

# ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND ROMANIA

## Fund for Bilateral Relations

### Guidelines for applicants

Call for proposals no. 3/2022

Bucharest,  
26 October 2022

Fund operated by:



## 1. GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND ROMANIA AND THE FUND FOR BILATERAL RELATIONS

This call for proposals is part of **Active Citizens Fund Romania** programme (hereafter named “ACF Romania” or “Programme”). With a total allocation of **48,000,000 EURO**, the Programme aims at 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 for all, while strengthening bilateral relations with entities from the Donor States (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway).

**ACF Romania** is part of the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021. The **overall objective of the Grants** is to reduce economic and social disparities and to strengthen bilateral relations between the 15 beneficiary countries and the Donor States. **ACF Romania** is administered by a Consortium composed of the Civil Society Development Foundation, Romanian Environmental Partnership Foundation, Resource Centre for Roma Communities, PACT Foundation and Frivillighet Norge, acting as Fund Operator designated by FMO – the Financial Mechanism Office of the EEA and Norway Grants.

The **objectives** of the **ACF Romania** are **to strengthen civil society and active citizenship** and **to empower vulnerable groups**. The following **Areas of Support** are targeted by the Programme:

- 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, disability, age, sexual orientation or gender identity etc.
- Social justice and inclusion of vulnerable groups
- Gender equality and gender-based violence (GBV)
- Environment and climate change

**ACF Romania** supports projects under the following **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 (organizations and the sector)

! More information about the programme is available at <https://activecitizensfund.ro>

As part of the ACF Romania, the **Fund for Bilateral Relations** aims **to contribute to strengthening bilateral relations between Romania and the Donor States**. The Fund for Bilateral Relations supports activities aiming at strengthening bilateral relations between civil society organizations and other entities from Romania and the Donor States, the search for partners for donor partnership projects prior to or during the preparation of a project application, the development of such partnerships and the preparation of an application for donor partnership project, networking, exchange, sharing and transfer of knowledge, technology, experience and best practice between civil society organizations and other entities from Romania and Donor States.

All organizations and activities funded shall be based on the **common values** of respect of human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and the respect for human rights for all. All activities supported by the Fund shall follow the principles of good governance - they shall be participatory and inclusive, transparent, effective, and efficient. There shall be zero-tolerance towards corruption. All activities supported by the Fund shall be in line with the principles of sustainable development, long-term economic growth, social cohesion and environmental protection.

## 2. SPECIFIC INFORMATION ON THE PRESENT CALL FOR PROPOSALS

### 2.1 OBJECTIVE AND ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The **objective of this Call for proposals** is to facilitate networking, exchange, sharing and transfer of knowledge, technology, experience, and best practice between organizations that were or currently are project promoters and partners of the ACF Romania programme and entities in donor states.

**Eligible activities** proposed under the current Call must primarily focus on dissemination and valorization of results, products and achievements of the projects financed under ACF Romania. Also, **activities must have a consistent bilateral dimension with the Donor State entities**, shall contribute to the sustainability of relations with entities from Donor States and contribute also to the capacity building of the applicant/partner(s).

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

- a. Participation in or organization of conferences, seminars, training courses and/or workshops;
- b. Organization of internships;
- c. Organization of study visits;
- d. Elaboration and publication of policy papers, reports, studies, scientific papers analysis and/or articles written in cooperation by at least one organization from Romania and an entity from a donor state;
- e. Promotion, information and dissemination activities of results achieved in projects financed through the ACF Romania programme;
- f. Campaigns, exhibitions and promotional materials aimed to promote and disseminate results achieved in projects financed through the ACF Romania programme;
- g. Translation in English and/ or donor state languages and dissemination in donor states of the (tangible) results of projects supported under the ACF Romania programme;
- h. Any other common interest activities contributing to the strengthening of bilateral relations and, at the same time, to the development of the applicant capacity.

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 to be done in a logical sequence to achieve a set of predefined targets using the given resources.

Activities must primarily be implemented in Donor States (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein). However, the activities proposed for implementation in Romania can be eligible if the bilateral dimension is consistent and relevant.

**Under this Call for proposals the following types of projects are not eligible:**

- projects that target feasibility studies and infrastructure development;
- projects that involve obtaining / awarding individual scholarships;
- projects that include economic activities;
- projects for emergency support;
- refinancing activities (e.g., re-granting of loans given to other organizations or individuals/ legal entities);
- projects that focus on the purchase of equipment, buildings or offices;
- general activity 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).

