

Call 6:

ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND IN CROATIA

Call for applicants to Call for small projects and Guidelines for applicants

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE CALL: March 1, 2022

PROJECT PROPOSAL DEADLINE: May 2, 2022, 12:00 Croatian time

Note: The Croatian version is the official document, in case of differences between the two texts; the Croatian version is the valid one.

Content

1. EEA AND NORWEGIAN FINANCIAL MECHANISMS 2014 – 2021

1.1. ABOUT THE ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND	3
1.2. OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND IN CROATIA	3
1.3. MANAGEMENT OF ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND IN CROATIA	4
1.4. INDICATIVE BUDGET OF ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND IN CROATIA	4

2. PROVISIONS OF THE CALL FOR SMALL PROJECTS 2022

2.1. INDICATIVE BUDGET FOR SMALL PROJECTS CALL	5
2.2. FOCUS OF THE CALL	5
2.2.1. SPECIFIC PROVISIONS OF THE CALL	13
2.3. ELIGIBILITY OF APPLICANTS AND PARTNERS	14
2.3.1. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS	14
2.3.2. ELIGIBLE PARTNERS	15
2.4. NUMBER OF PROPOSALS AND PARTNERSHIPS	16
2.5. GENERAL RULES AND INFORMATION	17
2.6. ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE	18
2.7. INELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES	20

3. CALL DOCUMENTATION AND APPLICATION PROCESS

3.1. APPLICATION PROCESS	21
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4. PROVISIONS ON PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

4.2. REPORTING AND PAYMENTS	27
4.3. INFORMING THE PUBLIC	28

5. INFORMATION CONCERNING THE PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA SUBMITTED BY PROJECT APPLICANTS TO THE ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND IN CROATIA

6. COMPLAINT MECHANISM

7. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND SUPPORT FOR THE APPLICANTS

1. EEA AND NORWEGIAN FINANCIAL MECHANISMS 2014 – 2021

1.1. ABOUT THE ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND

Support to civil society is a key priority for the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms (FMs) 2014 – 2021¹, 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. They cooperate with 15 beneficiary countries, EU member states, one of which is Croatia.

Overall focus of Active Citizens Fund (ACF) 2014-2021 as a part of Civil society Programme of FMs is set to long-term sustainable development and capacity building of non-governmental sector. **Main objective of Active Citizens Fund is ‘Civil society and active citizenship strengthened and vulnerable groups empowered’.** Programme aims at strengthening the role of non-governmental organisations in promotion of democracy, public inclusion in decision-making processes on national and local level and human rights protection. 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.

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.

Active Citizens Fund priority programme areas of support are:

- Democracy, active citizenship, good governance and transparency,
- 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.

In addition, the Programme in Croatia shall address the following country-specific areas and concerns:

- Strengthen the capacity and sustainability of the civil society sector;
- Improve outreach to under-served geographic areas and target groups;
- Empowerment and inclusion of vulnerable groups, including Roma;
- Promote initiatives strengthening inter-cultural dialogue with special emphasis on national minorities;
- Promote initiatives aimed at intergenerational cooperation.

1.2. OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND IN CROATIA

Expected outcomes of the ACF in Croatia are:

- Strengthened civil society watchdog/advocacy role;

¹ More on EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms: www.eeagrants.org.

- Increased support for human rights, rule of law and good governance;
- Strengthened democratic culture and civic awareness and engagement;
- Enhanced capacity and sustainability of civil society (organisations and sector);
- Enhanced collaboration between Croatia and donor state entities involved in the Programme;
- Strengthened regional (cross-border) cooperation in the civil society sector.

To realise these goals and address challenges identified in common effort with CSOs in Croatia, Programme is set to:

- address funding gaps and provide targeted financing to CSOs performing a watchdog role, CSOs engaged in human rights protection, environmental protection and social inclusion of vulnerable groups including Roma and CSOs working in under-served geographic areas and with under-served target groups;
- improve the financial sustainability and autonomy of CSOs, especially those working in the fields of democracy and human rights by improving their ability to fundraise and diversify income sources;
- build resilience of human rights defenders and CSOs committed to the empowerment and the social inclusion of ethnic and sexual minorities;
- foster a culture of collaboration and solidarity among CSOs in managing common resources and in addressing common problems through broader and effective cross-thematic and cross-sectoral collaboration, a common human rights approach to social development and closer relations with socially responsible business community, non-profit and independent media;
- encourage development of innovative capacity building methods to improve transparent and accountable management/governance procedures as well as skills in monitoring and evaluation, fundraising and evidence-based advocacy;
- support community outreach and innovative methods for civic engagement, including new approaches to empower vulnerable groups;
- encourage youth inclusion across all priorities by encouraging CSOs to engage youth workers and volunteers in their activities and to target their projects to young people where such actions have the most impact and
- foster results and impact-oriented bilateral activities through partnerships on thematic areas of particular interest for bilateral cooperation between Croatian CSOs and CSOs from donor countries.

1.3. MANAGEMENT OF ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND IN CROATIA

Active Citizens Fund is managed by Financial Mechanism Office – FMO, Brussels based secretariat for the three EEA Grants' donor countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

Community Foundation Slagolica (hereafter: CF Slagolica), 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 were selected to operate Active Citizens Fund in Croatia.

1.4. INDICATIVE BUDGET OF ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND IN CROATIA

Total budget of ACF in Croatia is € 9.060.000, out of that €8.552.00 from EEA Financial Mechanism and €560.000 from Norwegian Financial Mechanism.

The amount of € 7.724.000 is intended for grants to Croatian CSOs, out of which €7.244.000 from EEA Financial Mechanism and €480.000 from Norwegian Financial Mechanism.

The projects financing budget will be distributed via seven public calls:

- Public call for large projects – with a budget of € 3.150.000, for expectedly about 21 projects.
- Public call for micro or »Ad-Hoc Action« projects – with a budget of €215.000, for expectedly around 43 projects.
- Public call for sectoral innovation projects – with a budget of €600.000, for expectedly 3 projects.
- Public call for medium projects – with a budget of €2.709.000, for expectedly around 45 projects.
- Two public calls for small projects – with a budget of €630.000, for expectedly around 44 projects.
- Public call for in organizational (institutional) grants - with a budget of € 420.000, for expectedly 7 projects.

In addition, ACF in Croatia includes co-financing budget for Fund for bilateral cooperation and Regional civil society initiatives as follows:

- Bilateral cooperation between Croatian and donor countries' CSOs - € 85.000,00 and
- Regional Civil Society Initiatives - € 115.000,00.

2. PROVISIONS OF THE CALL FOR SMALL PROJECTS 2022

2.1. INDICATIVE BUDGET FOR SMALL PROJECTS CALL

The total available budget for the Call for Small Projects (hereinafter: The Call) is EUR 630,000.00 for approximately 42 projects. These funds will be allocated through two calls. This is a second Call through which a total of 315,000.00 Euros will be awarded for approximately 21 projects.

2.2. FOCUS OF THE CALL

This Call will support small-scale projects lasting from six to twelve months, aimed at interventions proposed and implemented by local civil society organizations in order to increase the well-being of local communities and / or thematic communities consisting of certain social groups with common interests, needs and problems in one of the priority program areas of the Active Citizens Fund.

