

Call 5:

# ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND IN SLOVENIA

## Call for proposals for micro projects (quick response fund) and Guidelines for applicants

Announcement of the call: January 30, 2023

The earliest date for submission of project application: April 3, 2023 (two months after call publication)

The on-going call will be open until the funds are fully allocated. The latest date for submission of project applications: until all funds are spent or 1 October 2023.

Note: This is an extract of the full document »Javni razpis in Smernice za prijavitelje projektnih predlogov na javni razpis za mikro projekte za hiter odziv«. The Slovene version is the official document, in case of differences between the two texts; the Slovene version is the valid one.

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## CALL FOR PROPOSALS AT A GLANCE

### How much?

€70.000

### How much per project?

€1.000 - €5.000

### For whom?

NGOs in Slovenia. And their partners.

### For what?

The main purpose of the quick response fund is to support organisations, when **quick** advocacy, legal, communicational or other **form of reaction** is needed either to **seize up the advocacy/campaigning opportunities** or **tackle challenges** (e.g. pressures on civic space and incidences of hate speech).

Also the purpose of the quick response fund is to support actions, which are planned as **an opportunity** (formulation of policies and regulations) **to positively influence** both the local and national level.

### For how long?

Projects: maximum 6 months

Call: until all funds are spent

### When to apply?

From April 3, 2023 onwards

### Where to apply?

[Prijava.HO@acfslovenia.si](mailto:Prijava.HO@acfslovenia.si)

### Whom to contact to get support?

[podpora@acfslovenia.si](mailto:podpora@acfslovenia.si)

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<https://acfslovenia.si/faq/>

## EEA AND NORWEGIAN FINANCIAL MECHANISMS 2014 – 2021

### ABOUT ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND

Support to civil society is a key priority for the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms (FMs) 2014 – 2021<sup>1</sup>, funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. Their aim is to contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area and to strengthen bilateral relations between the Donor States and the Beneficiary States. They cooperate with 15 beneficiary countries, EU member states, one of which is also Slovenia.

Overall focus of Active Citizens Fund (ACF) 2014-2021 as a part of Civil society programme of FMs is set to long-term sustainable development and capacity building of non-governmental sector. **Main objective of ACF on the EU level is 'Civil society and active citizenship strengthened and vulnerable groups empowered'**. Programme aims at strengthening the role of non-governmental organisations in promotion of democracy, public inclusion in decision-making processes on national and local level and human rights protection. An important priority of the programme is also strengthening of bilateral cooperation between civil society organisations from Slovenia and organisations from donor countries - Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

### PRIORITY AREAS, OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND IN SLOVENIA

Active Citizens Fund priority areas of support are:

- Democracy, active citizenship, good governance and transparency,
- Human rights and equal treatment through combating any discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or gender identity,
- Social justice and inclusion of vulnerable groups,
- Gender equality and gender-based violence,
- Environment and climate change.

Programme is based on common values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and the respect for human rights including the rights of persons belonging to minorities.

Expected outcomes of the ACF in Slovenia are:

- Strengthened civil society watchdog/advocacy role;
- Increased support for civic education and human rights;
- Vulnerable groups are empowered;
- Enhanced capacity and sustainability of CSOs and sector;
- Strengthened bilateral cooperation between civil society organisations from Slovenia and organisations from donor countries;
- Strengthened regional civil society cooperation.

To realise these goals and address challenges identified in common effort with NGOs in Slovenia, programme is set to:

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<sup>1</sup> More on EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms: [www.eeagrants.org](http://www.eeagrants.org).

- Financially support areas or activities which are under-financed or not financed at all in Slovenia, and organisations working in under-served areas as well as under-served target groups;
- Strengthen financial stability of non-governmental organisations, especially those working in the fields of democracy and human rights;
- Encourage use of innovative methods for promotion of active participation of individuals, including vulnerable groups;
- Empower vulnerable groups, including Roma and migrants;
- Promote development of innovative methods to strengthen advocacy, fund-raising, transparency and accountability of NGOs;
- Promote inclusion of youth.

## MANAGEMENT OF ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND IN SLOVENIA

Active Citizens Fund is managed by Financial Mechanism Office – FMO based in Brussels, representing European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and reporting to Ministries of Foreign affairs of donor countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

Upon a public invitation to bid CNVOS – Centre for Information Service, Co-operation and Development of NGOs, in consortium with Institute PIP – Legal and Information Centre Maribor, and DRPD Novo mesto – Society for the Advancement of Voluntary Work Novo mesto were selected to operate Active Citizens Fund in Slovenia.

## INDICATIVE BUDGET FOR QUICK RESPONSE FUND

### INDICATIVE BUDGET FOR MICRO PROJECTS CALL

Total indicative budget of the call is 70.000,00 euros.

