ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND ROMANIA

Guidelines for Applicants
Call #6.1 – Support for refugees fleeing Ukraine
Rapid Response grants for Ukraine crisis
Single round call

Fund operated by:
## Table of Contents

1. **About Active Citizens Fund Romania** ................................................................................. 3
2. **Outcome 3. Vulnerable groups are empowered.** ................................................................. 4
3. **Focus of the Call #6.1 Support for refugees fleeing Ukraine** ........................................... 5
   3.1 Context .............................................................................................................................. 5
   3.2 Types of grants and financial allocation ........................................................................... 6
   3.3 Objective of the Call #6.1 and contribution to Programme results ................................. 6
   3.4 Eligible projects ............................................................................................................... 7
   3.5 Eligible activities ............................................................................................................ 8
   3.6 Information and communication activities ...................................................................... 9
4. **Administrative and eligibility criteria** .................................................................................. 10
   4.1 Territorial scope .............................................................................................................. 10
   4.2 Eligible Applicants ........................................................................................................... 10
   4.3 Exclusion criteria for Applicants ..................................................................................... 11
   4.4 Eligible project partners ................................................................................................ 12
   4.5 Grant rate and co-financing ........................................................................................... 13
   4.6 Limitations ..................................................................................................................... 13
5. **Eligibility of costs** .............................................................................................................. 14
   5.1 General principles on the eligibility of costs ................................................................... 14
   5.2 Direct costs ...................................................................................................................... 14
   5.3 Indirect costs .................................................................................................................. 15
   5.4 Excluded costs ................................................................................................................ 15
6. **Preparation, submission and registration of project applications** ...................................... 16
7. **Application deadline** ......................................................................................................... 17
8. **Additional information and contact details** ....................................................................... 17
9. **Evaluation and project selection** ....................................................................................... 18
   9.1 Verification of administrative compliance and eligibility ............................................... 18
   9.2 Technical and financial evaluation .................................................................................. 19
   9.3 Selection Committee ....................................................................................................... 21
   9.4 Executive Board ............................................................................................................. 21
   9.5 Announcing the results ................................................................................................... 21
   9.6 Complaints Committee .................................................................................................... 21
10. **Project contracting** ........................................................................................................... 22
11. **Reporting, payments and audit** ........................................................................................ 22
   11.1 Procedures for reporting from project promoters ......................................................... 22
   11.2 Payments procedures .................................................................................................... 23
   11.3 Proof of expenditure and audit ...................................................................................... 24
Annexes .................................................................................................................................. 24
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme Areas of Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➢ Democracy, active citizenship, good governance and transparency;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ 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;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Social justice and inclusion of vulnerable groups;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Gender equality and gender-based violence (GBV);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Environment and climate change.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ACF Romania Programmes Outcomes

1. Strengthened democratic culture and civic awareness
2. CSOs actively defend human rights and promote equal treatment
3. Vulnerable groups are empowered
4. Enhanced capacity and sustainability of civil society (organization and the sector)

All organisations and activities funded shall be based on the common values and principles:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values</th>
<th>General Principles</th>
<th>Principles of sustainable development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• respect of human dignity</td>
<td>• good governance</td>
<td>• long-term economic growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• freedom</td>
<td>• participatory and inclusive</td>
<td>• social cohesion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• democracy</td>
<td>• accountable</td>
<td>• environmental protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• equality</td>
<td>• transparent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• the rule of law</td>
<td>• responsive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• the respect for human rights for all</td>
<td>• effective and efficient</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• zero-tolerance towards corruption</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 3. Vulnerable groups are empowered**