Local civil society organizations under this Call include those organizations that primarily operate in the local community in which they are based, which are well aware of the needs and problems in their local communities and which respond to them with their activities, projects and programs. Local organizations are recognized in their local communities as an important actor for achieving positive social change and draw their legitimacy from a strong connection with the local community (other organizations, bodies, institutions, users and citizens).

Local communities within this Call include geographical and social units (one or more connected local self-government units within one or neighbouring regional self-government units) in which local organizations, applicants to this Call, implement their activities, projects and programs.

Thematic communities within this Call include those communities of people that are formed due to specific common interests, identities, needs and problems related to their position in the society, and can be made up of people directly affected by a needs or problems but also active citizens who identify with that problem and they are trying to solve it. For example, the thematic community related to the social problem of marginalization of persons with disabilities may consist of persons with disabilities, activists and experts engaged in equal opportunities policy. Projects that primarily focus on the well-being of a particular thematic community also presuppose a partnership between different organizations that connects a common area of interest, action or value for the purpose of collaborative design and implementation of projects in the local community.

Within this Call, only those project proposals that contribute to achieving positive social change in one of the priority program areas of the Fund's support are eligible for funding. Project proposals therefore must address one of the priority program areas:

- Democracy, active citizenship, good governance and transparency,
- 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.

In the project proposal application process, applicants **are required to select one** of the above areas and **describe in detail the problems of the local or thematic community and offer their own solutions** to the described problems in the selected area.

Furthermore, since Active Citizens Fund is designed to strengthen civil society and active citizenship and empower vulnerable groups, all projects should **contribute to at least one of the predefined expected outcomes** defined in the common results-based framework. These expected outcomes are:

- 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,
- Enhanced capacity and sustainability of civil society (organisations and sector).

Each project in this Call **must contribute to at least one of these expected outcomes**. In case a project contributes to more than one outcome, a primary outcome must be clearly indicated in the application form, which is the one to which the project contributes the most.

When designing and drafting a project proposal, applicants are required to **identify project activities** which directly contribute to achieving at least one of the **expected results** of the Fund within the previously selected **expected outcome** of the Fund. Projects must include the outcome level indicators for the outcomes they contribute to, and should also include outputs and output level indicators depending on what their focus within the outcome is.

Each of the four outcomes has specific indicators, outputs and outputs' indicators set. Four tables below show the relevant result framework for each of these four outcome areas, and are presented with clarifications of all four outcomes with their specific indicators and indicative set of activities. Presented four outcomes make up the whole result framework for the Programme.

Outcome 1: Strengthened civil society watchdog/advocacy role

Fund operator has, under this Call allocated EUR 70,000.00, for the implementation of projects that contribute to achieving expected outcome 1, and designated expected programme results and indicators.

When we talk about public policies, we are not talking about politics in general, but about policies that relate to a particular area of activity (i.e. *public education policy*) or a particular group of people (i.e. *public policy for young people*). There are public policies that are formed according to the content that they are regulating; public policies on education, transport and energy policy or environmental protection. There are also public policies that are formed according to the target groups that they are regulating, special societal groups such as children, families, the elderly or people with disabilities. In Croatia we have municipal, regional, urban, rural, national, state or European public policies. Civil society organizations are an important stakeholder in the process of preparing, adopting and monitoring implementation of public policies and public affair in general. Expected outcome 1 is therefore aimed supporting civil society organization in advocating and lobbying for a particular societal group(s) in representing their needs and problems, especially at the local and regional level. Often, civil society organizations are providers of certain services and through direct contact with the beneficiaries can gain legitimacy to participate in and create public policies.

Representatives of civil society organizations can participate as members of working groups and various advisory councils and committees. Embeddedness of civil society organisations in the local community can give them legitimacy to monitor implementation and effect of different stakeholder's interventions in the public space. Therefore watchdog role of the civil society organisations and citizens is essential in any ventures and decision that have impact on citizens and the community as a whole.

The activities of organizations in the watchdog/ advocacy role also depend on their capacities (human, technical and financial capacity). Therefore, smaller under-capacitated organizations from the local community can operate through the existing network or come together in a new network or coalition and thus strengthen and gain support and legitimacy. Applicants that address some of the similar or the same issues mentioned above will contribute to the Outcome 1.

Outcome/ Output	Expected programme results	Indicator
Programme Objective	Civil society and active citizenship strengthened and vulnerable groups empowered	Number of people engaged in civil society organisation activities
		Number of CSOs (always referring to project promoters and their project partners) directly funded by the Programme ¹
Outcome 1	Strengthened civil society watchdog/advocacy role	Number of national policies and laws influenced by the CSOs
		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

Some of the possible activities within the applications are: *(Note: the list is not prescriptive or exhaustive)*

- **Working groups and / or initiatives** (cross-sectoral and / or intra-sectoral) that participate in the preparation and / or adoption of public policies
- **Conduct research and analysis of public policies, regulations and practices** in order to give concrete written recommendations through systematic advocacy (reports, submission paper recommendations for improvement, etc.)
- **Monitor and report on the process of implementation** of local, regional, national public policies and decision-making processes (i.e. monitoring of public procurement, implementation of public services, decision-making in the municipality, county, Parliament, etc.)
- **Prepare and / or implement strategic litigation**
- **Prepare and implement public campaigns, public hearings, protests, petitions** etc.
- **Conduct a needs assessments of target groups** (especially vulnerable groups) in order to adapt services and / or prepare and adopt public policies with concrete written recommendations /conclusions
- **Work through new or existing informal and formal networks and coalitions of CSOs** for stronger impact and legitimacy of advocacy work
- Other activities not explicitly mentioned here that contribute to Expected Outcome 1

Outcome 2: Increased support for human rights, rule of law and good governance

Fund operator has, under this Call allocated EUR 80,000.00, for the implementation of projects that contribute to achieving Expected outcome 2, and designated expected programme results and indicators.

Civil society organizations have an important role to play in promoting and respecting human rights, the rule of law and good governance. They work on issues that are important to citizens, monitor the activities of governments, parliament and local and regional self-government and through different activities encourage and demand from the authorities to take responsibility for their actions. Outcome 2 contributes to promoting the rule of law, involving citizens in the public sphere, raising public awareness on various social issues, community development and seeking to contribute to the establishment of an equal level and inviolability of universal rights for all people regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, politics, class or gender, affiliation, education or economic status. This area of work includes the issue of valuing and respecting diversity (by gender, race, cultural identity, education, economic power, sexual orientation, etc.), supporting the promotion of tolerance and positive action towards particularly vulnerable and minority groups. Activities include monitoring of human rights violations and analysis of existing laws, launching legislative initiatives to amend existing or enact new

laws, monitoring the application and compliance with internationally accepted human rights standards included by the Republic of Croatia in its domestic legislation, motivating citizens to associate and connect in the protection and exercise of their rights. Applicants that address some of the similar or the same issues mentioned above will contribute to the Programme Outcome 2.

