

Call 7:

ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND IN CROATIA

Call for proposals for organisational (institutional) grants and Guidelines for applicants

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE CALL: MARCH 1, 2022

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF PROJECT APPLICATION: MAY **23**, 2022, NOON,
CROATIAN TIME

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Note: This is an extract of the full document »Poziv za organizacijsku (institucionalnu) podršku organizacijama civilnog društva i upute za prijavitelje«. The Croatian version is the official document; in case of differences between the two texts, the Croatian version is the valid one.

CONTENTS

1. EEA AND NORWEGIAN FINANCIAL MECHANISMS 2014–2021	3
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 ORGANIZATIONAL (INSTITUTIONAL) GRANTS.....	6
2.1. INDICATIVE BUDGET FOR ORGANISATIONAL GRANTS.....	6
2.2. MAIN PURPOSE OF THE CALL.....	6
2.2.1. FOCUS OF THE CALL.....	6
PRIORITY AREAS AND SPECIFICS OF THE CALL	6
EXPECTED PROGRAMME OUTCOMES	7
2.3. ELIGIBILITY RULES	10
2.3.1. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS.....	10
2.4. NUMBER OF PROPOSALS AND PARTNERSHIPS	12
2.5. FINANCIAL PROVISIONS OF THE CALL FOR ORGANISATIONAL GRANTS.....	12
GENERAL RULES.....	12
ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE	13
3. CALL DOCUMENTATION AND APPLICATION PROCESS.....	14
APPLICATION PROCESS	14
4. PROVISIONS ON PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	19
4.1 CONTRACT PROVISIONS.....	19
4.2. REPORTING AND PAYMENTS	20
4.3. INFORMING THE PUBLIC.....	21
5. INFORMATION CONCERNING THE PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA SUBMITTED BY PROJECT APPLICANTS TO THE ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND IN CROATIA	21
6. COMPLAINT MECHANISM.....	22
7. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND SUPPORT FOR THE APPLICANTS.....	22
Appendix 1: ACF Croatia's Results framework	24

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 also 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 ACF on the EU level 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.

Active Citizens Fund priority 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.

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.

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;
- 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 Slagalica (hereafter: CF 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 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 €8.552.000 from EEA Financial Mechanism and €508.000 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 co-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 ORGANIZATIONAL (INSTITUTIONAL) GRANTS

2.1. INDICATIVE BUDGET FOR ORGANISATIONAL GRANTS

Total available budget for this call is 420,000.00 euros. It is foreseen that Fund Operator will select 7 organizations to be funded.

Expected outcome	Indicative budget per outcome
<i>Enhanced capacity and sustainability of CSOs and sector</i>	420,000.00

2.2. MAIN PURPOSE OF THE CALL

The main purpose of the call is to support Croatian CSOs working in selected areas of support and whose core activities¹ are related to contributing to the Active Citizens Fund outcomes in achieving their strategic objectives.

For the organisational grant, the applicants will apply with their multi-annual organisational work plan or strategy, which needs to set strategic objectives for their programmes as well as organisation (i.e. human resources, fundraising, communications, etc.). Organizations' multi-annual work plan or strategy must cover the entire funding period (at least until 29.02.2024²) and contain clear and measurable strategic objectives, results, indicators and targets. This can be presented with annual quantitative indicators. In their application the applicants need to clearly present expected improvements in their programme implementation and organizational development (for beneficiaries, stakeholders, employees, etc.) with the clear information on how they will measure this progress. The applicants will also need to submit the organisational budget for the 2-year period based on the financial strategy of the applicant organization. The applicant will need to indicate in which areas of their work they plan to make use of the organizational grant.

The selected applicants (Project Promoters) will receive a financial contribution in the amount of 60,000 € for the realisation of their multi-annual organisational work plan or strategy in the period July 1, 2022 - February 29, 2024.

2.2.1. FOCUS OF THE CALL

PRIORITY AREAS AND SPECIFICS OF THE CALL

Grant proposals must address one of the following programme areas:

- Democracy, active citizenship, good governance and transparency,
- Human rights and equal treatment through combating any discrimination on the grounds of

¹ Core activities - any type of activities that the organization implements on a daily basis and that is directly related to the achievement of the organization's goal (specified in the statutes or other founding act).

