

ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND ROMANIA

Guidelines for Applicants

Call #1.1 – Civic participation in response to the Ukraine crisis

Rapid response grants for Ukraine crisis

Single round call

Fund operated by:



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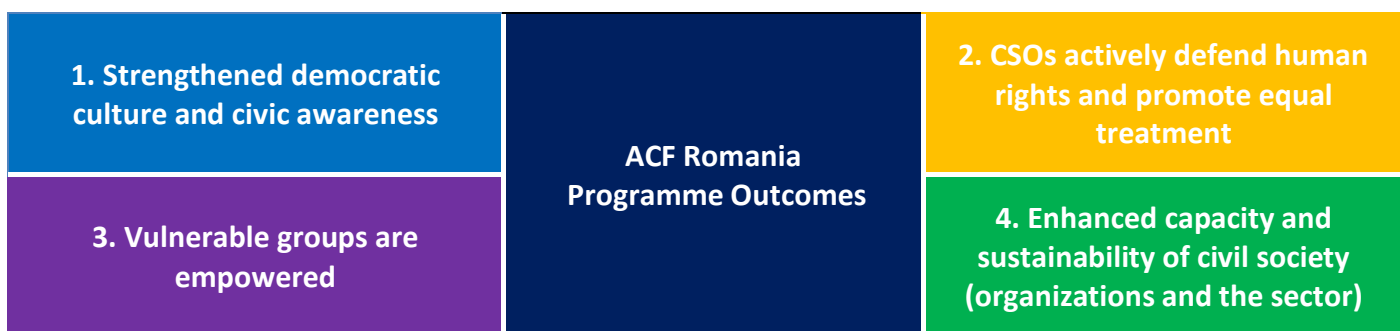
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1. About Active Citizens Fund Romania

The Active Citizens Fund Romania programme (hereafter named “ACF Romania” or “Programme”) is part of the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021. The **objectives** of the **Programme** are **to strengthen civil society and active citizenship and to empower vulnerable groups**. ACF Romania will pursue a long-term development of the civil society sector sustainability and capacity, stepping up its role in promoting democratic participation, active citizenship and human rights, while strengthening bilateral relations with organizations from the Donor States (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway). The Programme has a total allocation of **48,000,000 Euro**.

The **overall objective of the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021** is to reduce economic and social disparities, and to strengthen bilateral relations between 15 beneficiary countries and the Donor States.

Programme Areas of Support	➤ Democracy, active citizenship, good governance and transparency;
	➤ Human rights and equal treatment through combating any discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or gender identity;
	➤ Social justice and inclusion of vulnerable groups;
	➤ Gender equality and gender-based violence (GBV);
	➤ Environment and climate change.



All organisations and activities funded shall be based on the common values and principles :		
Values	General Principles	Principles of sustainable development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • respect of human dignity • freedom • democracy • equality • the rule of law • the respect for human rights for all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good governance • participatory and inclusive • accountable • transparent • responsive • effective and efficient • zero-tolerance towards corruption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • long-term economic growth • social cohesion • environmental protection

ACF Romania is administered by a Consortium composed of [Civil Society Development Foundation](#), [Romanian Environmental Partnership Foundation](#), [Resource Center for Roma Communities](#), [PACT Foundation](#) and [Frivillighet Norge](#), acting as Fund Operator (FO) designated by FMO – Financial Mechanism Office of the EEA and Norway Grants.

2. Outcome 1. Strengthened democratic culture and civic awareness

Outcome 1. Strengthened democratic culture and civic awareness covers two areas of support of the Active Citizens Fund Romania, respectively „*Democracy, active citizenship, good governance and transparency*” and „*Environment and climate change*”.

Aims	To support NGOs to empower people to become active citizens by enhancing their awareness on their role and capacity to contribute to democratic culture at local/national level. On a long term, citizens will become more involved in the community life and in the decision-making processes, having the power to assure accountability.
Approach	<p>Projects to be supported shall tackle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• civic and human rights education to enhance civic participation, promote non-discrimination and solidarity.• civic engagement by providing citizens with participation tools and equipping them with knowledge and skills in how to use the tools, supporting them in getting involved in community life and public decision-making processes in order to contribute to improvement of law enforcement, public services, environment protection, community development and social inclusion.• Civic engagement in addressing exceptional social circumstances generated by the conflict in Ukraine <p>Partnerships between NGOs with complementary expertise and experience as well as among different local actors (small NGOs, community members, authorities, and business) are encouraged to find the best solutions to community problems and to empower citizens.</p>
Special focus	A special focus of the Outcome 1 is to bring interventions in underserved areas and support hard-to-reach and underserved target groups , for which authorities or NGOs do not usually provide support. Youth participation , a priority of the Programme, represents a special focus of the Outcome 1.
Financial allocation	The total allocation available for open calls under Outcome 1 is 14,498,000 Euro .
Special allocations within the total financial allocation for Outcome 1	<p>4,000,000 Euro is envisaged for the strategic focus of the programme on environment and climate change activities, supported only as part of measures to promote civic participation, advocacy, social innovation and active citizenship.</p> <p>Also, a special allocation is foreseen for the development of civil society infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 1,400,000 Euro for small grants for small NGOs working in underserved areas and for underserved target groups- 4,000,000 Euro for strategic grants for supporting implementation of long term strategies for networks, coalitions and platforms- 100,000 Euro for rapid response grants allowing rapid civic mobilisation in case of emerging situations- 110,000 Euro for Rapid response grants for Ukraine crisis.

3. Focus of the Call #1.1 Civic participation in response to Ukraine crisis

3.1 Context

Since the start of the conflict in Ukraine, 5.5 million people were forced to flee from Ukraine and seek protection and support across the region, as estimated by UNHCR, who declares this is the fastest and largest displacement of people in Europe since WWII. The classical war happening at the EU border, impacting directly EU member states, comes with unprecedented challenges for the region, as well as at global level. Systems themselves are challenged, traditional humanitarian actors had to adapt and new solutions had and still have to be put in place, compared to other conflict contexts in the recent years.

About 1.5 million migrants entered Romania¹, either crossing directly from Ukraine (the majority) or through the Moldavian border, seeking shelter and safety. Many of them are in transit to other countries. The largest group of refugees (37%) comes from the northern region of Ukraine and 32% of the refugees come from the southern region, which borders Romania.² Although the peak of the crisis has passed, the daily number of arrivals still comes close to the yearly number of asylum seekers in previous years. Almost 85,000 migrants from Ukraine are still in Romania (approximately 30% children, some of them unaccompanied by relatives, and over 50% women)³, almost 4,400 requested asylum in Romania⁴, while the centres of the General Inspectorate for Immigration are occupied at about 40% of their capacity. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, over 46,000 have registered for temporary or similar national protection schemes, while only around 10% are in accommodation declared to responsible institutions.

Romania has offered humanitarian assistance to the refugees passing its borders. The civil society has mobilized to support the refugees and there have been high efforts from a wide range of stakeholders (NGOs, local and central authorities, business sector, citizens) to provide the necessary assistance at the border points, to those who are in transit from Romania to other destinations, as well as to those that decide to remain in Romania. Despite this, there is a limited infrastructure to cover the needs in terms of *number of refugees, geographic coverage, diversity of the refugees* (women with children, unaccompanied children, LGBTQIA+, elderly, people with disability, etc), considering that majority of the hundreds of NGOs that responded, had no previous experience in dealing with humanitarian crisis or assisting refugees, while the few ones with expertise usually deal with a limited number of beneficiaries, compared with the current situation.

In this context, the coordination of interventions becomes even more challenging, especially taking into account the different working groups and platforms (at the level of the Government, the international organizations and other thematic federations or networks) and the limited human resources available. Several efforts have been made to map activities according to their field of intervention and coordinate efforts, either at local or central level. However, these require improvement and a better information flow to avoid potential gaps and overlaps.

Another situation to be addressed is the continuous radicalization of public speech and the increased danger of disinformation.

Citizens are sometimes reluctant to official information they receive, making them even more vulnerable in face of misinformation and fake news. This climate of untrust reflects also in the response to the Ukraine crisis in Romania, where, although important steps have been made for authorities and civil society to join hands and increase the efficiency of the humanitarian response, still large numbers of citizens who wanted to help didn't want to relate to public institutions, preferring to only engage in all kind of social media support groups or other civic groups/NGOs actions.