Expected outcome	Indicative budget per outcome (EUR)
Strengthened civil society watchdog/advocacy role	39.200,00
Increased support for civic education and human rights	16.100,00
Vulnerable groups are empowered	14.700,00
<b>SKUPAJ</b>	<b>70.000,00</b>

Each project must contribute to at least one of these expected outcomes.

## ELIGIBILITY RULES

### ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants for both categories of projects are non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in compliance with the conditions set in the Article 2 of the Non-governmental Organisations Act (Official

Gazette of Republic of Slovenia no. 21 /18) and if they meet requirements set in the Manual for fund operators of the Active Citizens Fund<sup>2</sup>.

Eligible applicant is therefore an organisation:

- a) that is a private-law legal entity established in Republic of Slovenia;
- b) was established exclusively by domestic or foreign natural or legal persons under private law;
- c) is non-profit (organisation that based on the law or its founding document uses its profits or surplus of revenue over expenditure exclusively for realisation of its purpose or goals; does not divide its property among its founders, members or other persons, and in the event of its termination, after settlement of its obligations, its property is transferred to another non-governmental organisation with the same or similar purpose, or non-profit legal entity of public law);
- d) is not established to generate profit (organisation that based on the law is not established with the intention of for-profit operation or with the intention of making profit or with the intention of development, facilitation or promotion of for-profit operation of their founders or members);
- e) is independent of other subjects (organisation whose management body, administrative body and supervision body do not consist of more than a quarter of representatives of the state, local self-governing community, other public-law entities, barriers of public authority, international intergovernmental organisations, political parties, trade unions, chambers and corporate entities, or natural persons who independently engage in a gainful activity on the market, or representatives of other entities that are not non-profit);
- f) is not organised as political party, a church or other religious community, trade union or chamber.

<sup>2</sup> Chapter 7.1 of the Manual states that eligible applicants are non-profit, voluntary organisations established as a legal entity, having a non-commercial purpose, independent of local, regional and central government, public entities, political parties and commercial organisations. Applicants thus have to fulfil the following criteria:

- Are non-profit, being organisations that have not been created nor operate to generate personal profit. Although they may have paid staff and may engage in revenue-generating activities, they do not distribute profits to their members nor to their board. Where revenue-generating activities are undertaken, these should not represent the purpose of the NGO, but should be a means to support its mission and values
- Have members who do not have any direct commercial interest in the outcome of the work of the organisation or of its commercial activities and should not pursue the commercial or professional interests of their members. This requirement therefore excludes trade- and professional associations, where the aims and purposes of the association is to further the specific interests of its members only
- Are voluntary in nature, formed voluntarily by groups or individuals and usually involving an element of voluntary participation in the organisation
- Act in the public arena and for the public good on concerns and issues related to the well-being of people, groups or society as a whole
- Have some degree of formal or institutional existence, unlike informal or ad hoc groups, involving formal statutes or other governing document(s) defining their mission, objectives and scope
- Have transparent structures and elected chair/board, and are accountable to their members and donors
- Are independent of local, regional and national government and other public authorities
- Are independent of political parties and commercial organisations

Political parties, religious institutions, social partners or profit-distributing cooperatives are not considered NGOs. Foundations and the national Red Cross societies are considered eligible NGOs if they fulfil the above principles. Faith-based organisations are eligible if they meet the principles identified above and if the funded activities do not directly or indirectly promote a religious doctrine, mission or proselytism related to the beliefs of a particular faith (beyond basic religious/cultural awareness raising).

All eligible applicants, partners and project proposals shall follow the principles of common values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and the respect for human rights including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. The applicants and partners will confirm this in the applicant and partner statements accordingly. Selection committee will have the power to suggest a rejection of a project, if it will establish that the applicants, partners and project do not follow the mentioned principles.

Individual organisation can, in a role of the applicant, have only **one active application at a time**. Therefore, while one application is still in the selection or implementation phase, the same applicant cannot submit another application, but it may do so after one application is rejected or the final report of the previous project has been approved. There are, however, no limitations as to the number of project proposals in which an organisation is in a partner role.

## ELIGIBLE PARTNERS

A project may be implemented in partnership with one or more project partners. If a project is implemented in such a partnership, the applicant shall sign a partnership agreement with each of the project partners. A model agreement is a part of the call documentation. In the application process, partners will have to sign a partner statement as part of the application.

A project partner is a public- or private-law entity, commercial or non-commercial, or non-governmental organisation established in any of the ACF donor countries – Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, any of the ACF beneficiary countries (beside Slovenia, also Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Poland, Portugal), or any inter-governmental organisation or a body thereof that is actively involved in, and effectively contributing to, the implementation of a project. Partners from other countries are not eligible and projects involving them will be rejected.

Eligible project partners are also informal groups under following conditions:

- informal group is not established for the purpose of personal gain;
- work for public good;
- are voluntary and non-discriminatory;
- are independent of local, regional and national authorities and other public institutions, political parties, religious communities, chambers and corporate entities.