² If the plan/strategy expires before 29.02.2024, it must be renewed/ supplemented to cover the funding period (at least until 29.02.2024) before the application is submitted.

racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or gender identity.

EXPECTED PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

When applying for organisational grants, CSOs have to describe how the grant will contribute to their multi-annual organisational work plan or strategy and demonstrate that the activities of their organisational work plan contribute to one or several outcomes of the Active Citizens Fund. However, they will be required to report on the indicators that correspond to the focus of their work plan at outcome level, but not at output level.

In the tables below, expected outcomes on the level of the ACF in Croatia that are particularly relevant for this call are presented. Presented information should serve as a guide as only strategies contributing to at least one or more of these outcomes shall be considered for the organisational grant. However, it is not necessary for strategies to follow only these outcomes.

In the appendix I to this document, attached is the whole results framework of the ACF Program in Croatia. Each of the four outcomes has specific indicators, outputs and outputs' indicators set. The appendix is attached only for informational purposes; applicants are not obliged to address precisely those outputs and indicators. However, the document can help potential applicants with the ideas, what could be done when addressing respective outcome. Also, the applicants may include output and/or outcome level indicators in their monitoring plans and/or applications.

Programme outcome 1: Strengthened civil society watchdog/advocacy role

This outcome aims at increasing the number of national law and policies influenced by NGOs' advocacy, contributing to improved legislation and a more influential CSO sector; part of which are evidence-based advocacy, monitoring of public and private decision-making and professional campaigning.

Outcome indicators on the level of programme	Clarification
<p><i>Number of national policies and laws influenced by the CSOs</i></p>	<p><i>Indicator refers to the impact NGOs have on policy and regulation development, new policy or regulation initiatives or proposals, on policy and regulatory changes and upgrades. Policy includes strategies, action plans, etc., adopted by the government, ministries or other public institutions on national level. Regulations are legislation on national level that is being adopted or is enacted, or proposals thereof not adopted yet. Indicator refers also to research work, evidence-based advocacy, monitoring of decision-making process or work of executive bodies and institutions (for instance, monitoring and collection of relevant data, development of monitoring methodologies and mechanisms for monitoring public policy decision-making or implementation). It refers also to monitoring and measuring of the effects of own (NGOs') services and activities, such as monitoring of impacts and changes reached by campaigns or services implemented by organisations.</i></p> <p><i>Impact on national policies and legislation can be achieved in various ways, for instance through direct cooperation with relevant public bodies, through stakeholder and public consultation, campaigning, advocacy initiatives etc. Activities can be implemented by one organisation or in cooperation with others (as an NGO coalition or a network).</i></p> <p><i>Above mentioned activities can also be implemented on the local level.</i></p>

<i>Number of media reports of CSOs' engagement in public policy</i>	<i>The indicator refers to media publications / articles on competent and professional participation of CSOs in the processes of preparation and adoption of public policies.</i>
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Programme outcome 2: Increased support for human rights, rule of law and good governance

This outcome will contribute to an increased share of the target group showing concern for human rights and disapproving of public statements that express negative views or hatred against minorities. The Programme will enable CSOs to address the implementation gap between the legislation and practice through **monitoring and reporting violations of human rights**. Furthermore, the Programme also addresses the pressing need to resist populist rhetoric, hate speech and increased degradation of human rights based on race, ethnicity and gender in public discourse; the projects will foster **greater awareness of civic and human rights** by working with educational institutions and other public entities, such as courts and police. Programme priority *Gender equality and gender-based violence* will also be covered under this outcome. The outcome targets gender, gender-based violence, youth and marginalised groups, such as refugees, migrants, Roma, LGBTI communities and other victims of discrimination.

