



CALL FOR PROPOSALS
EaP CSF RE-GRANTING (FSTP) TO MEMBERS 2021
LOT 1 & LOT 2

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

Deadline for submission of proposals: September 12, 2021, 23.59 Brussels time (CET)

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1. BACKGROUND

In the framework of its project *Support to the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum: Strengthening Policy Dialogue and Civic Actors* (ENI/2020/421-928) funded by the European Commission, the Secretariat of the Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (hereafter the EaP CSF Secretariat), as the body responsible for the implementation of the *Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP)*, is opening this Call for Proposals under the EaP CSF Re-granting to Members programme for 2021-2023. The supported projects must have a regional dimension and contribute to achieving the mission and strategic objectives of the Forum. This FSTP program is split into three lots:

- Lot 1 – Monitoring EaP deliverables and related reforms
- Lot 2 – Addressing the Forum's strategic and advocacy priorities
- Lot 3 - Strengthening the linkages between the EaP CSF members

This call for proposals is open for Lot 1 and Lot 2.

2. OBJECTIVES AND THEMATIC PRIORITIES OF THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

2.1. Objectives

The overall objective of this Call for Proposals is to support the work of the EaP CSF members to develop and deliver on the strategic policy, advocacy and capacity building priorities of the Forum within the regional dimension.

The specific objectives are:

- To contribute to monitoring and advancing reforms in the EaP countries in line with the [Eastern Partnership policy framework](#) and the [Joint Staff Working Document](#) Recovery, resilience and reform: post 2020 EaP priorities (2021-2025 EaP roadmap);
- To contribute to the effective participation of civil society in policy-making and to the EaP governments' accountability via enhanced mechanisms of dialogue between the EU and civil society, between the national governments and EaP civil society, and between the EU, national governments and EaP civil society;
- To strengthen regional dimension and cooperation (namely by project activities with regional added value) by developing joint monitoring on advocacy, facilitating exchanges of experiences and best practices, and coalition and confidence building while acknowledging the different paths and contractual relations of the individual partner countries with the EaP initiative;
- To strengthen the role of civil society and, the EaP CSF in particular, within EaP policy formulation, implementation, and monitoring and oversight by developing quality evidence-based policy and advocacy products supporting the EaP CSF's objectives;
- To contribute to closing the feedback loop between citizens and governments in the EaP countries.



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2.2. Thematic Priorities

LOT 1 – Monitoring EaP targets, deliverables and related reforms

The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum contributed to the *Joint Communication [Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020 Reinforcing Resilience](#) - an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all*, adopted on March 18, 2020. The Communication is setting the policy framework for the implementation of the Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020. The EaP reform agenda for 2021-2025 is further detailed in the [Joint Staff Working Document](#) (JSWD) *Recovery, resilience and reform: post 2020 EaP priorities* (2021-2025 EaP roadmap) and will be further elaborated on in the run up to the EaP Summit in December 2021. The thematic priority under Lot 1 is regular and complex monitoring of the implementation of the EaP targets and deliverables as outlined in the JSWD and related reforms from the civil society perspective across the 6 EaP countries. The results of the regular monitoring will be advocated and communicated in close cooperation with the EaP CSF as its flagship initiative.

LOT 2 - Addressing EAP CSF's strategic and advocacy priorities

The objective of Lot 2 is to ensure that the development and implementation of the Forum's strategic and advocacy priorities is driven by its members, in alliance with the EaP CSF Steering Committee and the EaP CSF Secretariat. The actions aim to increase awareness and the prominence of the EaP region in specific EU Member States via the EU members of the EaP CSF and new EU-based partners can be considered under this lot. The thematic priorities are:

- **Resilient civil society** – projects aimed at developing best practices and policy advice on improving the civil society environment, civil society funding and sustainability, mitigation of the Covid-19 pandemic mid- and long-term impacts on the civil society sector in the EaP countries, monitoring of the implementation of national-level civil society strategies, monitoring of national legislations and its impact on civil society operations in EaP countries.
- **Cohesion and differentiation** – projects aimed at developing best practices and policy advice on the possible ways of implementation of the enhanced cooperation with and within the trio of the AA/DCFTA countries (Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine) in the EaP multilateral format from the civil society perspective, and the spill-over effect to the rest of the EaP partner countries. The projects should reflect the framework for policy implementation as per the [Joint Staff Working Document](#) (JSWD) *Recovery, resilience and reform: post 2020 EaP priorities*.
- **Reconciliation and confidence-building** – projects aimed at developing best practices and policy advice for reconciliation and confidence-building among countries, communities and civil societies divided by conflicts in the EaP region.
- **EaP going green** - projects aimed at developing best practices and policy advice on the implementation of the European Green Deal in the EaP countries, namely with a focus on environmental and climate resilience and the EaP CSF's long standing advocacy



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priorities – stronger institutional capacity and environmental governance and more aware citizenry and green education.

