

NGO FUND in Romania

Funds for Bilateral Relations

Measure b. Networking and exchange

Guidelines for applicants

Call for proposals no. 1/2015
Bucharest,
December 18, 2015

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 16 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 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**
- **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.

¹ Donor states = Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein

Note: Please note that support for *Measure a. Partnership building* is **NOT** subject to the present Call for proposals. Organisations that previously benefitted of support under this measure are available at <http://fondong.fdsc.ro/selectie>.

2. SPECIFIC INFORMATION ON THE PRESENT CALL FOR PROPOSALS

2.1 OBJECTIVE AND ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The present call falls within *Measure b. Networking and exchange of the Funds for Bilateral Relations*.

The **objective** of the call is to *facilitate networking, exchange, sharing and transfer of knowledge, technology, experience and best practice between project promoters of the Romanian NGO Fund and entities in donor states.*

The eligible activities must focus on dissemination and valorisation of **overall results, products and achievements of the projects** financed under the NGO Fund in Romania (2009-2014).

Activities proposed in the projects must have a **consistent bilateral dimension with the donors' states**.

Activities should contribute to the **sustainability of relations** with the entities from donor states and reflect the extent to which they are beneficial to the **capacity building** of the applicant.

Types of eligible activities **can include** the followings:

- a) Participation in conferences, seminars, training courses and/or workshops;
- b) Internships and study tours/visits;
- c) Expert visits;
- d) Elaboration and publication of policy papers, reports, studies, scientific papers analysis and/or articles written in cooperation by at least one promoter from Romania and an entity from a donor state;
- e) Organising conferences, seminars, training courses and workshops;
- f) Promotion, information and dissemination activities;
- g) Campaigns, exhibitions and promotional materials;
- h) Translation in English or donor state languages of (tangible) results of projects under the NGO Fund in Romania, accompanied by their dissemination in the donor states;
- i) Other common interest activities contributing to the strengthening of bilateral relations.

Activities should primarily be implemented in donors' states (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein). However, activities' proposed for implementation in Romania can be eligible if the bilateral representation and dimension is consistent.

2.2 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

The only eligible applicants under the present call are **non-governmental and non-profit organisations who acted as or are currently promoters of projects financed within the NGO Fund in Romania** under the EEA Financial Mechanism 2009-2014.

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.

The potential applicants must also:

- comply with democratic values and human rights **and**
- 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 authorities² **and**
- be independent of commercial organisations³ **and**
- be independent of political parties **and**
- be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the project and not acting as an intermediary.

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)
- professional associations⁴
- social partners (trade unions and employers associations)
- profit-distributing cooperatives.

The ***Applicant Statement of eligibility (Annex 2)*** must be filled in and included in the Application Dossier.

²This conditions is NOT fulfilled by organisations that:

- more than half of their members are local, regional and/or national institutions and/or public authorities;
- more than half of the voting members of their Board/ General Assembly are local, regional and/or national institutions and/or public authorities or individuals appointed as their representatives;
- have organizational and functioning structures set up so that the decisions are influenced in majority by local, regional and/or national institutions and/or public authorities.

³This conditions is NOT fulfilled by organisations that:

- more than half of their members are commercial organisations;
- more than half of the voting members of their Board/ General Assembly are commercial organisations or individuals appointed as their representatives;
- have organizational and functioning structures set up so that the decisions are influenced in majority by commercial organisations.

⁴ The „Professional association” is the associations which conditions the execution of a specific profession by the quality of member in the association, whilst the scope and the objectives of the association follow exclusively to satisfy the specific interests of its members.

2.3 ELIGIBLE PARTNERS

An official partnership between a Romanian NGO and an organisation from the donor states (Norway, Island, Liechtenstein) is NOT compulsory.

Given the overall objective though, we strongly encourage the potential applicants to ensure the availability of the entities from the donors' states in order to relevantly contribute to the activities proposed.

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.

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 3)*** must be filled in by any partner and included in the Application Dossier.

2.4 ELIGIBILITY OF COSTS

The following types of costs are eligible:

- a) fees (i.e for registration to an event) and travel costs for participation in conferences, seminars, courses, meetings and workshops;
- b) travel costs for study trips;
- c) travel and salary costs for visits by experts;
- d) costs of conferences, seminars, courses, meetings and workshops;
- e) promotional and information activities;
- f) external consultancy fees
- g) VAT provided that by law it cannot be recovered by the applicant and/or partner

Travel costs referred above include subsistence allowance expenses: accommodation, meals or per diem under national legislation.

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

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

- a) they are invoiced, paid and the subject matter performed 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 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.