Outcome indicators on the level of programme	Clarification
<i>Share of people who disapprove of public statements that express negative views or hatred towards specific groups in society</i>	<i>Indicator refers to increased number of individuals or groups disapproving of public statements that express negative views or hatred towards specific groups in society.</i>
<i>Share of people who know it is a crime to incite hatred based on race, ethnicity and gender</i>	<i>Indicator refers to increased number of individuals or groups who know it is a crime to incite hatred based on race, ethnicity and gender.</i>
<i>Number of victims supported by CSOs</i>	<i>Indicator refers to the number of individuals who have experienced HR violations and have been supported by PPs.</i>

Programme outcome 3: Strengthened democratic culture and civic awareness and engagement

This outcome aims to increase the share of the target group showing civic awareness and to increase share of empowered vulnerable individuals. The Programme enables supported CSOs to engage more in civic and human rights education by working and partnering with educational institutions and other public entities in addressing gaps between the educational standards of civic education and practice existing in Croatia. The Programme will promote social inclusion by supporting CSOs to improve existing or pilot new participatory methods for involving vulnerable groups in the development of **new approaches for addressing of their needs**. The Programme will also support CSOs to enhance the capacities of vulnerable groups to advocate for their needs and the needs of their communities through **participatory advocacy methods** by consulting vulnerable groups on public policy decisions and **awareness raising campaigns**.

In the scope of this outcome, the Programme also aims to foster **constituency building and mobilisation of citizens in civic activities**. This is particularly important at the local level where CSOs will work on nurturing engagement of citizens to demand for their rights to be upheld, to volunteer, to embrace causes, and to hold governments accountable thus contributing to make CSOs more constituencies based.

Outcome indicators on the level of programme	Clarification
<i>Share of persons who show civic awareness</i>	<i>Democratic political culture depends on the acceptance by both citizens and political elites of a shared system of democratic norms and values. These include tolerance of diversity, interpersonal trust, social capital and a sense of political efficacy on the part of individuals. A democratic political culture also requires that citizens have knowledge about their system of government. Civic awareness refers to citizens' attitudinal adherence to this system of democratic norms and values, evidenced by public opinion research, based on scientific studies of citizenship.</i>
<i>Number of vulnerable individuals reached by empowerment measures</i>	<i>Empowerment measures refer to activities contributing to improvement of conditions and building of skills of individuals of the vulnerable groups to enact their rights and to enable them for active participation in social and economic life. Hence, this indicator refers only to individuals included in empowerment measures, not all individuals included in other project activities. Target of this indicator are new approaches to development of services for vulnerable groups, especially participatory methods for inclusion of vulnerable groups in service development aimed at their needs (development of services in collaboration with end users). Ensuring access of services for vulnerable groups can be one of the activities, if it represents a service in a wider awareness raising, advocacy, empowerment efforts, or as a part of reform and change initiatives, litigation.</i>

Programme outcome 4: Enhanced capacity and sustainability of CSOs and sector

Overall objective of this area is to build capacities of applicant through improvement of transparency, governance and management. This includes development of strategies for fundraising of new resources, organisation and/or project management skills development, financial management, advocacy skills development, etc.

Capacity building is an integral part of the organisational grants. Applicants should in their multi-annual organisational work plan or strategy, alongside the objectives targeting the above outcomes, address also the objectives targeting their capacities.

Outcome indicators on the level of programme	Clarification

<p><i>Number of CSOs that are members of civil society networks/platforms</i></p>	<p><i>This indicator refers to network development among CSOs, i.e. continuous exchange of information and joint creation of new opportunities for collaboration among a fixed, yet open set of CSOs which share common values and interests and are focused on common objectives.</i></p>
<p><i>Number of CSOs demonstrating diversification in funding sources</i></p>	<p><i>This indicator refers to the structure of CSO funding, in respect to different sources (e.g. public, private, self-financing; local, national, international; corporate, citizen, public or non-profit) and is based on the assumption that greater diversification contributes to greater financial sustainability and programmatic autonomy of CSOs. The indicator refers to capacity building and development of tools and approaches for fundraising from companies and individuals (for example, diverse fundraising actions, initiatives, crowdfunding, etc.)</i></p>
<p><i>Number of CSOs with transparent and accountable governance procedure</i></p>	<p><i>The indicator refers to measures for improvement of transparency and accountability assurance in organisation operation; including skills and capacity improvement for effective organisation management (decision-making, task delegation, work processes definition), financial and other resources management, publication of information, etc.</i></p>
<p><i>Number of CSOs that regularly disseminate information on their activities and results to the public</i></p>	<p><i>This indicator refers to the CSOs' citizen orientation and capacities to reach out to the public via their own communication channels on a regular basis, through an established rhythm that enables CSOs to enhance public trust in their work and potentially mobilize more citizens for their causes.</i></p>

2.3. ELIGIBILITY RULES

2.3.1. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

All eligible applicants and grant 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 minorities³ (based on race or ethnicity, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or identity). The applicants will confirm this in the Applicant 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.