In response to this unprecedented crisis, the authorities have taken several measures, some translating into new regulations or adapted legislation in order to serve new vulnerable groups. The EU regulation on Temporary protection, as well as other ordinances and Government decisions, such as the ones offering reimbursement to stakeholders that provided shelter and food to the refugees are just some examples. However, with new measure comes an increased need to monitor all the changes and to observe if and how they translate into practice. Also, as the first response is replaced by integration measures and complex Government plans, it must be ensured that civil society remains engaged, watches over the transparency of the process and engages in consultations.

Even more, with Romania's weakness in governance, confirmed by the scoring near the bottom of the "flawed democracy" category in Eastern Europe (Democracy Index 2021 report), it is equally important to continue monitoring other legislative changes, that might have an important impact and might not be given full attention in the current context.

Therefore, there is a constant need for civil society, both organized and informal, to engage in consultations and watchdog activities and respond to current challenges that might as well affect the overall environment for CSOs and the civic space.

¹ Border Police, official data for the 11th July 2022, <https://www.politiadefrontiera.ro/ro/main/i-traficul-la-frontiera-in-data-de-11-iulie-2022-29768.html>

² "Ukrainian refugees in Poland, the Czech Republic and Romania"² conducted by the EWL Migration Platform, Foundation for the Support of Migrants on the Labour Market 'EWL' and the Centre for East European Studies at the University of Warsaw

³ UNHCR data portal

⁴ Ministry of Internal Affairs, official daily update 12th of July 2022

3.2 Types of grants and financial allocation

Rapid response grants for Ukraine crisis	
Opening date of the application process for Rapid Response grants for Ukraine crisis (application process exclusively through the online platform https://finantaripublice.fdsc.ro)	24 th August 2022
Application deadline	11 th October 2022; 16:00 (Romanian time)
Total additional financial allocation for Ukraine crisis	110,000 Euro*
Project duration (minimum and maximum)	4-12 months
Grant amount (minimum and maximum)	15,000 - 50,000 Euro
Type of call	Restricted call for proposals, open only to non-governmental organizations from Romania that implemented/are implementing projects with the financial support of the Active Citizens Fund Romania as project promoters or partners

*The funds not committed after the last evaluation of Rapid Response grants under the Call #1 – Civic participation in underserved areas will be automatically reallocated to the current Call #1.1 Civic participation in response to Ukraine. At this moment there are 43,068.05 Euro not committed yet under the Call #1, but the application process is still ongoing.

3.3 Objective of the Call #1.1 and contribution to Programme results

Programme Outcome 1	Strengthened democratic culture and civic awareness.
The objective of the Call #1.1	To enhance civic engagement for a better response to the Ukraine crisis
Programme Areas of support targeted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Democracy, active citizenship, good governance and transparency
Country specific concern addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening the capacity and sustainability of the civil society sector Improving outreach to underserved geographic areas and target groups
Target groups	<p>Citizens residing in Romania, both Romanians and of other nationalities.</p> <p>Other groups (professions or entities) could be also targeted to achieve better results. For example, local elected and administrative staff, informal/civic groups, other small NGOs, volunteers, journalists, businessmen etc.</p>

3.4 Eligible projects

This Call supports **measures to enhance civic engagement in addressing challenges arising from the Ukraine crisis**. Citizens and local actors (informal/civic groups, NGOs, volunteers etc.) shall be empowered to actively participate in the process of local public decisions, data collection, cooperation for improved coordination of the humanitarian response, and to critically engage with information and media content. Threats to civic space and civil society environment can also be addressed within this call.

There will be supported projects engaging citizens in **watchdog and/or advocacy** in response to emerging public challenges associated with the Ukrainian crisis, such as: monitoring of specific regulations, identifying gaps in legislation and law enforcement, especially in the context of new regulations adopted this year in reaction to the humanitarian crisis related to people fleeing Ukraine, initiating and/or facilitating efficient public consultations in response to a local or central government decision that needs to be tackled with emergency, etc.

There are also encouraged initiatives to **combat misinformation, disinformation, fake news and address information inequality in society** associated with the Ukrainian war context (such as citizens driven data initiatives, initiatives encouraging citizens to critically engage with news content, identification of malicious campaigns, building capacity to respond to information attacks designed to discredit CSOs etc).

Innovative ways, for example using technologies for web or applications, can foster the engagement and reach a wide range of stakeholders in the communities (young professionals, IT professionals, students, influencers, bloggers, investigative journalists etc.).

Initiatives can include **formal and informal coordination** between CSOs to stimulate cooperation, a more efficient allocation of resources and avoid duplication of efforts. This can include mapping of needs, resources and interventions, innovative cooperation mechanisms, etc.

This Call strongly encourages partnerships between NGOs and:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • other NGOs active in the same or in other complementary fields of activity, like environment and climate change, good governance, education, community development etc. Those could be: 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more experienced NGOs that could guide them to better design their intervention and to further develop their capacity and sustainability; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGOs that are already active at grassroots level and are connected with local communities.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • other stakeholders (authorities, public institutions, mass media, private sector) to, discover new collaborative ways, explore opportunities and deliver the most efficient response possible to the identified needs determined by the crisis. 	

Under the Call #1.1 the following types of projects are not eligible	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	projects that exclusively or essentially target academic research, feasibility studies, conferences and other individual/unique events, infrastructure, individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences and congresses;
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	projects that involve obtaining / awarding individual scholarships;
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	projects involving only training activities (see Attention note in 3.5);
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	projects for emergency support, unless they are an indispensable component of the project;
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	refinancing activities (e.g. re-granting or loans given to other organizations or individuals/ legal entities);
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	projects that focus on the purchase of equipment, buildings or offices;
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	day to day activities of the Applicant (the project application must be elaborated for a specific project, as a set of well-defined and correlated activities, which will lead to concrete results within a well-defined time frame.)

3.5 Eligible activities

! Attention

Please note that the activities listed above are only examples that can be part of a project which has to be understood as a defined group of activities implemented to develop a response to a specific need, activities that need to be done in a logical sequence to achieve a set of predefined targets using the given resources.

Analytical activities such as studies, reports, are also eligible as part of more complex projects (i.e. preparatory work for proposed advocacy campaigns, data-based argumentation to public policy proposals or public decision-making, etc.).

Training activities are also eligible as part of more complex projects that include additional activities supporting the beneficiaries' involvement in community life and public decision-making processes (follow-up activities, mentoring coaching etc) in order to produce changes in selected target groups

Type of eligible activities (non-exhaustive list):

- ✓ **Support active citizens' participation in civic activities related to the refugees' crisis.** This could be done by:
 - Mobilizing citizens, groups, local authorities and the local business to work together and coordinate efforts in order to solve concrete local problems with local resources (through, community facilitation, volunteering, participatory needs assessment and prioritization, design and implement community projects);
 - Engaging citizens, Romanian and refugees, in citizen driven data initiatives, for a more accurate information that could feed into better policies as well as better private interventions/assistance;
 - Initiate and/or facilitate effective public consultations and participatory public decision-making processes;
 - Mobilize citizens to hold public institutions / authorities or local elected members accountable and transparent through petitions campaigns, public debates, other online /offline instruments, etc.
- ✓ **Activities supporting citizens to engage critically with news content and to detect misinformation online**
- ✓ **Enhance accurate information available to the general public, as well as to stakeholders involved in providing assistance to refugees fleeing Ukraine. This can include:**
 - awareness campaigns;
 - initiatives countering fake news;

