

Bilateral Fund

Programme ***Active Citizens Fund – Slovakia***

Open Call for Proposals

Call code: 09 – 1

Announcement of the 1st call: 5 December 2018

The on-going call will be open until the funds are fully allocated. The latest date for submission of project applications is 1 February 2022, 16:00.

Call published by: Open Society Foundation

Call text updated 26 January, 2021

1. Programme Active Citizens Fund Slovakia

This call for proposals is a part of the implementation of the programme Active Citizens Fund – Slovakia (ACF – Slovakia or programme).

The ACF – Slovakia supports Slovak civic organizations in engaging citizens in decision-making and public policy making, in efforts to create better conditions for good governance, protect human rights and provide civic education and improve the position of vulnerable groups in society. Particular attention is paid to young people and their participation in public affairs.

The horizontal priorities of the programme are to support bilateral co-operation between Slovak organizations and partners from the donor countries and to develop capacities as well as to improve the position of civic organizations in society.

ACF – Slovakia supports projects of civic organisations through open calls in the following outcomes:

1. Increased citizen participation in civic activities;
2. Strengthened civil society advocacy and watchdog role;
3. Increased support for human rights and civic education;
4. Vulnerable groups empowered;
5. Enhanced capacity and sustainability of civil society.

The programme shall also address two the country-specific concerns:

- Improving outreach to under-served geographic areas and target groups;
- Empowerment and inclusion of minorities including Roma.

In the period 2018 – 2023, the ACF – Slovakia will allocate 7.7 million¹ EUR in 17 open grant calls for projects of civic society organizations (CSO) and will provide other support activities, training in project management, organizational development and self-financing.

The ACF – Slovakia is part of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway's financial assistance to 15 Member States of the European Union. The programme is managed by the Ekopolis Foundation in partnership with the Open Society Foundation and the Carpathian Foundation.

The information on the ACF – Slovakia is available at www.acfslovakia.sk.

The information on the EEA and Norway Grants is available at www.eeagrants.org.

2. Focus of the call

The purpose of the call is to support activities fostering bi-lateral exchange of experience, know-how and best practice between civil society in Slovakia and donor state entities.

Strategic areas for bilateral cooperation correspond with the five expected outcomes of the ACF Slovakia, as provided above.

Specific priority for bilateral cooperation is given to addressing the proliferation of fake news, anti-democratic propaganda, and countering the detrimental impact of these phenomena on public trust in democratic institutions and values of liberal democracy.

¹ The amount includes allocation for the Bilateral Fund and allocation for the Pre-defined project Development and use of life competences of young people

Specifically the call is focused to achieve the following results and their indicators:

Expected programme results	Indicator	Guidance for applicants
Programme Objective – Civil society and active citizenship strengthened and vulnerable groups empowered	Programme-level Indicator Number of people engaged in civil society organisation activities	All projects will report against this indicator
Outcome BF Enhanced collaboration between beneficiary and donor state entities involved in the programme	Outcome BF Indicator [a] Level of satisfaction with the partnership (disaggregated by Beneficiary State, Donor State)	
	Outcome BF Indicator [b] Level of trust between cooperating entities in Beneficiary States and Donor States (disaggregated by Beneficiary State, Donor State)	
	Outcome BF Indicator [c] Share of cooperating organisations that apply the knowledge acquired from bilateral partnership (disaggregated by Beneficiary State, Donor State)	
	Outcome BF Indicator [d] Share of participants in bilateral initiatives funded by the ACF bilateral fund reporting improved knowledge/methods/approaches	
Output BF.1 Partnerships between beneficiary and donor state entities supported	Output BF.1 Indicator Number of projects involving cooperation with a donor project partner (disaggregated by Donor State)	All projects contributing to this output indicator will also report against the Outcome BF (Enhanced collaboration between beneficiary and donor state entities involved in the programme) Indicators [a - d]
Output BF.2 Cooperation between beneficiary and donor state entities facilitated through the ACF bilateral fund	Output BF.2 Indicator 1 Number of bilateral cooperation initiatives funded by the ACF bilateral fund	All projects contributing to this output indicator will also report against the Outcome BF (Enhanced collaboration between beneficiary and donor state entities involved in the programme) Indicators [a - d]
	Output BF.2 Indicator 2 Number of individuals participating in bilateral activities funded by the ACF Bilateral Fund (disaggregated by Donor State)	All projects contributing to this output indicator will also report against the Outcome BF (Enhanced collaboration between beneficiary and donor state entities involved in the programme) Indicators [a - d]

For guidance on the outcomes, outputs and indicators applicable for ACF Slovakia, please refer to the *ACF – Slovakia Guidelines for Applicants and Project Promoters*.

In addition to the indicators set out in the programme, applicants may add additional relevant indicators at their own discretion.

3. Administrative and eligibility criteria

3.1. Project application administrative criteria

A project application must meet the following administrative criteria:

- the project application was submitted in electronic format in the online grant system
- the project application was submitted within the deadline of this call;
- the project application includes all annexes requested in the call.

