

## **EaP CSF CALLs for projects from its members aimed at mitigation of the effects of COVID-19**

\*\*\*

### **Guidelines for applicants**

***Deadline for submission of proposals: October 25, 2020 00.00 Brussels time (CET +1)***

Civil society organisations are at the forefront of efforts to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Eastern Partnership region. In a crisis which has put the crisis management capacities of the EaP governments to the test, CSOs have stepped up to the plate, mobilising in defence of fundamental rights and freedoms, and in support of vulnerable groups and the economy.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a deterioration in the financial situation of civil society organisations – exacerbated by already restrictive CSO legislation with regards to grants from foreign donors in countries like Azerbaijan and Belarus – at a time when organisations' capacities are already being pushed to the limit by the ongoing sanitary and economic emergency.

To respond to the situation the EaP CSF invites short-term project proposals from its members from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine aimed at addressing the needs of the vulnerable population exacerbated by COVID-19 pandemic and strengthening the capacities of the CSOs in addressing those needs.

#### **1. Financial allocations**

The COVID-19 related support for EaP CSF members amounts up to **40.000 EUR** per country/National Platform (240.000 EUR in total).

#### **2. Eligible actions**

**A. Projects aimed at addressing the needs of vulnerable populations (emergency fund)** exacerbated/created by the coronavirus crisis. The minimal amount per project is 5,000 EUR and the maximum amount is 20,000 EUR. Multi-country projects can also be funded, but this is not a priority for this call.

The projects can focus on a broad variety of areas, starting with education, volunteering, development of digital skills, and finishing up with supporting women's initiatives, addressing the needs of vulnerable groups, etc. The projects will allow CSOs:

- to expand their existing services to vulnerable groups of populations affected by the coronavirus crisis or to introduce new services

- to develop and conduct COVID-19-related communication and thematic informational campaigns tailored to the broader public or selected narrow target groups
- to conduct capacity-building for target groups to address the needs created by COVID-19
- To conduct the activities strengthening the potential of hubs connecting civic initiatives and services

The target groups may include (non-exhaustive list): elderly, youth and students, women, people with disabilities, minorities, incarcerated, cultural workers, freelancers, health professionals, educators, volunteers etc.

**B. Projects aimed at helping the members of the EaP CSF to adapt** as organisations to the challenging situation and increased demand for their services and activities caused by the coronavirus crisis (adjustment fund). The minimal amount per project is 4,000 EUR and the maximum amount is 10,000 EUR. Eligible actions will cover a variety of needs of the CSOs based in the EaP countries starting from:

- consultations on legal matters
- procuring protection equipment for the staff and volunteers to safely conduct their activities
- capacity building and advice on adjusting CSOs communication to the target population or other expert support
- developing CSOs capacity to work with volunteers
- adapting their internal operations to teleworking
- revising or developing internal regulations
- procuring and working effectively with newly licensed software and online tools
- reviewing the sustainability of their business models and sources of funding/income, developing new income-generating activities, etc.

In limited cases the contribution to the operational costs, in particular staff costs and rent of premises where COVID-19 created new needs will be provided.

### **3. Implementation period**

The implementation period is maximum of **3 months (November 2020 – January 2021)**.

### **4. Eligibility of applicants**

The projects are solicited from individual organisations or groups of organisations. The applicant should be an EaP CSF member based in one of the EaP countries. EaP CSF member organisations can apply on behalf of the EaP CSF National Platforms in case those do not have legal status. EaP CSF members can partner with other EaP CSF members from the EaP countries or the EU or non-EaP CSF members to implement the project.

A CSO can submit one proposal for both emergency and adjustment fund.

In order to be eligible, the **applicant** must:

Criteria	Applicant
Be a legal person	✓
Be non-profit-making	✓
Be a civil society organisation (CSO)	✓
Be established in an EaP or EU country	✓
Be a member of the EaP CSF or its National Platforms	✓
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.	✓

### 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.

### 5. 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, 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, and not recoverable by the Grantees. Therefore, Grantees should show evidence that they cannot reclaim VAT. The evidence can be obtained from national tax authorities. 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.

### 6. Application process and selection of beneficiaries

The percentage of the funding that will be spent on category A or B within the **40,000 EUR** country allocation will be decided for each country based on the number and quality of the received project proposals. Country allocations can be reconsidered in case of lack of a sufficient number of quality proposals. CSOs can apply for both categories.

## 6.1. Timeline

Action	Date
Call open	October 12, 2020
Deadline for submission of proposals	October 25, 2020, 00.00 CET
Eligibility check of all proposals	October 26, 2020
Evaluation and selection process	October 27-30, 2020
Communication of results	October 30, 2020
Communication and deliberations with the beneficiaries, signature of the contract	October 30 – November 15 2020
Implementation period	1 November 2020 - 30 January 2021

## 6.2 Evaluation criteria and procedure:

The evaluation and selection process goes in two steps:

### Step 1: Eligibility criteria

Applicants will be checked for compliance with the criteria stated in article 4 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 (October 26, 2020).

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

***The following scoring system will be used to evaluate the projects.*** The evaluation grid is divided into sections. Each subsection will be given a score where 1 = very poor and a maximum score = very good. The overall maximum score stands at 100 points.

Section	Maximum Score
1. Does the applicant have sufficient expertise in the project field?	<b>20</b>
2. Is the proposal addressing the needs of vulnerable population? <sup>i</sup>	<b>20</b>
3. Is the proposal aimed at increasing the capacity of a CSO or CSOs to operate in the new situation created by COVID-19? <sup>ii</sup>	<b>20</b>
4. Are the activities proposed appropriate, realistic, and consistent with the objectives and expected results/outcomes?	<b>25</b>
5. Are the proposed activities appropriately reflected in the budget?	<b>15</b>

<sup>i</sup> If the CSO applies only for the emergency fund, the maximum score for this question is 40. If the CSO applies only for the adjustment fund, this question is not applicable.

<sup>ii</sup> If the CSO applies only for the emergency fund, this question is not applicable. If the CSO applies only for the adjustment fund, the maximum score for this question is 40.

## 7. HOW TO APPLY

### 7.1. Project proposal

The proposal shall be submitted in English and can cover one category of funding (A or B) or both (A and B).

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 applicant (Annex III, if applicable)

*Note:* If the proposal is submitted for both category of funding (A and B), please fill in two separate budgets.

### 7.2. Deadline

Proposals must be submitted to the following email address: [applications@eap-csf.eu](mailto:applications@eap-csf.eu) by October 25, midnight (00.00 Brussels time).

### 7.3. Window for consultations

Window for consultations with the EaP CSF Secretariat is open:

October 12, 2020 – October 25, 2020

Please send your questions via email:

For project activities: [secretariat@eap-csf.eu](mailto:secretariat@eap-csf.eu)

For finance, eligibility and procedural matters: [finance@eap-csf.eu](mailto:finance@eap-csf.eu)

## 8. FORCE MAJEURE

8.1 Neither Party shall be liable to the other for any delay or non-performance of its obligations hereunder in the event and to the extent that such a delay or non-performance is due to an event of Force Majeure.

8.2 Events of Force Majeure are unforeseeable events beyond the control of the affected Party and whose effects the Party is not capable to overcome without unreasonable expense and/or loss of time to the Party concerned. Events of force majeure shall include (without being limited to) war, civil unrest, strikes, lock-outs and other general labour disputes, acts of government, natural disasters, exceptional weather conditions, breakdown or general unavailability of transport facilities, accidents, fire, explosions, and shortages of energy.