Outcome 2	Increased support for human rights, rule of law and good governance	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

Some of the possible activities within the applications are: *(Note: the list is not prescriptive or exhaustive)*

- **Conduct needs assessments of target groups** (especially vulnerable groups) in order to adapt services and / or prepare and adopt public policies with concrete written recommendations /conclusions
- **Conduct research and analysis of public policies, regulations and practices** in order to give concrete written recommendations through systematic advocacy (reports, submission paper recommendations for improvement, etc.)
- **Monitor and report on the process of implementation** of local, regional, national public policies and decision-making processes (i.e. monitoring of public procurement, implementation of public services, decision-making in the municipality, county, Parliament, etc.)
- **Prepare and implement public campaigns, public hearings, protests, petitions** etc.
- **Conducting needs assessments of target groups** (especially vulnerable groups) in order to adapt services, create and adapt methodology, include some innovation in the way of delivering services, relations with the target group
- **Develop and test new methodology to work with vulnerable groups** in order to give better more targeted services, create and adapt methodology, include some innovation in the way of delivering services, build new relations with the target group
- **Monitor media coverage of hate speech and / or hate crimes** based on race, ethnicity, gender, religion or ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, any physical or mental characteristics or illness property status or level of education
- **Organise festivals, parades, performances, radio shows and other types of public presentation of the work of associations** in order to mobilize the community, increase the number of

volunteers, raise public awareness (community) about the work of civil society organizations and / or raise awareness of problems and / or needs of the target group.

- **Develop publicly available promotional materials, mobile applications, websites, videos, manuals, posters, audio and / or video recordings, etc.** related to promotion and awareness raising of human rights standards
- **Provide counselling, legal assistance and other types of support** to socially deprived/ vulnerable groups, victims of human rights violations, persons discriminated against on the grounds of race, ethnicity, gender, **ONLY as a part of wider actions addressing awareness-raising, advocacy, empowerment and reform initiatives oriented to increased support for human rights, rule of law and good governance**
- **Establishing new, formal or informal, ad-hoc or long-term, cross-sectoral bodies, platforms, networks, alliances, coalitions and other forms of collaboration** in the relevant program/ thematic area
- Other activities not explicitly mentioned here that contribute to Programme Outcome 2

Outcome 3: Strengthened democratic culture and civic awareness and engagement

Fund operator has, under this Call allocated EUR 120,000.00, for the implementation of projects that contribute to achieving Expected outcome 3, and designated expected programme results and indicators.

Effective citizen participation is key to good governance. Elected representatives, officials and citizens have important roles in governing the local community, region or state. Cooperation between the government, local self-government units and citizens leads to the best political and developmental policy decisions. Therefore, promoting and creating an environment that will stimulate citizen's participation is of uttermost importance.

Civil society organizations can make a significant contribution to shaping a better, socially sensitive and just society. Greater involvement of citizens in the work of civil society organizations gives legitimacy to the work of civil society organizations and / or in solving problems and needs in the local community. Participatory democracy is a form of democracy that ensures the continuous participation of responsible and informed citizens in political decision-making processes. Thus, it is a socially inclusive decision-making process, public policy or implementation of projects of common interest, which enables the creation of a cooperative relationship between citizens and government representatives. Cooperation and joint problem solving results in more appropriate solutions in accordance to the needs, and with the ultimate goal of long-term community development.

Equally important on several levels is civic engagement through volunteering, activism which are a social value as well as a way that allows citizens to get involved in creating the desirable community and society as a whole. Volunteering empowers individuals, builds a sense of solidarity, encourages participation, protects vulnerable groups from economic, social and political marginalization and has the potential of a cohesive element in society. Applicants that address some of the similar or the same issues mentioned above will contribute to the Outcome 3.

Outcome 3	Strengthened democratic culture and civic awareness and engagement	Number of vulnerable individuals reached by empowerment measures
Output 3.1	Civic and human rights education	Number of CSOs (project promoters and

	supported	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 engaged in CSOs and the community

Some of the possible activities within the applications are: *(Note: the list is not prescriptive or exhaustive)*

- **Conduct needs assessments of target groups** (especially vulnerable groups) in order to adapt services and / or prepare and adopt public policies with concrete written recommendations /conclusions
- **Develop and test new methodology to work with vulnerable groups** in order to give better more targeted services, create and adapt methodology, include some innovation in the way of delivering services, build new relations with the target group
- **Mobilise and gather citizens through various forms (formal and non-formal, informal in increasing democratic culture and civic awareness and engagement**
- **Conducting needs assessments of target groups** (especially vulnerable groups) in order to adapt services and / or prepare and adopt public policies with concrete written recommendations /conclusions
- **Educational programs** ²(workshops, counselling, mentoring, coaching), in the area of civic and human rights education
- **Information activities** (on the rights of socially vulnerable, vulnerable groups)
- **Develop publicly available promotional materials, mobile applications, websites, videos, manuals, posters, audio and / or video recordings, etc.**
- **Develop volunteer programs in CSOs and public educational institutions for systematic inclusion of volunteers** in CSOs and the community
- **Organize volunteer actions** in the community (short-term and long-term volunteering)
- Other activities not explicitly mentioned here that contribute to Programme Outcome 3

Outcome 4: Enhanced capacity and sustainability of civil society (organisations and sector)

² Civic education programs for human rights can be implemented only in cooperation / partnership with public educational institutions

Fund operator has, under this Call allocated EUR 45,000.00, for the implementation of projects that contribute to achieving Expected outcome 4, and designated expected programme results and indicators.

Outcome 4 refers to the identified needs in the area of capacity and sustainability of organisation and civil sector. This call is focused on strengthening capacity of small organisation in the framework of 5 programme areas. In order to contribute to the social development, civil society organizations need to be more efficient and effective in implementing their work programs and more transparent in their work and more accountable to the communities in which they operate, as well as to the general public. Therefore, it is important to build both human and technical and technological capacities of organizations. Capacity building of the organization refers to the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the performance of the organization, bearing in mind the needs and problems of the societal group(s) with which it works and the sectoral and geographical area. Within this effect, two more aspects are important; activities and connecting and exchanging competencies of civil society organizations within the sector and involving and expanding members of civil society organizations. Of particular interest is the solidarity and support of the larger, more experienced organizations to smaller, less developed organizations, especially those not in city centres.