2.3. Mainstreaming Gender Equality

Following the EU principles of gender equality, women's leadership and participation in projects, as well as the coverage of gender aspects in the themes addressed by the projects, is highly encouraged and should be clearly described in the application form (Annex I).

3. FINANCIAL ALLOCATIONS

LOT 1 - Monitoring EaP targets, deliverables and related reforms

A single multi-annual grant to a consortium of CSOs - EaP CSF members and non-members (as partners), for an implementation period of 27 months (October 2021-December 2023).

- ➔ maximum size of the grant allocated (2021-2023): **EUR 180.000**
- ➔ maximum size of the grant annually: **EUR 60.000**
- ➔ **minimum 5% co-financing** is requested

LOT 2 - Addressing EaP CSF's strategic and advocacy priorities

Grants to consortiums of CSOs – EaP CSF members and non-members (as partners), for an implementation period of 6-16 months (October 2021-January 2023)

- ➔ maximum amount allocated per call: **EUR 120.000**
- ➔ minimum size of the grant: **EUR 20.000**
- ➔ maximum size of the grant: **EUR 60.000**
- ➔ **minimum 5% co-financing** is requested

Co-financing means that the grant beneficiary has to co-finance part of the cost of the action. Contribution in kind is not permitted.

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 project proposals complying with the criteria set in articles 3., 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 – **LOT 1 must cover all six EaP countries** (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine). The project consortium has to be composed of **at least three CSOs from three different EaP countries** acting as lead applicant and/or partners and prove the expert coverage of the EaP countries non-represented by a CSO in the consortium in the project description and monitoring methodology. The CSOs registered in EU member states can act as lead applicant (only EaP CSF members) and/or partner given they apply together with three CSOs from three different EaP countries (i.e. 3+1).
- Any project funded through this Call for Proposals – **LOT 2 must cover at least three EaP countries** (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine). The project consortium has to be composed of **at least three CSOs from three different EaP countries** acting as lead applicant and/or partners. The CSOs registered in EU member states can act as lead applicant (only EaP CSF members) and/or partner given they apply together with three CSOs from three different EaP countries (i.e. 3+1).

4.2. Eligible applicants

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

LOT 1 - Monitoring EaP targets, deliverables and related reforms

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 ¹	✓	✓
Be EaP CSF member ²	✓	
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.	✓	✓

¹ 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.

² For the definition of EaP CSF membership please see here: <https://eap-csf.eu/join-us/>



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LOT 2 - Addressing EAP CSF's strategic and advocacy priorities

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 ³	✓	✓
Be EaP CSF member ⁴	✓	
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.	✓	✓

- A CSO can submit only **one proposal** as the **lead applicant**. A lead applicant may act as a project partner in other proposal(s) within this call.
- An organisation can only be a **lead applicant** under the EaP CSF Re-granting to Members 2021-2023 **once throughout the three-year duration of the program, all LOTs included**.
- **Individual experts** in the capacity of natural person can be involved as a **third party**; their participation is welcome but does not establish/substitute compliance with the regional dimension criterion (art. 4.1.)

4.3. Eligible actions

An action is composed of a set of project activities.

Duration and implementation period

LOT 1 – Strengthening the linkages between the EaP CSF members: a single multi-annual grant to a consortium of CSOs - EaP CSF members and non-members, for the maximum implementation period of 27 months (1 October 2021 - 31 December 2023).

³ 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.

⁴ For the definition of EaP CSF membership please see here: <https://eap-csf.eu/join-us/>



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LOT 2 - Addressing EaP CSF's strategic and advocacy priorities: grants to consortiums of CSOs – EaP CSF members and non-members, for the implementation period of 6-16 months (1 October 2021- 30 January 2023)

Activities

LOT 1 – Monitoring EaP targets, deliverables and related reforms

Actions and activities funded under **LOT 1** should result in comprehensive monitoring and evidence-based evaluation of the implementation of the EaP reform agenda for 2021-2025 as detailed in the [Joint Staff Working Document](#) (JSWD) *Recovery, resilience and reform: post 2020 EaP priorities* and its possible updates resulting from the policy process leading up to the EaP summit (15-16 December 2021) from the civil society perspective. The applicants are encouraged to develop proposals that **mandatorily include monitoring methodology**, establishing how the critical review of EaP targets and deliverables defined in the JSWD will be conducted, how the baseline for monitoring will be established and how the data collection, and analysis, will be implemented. **Timeline and frequency of delivery** of monitoring results and reports should be outlined. **Communication and advocacy plan and activities**, including events, promoting the monitoring reports and results in close cooperation with the EaP CSF Steering Committee and the EaP CSF Secretariat have to be described in the proposal.

