

## Call 2:

# ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND IN CROATIA

## Call for proposals for large projects<sup>1</sup>

Deadline for submission of Concept notes: May 11, 2020, 12:00 Croatian time

Anticipated deadline for submission of full project proposals: August 17, 2020, 12:00 Croatian time (or 1 month after applicants receive invitations to proceed with preparation and submission of full project proposals)

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<sup>1</sup> The call contains basic information, for more details please check Guidelines for applicants.

## INTRODUCTION

Community Foundation Slagalica, in consortium with SOLIDARNA - Foundation for Human Rights and Solidarity, Association for Civil Society Development SMART and CNVOS – Centre for Information Service, Co-operation and Development of CSOs, acting as the Fund operator (FO) for the EEA Grants Programme *Active Citizens Fund* in Croatia, announces the present open call for large Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) project proposals.;

This is the second open call for this Programme, with an allocated amount of €3.150.000.

The maximum grant amount for large projects is €150.000 and the minimum grant amount for large projects is € 90.000. Duration of large projects is from 24 to 36 months.

The available funding will be allocated to projects proposed by CSOs through a transparent two-phase selection procedure. In the first phase, concept notes prepared and submitted by applicants will be evaluated by external evaluators. Based on the evaluation, the Selection committee will select those with highest scoring to be invited to the second phase of the application process – preparation and submission of full project proposals. The final decision is on the Fund operator. For more information concerning the application process, the selection criteria, as well as the evaluation and selection process, please see the Guidelines for Applicants.

The *Active Citizens Fund* in Croatia is part of the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms (FMs) 2014 – 2021<sup>2</sup>, funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. Their aim is to contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area and to strengthen bilateral relations between the Donor States and the Beneficiary States.

The total amount of € 8.500.000 will be allocated through the Programme in Croatia.

**Main objective of the Programme on the EU level is ‘Civil society and active citizenship strengthened and vulnerable groups empowered’.** Programme is based on common values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and the respect for human rights including the rights of persons belonging to minorities.

An important priority of the Programme is also strengthening of bilateral cooperation between civil society organisations from Croatia and organisations from donor countries - Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

## PRIORITY AREAS AND SPECIFICS OF THE CALL

This Call for proposals has been designed to provide financial and capacity building support for Croatian CSOs active in one (or more) of the Programme Priority Areas

- Democracy, active citizenship, good governance and transparency,

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<sup>2</sup> More on EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms: [www.eeagrants.org](http://www.eeagrants.org).

- Human rights and equal treatment through combating any discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or gender identity,
- Social justice and inclusion of vulnerable groups,
- Gender equality and gender-based violence,
- Environment and climate change.

and whose social impact and own organizational development supported by the Call will contribute to at least one of the Programme Outcomes:

- Strengthened civil society watchdog/advocacy role;
- Increased support for human rights, rule of law and good governance;
- Strengthened democratic culture and civic awareness and engagement;

The support provided by the Call is aimed at building organizational and programmatic capacities of Croatian CSOs that share a common value base to address a social problem in a systematic and strategic manner, through the funding of a project that is relevant to the Programme's Priority Areas and which is designed and managed in a way that is geared towards social impact. Hence, the Call is targeting civil society organizations with sufficiently effective management and governing processes capable of developing complex, multi-year project interventions, targeting the same social problem or needs of a particular target group in a comprehensive manner, with focus on social impact. Social impact project design takes into account the complexity of factors influencing the solution to any social problem and outcome of any civic action.

In addition, applicants must also take into account following specifics of the Programme:

- **Protection of the environment and climate change** will **only** be supported as part of measures to promote civic participation, advocacy, social innovation and active citizenship.
- In the field of **social justice and inclusion of vulnerable groups, provision of welfare and basic services** will **only** be supported as part of wider actions addressing awareness-raising, advocacy, empowerment and reform initiatives.
- **Youth inclusion** will be an important part of the projects (e.g. in civic education and civic mobilisation) and organisational development (leadership succession, rejuvenation of staff, etc.) and young people will be highlighted as a target group. For the activities targeted at youth, entering partnership with youth organisations is advisable.

The call addresses the following **country-specific concerns** through following measures:

1. **Capacity and sustainability of the civil society sector** shall be supported through an allocation of mandatory 13% of awarded grants for capacity building based on individual organisational needs.
2. **Projects targeting under-served regions**<sup>3</sup> (Bjelovarsko-bilogorska County, Brodsko-posavska County, Ličko-senjska County, Sisačko-moslavačka County, Virovitičko-podravska County, Vukovarsko-srijemska County, Karlovačka County, Koprivničko-križevačka County, Krapinsko-zagorska County, Osječko-baranjska County, Požeško-slavonska County and Šibensko-kninska County) will be awarded additional 2 points during the evaluation of full project proposal in the second phase of the application process if the project is evaluated by external experts as beneficial for one of the under-served counties.

