

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

EaP CSF RE-GRANTING TO WGs 2019

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

Deadline for submission of proposals: December 16, 2018, 24.00 Brussels time

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1. BACKGROUND

In the framework of its Grant Contract number ENI/2018/387-389 *Support to the activities of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum II* with the European Commission, the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Steering Committee Secretariat (hereafter EaP CSF Secretariat) as the body responsible for the implementation of the *Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP)*, is opening a Call for Proposals under the 2019 re-granting to WGs scheme in order to support projects of current and former EaP CSF members with a regional dimension that will contribute to achieving the mission and objectives of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum.

2. OBJECTIVES AND THEMATIC PRIORITIES OF THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

2.1. Objectives

The overall objective of this Call for Proposals is to support work of five thematic Working Groups of the EaP CSF in line with specific objectives and thematic priorities within the regional dimension.

The specific objectives are:

- to contribute to advancing reforms of the EaP countries in one of the areas covered by the EaP CSF structures, namely EaP Platforms and panels;
- to ensure full-fledged participation of civil society organisations in the process of implementation of the EaP via institutionalising and strengthening mechanisms of dialogue - between the EU and civil society, between the national governments and the EaP civil society, and between the EU, national governments and EaP civil society;
- to strengthen the regional perspective (namely by project activities with regional added value) and bridging the emerging gaps among the EaP countries while acknowledging the different paths and contractual relations of the EaP countries with the EU;
- to strengthen the role of the EaP CSF in the EaP policy development and to contribute to effective advocacy of the EaP CSF objectives (as defined, for example, in the EaP CSF Strategy for 2018-2020).

Proposals that comply with more than one of the specific objectives are especially encouraged.



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2.2. Thematic Priorities

For this call for proposals, the thematic priorities were identified on the EaP Platforms and panels work plans for 2018-2019. The projects should preferably respond to the need of the EaP CSF to provide relevant input into the implementation of the joint staff working document [Eastern Partnership - 20 Deliverables for 2020](#): *(Please note the applicants are encouraged to submit proposals under the thematic priorities of the WGs they participate/d in, however, proposals submitted under other WGs' priorities will be also considered.)*

WG1 (Democracy, human rights, good governance and stability)

- **Rule of law:** enhancing the capacity of EaP countries to recover **criminal assets - strengthening asset declaration** systems; improving the **independence of the judiciary** and access to **justice for all** - improved enforcement of judgements and execution of court decisions; fight against **organised crime**.
- **Governance and Public administration reform:** results, challenges and best practices in **implementation of the Civil Service Reforms; evidence-based policy making, monitoring and evaluation**, including based on gender analysis; adoption of the **anti-discrimination legislation**.
- **Security, CSDP & Civil Protection:** the developments in the field of **CFSP/CSDP policy**, security sector reform, progress in the capacity building to enhance **Partner Countries' resilience to hybrid threats**, progress in the establishment of **Computer Emergency Response teams (CERTs)** and cybersecurity strategies, including the gender aspects in these areas; capacity building of Emergency Management Services related to the disaster risk management; the **conceptual and technical interoperability** of Partner Country's units with the EU; **critical infrastructure, CBRN** in connection with other threats; civil protection.

WG2 (Economic integration and convergence with EU policies)

- **Structural reforms, financial sector, agriculture and SMEs:** progress of the **adoption and implementation of SME strategy, SME Strategy Action Plan 2018-2020 and the Structural Reform Facility**; EaP countries **investment strategies; capital market reforms** and the way to support its implementation; agricultural development strategies, privatisations.
- **Trade and trade related regulatory cooperation: raising awareness on sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures** in trade with the EU and within the EaP region; reform of **System of Technical Regulations; enhancing IPR enforcement by customs; geographical indications: EU system of protection of agricultural GIs**.