**Outcome 3. Vulnerable groups are empowered** covers one area of support of the Active Citizens Fund in Romania, respectively „Social justice and inclusion of vulnerable groups“.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aims</th>
<th>To support NGOs actions to achieve social justice and inclusion of vulnerable groups, to activate and empower vulnerable groups to know and claim their rights and entitlements towards the authorities, to be proactive and access available services, to demand the authorities to develop needed services, to act for vulnerable peers, have increase resilience, coping mechanisms, skills and abilities to integrate (in education, employment, etc.), to participate to community life, including decision making process.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Approach | Projects to be supported shall tackle:  
- causes of inequalities and exclusion  
- issues related to mobilization and empowerment of vulnerable groups  
- awareness raising and advocacy for social justice and inclusion of vulnerable groups  
- development of new/improved models and services to cover existing gaps and best serve the needs of vulnerable groups  
- promotion of equal access and improvement of Roma situation  
- social protection responses to the COVID-19 crisis  
- exceptional social circumstances generated by the global health pandemic crisis  
- exceptional social circumstances generated by the conflict in Ukraine  |
| Special focus | Partnerships between NGOs with complementary expertise and experience (for example in community development, human right area etc.) 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 and other vulnerable groups on Romanian territory. |
| Financial allocation | The total allocation available for open calls under **Outcome 3** is **15,058,000 Euro**. |
| Special allocations within the total financial allocation for Outcome 3 | 5,000,000 Euro is envisaged for projects targeting **Roma inclusion and empowerment**  
A special allocation is foreseen for the development of civil society infrastructure:  
- 1,250,000 Euro for small grants for small NGOs working in underserved areas and for underserved target groups  
- 250,000 Euro for **Rapid Response grants** allowing rapid response to emerging situations closely related to vulnerable groups and that requires immediate action,  
- 1,058,000 Euro for **Rapid Response grants for Ukraine crisis** |
3. Focus of the Call #6.1 Support for refugees fleeing Ukraine

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. About 1.5 million migrants entered Romania, 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. 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), almost 4,400 requested asylum in Romania, 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.

Moreover, the severe and lasting impacts on economic activity, employment, and trade of COVID-19 pandemic are now amplified by the war in Ukraine. Inflation increased to 14.5% in June 2022 (the highest rate since 2003), largely on account of the sharp increase in gas, energy, and oil prices, but also due to higher food prices. At the same time, the refugee crisis started in a context characterized by several challenges in Romania, such as poor housing for persons in vulnerable situations, the rural-urban gaps in development and services offer (health, quality education, social services, employment), groups disproportionally affected by poverty and social exclusion (women, children and youth, rural population, Roma population, persons with disabilities, migrants, especially those coming from different cultural settings). Already significantly affecting the achievement of the social justice and inclusion of vulnerable groups, including the asylum seekers and refugees in Romania before the Ukrainian crisis, poverty and extensive inequalities are now on an increasing trend. Furthermore, the effects of such a crisis will be experienced longer after the end of the military operations and the pressure upon the social assistance/services toward the vulnerable groups will rise.

Support services addressing the needs of the refugees should be further developed taking into consideration the specificities of the refugees crossing/staying in Romania, as well as the opportunities and shortcomings of the existing support services in Romania for vulnerable groups. Only few of the refugees staying in Romania have the means to support themselves on medium and long term (have resources or can access the labour market), while the majority are at intersection of several vulnerabilities (women with small children, persons with disabilities, elderly, LGBTQIA+, etc.) that put them at higher risk of social exclusion, as well as to trafficking and labour exploitation. At the same time, there is a permanent dynamic in terms of needs to be addressed, since some of the refugees intend to remain in Romania for a longer period, others would go back to Ukraine when it will be possible, and few are already going back and forth trying to see if it is possible to settle back home. The number of border crossing into Ukraine is almost equal to the entries, however this movement might decrease once the academic year starts and the weather becomes colder.

Since the flux of the refugees is hard to predict and is influenced by the evolution of the conflict in Ukraine, the capacities for immediate assistance and support still have to remain in place, while integrated and inclusive approaches, that go beyond immediate response and are in the benefit of the local population as well, should be developed. Capacity of staff working with refugees should be increased as well, such as to better respond to the needs of the refugees. Thus, Call #6.1 represent a possibility to act swiftly in order to answer these current needs.