<sup>3</sup> In accordance to the document "Values of Development Index and Indicators for Calculating Development Index for Regional Self Government", source: <https://razvoj.gov.hr/o-ministarstvu/regionalni-razvoj/indeks-razvijenosti/112>"

3. **Projects targeting under-served/vulnerable groups** (such as: persons belonging to minorities<sup>4</sup> (based on race or ethnicity, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or identity), Roma, refugees/migrants, domestic violence survivors, children at risk, etc.) will be awarded 3 additional points during the evaluation of full project proposal in the second phase of the application process if the project is evaluated by external experts as beneficial and relevant for targeted vulnerable group.

4. **Inter-generational cooperation and inter-cultural dialogue** will be treated as horizontal priorities of the call. The cooperation and dialogue will concern specific issues in improving societal conditions, social cohesion, knowledge transfer and learning, promoting human rights, equality and building peace and tolerance. Project proposals including activities and/or partnerships clearly oriented towards either of these two horizontal priorities will be awarded up to 5 additional points during the evaluation of full project proposal in the second phase of the application process.

**Examples of indicative activities:**

- Awareness raising and advocacy campaigns and initiatives to promote transparency, accountability and good governance;
- Monitoring and watchdog activities;
- Advocacy campaigns related to the promotion of human rights and equal treatment;
- Strategic litigation;
- Cultural activities on human rights and equal treatment issues;
- Support to victims of human rights violations, especially of gender-based violence, aiming at empowering them and informing them about their rights;
- Initiatives for community development and activation;
- Developing mechanisms to foster contact between citizens and public authorities;
- Generating or improving systems to promote the importance of CSOs in decision making processes;
- Producing reports / papers / legal documents on issues related to public policies on local, national level or international level;
- Awareness-raising and capacity building on environmental issues including climate change and adaptation;
- Strengthening of cooperation/networking with other organisations;

Active Citizens Fund follows a common results-based framework, based on which fund operators in each beneficiary country in cooperation with FMO and with help of public consultation identify and set their outcomes and outputs that shall contribute to realisation of the expected results on the level of the Programme.

Each supported project shall deliver and report upon at least one output, to be selected from the indicators set for the Programme and quantified according to its nature and objective. For more details, please see the Guidelines for Applicants.

Each of the three outcomes has specific indicators, outputs and outputs' indicators set.

Outcome/Output	Expected programme results	Indicator
Objective	Civil society and active citizenship strengthened and vulnerable groups	Number of people engaged in civil society organisation activities

<sup>4</sup> Article 1.2 of Protocol 38c on the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms (2014-2021)

	empowered	Number of CSOs (always referring to project promoters and their project partners) directly funded by the Programme <sup>1</sup>
Outcome 1	Strengthened civil society watchdog/advocacy role	Number of national policies and laws influenced
		Number of media reports of CSOs' engagement in public policy
Output 1.1	Strategic litigation supported	Number of strategic litigation cases supported
		Number of CSOs engaged in strategic litigation
Output 1.2	Research conducted to inform public policymaking and debate	Number of CSOs using evidence/research to support their advocacy and policy work
		Number of evidence-based policy submissions by CSOs
Output 1.3	Policy-monitoring and advocacy supported	Number of CSOs engaged in monitoring private/ public decision-making
Output 1.4	Network and coalition building supported	Number of CSO platforms, coalitions and networks supported
Outcome 2	Increased support for human rights, rule of law and good governance	Share of people who disapprove of public statements that express negative views or hatred towards specific groups in society
		Share of people who know it is a crime to incite hatred based on race, ethnicity and gender
		Number of victims supported by CSOs
Output 2.1	Victims of human rights violations supported	Number of CSOs providing services to victims of human rights violations
Output 2.2	Intra and inter-sectoral collaboration and synergies supported	Number of joint initiatives conducted by CSOs in collaboration with other CSOs and/or private/public entities.
Output 2.3	International human rights standards promoted	Number of CSOs engaged in advocacy and watchdog work on women's rights
		Number of public awareness-raising campaigns carried out
		Number of CSOs engaged in advocacy work on human rights
		Number of people reached by campaigns
Outcome 3	Strengthened democratic culture and civic awareness and engagement	Share of persons who show civic awareness
		Number of vulnerable individuals reached by empowerment measures
Output 3.1	Civic and human rights education supported	Number of CSOs (project promoters and project partners) engaged in civic education
		Number of public and educational institutions partnering with CSOs on civic and human rights education
Output 3.2	Outreach to and empowerment of vulnerable groups supported	Number of new or improved methods developed to address the needs of vulnerable groups
		Number of CSO initiatives consulting vulnerable groups on public policy decisions
Output 3.3	Citizen mobilization and engagement promoted	Number of volunteers working in supported CSOs

## ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants are civil society organisations (CSOs) established in Republic of Croatia if they meet following definition:

“A non-profit voluntary organization established as a legal entity, having a non-commercial purpose, independent of local, regional and central government, public entities, political parties and commercial organizations. Religious institutions and political parties are not considered NGOs”. Eligible applicants shall abide by the principles of democratic values and human rights.

More specifically, eligible candidates must meet the following general conditions:

- 1) Are **non-profit** organizations that have not been created nor operate to generate

personal profit. Although they may have paid staff and may engage in revenue-generating activities, they do not distribute profits to their members nor to their board. Where revenue-generating activities are undertaken, these should not represent the purpose of the NGO but should be solely a means to support its mission and values;

- 2) Have members who do not have any direct commercial interest in the outcome of the work of the organizations or of its commercial activities and should not pursue the commercial or professional interests of their members. This requirement therefore excludes trade and professional associations, where the aims and purposes of the association are to further the specific interests of its members only;
- 3) Are voluntary in nature, formed voluntarily by groups or individuals and usually involving an element of voluntary participation in the organization;
- 4) Act in the public arena and for the public good on concerns and issues related to the well-being of people, groups or society as a whole;
- 5) Have some degree of formal or institutional existence, unlike informal or ad hoc groups, involving formal statutes or other governing document(s) defining their mission, objectives and scope;
- 6) Have transparent structures and an elected chair / board, and are accountable to their members and donors;
- 7) Are independent of local, regional and national government and other public authorities;
- 8) Are independent of political parties and commercial organizations,
- 9) conducts transparent financial operations validated through Register of Nonprofit Organizations (RNO) with Croatian Ministry of Finance.<sup>5</sup>

Political parties, religious institutions, social partners or profit-distributing cooperatives are not considered CSOs.

Foundations and the Croatian Red Cross societies are considered eligible CSOs if they fulfil the above principles.

Faith-based organisations are eligible if they meet the principles identified above and if the funded activities do not directly or indirectly promote a religious doctrine, mission or proselytism related to the beliefs of a particular faith (beyond basic religious/cultural awareness raising).

Organisations that have not recovered amounts due, following a final court decision in connection with the CSO Programme 2009-2014 in Croatia, shall not be considered eligible applicants and/or partners.

All eligible applicants, partners and project proposals shall follow **the principles of common values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and the respect for human**

<sup>5</sup>Applicants who are CSO by their legal status, by transparent financial operations, are considered to have submitted to the FINA, for the Croatian Ministry of Finance, an annual revenue and expenditure account from 1 January to 31 December 2019 and a balance sheet or annual financial statement of receipts and expenditures for 2019, in accordance with the accounting regulations of non-profit organizations, whereby the 2019 Annual Financial Report is visible in the Register of Nonprofit Organizations.

rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities<sup>6</sup> (based on race or ethnicity, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or identity). The applicants and partners will confirm this in the Applicant and Partner declarations of compliance accordingly. Selection Committee will have the authority and obligation to propose the rejection of the project application in case the aforementioned principles are not respected or disregarded.

Each individual applicant can submit only one project proposal in this call (valid for all Outcomes 1-3 projects). Same organization can participate in no more than two project proposals in a partner role.

### ELIGIBLE PARTNERS

Partnership is not obligatory. A project may be implemented in partnership with one or more project partners. If a project is implemented in such a partnership, the applicant shall sign a partnership agreement with each of the project partners. In the application process, partners will have to sign a Partnership statement as part of the application.

A project partner is a public or private-law entity, commercial or non-commercial, as well as non-governmental organisation established as a legal person in any of the EEA Grants' donor countries – Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, any of the EEA Grants' beneficiary countries (beside Croatia, also Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Poland, Portugal), and/or countries outside the European Economic Area that have a common border with Croatia (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia) or any inter-governmental organisation or a body or agency thereof that is actively involved in, and effectively contributing to, the implementation of a project. Projects including partnerships with entities from donor countries shall be scored with up to 5 additional points in the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of selection process.

Eligible project partners are also informal groups under following conditions:

- informal group is not established for the purpose of personal gain;
- work for public good;
- are voluntary and non-discriminatory;
- are independent of local, regional and national authorities and other public institutions, political parties, religious communities, chambers and corporate entities.

