

Judiciary Learning Grants Overview

What is the Judiciary Learning Grant Programme?

The Judiciary Learning Grant Programme is organised by the European Judicial Training Network (EJTN) in the framework of the Exchange Programme. The programme was launched in 2021 as a response to the national lockdown measures that prevented many scheduled trainings and exchanges from taking place. As a result, a need was identified to provide self-directed learning opportunities. This flexibility allows judiciary staff the autonomy to self-identify and create individualised learning opportunities in locations and times where safe travel and border crossing is possible.

Objectives

Judiciary Learning Grants provide grants to EU judges, prosecutors, and trainers who identify a workplace learning need in international judicial matters and want to create a remediation action plan to improve performance. The objectives of the programme are to:

- Enable judiciaries to gain new knowledge through problem identification and resolution
- Enable judiciaries to set up tailor-made and customised study projects on short notice that are feasible in pandemic conditions within Member States (e.g., respecting travel bans and restrictions)
- Strengthen judicial work and contribute to positive change through transnational dialogue, networking, and collaborative problem-solving
- Empower judiciaries with the ability to take proactive measures to develop a more effective and efficient judicial practice utilising an active learning approach and to use the insight gained to solve issues they may encounter in their own practice

Intended Recipients

Recipients for the self-directed learning grant programme are Member States judges, prosecutors, and trainers.

Considerations for a Grant

Eligible judges, prosecutors and judicial trainers interested in pursuing a grant must describe a learning need relevant to their work. The grant proposal must clearly identify where further learning and collaboration will result in improved judicial outcomes. The proposal must identify clear benefits that can enhance the effectiveness of day-to-day work.

Judicial staff must work collaboratively with their EU host partners to arrange the learning visit. It is crucial that these partners be involved in the grant proposal planning process. These partners are often the direct beneficiary of grant outcomes. It is required to obtain a clear commitment from the host institution to ensure that dates, details, and agenda for the visit are clearly articulated and all parties agree to the grant goals and individual roles.

Grant Proposals

A successful grant proposal must demonstrate thoughtful planning. Applications must include a proposal that contains defined and measurable work-related outcomes, and a clear description of activities relevant to their practice. The strongest proposals start with the end in mind; they consider the desired outcomes and create detailed plans to achieve the goal.

Application forms must contain the following:

1. Applicant information
2. Learning plan host information
3. Name of grant and judicial area addressed by application proposal
4. Statement of need
5. Learning objectives/outcomes
6. Methods and plan to achieve objectives/outcomes
7. Plan for the dissemination of acquired knowledge

The application forms are accessible through the National Training Institutions and/or National Contact Points (NCP).

Grant Evaluation and Selection Criteria

Grant proposals will be assessed against a scoring rubric which may be used to evaluate proposals by the National Training institution. See Appendix 1 for the scoring rubric.

Financial Conditions

Each recipient of a Learning grant will receive a per diem for his/her subsistence expenses during the stay abroad and will be reimbursed for their travel expenses from the court/prosecution office of origin according to the financial rules laid down in the “Exchange Programme Financial Conditions 2022”¹. The costs of the hosting courts/prosecution offices or other visited institution will not be covered by EJTN.

Timeframe and Application Procedure

The application period will be open from 1 February 2022 until the exhaustion of the budget (not to exceed 1 December 2022). All learning grants activities must be completed between 1 March and 31 December 2022.

Applicants should submit their online application on the EJTN Exchange Programme platform. The NCP of their home country will assess the applications based on the scoring rubric. All selected projects shall be sent to the EJTN secretariat as they are approved. The EJTN secretariat will then check the validity of selected projects and give final approval to the applicant. Projects will be reviewed on a rolling basis throughout the application period.

¹ Only participants from EU Member States that are part of the Justice Programme of the European Commission can be funded under this programme. In other words, participants from all EU Member States, with the exception of Denmark, are eligible for funding.

Applicants can expect to be informed about the outcome of their application within 6 weeks after submission.

Once their application is validated by the secretariat, applicants are expected to register on the Exchange Programme platform within 4 weeks of their acceptance notification.

Post-activity Requirements

Participants must fill in two feedback surveys that provide a detailed report on their experiences. The reporting shall include a description of how the learning objectives were met, the lessons learnt, the best practices observed, and how the benefits of the Learning grant are used in daily practice to improve judicial effectiveness.

In addition to the surveys, participants must disseminate their knowledge and share their outcome(s) with their judicial peers at national and/or EU level. This may take different forms, e.g., dialogues with peers, presentations, a written report, a video podcast, an article in a law journal, etc. The cross-fertilisation of knowledge within the judiciary is an important component of the process. It provides the ability for judiciaries to learn from one another and consider improvements and new ideas in areas as diverse as technology, procedures, and methods of inter-judicial transnational coordination.

The reporting and dissemination should focus on the process of problem resolution through the execution of the learning grant programme. Participants are requested not to share any confidential case-related information when sharing or disseminating knowledge.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. I have taken part in EJTN exchanges previously can I still apply for the grant?

Yes, previous participants in the EJTN Exchange Programme are eligible to apply.

2. Does the visit to the receiving judicial institution need to be reciprocal?

No. Reciprocity is possible but not compulsory or guaranteed. Should you wish this to be reciprocal, the host should apply as well during an enrolment period. Acceptance of all applications are based on a rubric-based assessment and are awarded on merit.

3. Can group applications be submitted?

No. The learning grant proposals should be individual projects. Group applications are not eligible.

4. How long can the grant visit last?

Grant visits can last up to 4 days including travel.

5. Who is responsible for identifying the EU host partner and arrange the learning visit activities?

Applicants (judges, prosecutors or judicial trainers) are self-responsible for identifying the EU host partner. Any application submitted without the EU counterpart identified will be rejected.

The planning of the learning visit activities is a collaborative work between the applicant and his or her EU host partners. It is crucial that these partners be involved in the grant proposal planning process.

6. If the project continues beyond the initially agreed-upon end date, will additional funding be available?

No, all Learning grants must be completed by 31st December 2022 for the current enrolment period starting in February 2022.

7. What evidence do I need to provide that I have successfully completed my visit and achieve my Learning grant goals?

Participants must fill in a feedback survey that includes a detailed report on their experience both immediately after their learning grant trip and again after 6 months to determine their success in transferring their knowledge to the workplace. In addition to the survey, participants must disseminate their knowledge and share their outcome(s) with their judicial peers at national and/or EU level. The reporting shall include *inter alia* how the learning objectives were met and how the Learning grant will impact judicial practice. Professional disclosures should always keep in mind the rules of ethical conduct and confidentiality.

8. Which countries and institutions are covered to visit for the grant?

Recipients must travel to a Member State judicial institution (court, prosecutors office or national training institutions). The agenda for the trip can include visits to other organisations (e.g., police agencies, associations, NGOs, or social work agencies).

9. Who will see the results/ from the project?

The hosting and sending institution will have access to all participant documents.

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Timeline