2 "Ukrainian refugees in Poland, the Czech Republic and Romania" 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
5 28% of the refugees responding to survey declare their intention to stay in Romania for longer and 47% stated that they intend to return to Ukraine as soon as it is possible - "Ukrainian refugees in Poland, the Czech Republic and Romania" 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, June 2022
3.2 Types of grants and financial allocation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rapid Response grants for Ukraine crisis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opening date of the application process for Rapid Response grants for Ukraine crisis</strong> (application process exclusively through the online platform <a href="http://www.finantaripublice.fdsc.ro">www.finantaripublice.fdsc.ro</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Application deadline</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total additional financial allocation for Ukraine crisis</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project duration (minimum and maximum)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grant amount (minimum and maximum)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of call</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The funds not committed after the last evaluation of Rapid Response grants under the Call #6 – Mobilising vulnerable groups in underserved areas will be automatically reallocated to the current Call #6.1 Support for refugees fleeing from Ukraine. At this moment there are 73,963.05 Euro not committed yet under the Call #6, but the application process is still ongoing.

3.3 Objective of the Call #6.1 and contribution to Programme results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme Outcome 3</th>
<th>Vulnerable groups are empowered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The objective of the Call #6.1</strong></td>
<td>To provide support for protection and social inclusion of refugees fleeing from Ukraine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Programme Areas of support targeted</strong></td>
<td>Social justice and inclusion of vulnerable groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Country specific concern addressed</strong></td>
<td>Strengthening the capacity and sustainability of the civil society sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improving outreach to underserved geographic areas and target groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target groups</th>
<th>End beneficiaries are refugees fleeing from Ukraine at risk of social exclusion, exploitation, trafficking in human beings, especially women, children, elderly, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, LGBTQIA+, people living in marginalized areas, etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other vulnerable groups in Romania (including migrants, asylum seekers, refugees or beneficiaries of other forms of international protection, etc, other than those fleeing from Ukraine) at risk of social exclusion can be additionally targeted as end beneficiaries as part of interventions tackling social inclusion (maximum 30% of the beneficiaries).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other intermediary groups could be targeted in order to achieve results at the level of the end beneficiaries, such as general public, law enforcement (policemen, judges, etc.), public services employees (teachers, social workers, physicians, nurses, etc.), media, academia, NGOs staff working with refugees, local community members, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4 Eligible projects

The projects under the current Call will address social inclusion of refugees that arrived in Romania as a consequence of the war in Ukraine, with a focus on the most vulnerable ones and the engagement of stakeholders in the process, creating benefits for local population as well.

Thus, projects will **facilitate access to existing services and contribute to improvement and adaptation of existing services and development of new services for refugees fleeing Ukraine** (end beneficiaries as defined by the Call) with an integrated and inclusive approaches that go beyond immediate response: accommodation, medical support, learning Romanian language, access to education, employment, support groups, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provision of social services shall only be supported as part of actions addressing awareness raising, advocacy and/or empowerment of targeted vulnerable groups. Therefore, projects should also:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) <strong>empower refugee fleeing Ukraine</strong>, to know their rights, to be proactive and access available services, act for vulnerable peers, have increase resilience, coping mechanisms, skills and abilities to integrate in education, employment, etc., and participate in community life and/or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) <strong>awareness raising</strong> - promoting inclusion and non-discrimination and addressing negative attitudes and practices towards refugees at the level of general population and/or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) <strong>advocate</strong> at local/national level for social justice and inclusion of refugees fleeing Ukraine. This may include improvement of policy/legislation/secondary legislation; enforcement of the law, improvement and adapting institutional practices; increasing the quality and capacity of existing services to better respond to the refugees’ needs; increasing the engagement of business, community members and public administration in the provision and planning of local services; increasing the involvement of academia or more experienced NGOs in needs assessment and evaluation of interventions; communicating the social impact of NGOs’ activity and increased support for NGOs activities, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Projects should provide (as needed) **support** (such as proper information, training, counselling) to the personnel working directly with the refugees/migrants (social workers, community mediators, interprets, etc.) to ensure quality interventions and continuation of activities in a safe manner.