Informal group shall be represented by a chosen individual as a signatory of partnership agreement. Informal group cannot be a direct beneficiary of project funding; their costs shall be carried by the project applicant organization.

### PROJECT SIZE AND DURATION

Budget for large projects: € 3.150.000,00.

The grant requested must be between following minimum and maximum amounts:

- Minimum: € 90.000,00,
- Maximum: € 150.000,00.

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<sup>6</sup> Article 1.2 of Protocol 38c on the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms (2014-2021)

### *Project grant rate*

The maximum project grant rate indicated in the application may not exceed 90% of the total eligible project costs. The applicant shall provide the remaining co-financing (at least 10%) in the form of cash and/or in-kind contribution as voluntary work. The in-kind contribution may constitute up to 50% of the required co-financing. Detailed information on the calculation of the in-kind contribution is stipulated in the document Guidelines for Applicants.

### *Organisational development budget*

Each applicant has to allocate exactly 13% of its budget for activities contributing to their organisational development or building capacity of actors in the civil society

### *Project duration*

Project duration is limited to minimum 24 and maximum 36 months.

## **ELIGIBILITY OF EXPENSES**

Costs within projects may be eligible from the date on which the grant is awarded or at a later date set in the project contract. Costs incurred after that date are not eligible.

### *Indirect costs*

Indirect costs incurred in carrying out the project may be eligible for flat-rate funding, but the total must not exceed **15 % of the estimated total eligible personnel costs**.

Project promoters have to be able to demonstrate that indirect costs of the project are proportionate to total administrative costs of their organisation.

Detailed information on eligibility of expenses is stipulated in the document Guidelines for Applicants.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

### **FIRST PHASE – PRESENTATION OF CONCEPT NOTE**

In the first phase, applicants are invited to develop concept notes for their project ideas.

*Deadline and submission process for the first phase: May 11, 2020, 12.00 (noon) Croatian time*

Application shall be submitted **only in electronic form** to the following e-mail address: [prijava.veliki@acfcroatia.hr](mailto:prijava.veliki@acfcroatia.hr). The subject of the submitting e-mail shall be: **Application to call for large projects**

Guidelines for applicants, application forms and supporting documentation are available for download on <https://acfcroatia.hr>.

### **Language of the application form**

The application form and all the required annexes should only be submitted in Croatian with a project summary in English, irrespective of whether the project is submitted by a national entity only or in cooperation with a partner from a Donor State.

### *Administrative and Eligibility check*

Prior to the quality evaluation of the concept notes, the Fund Operator will conduct the check of the the eligibility of the applicants and administrative compliance assessment, as explained in the Guidelines for Applicants.

In case the application will miss certain parts (documents or information) that can be supplemented according to criteria listed in the Guidelines for Applicants, applicants will be invited to provide respective missing parts within five (5) days. Only complete applications will be considered for first phase of the selection process.

After the administrative eligibility assessment process is completed, ineligible applicants will be notified of the rejection of their project proposals from further evaluation. Applicants of ineligible project proposals will have eight (8) calendar days available to appeal against the eligibility decision. The right to appeal may be exercised only once. Appeals will be considered by the Complaints Committee. The decision of the Committee is final. Appeal can be submitted at: [prigovori@acfcroatia.hr](mailto:prigovori@acfcroatia.hr).

### *Application quality assessment*

Each concept note application that meets the administrative and eligibility criteria shall be evaluated by two impartial external experts according to the evaluation criteria published in the Guidelines for Applicants. For the purposes of ranking the concept note applications, the average of the scores awarded by the experts shall be used.

Threshold for inclusion of the concept note into the next phase of application process is 60 out of 100 possible points. Selection committee will select around 35 best scored project proposals to enter the second phase of application process.

### *Notification on selection*

Applicants will be notified on the selection of their project proposals to enter the second phase of the application process via e-mail indicated in application form, in July 2020.

## **SECOND PHASE – FULL PROJECT PROPOSAL**

Applicants invited to submit full project proposals in the second phase of the application process shall prepare and fill in the form »Cjelovita projektna prijava« (Full Application Form) in accordance with instructions. Full proposal shall be based on the concept note submitted in the first phase of the application process.

### **Language of the application form**

The application form and all the required annexes should only be submitted in Croatian with a project summary in English, irrespective of whether the project is submitted by a national entity only or in cooperation with a partner from a Donor State.