Informal group shall be represented by a chosen individual as a signatory of partnership agreement. Informal group cannot be a direct beneficiary of project funding; their costs shall be carried by the applicant organization.

Partnership is not obligatory and does not bring additional points. It is important that partnerships are based on quality and concrete challenges that are common to all organisations involved in the project. In project proposal evaluation and selection process, capacity of the whole partnership will be considered.

All partners are requested to sign a Partnership statement in the process of project submission. The form of Partnership statement is a part of the call documentation.

Organisations that have not recovered amounts due, following a final court decision in connection with the NGO Programme 2009-2014 in Slovenia, shall not be considered eligible applicants and/or partners.



## Support in finding partners

For easier search for partners from Donor states and beneficiary countries you can use a portal of Norwegian Helsinki committee: <https://ngonorway.org/>. Applicants searching for Icelandic partners are advised to turn to the Icelandic Human Rights Centre ([margret@humanrights.is](mailto:margret@humanrights.is)). Especially welcome are the upgrades of already existing partnerships.

## MAIN PURPOSE OF THE CALL

The main purpose of the quick response fund is to support organisations, when **quick** advocacy, legal, communicational or other **form of reaction** is needed either to **seize up the advocacy/campaigning opportunities** or **tackle challenges** (e.g. pressures on civic space and incidences of hate speech).

Also the purpose of the quick response fund is to support actions, which are planned as **an opportunity** (formulation of policies and regulations) **to positively influence** both the local and national level.

The purpose of this call is NOT to support activities that could be predicted in advance.

- ✓ Ministry just published a new draft law for consultations. You have concrete proposals, but you need additional expert support to prepare evidence-based justification for them.
- ✓ Ministry just published a new draft law for consultations. You need high public support in order to stop the law or some articles. You want to do an outreach campaign.
- ✓ Newly elected mayor promised to solve the issue with inaccessibility of public spaces. You want to be part of the defining solutions in the working group and provide concrete proposals.
- ✓ Your local government has made a decision on the implementation of your organization's activities (change of events location, relocation from premises, etc.). You need legal and communicational support to respond.
- ✓ Your local community has decided to oppose the acceptance of vulnerable groups into their environment (people with intellectual disabilities, migrants, etc.). You need high public support in order to stop the opposition. You want to do an outreach campaign.
- ✓ Important daily newspaper published an article full of insinuations about your work or NGOs in your field. You need legal and communicational support to respond.

Examples of concrete situations, for which you **cannot** apply for the quick response fund:

- × You identified some gaps in a law. You want to write recommendations and persuade the ministry to open the law.
- × You want to start a new service/activity as an upgrade of existing activities or as a response to newly emerging needs of beneficiaries.
- × You are organizing a conference next month and would like to get some extra funding.

## FOCUS OF THE CALL

Active Citizens Fund follows a common results-based framework, based on which fund operators in each beneficiary country in cooperation with FMO and with help of public consultation identify and set their outcomes and outputs that shall contribute to realisation of the expected results on the level of the programme.

## PRIORITY AREAS AND SPECIFICS OF THE CALL

Project proposals must address one of the priority areas:

- Democracy, active citizenship, good governance and transparency,
- Human rights and equal treatment through combating any discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or gender identity,
- Social justice and inclusion of vulnerable groups,
- Gender equality and gender-based violence,
- Environment and climate change.

In addition, applicants must also take into account:

- Protection of the environment and climate change will only be supported as part of measures to promote civic participation, advocacy, social innovation and active citizenship.
- Provision of welfare and basic services will only be supported as part of wider actions addressing awareness-raising, advocacy, empowerment and reform initiatives.
- Youth inclusion is encouraged to be an important part of the projects (e.g. civic mobilisation).

## EXPECTED PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

In the tables below, expected outcomes and respective indicators on the level of the ACF in Slovenia are presented. Presented information should serve as a guide in development of project ideas as only projects contributing to at least one or more of these outcomes shall be considered for financial support of ACF. However, it is not necessary for projects to follow only these outcomes. Project can be set wider and also follow other objectives and outcomes. In any case, projects should be coherent. In the reporting process, we shall pay notice also to the so called 'side effects', i.e. achievements of projects that do not contribute to programme outcomes but are nevertheless very important.

Each of the three outcomes has specific indicators, outputs and outputs' indicators set. Tables present the whole framework while also offering clarifications on individual indicators.

### Programme outcome 1: Strengthened civil society watchdog/advocacy role

This outcome aims at increasing the number of national law and policies influenced by NGOs' advocacy, contributing to improved legislation and a more influential CSO sector; evidence-based advocacy, monitoring of public and private decision-making and professional campaigning are examples of practices also expected in project proposals under this outcome.

