informed in due time about the final decision; successful applicant cities will be awarded the prize; non-successful cities will be informed accordingly and they will be provided with the reasons for the decision.

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<sup>12</sup> The Commission may, if evidence supports this, alter the assessment provided by the Panel of Experts, in particular in circumstances where cities fail to live up to environmental standards established in EU Law).

<sup>13</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/europeangreencapital/applying-for-the-award/the\\_jury/](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/europeangreencapital/applying-for-the-award/the_jury/)

### 4.3 EVALUATION PROCESS – INDICATORS

The Awards have been successfully running for more than a decade. The indicator areas are aligned with the [Green City Accord](#), which was initiated in 2020 and signatory cities report key data and commit to improve in those areas.

The five key themes are: air, water, noise, nature and biodiversity and circular economy. In order to complete the holistic character of the Awards, two further indicators for climate change mitigation and adaptation are included in the application forms for this competition.

A panel of seven independent experts will assess all applications against those **seven indicators** as follows:

1. Air Quality
2. Water
3. Biodiversity, Green Areas and Sustainable Land Use
4. Waste and Circular Economy
5. Noise
6. Climate Change Mitigation
7. Climate Change Adaptation

Additionally the applicant is required to provide Good practices, which will be assessed by the expert panel (see 4.4.2).

### 4.4 SELECTION AND AWARD PROCESS

#### 4.4.1 Pre-selection

Admissibility of the application, eligibility and non exclusion criteria will be examined first. These are minimum requirements and the applicants must meet these criteria in order to have their application further examined.

Applications not meeting the pre-selection requirements will be rejected and applicant cities duly informed on the reasons for their rejection.

#### 4.4.2 Pre-evaluation stage by the panel of experts

In a first selection phase, the panel of experts will perform the technical assessment which will contain qualitative comments on each application. The assessment is made by the expert competent for one of the indicators, then it is subsequently peer reviewed by another expert. The **seven indicators** as examined and peer reviewed, are endorsed by the Panel of Experts.

Because of their often integral nature, the **Good practices** are assessed by each expert (more details in the guidance note).

To ensure the use of objective, comparable and reliable environmental information, the Panel of Experts will, for both awards, rely also on environmental data and indicators from the European Environment Agency.

The Panel of Experts will also consider if the city is concerned by **infringements** in the field of EU environmental law (or equivalent major procedures in non EU cities). In the application form, applicants should inform if they are aware of any EU proceedings vis-a-vis EU legislation concerning

their city, in particular in the following areas: Air Quality, Water quality and efficiency, Biodiversity and Nature, Waste and Circular Economy, and Noise.

The application for the EGC Award and EGL Award follow the same aspects, but applicants for the EGC Award are expected to give more complete and more detailed information than applicants for the EGL Award.

Guided by the Panel of Experts' recommendations, a shortlist of cities will then be established by the Commission and subsequently submitted to the Jury.

A summary of the Panel of Experts assessment of the shortlisted cities is made publicly available on the [EU Green Capital & EU Green Leaf Awards website](#). All eligible cities can request a copy of their technical assessment report.

### 4.4.3 Jury Deliberation

In a second selection phase, the jury receives prior to the jury panel, a detailed technical assessment report from the panel of experts. This report serves as a background document for the second phase of the selection.

The shortlisted cities will be invited to present their application in front of the jury panel. For the jury briefing, the finalist cities will be asked to provide at least two weeks ahead of the jury panel the following documents:

- A document (of a maximum length of two pages) on the city's environmental governance, outlining how they work across policy silos and engage citizens and stakeholders from different political and societal fields including businesses.
- A document (of a maximum length of two pages) with a vision of the city's communication strategy and actions for the year 2027 as an EGC or EGL. This document should give a first overview of what the focus areas would be and how the city will engage with others.

Representatives of each shortlisted city will be invited to give an oral presentation in front of the jury panel covering as follows:

1. The city's **overall strategy**, vision, and commitment to sustainability, and how these are implemented in practice.
2. The city's **communication strategy** and actions for its role as a EGC or EGL for the year 2027, which should address:
  - Citizen communication and involvement to date in relation to the seven environmental indicators, effectiveness via changes in citizen behaviour, lessons learned and proposed modifications for the future.
  - The city's ability to showcase its sustainability vision and plans at local and regional levels.
  - How the applicant city intends to fulfil their role in inspiring other European cities.
3. Their **proposal on concrete initiatives and measures** for their title year 2027 with the aim to enhance transition to a greener and more sustainable city. The city should give examples and inform about planning to reach targets as under the European Green Deal, in particular those specified in the Zero Pollution Action Plan, the Biodiversity Strategy and Circular Economy Action Plan and the Fit for 55 Package.