## 2.2 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants under the present call are only organizations that implemented or are implementing projects with the financial support of the Active Citizens Fund Romania as project promoters or partners.

**Eligible applicants** under the Fund for Bilateral Relations are:

### 2.2.1.

**(a) 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

**(b) County and Bucharest municipality foundations for youth and the National Youth Foundation** established under the Law 146/2002 (with subsequent amendments and completions); or

**(c) 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**; or

**(d) Non-governmental and non-profit organizations (NGOs) legally established in one of the Donor States (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway)**

**2.2.2** In addition to the above-mentioned criteria, **the applicants from Romania and Donor States shall meet the following requirements:**

- a. abide by the principles of human rights for all, democratic values, rule-of-law **and**
- b. do not promote intolerant, discriminatory and/or hate speech, **and**
- 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**
- d. have the capacity, according to their statutes, to act in the field addressed by the project, **and**
- e. are independent of the local, regional and national government and other public entities<sup>1</sup> **and**
- f. are independent of political parties, **and**
- g. are independent of commercial entities<sup>2</sup> (such as companies, self-governing regies, individual enterprises etc.), **and**
- 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**
- i. have transparent structures and elected chair/board, and are accountable to their members and donors, **and**
- j. are directly responsible for designing and managing the project and do not act as an intermediary, **and**
- k. have implemented or are currently implementing a project financed through Active Citizens Fund Romania, as project promoter or partner.

<sup>1</sup> For assessing if an organization fulfils this condition, the FO will mainly check the following aspects:

- Does not have more than half of the members local, regional and / or national institutions and / or authorities;
- 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);
- 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.

<sup>2</sup> For assessing if an organization fulfils this condition, the FO will mainly check the following aspects:

- Does not have more than half of the members profit-making entities;
- 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);
- Does not have the organizational and operational structures established so that decisions are mostly influenced by profit-making entities.

## 2.3 EXCLUSION CRITERIA FOR APPLICANTS

**Not eligible Romanian applicants** are any other legal entities that do not cumulatively respect the criteria mentioned in the section 2.2 Eligible applicants. Political parties, religious institutions (religious cults, religious associations established under the Law no.489/2006 on freedom of religion and general regime of cults), professional associations<sup>3</sup>, social partners (trade unions and employers' organizations), profit-distributing cooperatives, are not eligible applicants.

**Entities from Romania or Donor States 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) organizations from which the amount due was not recovered, following a final court decision in connection with the NGO Programme 2009-2014 in Romania.

The project proposal will be accompanied by a signed **Declaration of eligibility (Annex 3)**, by which the Applicants certify that they meet all the eligibility conditions mentioned in the Section 2.2 Eligible applicants and that are not in any of the exclusion situations mentioned in Section 2.3 Exclusion criteria for applicants. Through this statement, Applicants will also certify the eligibility of the partner(s) as stipulated in section 2.4 Eligible project partners.

For the projects selected for funding, the Fund Operator reserves the right to request the Applicant to submit any kind of documents in support of the Applicant Statement of eligibility.

## 2.4 ELIGIBLE PROJECT PARTNERS

Eligible partners are:

- Romanian non-governmental and non-profit organizations (NGOs) mentioned at article 2.2.1 a)-c) that meet all the eligibility conditions mentioned in the Section 2.2.2 a.- j. and that are not in any of the exclusion situations mentioned in Section 2.3 Exclusion criteria for Applicants.
- Entities from Donor States - any non-governmental organizations, any public or private entity, commercial or non-commercial, established as a legal person in **Iceland, Liechtenstein or Norway**. Public entities could be local and central public authorities, public institutions/ agencies, decentralized governmental public services, territorial administrative units, universities, etc.

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 2.2.1 and 2.2.2. a.-j. and are not among the not eligible applicants mentioned in the section 2.3;

<sup>3</sup> "Professional association" is the association 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.

- 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 of the project.

Please note that within this Call for proposals **it is compulsory** to have a partnership at application stage among at least one eligible Romanian non-governmental organization and one eligible Donor State entity. The Applicant and Partner(s) will sign and send to the Fund Operator at application stage an official partnership agreement (Annex 4).

