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CIVIL SOCIETY  
RESOURCE  
CENTRE

**Contracting authority: Civic Resource Centre**

**Call for Proposals:**

**EU Support for Systematic Sectoral Civil Society Participation for the EU  
Accession Negotiations and the Growth Plan Reform Agenda**

Guidelines  
for grant applicants

Reference: 08-31/1-2026

Deadline for submission of application:  
**06/07/2026 at 17:00 (Macedonian date and time)**

## NOTICE

This is an open call for proposals, where all documents are submitted together (concept note and full application). In the first instance, only the concept notes will be evaluated. Thereafter, for the lead applicants who have been pre-selected, the full applications will be evaluated. After the evaluation of the full applications, an eligibility check will be performed for those which have been provisionally selected (including those placed on the reserve list). Eligibility will be checked on the basis of the supporting documents requested by the contracting authority and the signed 'declaration by the lead applicant' sent together with the full application.

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# 1. EU SUPPORT FOR SYSTEMATIC SECTORAL CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION FOR THE EU ACCESSION NEGOTIATIONS AND THE GROWTH PLAN REFORM AGENDA

## 1.1. BACKGROUND

Accession to the European Union is a key political objective for the Western Balkans and Türkiye. The enlargement process relies on effective cooperation and dialogue among public institutions, civil society organisations (CSOs), media, and other stakeholders to ensure inclusive, transparent, and accountable reforms aligned with EU values and standards.

On 25 March 2020, the Council of the European Union decided to open accession negotiations with the Republic of North Macedonia. The accession negotiations formally started with the first Intergovernmental Conference held on 19 July 2022, followed by the launch of the screening of the EU acquis. The negotiations are structured around six clusters and 35 acquis chapters, which define the scope and sequencing of reforms. In particular, the **Fundamentals** Cluster—covering areas such as the rule of law, democratic institutions, public administration reform, and economic governance—plays a central role, as progress under this cluster conditions the overall pace of negotiations.

A functioning and independent civil society is a key indicator of a country's readiness for EU membership and is assessed under the political criteria, notably within the area of Functioning of Democratic Institutions, alongside the role of Parliament and the conduct of elections. CSOs contribute to democratic governance by monitoring reforms, supporting transparency and accountability, and facilitating citizen participation across negotiation clusters and chapters.

Engaging civil society organisations in the EU accession dialogue is essential to ensure broad public understanding, inclusiveness, and ownership of accession-related reforms. Meaningful civil society participation helps ensure that commitments undertaken under the negotiation chapters are not limited to institutional processes, but are based on consultation, evidence-based input, and genuine civic engagement. Independent CSOs, media organisations, and thematic networks are therefore instrumental to the successful implementation of key political, institutional, and economic reforms.

In parallel, the **Growth Plan** for the Western Balkans provides a complementary framework aimed at accelerating socio-economic convergence with the European Union. The Growth Plan is structured around four pillars: (i) integration into the EU Single Market, (ii) regional economic integration, (iii) acceleration of fundamental reforms, and (iv) increased financial support linked to reform performance. Civil society plays an important role in monitoring reform milestones, advocating for transparency, and contributing to public dialogue on the implementation of the Growth Plan Reform Agenda.

This Call for Proposals contributes to these objectives by supporting CSOs' systematic participation in the EU accession process, Fundamentals Cluster, as well as their engagement in the monitoring, advocacy, and implementation of the Growth Plan Reform Agenda. The supported actions under this call should not only strengthen structured dialogue mechanisms but also empower civil society to articulate a coherent and unified approach. Consolidated sectoral platforms would enable CSOs to represent their interests more effectively, uphold democratic values, and ensure accountability throughout the EU accession negotiations. Without such a strategic and coordinated effort, civil society risks remaining reactive and fragmented, thereby limiting its potential to impact reforms within the Fundamentals Cluster.

This Call for Proposals is launched as a financial support to third parties (FSTP) under the EU-funded project "EU Support to the Civil Society Resource Centre – Phase 2". The project aims to strengthen and empower CSOs to participate actively and meaningfully in policy development and decision-making processes. The project is implemented by the Foundation Civic Resource Centre, in partnership with the Association for Democratic Initiatives (ADI), Gostivar, and Media Plus, Štip, with the Macedonian Centre for International Cooperation acting as an affiliated entity. The core objective of the Civic Resource Centre is to support the development of an enabling environment for civil society, while enhancing the capacity and resilience of CSOs to act as competent, effective, accountable, and independent actors within society. Further information on the Civic Resource Centre is available at: [www.rcgo.mk](http://www.rcgo.mk).

## 1.2. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME AND PRIORITY ISSUES

The **global objective** of this call for proposals is to strengthen structured civil society participation in supporting inclusive, transparent, and effective reform processes related to North Macedonia's EU accession and the implementation of the Growth Plan Reform Agenda.

The **specific objectives** of this call for proposals are:

1. To strengthen the **structured, systematic, and evidence-based participation of civil society organisations in reforms under the Fundamentals Cluster of the EU accession process**, through consolidated engagement of existing civil society networks in dialogue with public institutions, monitoring of rule of law, governance reforms and other key areas under the Fundamentals Cluster, and coordinated advocacy related to alignment with the EU acquis.
2. To support and **streamline civil society engagement in the monitoring, advocacy, and public communication of the Growth Plan Reform Agenda**, including through improved coordination, networking, and coalition-building among CSOs contributing to transparent, inclusive, and accountable implementation of Growth Plan reforms.

The priorities of this call for proposals are:

**Priority no. 1/Lot 1: Civil society structural dialogue under the Fundamentals Cluster of the EU Accession Process**

**Priority no. 2 /Lot 2: Civil society coordinated monitoring of the Growth Plan Reform Agenda**

## 1.3. FINANCIAL ALLOCATION PROVIDED BY THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY

The overall indicative amount made available under this call for proposals is **EUR 600,000**. The contracting authority reserves the right not to award all available funds.

**Indicative allocation of funds by lot:**

No.	Lots	Budget in €
Lot 1	<b>Civil society structural dialogue under the Fundamentals Cluster of the EU Accession Process</b>	360,000
Lot 2	<b>Civil society coordinated monitoring of the Growth Plan Reform Agenda</b>	240,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>600,000</b>

If the allocation indicated for a specific lot cannot be used due to insufficient quality or number of proposals received, the contracting authority reserves the right to reallocate the remaining funds to other lot.

### Size of grants

Any grant requested under this call for proposals must fall between the following minimum and maximum amounts:

- minimum amount: EUR 50,000
- maximum amount: EUR 60,000

Organisations that submit applications under this Call for proposals **are not obliged** to provide co-funding. The grant shall cover all eligible costs of the action (100%) as deemed essential to carry it out.

## 2. RULES FOR THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS

These guidelines set out the rules for the submission, selection and implementation of the actions financed under this call, in conformity with the practical guide (PRAG), which is applicable to the present call (available on the internet at this address <https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/display/ExactExternalWiki/ePRAG> ).