Outcome 4	Enhanced capacity and sustainability of civil society (organisations and sector)	Number of CSOs that are members of civil society networks/platforms
		Number of CSOs demonstrating diversification in funding sources
		Number of CSOs with transparent and accountable governance procedure
		Number of CSOs that regularly disseminate information on their activities and results to the public
Output 4.1.	Capacity-building provided to CSOs	Number of CSOs participating in learning initiatives supported by the programme
		Number of CSO leaders trained on leadership skills
		Number of supported CSOs with effective management procedures
		Number of CSOs conducting an assessment of their organisational capacity
Output 4.2.	Partnerships between CSOs supported	Number of partnerships between established/strong and less established/weaker/smaller CSOs
Output 4.3.	CSOs' outreach to citizens and local communities supported	Number of CSO paid staff trained in public communications and community outreach
		Number of CSOs trained in public communications and community outreach

Some of the possible activities within the applications are: *(Note: the list is not prescriptive or exhaustive)*

- **Assess organizational capacities and develop action plan** for organizational development
- **Educational and / or advisory and / or mentoring programs** for building the capacity of human resources in the area of non-profit management
- **Educational and / or advisory and / or mentoring programs** for developing transparent and accountable governance procedure in the organisation
- **Development of a communication plan, fundraising plan (increase diversification)**
- **Development of volunteering programme in CSO's and /or public educational institutions** including implementation of standards for volunteer organisers
- **Development of long-term strategic and/or operational plan** of the organization
- **Job-shadowing, study visits within Croatia**
- **Fundraising events to support implementation of CSOs programme to vulnerable groups**
- Other activities not explicitly mentioned here that contribute to Programme Outcome 4

2.2.1. SPECIFIC PROVISIONS OF THE CALL

At least 50% of the total available funds under this Call will be allocated to organizations registered and working in underserved geographic areas and/or organizations working with vulnerable groups, including Roma.

Applications coming from organization(s) registered and working in a local self-government unit with a development index below 100% according to the Croatian Government's Decision on classifying local and regional self-government units according to the level of development³ will receive up to 4 (four) additional points.

Applications implemented within local self-government units with a development index below 100% according to the Croatian Government's Decision on classifying local and regional self-government units according to the level of development⁴ will receive up to 4 (four) additional points in the process of assessing the quality of applications.

Project proposals aimed at marginalized and deprived groups such as members of minority groups (based on race or ethnicity, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or identity - Roma, refugees / migrants, victims of violence, survivors of domestic violence, children and young people at risk, etc.) will receive up to 4 (four) additional points in the process of assessing the quality of project proposals.

This Call responds to the identified **horizontal social priorities** and will support applications that contribute to:

- strengthening intercultural dialogue, with special emphasis on national minorities;
- strengthening intergenerational cooperation and solidarity.

Project proposals that include activities, working methods and/or project partnership aimed at achieving one or both of these priorities will receive up to 3 (three) additional points in the process of assessing the quality of application.

³ Full list available at: <https://bit.ly/3bKwNFs>

⁴ Full list available at: <https://bit.ly/3bKwNFs>

When designing an application, applicants must take into account the following special conditions of the Fund:

- All programmes shall include youth inclusion
- Protection of the environment and climate change shall only be supported as part of measures to promote civic participation, advocacy, social innovation and active citizenship
- Provision of welfare and basic services shall only be supported as part of wider actions addressing awareness-raising, advocacy, empowerment and reform initiatives

2.3. ELIGIBILITY OF APPLICANTS AND 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 rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities⁵ (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.

2.3.1. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible lead applicants are civil society organisations (CSOs) established and registered 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”.

More specifically, eligible candidates must meet all of 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,

⁵ Article 1.2 of Protocol 38c on the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms (2014-2021)

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 Non-profit Organizations (RNO) with Croatian Ministry of Finance⁶;

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).

Organizations implementing projects funded under the Call for large projects are not eligible applicants.

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

Political parties, religious institutions, social partners⁷ or profit-distributing cooperatives are not considered CSOs.

2.3.2. ELIGIBLE PARTNERS

Partnership is not obligatory under this Call, however the proposed project can be implemented in partnership with one or more eligible organizations. It is important that partnership is based on mutual capacity upgrade between involved organizations as well as common values and ownership of the project. All partners shall be included in preparation as well as actual and financial implementation of the project. In project proposal evaluation and selection process, capacity of the whole partnership will be considered.

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 ACF donor countries – Island, Lichtenstein and Norway, any of the ACF beneficiary countries (beside Croatia, also Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia,

⁶ 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 2021 and a balance sheet or annual financial statement of receipts and expenditures for 2020, in accordance with the accounting regulations of non-profit organizations, whereby the 2021 Annual Financial Report is visible in the Register of Nonprofit Organizations.

⁷ Social partners are defined as trades unions and employers' negotiating bodies, as defined by the EU.

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.

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.

A special emphasis is put on partnerships that are including partners from the donor countries. Projects including bilateral partnerships shall be scored with up to 5 additional points.

Important: A project partnership shall not be mistaken for sub-contracting. Contractors providing services and supply of goods awarded by a beneficiary organization under the Fund do not fall within the category of partners and are selected by the respective organization under the rules for the procurement of goods and/or services, i.e. selection of contractor. The partner must have a clear and well-grounded role in achieving the goals of the project!

All partners are requested to sign a Partnership statement in the process of project submission. The form of Partnership statement is a part of the call documentation.

If a project is implemented in partnership, in case of financial support to the project, the applicant shall sign a partnership agreement with each of the project partners. A model agreement is a part of the call documentation.

Support in finding partners

For easier search for partners from Donor states and beneficiary countries you can use a portal of Norwegian Helsinki committee: <https://ngonorway.org/>. Applicants searching for Icelandic partners are advised to turn to the Icelandic Human Rights Centre (margret@humanrights.is). Especially welcome are the upgrades of already existing partnerships.

2.4. NUMBER OF PROPOSALS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Each individual applicant can submit **only one project proposal** in this call as a **lead applicant**. Lead applicant can be a partner in another application.

Each organization can participate in **no more than two project proposals in a partner role**. This limitation applies to both partners in Croatia as well as in other eligible countries (including the donor countries). If during the administrative and eligibility check the Fund Operator determines that partner organisation participates in more than two applications in the role of a partner, the lead applicant will receive the request for supplementation allowing them to exclude the partner; otherwise the application will be rejected

2.5. GENERAL RULES AND INFORMATION

Available budget for Small projects: € 315.000

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

- Minimum: € 5.000,00
- Maximum: € 15.000,00

Project grant rate

The maximum project grant rate indicated in the application may equal 100% of the total eligible project costs.

Project duration

Project duration is between six (6) and twelve (12) months.

Location of the project

While there are no limitations to the geographic location of project activities, all activities need to contribute to the agreed outputs, outcomes and objective of the Programme as well as the overall objective of the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms, i.e. to reduce social and economic inequalities in the EEA and strengthen bilateral relations between the Croatia and donor states.

Payments

Payments of the project grant shall take the form of advance payments, interim payments and a final payment. The level of advance payment to projects shall be set out in the project contract. The maximum level of advance payment shall be linked to the project budget and duration as follows:

Grant size	Project implementation duration	Advance payment	Interim payment(s)	Final payment
€5.000,00-€15.000	6-12 months	Max 40%	Max 50%	Minimum 10% or the remaining balance

Value added tax

Value added tax (VAT) is eligible cost only in case the applicant is not entitled for recoverable VAT. Applicants shall be aware of this rule when preparing their financial plan for the projects, and consider only those VAT costs that are non-recoverable by the state.

Applicants whose project proposals will be selected for the grant will be asked to provide a statement on non-recoverable VAT.

Changes to the financial structure during project implementation period

General principle regarding possible reallocation between cost headings is: reallocation of budget between cost headings of up to 15% of total heading amount are possible without approval of the grant officer on the side of the Fund Operator; for reallocation of budget between cost headings higher than 15% of total heading amount project promoter will have to get Fund Operator's grant officer's approval and an annex to the contract will be signed.

