

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

EaP CSF RE-GRANTING 2018

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

Deadline for submission of proposals: January 28 2018, 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	5
3. FINANCIAL ALLOCATIONS	5
4. ELIGIBILITY	5
4.1. Regional dimension	6
4.2. Eligible applicants	6
4.3. Eligible actions	7
4.4. Eligible costs	7
5. EXCLUSION CRITERIA	8
6. REPORTING, OBLIGATION OF INFORMATION AND VISIBILITY	8
7. HOW TO APPLY	9
7.1. Project proposal	9
7.2. Deadline	9
7.3. Window for consultations	9
8. EVALUATION AND SELECTION	10
8.1. The Evaluation and selection process	10
8.2. The Evaluation Grid	11
9. INDICATIVE TIMETABLE	12
10. ANNEXES	12



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1. BACKGROUND

In the framework of the grant contract 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 2018 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 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 following thematic priorities were identified. 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, human rights and anti-corruption mechanisms***
- ***Support to implementation of key judicial reforms***
- ***Implementation of the public administration reform***
- ***Enabling environment for civil society,***
- ***Stronger cooperation in the area of security, resilience and CSDP***
- ***Addressing hybrid threats with focus on tailor-made strategic communication and support to the plurality of the media***
- ***Gender equality and non-discrimination***

WG2 (Economic integration and convergence with EU policies)

- ***Progress of EaP countries towards economic integration with the EU*** - assessing the level of convergence of the business climate (LCBC)
- ***SMEs, Trade & Related Regulatory Cooperation*** – competitiveness and implementation of DCFTAs with a focus on SMEs
- ***Regional Policy & Cross-border Cooperation*** – empowerment of regions within the EaP countries, support to the development of regional professional education
- ***Harmonization of Digital Markets and Digital Competences*** – promoting digital leadership and e-skills for value creation in line with one of the six priorities stated in the second EaP Ministerial Meeting on the Digital Economy Declaration (October 2017)



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WG3 (Environment, climate change and energy security)

- **Environmental Governance** - monitoring and assessment of the environmental governance reform in the EaP countries, implementation of SEA and EIA (EU legislation and ESPOO Convention), promotion of integrated water resources management in the EaP countries, communication of priorities outlined in the joint staff working document [Eastern Partnership - 20 Deliverables for 2020](#) at national level
- **Climate Change Prevention** and communication of priorities outlined in the joint staff working document [Eastern Partnership - 20 Deliverables for 2020](#) at national level
- **Energy** - security of energy supplies, interconnection and communication of priorities outlined in the joint staff working document [Eastern Partnership - 20 Deliverables for 2020](#) at national level

WG4 (Contacts between people)

- **Education** - reforms of higher education institutions based on norms and standards of EHEA including implementation of networking activities, reforms of vocational education and training in response to the labour market needs, development of civic education school concept
- **Culture** - advocating the full accession of the EaP countries to Creative Europe program, expert monitoring of Creative Europe programme and facilitating access of the EaP CSOs to the Creative Europe funding, active participation of the civil society in formulation of culture policies
- **Youth** - developing long-term frameworks and roadmaps for stimulating youth entrepreneurship, including social entrepreneurship and youth employment on national, regional and local level (rural areas)
- **Seniors** - social inclusion of seniors, development and implementation of the legislative frameworks for lifelong learning of seniors
- EaP Regional Mapping of **Infrastructures for Peace** (I4P) - assessing institutions, mechanisms, resources, values and skills through which conflicts can be resolved and peace sustained in the EaP countries.

WG5 (Social & Labour Policies and Social Dialogue)

- 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



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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: **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 10% 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 9.000 EUR and the grantee's contribution would be 1.000 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.

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.



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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:

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 scheme**³.
- Individual experts** in the capacity of natural person can be involved as a **third party**;

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 can apply within this call as lead organisations again. Lead organisations of 2017 scheme can re-apply as lead organisations as of 2019 call in order to ensure that the lead organisation is not implementing a project during two consecutive years; however they can still apply as project partners within 2018 call.



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their participation is welcome 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
- must be implemented between 1 April 2018 and 30 November 2018.
- Preliminary (if not final) results should be available and ready to be presented at the 2018 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, ideally based on and addressing the relevant milestones and deliverables outlined in the joint staff working document [Eastern Partnership - 20 Deliverables for 2020](#): 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 2017 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;



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- 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, 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.



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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.

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 **January 28 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 **December 20 2017–January 18 2018**. Please send your questions via email at: 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 is informed via email. Final list of eligible proposals is issued and communicated (February 5 2018).

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 a **respective WG Coordinator – member of the EaP CSF Steering Committee, two external experts** selected by the Secretariat and the SC out of the pool of external experts generated by the call for expression of interest, and a **member of the EaP CSF Secretariat** without voting rights. The EaP CSF Steering Committee approves the composition of the **Selection Committees** at the SC meeting in January 2018.

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 **55 points**. The project proposals scoring lower than 55 points cannot be considered for funding.

Guidelines on Conflict of Interest (CoI)

The external members of the Selection Committees are signing the mandatory CoI declaration before evaluating the project proposals. The EaP CSF members in given year (2017-2018) 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 9th Annual Assembly in Tallinn 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. The EaP CSF Steering Committee is the ultimate decision-making body when a problem with a project occurs.



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Step 3: Selection Committee discussion and decision

The Selection Committees will take the final decision after meeting online (February 20–27 2018). 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 28 2018.

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 28 – March 31 2018).

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

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

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 90 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)?	
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*



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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*
3. DESIGN OF THE ACTION	20
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?	
4. EFFECTIVENESS AND FEASIBILITY OF THE ACTION	15
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
Deadline for submission of proposals	January 28 2018, 24.00 Brussels time
Eligibility check of all proposals	January 29 – February 2 2018
List of eligible projects issued	February 5 2018
Evaluation and selection process	February 5 – February 27 2018
Communication on the selection of 2018 beneficiaries	February 28 2018
Communication and deliberations with the beneficiaries, signature of the contract	March 1 – March 31 2018
Implementation period	April 1 – November 30 2018

10. ANNEXES

Annex I: Project proposal template

Annex II: Budget proposal template

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

Annex IV: Declaration or certification about VAT no-exemption*

*Facultative, but it will be requested at the signature of the grant agreement and therefore can cause delays in the start of the project



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