### 2.1. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

There are three sets of eligibility criteria, relating to:

- (1) the actors (2.1.1.) and (2.1.2):
  - the ‘**lead applicant**’, i.e. the entity submitting the application form;
  - if any, its **co-applicant(s)** (**where it is not specified otherwise the lead applicant and its co-applicant(s) are hereinafter jointly referred as ‘applicant(s)’**);
  - if any, **affiliated entity(ies)** to the lead applicant and/or to a co-applicant(s);
  - and, entities that are not applicants nor affiliated entities (contractors and associates).
- (2) the actions (2.1.3.):
  - actions for which a grant may be awarded;
- (3) the eligible costs or results/conditions (2.1.4.):
  - where the grant takes the form of reimbursement of costs (totally or partially): the eligible costs, the types of cost that may be taken into account in setting the amount of the grant.
  - where the grant takes the form of financing not linked to costs (totally or partially): the eligibility conditions for the results/conditions.

#### 2.1.1. Eligibility of applicants (i.e. lead applicant and co-applicant(s))

##### Lead applicant

In order to be eligible for a grant, the lead applicant must:

- be a legal person **and**
- be non-profitmaking **and**
- be a civil society organisation registered in line with the [Law on Associations and Foundations<sup>1</sup>](#) **and**
- be effectively established in the Republic of North Macedonia at least three (3) years before this call is launched, **and**
- be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action with the co-applicant(s) and affiliated entity(ies), not acting as an intermediary, **and**
- have completed the online organisational capacity self-assessment tool, available at <https://rcgo.mk/samoocenka/>, **and**
- have completed the online questionnaire on CSOs’ good governance, transparency and accountability, available at <https://rcgo.mk/ogledalo-na-graganskite-organizacii/>, **and**
- be an organisation whose aims and objectives declared in its statute or another organisation’s document are focussed in the relevant priority sector/s of this call.

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<sup>1</sup> Available at: <https://portal.nvosorabotka.gov.mk/post-body-files/site-dokumenti-file-lw8C.pdf>

**The lead applicant must act with co-applicants as specified hereafter.**

If awarded the grant contract, the lead applicant will become the beneficiary identified as the coordinator in the Special conditions of the Grant Contract. The coordinator is the sole interlocutor of the contracting authority. It represents and acts on behalf of any other co-beneficiary (if any) and coordinate the design and implementation of the action.

**Co-applicant(s)**

The lead applicant **must act with at least two (2) co-applicants.**

Co-applicants participate in designing and implementing the action, and the costs they incur are eligible in the same way as those incurred by the lead applicant.

**Co-applicants must satisfy the eligibility criteria as applicable to the lead applicant himself.**

Co-applicants **must sign the mandate in Annex A.2 Section 5.**

If awarded the grant contract, the co-applicants will become beneficiaries in the action (together with the coordinator).

**Affiliated entities**

The lead applicant and its co-applicants may act with affiliated entity(ies).

Only the following entities may be considered as affiliated entities to the lead applicant and/or to co-applicant(s):

Only entities having a structural link with the applicants (i.e. the lead applicant or a co-applicant), in particular a legal or capital link.

This structural link encompasses mainly two notions:

- (i) Control, as defined in Directive 2013/34/EU on the annual financial statements, consolidated financial statements and related reports of certain types of undertakings:

Entities affiliated to an applicant may hence be:

- Entities directly or indirectly controlled by the applicant (daughter companies or first-tier subsidiaries). They may also be entities controlled by an entity controlled by the applicant (granddaughter companies or second-tier subsidiaries) and the same applies to further tiers of control;
- Entities directly or indirectly controlling the applicant (parent companies). Likewise, they may be entities controlling an entity controlling the applicant;
- Entities under the same direct or indirect control as the applicant (sister companies).

- (ii) Membership, i.e. the applicant is legally defined as a e.g. network, federation, association in which the proposed affiliated entities also participate or the applicant participates in the same entity (e.g. network, federation, association...) as the proposed affiliated entities.

The structural link shall, as a general rule, be neither limited to the action nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation. This means that the link would exist independently of the award of the grant; it should exist before the call for proposals and remain valid after the end of the action.

By way of exception, an entity may be considered as affiliated to an applicant even if it has a structural link specifically established for the sole purpose of the implementation of the action in the case of so-called 'sole applicants' or 'sole beneficiaries'. A sole applicant or a sole beneficiary is a legal entity formed by several entities (a group of entities) which together comply with the criteria for being awarded the grant. For example, an association is formed by its members.

### What is not an affiliated entity?

The following are not considered entities affiliated to an applicant:

- Entities that have entered into a (procurement) contract or subcontract with an applicant, act as concessionaires or delegates for public services for an applicant,
- Entities that receive financial support from the applicant,
- Entities that cooperate on a regular basis with an applicant on the basis of a memorandum of understanding or share some assets,
- Entities that have signed a consortium agreement under the grant contract (unless this consortium agreement leads to the creation of a 'sole applicant' as described above).

### How to verify the existence of the required link with an applicant?

The affiliation resulting from control may in particular be proved on the basis of the consolidated accounts of the group of entities the applicant and its proposed affiliates belong to.

The affiliation resulting from membership may in particular be proved on the basis of the statutes or equivalent act establishing the entity (network, federation, association) which the applicant constitutes or in which the applicant participates.

If the applicants are awarded a grant contract, their affiliated entity(ies) will not become beneficiary(ies) of the action and signatory(ies) of the grant contract. However, they will participate in the design and in the implementation of the action and the costs they incur (including those incurred for implementation contracts and financial support to third parties and subcontractors) may be accepted as eligible costs, provided they comply with all the relevant rules already applicable to the beneficiary(ies) under the grant contract.

Affiliated entity(ies) must satisfy the same eligibility criteria as the lead applicant and the co-applicant(s). They must sign the affiliated entity(ies) statement in Section 5 of Annex A.2. Full application form.

### **2.1.2. Associates and contractors**

The following entities are not applicants nor affiliated entities and do not have to sign the 'mandate for co-applicant(s)' or 'affiliated entities' statement:

- **Associates**

Other organisations or individuals may be involved in the action. Such associates play a real role in the action but may not receive funding from the grant, with the exception of per diem or travel costs. Associates do not have to meet the eligibility criteria referred to in Section 2.1.1. Associates must be mentioned in Section 4 — 'Associates participating in the action' — of Annex A.2. Full application form.

- **Contractors**

The beneficiaries and their affiliated entities are permitted to award contracts (subcontracting or implementation contracts). Beneficiaries, affiliated entity(ies), recipients of financial support or associates cannot be also contractors in the project. Contractors are subject to the procurement rules set out in Annex IV to the standard grant contract.

Each actor should only participate in a single role in an action. This is to avoid any potential conflicts of interest and ensure clear allocation of rights and obligations as well as certainty on cost eligibility.

### **2.1.3. Eligible actions: actions for which an application may be made**

#### **Definition**

An action is composed of a set of activities.

## Duration

The initial planned duration of an action may not be lower than **12 months** nor exceed **14 months**.

## Sectors or themes

Specific sectors or themes to which the actions must relate are those directly contributing to the achievement of the objectives and priorities as per section 1.2 above.

## In particular for:

### **LOT 1: Civil Society structural dialogue under the Fundamentals Cluster of the EU Accession Process**

Under this Lot, support will be provided to **existing civil society networks and platforms** that are actively engaged in reforms under the **Fundamentals Cluster<sup>2</sup> of the EU accession process**, including areas related to the good governance, rule of law, judiciary and fundamental rights, justice, freedom and security, public administration reform and public procurement. Actions are expected to contribute to the consolidation and further strengthening of these networks, enhancing their capacity to act as credible, coordinated, and informed interlocutors in the EU accession dialogue with public institutions. In addition, actions may support formalisation of existing networks and their registration as separate legal entities, where relevant, in order to strengthen their sustainability, and ability to engage effectively in the EU accession process.