**Transfer of knowledge with other organisations providing expertise in relevant fields related to refugee crisis response is highly encouraged.**

This Call strongly encourages **partnerships** with:

- **more experienced NGOs** that could guide applicants to better design their intervention and further develop their capacity and sustainability;
- **other stakeholders** (authorities, public institutions, mass media, private sector) to deliver the most efficient response possible to the identified needs determined by the crisis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Under the Call #6.1 the following types of projects are not eligible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☑ 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;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☑ projects that involve obtaining / awarding individual scholarships;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☑ projects involving only training activities (see Attention note in 3.5);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☑ projects for emergency support, unless they are an indispensable component of the project;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☑ refinancing activities (e.g. re-granting or loans given to other organizations or individuals/ legal entities);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☑ projects that focus on the purchase of equipment, buildings or offices;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☑ 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.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5 Eligible activities

**Attention!**

Please note that the activities listed below 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.

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.

Vulnerable groups refer to the end beneficiaries as defined in section 3.3.

**Type of eligible activities** (non-exhaustive list):

✓ **Provide tailored information according to the needs of vulnerable groups during and after the crisis** (about their rights, available services, employment and funding opportunities), that should contribute to the improvement of their wellbeing

✓ **Address the specific needs of most at risk groups in emergency situation** (for example elderly, persons with disabilities or chronic diseases who are at particular risk during the crisis).

✓ **Support vulnerable groups to access basic services during and after the crisis times.** This could include access to water, sanitation, heating, electricity, housing, etc.

✓ **Increase access of vulnerable groups to existing/new/improved services** (education, health, employment, housing, social services, etc.). This could include:
  - access to formal education
  - informal education
  - day care services
  - provision of medical services
  - support to comply with legal provisions,
  - increase economic participation of vulnerable groups
  - promote and implement self-help and empowerment strategies/initiatives for combating social exclusion
  - legal advice or counselling services
  - psychological and emotional support

✓ **Support for vulnerable groups in order to be proactive and access available services, to participate to community life and in the decision-making process.** This could include:
  - promoting and implementing self-help and empowerment strategies/initiatives for combating social exclusion
  - increasing economic participation of vulnerable groups

✓ **Increase vulnerable groups employability or livelihood opportunities**

✓ **Organize multicultural dialogue activities that bring together interethnic community members** (sport, educational and cultural events, local celebrations, etc.)

✓ **Support participation of vulnerable groups in (public) consultation processes** (to have their voice heard on issues important to them, to defend and safeguard their rights, have their views and wishes considered when decisions are being made about their lives).

✓ **Engage vulnerable groups in advocating for their needs and act on behalf of vulnerable peers.** This could include:
  - increase access to relevant information (about rights and entitlements, employment opportunities, etc.)
  - change vulnerable groups attitudes and practices in order to be more proactive and claim their rights

✓ **Litigations in relation to social justice and inclusion of vulnerable groups** (counselling, legal assistance, etc.)

✓ **Develop of new or improved models (methodology, type of service, evaluation tool, research etc.) to address the needs of vulnerable groups.** This could include:
  - innovatory approaches to tackle social exclusion and injustice
  - demand driven approach in community level interventions
  - models of involving vulnerable groups in contributing to solving local problems
  - elaboration of community action plans that respond to the needs of the most disadvantaged members of the community
  - new consultations models to empower and engage vulnerable groups

✓ **Networking with other NGOs or stakeholders in order to work together and influence the decision-makers for solving local problems**

✓ **Transfer of knowledge activities with specialized organizations, leading to better tailored interventions**

✓ **Advocate local entrepreneurs and employers for the inclusion of individuals in vulnerable situations from the community**