- monitoring information flows and detecting malicious campaigns;
 - building capacity to respond to information attacks designed to discredit CSOs, their beneficiaries or the problem area in which they work, including by building skills for anticipating, identifying, reporting and counteracting misinformation;
 - ensuring accurate information channels especially for stakeholders active in the humanitarian response;
 - providing basic data protection and information security to ensure that sensitive information, membership databases or communications with vulnerable groups and individuals remain secure.
- ✓ **Policy monitoring and advocacy initiatives through participatory approaches on issues associated with the Ukraine crisis.**
This could include:
- Analysis of policies/specific regulation and dialogue between NGOs and decision makers;
 - Monitoring and improving the implementation of specific legislation relating to people fleeing Ukraine and other refugees with the direct involvement of citizens; identifying implementation gaps and investigating solutions; Awareness raising in order to engage citizens;
 - Improving access to objective and reliable information for the community members/general public;
 - Developing and using effective and innovative tools for public participation.
- ✓ **Develop and/or strengthen collaboration structures (platforms, networks, coalitions) between stakeholders addressing challenges associated with the war in Ukraine (humanitarian response, disinformation and fake news, etc)**
- ✓ **Mapp and promote interventions, good practices and lessons learned related to the response to Ukraine humanitarian crisis**
- ✓ **Transfer of knowledge activities with specialized organizations, leading to better tailored interventions**

All projects funded under the current Call shall contribute to the achievement of:

Results Framework Call #1.1 Civic participation in response to the Ukraine crisis			
Expected programme results	Indicators	Targets* to be reached at Call level	Requirements for applicants
Programme Objective Civil society and active citizenship strengthened, and vulnerable groups empowered	Programme-level Indicator A Number of people engaged in civil society organization activities.	100	All projects must report against this indicator.
Outcome 1. Strengthened democratic culture and civic awareness.	Indicator 1. Share of target group showing civic awareness.	+25%	All projects must select and report against at least one Outcome 1 indicator [1] and/or [2].
	Indicator 2. Number of people participating in consultations with a public decision-making body.	30	
Output 1.1. Civic and human rights education supported	Indicator 3. Number of people (students) educated in civic and human rights.	30	All projects must contribute to at least one Output from this table and must select and report against at least one corresponding Output level indicator.
	Indicator 4 Number of CSO initiative on “media literacy” carried out.	1	
	Indicator 5. Number of civic and human rights – related partnerships between established /strong and less established/ weaker/smaller CSOs.	1	
Output 1.2. Citizens' participation in civic activities promoted	Indicator 6. Number of awareness raising campaigns carried out.	1	
	Indicator 7. Number of citizens involved in civic activities.	100	
	Indicator 9. Number of CSO and public/private partnerships forged to promote citizens participation.	1	
Output 1.6. CSOs watchdog / monitoring / advocacy role supported	Indicator 15. Number of CSOs advocating for improvements to the legal/policy environment for civil society.	1	
	Indicator 16. Number of CSO watchdog role-related cases litigated.	1	
	Indicator 17. Number of initiatives (including Freedom of Information requests) to promote transparency in public/ private decision making.	2	

*The target values to be reached at Call level are presented for information purposes only. Within the project proposals, applicants will establish the target values in concordance with the project objectives and project budget.

Note:

In addition to the results and indicators included in the above list, applicants may add **up to two** relevant results (outcome, output) and corresponding indicators. These additional results and indicators will be selected from the ones set out at programme level (excepting those under the Outcome 4). In exceptional cases, the additional results and indicators could be proposed by the applicants.

For more in depth information about the Programme indicators (description, measurement etc.), please consult the *Programme Indicators. Guidance document 2.0*, available at <https://activecitizensfund.ro>.

3.6 Information and communication activities

When developing their project proposals, the Applicants should describe information and communication actions with the aim of creating awareness of the project and its objectives, any bilateral cooperation with entities in Iceland, Liechtenstein and/or Norway, as well as of the implementation, results and the impact of support from the Donors to the project. Applicants should take into account the following **minimal obligatory requirements** that have to be planned, developed, budgeted, implemented and reported to the Fund Operator:

1. **At least one information activity** on progress, achievements and results in the project, such as a seminar or a conference with stakeholders, a press conference or press event;
2. Measures for making **information on the project available on the web, either through a dedicated website or through a dedicated section on the organisation's existing website with linking between the pages. or, alternatively, through an active social media profile (Facebook profile) for the project where a website does not already exist.** Where a social media profile (Facebook profile) is created for a project the social media profile shall remain visible and all information shall remain accessible also after the final eligibility date of the project;
3. The information of the project (either on website or social media) must be regularly updated and shall include information about the project, its progress, achievements and results, the cooperation with entities in Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, relevant photos, contact information and a clear reference to the Programme and the EEA and Norway Grants;
4. All projects having a Donor States Project Partner shall be required to have the dedicated project information in English as well as in Romanian;
5. An indication of **how the information and communication measures are to be evaluated in terms of visibility and awareness** of the project, its objectives and impact, and of the Donors;
6. Organisers of **information events** such as conferences, seminars, fairs and exhibitions in connection with implementation of the project **make explicit and visible the support of the donor countries**;
7. Provide **information on the project to the widest possible audience** at the appropriate national, regional and/or local levels;
8. Ensure that those taking part in the project have been **informed of the Programme's funding**;
9. Ensure that at least 10 photos from project activities will be provided to the Fund Operator, taking into account the following minimal requirements: they are GDPR⁵ compliant and their minimal resolution is 1920*1080p.

! Attention

Please keep in mind that fulfilment of all these minimal requirements have to be described in the Application form (Annex 1) under *A2 Information and Communication* and budgeted accordingly, if the case. The proposed information and communication actions should be in close connection and adapted to the project activities.

All information and communication materials related to the projects that are carried out with ACF support have to be in line with the **Communication and Design Manual** available on the Programme website (<https://activecitizensfund.ro>).

Please note that, in case the Application is selected for funding, the Applicants will develop a Communication Plan in a format to be provided by the Fund Operator.

⁵ GDPR – General Data Protection Regulation ([EU](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/679/oj)) 2016/679

4. Administrative and eligibility criteria

4.1 Territorial scope

The Programme aims to support **Romanian NGO projects in Romania**, without prejudice to actions that are carried out in Donor or Beneficiary States or Border States with Romania under partnerships created to implement the selected projects.

4.2 Eligible Applicants

4.2.1

- **Non-governmental and non-profit organizations (NGOs)**, with Romanian nationality that acquired legal personality, are organized and operating under the Government Ordinance 26/2000 and/or the Law 21/1924 on associations and foundations (with subsequent amendments and completions); or
- **County and Bucharest municipality foundations for youth and the National Youth Foundation** established under the Law 146/2002 (with subsequent amendments and completions); or
- **National Red Cross Society in Romania** established under the Law 139/1995 (amended and supplemented by the Law 524/2004) and **its structures with legal personality**.

4.2.2

In addition to the above mentioned criteria, the Applicants shall meet the following requirements:

(a) abide by the principles of human rights for all, democratic values, rule-of-law and	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(b) do not promote intolerant, discriminatory and/or hate speech, and	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(c) act in the public arena and for the public good on concerns and issues related to the well-being of people, groups or society as a whole, and	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(d) have the capacity, according to their statutes, to act in the field addressed by the project, and	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(e) are independent of the local, regional and national government and other public entities ¹ , and	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(f) are independent of political parties, and	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(g) are independent of commercial entities ² (such as companies, self-governing regies, individual enterprises, etc.), and	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(h) do not directly or indirectly promote a religious doctrine, mission or proselytism related to the beliefs of a particular faith (beyond basic religious/cultural awareness raising) and	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(i) have transparent structures and elected chair/board, and are accountable to their members and donors, and	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(j) are directly responsible for designing and managing the project and do not act as an intermediary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(k) have implemented or are currently implementing a project financed through Active Citizens Fund Romania, as project promoter or partner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

¹ To assess if an organization fulfils this condition, the FO will mainly check the following aspects:

- It does not have more than half of the members local, regional and / or national institutions and / or authorities;
- It does not have more than half of the voting members of the Board of Directors / General Assembly local, regional and / or national public authorities or their representatives (natural persons);
- It does not have the organizational and operational structures established so that decisions are mostly influenced by local, regional and / or national public institutions and/ or authorities.

² To assess if an organization fulfils this condition, the FO will mainly check the following aspects:

- It does not have more than half of the members profit-making entities;
- It does not have more than half of the voting members of the Board of Directors/ General Assembly, profit-making entities or their representatives (natural persons);
- It does not have the organizational and operational structures established so that decisions are mostly influenced by profit-making entities.

