

*"It is not about tolerance, but about understanding that beyond our differences we are profoundly similar to each other",
Kenizé Mourad*

NGO FUND in Romania

Funds for Bilateral Relations

Guidelines for applicants

Call for proposals no. 2/2013

Bucharest,
December 10, 2013

1. GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE NGO FUND IN ROMANIA

The **NGO Fund** is part of the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2009-2014. Through the EEA and Norway Grants, the donor countries (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities and to strengthening bilateral relations with 15 EU countries in Central and Eastern Europe.

The Programme Operator in Romania is the *Civil Society Development Foundation (CSDF)* in partnership with the *Romanian Environmental Partnership Foundation (REPF)* and the *Resource Centre for Roma Communities (RCRC)*.

The NGO Fund in Romania supports the activities of non-governmental organisations by organising grant schemes under the following 5 Components:

1. **ENGAGE**, having as sub-components:
 - Participation in decision-making and community engagement
 - Volunteering
 - Encouraging democratic values
2. **SOCIAL JUSTICE**, having as sub-components:
 - Rural interethnic communities development
 - Fighting social inequalities, poverty and exclusion
3. **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**
4. **WELFARE AND BASIC SERVICES**
5. **NGO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT. NETWORKS AND COALITIONS**, having as sub-components:
 - Support for coalitions and networks at regional and national level and think tanks
 - Support for initiatives that contribute to an enabling environment for NGOs in Romania and strengthen the overall sector representation
 - Strengthening membership and volunteer base of organisations and increase participation of members/volunteers in organisation activities

As part of the NGO Fund, **Funds for Bilateral Relations** are available and aim **to increase cooperation among entities from Romania and respectively donor states¹, to improve knowledge and mutual understanding and to share results.**

The support is structured under two main directions:

- **Measure a. Partnership building** – 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 a donor partnership project, **and**

¹ Donor states = Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein

- **Measure b. Networking and exchange** – networking, exchange, sharing and transfer of knowledge, technology, experience and best practice between project promoters and entities in donor states.

Note: Please note that support for *Measure b. Networking and exchange* is **NOT** subject to the present Call for proposals and it is foreseen for announcement in the first quarter of 2014.

2. SPECIFIC INFORMATION ON THE PRESENT CALL FOR PROPOSALS

2.1 OBJECTIVE AND ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The present call falls within **Measure a. Partnership building of the Funds for Bilateral Relations**.

The **objective** of the call is *to support Romanian non-governmental organisations in searching for partners from donor countries, developing sustainable partnerships and preparing applications for bilateral projects under the NGO FUND.*

The following exchange activities between NGOs from Romania and entities from the donor states, aimed to develop partnerships for bilateral projects, will be eligible for financing:

- *Development of the bilateral partnership* by supporting the work together and sharing of common knowledge, interest and expertise on specific project ideas between a Romanian NGO and a partner from a donor country
- *Identification of additional partners for developing donor partnership projects* by attending different meetings, conferences, study trips, visits, events organised by (potential) partners from donor states

Exchange activities can be implemented in Romania or in any of the donor states.

Please note that the current Call for proposals, **Funds for Bilateral Relations: Measure a. Partnership building**, aims to create or strengthen the base for present or future cooperation. The current Call for proposals is NOT intended to fund projects but exchange activities in order **to prepare the elaboration and submission of a proposal under the second round² of Call for proposals of any of the NGO Fund Components**, as enlisted in section 1 above.

2.2 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants under the present call for proposals are **non-governmental and non-profit organisations**, with a legal status and the headquarters in **Romania**, organised and managed according to the Romanian enforced laws regarding the non-governmental organisations, respectively association, foundation, federation constituted according to the provisions of GO 26/2000 or the Law 21/1924 regarding associations and foundations, with subsequent modifications and completions. In addition to these entities, Romanian Red Cross Society and its legally established branches will be also eligible.

² The tentative launching date for the Calls for proposals within Round 2 of the NGO Fund is April 2014.

The potential applicants must also:

- be able, according to their statutes/regulations, to act in the domain addressed by the project **and**
- be independent of local, regional and national government and other public authorities **and**
- be independent of political parties and commercial organisations **and**
- be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the project with their partners, not acting as an intermediary.

All applicants must comply to respect democratic values and human rights.