#### *Example of potential project*

*Problem: the government wants to build an ecologically controversial alternative energy source in your local area*

*Solution: raising awareness of the local population and the general public about the harmfulness of the proposed solution*

*Activities: you need to think about, how to achieve this and answer questions, such as: What do you want to achieve with your campaign? How will you gain the interest of the general public and the media about the issue?*

*Which opportunity you can grasp? Could you convince your mayor to participate in awareness raising activities? Who do you know in your town that knows something about this topic? Can organizations from other regions help you in some way?*

*With whom you need to cooperate – what other NGOs could be interested in working with you, is there a local company that could support you?*  
*What do you need to do to get support from others (public) – more people have more power to convince the decision-makers?*

Number	Expected programme results	Indicator
Outcome 1	Strengthened civil society watchdog/advocacy role	Number of national policies and laws influenced by the CSOs
		Number of CSOs using evidence/research to support their advocacy and policy work
		Number of media appearances where CSOs provide expertise on specific issues
Output 1.1	Citizens participation in civic activities promoted	Number of CSOs mobilizing citizens in civic activities, including in public policy decision-making
Output 1.2	Policy input submitted by CSOs	Number of evidence-based policy submissions by CSOs
		Number of CSOs involved in monitoring of public and private decision-making
Output 1.3	Innovative (new or improved) methods for advocacy and campaigning applied	Number of innovative methods applied

## Programme outcome 2: Increased support for civic education and human rights

Overall objective of this programme area is to contribute to an increased share of the target group showing concern for human rights and disapproving of public statements that express negative views or hatred towards minorities; it includes addressing the implementation gap between the legislation and practice through strategic litigation and by monitoring and reporting violations of human rights, with more research-based and expert arguments, including promotion of international human rights standards. It is also focused on addressing the pressing need to resist populist rhetoric, hate speech and increased degradation of human rights in public discourse; the projects will foster greater awareness of civic and human rights by working with educational institutions and other public entities, such as courts and police; it is targeting gender, gender-based violence, youth and marginalised groups, such as refugees, migrants, Roma, LGBTI communities and other victims of discrimination.

*Example of potential project*

*Problem: town/village has increasing number of migrants that were mistreated during their way to Slovenia*

*Solution: show to Slovenian and international community dangers and hardships that migrants have to endure on their migrant route and advocate for the change of practice*

*Activities: you need to think about who you need to address in order for the community to be aware of the problem. How will you reach the Slovenian and international community? You could organise some campaign together with the local/national/international newspapers, have some street performance paraded with awareness raising, etc. Think carefully about how are you going to set your main messages – who are you targeting and to what will they mostly likely react? Can organizations from other regions help you in some way? With whom you need to cooperate?*

Programme level indicators:

Number	Expected programme results	Indicator
Outcome 2	Increased support for civic education and human rights	Share of target group disapproving of public statements that express negative views or hatred against minorities
		Share of target group showing concern for human rights (disaggregated by gender, age)
Output 2.1	Civic and human rights education provided	Number of public and educational institutions partnering with CSOs on civic and human rights education
		Number of educational tools for civic and human rights education developed and/or disseminated by CSOs
Output 2.2	Implementation of international human rights standards promoted	Number of strategic litigation cases supported
		Number of CSOs registering and reporting HR violations
		Number of cases of human rights violations and discrimination filed/lodged

		Number of awareness raising campaigns carried out
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### Programme outcome 3: Vulnerable groups empowered

Overall objective of this area is to promote social inclusion and empowerment by supporting NGOs to pilot participatory methods for involving vulnerable groups in the development of new approaches for addressing their needs. This also includes capacity building in participatory advocacy methods and awareness raising campaigns that aim for a better understanding of vulnerable groups, their needs and encourage their acceptance (e.g. inclusive education, inclusive playgrounds etc.). While the initial target group are all vulnerable groups, special attention will be given to those with multiple factors of vulnerability.

#### *Example of potential project*

*Problem: Your municipality is going to build a sports field, but they did not include the needs and requirements of physically challenged people*

*Solution: raise awareness for a better understanding of vulnerable groups, their needs and encourage their acceptance*

*Activities: you need to think about who you need to address in order for the community to be aware of the problem.*

*The municipality, local administration and the council – how can you reach them? Will you use personal contacts, media, etc.?*

*The community - you could think about role playing, developing social media clips on importance of inclusion, organise theatre, campaign together with the local newspaper, have some street performance parred with awareness raising etc.*

*Important – physically challenged people are the target group of your action. They need to be the frontrunners of advocacy activities. Support them in their advocacy, instead of doing everything by yourself!*

Number	Expected programme results	Indicator
Outcome 3	Vulnerable groups are empowered	Number of vulnerable individuals reached by empowerment measures (disaggregated by gender, age, Roma)
Output 3.1	Innovative (new or improved) methods and approaches addressing the needs of vulnerable groups promoted	Number of new or improved methods developed and/or implemented to address the needs of vulnerable groups

Output 3.2	Members of vulnerable groups mobilised to advocate for their needs/ the needs of their communities	Number of vulnerable individuals trained in advocating for their needs/the needs of their communities
		Number of CSOs adopting participatory methods with vulnerable groups
		Number of awareness raising campaigns carried out (in cooperation with vulnerable groups)

## ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

When thinking about possible activities, illustrative list below should be of assistance:

- Advocacy and raising awareness, including campaigning,
- Research, analysis and studies – as basis for further project activities,
- Participation in decision-making processes,
- Monitoring and watchdog activities,
- Promotion of active citizenship,
- Promotion of direct democracy mechanisms,
- Strategic litigation,
- Development of new services,
- Training and education,
- Community development and activation,
- Intersectoral partnerships,
- NGO networking,
- Mentorship.