*Deadline and submission process for the second phase: August 17, 2020. 12:00 (noon) Croatian time (or 1 month after applicants receive invitations to proceed with preparation and submission of full project proposals)*

Application shall be submitted **only in electronical form** to the following e-mail address: [prijava.veliki@acfcroatia.hr](mailto:prijava.veliki@acfcroatia.hr). The subject of the submitting e-mail shall be: **Application to call for large projects – second phase.**

#### *Full project proposal assessment procedure and criteria*

After the delivery of full project proposals, Fund Operator will conduct administrative compliance assessment, as explained in the Guidelines for Applicants. Fund Operator can request for additional information or clarifications referring to administrative compliance criteria.

After the administrative eligibility assessment process is completed, ineligible applicants will be notified of the rejection of their project proposals from further evaluation. Applicants of ineligible project proposals will have eight (8) calendar days available to appeal against the eligibility decision. The right to appeal may be exercised only once. Appeals will be considered by the Complaints Committee. The decision of the Committee is final. Appeal can be submitted at: [prigovori@acfcroatia.hr](mailto:prigovori@acfcroatia.hr).

#### *Application quality assessment*

Each project application that meets the administrative and eligibility criteria shall be evaluated by two impartial external experts according to the evaluation criteria published in the Guidelines for Applicants. For the purposes of ranking the project applications, the average of the scores awarded by the experts shall be used.

After the conclusion of expert evaluation of all project proposals, based on received scoring, the ranking list of applications will be prepared by the Fund Operator. Proposed ranking list will be examined by the Selection Committee, who will make recommendations to the Fund Operator on project proposals that shall be funded. The decision of the Fund Operator is final and may not be changed.

Project proposals scoring a minimum of 60 points in quality assessment will be recommended for funding. Only the highest scoring project proposals within individual Programme outcome will be awarded with ACF grant.

#### *Notification on selection and appeal procedure*

Applicants will be notified on the selection of their project proposals via e-mail indicated in application form, in September 2020.

The decision of the Fund Operator to approve or disapprove support is final. Any organization that has participated in the application process for this Call may file a complaint with the Fund Operator Complaint Committee within 8 calendar days from the date of receipt of the notification of the results of the Call in the event that it has noticed any deficiencies in the implementation of the established procedure for assessing the quality of its application. Complaints must be submitted exclusively to the following e-mail address: [prigovori@acfcroatia.hr](mailto:prigovori@acfcroatia.hr). The Complaint Committee is obliged to respond to the complaint within 10 calendar days from the day of receipt. The right to appeal can be exercised once. The decision of the Complaint Committee is final.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND SUPPORT FOR THE APPLICANTS

In the first phase of application process, applicants will have a wide range of support activities and services at their disposal: info workshops in March and April 2020, additional individual assistance organised on 4 different locations in under-served areas in April 2020, and brief counselling via phone or e-mail at [podrska@acfcroatia.hr](mailto:podrska@acfcroatia.hr), until the May 4, 2020. Answers to applicants' questions asked via phone or e-mail will also be updated and published weekly on the Active Citizens Fund in Croatia web site <https://acfcroatia.hr/>

For the second application phase (full application) individual personal assistance will be available upon request. Telephone and e-mail support will also be available until one week before the application deadline. All inquiries concerning the call for proposals should be directed to [podrska@acfcroatia.hr](mailto:podrska@acfcroatia.hr). All questions and answers will be replied within one week and will be published on the Programme's website.

With brief questions applicants can turn to: Jelena-Gordana Zloić (+385 31 213255) or Renata Toić (+385 51 332750) or Petra Mađerčić (+ 385 1 5544 722).

Timetable of workshops:

Event	Main purpose	Date	Venue
Information workshop	Detailed presentation of the call for proposal, especially result framework	March 12, 2020	Osijek
		March 31, 2020	Rijeka
		April 2, 2020	Zagreb
		April 3, 2020	Zadar

For more information, visit our website: [www.acfcroatia.hr](http://www.acfcroatia.hr) where you can find all information and documentation relating to this Call, including the **Application Form - Concept Note, Full project application, Guidelines for Applicants**, as well as a list of **Frequently Asked Questions**.

In accordance with the terms and conditions for the *Active Citizens Fund* in Croatia, the Fund Operator has established a Complaints Committee to review complaints regarding the potential irregularities regarding the implementation of the Programme, i.e. complaints about suspected non-compliance with the principles of good governance in relation to the implementation of the Programme. All complaints are first assessed by the Fund Operator. A complainant who is not satisfied with the conclusion made by the Fund Operator has the right to take the case to the Complaints Committee, which includes one member who is external to the Fund Operator and its Board and does not include programme staff responsible for assessing project applications.

The complaints must be fully justified and submitted electronically to the following email: [prigovori@acfcroatia.hr](mailto:prigovori@acfcroatia.hr)