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,

³ Article 1.2 of Protocol 38c on the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms (2014-2021)

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, 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 Finance⁴;

Foundations are considered eligible CSOs if they fulfil the above principles. Faith-based organizations 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).

CSOs that implement programmes financed as public needs or public authorities under special regulations or are registered as: associations in technical culture, student associations, sports associations, Croatian Red Cross societies, joint municipal councils, local action groups (LAGs), hunting associations, voluntary fire brigades, mountain rescue service stations shall not be considered eligible applicants under this call.

Organizations implementing projects funded under the Call for large and sectoral innovation projects in the role of lead applicant are not eligible applicants.

⁴Applicants 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 in 2018, 2019 and 2020 and a balance sheet or annual financial statement of receipts and expenditures for 2018, 2019, and 2020, in accordance with the accounting regulations of non-profit organizations, whereby the 2020 Annual Financial Report is visible in the Register of Nonprofit Organizations.

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.

Political parties, religious institutions, social partners⁵ or profit-distributing cooperatives are not considered CSOs.

ADDITIONAL CRITERIA OF ELIGIBILITY FOR APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants must:

- have a legal personality for at least 48 months before the day of the deadline for submitting applications (This will be checked in the public records of Ministry of Public Administration);
- have an average annual turnover for the last three completed financial years (2019, 2020 and 2021) of at least 80.000 euro (this will be confirmed through Register of Non-profit Organizations with Ministry of Finance),
- have implemented or are implementing at least one project as of January 1, 2018 in one of the following areas of support: a.) Democracy, active citizenship, good governance and transparency, or b.) 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 (the applicants will prove this with inserting the following project data in the application form: name of the project, donor, number of the contract, project size, amount received by the applicant, project duration, main activities and main results);
- have a multi-annual organizational work plan and/or strategy;
- **have not received organizational (institutional) grant for 2023 by another national** donor and
- have at least 1 (one) employee based on the employment contract (work contract) for a minimum of 12 months before the day of the deadline for submitting applications.

2.4. NUMBER OF PROPOSALS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Each individual applicant can submit **only one project proposal per organization** in this call. If an applicant submits more than one application, only the last application submitted enters the administrative eligibility check phase, others are automatically rejected. In the scope of the organisational grants, **partners are not allowed**.

2.5. FINANCIAL PROVISIONS OF THE CALL FOR ORGANISATIONAL GRANTS

GENERAL RULES

Total budget available: 420,000.00 EUR. The selected organizations will receive a grant in the amount of 60,000.00 EUR. It is foreseen that 7 organizations will be supported.

Financial management of organisational grant

In the application form, the applicant will describe what will be the grant's share of the total revenue that the applicant envisions for the duration of the grant. The applicant will need to provide an organisational budget with expected sources on income for the duration of the grant. The project

⁵ Social partners are defined as trades unions and employers' negotiating bodies, as defined by the EU.

promoter receives the grant as a lump sum.

Project grant rate

The grant is a lump sum with 100% of funding provided by the Programme.

Project duration

The project duration is 20 months, from **August 1, 2022** until **March 31, 2024**.

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.

ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE

The project promoter receives the grant as a lump sum. The project promoter does not need to provide financial reports on the specific expenditures made under the grant. Payments of the grant do not depend on specific and individual expenditure incurred by the project promoter.

An applicant will need to supply the organisational budget including the grant amount and overview of sources of funding to allow the Fund Operator to assess the grant's potential impact. The organisational budget including the grant should be proportionate and necessary in relation to the implementation of the annual organisational workplan/strategy, ensuring the optimal use of resources.

Project promoter needs to keep detailed account of the expenditure according to the accounting standards and generally accepted accounting principles.