Actions under Lot 1 should focus on enabling CSOs to operate via **functional sector-based networks** in order to **monitor, analyse, and assess progress in reforms under the Fundamentals Cluster for the EU accession and to cooperate with the working groups on the Fundamentals Cluster once the working groups become fully operational**. This includes assessing alignment with the relevant acquis chapters and the implementation of key governance benchmarks. Particular emphasis should be placed on producing high-quality, evidence-based analysis and policy **recommendations** that can effectively support the design, implementation, and **evaluation** of the progress in the negotiation processes.

Supported actions should further develop **structured and regular policy dialogue** with competent public authorities responsible for EU integration and reforms within the Fundamentals Cluster. This includes sectors' structures that can systematically be involved in the EU negotiation process.

Networking and coordination among CSOs remain a core component of this Lot. Actions should reinforce **sector-based coordination, collective monitoring, and joint advocacy efforts**, ensuring coherent and sustained civil society engagement in reforms under the Fundamentals Cluster throughout the EU accession process.

### **LOT 2: Civil Society coordinated monitoring of the Growth Plan Reform Agenda**

Lot 2 aims to strengthen **coordinated civil society engagement** in the monitoring, advocacy, and implementation of the Growth Plan Reform Agenda, with a view to enhancing transparency, accountability, and inclusive stakeholder participation in reform processes linked to the Growth Plan, as well as fostering a shared understanding of the reform priorities and implementation process.

Under this Lot, support will be provided to civil society initiatives that contribute to **systematic and harmonised monitoring** of reforms, commitments, and milestones under the Growth Plan Reform Agenda, in line with its four pillars. Actions are expected to enable CSOs to generate **evidence-based analysis**, assess reform progress, and provide informed input into policy discussions related to the Growth Plan. While in-depth analysis is expected at the technical level, including engagement with sector-experts, implementing authorities, CSOs shall disseminate key technical insights in accessible formats to a wider audience through social media channels and campaigns, thereby raising public awareness of reform implementation challenges and achievements. CSOs are encouraged to specialise in a defined combination of Growth Plan Reform Agenda policy areas and pillars (e.g. Private Sector Development, Human Capital; Growth Plan pillar initiatives SEPA, Green Lines, etc.), in line with their core expertise, and to maintain active networks with other CSOs in the same domain. With regard to the policy area "Fundamentals and Rule of Law," the focus shall be on key reforms, while avoiding overlap with those covered under LOT 1

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<sup>2</sup> See more details at: <https://mep.gov.mk/en-GB/eu-integracii/klaster-1-fundamentalni-vrednosti>

related to the Fundamental Cluster of the EU accession process. CSOs within the two LOTs are expected to coordinate on Rule of Law topics to avoid overlapping.

Actions funded under Lot 2 should support **coordinated monitoring and advocacy efforts** aimed at improving the implementation and transparency of the Growth Plan reforms, including through structured engagement with public institutions responsible for their implementation and the development and strengthening of **civil society coordination and thematic platforms** that foster cooperation, information exchange, and **joint civil society positions and recommendations**.

In addition, supported actions should promote **public communication and awareness-raising** on the objectives, progress, and impact of the Growth Plan Reform Agenda, helping to increase public understanding and citizen engagement in socio-economic reform processes.

**This Call for proposals encourages applicants under Lot 2 to consult the [Proposed Methodology for Measuring Reform Agendas' Progress in Western Balkan Countries](#)<sup>3</sup>.**

## Location

Actions must take place in the Republic of North Macedonia.

## Types of action

Project proposals should be self-contained operations indicating a coherent set of activities with clearly defined operational objectives, target groups and planned, tangible outcomes, within a limited timeframe. Activities should be designed to meet the specific needs of the target groups identified by the project. Only activities that fall under the priority sector/s mentioned in section 1.2 are eligible for funding under this Call.

Proposed actions should be designed to produce concrete and measurable results in response to identified specific problems along with their social, economic, and political constraints. Actions should be tailored to address these identified problems directly, employing appropriate strategies and methodologies. Each proposed action must include clear objectives, supported by specific, measurable, and verifiable indicators to assess performance and success. The effectiveness of the proposed actions will be evaluated based on their expected results and the logical alignment of the means deployed with the identified objectives.

All proposals under this Call must systematically integrate **gender equality, youth participation, and the rights of persons with disabilities** as cross-cutting priorities. In line with the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025<sup>4</sup>, the EU Gender Action Plan III (2021–2025)<sup>5</sup>, including the Country-Level Implementation Plan for the Republic of North Macedonia<sup>6</sup>, applicants should apply a gender-responsive approach, including gender analysis, sex-disaggregated data, and the use of relevant SMART indicators, as well as the application of the OECD Gender Equality Policy Marker. Each proposal should include at least one indicator addressing gender equality. Furthermore, proposals should mainstream youth participation, in accordance with the EU Youth Strategy 2019–2027<sup>7</sup>, Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the National Youth Strategy 2016–2025, and the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies<sup>8</sup>, ensuring meaningful and inclusive engagement of young people in EU accession and reform

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<sup>3</sup> The methodology is available at <https://reform-monitor.org/proposed-methodology-for-measuring-reform-agendas-progress-in-western-balkan-countries/>. The methodology allows, in justified cases, for continuous adjustment and refinement of the selected indicators, as past practice has shown the need for this (e.g. creation of new process indicators during the implementation of the Instrument, or changes in indicators for monitoring specific reforms). Changes are made through a structured process, reviewed at semi-annual meetings, and agreed upon jointly.

<sup>4</sup> EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 [https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy\\_en#:~:text=The%20key%20objectives%20are%20ending,gender%20balance%20in%20decision%2Dmaking](https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en#:~:text=The%20key%20objectives%20are%20ending,gender%20balance%20in%20decision%2Dmaking)

<sup>5</sup> EU GAP III [https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/topics/gender-equality-and-empowering-women-and-girls\\_en#header-5139](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/topics/gender-equality-and-empowering-women-and-girls_en#header-5139)

<sup>6</sup> EU GAP III CLIP for the Republic of North Macedonia [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/republic-north-macedonia/eu-gender-action-plan-iii-country-level-implementation-plan\\_en?s=229](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/republic-north-macedonia/eu-gender-action-plan-iii-country-level-implementation-plan_en?s=229)

<sup>7</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A42018Y1218%2801%29>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.pravdiko.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Zakon-za-mladinsko-uchestvo-i-mladinski-politiki-16-01-2020.pdf>

processes. In addition, proposals should reflect a strategic commitment to the rights of persons with disabilities, in line with the EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021–2030<sup>9</sup>, promoting non-discrimination, accessibility, and equal participation across all activities.