3.2. Eligible project application

An eligible project application must meet the following criteria:

- requested grant amount corresponds with the terms set in the section 3.5 of this call for proposals;
- project realisation period does not exceed the maximum stated in the section 3.6 of this call for proposals.

3.3. Eligible applicants

Applicants eligible to carry out and implement projects are non-governmental organisations (NGOs). An NGO is a legal entity in the Slovak Republic, having a non-commercial purpose, independent of local, regional and central government, public entities, political parties and commercial organisations. NGOs are voluntary in nature, formed voluntarily by groups or individuals and usually involving an element of voluntary participation in the organisation.

An eligible applicant is registered in the Slovak Republic in one of the following categories:

- a) Civic Association according the Act No. 83/1990 Coll. on the Association of Citizens;
- b) Foundation according the Act No. 34/2002 Coll. on Foundations;
- c) Non-profit Organisation Providing Public Beneficial Services according the Act No. 83/1990 Coll.
- d) Non-investment Fund according the Act No. 34/2002 Coll. on Non-investment Funds;
- e) Non-profit Organisation according the Act No. 116/85 Coll. on terms for activities of organisations with international aspect;
- f) Association of Legal Entities under the Act No. 40/1964 Coll. on Civil Code;
- g) Slovak Red Cross under the Act No. 460/2007 Coll. on the Slovak Red Cross.

Political parties, religious organisations, social partners, profit distributing cooperatives, informal and ad-hoc groups and individuals are not eligible applicants.

Organizations that have not recovered amounts due, following a final court decision in connection with the NGO Programmes 2009 – 2014 in Slovakia, shall not be considered eligible applicants and/or project partners.

3.4. Eligible project partners

Projects in the ACF Slovakia Bilateral Fund may be implemented in partnership with a project partner from the donor states (Iceland, Liechtenstein or Norway).

Project partner shall share a common economic or social goal with the project promoter, which is to be realised through the implementation of the project. The purpose of creating a partnership is to ensure close co-operation between different types of organizations with different experience in solving the issues in the field. Project partners shall be actively involved in and effectively contributing to the implementation of the project.

The entities eligible to be project partners are any public or private entity, commercial or non-commercial, as well as non-governmental organisations established as a legal person either in the donor states.

Applicants may participate in the partnership with **up to one other partner**.

Further requirements for partners' participation in the project:

- participation of project partners is irreplaceable, without partnership it would not be possible to implement the project properly and meet its goals;
- partnership normally involves financial transactions, where the partner is awarded a financial compensation for realisation of activities in the project;
- cooperation is not be that of supplier – customer relationship.

In case of a project planned in partnership, the Partnership Declaration (Annex No. 3a, respectively 3b) is a mandatory attachment to the project application.

3.5. Project funding

A grant under the ACF Slovakia Bilateral Fund covers 100 % of the total eligible project costs.

The maximum grant amount per project is **10,000 €**.

Payments of the project grant shall take the form of advance payments, interim payments and a final payment. Interim and final payments to the projects shall be based on approved interim and final project reports. The maximum level of the advance payment to projects is 40 % from the total budget, of the interim payment 50 % from the total budget and of the final payment 10 % of the total budget.

For more information regarding payments, please refer to the *ACF – Slovakia Guidelines to the eligibility of expenses*.

3.6. Duration of projects

The maximum duration of projects in this call is 12 months.

3.7. Eligibility of expenses

Costs within projects may be eligible from the date on which the grant is awarded or at a later date set in the project contract. The project contract shall set the final date of eligibility of costs which shall be no later than 30 April 2024. Costs incurred after that date are not eligible.

The inclusion of an expenditure item in a project budget approved by the FO cannot be considered as a prerequisite of its eligibility.

Detailed information on eligibility of expenses is stipulated in the document *ACF – Slovakia Guidelines to the eligibility of expenses*.

3.8. Calculation of indirect costs

Indirect costs may not include any eligible direct costs. Indirect costs of the project shall represent a fair apportionment of the overall overheads of the project promoter or the project partner. Applicants (project promoters) and their project partners may apply a flat rate of up to 15 % of direct eligible personnel costs to cover these costs.

4. Evaluation criteria

The evaluation criteria and a scoring chart:

Group of criteria / criterion	Maximum score
1. Relevance, usefulness and added value of the project	45
1.1 Coherence between the project and the Programme results and their indicators	20
1.2 Implementation of the project with a partner from a donor country	10
1.3 Relevance of the project to the needs of direct and indirect target groups and beneficiaries	10
1.4 Sustainability of the project results	5
2. Implementation of the project	22
2.1 Relevance and feasibility of the suggested activities	10
2.2 Collaboration with other organizations and experts, involving the public and professionals	5
2.3 Quality of communication of project results towards the public	7
3. Value for money – the budget and effectiveness of expenses	20
3.1 Reasonable and justifiable budget	12
3.2 Coherence with the proposed activities	8
4. Experience of the applicant (and partner) and capacity to implement the project	13
4.1 Experience of the applicant (and partner) and relevancy of previous activities of the applicant (and partner) in relation to the project	8
4.2 Personnel and technical capacities of the applicant (and partner)	5
Total	100

Any application that receives an **average score less than 70 points** pursuant to the procedure described in part 7.5.2. of this Open Call for Proposals shall automatically be rejected.