✓ **Identify opportunities of self-help for vulnerable persons** (provide minimal support to identify opportunities that will prevent the risk of social exclusion and extreme poverty due to displacement)

✓ **Provide support (such as necessary information, training, counselling) for the staff working directly with vulnerable groups**
All projects funded under the current Call shall contribute to the achievement of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expected programme results</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Targets* to be reached at Call level</th>
<th>Requirements for applicants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 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. | 600                                 | All projects must report against this indicator. |
| Outcome 3. Vulnerable groups are empowered                                                | Indicator 26. Number of vulnerable individuals reached by empowerment measures. | 300                                 | All projects must select and report against at least one Outcome 3 indicator [26] and/or [27] |
|                                                                                         | Indicator 27. Number of beneficiaries of services provided or improved.    | 300                                 |                             |
| Output 3.1. CSOs advocating at local/national level for social justice and inclusion of vulnerable groups supported | Indicator 28. Number of litigations supported                             | 2                                  | 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 |
| Output 3.2. Members of vulnerable groups mobilised to advocate for their needs            | Indicator 29. Number of members of vulnerable groups mobilised to advocate for their needs. | 70                                  |                             |
|                                                                                         | Indicator 30. Number of members of vulnerable groups consulted.            | 100                                 |                             |
| Output 3.3. Integrated and new models of service delivery developed to address the needs of vulnerable groups | Indicator 31. Number of new and improved models implemented to address the needs of vulnerable groups. | 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.

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](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 two information activities on progress, achievements and results in the project, such as a seminar or a conference with stakeholders, a press conference or press event, including a launch activity and/or a closing activity for the project;

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 and/or receiving a minimum of 150,000 Euro support from the EEA and Norway Grants 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. Put up a billboard at the site of each operation, during implementation, and replace it no later than six months after completion of the project with a permanent commemorative plaque that is visible, of significant size, in case of projects fulfilling the following two conditions:
   • Projects whose total grant amount to the project exceeds EUR 50,000,
   • The operations consist in the financing of a physical object, infrastructure or of construction operations;

10. 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 GDPR 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 provided by the Fund Operator.

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 requirement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Check</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) abide by the principles of human rights for all, democratic values, rule-of-law and</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) do not promote intolerant, discriminatory and/or hate speech, and</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(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</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) have the capacity, according to their statutes, to act in the field addressed by the project, and</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) are independent of the local, regional and national government and other public entities¹, and</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) are independent of political parties, and</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g) are independent of commercial entities² (such as companies, self-governing regies, individual enterprises etc.), and</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(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</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ GDPR – General Data Protection Regulation [EU] 2016/679
(i) have transparent structures and elected chair/board, and are accountable to their members and donors, and ☑

(ii) are directly responsible for designing and managing the project and do not act as an intermediary ☑

(iii) have implemented or are currently implementing a project financed through Active Citizens Fund Romania, as project promoter or partner ☑

To assess if an organisation 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.

To assess if an organisation 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 ☑ |
| (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) ☑ |
| (c) | any other legal entities that do not cumulatively respect the requirements mentioned in the section 4.2.2 ☑ |
| (d) | political parties ☑ |
| (e) | religious institutions (religious cults, religious associations established under the Law 489/2006 on freedom of religion and general regime of cults) ☑ |
| (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) ☑ |
| (g) | social partners (trade unions and employers organizations) ☑ |
| (h) | profit-distributing cooperatives ☑ |

#### 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; ☑ |
| (b) | are guilty of serious professional misconduct proven by any means the Fund Operator can justify; ☑ |
| (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; ☑ |
| (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; ☑ |
| (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. ☑ |

### 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 the 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 has a common border with Romania (Moldova, Ukraine and Serbia), any international organisation (IGOs)7 or body or agency thereof.

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 entire 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 name.8 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.

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

- 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.