The following types of action are ineligible:

- actions concerned only or mainly with individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences and congresses;
- actions concerned only or mainly with individual scholarships for studies or training courses;
- actions and measures that may result in violation of human rights or causing significant adverse effects on the environment or the climate<sup>10</sup>;
- actions discriminating against individuals or groups of people on grounds of their gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or lack of them, or their ethnical origin;
- actions concerned only or mainly with “one-off” conferences, and similar events;
- actions concerned only or mainly with academic research and/or feasibility studies;
- actions concerned infrastructure investments and/or essentially focused on purchasing of equipment;
- actions linked to political parties or of political/partisan or religious nature;
- actions that fall within the general activities of competent state institutions or state administration services, including local government;
- retrospective financing for projects already in implementation or completed;
- actions for the exclusive benefit of individuals or exclusive restricted groups of individuals;
- core funding of the lead applicant or its co-applicants (i.e. when budget is mainly for organisational expenses);
- actions related to charitable donations and humanitarian activities;
- purchase and/or renovation of buildings or offices and/or reconstruction works.
- activities undertaken before signature of the contract; and
- actions aimed at profit making activities.

### **Types of activity**

Activities financed under this Call for Proposals must be directly linked to the objectives of the respective Lot and demonstrate clear relevance to the **EU accession negotiations** and/or the **Growth Plan Reform Agenda**.

Actions should build on existing civil society structures and demonstrate added value, sustainability, and complementarity with ongoing reform processes.

Types of activities that may be financed under this call include (**the list is not exhaustive!**):

### **LOT 1: Civil Society structural dialogue under the Fundamentals Cluster of the EU Accession Process**

- Development and reinforcement of sector coordination mechanisms among CSOs, enabling harmonised monitoring, joint positions, and coherent civil society input into reforms under the Fundamentals Cluster, while fostering collaboration, solidarity, and sustained engagement among organisations working within the same reform sectors.
- Joint monitoring, analysis, and assessment of reforms under the Fundamentals Cluster, including relevant acquis chapters and governance benchmarks, through sector-based civil society networks, as well as the preparation of policy briefs, shadow reports, analytical papers and evidence-based recommendations.

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<sup>9</sup> EU Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities 2021-2030  
<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8376&furtherPubs=yes>

<sup>10</sup> Article 29 NDICI.

- Structured and evidence-based policy dialogue with public institutions responsible for EU integration and reforms within the Fundamentals Cluster, including coordinated participation of sectoral civil society networks in the consultative processes, advisory bodies and working groups.
- Coordinated sector-based advocacy initiatives aimed at promoting a joint civil society voice on reforms within the Fundamentals Cluster, including contributions to legislative processes, strategic reform documents and alignment with the EU acquis.
- Strengthening and consolidation of existing civil society networks and platforms active in areas covered by the Fundamentals Cluster, including sector-based coordination, joint monitoring, collective advocacy initiatives, and coordination of network members.
- Capacity-building activities for sectoral CSOs' networks, aimed at strengthening their expertise in rule of law monitoring, governance reforms, acquis alignment, and EU accession methodology related to the Fundamentals Cluster, while enhancing their ability to act collectively and effectively in policy dialogue processes.
- Institutional strengthening of existing civil society networks operating in areas covered by the Fundamentals Cluster, including activities aimed at improving internal governance, coordination mechanisms, sustainability, and, where relevant, the formalisation and registration of networks as legal entities.

## **LOT 2: Civil Society coordinated monitoring in the Growth Plan Reform Agenda**

- Monitoring and assessment of the implementation of the Growth Plan Reform Agenda, including tracking reform milestones, commitments and progress under the four pillars of the Growth Plan.
- Advocacy initiatives aimed at improving transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness in the implementation of Growth Plan reforms, including engagement with relevant public institutions and stakeholders.
- Development and implementation of civil society coordination, networking, and coalition-building initiatives related to the Growth Plan, promoting the consolidation of efforts for organised and unified sectoral monitoring based on a shared methodology, common indicators and coordinated reporting.
- Intra-sector specialisation focused on reform milestone tracking, civil society coordination, networking and coalition building, and engagement of sector-experts and implementing institutions through dedicated, regular discussion panels addressing sector-specific reform implementation challenges, and progress toward indicators.
- Specialisation in a defined combination of Growth Plan Reform Agenda policy areas and pillars (e.g. Private Sector Development, Human Capital; Growth Plan pillar initiatives SEPA, Green Lines, etc.), CSOs are expected to define the set of policy areas, reforms, and pillar initiatives under their oversight.
- Public communication, awareness-raising, and outreach activities aimed at informing citizens and stakeholders about the objectives, progress and socio-economic impact of the Growth Plan reforms.
- Preparation of analytical and communication products (reports, policy briefs, analytical papers, policy recommendations) related to the implementation of the Growth Plan Reform Agenda, with a focus on social media dissemination of user-engaging content and campaigning, with the aim of enhancing the accessibility and comprehensibility of reform challenges and achievements for a wider audience.
- Capacity-building activities for CSOs and civil society networks to strengthen their ability to conduct coordinated monitoring, advocacy and public communication related to the Growth Plan Reform Agenda.

**Please note the lists refer to typical areas and are not limited, proposals with other innovative activities covering the above priorities will also be considered.**

## **Visibility**

The applicants must take all necessary steps to ensure the visibility of the European Union as the funder or co-funder of the action, through the correct and prominent display of the EU emblem and relevant funding statement. Unless the European Commission agrees otherwise, actions that are wholly or partially funded by the European Union must ensure the visibility of EU financing by displaying the EU emblem in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Operational guidelines for recipients of EU funding, published by the European Commission.

All measures and activities relating to visibility and, if applicable, communication, must comply with the latest Communication and Visibility Requirements for EU-funded external action, laid down and published by the European Commission [Communication and Visibility Requirements for EU External Actions | International Partnerships \(europa.eu\)](https://european-council.europa.eu/media/eu-external-partnerships/communication-and-visibility-requirements-for-eu-external-actions-international-partnerships/europa.eu).

Derogation from contractual visibility obligations is permitted in exceptional situations, which may be required in the framework of this action due to security issues for the staff and beneficiaries, local political sensitivities, when this is in the interest of the beneficiary or the contracting authority. In such cases, visibility tools, products, and channels to be used in promoting a given action will be determined on a case-by-case basis, in consultation and agreement with the EU prior to limiting EU visibility. Requests for derogation from contractual visibility obligations should be included in Annex A.2 – Full application form and negotiated as part of the Special Conditions of the contract.

## **Number of applications and grants per applicants / affiliated entities**

The lead applicant **may not submit more than one (1) application** under this call for proposals.

The lead applicant **may not be awarded more than one (1) grant** under this call for proposals.

The lead applicant **may not be a co-applicant or an affiliated entity** in another application at the same time.

A co-applicant/affiliated entity **may not be the co-applicant or affiliated entity in more than one (1) application** under this call for proposals.

A co-applicant/affiliated entity **may not be awarded more than one (1) grant** under this call for proposals.

## **Form of the grant**

The grants awarded under this call for proposals take the following form:

**Reimbursement of eligible costs that may be based on the following form as per Section 2.1.4: (i) actual costs incurred by the beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies).**

### **2.1.4. Eligibility of costs and eligibility of results/conditions**

#### **Reimbursement of costs**

Where the grant takes the form of reimbursement of costs (entirely or partially), only ‘eligible costs’ can be covered by a grant. The categories of costs that are eligible and non-eligible are indicated below. The budget is both a cost estimate and an overall ceiling for ‘eligible costs’.

Eligible costs can be reimbursed as actual costs.