The Project Promoter must provide an audit report by an external auditor at the end of the project implementation. This report shall provide assurance that the project promoter has used the grant in accordance with the purpose and provisions of the grant agreement. The audit will be paid by the Project Promoter. If the Project Promoter commissions annual statutory audit reports for other purposes, the report of the latest year of the project implementation may be provided instead, provided it covers and specifically mentions the EEA and Norway Grants contribution.

3. CALL DOCUMENTATION AND APPLICATION PROCESS

Call documentation can be found at: <https://acfcroatia.hr/>

Call documentation consist of:

- Call for proposals for organisational (institutional) grants with Guidelines for applicants (pdf)
- Application form (word)
- Organisational budget form (excel)
- Information on the applicant and project (excel)
- Applicant's statement
- Contract sample

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants submit the application on a designated form in accordance with the instructions.

Deadline and submission process

Complete application consists of:

- A completed application form (.pdf and word)
- A completed organisational budget (.pdf and excel),
- Organisation's multi-annual organisational work plan or strategy,
- A completed Information on the applicant and project (excel),
- A scan of signed and stamped Applicant's statement,
- A scan of Certificate of paid taxes and compulsory charges, issued by the Fiscal Office **no later than April 2, 2022**,
- A scan of a current statute or the founding act of the applicant if such a document is not available in an online public register.

Applications shall be submitted only in electronic form to the following e-mail address: prijava.org@acfcroatia.hr. In case you have questions regarding the call, the Fund, etc., please contact us at: podrska@acfcroatia.hr

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 application form and all the required annexes should only be submitted in Croatian with a project summary in English.

Applications must be delivered to the e-mails provided above by May **23**, 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.). 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 us at 031 213 255, so we can check the status of your application on our side.

Application assessment procedure and criteria

After the delivery of the application, Fund Operator will check its eligibility based on the financial reports available in the online public register, the statute and on the administrative compliance criteria. Fund Operator can request additional information or clarifications referring to administrative compliance criteria.

Application administrative criteria

Criteria	Meeting the		Notes
	criteria		
Application is submitted to designated email.	YES	NO	rejection
Application is submitted within the deadline.	YES	NO	rejection
The applicant submitted only one application.	YES	NO	Rejection of all applications, except of the last one submitted
Application form is submitted and fully completed.	YES	NO	rejection
Priority area of the application is clearly indicated.	YES	NO	request for supplementation
Application completed in Croatian language.	YES	NO	rejection
Short brief on the strategy is prepared in English language.	YES	NO	request for supplementation
Organisational budget is submitted and completed.	YES	NO	rejection
Information on the applicant is submitted	YES	NO	request for supplementation
Applicant's statement, signed and stamped, is submitted.	YES	NO	request for supplementation
Multi-annual organisational work plan and/or strategy is attached.	YES	NO	rejection
Financial reports for the completed financial years of 2021, 2020 and 2019 are visible in online public register.	YES	NO	rejection
Certificate of paid taxes and compulsory charges issued by the Fiscal Office no later than April 2, 2022 is attached	YES	NO	request for supplementation
A scanned valid statute or founding act of the applicant has been submitted, if this document is not available in the publicly available national electronic register.	YES	NO	request for supplementation

Application eligibility criteria

Criteria	Meeting the criteria		Notes
	YES	NO	
Applicant is a civil society organisation.	YES	NO	rejection
The applicant obtained a legal personality for at least 48 months before the day of the deadline for submitting applications.	YES	NO	rejection
Applicant is registered at RNO and conducts transparent financial operations ⁶	YES	NO	rejection
The applicant has an average annual turnover of at least 80.000,00EUR for the last three financial years (2019-2021)	YES	NO	rejection
The applicant implemented or is implementing at least one project as of 1 January 2018 in one of the following areas of support: a.) Democracy, active citizenship, good governance and transparency, or b.) 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.	YES	NO	rejection
The applicant has at least 1 (one) employees based on the employment contract (work contract) for a minimum of 12 months before the day of the deadline for submitting applications	YES	NO	rejection
The applicant have not received organizational (institutional) grant for 2023 by another national donor	YES	NO	rejection
Applicant organisation is not implementing projects funded under the Call for large projects in the role of lead applicant	YES	NO	rejection
Applicant 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**).

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 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.