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- **Harmonization of digital markets: electronic communications rules and infrastructure - independent NRA** for electronic communications and coordinated national spectrum strategies, national broadband strategies, harmonised roaming pricing; **trust and security in the digital economy – GDPR**, interoperable cross-border **eSignature**; combating copyright connected crimes; focus on consumers: including data security, electronic payments, equal access to online services and goods, and cross-border services; **eTrade**, Digital Transport Corridor between the Baltic and the Black Sea; regional framework for cross-border **eServices** for businesses; **digital skills** – national digital skills strategies implementation, **e-competence framework**; **well-structured ICT research, innovation and startup ecosystems in place for all EaP partners with the involvement of the civil society sector**; **eHealth** services.

WG3 (Environment, climate change and energy security)

- **Energy: progress in key interconnectivity projects in the region**; integration of **energy efficiency and renewable energy** into national and local legislation, planning and programming; support the **development of mid-century, long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies**, take stock of **progress of the High-Level Energy efficiency Initiative with International Financing Institutions** and advice on the way to forward for the initiative; **investment environment to increase investment in energy efficiency** in all sectors; measures for sustainable financing options and for stimulating the private market in the areas of energy efficiency and renewable energy; implementation of **the Paris Commitments**.
- **Transport: monitoring the progress on the investment action plan**; implementation of selected **TEN-T corridor**; **assessment of non-infrastructure barriers and setting up of a plan to remove non-infrastructure obstacles by end of 2019** on a selected corridor, such as the East-West or the South-West corridor linking the Caspian Sea to the Black Sea; **Inclusion of inland waterways** into indicative TEN-T network; achieve concrete actions on road safety.
- **Environment and climate change: promote climate action investment**, both for mitigation and adaptation; **address policy and institutional bottlenecks** in achieving the transition to a green and circular economy; **promote the role of civil society and improve public access to environmental information** and boarder participation in decision-making in line with the Aarhus Convention, and relevant EU Directives and Regulations.



WG4 (Contacts between people)

- **Education, culture and youth: youth engagement roadmaps and youth action plans**, including establishment of inclusive and evidence-based youth policy development and decision-making structures; **mutual peer learning dialogue on policies and institutions** to support youth transitions to work or education training; **youth civil engagement and intercultural dialogue**; modernisation, quality, **internationalisation and digitalisation (e-learning) of higher education and VET systems**; enhancing teacher's training and career development, promoting the development of **cultural and creative sectors**.
- **Research and innovation**: identifying a concrete **EU4Innovation implementation roadmap** for each Partner country; promoting relevant elements of the **Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2018-20** in coordination with the EaP Plus Platform; **developing synergies between relevant EU instruments** – including COST, COSME and Smart Specialisation – to support Partners' research and innovation capacities, and facilitate their access to financial, technical and political support; promoting the exchange of **best practices between policymakers** in the field of research and innovation.
- **Mobility, migration and IBM**: exchanges on mobility and migration related issues, in particular to underpin the implementation of the **Mobility Partnerships**; supporting the facilitation of **legal migration**, including visa policy, and **preventing irregular migration and trafficking in human beings**, especially the precarious conditions for women and girls, including through IBM, return and readmission; promoting **international protection** and maximising the development impact of migration and mobility; creating synergies with the new **IBM concept**

WG5 (Social & Labour Policies and Social Dialogue)

- **Improved business environment: labour market reforms and pension reforms**
- Development of **social dialogue** at national and local level in the EaP countries – defence of social-labour rights through social dialogue with focus on young people
- **Employment and labour relations** – non-discrimination at work place (based on gender, age, disabilities etc.) gender equality, targeting human trafficking for forced labour

2.3. Mainstreaming Gender Equality

Following the EU principles of gender equality, women leading and participating in the projects, as well as the coverage of the gender aspects in the themes addressed by the projects is highly encouraged.



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3. FINANCIAL ALLOCATIONS

The overall amount for this call for proposal is: **270.000 EUR**

Financial allocation per EaP CSF Working Groups¹:

WG1 – 80.000 EUR

WG2 – 50.000 EUR

WG3 – 50.000 EUR

WG4 – 60.000 EUR

WG5 – 30.000 EUR

Any grant requested under this Call for Proposals must fall between the following minimum and maximum amounts:

- ➔ minimum amount per project: **EUR 10.000**
- ➔ maximum amount per project: **EUR 25.000**
- ➔ **minimum 5% co-financing** is requested

Co-financing means that the grant beneficiary has to co-finance part of the cost of the action.