## FINANCIAL PROVISIONS OF THE CALL FOR MICRO PROJECTS

### GENERAL RULES

Total budget available: 70.000,00 EUR.

The grant requested must fall between the following minimum and maximum amounts:

Minimum: 1,000 EUR

Maximum: 5,000 EUR.

### Project grant rate

The applicants may ask for 100 % of an eligible expenditure of a project.

## PROJECT DURATION

All projects must last up to 6 months. In the case of objective reasons that affected timely implementation of the project, the project promoter can ask for a non-cost extension for a period of up to 3 months. The final date of eligibility of costs is no later than 30 April 2024, thus the project need to end on this date at the latest. Application for prolongation is considered and decided upon by the fund operator.

### Value added tax

Value added tax (VAT) is eligible cost only in case the applicant is not entitled for recoverable VAT. Applicants shall be aware of this rule when preparing their financial plan for the projects and consider only those VAT costs that are non-recoverable by the state.

Applicants whose project proposals will be selected for the grant will be asked to provide a statement on non-recoverable VAT.

### Changes to the financial structure during project implementation period

General principle regarding possible transfers between cost categories is: transfers of budget between cost categories of up to 20 % of total project budget are possible without consent of the grant officer on the side of the fund operator; for transfers of budget between cost categories higher than 20 % of total budget project promoter will have to get fund operator's grant officer's consent and an annex to the contract will be signed.

### Procurement rules

National and European Union law on public procurement shall be complied with at any level in the implementation of the projects.

Notwithstanding provisions of national law that exempt NGOs from public procurement, any procurement procedures related to amounts above the European Union thresholds for procurement shall be undertaken in accordance with the applicable laws on procurement without regard for such an exemption.

In cases where contracts concluded as part of the implementation of the projects fall below the national or European Union thresholds set for public procurement or outside the scope of the applicable public procurement laws, the awarding of such contracts (including the procedures prior to the awarding) and the terms and conditions of such contracts shall comply with best economic practices, including accountability, allowing for a full and fair competition between potential providers, for example by way of effective price comparison, and ensuring the optimal use of resources from the ACF in Slovenia. To this end, and in the absence of stricter national laws, in cases of procurement related to an amount of EUR 5,000 or higher but below the relevant European Union thresholds, the project applicant shall invite at least three suppliers/service providers to submit offers.

The highest ethical standards shall be observed during the procurement and execution of contracts. The project applicant shall ensure the application of adequate and effective means to prevent illegal or corrupt practices. No offer, gifts, payments or benefit of any kind, which would or could, either directly or indirectly, be construed as an illegal or corrupt practice, e.g. as an inducement or reward for the award or execution of procurement contracts, shall be accepted.

## ELIGIBLE COSTS

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

- a) they are incurred between the first and final dates of eligibility of a project as specified in the project contract;
- b) they are connected with the subject of the project contract and they are indicated in the detailed budget of the project;
- c) they are proportionate and necessary for the implementation of the project;
- d) they are used for the sole purpose of achieving the objective of the project and its expected outcome(s), in a manner consistent with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness;
- e) they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular through being recorded in the accounting records of the project promoter and determined according to the applicable accounting standards and generally accepted accounting principles; and
- f) they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation.

Expenditures are considered to have been incurred when the cost has been invoiced, paid and the subject matter delivered (in case of goods) or performed (in case of services and works). Exceptionally, costs in respect of which an invoice has been issued in the final month of eligibility are also deemed to be incurred within the dates of eligibility if the costs are paid within 30 days of the final date of eligibility. Indirect costs and depreciation of equipment are considered to have been incurred when they are recorded on the accounts of the project promoter.

The internal accounting and auditing procedures must permit direct reconciliation of the expenditures and revenues declared with the corresponding accounting statements and supporting documents.

Project promoters and partners are obliged to keep a separate account evidence for the project.