After the administrative eligibility assessment process is completed, ineligible applicants will be notified of the rejection of their concept note from further evaluation. Applicants of ineligible concept notes 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 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.

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 shall be funded. Final decision is made by the Fund Operator.

Application adequacy criteria (max. total points: 100)

QUALITY OF THE MULTI-ANNUAL ORGANISATIONAL WORK-PLAN OR STRATEGY (45 points) <i>*eliminating criterion: If below 20, the project is automatically rejected *</i>	
Description of criteria	Score
<i>To what extent does the multi-annual organisational work-plan/strategy identify clear and measurable objectives (results), indicators and targets? <i>*eliminating criterion: If below 10, the project is automatically rejected *</i></i>	/ 15
<i>To what extent will the grant contribute to the programme implementation, organizational development and the overall impact of the organization?</i>	/ 10
<i>To what extent does the applicant monitor and evaluates programme implementation, organizational development and the overall impact of the organization? To what extent does the applicant provide clear information on how they will measure this progress?</i>	/ 10
<i>To what extent is the applicant's understanding of importance of constituency building visible from the multi-annual organisational work-plan/strategy?</i>	/ 10
	/ 45

RELEVANCE OF THE MULTI-ANNUAL ORGANISATIONAL WORK-PLAN OR STRATEGY (20 points)	
Description of criteria	Score
<i>To what extent is the multi-annual organisational work-plan/strategy relevant for Croatia (To what extent does it target relevant needs, niche, etc.)?</i>	/ 10
<i>To what extent is the multi-annual organisational work-plan/strategy relevant for the ACF Croatia (To what extent does it target ACF Croatia's result framework)?</i>	/ 10
*eliminating criterion: If below 3, the project is automatically rejected *	
	/ 20

FINANCIAL VIABILITY (20 points)	
*eliminating criterion: If below 10, the project is automatically rejected *	
Description of criteria	Score
<i>To what extent does the applicant demonstrate sufficient financial sources of funding to maintain its activity throughout grant duration?</i>	/ 10
<i>To what extent does the organisational budget appear proportionate and necessary for the implementation of the multi-annual organisational work-plan/strategy, ensuring the optimal use of resources?</i>	/ 10
	/ 20

EXPERIENCE OF THE APPLICANT (15 points)	
Description of criteria	Score
<i>To what extent does the applicant have appropriate organisational, managerial and expert capacities to implement the multi-annual organisational work-plan/strategy?</i>	/ 10
<i>To what extent does the applicant demonstrate experience in addressing thematic focus of the call?</i>	/ 5
	/ 15

Project proposals scoring a minimum of 70 points in quality assessment can be recommended for funding. The recommendation is made by the Selection Committee. Only the highest scoring project proposals will be awarded with ACF grant. The final decision will be made by the Fund Operator.

Prior to the final decision of the Fund Operator, in all organizations whose applications are recommended for funding, the Fund Operator will conduct a financial pre-assessment to verify the organization's compliance with the principles of sound financial management, i.e that their general spending can comply with the following:

- a) appears proportionate and necessary for the implementation of the annual organisational work plan / strategy, ensuring the optimal use of resources (this will be evaluated during the quality assessment based on the organisational strategy and organisational budget);
- b) The spending is identifiable and verifiable, in particular through being recorded in their accounting records and determined according to the applicable accounting standards and

generally accepted accounting principles and

c) The spending complies with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation.

This will be confirmed through on-site assessment.

If the Fund Operator in the financial pre-assessment procedure determines that the organization does not meet the criteria b) and c) of sound financial management, the organization will not be funded.

In addition, if the Fund Operator, during the project implementation, establishes that the project promoter does not comply with the b) and c) criteria of the sound financial management, the project contract can be terminated.

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.

Notification on selection

Applicants will be notified on the selection of their project proposals via e-mail indicated in application form, by the end of **July** 2022.

4. PROVISIONS ON PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 CONTRACT PROVISIONS

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.

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

- Final grant amount;
- 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. Fund Operator can demand total or partial refund of already paid contribution in case beneficiary does not comply with the contractual provisions;
- The duration of the project;
- The obligations on project reporting;
- The eligibility and the supporting documents on expenditure;
- 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 in case of termination of the project contract;

- Waiver of responsibility.