Non eligible applicants under the present call for proposals are:

- political parties and religious institutions (religious denominations, religious associations established in accordance with Law 489/2006 on the Freedom of Religion and the General Status of Denominations)
- social partners (trade unions and employers associations)
- profit-distributing cooperatives
- Non-governmental and non-profit organisations that already benefitted of financial support as part of the first Call for proposals of the *Funds for Bilateral Relations: Measure a. Partnership building*³

Non-governmental and non-profit organisations that were recommended for financing within the first round of Calls for Proposals of the NGO Fund cannot benefit from a financial support, under the present call, for a mobility project involving the same partner(s) from the donor states.

The ***Applicant Statement of eligibility (Annex 3)*** must be filled in and included in the Application Dossier.

2.3 ELIGIBLE PARTNERS

An official partnership between a Romanian NGO and an organisation from the donor states (Norway, Island, Liechtenstein) is compulsory.

Eligible partners under this Call are non-governmental organisations (established and run according to the applicable legislation in their country), public or private entities, commercial or non-commercial. Public entities could be local and central public authorities, public institutions/agencies, decentralized governmental services at a local level, territorial entities, universities etc.

Non eligible partners under the present call for proposals are political parties and religious institutions, social partners (trade unions and employers associations) and profit-distributing cooperatives.

It is mandatory that all partners have legal personality and they must be able to act in the domain addressed by the project.

³ The list of organizations contracted within first Call for Proposals of the *Funds for Bilateral Relations: Measure a. Partnership building* is available [here](#)

Organisations/entities from the donor states cannot directly apply for funding. However, costs incurred by partners from donor states are eligible within projects submitted by a Romanian organisation, provided that they follow activities eligible under the present call.

All partners must comply to respect democratic values and human rights.

The **Statement on eligibility and partnership agreement (Annex 2)** must be filled in by any partner and included in the Application Dossier.

2.4 ELIGIBILITY OF PROJECTS

The projects and exchange activities will focus on facilitating collaboration on one or more of the following core areas:

- Democracy
- Human rights
- Good governance and transparency
- Participatory democracy
- Combat racism and xenophobia
- Anti-discrimination
- Social inequalities, poverty and exclusion (including in rural areas)
- Gender equality
- Gender-based violence
- Environment protection and climate change
- Welfare and basic services
- Capacity building for nongovernmental organisations

These were identified as being critical areas where NGOs can play a specific role and foster positive change and are in line with the overall objectives and priorities of the NGO Fund in Romania.

2.5 ELIGIBILITY OF COSTS

Eligible costs under this Call are **travel and subsistence costs** incurred by the applicant and/or partner involved in the exchange activities.

These expenditures must be consistent with usual practices of the applicant and/or partner.

The following types of costs are eligible:

- International travel (round trip), economic class, including travel insurance and luggage fee if the case
- subsistence allowance expenses: accommodation, meals or per diem under national legislation
- local transportation in Romania or in the donor states where the mobility is done
- VAT provided that by law it cannot be recovered by the applicant and/or partner

Eligible expenditures are those actually incurred by the applicant or partner, which meet the following criteria:

- a) they are incurred between the first and final dates of eligibility of a project as specified in the project contract;

- b) they are connected with the subject of the project contract and they are indicated in the estimated overall budget of the project;
- c) they are proportionate and necessary for the implementation of the project;
- d) they must be used for the sole purpose of achieving the objective(s) of the project and its expected outcome(s), in a manner consistent with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness;
- e) they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular through being recorded in the accounting records of the Project Promoter and/or project partner and determined according to the applicable accounting standards of the country where the applicant and/or project partner is established and according to generally accepted accounting principles; **and**
- f) they comply with the requirements of applicable legislation.

2.6 FINANCIAL ALLOCATION AND GRANT SIZE

The total allocation for the present Call for proposals is of **EUR 71,958.23**.

The maximum size of the grant is **EUR 3.000**, with a limit of not more than **EUR 1.500 Euro** per participant per travel.

A non-governmental organisation may submit **only one grant proposal** within the present Call for proposals.

If the same organisation submits more than one proposal, then it has to opt for one of them within the deadline communicated by Civil Society Development Foundation. In case the applicant does not express its option for one of the proposals within the deadline, all proposals submitted by the same organisation shall be declared ineligible.

No co-financing is required. The project grant rate may be up to 100% of the total eligible expenditure of the project.

2.7 DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION AND PROJECT DURATION

Launch date for the Call for proposals:	December 10, 2013
Deadline for proposals' submission:	February 20, 2014

After the deadline of submission, all proposals shall enter the evaluation and selection process as described in section 2.9 below.

The estimated duration of the evaluation process is up to 21 days from the deadline.

Maximum implementation project period is 2 months.