4.3 Exclusion criteria for Applicants

4.3.1

Not eligible Applicants	
a) any legal entities that do not fall under/do not pertain to any of the three categories mentioned in the section 4.2.1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) any legal entities that do not comply with all the requirements at section 4.2.1 (a) or 4.2.1 (b) or 4.2.1 (c)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) any other legal entities that do not cumulatively respect the requirements mentioned in the section 4.2.2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) political parties	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) religious institutions (religious cults, religious associations established under the Law 489/2006 on freedom of religion and general regime of cults)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) professional associations (the associations which makes conditional the exercise of a certain profession with the membership in the association, and the purpose and objectives of the association are to further the specific interests of its members only)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) social partners (trade unions and employers organizations)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h) profit-distributing cooperatives	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

4.3.2

Applicants do not have the right to apply and receive funds under the Programme if they are in any of the situations described below:	
(a) are bankrupt, are in the administration of a judicial authority or are being winding up, have suspended the activity, are subject of proceedings concerning these issues or are in a similar situation following the application of a similar procedure provided for in the national legislation or regulations in force;	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(b) are guilty of serious professional misconduct proven by any means the Fund Operator can justify;	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(c) have not fulfilled obligations related to the payment of social security contributions or taxes to the state budget in accordance with the national legislation;	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(d) have been the subject of a final decision res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organization or any other illegal activity to the detriment of financial interests, without the evidence that corrective action has been taken in this respect in recent years;	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(e) organisations from which the amount due was not recovered, following a final court decision in connection with the NGO Programme 2009-2014 in Romania.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Note:

The project proposal will be accompanied by a signed Declaration of eligibility (Annex 3) of the Applicants certifying that they meet all the eligibility conditions mentioned in the section 4.2. Eligible Applicants and that are not among not eligible applicants mentioned in the section 4.3.1, nor in any of the exclusion situations mentioned in section 4.3.2.

In case of projects selected for funding, the Applicants will be requested to submit an updated **Declaration of eligibility**. The FO reserves the right to request the Applicant any kind of documents in support of Declaration. The analysis of the eligibility of any Applicant or partners will be made on individual basis, with the consideration of the specific documents presented.

4.4 Eligible project partners

Projects may be implemented in partnership with project **Partners**. Project Partners shall share a common economic or social goal with the Applicant, which is to be realised through the implementation of the project. Partners shall be actively involved in and effectively contributing to the implementation of the project.

Partnerships are not mandatory, but highly encouraged. The following legally established entities are **eligible to be project partners**: any **non-governmental organisations, public entities** (such as local and central public authorities, public institutions / agencies, decentralized governmental public services, territorial administrative units, universities, etc.) as well as **private entities** (commercial or non-commercial), **established as a legal person** either in: **Romania, Donor States** (Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein), **Beneficiary States** (Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia and Slovenia) and/or **Countries outside the European Economic Area that have a common border with Romania** (Moldova, Ukraine and Serbia), any **international organisation (IGOs)⁶ or body or agency** thereof.

⁶ International intergovernmental organisation as defined by the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties and established by a treaty or other instrument governed by public international law.

Only the following entities are **eligible to receive funding as project Partners** under the Programme:

- NGOs that meet the eligibility requirements set for the Applicants under section 4.2. 1 and 4.2.2 a - j) and are not in the situations specified under section 4.3.2 a)-e) nor are among the not eligible applicants mentioned in the section 4.3.1 d)-h);
- international organisations (IGOs) or agencies or bodies thereof;
- public entities

Other types of partners may not have access to the grant, but may contribute to the activities and/or to the co-financing required for the project.

The **Declaration of eligibility** submitted by the Applicant with the project proposal will also certify the fulfilment by the Partners of the eligibility conditions specified in this section.

In case of projects implemented in partnership with one or several entities, it is mandatory for the Applicants to submit with the Application form a **Partnership Declaration** (Annex 4) signed with the Partner/s (including Partners from Donor States). The Partnership Declaration shall be in English in the case of projects implemented in partnerships with entities from other countries than Romania and Moldova.

The Applicant coordinates the implementation of the project and, in case it is selected for funding, will represent the Partners and will sign the grant contract. Eligibility of costs generated by the Partners must respect the same rules that apply to the costs generated by the Applicant.

A project partnership shall not be mistaken for sub-contracting. Project partners always share a common economic or social goal through the implementation of the project, and partners cooperate throughout the entirely project realisation. Sub-contracting is aimed at one (or perhaps several) specific deliverables, e.g. services or equipment in order to realise a specific activity within the project. Sub-contracting shall always be carried out based on appropriate service or purchase contract, according to the applicable public procurement rules as defined below in section 5.1. General principles of the eligibility of costs.

Applicants may collaborate in implementing the project with informal or *ad hoc* local groups, self-help organizations (including grassroots organizations) – that are not registered legal entities in Romania. They are **Collaborators** and must meet the following requirements: are not for personal profit, act for public good, are voluntarily and non-discriminatory in nature, are independent of local, regional and national government and other public entities, political parties, religious institutions and commercial entities. **Collaborators** cannot be a direct recipient of the project grant and will not be able to conclude expenses in their own name⁷. For collaborators it is not necessary to conclude and submit a Declaration of Partnership.

Partners and Collaborators shall have the capacity to implement relevant activities within the project. The Applicant will present in the project proposal the added value brought by the involvement of Partners and Collaborators in the implementation of the project.

4.5 Grant rate and co-financing

The project grant rate	can be up to 100% of the total eligible costs of the project
	When determining the grant rate, the Applicant will take into account: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the need to ensure its commitment and ownership, as well as the sustainability of the project; • any economic benefit (e.g. cost savings or increased profit resulting from receiving a financial contribution). Economic benefits shall be used in a manner which supports the long-term objectives of the project.

The co-financing is not compulsory, and it can be provided in form of cash and/or in-kind contribution, in the form of voluntary work.

In case such co-financing is ensured in cash, it is preferable to be from sources such as donations, sponsorships, membership fees, etc. and not through other projects/grants. The project cannot be co-financed by other programmes of the EEA and Norway grants, European funds or European Union budget or other in-kind contribution.

For the calculation of in-kind contribution in the form of voluntary work, the Applicant and project partner/s will take into account the actual time allocated for the implementation of the project (in hours/month) and the price shall be set in the range of the minimum gross hourly wage in Romania and the average gross hourly wage in Romania (valid at publishing date of the Call - 2022), including the employer's social contribution, depending on the character of the delivered work. The Applicant should provide justification for establishing the corresponding price of the voluntary work hour. For project partner/s whose primary location is in one of the Donor States or other Beneficiary States or countries outside EEA with a common border with Romania, the range in the respective country will be applied.

⁷ The expenditure related to the involvement of the informal group shall be borne by the project promoter.

Please note that the in-kind contribution cannot be provided by a staff member who has, at the same time, an individual employment contract concluded with the Applicant or project Partner/s for the same type of responsibility.

In case in-kind contribution in the form of voluntary work is provided, it should be included in the project budget and must comply with the general principles on the eligibility of expenditures.

4.6 Limitations

An NGO can submit as Applicant **only one project proposal under the Call #1.1 Civic participation in response to the Ukraine crisis**. There are no restrictions regarding the number of projects proposals submitted in which an organization participate as partner.

In case an Applicant submits more than one project proposals under the Call #1.1 Civic participation in response to the Ukraine crisis, the FO will request the Applicant to indicate the application that will enter the administrative and eligibility verification in order to comply with the limitation established. If the Applicant does not respond in 5 days from the receipt of the FO request, all its applications will be rejected and none of them will enter the administrative and eligibility verification.

The limitations at the Programme level related to the maximum number of 4 projects and maximum amount of 550,000 Euro in total that can be received by an applicant/partner during the course of the Programme do not apply for the Rapid response grants under the current Call #1.1 Civic participation in response to the Ukraine crisis.

5. Eligibility of costs

! Attention

This chapter is completed by the provisions of the Annex 2b - Guidelines for budgeting which is an integral part of this Guidelines for Applicants. If there are different provisions between this Applicant's Guide and the Annex 2b - Guidelines for budgeting, the provisions from the latter will prevail.