#### Eligible direct costs

To be eligible under this call for proposals, costs must comply with the provisions of Article 14 of the general conditions to the standard grant contract.

Recommendations to award a grant are always subject to the condition that the checks preceding the signing of the grant contract do not reveal problems requiring changes to the budget (such as arithmetical errors, inaccuracies, unrealistic costs and ineligible costs). The checks may give rise to requests for clarification and may lead the contracting authority to impose modifications or reductions to address such mistakes or inaccuracies. It is not possible to increase the grant or the percentage of EU co-financing as a result of these corrections.

It is therefore in the applicants' interest to provide a **realistic and cost-effective budget**.

**NOTE: Contingency reserves and indirect costs are NOT eligible under this Call for Proposals.**

#### Ineligible costs

Costs that do not comply with the conditions laid down in the contract are not eligible. The following costs are not eligible:

- debts and debt service charges (interest);
- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- costs declared by the beneficiary(ies) and financed by another action or work programme receiving a European Union (including through EDF) grant;
- purchases of land or buildings, except where necessary for the direct implementation of the action, in which case ownership must be transferred in accordance with Article 7.5 of the general conditions of the standard grant contract, at the latest at the end of the action;
- currency exchange losses;
- in kind contributions;
- bonuses included in costs of staff;
- negative interest charged by banks or other financial institutions;
- credit to third parties;
- salary costs of the personnel of national administrations.

### **2.1.5. Ethics and values**

#### **Absence of conflict of interest**

The applicant must not be affected by any conflict of interest and must have no equivalent relation in that respect with other applicants or parties involved in the actions. Any attempt by an applicant to obtain confidential information, enter into unlawful agreements with competitors or influence the evaluation committee or the contracting authority during the process of examining, clarifying, evaluating and comparing applications will lead to the rejection of its application and may result in exclusion decisions for other award procedures and/or financial penalties according to the Financial Regulation in force.

#### **Respect of environmental legislation and core labour standards**

Applicants who are awarded a grant must comply with the environmental legislation including multilateral environmental agreements, and with the core labour standards as applicable and as defined in the relevant International Labour Organisation conventions (such as the conventions on freedom of association and collective bargaining; elimination of forced and compulsory labour; abolition of child labour).

#### **Respect of EU values**

Applicants who are awarded a grant must commit to and ensure the respect of basic EU values, such as respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and human rights, including the rights of minorities.

**Zero tolerance for sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment**

The European Commission applies a policy of 'zero tolerance' in relation to all wrongful conduct which has an impact on the professional credibility of the applicant.

Physical abuse or punishment, or threats of physical abuse, sexual abuse or exploitation, harassment and verbal abuse, as well as other forms of intimidation shall be prohibited.

Successful applicants (and affiliated entities) other than (i) natural persons, (ii) pillar-assessed entities and (iii) governments and other public bodies shall assess their internal policy against sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEA-H) through a self-evaluation questionnaire (Annex L).

### **Anti-corruption and anti-bribery**

The applicant shall comply with all applicable laws, regulations and codes relating to anti-bribery and anti-corruption. The contracting authority reserves the right to suspend or cancel project financing if corrupt practices of any kind are discovered at any stage of the award process or during the execution of a contract and if the contracting authority fails to take all appropriate measures to remedy the situation. For the purposes of this provision, 'corrupt practices' are the offer of a bribe, gift, gratuity or commission to any person as an inducement or reward for performing or refraining from any act relating to the award of a contract or execution of a contract already concluded with the contracting authority.

### **Unusual commercial expenses**

Applications will be rejected or contracts terminated if it emerges that the award or execution of a contract has given rise to unusual commercial expenses. Such unusual commercial expenses are commissions not mentioned in the main contract or not stemming from a properly concluded contract referring to the main contract, commissions not paid in return for any actual and legitimate service, commissions remitted to a tax haven, commissions paid to a payee who is not clearly identified or commissions paid to a company which has every appearance of being a front company.

Grant beneficiaries found to have paid unusual commercial expenses on projects funded by the European Union are liable, depending on the seriousness of the facts observed, to have their contracts terminated or to be excluded from receiving EU/EDF funds.

### **Breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud**

The contracting authority reserves the right to suspend or cancel the procedure, where the award procedure proves to have been subject to breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud. If breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud are discovered after the award of the contract, the contracting authority may refrain from concluding the contract.

## **2.2. HOW TO APPLY AND THE PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW**

### **2.2.1. Application forms**

Applications must be submitted in accordance with the instructions in the grant application form annexed to these guidelines (Annex A). Lead applicants should then keep strictly to the format of the grant application form and fill in the paragraphs and pages in order.

#### **Applicants must apply in English.**

Please complete the full application form carefully and as clearly as possible so that it can be assessed properly.

#### **WARNING**

The title of your proposal will become, if selected, the subject matter of the grant contract that will be signed with your organisation.

We therefore recommend to define the subject matter of your proposal along the following indications.

An appropriate subject:

- refers to the content of the project or its objective;
- does not repeat information available in other fields such as the recipient's name, the programme, the year;

- is preferably written in English;
- may contain acronyms if relevant for the citizens;
- may contain the reference to the project or programme.

Any error or major discrepancy related to the points listed in the instructions or any major inconsistency in the application (e.g. if the amounts in the budget worksheets are inconsistent) may lead to the rejection of the application.

Clarifications will only be requested when the information provided is unclear and thus prevents the contracting authority from conducting an objective assessment.

Please note that only the grant application form and the published annexes which have to be filled in (budget, logical framework) will be evaluated. It is therefore of utmost importance that these documents contain ALL the relevant information concerning the action.

**Please note that incomplete applications may be rejected. Lead applicants are advised to verify that their application is complete using the checklists (Checklist for self-guidance of A.1. Concept note and Checklist for self-guidance of A.2. Full application form).**

The following documents should also be submitted together with the application form (with all annexes):

1. Certificate of Current Status for the lead applicant, each co-applicant and (if any) each affiliated entity, issued by the Central Register of the Republic of North Macedonia. This certificate must not be older than six (6) months as of the application submission deadline.
2. The statutes of the lead applicant, of each co-applicant and (if any) of each affiliated entity.
3. The declaration on honour (Annex H to these guidelines) signed by the lead applicant as well as all co-applicants and affiliated entities certifying that they are not in one of the exclusion situations (see Section 2.4.2 of the practical guide) where the amount of the grant exceeds EUR 15 000.
4. In addition, for the purpose of the evaluation of the financial capacity, the following documents should be submitted:
  - a. A copy of the lead applicant's profit and loss account and the balance sheet for up to the three last financial years for which the accounts were closed. A copy of the latest account is neither required from the co-applicants nor from affiliated entity(ies) (if any).

These documents must be supplied in the form of originals, photocopies or scanned versions (i.e. showing legible stamps, signatures and dates) of the said originals. The declaration on honour on exclusion criteria shall be submitted in original. For the other documents, originals shall be kept on file for controls in accordance with the record keeping obligations laid down in Section 2.5.5. of the practical guide.

If the abovementioned supporting documents are not provided by the deadline for the submission of the application form, the application may be rejected.

No additional annexes should be sent.