All exchange/mobility activities within the financed projects must be planned to be completed no later than May 23, 2014.

2.8 PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF THE GRANT APPLICATION

The Application Dossier will include:

- **Application Form (Annex 1** - template attached), completed in ROMANIAN or ENGLISH
- **Statement on eligibility and partnership agreement (Annex 2** - template attached, it can be submitted also as scan/fax⁴), completed in ENGLISH by the partner, signed and, if the case, stamped.
- **Applicant Statement of eligibility (Annex 3** - template attached), completed by the applicant, signed and stamped **in original**

The application dossier, with all documents enlisted above, shall be submitted in:

- 2 hard copies (1 original and 1 copy) **and**
- 1 electronic copy (for example CD, comprising all annexes in any of the formats: Word, PDF, Excel, etc.),

in a sealed envelope by registered mail, private courier service or hand-delivery at the address below:

Fundația pentru Dezvoltarea Societății Civile

Bd. Nerva Traian nr. 21, sector 3, București, cod poștal 031044

In the attention of: Vlad Dumitrescu, Senior Grants Officer

Applications delivered by e-mail or fax will NOT be accepted.

The outer envelope must bear the following information:

EEA GRANTS: Funds for Bilateral Relations, Call no. 2/2013

Title of the project: <title>

Applicant: <full name and address of the applicant>

Name and nationality of partners: <full name and nationality of the partner>

Latest date of submission of Application Dossiers, in accordance with section 2.7 above, is **February 20, 2014**. Relevant is the date in the postmark or the date of receipt by the courier service.

If using postal services, we recommend that you submit the Application dossier with a confirmation receipt ("confirmare de primire") and that you keep the mail receipt.

Personal delivery at the above address is possible no later than February 20, 2014, 16:00 local time.

Civil Society Development Foundation shall inform the applicant on registration of the Application dossier, by e-mail and by publishing a list of registered Applications on the programme's website no later than 7 working days since registration of the application.

⁴ In case the Statement is submitted as scan/fax, the applicant undertakes the obligation that the document in original shall be provided if the proposal is recommended for financing.

2.9 EVALUATION AND SELECTION

The evaluation and selection process covers the following stages:

- 1. Registration and opening of the Application Dossiers:** only Applications dossiers delivered within the deadline stipulated at section 2.7 above shall be opened and proceed to the following stages of the selection process.
- 2. Civil Society Development Foundation shall review grant applications for compliance with administrative and eligibility criteria,** based on the following grid:

Administrative and eligibility criteria	YES	NO
1. The Application Dossier (Application Form and its annexes) is submitted in 2 hard copies (1 original and 1 copy) and 1 electronic version of all documents		
2. The “ <i>Statement on eligibility and partnership agreement</i> ”, completed in English is signed and, if the case, stamped by the partner and included in the Application Dossier		
3. The “ <i>Applicant Statement of eligibility</i> ” is completed, stamped and signed, in original		
4. The applicant is eligible		
5. The partner is eligible		
6. The maximum grant requested for financing is EUR 3,000		
7. Project duration is maximum 2 month.		

Only grant applications that receive “YES” to all entries will qualify for the next stage of the evaluation. An applicant can request, in writing, the revision of the decision to reject a proposal at this stage. This should be done within 10 days from the date when the decision was communicated, by providing reasoning that would justify the decision’s revision. The final decision shall be communicated to the applicant within 15 days from the registration of the revision’s request.

In order to verify the fulfilment of the eligibility criteria, the Programme Operator reserves the right to request additional documentation. Request shall be made by email or fax (using the data provided in the application form) and the required clarifications must be provided by the applicant in writing, by email, fax or mail/courier delivery within 3 working days from the date of request. Failing in providing the requested information within the deadline may result in the rejection of the application.

- 3. Technical evaluation** – each application that meets the administrative and eligibility criteria shall be reviewed by two experts appointed by Civil Society Development Foundation. The experts shall separately and independently score the project according to the selection criteria published with the call for proposals. For the purposes of ranking the projects, the average of the scores awarded by the experts shall be used. If the difference between the scores given by the two experts is more than 30% of the higher score, a third expert shall be commissioned by the Civil Society Development Foundation to score the project

independently. In such cases the average score of the two closest scores shall be used for the ranking of the projects.