Procurement rules

National and European Union law on public procurement shall be complied with at any level in the implementation of the projects.

Notwithstanding provisions of national law that exempt CSOs from public procurement, any procurement procedures related to amounts above the European Union thresholds for procurement shall be undertaken in accordance with the applicable laws on procurement without regard for such an exemption.

In cases where contracts concluded as part of the implementation of the projects fall below the national or European Union thresholds set for public procurement or outside the scope of the applicable public procurement laws, the awarding of such contracts (including the procedures prior to the awarding) and the terms and conditions of such contracts shall comply with best economic practices, including accountability, allow a full and fair competition between potential providers, for example by way of effective price comparison, and ensure the optimal use of resources from the ACF in Croatia. To this end, and in the absence of stricter national laws, in cases of procurement related to an amount of € 5,000 or higher but below the relevant European Union thresholds, the project applicant shall invite at least three suppliers/service providers to submit offers.

The highest ethical standards shall be observed during the procurement and execution of contracts. The project applicant shall ensure the application of adequate and effective means to prevent illegal or corrupt practices. No offer, gifts, payments or benefit of any kind, which would or could, either directly or indirectly, be construed as an illegal or corrupt practice, e.g. as an inducement or reward for the award or execution of procurement contracts, shall be accepted.

2.6. ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE

Eligible expenditures of projects are those actually incurred by the project applicant or the project partner, which meet the following criteria:

- a) they are incurred between the first and final dates of eligibility of a project as specified in the project contract;
- b) they are connected with the subject of the project contract and they are indicated in the detailed budget of the project;
- c) they are proportionate and necessary for the implementation of the project;
- d) they are used for the sole purpose of achieving the objective of the project and its expected outcome(s), in a manner consistent with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness;
- e) they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular through being recorded in the accounting records of the project promoter and determined according to the applicable accounting standards and generally accepted accounting principles; and

- f) they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation.

Expenditures are considered to have been incurred when the cost has been invoiced, paid and the subject matter delivered (in case of goods) or performed (in case of services and works). Exceptionally, costs in respect of which an invoice has been issued in the final month of eligibility are also deemed to be incurred within the dates of eligibility if the costs are paid within 30 days of the final date of eligibility.

Indirect costs and depreciation of equipment are considered to have been incurred when they are recorded on the accounts of the project promoter and/or project partner.

The internal accounting and auditing procedures must permit direct reconciliation of the expenditures and revenues declared with the corresponding accounting statements and supporting documents.

Project promoters and partners are obliged to keep a separate account card for the project.

2.6.1. Direct expenditure

- the cost of staff assigned to the project (employments contracts, civil law contracts, private entrepreneurs, who are part of the project team), comprising actual salaries plus social security charges provided that this corresponds to the project promoter's and project partner's usual policy on remuneration;
- travel and subsistence allowances for staff taking part in the project provided that they are in line with the project promoter's and project partner's usual practices on travel costs;
- cost of new or second hand equipment provided that it is depreciated in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles applicable to the project promoter and generally accepted for items of the same kind. Only the portion of the depreciation corresponding to the duration of the project and the rate of actual use for the purposes of the project may be taken into account by the Fund Operator. In case the Fund Operator determines that the equipment is an integral and necessary component for achieving the outcomes of the project, the entire purchase price of that equipment may be eligible⁸;
- costs of consumables and supplies, provided that they are identifiable and assigned to the project;
- costs entailed by other contracts awarded by a project applicant for the purposes of carrying out the project, provided that the awarding complies with the applicable rules on public procurement;

⁸ Where the entire purchase price of equipment is eligible in accordance with this paragraph, the project promoter shall: a) keep the equipment under its ownership for a period of at least five years following the completion of the project and continues to use the equipment for the benefit of the overall objectives of the project for the same period; b) keep the equipment properly insured against losses such as fire, theft or other normally insurable incidents both during project implementation and for at least five years following the completion of the project; and c) set aside appropriate resources for the maintenance of the equipment for at least five years following the completion of the project. The specific means for the implementation of this obligation shall be specified in the project contract.

- costs arising directly from requirements imposed by the project contract for each project (e.g. dissemination of information, specific evaluation of the action, audits, translations, reproduction), including the costs of any financial services (especially the cost of financial guarantees) and
- reconstruction, renovation or refurbishment of a real estate up to 50% of the eligible direct cost of the project.

2.6.2. 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**. Indirect costs do not have to be proven or evidenced in the separate account evidence of the project. The rate of indirect costs applies to the whole partnership; however, the rate can differ between partner organisations.

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

In case beneficiaries are international organisations or bodies or agencies thereof, indirect costs can be identified in accordance with existing rules of such organisation.

2.7. INELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES

The following costs shall not be considered eligible:

- Costs related to preparation of project application;
- Costs of construction work, i.e. construction of new buildings, facilities, objects;
- Costs for purchasing of equipment, which is not necessary for implementation of the project;
- Fees for regular work of civil servants or other public officials engaged in project implementation;
- Costs of debt, interest on debt, debt service charges and late payment charges;
- Charges for financial transactions and other purely financial costs, except costs related to accounts required the contract with Fund Operator;
- Costs related to purchase of land or real estate;
- Provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- Exchange losses;
- Recoverable VAT;
- Costs that are covered by other sources;
- Fines, penalties and costs of litigation, except they are an integral and necessary component for achievement of project objectives;
- Excessive or reckless expenditure;
- Re-granting of project funds to third parties;
- Subcontracting costs between partner organisations.

3. CALL DOCUMENTATION AND APPLICATION PROCESS

All of the call documentation can be found at: <https://acfcroatia.hr/en/small-projects/>

Call documentation consist of:

- Call for small projects and guidelines for applicants (pdf);

- Application form for project proposal(word);
- Financial plan (excel);
- Applicant's statement;
- Partner's statement;
- Contract sample;
- Partnership agreement sample;

3.1. APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants shall prepare and fill in the form »Projektna prijava« (Application form for project proposal) in accordance with the instructions presented in the form.

In addition to the Application Form, applicants will also have to submit Financial plan, Applicant's statement, Partner's statement (in case of submission of partnership project), and current statute or the founding act of the applicant and partner organization(s), if such a document is not available in the official on-line public register.

Deadline and the submission process

Complete application consists of:

- Complete Application form for project proposal (word and .pdf),
- Complete financial plan (excel and .pdf),
- Scan of Applicant's statement (signed and stamped, .pdf)
- Statute or the founding act of the Applicant Organisation, legally published (scanned, .pdf)⁹
- Scan of Partner statement (signed and stamped) - if applicable
- Scan of Statement on the establishment of the informal group (signed, .pdf) - if applicable

Application shall be submitted **only in electronic form** to the following e-mail address: prijava.mali@acfcroatia.hr (this e-mail is intended exclusively for submission of applications for this call. In case you have questions regarding the call, Fund, etc., please contact us at: podrska@acfcroatia.hr).