### **2.2.2. Where and how to send applications**

Applications must be submitted in one original in A4 size. The complete application form (Annex A.1. Concept note and Annex A.2. Full application form), the declaration on honour on exclusion criteria, the rest of supporting documents, budget and logical framework and all other annexes must also be supplied in electronic format (USB) in a separate and single file (i.e. the application must not be split into several different files). The electronic file must contain **exactly the same** application as the paper version enclosed. Hand-written applications will not be accepted.

The declaration by the lead applicant (Section 5 of Annex A.2. Full application form) and the declaration on honour on exclusion criteria (Annex H) must be printed stapled separately and enclosed in the envelope.

The outer envelope must bear the reference number and the title of the call for proposals: EU Support for Systematic Sectoral Civil Society Participation for the EU Accession Negotiations and the Growth Plan Reform Agenda, Reference: 08-31/1-2026, together with the full name and address of the lead applicant,

and the words 'Not to be opened before the opening session'. This must be written in English and Macedonian language.

Applications must be submitted in a sealed envelope by registered mail, private courier service or by hand-delivery (a signed and dated certificate of receipt will be given to the deliverer) at the address below:

Postal address:

Civic Resource Centre, Bul. Kliment Ohridski No. 21, 1000 Skopje

Граѓански ресурсен центар, бул. Климент Охридски бр. 21, 1000 Скопје

Address for hand delivery:

Civic Resource Centre, Bul. Kliment Ohridski No. 21, Skopje

Applications sent by any other means (e.g. by fax or by e-mail) or delivered to other addresses will be rejected.

### **2.2.3. Deadline for submission of applications**

The applicants' attention is drawn to the fact that there are two different systems for sending applications: one is by post or private courier service, the other is by hand delivery.

In the first case, the application must be sent before the date for submission, as evidenced by the postmark or deposit slip, but in the second case it is the acknowledgment of receipt given at the time of the delivery of the application which will serve as proof.

The deadline for the submission of applications is 06/07/2026 as evidenced by the date of dispatch, the postmark or the date of the deposit slip. In the case of hand-deliveries, the deadline for receipt is at **06/07/2026 at 17:00 (Macedonian date and time)**, as evidenced by the signed and dated receipt. Any application submitted after the deadline will automatically be rejected.

The contracting authority may, for reasons of administrative efficiency, reject any application submitted on time to the postal service but received, for any reason beyond the contracting authority's control, after the effective date of approval of the first evaluation step (i.e. concept note), if accepting applications that were submitted on time but arrived late would considerably delay the award procedure or jeopardise decisions already taken and notified. (see indicative calendar under Section 2.7).

**Any application submitted after the deadline will be rejected.**

### **2.2.4. Further information about applications**

Two information sessions on this call for proposals will be held online on **15th May 2026 at 12:00 and 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2026 at 12:00**.

Questions may be sent by e-mail no later than 21 days before the deadline for the submission of applications to the below address, indicating clearly the reference of the call for proposals:

E-mail address: [info@rcgo.mk](mailto:info@rcgo.mk)

The contracting authority has no obligation to provide clarifications to questions received after this date.

Replies will be given no later than 11 days before the deadline for the submission of applications.

To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the contracting authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of lead applicants, co-applicants, affiliated entity(ies), an action or specific activities.

Questions that may be relevant to other applicants, together with the answers, will be published on the website where the call was published: [www.rcgo.mk](http://www.rcgo.mk). It is therefore advisable to consult the abovementioned website regularly in order to be informed of the questions and answers published.

Please note that the contracting authority may decide to cancel the call for proposals procedure at any stage according to the conditions set out in Section 6.5.9 of the practical guide.

## 2.3. EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications will be examined and evaluated by the contracting authority with the possible assistance of external assessors or observers. All applications will be assessed according to the following steps and criteria.

If the examination of the application reveals that the proposed action does not meet the eligibility criteria stated in Section 2.1, the application will be rejected on this sole basis.

### 2.3.1. STEP 1: OPENING & ADMINISTRATIVE CHECKS AND CONCEPT NOTE EVALUATION

During the opening and administrative check the following will be assessed:

- If the deadline has been met. Otherwise, the application will be automatically rejected.
- If the application satisfies all the criteria specified in the Checklist for self-guidance of A.1. Concept note and the Checklist for self-guidance of A.2. Full application form. This includes also an assessment of the eligibility of the action. If any of the requested information is missing or is incorrect, the application may be rejected on that sole basis and the application will not be evaluated further.

The concept notes that pass this check will be evaluated on the relevance and design of the proposed action.

The concept notes will receive an overall score out of 50 using the breakdown in the evaluation grid below. The evaluation will also check on compliance with the instructions on how to complete the concept note, which can be found in Part A of the grant application form.

The evaluation criteria are divided into headings and subheadings. Each subheading will be given a score between 1 and 5 as follows: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.

	Scores	
<b>1. Relevance of the action</b>	Sub-score	<b>20</b>
1.1 <b>Consistency with the objectives of the call:</b> How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the call for proposals and to the specific themes/sectors/areas or any other specific requirement stated in the guidelines for applicants? Are the expected results of the action aligned with the priorities defined in the guidelines for applicants (Section 1.2)?	5	
1.2 <b>Relevance to the country/region/sector needs:</b> How relevant is the proposal to the particular needs and constraints of the target country(ies), region(s) and/or relevant sectors (including synergy with other development initiatives and avoidance of duplication)?	5	
1.3 <b>Target groups and final beneficiaries:</b> How clearly defined and strategically chosen are the target groups and final beneficiaries? Have their needs (as rights holders and/or duty bearers) and constraints been clearly defined? Does the proposal address them appropriately?	5	
1.4 <b>Added value elements:</b> Does the proposal contain particular added-value elements (e.g. innovation, best practices) and the other additional elements indicated under 2.1.3. of the guidelines for applicants.	5	
<b>2. Design of the action</b>	Sub-score	<b>30</b>
2.1 <b>Intervention logic.</b> Does the proposal indicate the expected results (outputs/outcomes/impacts) to be achieved by the action? Does the design of the proposed action identify explicitly the necessary sequence to achieve the desired objectives beginning with inputs, moving through activities and outputs, and culminating in outcomes and impacts?	5x2*	

2. <b>Context analysis.</b> Does the design of the action include a robust analysis of the needs to be addressed, including the capacities of the relevant stakeholders? Are those also embedded adequately in the intervention logic?	5	
2.3 <b>Risks and assumptions.</b> Is the design based on clear assumptions (the necessary and positive conditions that allow for a successful cause-and-effect relationship between different levels of results)? Does it take into account also risks (the factors that might hinder the achievement of results)?	5	
2.4 <b>Indicative Activities.</b> Is the indicative list of activities linked to and consistent with the expected outputs?	5	
2.5 <b>Cross-cutting issues:</b> To which extent does the proposal integrate relevant cross-cutting elements such as environmental/climate change issues, promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities, needs of disabled people, rights of minorities and rights of indigenous peoples, youth, combating HIV/AIDS (if there is a strong prevalence in the target country/region)?	5	
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>		<b>50</b>

\*this score is multiplied by 2 because of its importance

Once all concept notes have been assessed, a list will be drawn up with the proposed actions ranked according to their total score.

Firstly, only the concept notes with a score of at least 30 will be considered for pre-selection.

Secondly, the number of concept notes will be reduced, taking account of the ranking, to the number of concept notes whose total aggregate amount of requested contributions is equal to at least 200% of the available budget for this call for proposals. The amount of requested contributions of each concept note will be based on the indicative financial envelopes for each lot, where relevant.