Following these presentations, the Jury will deliberate on the winner of the EGC Award and EGL Award 2027. The Jury will select the winners on the basis of the award criteria. For transparency of the overall process, the deliberation and conclusions of the jury are presented in a publicly available 'Jury Report' after the award ceremony. For transparency reasons, the reports for the last competitions are published on the [awards website/winning cities](#).

Presentations to the jury will take place in the autumn 2025 in Vilnius (EGC 2025).

#### 4.4.4 Award stage

The winner of the EGC Award 2027 and winner(s) of the EGL Award 2027 will be announced at a festive awards ceremony in the autumn 2025 in Vilnius (EGC 2025).

## 5 AWARD CRITERIA

For the EGC Award and EGL Award, if cities are eligible, admissible, shortlisted and have presented their city in front of the jury panel (details see 'jury deliberation' point 4.4.3 ) the jury will give scores to the following award criteria :

1. The technical assessment of the environmental performance of the applicant city, as well as the efforts made to work towards high environmental standards, including Good practices with which the city shows exemplary innovative sustainable performance that will be an inspiration to other cities.
2. The applicant city's overall strategy, vision, and commitment to sustainability, and how these are being and will continue to be implemented in practice – as well as the approach the applicant city intends to take as an EGC or EGL respectively. This includes the city's performance on sustainable governance.
  - The 2-page document on governance included in the application will also be subject to assessment at the jury stage.
3. The applicant city's communication strategy and actions for its role as an EGC or EGL, which should address:
  - Citizen communication and involvement to date in relation to the seven environmental indicators, effectiveness via changes in citizen behaviour, lessons learned and proposed modifications for the future.
  - The extent of the applicant city's ability to showcase the city's sustainability vision and plans at local and regional levels.
  - How the applicant city intends to fulfil their role of Green Ambassador/role model, inspiring other European cities.
  - The above three award criteria will be assessed *inter alia* taking into account the initiatives and measures proposed for the Award year to enhance the applicant city's environmental sustainability and to contribute to achieving the applicant city's sustainability vision.
  - The 2-page document with a vision of the city's communication strategy and actions for the year 2027 as an EGC or EGL will also be subject to assessment at the jury stage.

Award criteria		Product provided by applicant city	Assessment at a level of	Minimum pass score	Maximum score	Total minimum pass score	Total maximum score
1a	Technical assessment of the environmental performance (7 indicators)	Application form duly filled in including Good practices	Expert panel	6	10	42	70
				Per indicator	Per indicator		
2	Strategy, vision, and commitment to sustainability and related implementation planning, including via Green City Accord commitments	City presentation and 2 page document on governance	Jury panel			18	30
3	Communication strategy and planning of events/initiatives during the title year in case the city wins	City presentation and 2 page document on city's communication strategy and actions	Jury panel			12	20
<b>Total scores</b>						<b>72</b>	<b>120</b>

Applications must pass both the individual minimum pass scores for each indicator **and** the total minimum pass score. The prizes will be awarded to the applications with the best scores. Other applications will be rejected.

## 6 OTHER CONDITIONS

The winner is expected to organise events and take initiatives during their title year, whereby the following applies:

- The budget the city sets aside for their title year has to be maintained at a level capable of delivering a high-quality programme.
- The European dimension has to remain sufficiently strong and a final draft be sent to the Commission ahead of the title year.
- The marketing and communication strategy and communication material (printed and online) used by the winning city and the projects of the city to enhance its sustainability must clearly reflect the fact that the awards are an initiative of the European Commission. For this purpose, the winning city shall make use exclusively of the official 'winning city' branding by the European Commission, where applicable (see 'letter of intent' below). Details on the rules and requirements for applying the logo are included in the Branding Rules document (see 5&6 'letter of intent').
- The winning city shall report on the use of the financial prize including the city's vision, plans and measures to achieve targets specified in the Zero Pollution Action Plan, the Biodiversity Strategy and Circular Economy.
- The winning city shall **report on the impact** of the title no later than **6 months** after their title year expired.