Exceptionally, costs in respect of which an invoice has been issued in the final three 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.

2.5 FINANCIAL ALLOCATION AND GRANT SIZE

The total allocation for the present Call for proposals is of **EUR 161,591**.

The maximum size of the grant is **EUR 7500**, with a limit of not more than **EUR 1500 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 is 100% of the total eligible expenditure of the project.

2.6 DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION AND PROJECT DURATION

Launch date for the Call for proposals: **December 18, 2015**

There will be two consecutive deadlines, until the entire financial allocation for the current call is used:

- **1st Deadline: January 22, 2016.**

All proposals received by this date shall enter into the evaluation and selection process and the funding order will be established by considering the final score resulted from the technical evaluation.

- **2nd Deadline: February 15, 2016**

All proposals received by this date shall enter into the evaluation and selection process and the funding order will be established by considering the final score resulted from the technical evaluation.

The available financial allocation for the two deadlines is distributed as follows:

- EUR 111,591 for the 1st Deadline (January 22, 2016)
- EUR 50,000 for the 2nd Deadline (February 15, 2016)

In case the financial allocation reserved for the 1st deadline is not entirely used, the amount shall be distributed and be available for funding proposals submitted within the 2nd Deadline.

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

The maximum implementation period for the project must be set such as **all activities are completed by April 30, 2016** and **all associated costs are invoiced, paid and subject matter performed by April 30, 2016 the latest.**

2.7 PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF THE GRANT APPLICATION

The **Application Dossier** will include:

- **Application Form (Annex 1 - template attached)**, completed in ROMANIAN or ENGLISH
- **Applicant Statement of eligibility (Annex 2 - template attached)**, completed by the applicant and signed **in original**
- **Statement on eligibility and partnership agreement, if the case (Annex 3 - template attached, it can be submitted also as scan/fax⁵)**, completed in ENGLISH and signed by the partner

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

⁵ 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.

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, Measure b, Call no. 1/2015

Title of the project: <title>

Applicant: <full name and address of the applicant>

Latest date of submission of Application Dossiers, in accordance with section 2.6 above, is **January 22, 2016** for the **1st Deadline**, respectively **February 15, 2016** for the **2nd Deadline**. 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:

- **1st Deadline: January 22, 2016, 16:00 local time**
- **2nd Deadline: February 15, 2016, 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.

2.8 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 2.6 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 complete		
2. The "Statement on eligibility and partnership agreement", completed in English is signed and included in the Application Dossier		
3. The "Applicant Statement of eligibility" is completed and signed, in original		
4. The applicant is eligible		
5. The partner is eligible		
6. The maximum grant requested for financing is EUR 7500		

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 within 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 results of the project in respect to their contribution to strengthened bilateral relations 	/25
<p><i>2. Motivation to undertake the project</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Description of the applicant and partner organisation, if the case, and correlation with the area(s) of intervention envisaged in the proposal - 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 the NGO Fund - Complementarity of the approach/activities included in the proposal with the actions of the project funded under the NGO Fund and the added value brought in by the bilateral dimension - To what extent the proposal/activities proposed are beneficial to the capacity building of the applicant and partners involved (if the case) 	/25
<p><i>3. Structure of the project, clarity and coherence of the proposed activities, partner’s involvement if the case</i></p>	/20

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proposed activities and associated concrete outputs are relevant and support the achievement of the project objectives - Preparatory activities of the project are relevant and coherently presented - The project has a coherent structure - The proposal describes the experience and expertise of the persons involved 	
<p><i>4. Follow-up, dissemination and results' exploitation activities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality and feasibility of proposed follow-up activities - Presentation of products/concrete results correlated with activities, potential multiplying effects outside the partnership structure (if the case) and the stakeholders directly involved in the activities; - Promotion/Dissemination of results in the donors countries - How/to what extent activities contribute to sustainable relations among the applicant, partner (if the case) and directly involved stakeholders – how will dialogue/cooperation shall be maintained after the project's closure? 	/20
<p><i>5. The budget is balanced and realistic, built in accordance with the proposed activities and includes eligible costs</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.

2.9 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 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 website⁶, corresponding to the month during which the expenditure incurred (i.e. date of invoice).

Payments shall be done in two instalments:

⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuro/inforeuro_en.cfm

- Advance payment of 90% 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 10% 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.

2.10 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

Mobile: 0757 826 614

E-mail: bilateral@fdsc.ro

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).

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 – APPLICANT STATEMENT OF ELIGIBILITY (WORD TEMPLATE)

ANNEX 3 – STATEMENT ON ELIGIBILITY AND PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT (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)