After the evaluation of concept notes, the contracting authority will send letters to all lead applicants, indicating whether their application was submitted by the deadline, informing them of the reference number they have been allocated, whether the concept note was evaluated and the results of that evaluation. The evaluation committee will then proceed with the lead applicants whose proposals have been pre-selected.

### 2.3.2. EVALUATION OF THE FULL APPLICATION

If the applications pass the opening and administrative checks along the instructions of the Step 1, they will be further evaluated on their quality, including the proposed budget and capacity of the applicants and affiliated entity(ies). They will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria in the evaluation grid below. There are two types of evaluation criteria: selection and award criteria.

**The selection criteria** help to evaluate the applicant(s)'s and affiliated entity(ies)'s operational capacity and the lead applicant's financial capacity and are used to verify that they:

- have stable and sufficient sources of finance to maintain their activity throughout the proposed action and, where appropriate, to participate in its funding (this only applies to lead applicants);
- have the management capacity, professional competencies and qualifications required to successfully complete the proposed action. This applies to applicants and any affiliated entity(ies).

**The award criteria** help to evaluate the quality of the applications in relation to the objectives and priorities set forth in the guidelines, and to award grants to projects which maximise the overall effectiveness of the call for proposals. They help to select applications which the contracting authority can be confident will comply with its objectives and priorities. They cover the relevance of the action, its consistency with the objectives of the call for proposals, quality, expected impact, sustainability and cost-effectiveness.

*Scoring:*

The evaluation grid is divided into Sections and subsections. Each subsection will be given a score between 1 and 5 as follows: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.

## Evaluation grid

Section	Maximum Score
<b>1. Financial and operational capacity</b>	<b>20</b>
1.1 Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient in-house experience of project management?	5
1.2 Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient in-house technical expertise? (especially knowledge of the issues to be addressed)	5
1.3 Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient in-house management capacity? (Including staff, equipment and ability to handle the budget for the action)?	5
1.4 Does the lead applicant have stable and sufficient sources of finance?	5
<b>2. Relevance</b>	<b>20</b>
<i>Score transferred from the Concept Note evaluation</i>	
<b>3. Design of the action</b>	<b>15</b>
3.1 <b>Intervention logic:</b> Does the proposal indicate the expected results (outputs/outcomes/impacts) to be achieved by the action? Does the design of the proposed action identify explicitly the necessary sequence to achieve the desired objectives beginning with inputs, moving through activities and outputs, and culminating in outcomes and impacts? Is the indicative list of activities linked to and consistent with the expected outputs?	5
3.2 <b>Logical Framework Matrix:</b> Is the logical framework provided in Annex C complete? Does each result (output, outcome, impact) include an adequate number of indicators that are sufficient in scope to measure its achievement? Is each indicator RACER (Relevant, Accepted, Credible, Easy to monitor, Robust)? Does each indicator have a baseline value (with year), target value (with year), and a credible source of data? If baselines and targets are not available, this is to be justified and a study (or other relevant tools) to be foreseen and budgeted in the proposal? In the case of use of FNLC, are the FNLC results and indicators clearly marked?	5
3.3 <b>Context analysis.</b> Does the design of the action include a robust analysis of the needs to be addressed, including the capacities of the relevant stakeholders? Are those also embedded adequately in the intervention logic?	5
<b>4. Implementation approach</b>	<b>15</b>
4.1 <b>Action plan:</b> Is the action plan for implementing the action clear and feasible? Are types of activities clearly clustered by output in the Activities Matrix? Is the timeline realistic?	5
4.2 <b>Monitoring, reporting and evaluation:</b> Does the proposal include an effective and efficient monitoring and reporting system? Is the system in place adequate to update the values of the indicators included in the Logical Framework Matrix - thus informing regularly on progress towards the achievement of impact, outcomes and outputs? Is there an evaluation planned and budgeted (previous, during or/and at the end of the implementation)? If relevant, is the role of third party assessor included?	5
4.3 <b>Project management (technical):</b> Do the co-applicant(s) and (if applicable) their affiliated entities have the necessary technical skills to attain the objectives of the action? Are the co-applicant(s)'s and affiliated entity(ies)'s adequately involved in the implementation (e.g. advocacy, research, capacity building, outreach related activities)?	5
<b>5. Sustainability of the action</b>	<b>15</b>

5.1 <b>Long-lasting benefits:</b> Is the action likely to ensure long lasting and transformative benefits to the target groups and the final beneficiaries?	5
5.2 <b>Multiplier effects:</b> Is the action likely to have multiplier effects, including scope for replication, extension, cross-fertilisation of experience and knowledge sharing?	5
5.3 <b>Sustainability</b> How likely the effects are to last after the intervention ends?  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Financial sustainability: which financial resources are available to fund the continuation of the services provided by the intervention? How long are they likely to be available and from which sources?)</li> <li>- Institutional sustainability: which institutional arrangements allow for maintaining the benefits achieved? Is there any measure in place to ensure local ownership?</li> <li>- Policy level sustainability (if applicable): is there any expected policy related effect from the action, e.g. improved legislation, codes of conduct, methods</li> <li>- Environmental sustainability (if applicable): will the action have a negative/positive environmental impact?</li> <li>- Risk analysis and mitigation measures: will the action be accompanied by a good risk analysis (including physical, environmental, political, economic and social risks) and relevant mitigation measures?</li> </ul>	5
<b>6. Budget and efficiency of the action</b>	<b>15</b>
6.1 <b>Budget:</b> Are the activities appropriately reflected in the budget? In the case of entire or partly use of financing not linked to costs, are the results and performance indicators adequately reflected in the budget?	/ 5
6.2 <b>Efficiency:</b> Is the relation between the estimated amounts as per budget and the expected results adequate??	/ 10
<b>Maximum total score</b>	<b>100</b>

If the total score for Section 1 (financial and operational capacity) is less than 12 points, the application will be rejected. If the score for at least one of the subsections under Section 1 is 1, the application will also be rejected.

If the lead applicant applies without co-applicants or affiliated entities the score for point 4.3 shall be 5 unless the involvement of co-applicants or affiliated entities is mandatory according to these guidelines for applicants.

#### *Provisional selection*

After the evaluation, a table will be drawn up listing the applications ranked according to their score. The highest scoring applications will be provisionally selected until the available budget for this call for proposals is reached. In addition, a reserve list will be drawn up following the same criteria. This list will be used if more funds become available during the validity period of the reserve list. The contracting authority informs those lead applicants provisionally selected and those placed on the reserve list, that they will be subject to the final eligibility check.

### **2.3.3. STEP 3: VERIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY OF THE APPLICANTS AND AFFILIATED ENTITY(IES) AND OTHER SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

The eligibility verification will be performed on the basis of the supporting documents requested by the contracting authority see Section 2.2. It will by default only be performed for the applications that have been provisionally selected (including those placed on the reserve list) according to their score and within the available budget for this call for proposals. In this case:

- The declaration by the lead applicant (Section 5 of Annex A.2. Full application form) and declaration of honour on selection and exclusion criteria will be cross-checked with the supporting documents provided by the lead applicant. Any missing supporting document or any incoherence between the declaration by the lead applicant and the supporting documents may lead to the rejection of the application on that sole basis.
- The eligibility of applicants and the affiliated entity(ies) will be verified according to the criteria set out in Section 2.1.1, including exclusion criteria.