- A **legacy report** shall be provided no later than **two years** after the end of their title year, reflecting on the impact the Award has had and still has on the city. It will be assumed that the plans for monitoring and evaluation of the title awarded to the city are in place.

The winning cities will gain attention Europe-wide. They will act as models inspiring other cities to follow the example and this will have a multiplying effect.

To support the winning cities in this endeavour, the European Commission will summarise a list of activities that are enshrined in a non-binding agreement, called 'letter of intent', between DG ENV and the winning city (annex 5 and 6 respectively).

The letter of intent is complemented by monitoring guidelines, a guideline document for monitoring the impact of the EGC/EGL title, as well as a 'communication toolbox', containing a number of instructions which will be useful in helping to promote the year as the EGC/EGL. An important element of the communications toolbox is the graphic design, ensuring continuity of the EGC Award/EGL Award 'brand' from year to year so that, by promoting the EGC Award/EGL Award brand, the visibility for the winning city is also increased and guaranteed after the city's EGC/EGL(calendar) year expires.

The European Commission shall be authorised to publish or to refer to, in whatever form and on or by whatever medium, the following information:

- The name of the winning city.
- The locality and address of the winning city.
- The completed application of the winning city<sup>14</sup>.
- The general purpose of the communication strategy and implemented projects / actions as presented at the jury meeting.
- The amount of the financial prize legally committed.

## 6.1 PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS

For the **EGC 2027**, one winning city will receive the award and a final prize of **EUR 600.000** (six hundred thousand euros)<sup>15</sup>.

For the **EGL 2027** one or two winning cities will receive the award and a final prize each of **EUR 200.000** (two hundred thousand euros)<sup>16</sup> per city.

The winner of the EGC Award and EGL Awards will be announced at the Awards Ceremony. For the EGC Award and EGL Awards, the payment of the prizes will take place in two instalments:

- 70% will be paid after the city has submitted a more concrete planning of events and actions for their winning year. Payment will need to be claimed within three months of the date that the title is awarded or by 31 December 2026 at the latest. The winning cities are encouraged to use the prize as a contribution towards implementing the initiatives and measures to enhance the city's environmental sustainability as part of the winning city's EGC/EGL year 2027, **as set-out by the city's sustainability vision presented at the jury meeting**. Prior to the payment of the first instalment, a kick-off meeting between the winning cities and the European Commission shall be set up to assess compliance with this requirement.

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<sup>14</sup> With due regard to data protection issues and protection of commercial interests if applicable.

<sup>15</sup> The availability of the resources for awarding the financial prize is subject to the adoption of the EU 2025 Budget and its amendments.

<sup>16</sup> The availability of the resources for awarding the financial prize is subject to the adoption of the EU 2025 Budget and its amendments.

- The kick-off meeting shall take place no later than one month following the award of the EGC/EGL 2027 titles.
- 30% during the 'title year' and no later than 30 June 2027, provided that the designated city continues to honour the commitments it made at the application stage, inter alia relating to the payment of the first instalment. Compliance with this requirement will be assessed by the European Commission on the basis of a follow-up report submitted by the winning city no later than 6 months after the end of the winning year. This report shall outline the actions that enhanced the **city's environmental sustainability vision** implemented as part of the cities' EGC/EGLyear programme.

The financial prize will be paid to the winning city, after the submission by the city of the necessary financial information<sup>17</sup>.

## 6.2 COMMUNICATION — DISSEMINATION — VISIBILITY OF FUNDING

Prize winners must promote the prize and its results, by providing targeted information to multiple audiences (including the media and the public) in a strategic and effective manner.

Communication activities related to the prize (including media interviews, press statements, conferences, seminars, information material, such as brochures, leaflets, posters, presentations, etc., in electronic form, via traditional or social media, etc.), dissemination activities and any infrastructure, equipment, vehicles, supplies or major result funded by the prize must acknowledge EU support and display the EGC or EGL logo.

The logo must remain distinct and separate and cannot be modified by adding other visual marks, brands or text.