5.1 General principles on the eligibility of costs

Eligible expenditures of projects are those actually incurred by the project promoter and/or the project partner, which meet the following criteria:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	they are incurred between the first and final dates of eligibility of a project as specified in the grant contract;
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	they are connected with the subject of the grant contract and they are indicated in the detailed budget of the project;
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	they are proportionate and necessary for the implementation of the project;
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	they are used for the sole purpose of achieving the objective of the project and its expected outcome/s, in a manner consistent with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness;
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular through being recorded in the accounting records of the project promoter and determined according to the applicable accounting standards and generally accepted accounting principles;
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation.

Expenditures are considered to have been incurred when the cost has been invoiced, paid and the subject matter delivered (in case of goods) or performed (in case of services and works). Exceptionally, costs in respect of which an invoice has been issued in the final month of eligibility are also deemed to be incurred within the dates of eligibility if the costs are paid within 30 days of the final date of eligibility. Overheads and depreciation of equipment are considered to have been incurred when they are recorded on the accounts of the project promoter and/or project partner.

The internal accounting and auditing procedures of the project promoter and partner/s must permit direct reconciliation of the expenditures and revenue recorded in the analytical / cost center accounting of the project with the amounts reported in the financial statements on the project and supporting documents.

5.2 Direct costs

The eligible direct expenditures for a project are those expenditures which are identified by the project promoter and/or the project partner, in accordance with their accounting principles and usual internal rules, as specific expenditures directly linked to the implementation of the project and which can therefore be booked to it directly.

The following direct expenditures are eligible provided that they satisfy the eligibility criteria previously mentioned (section 5.1. General principles on the eligibility of costs):

➤	costs of personnel assigned to the project, comprising actual remuneration including social security charges and other statutory costs as applicable, provided that this corresponds to the project promoter's and project partner's usual policy on remuneration;
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➤	travel and subsistence allowances for personnel and volunteers taking part in the project, provided that they are in line with the project promoter's and project partner's usual practices on travel costs;
➤	costs of new or second hand equipment provided that it is depreciated in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles applicable to the project promoter and generally accepted for items of the same kind. Only the portion of the depreciation corresponding to the duration of the project and the rate of actual use for the purposes of the project may be taken into account and included in the project budget. In case the promoter has clear arguments that the equipment is an integral and necessary component for achieving the outcomes of the project, the entire purchase price of that equipment may be eligible;
➤	costs of consumables and supplies, provided that they are identifiable and assigned to the project;
➤	costs entailed by other contracts awarded by a project promoter for the purposes of carrying out the project, provided that the awarding complies with the applicable rules on public procurement;
➤	costs arising directly from requirements imposed by the project contract.

Costs related to construction, reconstruction, renovation, or refurbishment of a real estate **shall not exceed 50%** of the eligible direct cost of the project.

Where the entire purchase price of equipment is eligible the applicant must ensure that:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	keeps the equipment in its ownership for a period of at least five years following the completion of the project and continues to use the equipment for the benefit of the overall objectives of the project for the same period;
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	keeps the equipment properly insured against losses such as fire, theft or other normally insurable incidents both during project implementation and for at least five years following the completion of the project; and
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	sets aside appropriate resources for the maintenance of the equipment for at least five years following the completion of the project.

The specific means for the implementation of this obligation will be specified in the grant contract.

As a general rule, for purchases and contracts awarding within the grant contracts, national and European Union legislation on public procurement shall be complied with.

For purchases with a **value of 5,000 Euro or higher**, the project promoter/partner shall invite at least three suppliers/service providers to submit offers. The contract should be awarded to the bid offering the best value for money or the lowest price (as appropriate). The entire selection procedure should be documented. More details regarding the applicable procurement procedure can be find [here](#).

5.3 Indirect costs

Indirect costs are all eligible costs that cannot be identified by the applicant and/or the project partner as being directly attributed to the project but which can be identified and justified by its accounting system as being incurred in direct relationship with the eligible direct costs attributed to the project. Indirect costs of the project shall represent a fair apportionment of the overall overheads of the project promoter or the project partner. They may not include any eligible direct costs. Project promoters and project partners may apply a **flat rate of up to 15% of direct eligible personnel costs of the project** to cover indirect costs, commensurate with the real indirect costs need.

In case of partners that are international organisations, or bodies or agencies thereof, indirect costs may be identified in accordance with the relevant rules established by such organisations.

5.4 Excluded costs

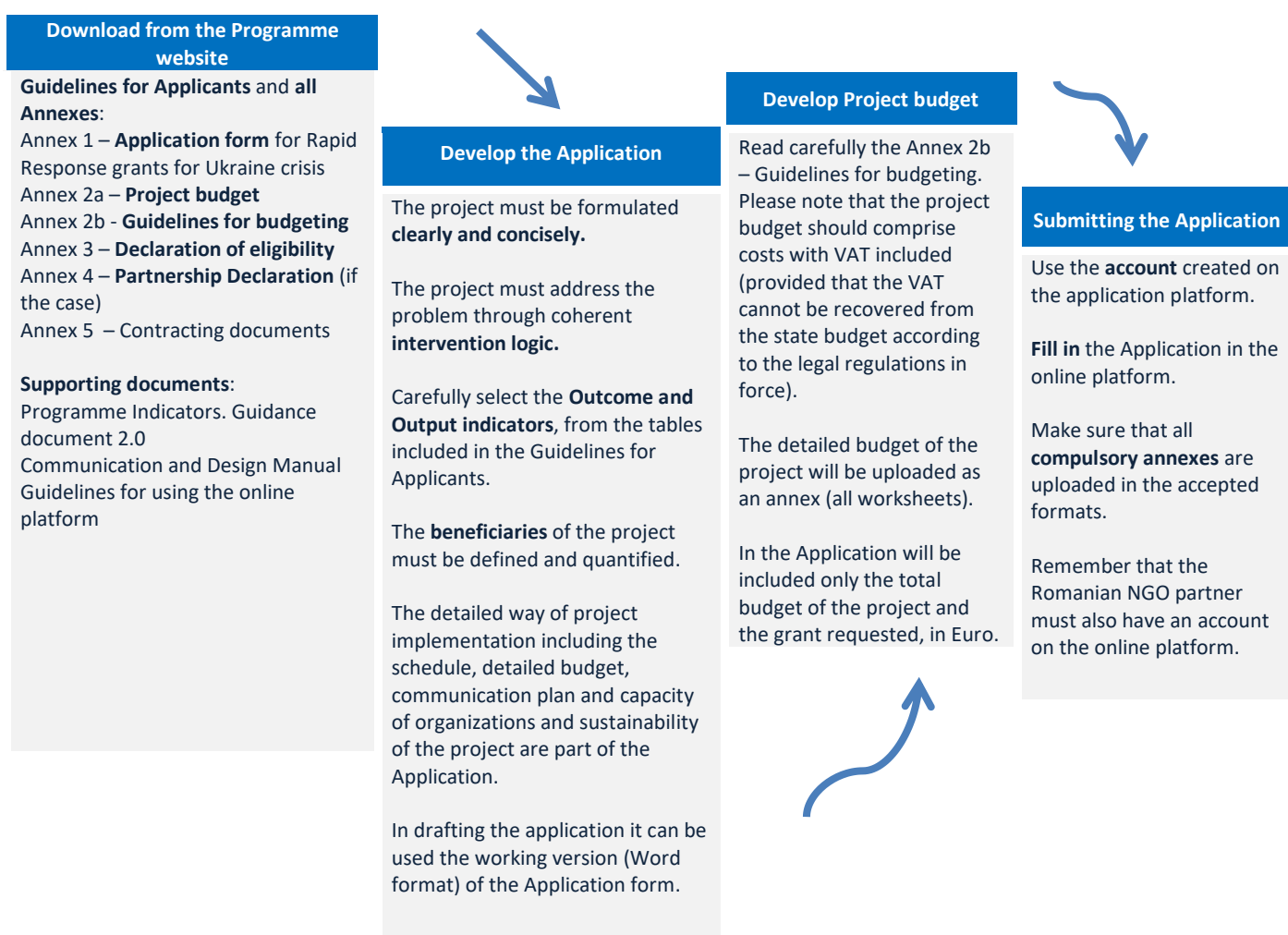
The following costs shall not be considered eligible:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	interest on debt, debt service charges and late payment charges (e.g. costs for loans taken in connection with the project, penalties / taxes related to late payment of invoices, penalties and interest for late payment of contributions and taxes to the state budget, etc.);
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	charges for financial transactions and other purely financial costs, except costs related to the special accounts of the project requested by the Fund Operator, provided they are mentioned in the grant contract and the costs of the financial services imposed by the grant contract;
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	costs related to purchase of land or real estate: ONLY the costs related to the construction, reconstruction, renovation or modernization of a building can be considered eligible, but will not exceed 50% of the directly eligible cost of the project;
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	exchange losses;

