

## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

### EaP CSF RE-GRANTING 2017

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## GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

*Deadline for submission of proposals: January 29 2017, 24.00 Brussels time*

### Table of Content

1. BACKGROUND .....	2
2. OBJECTIVES AND THEMATIC PRIORITIES OF THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS .....	2
2.1. Objectives .....	2
2.2. Thematic Priorities .....	3
2.3. Mainstreaming Gender Equality .....	4
3. FINANCIAL ALLOCATIONS .....	4
4. ELIGIBILITY .....	5
4.1. Regional dimension .....	5
4.2. Eligible applicants .....	5
4.3. Eligible actions .....	6
4.4. Eligible costs .....	7
5. EXCLUSION CRITERIA .....	7
6. REPORTING, OBLIGATION OF INFORMATION AND VISIBILITY .....	8
7. HOW TO APPLY .....	8
7.1. Project proposal .....	8
7.2. Deadline .....	9
7.3. Window for consultations .....	9
8. EVALUATION AND SELECTION .....	9
8.1. The Evaluation and selection process .....	9
8.2. The Evaluation Grid .....	11
9. INDICATIVE TIMETABLE .....	11
10. ANNEXES .....	12

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## 1. BACKGROUND

In the framework of the Grant Contract ENPI/2014/347-121 *Support to the activities of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum* with the European Commission, the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Secretariat (hereafter EaP CSF Secretariat) as the body responsible for the implementation, is opening a Call for Proposals under the 2017 re-granting 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;
- 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 with the EU;
- to contribute to the effective policy-making and advocacy of the objectives of the EaP CSF at the EU level;
- to connect with the interest and needs of the wider public in the EaP countries;
- to encourage activity of the civil society in relevant areas and policy domains where the civil society has not been active but which are considered important for societal development in the region.

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



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## 2.2. Thematic Priorities

The identified thematic priorities for this Call for Proposals are: *(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)

- ***Civil society participation in public policy decision-making in the EaP countries***
- ***Media monitoring***, the civil society watchdog role against propaganda and manipulation with public opinion in the EaP countries
- ***Judiciary*** (reforms, integrity issues)
- ***Public administration reform***
- ***Security policy***
- ***Dealing with populism in the EaP and the EU***
- ***Migration of EaP citizens*** (especially of young people)
- ***Gender equality***

### WG2 (Economic integration and convergence with EU policies)

- ***Progress of EaP countries towards economic integration with the EU*** - assessing cooperation with the EU, between EaP countries, as well as the relevance and effectiveness of EU assistance, monitoring and implementation.
- ***SMEs, Trade & Related Regulatory Cooperation*** - competitiveness, state procurements, financial state aid, creation of growth hubs related to regulatory cooperation, the implementation of DCFTAs with a focus on SMEs, applying EU best practices to achieve sustainable economic development.
- ***Regional Policy & Cross-border Cooperation*** – creation of regional ecosystems for innovation and entrepreneurship, promotion of European cohesion and regional policy, encouraging local communities' European performances.
- ***Harmonization of Digital Markets and Digital Competences*** – development of human capital, digital leadership and e-skills for value creation; building resource capacity for digital markets; business innovation, smart specialization (including integration in value chains) and clustering for increasing country's and region's competitiveness; adoption of HDM Panel Action Plan.

### WG3 (Environment, climate change and energy security)

- ***Good Environmental Governance***
- ***Climate Change Prevention***



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- **Energy Issues**

#### WG4 (Contacts between people)

- **Education** - non-formal education, trainings, including on-line education, e-learning, vocational education, civic education, quality assurance of the higher education, students' involvement in the quality assurance, ensuring academic freedoms, lobbying/advocacy for the inclusion of the EaP countries into the Erasmus program (besides Erasmus +).
- **Culture** - advocating of the full accession of the EaP countries to Creative Europe program, cultural heritage, advocating of the full accession of the EaP countries to the "Choice" program.
- **Youth** - encouraging civic activism among youth, promoting youth employment, access of young people to mobility programs, inclusion of vulnerable groups and NEET, defending youth rights, developing instruments to support youth locally, core funding of youth organizations; advocating the EaP Youth Conference recommendations, promoting youth for youth by youth projects.
- **Seniors** - youth and seniors, social guiding, employment of pensioners, education, training and capacity building of seniors, inclusion of seniors into the civil, cultural and political life of the EaP countries.

#### WG5 (Social & Labour Policies and Social Dialogue)

- Development of **social dialogue** at national and local level in the EaP countries
- **Social policy**, social reforms, and the monitoring of social reforms
- **Employment and labour relations**

### 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.

## 3. FINANCIAL ALLOCATIONS

The overall amount for this call for proposal is: **328.595 EUR**. (*Please note the unspent allocations from 2016 will be used for supporting the projects from the shortlist if applicable*)



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Financial allocation per EaP CSF Working Groups<sup>1</sup>:

**WG1** – 100.000 EUR

**WG2** – 67.500 EUR

**WG3** – 60.547 EUR

**WG4** – 70.548 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**
- ➔ **No co-funding** is requested

#### 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 CSOs acting as lead applicant and/or partners.

##### 4.2. Eligible applicants

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

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



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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 <sup>2</sup>	✓	✓
Have participated in any of the seven 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 scheme<sup>3</sup>**.
- **Individual experts** in the capacity of natural person can be involved as a **third party**; their participation is welcomed but does not establish/substitute the compliance with the regional dimension criterion.