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

LOT 2 - Addressing EaP CSF's strategic and advocacy priorities

The objective of LOT 2 is to ensure that the development and implementation of the Forum's strategic and advocacy priorities is driven by its members, in alliance with the EaP CSF Steering Committee and the EaP CSF Secretariat. The actions funded under this lot can also aim to increase awareness and the prominence of the EaP region in specific EU Member States within the framework of thematic priorities as defined in article 2.2 of these guidelines. The supported actions and activities under this lot should include (but are not strictly limited to): methodology development, including for consultations with the EaP CSF members, data collection, research, analysis, policy recommendations and advice development, communication and awareness raising activities, stakeholders outreach including workshops, seminars, roundtables and conferences. The proposals must **mandatorily include** an outline of how the communication and advocacy plans, actions and campaigns will be coordinated and implemented together with the EaP CSF Steering Committee and EaP CSF Secretariat.



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Project activities as well as the final project outputs shall demonstrate clear added value within the regional dimension (i.e. not only a collection of individual country actions without joint, comparative or best practices sharing elements).

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 CSF National Platforms and the EaP CSF Annual Assembly as much as possible.

4.4. Eligible costs

To be eligible, all costs must be:

- Indicated in the estimated Budget proposal (for multi-year projects: in multi-year budget estimation with annual revisions as per grant agreement);
- 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 financial documents;
- Reasonable, cost-effective, and comply with the principles of sound financial management and applicable tax and social legislation.

VAT and taxes that have been paid but are not recoverable by the grantees can also be included among eligible costs. Grantees should show evidence that they cannot reclaim VAT. The evidence can be obtained from the national tax authority. Self-certification can be acceptable if duly substantiated. The 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/donors.

5. EXCLUSION CRITERIA

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

- Fail the pre-selection eligibility check;
- Their (lead organisation or partner) 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 the awarding of a grant, the lead applicant will sign a **grant agreement with the EaP CSF Secretariat, which will specify in detail the reporting**



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requirements. In general terms, the reporting will consist of regular reports in written form in two parts:

- **A narrative part**, tracking jointly agreed indicators of project implementation and performance. The frequency of narrative reporting for project funded under LOT1 will be defined in the grant agreement and linked to the agreed project deliverables as well as instalments' payments, for LOT2, the projects shorter than 8 months will provide final narrative report only while providing information for project results' ongoing tracking. The reporting of the projects with the implementation period longer than 8 months will be defined in the grant agreement;
- **A financial part** with a detailed list of expenditures, accompanied by supporting documents for subsequent the EaP CSF Secretariat's audit purposes. The frequency of financial reporting for project funded under LOT1 will be defined in the grant agreement and linked to the agreed narrative reporting and project deliverables. The sequence of grant instalments' payments will be defined in the grant agreement and linked to the delivery of the agreed deliverables. For LOT2, the projects shorter than 8 months will provide final financial report only. The financial reporting of the projects with the implementation period longer than 8 months will be defined in the grant agreement.

By signing the grant agreement, the lead applicant will agree to authorise the EaP CSF Secretariat, the European Commission and possibly other donors to the EaP CSF FSTP – Regranting to members 2021-2023, to exercise their powers of control over project-related documents and proofs of spending. The lead applicant bears the final responsibility for the results of the project.

The lead applicant and project partners must comply with visibility guidelines and guarantee the visibility of EU funding, as well of funding from other participating donors and the EaP CSF, over the course of the project implementation and within the published project results. A detailed visibility guide will be provided as an annex to the grant agreement. Visibility obligations might be waived in justifiable circumstances.

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

Personal data is processed by the EaP CSF Secretariat under a contractual lawful basis. The Data Protection Officer for the EaP CSF is the 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>.



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7. HOW TO APPLY

7.1. Project proposals

The proposals under LOT 1 and LOT 2 shall be submitted **in English**.

The proposal must be composed of:

- A narrative proposal detailing the action (mandatory use of template in Annex I, please note there are different templates for LOT 1 and LOT 2)
- A budget proposal in EUR (mandatory use of template in Annex II, please note there are different templates for LOT 1 and LOT 2; for Lot 2 please fill in template **Lot2a** if the project is shorter than 12 months and **Lot2b** if equal or longer than 12 months)
- A declaration of honour on the financial eligibility of the lead applicant (mandatory use of template in Annex III)

7.2. Deadline

Proposals must be submitted to applications@eap-csf.eu by **September 12, 2021, 23.59 Brussels time (CET)**.

Incomplete or late applications will be rejected.

7.3. Window for consultations

A window for consultations with the EaP CSF Secretariat (for example on eligibility, project activities and further assistance) is open between **July 27 - September 6, 2021**. Please send your questions via email to vera.rihackova@eap-csf.eu.