The subject of the submitting e-mail shall be: Application to Call for small projects

Please note: Applications submitted in any other form or way (for example via fax, regular mail, etc.) or to any other e-mail, shall be rejected

The complete application must **be delivered** to the e-mail provided above by **May 02, 2022 before 12 p.m. (noon, Croatian time)**. Applications delivered to the respective e-mail past the deadline will be rejected. Date and time of the arrival of the e-mail with a complete application and all necessary attachments will be considered based on the records of the Fund Operator's server, regardless of the date and time of when it was sent and regardless of the date and time of sending recorded by the sending server. **Fund Operator assumes no responsibility for any delays in the delivery of application e-mail** (for example, due to large attachments and server occupancy or network disruption, etc.).

⁹ if such a document is not available in the official on-line public register

Therefore, applicants are recommended to not delay the submission of their applications until the last day.

Applicants will receive an automatic response on the delivery of their e-mail to the sending e-mail address. In case such response does not arrive to applicant's e-mail inbox or spam within two (2) hours after sending the application e-mail, please contact the Fund Operator at 031 213 255 during working hours, so the Fund Operator can check the status of your application on its side.

Language of the application

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 project proposals, the eligibility of the applicants and administrative compliance assessment will be done based on the administrative and eligibility compliance criteria presented in tables below. Fund Operator can request for additional information or clarifications referring to administrative compliance criteria.

ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLIANCE CRITERIA

Criteria	Meeting the criteria		Notes
Application is submitted to designated email.	YES	NO	Rejection
Application is submitted within the deadline.	YES	NO	Rejection
Application form is completed in Croatian language.	YES	NO	Rejection
Primary program outcome and priority Programme area of the application are clearly indicated.	YES	NO	request for supplementation
Short brief on the project is prepared in English language.	YES	NO	request for supplementation
Financial plan form is attached and adequately completed in Euros.	YES	NO	Rejection
Applicant's statement, signed and stamped, by the applicant's representative by law is submitted.	YES	NO	request for supplementation
Partner statement of each partner, signed and stamped, by the legal representative of partner is submitted.	YES	NO	request for supplementation
Statement on the establishment of the informal group, signed is submitted.	YES	NO	request for supplementation
Applicant submitted only one proposal to the Call	YES	NO	Only the first delivered proposal may remain in the process of assessment, while other are rejected as ineligible.
Partner organisation participates in more than two application in the role of a partner	YES	NO	Request for supplementation – exclusion of a partner, otherwise the application will be rejected

APPLICATION ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Criteria	Meeting the criteria		Notes
Applicant is an eligible civil-society organization.	YES	NO	rejection
Partner organisation(s) is (are) eligible.	YES	NO	rejection
Project duration is between 6 and 12 months.	YES	NO	rejection
Grant amount corresponds to determined frames of 5.000 € and 15.000 €.	YES	NO	rejection
Applicant organisation is not implementing projects funded under the Call for large projects	YES	NO	rejection
Applicant is registered at RNO and conducts transparent financial operations ¹⁰	YES	NO	rejection
Applicant (and partner organizations - if applicable) have no unrecovered amounts due, following a final court decision in connection with the CSO Programme 2009-2014 in Croatia	YES	NO	rejection

In case the application will miss certain parts (documents or information) that can be supplemented according to the above criteria, applicants will be invited to provide respective missing parts within five (5) calendar days. An invitation to provide the missing parts of the application will be sent to the e-mail address of the applicant listed in the application form (e-mail address of the contact person).

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 8 calendar days available for appeal against the eligibility decision. Appeals will be considered by the Appeal Committee. The decision of the Committee is final. Appeal can be submitted at: prigovori@acfcroatia.hr. The appeal will be formulated in writing and will include the reason for which such a request is well justified. The contestant cannot modify the content of the initial submitted application, but the Appeal Committee may request additional information from the contestant. The FO will take into consideration only the appeals submitted by the legal representative of the applicant or by the person empowered on his behalf. The appeal will be considered by the Appeal Committee of the FO and applicants will be informed within ten (10) calendar days. The decision on the appeal is irrevocable. No further appeal on the same application could be formulated afterwards.

Application quality assessment

All eligible and administratively compliant project proposals will be evaluated by two independent evaluators in accordance with criteria set below.

If the difference between the scores given by the two experts will be higher than 30 % of the highest score, a third expert will score the project independently. In such cases the average score of the two

¹⁰ 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 and a balance sheet or annual financial statement of receipts and expenditures for last closed financial year, in accordance with the accounting regulations of non-profit organizations, whereby the Annual Financial Report is visible in the Register of Nonprofit Organizations.

closest scores shall be used for ranking the project. The latter shall not be used in cases where scoring of the third evaluator does not, in any way, contribute to granting the project proposal.

EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR SUBMITTED APPLICATIONS (Max. total points: 100)

Relevance and importance of the project (40 points)		
Criteria	Description of the criteria	Score
Relevance of the project in relation to the selected priority area of support of the Fund	To what extent will the implementation of the proposed project contribute to achieving positive social changes in the selected priority program area of the Fund's support?	10
Relevance of the project in relation to the expected outcomes and outputs and related indicators of the Fund	To what extent will the implementation of the proposed project contribute to achieving the selected outcome of the Fund and the accompanying indicators? To what extent will the proposed project activities contribute to the achievement of the Fund's outputs and accompanying indicators?	10
Relevance according to the described problem	To what extent is the described problem related to the local/and or thematic community in the selected programme area of the Fund's support? To what extent do proposed activities respond and relate to described problem and will make the largest social change?	10
Relevance of the project with regard to target groups of the project	To what extent are the target groups and their needs defined? Are the proposed project activities relevant to the selected target groups and does it respond to their needs?	10

Project description and methodology (15 points)		
Criteria	Description of criteria	Score
Logical interconnectedness of individual parts of project proposal	To what extent are the objectives, outcomes, outputs and activities logically interconnected and coherent? To what extent do they connect and interlink with the chosen program area and outcomes?	5
Feasibility of the activities	Are the proposed project activities and methodology appropriate in response to the perceived need/problem? Are the proposed project activities feasible? To what extent are the planned activities will lead to the proposed project results? Is the project feasible in the planned time?	10

Capacity for project implementation (13 points)		
Criteria	Description of criteria	Score
Applicant (partner if applicable) capacity	To what extent does the applicant (and partner (s), if applicable) have the appropriate capacity (human resources) to implement the proposed project activities? To what extent does the applicant (and partner (s), if applicable)	10

	have already experience working with target groups in the geographical/thematic area? To what extent does organisation(s) implementing a project has built relationships/ties with other stakeholders (within the community, civil sector and with other sectors)?	
Bilateral partnership priority	Does the project envisage a purposeful and relevant partnership between Croatian CSOs and CSOs from donor countries? (If yes,) To what extent does this partnership add value to the proposed project and its implementation and strengthen bilateral cooperation?	5

Financial efficiency (15 points)		
Criteria	Description of criteria	Score
Cost – action plan compliance	<i>To what extent are proposed costs compliant with action plan? Are the planned costs logically related to planned activities and outputs?</i> <i>To what extent does the cost justification clarify what the cost entails and at what price?</i> <i>To what extent are cost estimations based on realistic assumptions?</i>	/ 5
Financial efficiency of the project	To what extent is the value of the project adequate in regard to set objectives (are project objectives achievable with indicated project budget)?	/10

Country specifics areas and concerns (15 points)		
Criteria	Description of criteria	Score
Outreach to under-served geographic areas and target groups	The applicant's is registered in a local self-government unit with a development index below 100% according to the Croatian Government's Decision on classifying local and regional self-government units according to the level of development.	/ 4
	Proposed project is implemented in at least one of the local self-government unit /s with a development index below 100%	/4
Inclusion of vulnerable groups, including Roma	Does proposed project include marginalized and deprived groups such as members of minority groups (based on race or ethnicity, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or identity - Roma, refugees / migrants, victims of violence, survivors of domestic violence, children and young people at risk, etc.) Roma?	/4
Relevance of the project in relation to horizontal social priorities (intercultural dialogue and intergenerational solidarity)	To what extent does the proposed project include activities, working methods and / or a project partnership aimed at achieving one or both of these priorities? To what extent will the implementation of the proposed activities will improve/contribute to intercultural dialogue and intergenerational solidarity?	/3

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. Final decision is made by the Fund Operator.