Example: In a project where the estimated total budget is 10.000 EUR, the EaP CSF contribution would be 9.500 EUR and the grantee's contribution would be 500 EUR.

4. ELIGIBILITY

Only proposals complying with the criteria set in articles 4.1. and 4.2. (Pre-selection eligibility check) will be subject to the full selection process.

4.1. Regional dimension

- Any project funded through this Call for Proposals **must** cover at least **three EaP** countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine), represented by

¹ The allocations are distributed based on WGs' thematic priorities covered by the projects, not based on affiliation of the lead applicants with a WG.



CSOs acting as lead applicant and/or partners.

4.2. Eligible applicants

In order to be eligible, the **lead applicant and its partners** must:

Criteria	Lead Applicant	Partners
Be a legal person	✓	✓
Be non-profit-making	✓	✓
Be a civil society organisation (CSO)	✓	✓
Be established in an EaP or EU country ²	✓	✓
Have participated in any of the nine EaP CSF Annual Assemblies	✓	
Be able to receive the grant (funds) on its bank account, provide account statements and have a financial management system in place to ensure clear and adequate reporting procedures.	✓	✓

- Members of the National Platforms, who have never participated in the EaP CSF Annual Assemblies, and delegates (CSOs) attending any EaP CSF Annual Assembly in the capacity of observers are eligible as **partners only**.
- A CSO can submit only **one proposal** as the **lead applicant**. It is allowed for a lead applicant to act as a project partner in other proposal/s within this call.
- An organisation can only be a **lead organisation** (lead applicant) and benefit from the re-granting **once throughout the three-year regranting/FSTP scheme**³.
- **Individual experts** in the capacity of natural person can be involved as a **third party**; their participation is welcome but does not establish/substitute the compliance with the regional dimension criterion.

² EaP CSOs operating in one or several EaP countries but registered in an EU member state can thus also apply both as lead applicant and as a project partner.

³ *Note of explanation:* The lead organisations of 2015-2016 EaP CSF re-granting scheme that have not received funding as lead applicants in 2018 can apply within this call as lead organisations again. Lead organisations of 2017 and 2018 scheme cannot apply as lead applicant in 2019 call; however they can still apply as project partners within 2019 call.



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4.3. Eligible actions

An action is composed of the set of project activities

Duration and implementation period

Any project funded through this Call for Proposals:

- may not have a duration lower than 2 months, and
- must be implemented between 1 March 2019 and 31 October 2019.
- The project results should be available and ready to be presented at the 2019 EaP CSF Annual Assembly.

The applicants are encouraged to develop proposals that include (but are not limited to) one or more of the following activities, addressing the thematic priorities of the call: research and analysis, data collection, policy development, developing input for EaP platforms and panels, capacity building and training, evaluation and monitoring, research-based advocacy and lobbying at all policy levels, know-how sharing, awareness raising and informing the general public, public campaigns, workshops, seminars, roundtables, conferences.

The project activities as well as the final project outputs shall demonstrate clear added value within the regional dimension.

The project activities as well as the final project outputs shall be linked (presented, discussed, used as an expert input) to the work of the EaP CSF Working Groups, EaP Platforms and Panels, EaP CSF National Platforms and the EaP CSF Annual Assembly as much as possible.

Follow-up projects of the 2018 Call for Proposal beneficiaries are eligible when complying with the criteria of the call. The innovative elements and link to the outputs of the previous project of such proposals have to be clearly stated.

4.4. Eligible costs

To be eligible, all costs must be:

- indicated in the estimated Budget proposal;
- incurred during the implementation period;
- necessary for the implementation of the project activities;
- identifiable and verifiable, in particular recorded in the accounting records and supported by documents;
- reasonable, cost-effective, and comply with the sound financial management and applicable tax and social legislation.
- VAT and taxes: among eligible costs, there can be taxes, charges including VAT paid,



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and not recoverable by the Grantees. Therefore, Grantees should show evidence that they cannot reclaim VAT. The evidence can be obtained from national tax authority. Self-certification can be acceptable if duly substantiated. EaP CSF Secretariat cannot grant VAT/tax exemption.