8. EVALUATION AND SELECTION

8.1. Evaluation and selection process

The evaluation and selection process is organised in three steps:

Step 1: Eligibility check

Project proposals will be checked by the EaP CSF Secretariat for compliance with the eligibility criteria stated in articles 4.1. and 4.2. of these guidelines.

In case a project proposal does not pass the eligibility check, the lead applicant will be informed via email. The final list of eligible proposals will be issued and published on the EaP CSF website on September 15, 2021.

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



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A **Selection Committee** will be established for the project proposals submitted under LOT 1 and LOT 2. The Selection Committee will be composed of **three external evaluators** selected by the EaP CSF Secretariat (in consultation with the EaP CSF Steering Committee) from respondents to a call for expression of interest. **Two EaP CSF Steering Committee members and a member of the EaP CSF Secretariat** (Advocacy Manager) will participate in the Selection Committee in an observer capacity. A representative of the European Commission (DG NEAR) might opt in to take part in the Selection Committee in an observer capacity. The observers will not score the project proposals but will review them and take part in the online discussion of the Selection Committee.

Every voting member of the Selection Committee (i.e. the three external evaluators) will score the project proposals in line with the evaluation grid (see 8.2.). The **minimum quality threshold** stands at **65 points**. Project proposals scoring lower than 65 points will not be considered for funding.

Guidelines on Conflict of Interest (CoI)

The members of the Selection Committee, including observers, will sign a mandatory Conflict of Interest declaration before reviewing and evaluating the project proposals. EaP CSF delegates and members are excluded from taking part in the evaluation process as external evaluators. The standing members of the EaP CSF Steering Committee cannot apply for funding under the EaP CSF Re-granting to Members 2021-2023 programme, in order to enhance the objectivity of the selection and decision-making process.

Step 3: Selection Committee discussion and decision

The Selection Committee will take the final grant award decision during a joint online meeting between September 23-28, 2021. The list of selected project proposals will be finalised as well as a reserve list of proposals (one project proposal per each lot) and published on the EaP CSF website and communicated via the EaP CSF communication channels the soonest on September 30, 2021, after validation by the European Commission.

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 merging the projects.

The Selection Committee reserves the right to present lead applicants with recommendations for changes to the project proposals and to suggest budget modifications. Recommendations and modifications will be discussed between the EaP CSF Secretariat and the lead applicant over the course of a deliberation period before concluding the grant agreement (October 1 – 15, 2021).

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

The Selection Committee has the right to exclude a project proposal on the basis stated in the article 5 of these guidelines.



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8.2. 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. Do the lead applicant and its partners have sufficient experience with project management (track record)?	
1.2. Do the lead applicants and its partners have sufficient expertise (especially knowledge of the issues to be addressed)?	
1.3. Do 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. Does the geographical coverage provided by the lead applicant and its partners correspond to the overall aim of the project (experts from other countries needed, etc.) and complies with mandatory obligations of the call stated in article 4.1 of the guidelines of the call?	
2. RELEVANCE OF THE ACTION	35
2.1. Is the proposal relevant to the specific objectives and thematic priorities of the Call for Proposals?	2*
2.2. LOT 1 - Does the proposal demonstrate a clear draft of the monitoring methodology, covering the requested aspects as per Article 4.3 of the Guidelines of the call? LOT 2 – Does the proposal demonstrate a clear added value with regard to Forum’s strategic and advocacy priorities as defined in Article 2.2 and suggested implementing actions as per Article 4.3 of the Guidelines of the call?	2*
2.3. Is the mainstreaming of gender equality well reflected in the project application and design?	
2.4. Is there a direct link to the work of the EaP CSF’s WGs and NPs? Is the condition to reflect on close cooperation with the EaP CSF Steering Committee and the EaP CSF Secretariat reflected in the proposal?	2*
3. DESIGN, EFFECTIVENESS AND FEASIBILITY OF THE ACTION	20
3.1. Is the overall design of the project coherent? In particular, does it	



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reflect the analysis of the problems involved and are the overall project goals attainable?	
3.2. Does the project 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 on the identified mid- and long-term results and are the indicators well defined?	
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	September 12, 2021, 23.59 Brussels time
Eligibility check of all proposals	September 12-14, 2021
List of eligible projects issued	September 15, 2021
Evaluation and selection process	September 15-30, 2021
Communication on the selection of 2021 beneficiaries	September 30 ⁵ , 2021
Communication and deliberations with the beneficiaries, signature of the grant agreement	October 1-15, 2021
Indicative implementation period starting date	October 1-15, 2021

⁵ The date can be modified based on the timeline for selection validation by the EC.





10. ANNEXES

Annex I: Project proposal template – LOT 1 and LOT 2

Annex II: Budget proposal template – LOT 1 and LOT 2

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



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