Project proposals scoring a minimum of 70 points in quality assessment will be recommended for funding.

The final decision of the Fund Operator whether to approve or reject support to a project is not subject to complaint/appeal, but general complaints/alerts related to the selection process as such can be submitted to the Complaints Committee providing the information as outlined in section 6 of this document.

Acceptance of an application does not imply an obligation to award it up to the amount claimed by the applicant. The amount claimed may be decreased by the selection committee based on the evaluators' findings on the appropriateness of the financial plan. Based on the findings of the evaluators on the appropriateness of the activities for achieving the project objectives, the selection committee may reject financing of activities that do not contribute to the objectives. The detailed timeline is presented in the section 7.

Notification on selection

Applicants will be notified on the selection of their project proposals via e-mail indicated in application form, in accordance with the indicative timeline in section 7.

4. PROVISIONS ON PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

For each approved project, a project implementation contract shall be concluded between the Community Foundation Slagalica and the project promoter setting out the terms and conditions of the grant, as well as the role and responsibilities of the parties. In case a delay in project implementation occurs due to objective reasons, beneficiary can request for a prolongation of the project for a maximum of 3 months. Request will be considered by the Fund Operator. Prolongation of the project does not impact financial plan of the project.

The project contract shall contain, as a minimum, provisions on the following:

- Final grant amount – maximum grant amount and rate will be determined in EUR with the contract based on the financial plan of the project representing planned amount of costs. However, this amount will become final only after the conclusion of the project and after submission of the final financial statement of project account;
- Failure to fulfil obligations of project contract and provisions – In case beneficiary will not realise project in accordance with project contract obligations and provisions, the Fund Operator reserves the right to stop payments or terminate the contract. ACF contribution can be reduced and Fund Operator can demand total or partial refund of already paid contribution in case beneficiary does not comply with the contractual provisions;
- Changes to the project – In the event of significant changes to the project, an annex to the contract has to be prepared and signed, while with smaller-scale changes, prior approval of contract guardian is sufficient;
- Changes to the financial plan – Original amounts of the categories in the financial plan may change under the following conditions:
 - when the change does not impact the original purpose of the project; and
 - reallocation of budget between cost headings of up to 15 % of total heading amount are possible without consent of the grant officer on the side of the Fund Operator; for reallocation of budget between cost headings higher than 15 % of total heading

amount project promoter will have to get Fund Operator's grant officer's approval and an annex to the contract will be signed;

- The description and the project budget;
- The duration of the project;
- The obligations on project reporting;
- The eligibility and the supporting documents on expenditure;
- The method of calculation of indirect costs and its maximum amount;
- The first and final date of the eligible costs;
- Approval of reports and payment of grant;
- Provisions that ensure that access for monitoring, audits and evaluations is provided without delay;
- Provisions to ensure obligations regarding publicity;
- Obligations regarding participation in the capacity building activities;
- The right of the Fund Operator and the Office of the EEA Financial Mechanism for monitoring project implementation;
- The obligation of the promoter as regards record keeping of the project files;
- Resolution of disputes and jurisdiction;
- Provisions on equipment for which the entire purchase price is eligible;
- A reference to partnership agreement(s) or letter(s) of intent, if relevant;
- Provisions in case of termination of the project contract;
- Waiver of responsibility.

4.2. REPORTING AND PAYMENTS

The submission of narrative and financial reports is a mandatory condition for the execution of the interim and final payments. The number of project reports depends on the project size and duration. Reports have to be approved by the Fund Operator before payments are made. Fund Operator can request for additional information on implementation progress at any time.

Interim Monitoring Reports (includes narrative and financial part) have to be submitted by the project promoter within 30 calendar days in 3 to 6 month intervals, depending on the contracted project implementation duration.

The final narrative and financial report supporting the final payment claim shall be submitted by the project promoter within 45 calendar days after the completion of the project.

Payments of the project grant shall take the form of advance payment, interim payments and final payment. The level of advance payment to projects shall be set out in the project contract.

Grant size	Project implementation duration	Advance payment	Interim payment(s)	Final payment
€5,000 to €15,000	6-12 months	Max. 40%	Max. 50%	Minimum 10% or the remaining balance

Advance payments are to be paid up to 15 working days from the start date of the project as stipulated in the Project Contract, or from the receipt of the project contract signed by the project promoter's statutory representative (if the latter executes after the start date of the project).

Interim payment(s) up to 50% of the grant, based on payment request upon approval of the Interim Monitoring Report of the project (includes narrative and financial part) submitted by the project promoter within required deadlines according to the Project Contract. The number of interim payments and its amount depends on the length of the project (i.e. number of interim monitoring reports submitted along with the payment request. A condition to prove incurred expenditures in amount of at least 50% of previous payment must be fulfilled concurrently. The transfer of interim payment is made in 15 working from the receipt of payment request signed by the promoter's entitled representative, following the approval of the individual report.

Final payment/payment of the final balance up to 10% of the grant, or up to the maximum grant amount according to the actually utilised eligible project expenses, is based upon approval of the Final Monitoring Report and the final payment request.

The approval of project interim/final financial report shall take place within 30 calendar days from the submission of all required information.

Rights and obligations of the project promoter and the Fund Operator regarding the monitoring and control of the use of the grant funds are detailed in the Project contract.

The project promoter and partner(s) must allow the FO/FMO/EFTA Board of Auditors/Office of the Auditor General of Norway to carry out audits and on-the-spot verifications and to examine supporting documents, accounting documents and any other documents relevant to the financing of the project. The supporting documents and records must be kept available for inspections and audits for a three-year period following the FMO's approval of the Final Program Report.

If the project is implemented with a partner(s) from Donor states, exceptionally, with reference to expenditures incurred by project partners whose primary location is registered in one of the donor states or project partners that are international organisations or bodies or agencies thereof, the proof of expenditure may take a form of a report by an independent auditor, qualified to carry out statutory audits of accounting documents, certifying that the reported costs are incurred in accordance with the guidelines, bilateral cooperation initiative implementation agreement, the relevant law and national accounting practices. In such a case:

- The cost of the report is considered an eligible cost, providing that it complies with the eligibility rules defined in the guidelines, Project contract and it is included in the budget;
- Upon request by the FMO, EFTA Board of Auditors/The Office of the Auditor General of Norway a project promoter or project partner shall grant access to the supporting documents on the basis of which the report was issued;
- The certification process can be governed by the International Standard on Related Services (ISRS) 4400 "Engagements to perform agreed-upon procedures regarding financial information" as published by the IFAC (International Federation of Accountants).