## 2.5 ELIGIBILITY OF COSTS

### 2.5.1 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 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.

### 2.5.2 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 2.5.1 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.
- audit costs – **only** for Applicants or Partners from Donor States;

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 rule, for purchases and contracts awarded 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 found [here](#).

### 2.5.3 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.

#### 2.5.4 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, costs related to the construction, reconstruction, renovation or refurbishment of a building;
- 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;
- 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);

### 2.6 FINANCIAL ALLOCATION, GRANT AMOUNT, DURATION, LIMITATIONS

The total minimum allocation for the present Call for proposals is of **304,391.08 Euro**. To this amount funds could be added in case they are made available for this Call for proposals.

The **minimum grant amount** per project is **5,000 Euro** and the **maximum grant amount** per project is **30,000 Euro**. **Co-financing is not required**. The project grant rate may be up to 100% of the total eligible expenditure of the project.

The **co-financing is not required but**, in case an applicant intends to provide co-financing, it can be provided in form of cash and/or in-kind contribution, in the form of voluntary work. When determining the grant rate, the Applicant will consider: 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.

In case that 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 nor other type of 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.

The **duration of the projects** shall be of **minimum 1 month**, and **maximum 6 months**. Implementation period for the project must be set in such a manner that activities do not start prior to **March 1, 2023** and are completed by **January 31, 2024**. As well, associated costs must be invoiced and paid by **January 31, 2024** the latest.

**Limitations:** An organization may submit as applicant **only one project proposal** within the present Call for proposals. If the same entity submits more than one proposal as applicant, it has to opt - within the deadline communicated by the Fund Operator - for one of the proposals submitted. In case the applicant does not express its option for one of the proposals within the deadline, all proposals submitted by the same entity (as applicant) shall be declared ineligible.

An organization may be partner in maximum 2 project proposals within the present Call for proposals. If the same entity is partner in more than 2 project proposals within the present Call for proposals, it will be requested by the Fund Operator to opt – within the deadline communicated by the Fund Operator - for maximum 2 of them. In case the entity does not express its option for maximum 2 proposals within the deadline, all proposals in question shall be declared ineligible.

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 grants received through the Calls under the Fund for Bilateral Relations.

## 2.7 APPLICATION DEADLINE

**Launch date** for the Call for proposals: **October 26, 2022**

**Application deadline:** Ongoing but not later than **February 28, 2023, 18:00 EET (RO time)**

Please note that the application, evaluation and selection process is ongoing, the available funds for this Call could be exhausted before the deadline. In this case the Call could be closed before the deadline.

## 2.8 PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF THE APPLICATION DOSSIER

**The Application Dossier** will include:

- **Application Form** (Annex 1 - template attached), to be filled in **Romanian** or **English**. The Applicant shall submit Annex 1 filled in word format as well as a scanned format (such as pdf/ jpeg.), signed by the legal representative of the Applicant;
- **Project budget** (Annex 2a - template attached), to be filled in **Romanian** or **English**. The Applicant shall submit Annex 2a filled in Excel format;
- **Declaration of eligibility** (Annex 3 - template attached), to be filled in **Romanian** or **English**, signed by the legal representative of the Applicant, and submitted in scanned format (such as pdf/ jpeg.).

- **Partnership agreement** (Annex 4 - template attached), to be filled in **English**, signed by the legal representative of the Applicant and Partner, and submitted in scanned format (such as pdf/ jpeg.).

! The Guideline for Applicants and the Annexes of the Application Dossier can be downloaded from the Programme website <https://activecitizensfund.ro>.

**The Application Dossier, with the required documents listed above, shall be delivered only via e-mail to [bilateral@fdsc.ro](mailto:bilateral@fdsc.ro) no later than February 28, 2023, 18:00 EET (Romanian time)**

**! Applications delivered by personal delivery, post/express mail or fax will NOT be accepted.**

The Fund Operator shall inform by email the applicant on registration of the Application Dossier and will publish a list of registered Applications on the Programme website.

## 2.9 EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

The evaluation and selection process will be ongoing. The applications will be selected according to a first come first served rule in the order of their registration, with the conditions that applications receive the minimum average score of **65 points** and funds are still available (namely they were not used up by previous selected applications).

### 2.9.1 Registration of the Application Dossiers:

All Applications Dossiers submitted via e-mail shall be registered and processed by the Fund Operator.