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 #6.1 Support for refugees fleeing Ukraine. 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 #6.1 Support for refugees fleeing Ukraine, 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 #6.1 Support for refugees fleeing Ukraine.
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 the Guidelines for Applicants. If there are different provisions between this Guidelines 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:

☑ they are incurred between the first and final dates of eligibility of a project as specified in the grant contract;
☑ they are connected with the subject of the grant contract and they are indicated in the detailed budget of the project;
☑ they are proportionate and necessary for the implementation of the project;
☑ 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;
☑ 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;
☑ 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 recorded on the accounts of the project promoter and partner/s.

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;
➢ 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:

- 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;
- 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
- 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:

- 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.);
- 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;
- 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;
- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- 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);
- fines, 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://finantaripublice.fdsc.ro will be evaluated. In order to submit an application it is necessary to follow the next steps:

- Download from the Programme website
  Guidelines for Applicants and all 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 (if the case)
  - Annex 5 – Contracting documents

- Supporting documents:
  Programme Indicators. Guidance document 2.0
  Communication and Design Manual
  Guidelines for using the online platform

**Develop the Application**

The project must be formulated clearly and concisely.

The project must address the problem through coherent intervention logic.

Carefully select the Outcome and Output indicators, from the tables included in the Guidelines for Applicants.

The beneficiaries of the project must be defined and quantified.

The detailed way of project implementation including the schedule, detailed budget, communication plan and capacity of organizations and sustainability of the project are part of the Application.

In drafting the application it can be used the working version (Word format) of the Application form.

**Develop Project budget**

Read carefully the Annex 2b – Guidelines for budgeting. Please note that the project budget should comprise costs with VAT included (provided that the VAT cannot be recovered from the state budget according to the legal regulations in force).

The detailed budget of the project will be uploaded as an annex (all worksheets).

In the Application will be included only the total budget of the project and the grant requested, in Euro.

**Submitting the Application**

Use the account created on the application platform.

Fill in the Application in the online platform.

Make sure that all compulsory annexes are uploaded in the accepted formats.

Remember that the Romanian NGO partner must also have an account on the online platform.

**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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Check</th>
<th>Submission through <a href="https://finantaripublice.fdsc.ro">https://finantaripublice.fdsc.ro</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application form for Rapid Response grants for Ukraine crisis</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>Filled in the platform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project budget (Annex 2a)</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>Uploaded as annex in EXCEL format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declaration of eligibility (Annex 3)</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>Uploaded as PDF or JPEG format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership Declaration (if the case) (Annex 4)</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>Uploaded as PDF or JPEG format</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Application deadline

| Rapid Response grants for Ukraine crisis |
| Single round |
| Opening date of the application process for Rapid Response Grants for Ukraine crisis: (application process exclusively through the online platform https://finantaripublice.fdsc.ro) | 24th August 2022 |
| Application deadline | 11th 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 #6.1 Support for refugees fleeing Ukraine. 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 #6.1 Support for refugees fleeing Ukraine |
| Fundaţia pentru Dezvoltarea Societăţii 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:

- Verification of administrative compliance and eligibility
- Requests for clarifications (if the case)
- Informing the Applicants on the results of the administrative and eligibility verification
- Successful Applications are randomly assigned to two impartial evaluators

**Selection Committee**
- The Selection Committee prepares a list of projects to be financed, conditions, reserve list or rejected
- The Selection Committee provides Executive Board with its decision

**Executive Board**
- The Executive Board confirms the decisions of the Selection Committee and justifies any changes (if the case)
- The Executive Board makes the final decision on the list of projects to be financed, reserve list and rejected applications