The annually audited financial statement of an entity cannot replace the specific auditor's certificate confirming that the claimed costs are incurred in accordance with the guidelines, Project contract, the relevant law and national accounting practices.

4.3. INFORMING THE PUBLIC

Project promoters are obliged to inform the public on receiving a grant from ACF. In all written publications, communications and products, at publication of project products, public events, such as conferences, seminars, fairs or exhibitions, related to project activities, project promoters are obliged to make explicit and visible the support of the donor countries.

Guidelines for informing and communicating are available on the ACF Croatia web site: <https://acfcroatia.hr/vidljivost/> . Project promoter will also have a wide pallet of communication support activities at their disposal.

5. INFORMATION CONCERNING THE PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA SUBMITTED BY PROJECT APPLICANTS TO THE ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND IN CROATIA

With personal data submitted (included) in application to public calls of the ACF in Croatia and reporting documentation by the applicants, CF Slagalica as Fund Operator and 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 as partners and fund co-operators will be acquainted. Hence, fund operator and co-operators enter the role of common personal data controllers. Submitted personal data will be used for the purposes of implementation of public calls (application assessment, informing of applicants) and in applications rewarded with grants also for preparation of grant agreements, for monitoring, control of co-financing and for related informing of beneficiaries or for other related business communication (request for additional information, informing on financial means) as well as for the purpose of proving of eligibility for funding.

Co-financing of selected project means establishing a contractual relation between CF Slagalica and the applicant in which CF Slagalica assumes the liability of co-financing party and has therefore, together with its partners, the right to monitor and control the implementation of the project. Such contractual relationship as well as submission of application to a public call (as a request for such contractual relationship) represent legal basis for all personal data processing by CF Slagalica, 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 as noted in this information.

With whole application, including personal data submitted with it, also third persons can get acquainted, and that is Financial Mechanism Office (Financial Mechanism Office, Rue Joseph II 12-16, 1000 Brussels, Belgium), donor states and their authorized persons.

In accordance with GDPR and respective national legislation, individuals whose personal data is included in application to public call have the right to be **acquainted with all of their personal data, to correction, in the case of conditions as laid down by applicable regulations also the right to deletion, restriction of processing** and to their portability. Individuals concerned can address their requests or questions regarding their personal data processing to CF Slagalica.

Please note: At submission of project proposal application to public call of ACF Croatia, legal representative of applicant organisation is obliged to sign a statement that they are aware of and in agreement with processing of personal data included in project proposal and relevant parts thereof.

6. COMPLAINT MECHANISM

In accordance with the terms and conditions for the Active Citizens Fund in Croatia, the Fund Operator has established a Complaints Committee. Complaints/alerts may be submitted in case of suspicion of irregularity, bad governance, corruption in implementation of Active Citizens Fund in Croatia programme, including those on possible misuse of funding projects submitted by general

public.

Complaints/alerts can also be submitted anonymously. Complaint/report/alert must be justified and consisted of the following information:

- Description of the irregularity (including whether it is alleged or real and how it occurred);
- Period the irregularity refers to or the timeline of its occurrence;
- How did the reporting person become aware of the irregularity;
- Identification of the individuals or legal entities related to the irregularity, and other information.

The decisions related to the administrative compliance and eligibility verification as part of the selection process are not subject to verification by the Complaints Committee, but will be handled by the Appeal Committee referred to in section 3.1. The final decision of the Fund Operator whether to approve or reject support to a project is not subject to complaint/appeal, but general complaints/alerts related to the selection process as such can be submitted to the Complaints Committee providing the information as outlined above.

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 two members who are external to the Fund Operator and its Board and does not include programme staff responsible for assessing project applications.

The complaints must be submitted electronically to the following email: prigovori@acfcroatia.hr.

7. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND SUPPORT FOR THE APPLICANTS

Applicants submitting the applications for this Call will have access to technical support from the publication of the Call until April 24, 2022, that is 8 days before the deadline for submission of the applications. All questions and requests for information related to this Call should be sent exclusively to the e-mail address podrska@acfcroatia.hr. The Fund Operator has no obligation to answer questions posed after April 24, 2022. The deadline for submitting the answers to the applicants is 7 days, and all relevant questions and answers will be published weekly on the Fund's website <https://acfcroatia.hr/fag/>.

Information workshop for the Call will be held online, on Zoom cloud platform, on Tuesday, March 8, 2022. The information workshop will give exhaustive details for the Call in terms of the goals, purpose and focus of the Call, the application process and various forms of support to the applicants. The Call will be additionally presented to existing and emerging Roma initiatives/organisations.

From March 28 to April 22, 2022, applicants will have the opportunity to participate in online (Zoom platform) **individual oral presentation of the project idea** (oral project pitch) whereby after each presentation, the potential applicants shall receive oral and written feedback for further developing of project ideas into quality, complete and relevant project proposal application. Additional instructions on

preparation of oral presentation are available on the Fund's website <https://acfcroatia.hr/mali-projekti/> in the form of written instructions and video tutorial.

Supporting the project applicants, Fund Operator will organise **three online (Zoom platform) workshops on project and budget development** on March 23, 24 and 25 2022.

More information on all the above mentioned forms of support to applicants (method of application, duration, etc.) will be available on the Fund's website <https://acfcroatia.hr/> and will be presented at the information workshops.

Video recordings of online information workshop and project&budget development workshops will be published on the Fund's website, as well as **video tutorial** on the procedure and preparation for the oral presentation of project ideas.

Event schedule:

Event	Purpose	Date	Venue
National information workshops	Detailed presentation of the goals, purpose and focus of the Call, the application process and various forms of support to applicants	March 8, 2022	Online (Zoom)
Informative workshop for existing and emerging Roma organisations/initiatives	Detailed presentation of the goals, purpose and focus of the Call, the application process and various forms of support to applicants	TBD	Online/offline
Project proposal and budget development workshops	Detailed presentation and explanation of the application form and budget form and providing advice for the preparation of a quality and relevant project proposal and accompanying budget	March 23, 2022 March 24, 2022 March 25, 2022	Online (Zoom)

INDICATIVE TIMELINE FOR CALL FOR SMALL PROJECTS IMPLEMENTATION

Date	Events
March 1, 2022	Publication of the Call for small projects
Until April 24, 2022	E-mail counselling
March 8, 2022	Info workshop (online)
March 28 - April 22, 2022	Individual project-pitching sessions (online)
March 23, 2022 March 24, 2022 March 25, 2022	Project and budget development workshops (online)
May 2, 2022	Deadline for submission of project proposals
May 2022	Applicant and application eligibility check, supplementing applications
May/June 2022	Project proposal assessment
July 2022 (planned)	Selection Committee meeting
July 2022 (planned)	Notification of applicants