☒	recoverable VAT, according to the legal regulations in force;
☒	costs that are covered by other sources; double financing must be avoided (e.g. if the full value of a previously purchased equipment was financed from another grant, the depreciation of this equipment cannot be the eligible expenditure within the project);
☒	finances, penalties (ex. fines imposed by public bodies due to the lack of security measures on the site of a building, parking fines, fines for late payment) and costs of litigation, except where litigation is an integral and necessary component for achieving the outcomes of the project;
☒	excessive or reckless expenditure (these must be taken in relation to the principle of eligibility of expenses according to which they must be "proportionate and necessary for the implementation of the project" - (e.g. business travel class, purchasing state of the art equipment where cheaper options would cover the same need)

6. Preparation, submission and registration of project applications

Only applications submitted before the deadline in the prescribed format with all the annexes and in an electronic version via platform <https://finantariublice.fdsc.ro> will be evaluated. In order to submit an application it is necessary to follow the next steps:



! Attention

Only the information included in the Application and in the compulsory annexes will be considered for evaluation.

A list of applications received will be published on the Programme website <https://activecitizensfund.ro>. A detailed procedure for online application is described in the *Guidelines for using the online platform* available on the Programme website <https://activecitizensfund.ro>

The Application will be filled in Romanian (the only exceptions are the sections indicating otherwise and the Partnership Declaration in case of a foreign partner). The Application is complete only when it contains all following documents:

Document	Check	Submission through https://finantaripublice.fdsc.ro
Application form for Rapid Response grants for Ukraine crisis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Filled in the platform
Project budget (Annex 2a)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Uploaded as annex in EXCEL format
Declaration of eligibility (Annex 3)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Uploaded as PDF or JPEG format
Partnership Declaration (if the case) (Annex 4)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Uploaded as PDF or JPEG format

7. Application deadline

Rapid response grants for Ukraine crisis	
Single round	
Opening date of the application process for rapid Response Grants for Ukraine: (application process exclusively through the online platform https://finantaripublice.fdsc.ro)	24 August 2022
Application deadline:	11 October 2022; 16:00 (Romanian time)

! The final form of the project proposal is considered the one uploaded on the online platform (<https://finantaripublice.fdsc.ro/>) and validated until the deadline.

The deadline for completing and validating the online Application form and attaching the required documents is **11 October 2022; 16:00 (Romanian time)**. After this date, it will no longer be possible to fill in a new project Application and modify / fill in the project Application already submitted for the Call #1.1 Civic participation in response to the Ukraine crisis. Access will be automatically limited by the online platform server.

We strongly recommend submitting the Application earlier than on the deadline set in the Guidelines. Postponing the Application submission for the last day may cause problems due to the system overloading that would not enable to complete and validate the Application on time.

8. Additional information and contact details

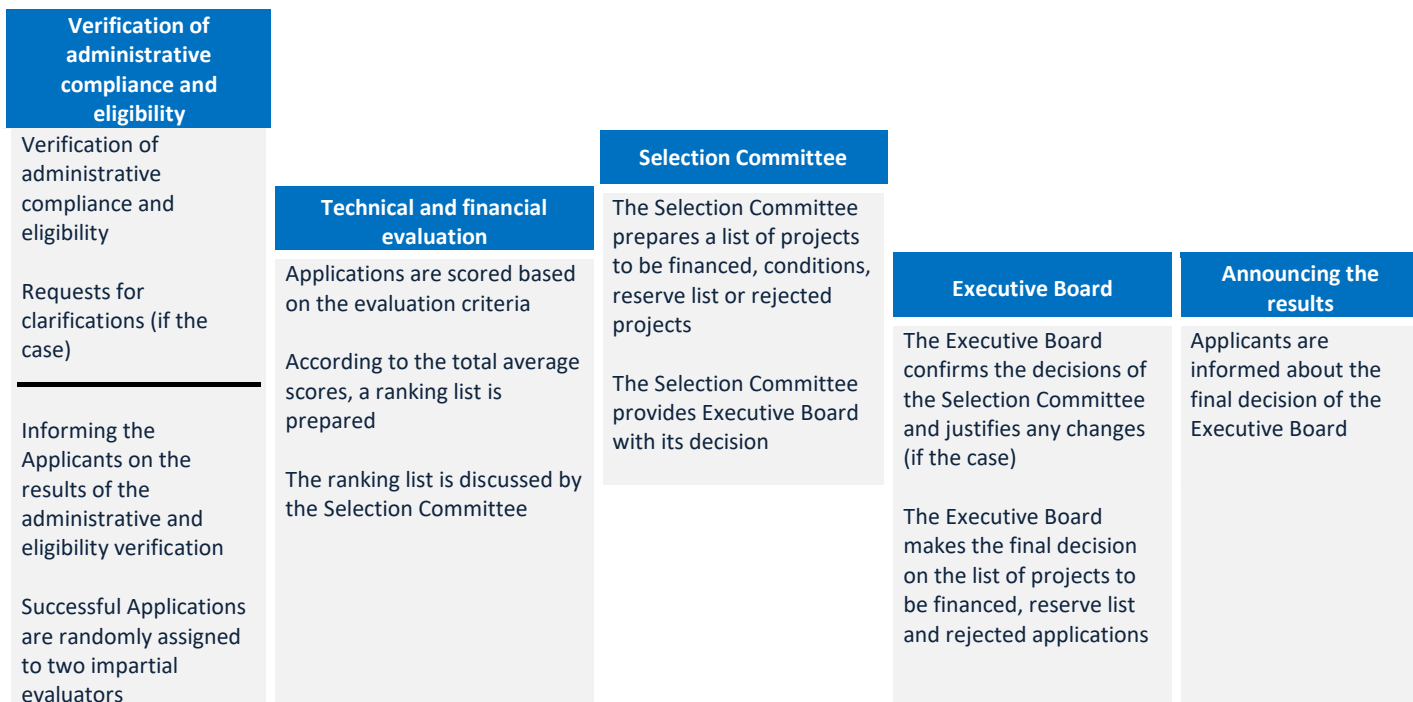
Questions related to this Call for proposals may be addressed by potential Applicants by e-mail and/ or phone by at least 7 days prior to the deadline to:

For the Call #1.1 Civic participation in response to Ukraine crisis
Fundația pentru Dezvoltarea Societății Civile/ Civil Society Development Foundation
Tel: 0040 757 579 184
E-mail: raluca.teodor@fdsc.ro
Contact person: Raluca Teodor, Senior Grants Officer

- ✓ The FO will submit the answers in 5 working days from the reception of the questions and with at least two days before each deadline.
- ✓ The questions that may be relevant to other applicants, together with the answers, will be published regularly on the Programme website <https://activecitizensfund.ro>
- ✓ Please check regularly the Programme website for updated information on this Call for proposals or for upcoming calls and events.

9. Evaluation and project selection

All applications received under this Call for project proposals will enter into the evaluation and selection procedure as follows:



9.1 Verification of administrative compliance and eligibility

All applications submitted within each of the deadlines mentioned in the present Guidelines for Applicants will be assessed according to the administrative and eligibility criteria, based on a Yes/No grid. The assessment of eligibility will be conducted only for the applications that are compliant with the administrative criteria.

Requests for clarifications will only be sent when the information provided is not clear enough and sufficient to allow an objective assessment of the administrative compliance and eligibility of the application. Please note that documents mentioned under the section 6. Preparation and submission of project Applications cannot be requested in case they are already missing from the online application package.