Further details are included in the branding rules as stated in the draft letter of intent (annex 5 and 6 respectively).

## 6.3 DATA PROTECTION AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

The Commission is bound by Regulation 2018/1725 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data.<sup>18</sup> The Commission will process personal data from applicants in accordance with this regulation. For more details, please refer to the data protection notice (annex 6).

The awarding authority does not obtain ownership of the results produced in the context of the prize. However, the awarding authority has the right to use non-sensitive information relating to the prize and materials and documents received from the winners (such as pictures or audio-visual material, in paper or electronic form) for information, communication, dissemination and publicity purposes.

Photos and videos taken by the awarding authority either in preparation of the award ceremony or during the award ceremony are the sole property of the awarding authority.

## 6.4 CHECKS, AUDITS AND INVESTIGATIONS

The awarding authority, the European Commission, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) and the European Court of Auditors (ECA) may carry out

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<sup>17</sup> Financial information that is needed comprise the dully signed Legal Entity Form of the City and the Bank Account Form.

<sup>18</sup> OJ C 288, 31.08.2017.

checks, audits and investigations in relation to the prize.<sup>19</sup>

## 6.5 WITHDRAWAL OF THE PRIZE — RECOVERY OF UNDUE AMOUNTS

The awarding authority may withdraw the prize after its award and recover all payments made, if it finds out that:

- False information, fraud or corruption was used to obtain it.
- The prize winners were not eligible or should have been excluded.
- The prize winners are in serious breach of their obligations under these Rules of Contest.

## 6.6 DISPUTES CONCERNING THE PRESENT PRIZE

EU law applies to any dispute concerning the present prize. The competent court or arbitration tribunal to hear disputes in the General Court of the Court of Justice of the European Union:

General Court  
Rue du Fort Niedergrünewald  
L-2925 Luxembourg  
Tel.: (352) 4303-1 Fax: (352) 4303 2100  
E-mail: [GeneralCourt.Registry@curia.europa.eu](mailto:GeneralCourt.Registry@curia.europa.eu)

If applicants believe that there has been maladministration, they may lodge a complaint to the European Ombudsman within two years of the date when they become aware of the facts which form the basis for the complaint (see <http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu>).

## 6.7 APPLICABILITY OF PENALTIES

Financial or administrative penalties, or both, may be imposed on applicants who have made false declarations, or committed irregularities or fraud, in accordance with the conditions laid down in Article 138 and Article 143 of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Union and in proportion to the value of the financial prize.

## 7 HOW TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION

All applications must be submitted directly **online via the [online Application Portal](#) in PDF format**. Paper format applications are **not** accepted.

The full application must be written in one of the official languages of the European Union. However, submission of the application in English is encouraged for the smooth and timely running of the assessment of the applications.

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<sup>19</sup> For the powers of OLAF, EPPA and ECA, see Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 883/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 September 2013 concerning investigations conducted by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1073/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Regulation (Euratom) No 1074/1999 (OJ L 248, 18/09/2013, p. 1), Council Regulation (Euratom, EC) No 2185/1996 of 11 November 1996 concerning on-the-spot checks and inspections carried out by the Commission in order to protect the European Communities' financial interests against fraud and other irregularities (OJ L 292, 15/11/1996, p. 2), Council Regulation (EU) 2017/1939 of 12 October 2017 implementing enhanced cooperation on the establishment of the European Public Prosecutor's Office ('the EPPA') and Article 287 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU) and Article 257 of EU Financial Regulation 2018/1046.



Applications must be complete. Applicants must answer to all questions and must complete all sections of the application form. If a question cannot be answered, reasons should be given.

Applications shall adhere to the word limits indicated in each section of the application form. Any words above the specified limit will not be taken into account and may leave application answers incomplete. Text included in the captions and headings (titles) of graphics/images/tables will not be included in the word count, however these should not exceed 20 words.

Applicant cities may be contacted in case of clerical and/or administrative errors or for missing documents.

## 7.1 RULES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF AN APPLICATION

Complete the application form (annex 1) and use the guidance note (annex 2) to facilitate completion.

