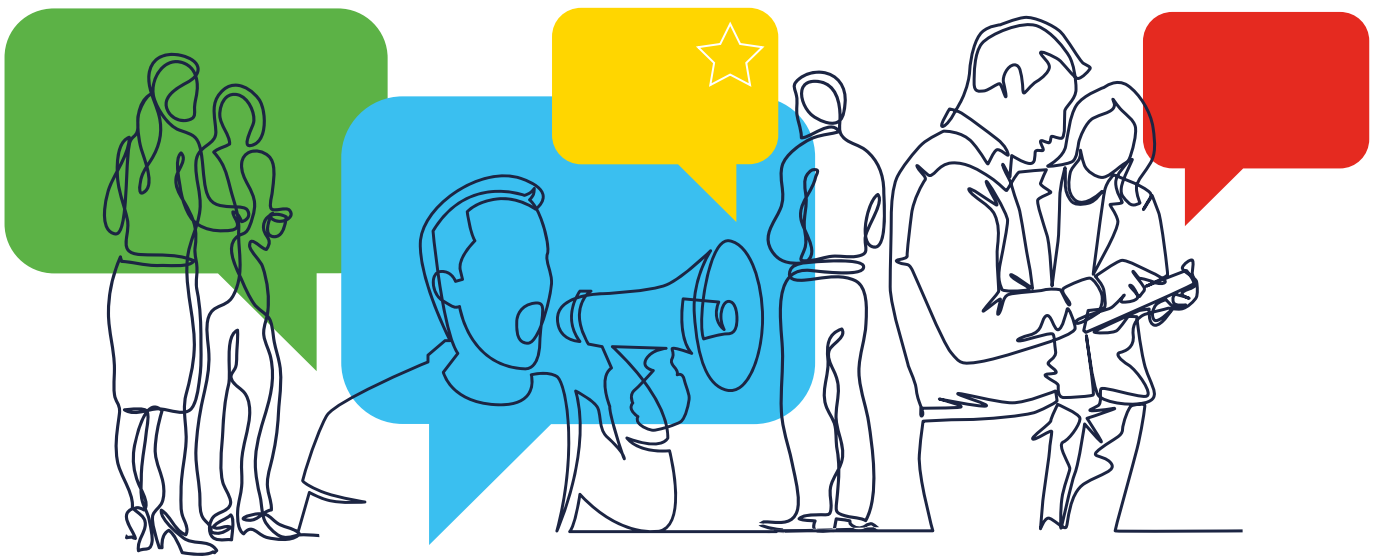




EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVE

How to raise funds



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| TABLE OF CONTENTS

Setting the agenda of the European Union	3
Ways to raise funds	4
Other ways to raise funds	7



1

Setting the agenda of the European Union

European citizens have the right to participate in the democratic life of the EU. One of the ways to foster citizen engagement in EU policy is the European Citizens' Initiative, a unique tool available to citizens to set the agenda of the EU institutions.

If citizens organised in a group of organisers are able to collect 1 million signatures from at least seven Member States within 12 months, they can invite the European Commission, within the framework of its powers (see the guidance note on **How to draft a European citizens' initiative**), to propose legislation with the purpose of implementing the Treaties.

For further details on the procedure, please refer to the guidance note on the **Procedural steps**.

| Getting ready for the European Citizens' Initiative

The fact that among the registered initiatives in the first five years of the initiative's existence, only five successfully collected 1 million signatures indicates that the preparation phase is one of the most critical steps in the procedure. Funds, human resources, IT support, legal advice and translators are often included in the inputs needed. Organising a European Citizens' Initiative campaign takes significant time and resources.

During the preparation phase, raising funds for designing and running a strong campaign is of the greatest importance and can be challenging. For further information on the campaign, please refer to the guidance note on **How to campaign**.

This focuses on the different steps to raise funds to finance an initiative's coordination and outreach activities.



The members of the group of organisers are jointly and severally liable for any damage caused in the organisation of the initiative and resulting from unlawful acts. However, if the group of organisers creates a legal entity based on the rules of one of the Member state, the legal entity will be considered as liable for damages resulting from the organisation of the initiative.



2

Ways to raise funds

Need for funds

Running a transnational campaign is one of the main challenges for the organisers of a European citizens' initiative. Many costs are expected not only in the preparation phase but also during all steps of the procedure.

First, Europe's multilingualism makes it necessary to translate all information related to the initiative into the official languages of all the countries in which organisers intend to collect statements of support – note that the European Commission will take care of the translation of the initiative description. Second, although volunteers can run the campaign, hiring staff adds another cost. Third, communication is crucial – website creation, social media management and event organisation all imply some cost. Fourth, if you need legal advice from lawyers, this can also be expensive. If organisers decide to print documents and leaflets and use media advertising the cost could also rise.