### *Definition of eligible expenditure categories*

#### Direct expenditure

- the cost of personnel assigned to the project (employments contracts, civil law contracts, private entrepreneurs, who are part of the project team), comprising actual salaries plus social security charges provided that this corresponds to the project promoter's and project partner's usual policy on remuneration;
- travel and subsistence allowances for staff taking part in the project, provided that they are in line with the project promoter's and project partner's usual practices on travel costs;
- cost of new or second-hand equipment provided that it is depreciated in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles applicable to the project promoter and generally accepted for items of the same kind. Only the portion of the depreciation corresponding to the duration of the project and the rate of actual use for the purposes of the project may be taken into account by the Fund Operator. In case the Fund Operator determines that the equipment



is an integral and necessary component for achieving the outcomes of the project, the entire purchase price of that equipment may be eligible<sup>3</sup> ;

- costs of consumables and supplies, provided that they are identifiable and assigned to the project;
- costs entailed by other contracts awarded by a project applicant for the purposes of carrying out the project, provided that the awarding complies with the applicable rules on public procurement;
- costs arising directly from requirements imposed by the project contract for each project (e.g. dissemination of information, specific evaluation of the action, audits, translations, reproduction), including the costs of any financial services (especially the cost of financial guarantees) and

Costs related to reconstruction, renovation, or refurbishment of a real estate shall not exceed 50 % of the eligible direct cost of the project.

### Indirect costs

Indirect costs are all eligible costs that cannot be identified by the project promoter and/or the project partner as being directly attributed to the project but which can be identified and justified by its accounting system as being incurred in direct relationship with the eligible direct costs attributed to the project. They 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.

Project promoters and project partners may apply a **flat rate of up to 15 % of direct eligible personnel costs to cover these costs.**

In case of project promoters or project partners that are international organisations, or bodies or agencies thereof, indirect costs may be identified in accordance with the relevant rules established by such organisations.

### INELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE

The following costs shall not be considered eligible:

- costs related to preparation of project application,
- costs for purchase of equipment, which is not necessary for implementation of the project,
- fees for regular work of civil servants or other public officials engaged in project implementation,
- costs of debt, interest on debt, debt service charges and late payment charges,
- charges for financial transactions and other purely financial costs, except costs related to accounts required the contract with Fund Operator,

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<sup>3</sup> Where the entire purchase price of equipment is eligible in accordance with this paragraph, the project promoter shall: a) keep the equipment under its ownership for a period of at least five years following the completion of the project and continues to use the equipment for the benefit of the overall objectives of the project for the same period; b) keep the equipment properly insured against losses such as fire, theft or other normally insurable incidents both during project implementation and for at least five years following the completion of the project; and c) set aside appropriate resources for the maintenance of the equipment for at least five years following the completion of the project. The specific means for the implementation of this obligation shall be specified in the project contract.

- costs related to purchase of land or real estate,
- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities,
- exchange losses,
- recoverable VAT,
- costs that are covered by other sources,
- fines, penalties and costs of litigation, except if they are an integral and necessary component for achievement of project objectives,
- excessive or reckless expenditure.

## CALL DOCUMENTATION AND APPLICATION PROCESS

All of the call documentation can be found at: <https://acfslovenia.si/>.

Call documentation consist of:

- Call for proposals for micro projects (quick response fund) with Guidelines for applicants (pdf)
- Information on the applicant and project (excel)
- Application form (word)
- Financial plan (excel)
- Applicant's statement
- Partner's statement
- Template for the presentation of the project idea to partners (in Slovene and English language)
- Contract sample
- Partnership agreement sample

## APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants submit the application on a designated form in accordance with the instructions. In addition to the application form and financial plan, applicants will also have to submit Applicant's statement, Partner's statement (in case of submission of partnership project), and current statute or the founding act of the applicant, which must clearly indicate the fulfilment of the conditions under Article 2 of the Non-Governmental Organisations Act.

## DEADLINE AND SUBMISSION PROCESS

Complete application consists of:

- a completed application form,
- a completed Information on the applicant and project,
- a completed financial plan,
- a scan of signed and stamped Applicant's statement,
- a scan of signed (and stamped) Partner's statement (if relevant),
- a scan of a current statute or the founding act of the applicant.

Applications shall be submitted **only in electronic form** to the following e-mail address: [prijava.HO@acfslovenia.si](mailto:prijava.HO@acfslovenia.si). In case you have questions regarding the call, the Fund, etc., please contact

us at: [podpora@acfslovenia.si](mailto:podpora@acfslovenia.si).

**Please note: Applications submitted in any other form or way (for example via fax, regular mail, etc.) or to any other e-mail, shall be rejected.**

The application form and all the required annexes should only be submitted in Slovenian with a project summary in English, irrespective of whether the project is submitted by a national entity only or in cooperation with a partner from a Donor State.

Applications can **be delivered** to the e-mail provided from **April 3, 2023 onwards until the funds will be available or 1 October 2023 at the latest**. Date and time of the arrival of the e-mail with a complete application and all necessary attachments will be considered based on the records of the Fund Operator's server, regardless of the date and time of when it was sent and regardless of the date and time of sending recorded by the sending server. Fund Operator assumes no responsibility for any delays in the delivery of application e-mail (for example, due to large attachments and server occupancy or network disruption, etc.). Applications submitted before June 1 will automatically be rejected.