#### 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

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> *Note of explanation:* The organisations that implemented projects within 2015 or 2016 EaP CSF re-granting scheme in the capacity of lead applicant can apply under the 2017 Call for Proposals as partners only.



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- must be implemented between 1 April 2017 and 30 November 2017.
- Preliminary (if not final) results should be available and ready to be presented at the 2017 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: research and analysis, data collection and polling, policy development, capacity building and training, evaluation and monitoring, research-based advocacy and lobbying, know-how sharing, awareness raising and informing the general public, public campaigns, know-how sharing visits, 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 (and sub-groups), EaP Platforms and Panels, EaP CSF National Platforms and 2017 Annual Assembly as much as possible.

Follow-up projects of the 2016 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.

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;



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- 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.

## 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)



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## 7.2. Deadline

Proposals must be submitted to the following email address: [applications@eap-csf.eu](mailto:applications@eap-csf.eu) by **January 29 2017, 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 **December 20 2016– January 18 2017**. Please send your questions via email at: [vera.rihackova@eap-csf.eu](mailto:vera.rihackova@eap-csf.eu)

## 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 is informed via email. Final list of eligible proposals is issued and communicated to the **Selection Committee** and **WG Councils** (February 3 2017).

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

**The Selection Committee** evaluates and rates the project proposals in line with the evaluation grid. The Selection Committee is composed of **two EaP CSF Steering Committee Co-Chairs** who can be replaced by any other Steering Committee member, **three external experts** (a representative of a donor organisation or policy expert), and a **member of the EaP CSF Secretariat** without voting rights.

The EaP CSF **WG Councils** contribute to the evaluation and selection process via providing consultative ranking of project proposals for their respective WGs by 12.00 noon, February 17 2017



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### ***Guidelines on Conflict of Interest (CoI)***

In case a **WG Council** member's organisation is acting as lead applicant or project partner within the EaP CSF 2017 Re-granting, as well as in case of close relations of the first degree (siblings, parents) to an applicant, a conflict of interest must be openly declared by a respective WG Council member. When conflict of interest is declared (CoI), the WG Council member refrains from evaluating the particular project proposal in question.

In case a **WG Council** member has any direct or indirect personal relationships to an applicant that go beyond a normal professional working relationship and may give rise to any actual or perceived CoI in relation to evaluating particular EaP CSF Re-granting project proposals, it is a moral responsibility of a WG member to openly declare CoI. If necessary, the evaluation-making body (WG Council) decides whether the case presented establishes the CoI. When CoI is declared, the WG Council member refrains from evaluating the particular project proposal in question.

The **EaP CSF Steering Committee members** are recommended not to apply within the EaP CSF Re-granting scheme in given year in order to enhance the objectivity of the decision-making process within the EaP CSF Re-granting scheme.

### **Step 3: Selection Committee discussion and decision**

The Selection Committee will take the final decision after meeting in situ in Brussels where all relevant inputs are debated (1-day meeting, February 20 – February 23 2017). The list of selected grantees is finalized as well as reserve list of proposals (up to two proposals per each WG) and published on February 27 2017.

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 27 – March 31 2017).

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

The Selection Committee has the right to exclude the proposals on the basis stated in the article 5 of this Guidelines.



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## 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

Section	Maximum Score
<b>1. OPERATIONAL CAPACITY</b>	
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)?	
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.)?	
<b>2. RELEVANCE OF THE ACTION</b>	
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?	2*
2.3. Is the mainstreaming of gender equality well reflected in the content?	
2.4. Is there a direct link to the work of the EaP CSF WGs and NPs, and EaP Platforms and Panels?	2*
<b>3. DESIGN OF THE ACTION</b>	
3.1. How coherent is the overall design of the project?	
3.2. Is the project feasible and consistent in relation to the project objectives and expected outcomes?	
3.3. Is the project likely to deliver mid and long-term impact in the envisaged area?	
3.4. Are the envisaged project risks likely to be mitigated?	
<b>4. EFFECTIVENESS AND FEASIBILITY OF THE ACTION</b>	
4.1. Are the activities proposed appropriate, realistic, and consistent with the objectives and expected outcomes?	
4.2. Is the time table clear and feasible?	
4.3. Are the proposed activities appropriately reflected in the budget (cost-effectiveness)?	

## 9. INDICATIVE TIMETABLE

Action	Date
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Deadline for submission of proposals	January 29 2017, 24.00 Brussels time
Eligibility check of all proposals	January 30 – February 3 2017
List of eligible projects issued	February 3 2017
Evaluation and selection process	February 6 – February 24 2017
Communication on the selection of 2017 beneficiaries	February 27 2017
Communication and deliberations with the beneficiaries, signature of the contract	February 27 – March 31 2017
Implementation period	April 1 – November 30 2017

## 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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