Any rejected application will be replaced by the next best placed application on the reserve list that falls within the available budget for this call for proposals.

In the eventuality that the evaluation committee is not satisfied with the strength, solidity, and guarantee offered by the structural link between one of the applicants and its affiliated entity, it can require the submission of the missing documents allowing for its conversion into co-applicant. If all the missing documents for co-applicants are submitted, and provided all necessary eligibility criteria are fulfilled, the above-mentioned entity becomes a co-applicant for all purposes. The lead applicant has to submit the application form revised accordingly.

## **2.4. AWARD DECISION**

After verifying the supporting documents (step 3), the evaluation committee will make a final recommendation to the contracting authority, which will decide on the award of grants.

The contracting authority may decide not to award any grants and cancel the call for proposals without having the applicants any right to compensation.

The award decision shall indicate the successful applicants, the names of the applicants rejected, and a reserve list (if any).

## **2.5. NOTIFICATION OF THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY'S DECISION**

The lead applicants will be informed in writing of the contracting authority's decision concerning their application. Please note that the lead applicant is the intermediary for all communications between applicants and the contracting authority during the procedure.

In case of rejection, they will be informed about the reasons for the negative decision. For the avoidance of doubt, please note that for applications rejected for reasons such as non-compliance with the admissibility requirements (for example, if the application was sent after the deadline), with the eligibility (the entity or person is not part of the predefined eligible population of entities or persons), the selection (the entity does not have financial capacity or professional or operational capacity) and the award criteria (the proposal does not comply with the predefined requirements such as quality, cost/efficiency), no prior adversarial procedure is required.

Applicants placed on the reserve list will also be informed. The applicable terms to the reserve list are laid down in Section 6.5. of the practical guide.

The successful applicants shall also be informed, and will be requested to provide some information and documents, including (for grants exceeding EUR 60 000) the self-evaluation questionnaire on SEA-H. The lead applicant as well as all co-applicants and affiliated entities other than (i) natural persons (ii) pillar-assessed entities and (iii) governments and other public bodies shall fill in the self-evaluation questionnaire assessing the organisation's internal policy and procedures against sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEA-H) (Annex L) (see Section 6.2.10 of the practical guide).

Successful applicants will also be informed if the first instalment of pre-financing is subject to the validation of a financial guarantee by the contracting authority. In this case, the applicant will be requested to send the guarantee in time to proceed to the payment of the first instalment in accordance with the payment provisions of the grant contract.

An applicant believing that it has been harmed by an error or irregularity during the award process may lodge a complaint. See Section 2.12 of the practical guide.

## 2.6. SIGNATURE OF THE GRANT CONTRACT

Following the decision to award a grant, the beneficiary(ies) will be offered a contract based on the standard grant contract. By signing the application form (Annex A of these guidelines), the applicants agree, if awarded a grant, to accept the contractual conditions of the standard grant contract. Where the coordinator is an organisation whose pillars have been positively assessed, it will sign a contribution agreement based on the contribution agreement template. In this case, references to provisions of the standard grant contract and its annexes shall not apply. References in these guidelines to the grant contract shall be understood as references to the relevant provisions of the contribution agreement.

The budget proposed for the action by the successful applicants at the call for proposals stage must be corrected to remove any obvious arithmetical errors or ineligible costs prior to signing the contract. The description of the action is corrected accordingly if need be.

The contracting authority may decide that other clarifications or minor corrections may be made to the description of the action or to the budget in so far as they do not call into question the grant award decision, do not conflict with equal treatment of applicants, and:

- relate to matters clearly identified by the evaluation committee; or
- aim at taking into consideration changes that have occurred since the date of receipt of the proposal.

These amendments cannot lead to an increase in either the amount of the grant or the percentage of the European Union contribution as set in the guidelines of the call for proposals. In this respect, records of the contacts with the applicants must be kept on the file.

In no case the conditions announced in the guidelines can be altered at this stage. Apart from the above-mentioned clarifications and/or corrections, any other alteration of the initial proposal or deviation from the award conditions laid down in the guidelines is strictly prohibited.

**Any other alteration to the successful applicant's proposal, or negotiation of it, is prohibited.**

## 2.7. INDICATIVE TIMETABLE

	DATE	TIME
<b>1. Information meeting (if any)</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> May 2026 22 <sup>nd</sup> May 2026	12:00
<b>2. Deadline for requesting any clarifications from the contracting authority</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> June 2026	17:00
<b>3. Last date on which clarifications are issued by the contracting authority</b>	26 <sup>th</sup> June 2026	-
<b>4. Deadline for submission of applications</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> July 2026	17:00
<b>5. Information to lead applicants on opening, administrative checks and concept note evaluation (Step 1)</b>	July 2026	-
<b>6./7. Notification of the contracting authority decision</b>	August 2026	-
<b>7./8. Contract signature</b>	August 2026	-

All times are in the time zone of the country of the contracting authority.

This indicative timetable refers to provisional dates (except for dates 2, 3, and 4) and may be updated by the contracting authority during the procedure. In such cases, the updated timetable will be published on the web site where the call was published: [www.rcgo.mk](http://www.rcgo.mk)

## **2.8. EARLY DETECTION AND EXCLUSION SYSTEM**

Applicants and, if they are legal entities, persons who have powers of representation, decision-making or control over them, natural or legal person that assumes unlimited liability for the debts, natural or legal person who is essential for the award or for the implementation of the legal commitment, beneficial owner or any affiliate of the applicant, are informed that, should they be in one of the situations of early detection or exclusion, their personal details (name, given name if natural person, address, legal form) may be registered in the early detection and exclusion system, and communicated to the persons and entities concerned in relation to the award or the execution of a grant contract.

For more information, you may consult the privacy statement available on

[http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect_en.cfm)

### 3. LIST OF ANNEXES

#### DOCUMENTS TO BE COMPLETED

Annex A	Grant application form (Word format)
A.1	Concept note
A.2	Full application form
Annex B	Budget (Excel format)
Annex C	Logical framework
Annex D	Identification form
Annex H	Declaration on Honour on exclusion criteria
Annex L	Self-evaluation questionnaire on SEA-H

#### USEFUL LINKS

PRAG	<a href="https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/display/ExactExternalWiki/ePRAG">https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/display/ExactExternalWiki/ePRAG</a>
Project Cycle Management Guidelines	<a href="https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/funding/managing-project_en">https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/funding/managing-project_en</a>
The implementation of grant contracts, A Users' Guide	<a href="https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=48169235">https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=48169235</a>
Financial Toolkit <sup>11</sup>	<a href="https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/financial-management-toolkit_en">https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/financial-management-toolkit_en</a>
Early Detection and Exclusion System (EDES)	<a href="https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/eu-budget/how-it-works/annual-lifecycle/implementation/anti-fraud-measures/edes_en#data-protection">https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/eu-budget/how-it-works/annual-lifecycle/implementation/anti-fraud-measures/edes_en#data-protection</a>

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<sup>11</sup> Please note that the toolkit is not part of the grant contract and has no legal value. It merely provides general guidance and may in some details differ from the signed grant contract. In order to ensure compliance with their contractual obligations beneficiaries should not exclusively rely on the toolkit but always consult their individual contract documents.