Applicants will receive an automatic response on the delivery of their e-mail to the sending e-mail address. In case such response does not arrive to applicant's e-mail inbox or spam within two (2) hours after sending the application e-mail, please contact us at 01 542 14 22, so we can check the status of your application on our side.

#### Language of the application form

The application form and all the required annexes should only be submitted in Slovenian with a project summary in English, irrespective of whether the project is submitted by a national entity only or in cooperation with a partner from a Donor State.

### APPLICATION ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE AND CRITERIA

After the delivery of the application, Fund Operator will check its eligibility based on the copy of the statute and on the administrative compliance criteria. Fund Operator can request additional information or clarifications referring to administrative compliance criteria.

#### Application administrative criteria

Criteria	Meeting the criteria		Notes
	YES	NO	
Application is submitted to designated email.	YES	NO	rejection
Application is submitted within the deadline (from 3 April 2023 until 1 October 2023 or until funds are available).	YES	NO	rejection
This application is the only active application of the applicant.	YES	NO	rejection
Application form is submitted.	YES	NO	rejection
Primary program outcome and priority area of the application are clearly indicated.	YES	NO	request for supplementation

Application is completed in Slovene language.	YES	NO	rejection
Short brief on the project is prepared in English language.	YES	NO	request for supplementation
Information on the applicant and project is submitted	YES	NO	request for supplementation
Financial plan is submitted.	YES	NO	rejection
Applicant's statement, signed and stamped, is submitted.	YES	NO	request for supplementation
Partner statement of each partner, signed and stamped, is submitted.	YES	NO	request for supplementation
The organisation's statute is attached.	YES	NO	request for supplementation

#### Application eligibility criteria

Criteria	Meeting the criteria		Notes
Applicant is a non-governmental organisation.	YES	NO	rejection
Partner organisation(s) is(are) eligible.	YES	NO	rejection
Project duration up to 6 months.	YES	NO	rejection
Grant amount corresponds to determined frames of 1.000 € and 5.000 €.	YES	NO	rejection
Applicant does not have any other active applications to this call (in the process of selection or implementation).	YES	NO	rejection

In case the application will miss certain parts (documents or information) that can be supplemented according to the above criteria, applicants will be invited to provide respective missing parts within 5 working days. An invitation to provide the missing parts of the application will be sent to the e-mail address of the applicant listed in the application form (e-mail address of the contact person). If the application will not be supplemented in the given deadline, it will be rejected.

After the administrative eligibility assessment process is completed, ineligible applicants or applicants that did not supplement their applications on time will be notified of the rejection of their project proposals from further evaluation. Applicants of ineligible project proposals will have 8 working days available for appeal against the eligibility decision. Appeals will be considered by the Complaints Committee. The decision of the Committee is final. Appeal can be submitted at: [pritozbe@acfslovenia.si](mailto:pritozbe@acfslovenia.si)

#### APPLICATION QUALITY ASSESSMENT

Eligible and administratively compliant project proposals will be assessed in the order of the application submission ("first comes, first serves" principle) by two independent evaluators in accordance with criteria set below.

If the difference between the scores given by the two external and impartial experts will be higher than 30 % of the highest score, a third expert will score the project independently. In such cases, the average

score of the two closest scores shall be used for ranking the project. The latter shall not be used in cases where scoring of the third evaluator does not, in any way, contribute to granting the project proposal.

After the conclusion of expert evaluation, Selection Committee will make a recommendation to the Fund Operator on whether or not the application should be approved. Final decision is made by the Fund Operator.

### Application adequacy criteria (max. total points: 100)

<b>Suitability of the project for Quick Response Funds (10 points)</b> <b>*eliminating criterion: If below 5, the project is automatically rejected *</b>	
Description of criteria	Score
Is the project in line with the purpose of the Quick Response Call (addresses the problem that needs to be dealt with urgently or is responding to current advocacy/communication opportunity)?	/ 10
	<b>/ 10</b>

<b>Relevance and importance of the project (20 points)</b> <b>*eliminating criterion: If below 10, the project is automatically rejected *</b>	
Description of criteria	Score
Is the problem relevant for the target groups?	/ 10
Is the project relevant for objectives and priorities of ACF?	/ 10
	<b>/ 20</b>

<b>Methodology (30 points)</b> <b>*eliminating criterion: If below 15, the project is automatically rejected *</b>	
Description of criteria	Score
Are the activities appropriate for targeting the problem?	/ 10
Are the activities feasible?	/ 10
Are the project outputs and outcomes concrete?	/ 10
	<b>/ 30</b>

<b>Financial and economic justification – value for money (15 points)</b>	
Description of criteria	Score
Are the costs necessary and appropriate?	/ 5
Is the project cost-effective and efficient?	/ 10
	<b>/ 15</b>

<b>Experience of the applicant (and project partners) (5 points)</b>	
Description of criteria	Score
Do the applicant and partners have appropriate organisational and expert capacities to implement the project?	/ 5