The following costs shall **not** be considered eligible: debts, provisions for losses and future liabilities, currency exchange losses, costs financed by other funds.

5. EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Applicants will be excluded from participating in selection procedure if they:

- fail the pre-selection eligibility check;
- their legal representatives are proven to be guilty of grave professional misconduct;
- they or their legal representatives are subject to a conflict of interests.

6. REPORTING, OBLIGATION OF INFORMATION AND VISIBILITY

Following the decision on grant award, the lead applicant will sign a contract with the EaP CSF Secretariat, which includes the following reporting requirements:

- Midterm and Final Report comprising of a narrative part tracking jointly agreed indicators;
- and a financial part with detailed list of expenditures, accompanied by supporting documents for subsequent audit purposes.

By signing the agreement, the lead applicant will agree to authorise both EaP CSF Secretariat and the European Commission to exercise their powers of control over project-related documents and proves of spending. The lead applicant bears the final responsibility for the results of the project.

The lead applicant and project partners must comply with the visibility guidelines and guarantee the visibility of the EU funding as well as other participating donors and of the EaP CSF over the course of the project. The detailed visibility guide will be provided as an annex to the contract agreement.

The lead applicant is responsible for compliance with project's communication and advocacy plan and for reporting on the implementation of the plan.

The failure to meet the deadlines, visibility requirements and sufficient quality of the project outputs will be sanctioned in line with the conditions stated in the grant agreement.



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The personal data is processed by the EaP CSF under the contractual lawful basis. The Data Protection Officer for the EaP CSF is Lidia Gromadzka, Administrative and Statutory Processes Manager, and can be contacted at admin@eap-csf.eu. Details of the EaP CSF privacy policy can be found at <http://eap-csf.eu/eap-csf-privacy-policy/>.

7. HOW TO APPLY

7.1. Project proposal

The proposal shall be submitted in English.

In case the applying organisations are not able to submit proposals in English, proposals in Russian will be accepted on the condition that the project outputs are delivered also in English in order to ensure wider dissemination and advocacy.

The proposal must be composed of:

- A narrative part (mandatory use of template in Annex I)
- A budget proposal in EUR (mandatory use of template in Annex II)
- Declaration of honour on financial eligibility of the lead partner (mandatory use of template in Annex III)

7.2. Deadline

Proposals must be submitted to the following email address: applications@eap-csf.eu by **December 16, 2018, midnight (24.00 Brussels time)**.

Incomplete or late applications will be rejected.

7.3. Window for consultations

Window for consultations with the EaP CSF Secretariat (for example on eligibility, project activities and assistance with looking for a project partner/s) is open on **November 5, 2018–December 7, 2018**. Please send your questions via email: vera.rihackova@eap-csf.eu



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8. EVALUATION AND SELECTION

8.1. The Evaluation and selection process

The evaluation and selection process goes in three steps:

Step 1: Eligibility check

Applications will be checked for compliance with eligibility criteria stated in articles 4.1. and 4.2. by the EaP CSF Secretariat.

In case the proposal does not pass the eligibility check, the lead applicant will be informed via email. Final list of eligible proposals will be issued and communicated (January 8, 2019).

Step 2: Evaluation and rating of the proposals in line with the evaluation grid

As of the 2018 EaP CSF Re-granting call, a **Selection Committee** is established for each WG (joint Selection Committee can be established for WG2 and WG5 in relation to number of project proposals submitted). **The Selection Committee** evaluates and rates the project proposals in line with the evaluation grid. The Selection Committee is composed of **two external experts** selected by the Secretariat after consulting the EaP CSF SC out of the pool of external experts generated by the call for expression of interest, a **respective WG Coordinator – member of the EaP CSF Steering Committee, and without voting rights in a capacity of observer and member of the EaP CSF Secretariat** without voting rights in a capacity of observer.

Every member of the Selection Committee scores the proposals in line with the evaluation grid (please see 8.2.). The **minimum quality threshold** stands at **65 points**. The project proposals scoring lower than 65 points cannot be considered for funding.