We strongly advise organisers to consider following these steps:

Organise an alliance

As set out in the guidance note on **How to look for partners**, an initiative should not be launched without having previously established a solid network of partners (local NGOs and organisations) with similar goals and concerns that operate both at local and international levels. Following the registration of the initiative the group of organisers has up to six months to launch the collection of statements of support. The period of time may be used by the group of organisers to consolidate its network.



Three pieces of advice:

1. Be active
2. Be creative
3. Be tenacious



Identifying potential supporters:

1. Map potential partners related to the initiative's topic/goal at local, regional, national and European level.
2. Create a 'lobby of citizens' to support initiatives locally and identify best practices.
3. Use the European Citizens' Initiative Forum to look for partners.
4. Use the EU Transparency Register to identify relevant partners at EU level.
5. The private sector and industry associations may be willing to give support on issues that are aligned with their objectives.



Success story

Stop glyphosate has been the most successful initiative in raising funds because the majority of the funds came from the strong member organisations that were supporting the initiative.

Draft a common budget

Expectations and limits need to be made clear when drafting the budget for the campaign.



Tip

- Non-financial support can also save organisers money. Examples of in-kind support from the Commission include the European Citizens' Initiative Forum, the provision of translation for all registered initiatives (title, objectives, annex), a free-of-charge online collection system managed directly by the Commission. Last but not least, the European Economic and Social Committee provides complementary support to organisers.



Success story

Right2Water's organisers launched a fund to finance the campaign three years in advance.

Burden-sharing

Individuals – in the majority of cases the organisers themselves – may also contribute small amounts to the financing of the initiative. Together with associations, foundations are usually the main sources of funding as the experience of the five successful initiatives (e.g. One of us or Ban Glyphosate) shows.



Tips

- A written agreement defining the different contributions of the partners (for example, staff time, outreach activities, money, etc.) will avoid misunderstandings between partners during the campaign.
- When signing an initiative, supporters could be invited to donate.
- Use partners' mailing lists to ask for donations.



Success story

Each national committee formed for the One of us campaign raised funds for its own national campaign. In the same way, Stop vivisection's organisers are of the opinion that national campaigns can be financed nationally.



3

Other ways to raise funds

Crowdfunding

One of the most commonly used ways to finance a project or initiative is through crowdfunding. This is a method by which a large number of individuals give money – usually in small amounts – to finance a project or initiative. It uses broad networks of people reached through social media and specialised crowdfunding websites to collect funds.

Peer-to-peer fundraising

This specific type of crowdfunding aims to reach a larger audience through the individual networks of the initiative's supporters. Individuals can create their own fundraising website and share it with their networks (family, friends, colleagues, etc.) in order to access financial support.

Merchandising

Although it does not usually raise large amounts of money, merchandising is an excellent complementary tool to raise funds for the campaign.

Awareness-raising bracelets, t-shirts, leaflets, cards, caps, brochures, scarfs and other merchandising material can help to raise awareness as well as money for the campaign.



Crowdfunding websites:

1. CiviCRM
2. YouCaring
3. Classy.org



Sponsorship

Companies are constantly spending more cash on corporate sponsorship programmes to improve their brand reputation and earn the attention of their target audience. To attract sponsors, you should:

- Know your audience: you need to know the type of sponsors that you want to attract. The sponsors selected should have values in line with the objectives you are pursuing. You should also know the sort of audience you may offer to a sponsor. One of the main reasons a company will sponsor your organisation is to earn attention from an audience it has not already reached.
- Offer something valuable
Companies want a return on their investment even if it is only in terms of image, corporate social responsibility. Work with your sponsor to create a marketing plan that benefits both of you.
- Showcase your idea and your values: you need to not only tell your story and convince organisations to empathise with what you are doing, but you also need to demonstrate your sustainability.

Donations

People who are supporting the European citizens' initiative you are trying to launch may also support your campaign by providing donations. You may collect donations via your website. For this purpose, you should ensure that you:

- Clearly explain what you do
- Disclose how donations are used- Display third-party endorsement
- Provide a clear link to donate and a fast donation process



Tip

- Keep careful track of financial support as all sources of support and funding worth more than EUR 500 per sponsor must be disclosed regularly throughout the procedure, at least every two months. You must also provide information on the organisations assisting you on a voluntary basis, where such support is not economically quantifiable.



Alternative ways to raise funds:

1. Social media
2. Organise a party
3. Bingo
4. Raffle
5. Viral challenges
6. Bar crawl
7. Board game tournament
8. Sports tournament
9. Auction
10. Karaoke night
11. Talent auction



For further details on how the five successful initiatives raised funds, please refer to the success story fiches:

- One of us
- Right2Water
- Stop glyphosate
- Stop vivisection
- Minority SafePack (not yet available)

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