Below is the grid for administrative compliance and eligibility:

I. Administrative compliance	YES	NO
The project application includes all the annexes required for the current Call for proposals:		
a. The online Application Form is filled in Romanian, including the summary in English and is complete (all compulsory fields are filled in)		
b. The project Budget is filled in, respects the format from Annex 2a, is provided in Euro and is uploaded (in Excel format)		
c. The Applicant's Declaration of Eligibility (Annex 3) is filled in, signed and uploaded (scanned format)		
d. Partnership Declaration/s (Annex 4) is filled in, signed by the Applicant and Partner/s and uploaded (scanned format) if the case		
The assessment of eligibility will be conducted only for the applications that are compliant with the administrative criteria.		
II. Eligibility	YES	NO
1. The Applicant is eligible		
2. Partner/s is/are eligible		
3. The project falls into the types of grants (amount, duration) that can be awarded within the current Call for proposals		

Note:

In case of inconsistencies between the amounts mentioned in the Application form and those included in the Project budget (Annex 2a), those from the Project budget (Sources of funding) will be taken into consideration.

The Application is automatically excluded from further evaluation if one or more administrative and eligibility criteria were not met.

The Applicants will be notified via e-mail regarding the result of the administrative and eligibility verification.

After receiving the notification, applicants may **appeal the decision over compliance with administrative and eligibility criteria** within **10 calendar days** from the notification date of the results, to raluca.teodor@fdsc.ro. The appeal will be formulated in writing and will include the reason for which such a request is well justified. The contestant cannot submit new documents in support of the case and cannot modify the content of the initial submitted application. The FO will take into consideration only the appeals submitted by the legal representative of the applicant or by the person empowered on his behalf. The FO's decision after appeal is final and will be communicated to the Applicant within 15 working days from the receipt of the appeal. No further appeal on the same application could be formulated afterwards.

A list of applications that entered in the technical and financial evaluation phase will be published on the Programme's website <https://activecitizensfund.ro>.

9.2 Technical and financial evaluation

Each application that meets the eligibility and administrative criteria will be scored, on a scale from 0 to 100, by two impartial evaluators (at least one of them is independent from FO). The evaluation process is based on the evaluation criteria with scores.

The score 65 out of 100 points is the minimum score for each application in order to be proposed for financing. The final total score is an arithmetic average of points given by both evaluators.

In case the difference between the scores given by the two experts is more than 30% of the higher score, the Application will be scored by a third impartial and independent evaluator. The average total score of the two closest scores shall be used for the ranking of the projects.

If the score given by a third expert would not in any way result in recommending the application for financing, a third expert will not be appointed.

The evaluation is performed in **two stages**, as follows:

- the **first stage** is focused on evaluating the dimension "*1. Project relevance and coherence*". For this dimension is set a **threshold score of 23 points**. There are three situations:

(1) Both scores given by the two evaluators are above the minimum threshold set for the dimension " <i>1. Project relevance and coherence</i> ",	(2) Both scores given by the two evaluators are below the minimum threshold set for the dimension " <i>1. Project relevance and coherence</i> ",	(3) One score given by one evaluator below the minimum thresholds (evaluation stops) and the other score given by the other evaluator above the minimum threshold set for the dimension " <i>1. Project relevance and coherence</i> " and score the entire project
The project enters the second evaluation stage and the Application is further evaluated.	The project is considered rejected and does not enter the second evaluation stage (the application is no further evaluated). The average score for the dimension " <i>1. Project relevance and coherence</i> " shall be used for the ranking of the projects.	The Application will be scored by a third impartial and independent evaluator. The average total score of the two closest scores shall be used for the ranking of the projects.

- the **second stage** consists in evaluating the rest of the dimensions. In this stage there are two thresholds:
 - Dimension "*2. Methodology and feasibility of the project*" - **15 points**
 - Dimension "*4. The budget of the project*" - **5 points**

If an Application has a total average score of 65 points or above, but any of the average scores for the dimensions "*2. Methodology and feasibility of the project*" or "*4. The budget of the project*" does not meet the respective threshold, it will not be recommended for financing.

The grid for technical and financial evaluation:

Technical and financial evaluation		
Dimensions and criteria of evaluation	Maximum score	Minimum threshold score
1. The project relevance and coherence	35	23
The project contributes to the Programme and the call for proposal objectives, as well as to the achievement of the selected outcome, output/s and indicators as defined by the Programme and the proposed results are feasible	10	
The problem approached by the project is justified (identification of the problem, documenting the problem, challenges, the target group affected/involved)	10	
The project addresses the problem through a clear and coherent intervention logic between objectives, activities and expected results	5	-
The project addresses the target group as defined in section 3.3 and the beneficiaries are strategically chosen clearly defined and their needs are properly addressed	10	-
2. Methodology and feasibility of the project	35	15
The activities are sufficiently described, well planned, feasible	15	-
The project includes transfer of knowledge activities and/or supports collaboration initiatives, adequate to the proposed interventions and to the needs of the Applicant/partner/s	5	-
The chosen indicators are realistic and correspond to the outcome(s) and activities of the project	5	-
The risks of the project implementation are identified and relevant; the proposed mitigation measures are appropriate	5	-
The correlation with similar initiatives is properly identified and synergy with them ensured	5	-
3. Sustainability	5	-
There is an understanding of the pre-requisite of sustainability and there are included measures in this respect; possibility of project replication, likelihood of the positive effects of the projects to continue)	5	-
4. The budget of the project	10	5
The foreseen costs are economic, justified and correlated with the proposed activities	5	-
The budget is correctly filled in and foreseen costs are eligible	5	-
5. Applicant and partners	15	-
The role of the partner/s within the proposed intervention, the necessity and the added value of the partnership	4	-
Through the proposed partnership, the project contributes to the consolidation of Bilateral Relations (projects with partner/s from Donor States)	1	-
Applicant and Partners (if the case) and the proposed project team have the experience*, expertise, motivation and capacity for implementing the project <i>*For new established organizations or without experience it will be taken into consideration the motivation and the experience of the proposed project team</i>	5	-
The project team is adequate for the implementation of the project (number of people involved, role and responsibilities, management)	5	-
Total	100	65

9.3 Selection Committee

Following the technical and financial evaluation, a ranking list will be produced based on the average scores awarded by the experts and an evaluation report will be drafted. It will comprise the list of all the Applications that have entered the technical and financial evaluation stage, the average score obtained by each of them and the recommendations of the evaluators.

The evaluation report, including the ranking list, will be submitted by the FO to a **Selection Committee** consisting of independent experts and representatives of the FO Consortium with relevant expertise and experience. At this stage, representatives of FMO, the Royal Norwegian Embassy and the National Focal Point in Romania are observers. Also, representatives from relevant institutions (ministries, governmental agencies etc.) may be invited as observers.

The **Selection Committee** will review the ranking lists and the recommendations made by the evaluators and will recommend to the FO the applications to receive grants, within the amount available for the Call for project proposals. The conclusions of the **Selection Committee** may include conditions, clarifications and a reserve list with the project applications that are recommended to receive grants, but cannot be supported at the time of the decision due to lack of funding.

The **Selection Committee** may amend and modify the ranking of the project applications in justified cases.

9.4 Executive Board

An **Executive Board** of the Programme is responsible for taking the final decision concerning the selection of applications. The Executive Board may modify the decision of the Selection Committee in justified cases. If such a modification results in a rejection of a project that otherwise would have been approved, the affected Applicant will be informed in writing about the justification for the modification.

The decision of the Executive Board is definitive and is not object of appeal.

9.5 Announcing the results

Once the final decision is taken, the result of the selection process for both successful and unsuccessful Applicants will be accessible online, in the organisation's account (the average score obtained for each evaluation criterion and also the total average score of their application). Applicants will be informed via e-mail on the fact that the selection results are available in the organisation's account.

Upon request, unsuccessful Applicants will be provided with more detailed feedback on the assessment of their application.

Applicants who have projects proposed for funding will be informed on the conditions they have to fulfil in order to sign grant contracts.

The final list of selected projects and promoters will be uploaded on the Programme's website <https://activecitizensfund.ro> only upon the signature of all grant contracts for the specific Call.