- Complete the application form giving careful information for each of the seven indicators of the application form. For each indicator, four sections have to be completed:
  1. Describe the present situation
  2. Describe the measures implemented over the last ten years
  3. Describe the short and long term objectives for the future and approach to achieve these objectives
  4. Explain how the above information can be documented, adding links if possible.
- The application must be fully completed and submitted on the application platform. A total of 11 separated documents in PDF needs to be upload:
  - Mayor Declaration (annex 3)
  - Declaration on Honour (annex 7)
  - Introduction and context
  - All 7 indicators, uploaded separately
  - Good practices

Each document has a designated spot for uploading.

- Please note that in the application forms, there is a limit of graphics/images/tables to be provided per indicator area, city introduction and context section and good practice section that should be adhered to.
- Ensure that the mayoral declaration is duly signed by the mayor or by the highest city representative, authorised by national law to represent legally the city and stamp with the official city seal.
- Complete and sign the Declaration on Honour on exclusion criteria and selection criteria, annex 7.

All queries should be directed to the Secretariat:  
[info@europeangreencapital.eu](mailto:info@europeangreencapital.eu) or [info@europeangreenleaf.eu](mailto:info@europeangreenleaf.eu)

## 7.2 RULES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF FINALISTS DOCUMENTS

Shortlisted cities will be asked to send in further documents as follows:

- A document (of a maximum length of two pages) on the city's **environmental governance**, outlining how they work across policy silos and engage citizens and stakeholders from different political and societal fields including businesses.
- A document (of a maximum length of two pages) with a vision of the **city's communication strategy and actions** for the year 2027 as an EGC or EGL. This document should give a first overview of what the focus areas would be and how the city will engage with others.

Those two documents **must be a PDF document and labelled correctly**, as follows: Governance\_CITY, DraftPlanning\_City. The documents will need to be sent end of July (tbc) to the EGCL Secretariat and are destined for the jury.

## 8 IMPORTANT INFORMATION



### IMPORTANT

- **Don't wait until the end** — Complete your application sufficiently in advance of the deadline to avoid any last minute **technical problems**. Problems due to last minute submissions (*e.g. congestion, etc.*) will be entirely at your risk. Call deadlines can NOT be extended.
- **Consult** the Portal Topic page regularly. We will use it to publish updates and additional information on the call (call updates).
- **No double funding** — There is a strict prohibition of double funding from the EU budget. Applications that have already received an EU prize cannot receive a second prize for the same activities.
- **Resubmission** — Applications may be changed and re-submitted until the deadline for submission. For first past the post prizes with cut-off dates, applications can be changed and re-submitted until the cut-off date;
- **Cancellation** — The awarding authority may cancel the contest or decide not to award the prize — without any obligation to compensate participants (*e.g. no applications, jury cannot determine winner, winner is not eligible or must be excluded, objectives have already been achieved, etc.*). In this case, you will be informed via a call update.
- **Transparency** — In accordance with Article 38 of the **EU Financial Regulation**<sup>1</sup>, information about EU prizes awarded and the winners (name, address and amount awarded) is published each year on the Europa website<sup>2</sup>.  
The publication can exceptionally be waived (on reasoned and duly substantiated request), if there is a risk that the disclosure could jeopardise your rights and freedoms under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights or harm your commercial interests.
- **Data protection** — Any processing of personal data in the context of this prize will be done in accordance with Regulation 2018/1725<sup>3</sup>. It will be processed solely for the purpose of evaluating your application (and subsequent management of your prize and, if needed, programme monitoring, evaluation and communication). Details are explained in the Funding & Tenders Portal Privacy Statement<sup>4</sup>.

By submitting the application, all applicants accept that the awarding authority will publish information on the finalists and winners

1. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32018R1046&qid=1535046024012>

2. [https://ec.europa.eu/budget/fts/index\\_en.htm](https://ec.europa.eu/budget/fts/index_en.htm)

3. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32018R1725&qid=1547993085271>

4. <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/support/legalnotice>

## 9 ANNEXES

- Annex 1 European Green Capital and Leaf Awards 2027 Application Form
- Annex 2 European Green and Leaf Awards 2027 Guidance Note
- Annex 3 European Green Capital & Leaf Awards 2027 Mayoral Declaration
- Annex 4 European Green Capital 2027 *Draft* Letter of Intent
- Annex 5 European Green Leaf 2027 *Draft* Letter of Intent
- Annex 6 Data Protection Notice
- Annex 7 Declaration of Honour