### 2.9.2 Compliance with administrative and eligibility criteria

The Fund Operator shall review the applications **for compliance with administrative and eligibility criteria**, based on the following grid:

Administrative and eligibility criteria	YES	NO
1. The Application Dossier (Annexes 1, 2a, 3 and 4) is complete and is submitted via e-mail to <a href="mailto:bilateral@fdsc.ro">bilateral@fdsc.ro</a> , no later than February, 28, 2023, 18:00 EET (Romanian time).		
2. The Declaration of eligibility (Annex 3) is duly filled in, signed by the legal representative of the applicant and sent in scanned format (such as pdf/ jpeg.).		
3. The applicant is eligible.		
4. Partner/s is/ are eligible.		
5. The grant requested is not below 5,000 EURO and does not exceed 30,000 EURO.		
6. Project duration is not below 1 month, does not exceed 6 months and is completed by January 31, 2024.		

The Application is automatically excluded from further evaluation if one or more administrative and eligibility criteria were not met. Only applications that receive "YES" to all entries will qualify for the next stage of the evaluation. An applicant can appeal in writing the Fund Operator's decision to reject a proposal at this stage. This should be done by e-mail to [bilateral@fdsc.ro](mailto:bilateral@fdsc.ro) within 5 working days from the date when the decision was communicated, by providing reasoning that would justify the decision's revision. The Fund Operator will communicate to the applicant the decision following the appeal within 10 working days from the registration

of the appeal. The decision after appeal is final and no further appeal on the same Application could be formulated afterwards.

In order to verify the fulfilment of the eligibility criteria, the Fund Operator reserves the right to request clarifications. Request shall be made by e-mail (using the data provided in the application form) and the required clarifications must be provided by the applicant in writing, also by email, within 2 working days from the date of request. Failing in providing the requested information within the deadline may result in the rejection of the application.

### 2.9.3 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. The evaluation process is based on the evaluation criteria with scores.

The experts shall separately and independently score the project according to the selection criteria below. For the purposes of scoring the projects, the average of the scores awarded by the experts shall be used. 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 evaluator. The total final score will be the average of the two closest scores. 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 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. The Applications which receive at least 65 points will be recommended for funding in order of their registration (chronological order), until the financial allocation available for the present Call for proposals shall be used up.

The grid for technical and financial evaluation of a grant application:

Dimensions and criteria of evaluation	Maxim Score
<p><b>1. Project contribution to the objective of the Funds for Bilateral Relations and the objective of the present call for proposals:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Clarity of the proposed objectives and their correlation with the Funds/Call objectives</i></li> <li>● <i>Presentation of the concrete results of the project in respect to their contribution to strengthen bilateral relations</i></li> </ul>	/20
<p><b>2. Motivation to undertake the project</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Description of the applicant and partner organization, if the case, and correlation with the area(s) of intervention envisaged in the proposal</i></li> <li>● <i>Coherence among the expertise/ experience of the applicant and of the partner, if the case and the motivation to implement the proposal, in close connection with the results / products / achievements of the project already funded under ACF Romania</i></li> <li>● <i>Complementarity of the approach/ activities included in the proposal with the actions of the project funded under ACF Romania and the added value brought in by the bilateral dimension, in the donor states</i></li> <li>● <i>To what extent the proposal/activities proposed are beneficial to the capacity building of the applicant and partners involved</i></li> </ul>	/25

<p><b>3. Structure of the project, clarity and coherence of the proposed activities, partner's involvement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposed activities and associated concrete outputs are relevant and support the achievement of the project objectives</li> <li>The project has a coherent structure</li> </ul>	/20
<p><b>4. Follow-up, dissemination and results' exploitation activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality and feasibility of proposed activities</li> <li>Presentation of products/ concrete results correlated with activities, potential multiplying effects outside the partnership structure and the stakeholders directly involved in the activities</li> <li>Promotion/ dissemination of results in the Donor States</li> <li>How/ to what extent activities contribute to sustainable relations among the applicant, partner and directly involved stakeholders – how will dialogue/ cooperation shall be maintained after the project's closure?</li> </ul>	/20
<p><b>5. The applicant or its representatives have not previously been involved or benefitted of support within actions financed through the Fund for Bilateral Relations (calls for proposals or events organized directly by the Operator)</b></p>	/5
<p><b>6. The budget is balanced and realistic, built-in accordance with the proposed activities and includes eligible costs</b></p>	/10
<p><b>Total</b></p>	<b>100</b>

#### 2.9.4 Selection Commission

The selection decision is taken by a Commission composed of five representatives from the Fund Operator Consortium, with the relevant expertise and experience. The Decision is taken based on the recommendations resulting from experts' evaluation. The decision of the Commission is final and cannot be contested. The Commission could gather in several meetings throughout the duration of the Call to make the decision of selecting or rejecting project proposals, based on the process mentioned above. Even if the evaluators' average score for one application is above 65 points, the Selection Commission can decide to not support it.