**Announcing the results**
- Applicants are informed about the final decision of the Executive Board

### 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLIANCE</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The project application includes all the annexes required for the current Call for proposals:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. The online Application Form is filled in Romanian, including the summary in English and is complete (all compulsory fields are filled in)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. The project Budget is filled in, respects the format from Annex 2a, is provided in Euro and is uploaded (in Excel format)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. The Applicant’s Declaration of Eligibility (Annex 3) is filled in, signed and uploaded (scanned format)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Partnership Declaration/s (Annex 4) is filled in, signed by the Applicant and Partner/s and uploaded (scanned format) if the case</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The assessment of eligibility will be conducted only for the applications that are compliant with the administrative criteria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>II. ELIGIBILITY</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The Applicant is eligible</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Partner/s is/are eligible</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The project falls into the types of grants (amount and duration) that can be awarded within the current Call for proposals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1) Both scores given by the two evaluators are above the minimum threshold set for the dimension “1. Project relevance and coherence”,</th>
<th>(2) Both scores given by the two evaluators are below the minimum threshold set for the dimension “1. Project relevance and coherence”,</th>
<th>(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 “1. Project relevance and coherence” and score the entire project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The project enters the second evaluation stage and the Application is further evaluated.</td>
<td>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 “1. Project relevance and coherence” shall be used for the ranking of the projects.</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions and criteria of evaluation</th>
<th>Maximum score</th>
<th>Minimum threshold score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. The project relevance and coherence</strong></td>
<td>35</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The problem approached by the project is justified (identification of the problem, documenting the problem, challenges, the target group affected/involved)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The project addresses the problem through a clear and coherent intervention logic between objectives, activities and expected results</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Methodology and feasibility of the project</strong></td>
<td>35</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities are sufficiently described, well planned, feasible</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The project includes transfer of knowledge and/or support activities for the personnel adequate to the needs of the Applicant/partner/s and proposed interventions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The chosen indicators are realistic and correspond to the outcome(s) and activities of the project</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The risks of the project implementation are identified and relevant; the proposed mitigation measures are appropriate</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The correlation with similar initiatives is properly identified and synergy with them ensured</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Sustainability</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. The budget of the project</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The foreseen costs are economic, justified and correlated with the proposed activities</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The budget is correctly filled in and foreseen costs are eligible</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Applicant and partners</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The role of the partner/s within the proposed intervention, the necessity and the added value of the partnership</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through the proposed partnership, the project contributes to the consolidation of Bilateral Relations (projects with partners from Donor States)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant and Partners and the proposed project team have the experience*, expertise, motivation and capacity for implementing the project</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*For new established organizations or without experience it will be taken into consideration the motivation and the experience of the proposed project team</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The project team is adequate for the implementation of the project (number of people involved, role and responsibilities, management)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>65</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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**

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.

The documents included in Annex 5 may be requested by the FO.

**Grant contract**

The grant contract sets out the terms and conditions of grant assistance as well as the roles and responsibilities of the parties.

If the Applicant fulfills 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.

The indicative timeframe for the contracting phase is between one and three months since the reception by the Applicants of the award letter.

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

11. Reporting, payments and audit

**11.1 Procedures for reporting from project promoters**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>ONE INTERIM REPORT</strong></th>
<th><strong>A FINAL REPORT</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Within 30 calendar days after the middle of the project implementation or earlier, after spending at least 70% from the advance/instalments.</td>
<td>Within 45 calendar days from the end of the project implementation period</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Statistical Progress Reports**

Four times per year, with following deadlines:

- 20 January
- 20 March
- 20 August
- 20 October

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 the interim technical and financial report 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 rate\(^9\) 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project duration</th>
<th>Maximum advance payment percentage</th>
<th>No. of interim payments</th>
<th>Interim payment percentage</th>
<th>Maximum percentage of the balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>from 6 months to 12 months (including)</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>1 (one)</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 programme\(^10\), 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. As a general rule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Payments general rule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advance payment</strong> 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interim payments</strong> 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Final payment / Reimbursement by the PP</strong> To be paid by the FO up to 10 working days after the date of FO approval of the 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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^10\) 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.
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\(^\text{11}\) or project partners that are international organisations or bodies or agencies thereof.

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

\(^{11}\) 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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