4.2. REPORTING AND PAYMENTS

When reporting on results, organisations will have to demonstrate that the activities of their organisational work plan contribute to one or several outcomes of the Active Citizens Fund. They will be required to report on the indicators that correspond to the focus of their work plan at outcome level, but not at output level.

Progress will be assessed against the multi-annual organisational work plan / strategy and its budget at the end of each implementation year. To this end, a narrative and financial report consisting of the latest narrative and financial general annual reports of the organisation must be submitted for approval prior to releasing interim and final payments. The final narrative and financial report needs to be submitted within two months after the conclusion of the grant. However, Fund Operator can request for additional information on implementation progress at any time. The Fund Operator undertakes further monitoring through the on-the-spot verifications. The FO and the FMO have the right to commission audits of the entire organisational accounts.

The Project promoter needs to keep detailed account of the expenditure according to the accounting standards and generally accepted accounting principles. The Project Promoter must provide an assurance report by an external auditor at the end of the project implementation. This report shall provide assurance that the project promoter has used the grant in accordance with the purpose and provisions of the grant agreement. The audit will be paid by the Project Promoter. If the Project Promoter commissions annual statutory audit reports for other purposes, the report of the latest year of the project implementation may be provided instead, provided it covers and specifically mentions the EEA contribution.

The Project Promoter will not need to provide financial reports on the specific expenditures made under the grant. Payments do not depend on the costs actually incurred by the Project Promoter. The costs are considered as incurred within the grant once paid to the Project Promoter.

In case the information provided by the project promoter proves evident non-satisfactory performance, or the work plan/strategy is not implemented in line with the principles set in Article 1.4 of the PIA⁷, the grant paid to the project promoter may be cancelled or reduced proportionately. Relevant provisions in this respect shall be included in the project contract.

Payments will be provided in three instalments:

- 40 % prepayment 15 days after the contract is signed,
- 50 % payment in 30 days after the approval of the first interim report,

⁷ 1. The Programme [in the case of organizational grants, “the programme” should be read as “the organization”] shall be based on the common values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities.

2. The Programme shall follow the principles of good governance; it shall be participatory and inclusive, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient. There shall be zero-tolerance towards corruption.

3. The Programme shall be consistent with sustainable development, long-term economic growth, social cohesion and environmental protection.

4. The Programme shall follow a results and risk management approach.

- 10 % in 30 days after the approval of the final report.

4.3. INFORMING THE PUBLIC

Project promoters are obliged to inform the public on receiving a grant from ACF.

Guidelines for informing and communicating will be published before the beginning of project implementation period on the ACF Croatia web site: <https://acfcroatia.hr/> and sent to all project promoters.

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

The support to project applicants will be available **via the e-mail, up to 8 days** before the deadline for submission of project applications which is **May 15, 2022**. All written questions and requests for information related to this Call should be addressed ONLY to the e-mail address podrska@acfcroatia.hr. The Fund Operator is under no obligation to provide answer to questions received after **May 15, 2022**. The deadline for submitting answers to all written queries is one week, and all relevant questions and answers will be published weekly on the Fund's website <https://acfcroatia.hr/faq/>.

Timetable of events:

Event	Main purpose	Date
Information workshop - webinar	Detailed presentation of the call for proposals	March 10, 2022
Strategic planning webinar	Overview of the strategic planning, main features, measurability of progress, etc. in context of application form of this Call	March 15, 2022

PUBLIC CALL STEP BY STEP TIMELINE

Date	Step
March 10, 2022	Publication of Call for institutional grants
Until April 24, 2022	E-mail counselling
March 10, 2022	Informational webinar
March 15, 2022	Strategic planning webinar
May 23 , 2022, noon	Application deadline
May 24 – June 3 , 2022	Applicant and application eligibility check, supplementing applications
From June 6 2022	Project proposal assessment
June 2022 (planned)	Selection Committee meeting
July 2022 (planned)	On-site assessment of applications recommended for funding
July 2022 (planned)	Preparation of decision argumentations
July/ August 2022	Notification of applicants and appeal consideration

Appendix 1: ACF Croatia's Results framework

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
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
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
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