Guidelines on Conflict of Interest (CoI)

The members of the Selection Committees are signing the mandatory CoI declaration before evaluating the project proposals. The EaP CSF members in given year (2018-2019) are excluded from taking part in the evaluation process. The membership status is established on the basis of the selection by the EaP CSF for the 10th Annual Assembly in Tbilisi and attendance thereof. The EaP CSF Steering Committee members cannot apply within the EaP CSF Re-granting scheme in given year in order to enhance the objectivity of the selection and decision-making process within the EaP CSF Re-granting scheme.

Step 3: Selection Committee discussion and decision

The Selection Committees will take the final decision after meeting online (January 8–30 2019). The list of selected grantees is finalized as well as reserve list of proposals (up to two proposals per each WG) and published on January 31 2019.



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In case the Selection Committee receives two equally good proposals that are similar in nature and content, the Selection Committee reserves the right to call on the lead applicants to discuss submitting a joint proposal.

The Selection Committee reserves the right to present lead applicants with recommendations for improving the proposals and to suggest budget modifications. The recommendations and modifications are discussed between the EaP CSF Secretariat and the lead applicant over the course of the deliberation period before concluding the contract (February 1– February 28 2019).

In case the lead applicant declines the funding after the deliberations, a proposal from the reserve list will be offered funding.

The Selection Committees have the right to exclude a proposal on the basis stated in the article 5 of this Guideline.

8.2. The Evaluation Grid

Scoring: The evaluation grid is divided into sections and subsections. Each subsection will be given a score between 1 and 5 as follows: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good

The overall maximum score stands at 100 points.

Section	Maximum Score
1. OPERATIONAL CAPACITY	20
1.1. Does the lead applicant and its partners have sufficient experience with project management (track record)?	
1.2. Does the lead applicants and its partners have sufficient expertise (especially knowledge of the issues to be addressed)?	
1.3. Does the lead applicant and its partners have sufficient implementation capacity assigned to the project (staff, financial management, ability to handle the budget for the action)?	
1.4. Is the geographical coverage provided by the lead applicant and its partners corresponding to the overall aim of the project (experts from other countries needed, etc.)?	
2. RELEVANCE OF THE ACTION	35
2.1. How relevant is the proposal to the specific objectives and thematic priorities of the Call for Proposals?	2*
2.2. Does the proposal demonstrate a clear added value within the regional dimension and responds to identified beneficiaries' needs?	2*
2.3. Is the mainstreaming of gender equality well reflected in the project design?	
2.4. Is there a direct link to the work of the EaP CSF WGs and NPs, and EaP Platforms and Panels?	2*



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3. DESIGN, EFFECTIVENESS AND FEASIBILITY OF THE ACTION	20
3.1. How coherent is the overall design of the project? In particular, does it reflect the analysis of the problems involved?	
3.2. Does the design take into account external factors (risks)? Are the envisaged project risks likely to be mitigated?	
3.3. Are the activities proposed appropriate, realistic, and consistent with the objectives and expected results/outcomes?	
3.4. ? Is the timetable clear and feasible?	
4. IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY	10
4.1. Is the project likely to deliver mid and long-term impact in the envisaged area and a tangible effect on its target groups?	
4.2. Are the expected results of the proposed action sustainable? Is the proposal likely to have a multiplier (replication) effect in other contexts or with other beneficiaries?	
5. BUDGET & COST EFFECTIVENESS	15
5.1. Are the proposed activities appropriately reflected in the budget?	
5.2. Is the ratio between the estimated costs and expected results satisfactory (value for money)?	2*

9. INDICATIVE TIMETABLE

Action	Date
Deadline for submission of proposals	December 16 2018, 24.00 Brussels time
Eligibility check of all proposals	December 17 2018 – January 7 2019
List of eligible projects issued	January 8 2019
Evaluation and selection process	January 8 – January 30 2019
Communication on the selection of 2019 beneficiaries	January 31 2019
Communication and deliberations with the beneficiaries, signature of the contract	February 1 – February 28 2019
Implementation period	March 1 – October 31 2019

10. ANNEXES

Annex I: Project proposal template

Annex II: Budget proposal template

Annex III: Declaration of honour on financial eligibility of the lead partner



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