#### 2.9.5 Informing Project Applicants on the results of the evaluation

The Fund Operator shall notify Applicants by email about the results of the selection process. The lists of the projects proposed to be financed will be posted on the website of the Programme.

### 2.10 CONTRACTING, REPORTING AND PAYMENTS

The applicants selected for funding shall conclude a financing contract with Civil Society Development Foundation. During the project implementation, the grant recipients will regularly provide to the Fund Operator information with respect to the development of activities included in the mobility project. At the end of the project implementation period, the grant recipients will provide a final technical and financial report, and, if the case, by a request for balance payment (Annex 5 – Request for payment, Annex 6 – Technical

and financial final report and Annex 6bis – Final financial report). These documents will be sent both in original, signed by the legal representative and in electronic format (by email).

All project expenditures **must be justified with financial-accounting support documents**. Eligible expenditures are those actually incurred by the project promoter or partner(s) and meet the criteria mentioned at section 2.5.1 General principles on the eligibility of costs.

All payments must be converted into euro using the monthly accounting exchange rate of the European Commission published on its official website<sup>4</sup>, corresponding to the month during which the expenditure incurred (i.e., date of invoice).

For Applicants or partners from Donor States, project expenditures included in the financial report (Annex 6bis - Final financial report) will be justified with copies of the financial-accounting support documents (invoices, receipts, etc.) **or** with an audit report (Annex 7 – Recommended audit report) prepared by an independent auditor, qualified for the execution of legal audits of accounting documents, which will certify that costs are borne/ realized in accordance with the financing contract, the relevant legislation and the national accounting practices.

**Payments** for the Grant agreement shall be done in two instalments:

- Advance payment of 80% of the grant, in euro, to be transferred based on a request for payment issued by the grant recipient, after the signature of the grant agreement by both parties. The advance payment shall be done in maximum 10 days from the signature of the contract and registration of the request for payment.
- Final payment (balance) up to 20% of the grant, in euro, to be calculated as the difference between the approved eligible expenditures from the final report and the transferred advance payment.

The **final financial and technical report** together with the request for payment (if the case) must be submitted within a maximum of 30 calendar days from the end of the project implementation period. If the case, the Fund Operator will transfer the balance within 10 days from the final report approval.

## 2.11 FURTHER INFORMATION AND CONTACT DETAILS

Questions related to this Call for proposals and the Fund for Bilateral Relations may be addressed by potential Applicants by e-mail and/ or phone to:

**Fundația pentru Dezvoltarea Societății Civile/  
Civil Society Development Foundation**

Address: Bd. Nerva Traian no. 21, Bucharest, Romania, sector 3, postal code 031044

Tel: 0040 745 122 191

E-mail: [bilateral@fdsc.ro](mailto:bilateral@fdsc.ro)

Contact person: Vlad Dumitrescu, Program Manager

<sup>4</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/budget/graphs/inforeuro.html>

Questions and answers could be published on the Programme website <https://activecitizensfund.ro> if relevant for other applicants.

In order to facilitate the identification of suitable entities from Donor States, the Fund Operator collaborates with two important bilateral partners:

**Norwegian Helsinki Committee**

<http://eeagrants.org/Who-we-are/Who-we-work-with/Norwegian-Helsinki-Committee>

and

**Icelandic Human Rights Centre**

<http://www.humanrights.is/english/>

A comprehensive **database of organizations from Norway** is available at:

<https://ngonorway.org/partners/>

<b>3. ANNEXES</b>
<b>ANNEX 1 – Application form (Word template)</b>
<b>ANNEX 2a – Project budget (Excel template)</b>
<b>ANNEX 2b – Guidelines for budgeting</b>
<b>ANNEX 3 – Declaration of eligibility (Word template)</b>
<b>ANNEX 4 – Partnership agreement (Word template)</b>