5. Timeframe

Publishing of the call for proposals:	5. December 2018
Deadline for submitting project applications:	1 February 2022, 16:00
Publishing of project application evaluation results (indicative):	at most 6 months from the date of the project application submission

6. Financial allocations

The financial allocation in this call for proposals is **100,000 €**.

After spending of these funds, the call will be closed.

No additional funds will be allocated to the call while the call is still running.

7. Preparation, submission, evaluation and approval of project applications

7.1. Preparation of project applications

A project application must be prepared:

- in compliance with the *ACF – Slovakia Guidelines for Applicants and Project Promoters*;
- in compliance the *ACF – Slovakia Guidelines to the Eligibility of Expenses*;
- using the *Project Application Form* and its prescribed annexes forms available in the online grant system.

The documents above are inseparable from this call for proposals and are available at www.acfslovakia.sk.

7.2. Consultations and providing information to applicants

The Fund Operator shall provide information to applicants in written form, by phone, e-mail, in the form of personal consultations. Please also consult the frequently asked questions addressed in the document *Questions and answers* at www.acfslovakia.sk.

7.3. Project application submission

Project application must be submitted online together with the following documents:

- **Project application** (prescribed online form)

- **Mandatory annexes:**
 - Annex No. 1 – Project budget (a prescribed online form)
 - Annex No. 2 – Applicant's legal registration document
 - Annex No. 3 – Partnership Declaration in English (if the project is implemented in partnership with a bilateral partner) (prescribed form)

- **Non-mandatory annexes:**
 - Preliminary approval of a public or expert organisation with realisation of a project activity, if it is necessary for realisation of the activity

The documents must be submitted in the ACF Slovakia online grant system in the following way:

- the project application by filling in the project application form;
- the Annexes No. 1 and No. 2 electronically as attached documents in the xls, pdf, jpg formats.

7.4. Confirmation of project application registration

The applicant shall be informed on registration of the project application automatically by online grant system by sending an e-mail notification. The Fund Operator shall publish a list of registered project applications at www.acfslovakia.sk no later than 7 days since the deadline for submitting project applications in this call.

7.5. Evaluation of project applications

Project application evaluation process:

7.5.1. Reviewing compliance with the administrative and eligibility criteria

The FO shall review the project application in terms of meeting criteria of administrative and eligibility criteria.

If missing, the applicant will be able to supplement the Annex No. 2 by e-mail within a period of 5 working days, based on the FO e-mail request sent to the applicant contact e-mail address.

Not submitting of the Annex 1 Project Budget and/or Annex 3 Partnership declaration will result in rejecting of the application.

The FO may request also additional information / documents from the applicant to determine the compliance with administrative criteria.

Without compliance with the set administrative criteria, the project application shall not be further assessed.

Applicants whose project applications are rejected at this stage shall be informed by the FO of the reasons for the rejection and given a period of 10 working days to appeal that decision through the complaint form available at www.acfslovakia.sk.

Those project applications, where the appeal has been raised are included back in the further process of evaluation and it shall be a responsibility of the Complaint Committee and the Selection Committee to review the reasons for rejection.

7.5.2. Expert evaluation

Each project application that meets the administrative and eligibility criteria and also each project application that was excluded by the Fund Operator on the basis of non-compliance with the administrative and eligibility criteria but the applicant has successfully appealed shall be reviewed by two impartial experts appointed by the Fund Operator. At least one expert shall be independent of the Fund Operator. The experts shall separately and independently score the project application according to the selection criteria published with the call for proposals (for the details, please refer to the *ACF – Slovakia Guidelines for Applicants and Project Promoters*). 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, the project application shall be scored by a third expert. This expert shall be commissioned by, and be independent of, the Fund Operator. In such cases the average score of the two closest scores shall be used for the ranking of the project applications.

7.5.3. Recommendations of the Executive Board on approval / rejection

The ACF Programme Executive Board assesses project applications based on expert evaluation and makes recommendations to the Board of the Open Society Foundation in terms of their approval or rejection.

7.5.4. Final decision of the Board of the Open Society Foundation

The Board of the Open Society Foundation makes a final decision on which project applications shall be approved.

7.6. Information on the results of project application evaluation

The Fund Operator shall inform on approval or rejection of a project application at most 6 months from the date of its submission.

The list of supported and rejected project applications shall be published at www.acfslovakia.sk.

8. Contact details

Programme web pages: www.acfslovakia.sk

Address:

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E-mail contact for submitting a complaint to the ACF – Slovakia Complaints Committee:

staznost@acf.sk