9.6 Complaints Committee

A **Complaints Committee** is established at the level of the Programme and is composed of three members. The objective of the Complaints Committee is to provide an accessible, transparent and consistent mechanism for complainants to express concerns regarding a supposed occurrence of mismanagement at the level of the Programme.

The decisions related to the administrative compliance and eligibility verification as well as the decisions related to the selection process are not subject to verification by the Complaints Committee.

10. Project contracting

Award letter	Direct mentoring and assistance	Grant contract
<p>All Applicants whose project proposals are recommended and approved for financing will receive an award letter comprising the general and special conditions to be fulfilled and the compulsory documents to be submitted in order to sign grant contracts.</p> <p>The documents included in Annex 5 may be requested by the FO.</p>	<p>After selection, the FO will provide support to Applicants in fulfilling the general and special conditions in order to sign the grant contracts</p> <p>The FO may invite the Applicants for meetings (face to face, Skype, phone), and will provide guidance and consultancy to clarify possible unclear elements, to settle the final budget</p>	<p>The grant contract sets out the terms and conditions of grant assistance as well as the roles and responsibilities of the parties.</p> <p>If the Applicant fulfils all the requirements included in the award letter, the grant contract will be signed and, after its entry into force, it becomes a Project Promoter.</p> <p>The indicative timeframe for the contracting phase is between one and three months since the reception by the Applicants of the award letter.</p>

Interested applicants can consult the template of the grant contract that can be found here: <https://activecitizensfund.ro/en/implementare-proiecte/#1616972302891-be0bf4e9-e71a>

11. Reporting, payments and audit

11.1 Procedures for reporting from project promoters

Each project promoter has to submit to the FO the following types of reports:	
<p>INTERIM (IF APPLICABLE ★)</p> <p>Technical and Financial Reports</p> <p>Within 30 calendar days after the middle of the project implementation or earlier, after spending at least 70% from the advance/ instalments.</p>	<p>FINAL</p> <p>Technical and Financial Reports</p> <p>Within 45 calendar days from the end of the project implementation period</p>
<p>Statistical Progress Reports</p> <p>Four times per year, with following deadlines: 20 January, 20 March, 20 August and 20 October</p>	
<p>★ The number and frequency of the interim reports are determined by the project duration as follows:</p>	
<p>4 - 6 months (excluding 6 months duration)</p> <p>▼</p> <p>NO INTERIM REPORT</p>	<p>6 – 12 months (including 12 months)</p> <p>▼</p> <p>ONE INTERIM REPORT</p>

Technical reports will contain information on the achieved results and implemented activities, progress towards achieving indicators, sustainability, etc.

Financial reports will contain information on the expenses made by PPs and partners during the reported period of time in order to implement the project.

The interim payment is conditioned by the submission of interim technical and financial reports by the Project Promoter. The final payment is conditioned by the submission of the final technical and financial report by the Project Promoter and the approval by

the Fund Operator of the interim and final technical and financial reports. The interim and the final technical and financial reports will serve as the basis on which the final project balance will be calculated.

The FO reserves the right to request other intermediate technical and/or financial reports, if considered necessary for the monitoring of the implementation of the projects.

The PPs are requested to submit to FO, during **contracting phase** or **within the first month** of contract implementation, an **estimated schedule** of the submission of the interim report if the date is prior to 30 calendar days after the middle of the project implementation and to inform FO in case there are changes to this schedule.

Statistical Progress Reports (SPR) which consist in brief information regarding the progress registered as regards both the indicators and expenses will be requested from all PPs. SPRs do not have to be accompanied by supporting documents.

11.2 Payments procedures

The payment system ensures a **positive financial flow** for the projects, while minimising as much as possible the risks related to difficulties/impossibility to recover the unspent amounts from the PPs. Payments to project promoters will be made in Euro (to project dedicated Euro bank accounts indicated by themselves and mentioned in the grant contract) and reporting will be made at the InforEuro rate⁸ corresponding to the month when the expense was committed/ invoiced (e.g. date of the invoice not the date of the actual payment).

Every project promoter has the obligation to open two dedicated bank accounts for the grant contract it signs with the FO, as follows: an Euro account in which it will receive the grant contract related payments in Euro from the FO and a national currency (RON) account in which they will transfer the equivalent in national currency of the funds received in the Euro account. Both accounts will be indicated in the grant contract.

In case of projects implemented in partnership, each Romanian project partner that manages any amount of the grant has the obligation to open a dedicated Euro account where they will receive the grant from the project promoter and also a dedicated national currency account (RON) for the project.

The PPs and the Romanian project partners have to use the RON dedicated bank account for all payments related to the project implementation. As an exception, the payment of salaries related to the personnel that is not 100% allocated to the project and the payment of the indirect costs can be made from the general account of the organization, with the obligation to reconcile the transfers between accounts by the end of the month following the one in which the payments were made.

In case of projects implemented in partnership with entities whose primary location is outside Romania, it is recommended for those Partners to have two dedicated accounts for project: one in Euro and the other in the national currency (if different from Euro). The partners may decide not to open dedicated accounts. In both cases the Partnership Agreement should specify the Partner account/s used for the project.

Payments of the project grant to project promoters may take the form of advance payment, interim payment and payment of the final balance as per the table below:

Project duration	Maximum advance payment percentage	No. of interim payments	Interim payment percentage	Maximum percentage of the balance
up to 6 months (excluding)	80%	N/A	N/A	20%
from 6 months to 12 months (including)	40%	1 (one)	50%	10%

The maximum amount of each payment will be clearly stated in the grant contract

In cases of projects that have been assessed as posing a high risk for the programme⁹, the FO may make a justified decision to change the payments scheme (reducing pre-financing or exceptionally, applying a scheme without pre-financing under which the FO reimburses project promoters only the amount of grant expenses verified by the FO).

The payment method shall not change in case of extension of project grant contracts based on addendum, unless otherwise specified in the respective addendum.

⁸ InforEuro rate is published on http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/infoeuro/index_en.cfm

⁹ This shall be based on a risk assessment prepared and documented by the FO, taking into account, inter alia, the project promoter's previous experience and/or its administrative and financial capacity.

As a general rule:

Payments general rule		
Advance payments	Interim payments	Final payment / Reimbursement by the PP
To be paid up to 10 working days after the date of the grant contract signature, unless a later date has been set in the project contract.	To be paid up to 30 working days from the reception by the FO of the interim report and payment claim from the PP. The verification and approval of the interim report will be done by the Operator before the submission of the final report by the Project promoter.	To be paid by the FO up to 10 working days after the date of FO approval of final report and payment claim. The final report can be submitted by the Project promoter only after the approval of the interim report (in cases when interim reports are submitted). The reimbursement is to be paid by the PP (in case of negative balance) up to 10 working days after the date of receiving from the FO the notification regarding the amount to be reimbursed.

11.3 Proof of expenditure and audit

For Applicants and Romanian partners an audit report will not be accepted by FO as sufficient evidence of the expenses involved. Costs incurred by project promoters and project partners shall be supported by receipted invoices, or alternatively by accounting documents of equivalent probative value. Indirect costs identified according to section 5.3 do not need to be supported by proof of expenditure.

A report by an independent auditor, qualified to carry out statutory audits of accounting documents, certifying that the reported costs are incurred in accordance with the Programme rules, the national law and relevant national accounting practices will be accepted by the Fund Operator as sufficient proof of expenditure incurred for **project partners whose primary location is outside Romania**¹⁰ or project partners that are **international organisations or bodies or agencies**

Other audits of the projects

The financed projects might be audited in the context of a compliance audit commissioned by the FO.

The FMO could also organise audits and on-the-spot verification for Programme and projects and EFTA Board of Auditors/Office of Auditor General of Norway may conduct audits of the Programme and projects.

Annexes

Annex 1 – Application form for Rapid Response grants for Ukraine crisis / Annex 2a – Project budget / Annex 2b - Guidelines for budgeting / Annex 3 – Declaration of eligibility / Annex 4 – Partnership Declaration / Annex 5 – Contracting documents

¹⁰ This includes **project partners from Donor States** (Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein), **beneficiary states** (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia and Slovenia) **and from countries outside the European Economic Area that have a common border with Romania** (Moldova, Ukraine and Serbia)

Guidelines for Applicants

<https://activecitizensfund.ro>

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