The technical evaluation of a grant application is reviewed based on the following criteria:

Technical evaluation	Maxim Score
<p><i>1. Contribution to the objective of the Funds for Bilateral Relations and the objective of the present call for proposals:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarity in proposed objectives and their correlation with the Funds/Call objectives - Presentation of the concrete outcomes of the mobility project and their contribution to strengthening bilateral relations 	/25
<p><i>2. Motivation to undertake the mobility project</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Description of the applicant and partner organisation and correlation with the area(s) of intervention envisaged for collaboration - Coherence among the expertise/experience of the applicant and of the partner and their motivation to implement the mobility project - The manner in which the applicant and the partner follow the identification and development of project ideas in future proposals within NGO Fund calls 	/25
<p><i>3. Structure of the mobility project, clarity and coherence of the proposed activities, partner's involvement</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relevant activities support the achievement of the proposed objectives for the mobility project - The presentation and relevance of the preparatory activities for the mobility project - The structure of the mobility itself (visit plan) - Experience and expertise of the persons involved 	/25
<p><i>4. Follow-up, dissemination and results' exploitation activities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality and feasibility of proposed activities - Presentation of products/concrete outcomes correlated with activities, potential multiplying effects outside the partnership structure 	/15
<p><i>5. The budget is balanced and realistic, built in accordance with the proposed activities</i></p>	/10

For a proposal to be recommended for funding, it must receive at least 60 points. The funding order, within the financial allocations available for the present call, shall be done by considering the final score resulted from the technical evaluation.

4. The selection decision is taken by a Commission composed of one representative of the Civil Society Development Foundation and one representative from each of the Consortium Partners. The Decision is taken based on the recommendations resulted from experts' evaluation. The decision of the Commission is final and cannot be contested.

2.10 REPORTING AND PAYMENTS

The applicants selected for funding shall conclude a financing contract with Civil Society Development Foundation (see **Annex 4 – Financing Contract template (RO)**).

During project implementation, the grant recipients will regularly provide information with respect to the evolvement of the activities included in the mobility project.

At the end of the implementation period, the grant recipients must provide a final technical and financial report (see **Annex 5 – Final technical and financial report**), accompanied, if the case, by a request for balance payment (see **Annex 6 – Request for payment (RO)**).

All expenditures included in the financial report must be justified with financial-accounting support documents. All payments have to be converted into euro using the monthly accounting exchange rate of the European Commission (Inforeuro), published on its official website⁵, corresponding to the month during which the expenditure incurred (i.e. date of invoice).

Payments 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 financing contract by both parties. The advance shall be paid in maximum 10 days from the registration of the request for payment.
- Final payment (balance) up to 20% of the grant, in euro, to be calculated as difference between the approved eligible expenditure based on the final report and the transferred advance payment.

The final report must be submitted to Civil Society Development Foundation within 30 days from the contract's closure and the analysis shall be done within 30 days. The balance, if the case, shall be transferred within 10 days from the approval of the final report.

2.11 FURTHER INFORMATION AND CONTACT DETAILS

Questions related to this Call for Proposals and the Funds for Bilateral Relations may be addressed by potential applicants by e-mail, phone or fax to:

Fundația pentru Dezvoltarea Societății Civile/Civil Society Development Foundation

Address: Bd. Nerva Traian nr. 21, București, sector 3, cod poștal 031044

Tel: 0040 21 310 01 81

Fax: 0040 21 310 01 80

E-mail: bilateral@fdsc.ro

<http://fondong.fdsc.ro/apeluri-pentru-cereri-de-finantare>

Contact person: Vlad Dumitrescu, Senior Grant Officer

Questions that may be relevant to other applicants, together with the answers, will be published on the Programme website (www.fondong.fdsc.ro).

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuro/inforeuro_en.cfm

In order to facilitate the identification of suitable partners in the donor countries, the Programme Operator collaborates with the **Norwegian Helsinki Committee** (<http://eeagrants.org/Who-we-are/Who-we-work-with/Norwegian-Helsinki-Committee>) and the **Icelandic Human Rights Centre** (<http://www.humanrights.is/english/>).

A comprehensive database of organisations from the donors' states is available at: <http://partners.ngonorway.org/search.php>

3. ANNEXES

ANNEX 1 – APPLICATION FORM (WORD TEMPLATE)

ANNEX 2 – STATEMENT ON ELIGIBILITY AND PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT (WORD TEMPLATE)

ANNEX 3 – APPLICANT STATEMENT OF ELIGIBILITY (WORD TEMPLATE)

ANNEX 4 – FINANCING CONTRACT TEMPLATE (RO) (WORD TEMPLATE)

ANNEX 5 – FINAL TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL REPORT (WORD TEMPLATE)

ANNEX 6 – REQUEST FOR PAYMENT (RO) (WORD TEMPLATE)