/ 5

<b>Innovativeness (5 points)</b>	
Description of criteria	Score
Does the project include innovative methods and approaches?	/ 5
	/ 5

<b>Project impact and sustainability (15 points)</b>	
Description of criteria	Score
Is the impact of the project on the target group relevant?	/ 5
Does the project affect under-served geographic areas and targets groups and/or vulnerable groups?	/ 5
Can the outputs and results be used beyond the project completion?	/ 5
	/ 15

Threshold for the application to be reviewed by the selection committee is 70 out of 100 possible points. Selection committee will provide their recommendation whether or not to approve the application on all applications that received 70 or more points in total and were above all eliminating criteria. Based on objective arguments, selection committee can propose to reject an application even though it received more than 70 points. The final decision will be made by the Fund Operator.

#### Notification on selection

Applicants will be notified on the selection of their project proposals via e-mail indicated in application form. The decision will be taken in 14 days after submission of applications, except for those received between April 3 and April 17 (first two weeks of into the application period) where the decisions will be known in 30 days. Applicants whose project proposals will not be selected for funding, will have 10 working days to appeal the decision. Appeals can be submitted at: [pritozbe@acfslovenia.si](mailto:pritozbe@acfslovenia.si). Appeals will be considered by Complaints Committee and its decision will be final.

## PROVISIONS ON PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

After final decision on selection of project for co-financing by ACF, the applicant will receive a Grant agreement based on standard agreement sample as presented in the call documentation. Before the signature of the agreement negotiations between applicants and Fund Operator to determine final definition of project activities and costs are possible.

### CONTRACT PROVISIONS

After notification on project selection, applicants will set the project start date and project duration. In case a delay in project implementation occurs due to objective reasons, beneficiary can request for a prolongation of the project for a maximum of 3 months, even if the project duration was planned for 6 months. The last eligible day is April 30, 2024. Request will be considered by the Fund Operator. Prolongation of the project does not impact financial plan of the project.

Grant agreement will consist mainly of following rights and obligations:

- Final grant amount – maximum grant amount will be determined with the agreement based on the financial plan of the project representing planned amount of costs. However, this amount will become final only after the conclusion of the project and after submission of the final financial statement of project account.
- Failure to meet project objectives – In case beneficiary will not realise project in accordance with Grant agreement obligations and provisions, Fund Operator reserves the right to stop payments or terminate the agreement. ACF contribution can be reduced and Fund Operator can demand total or partial refund of already paid contribution in case beneficiary does not comply with the contractual provisions.
- Changes to the project – In the event of significant changes to the project, an annex to the agreement has to be prepared and signed, while with smaller-scale changes prior approval of agreement guardian is sufficient.
- Changes to the financial plan – Original amounts of the categories in the financial plan may change under the following conditions:
  - when the change does not impact the original purpose of the project; and
  - transfers of budget between cost categories of up to 20% of total project budget are possible without consent of the grant officer on the side of the fund operator; for transfers of budget between cost categories higher than 20 % of total budget project promoter will have to get fund operator's grant officer's consent and an annex to the contract will be signed.

## REPORTING AND PAYMENTS

Project promoters will have to report on project implementation at the end of the project, by submitting final project narrative and financial report within two months after the conclusion of implementation period. However, Fund Operator can request for additional information on implementation progress at any time.

Payments will be provided in two instalments:

- up to 90 % prepayment 14 days after the contract is signed,
- 10 % in 30 days after the approval of the final report.

## INFORMING THE PUBLIC

Project promoters are obliged to inform the public on receiving a grant from ACF. In all written publications, communications and products, at publication of project products, public events, such as conferences, seminars, fairs or exhibitions, related to project activities, project promoters are obliged to make explicit and visible the support of the donor countries.

Guidelines for informing and communicating will be published before the beginning of project implementation period on the ACF Slovenia web site: <https://acfslovenia.si/> and sent to all project promoters. Project promoter will also have a wide pallet of communication support activities at their disposal.

## INFORMATION CONCERNING THE PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA SUBMITTED BY PROJECT APPLICANTS TO THE ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND IN SLOVENIA

With personal data submitted (included) in application to public calls of the ACF in Slovenia and reporting documentation by the applicants, CNVOS as Fund Operator and Institute PIP and DRPD as partners and fund co-operators will be acquainted. Hence, fund operator and co-operators enter the

role of common personal data controllers. Submitted personal data will be used for the purposes of implementation of public calls (application assessment, informing of applicants) and in applications rewarded with grants also for preparation of grant agreements, for monitoring, control of co-financing and for related informing of beneficiaries or for other related business communication (request for additional information, informing on financial means) as well as for the purpose of proving of eligibility for funding.

Co-financing of a project selected means establishing a contractual relation between CNVOS and the applicant in which CNVOS assumes the liability of co-financing party and has therefore, together with its partners, the right to monitor and control the implementation of the project. Such contractual relationship as well as submission of application to a public call (as a request for such contractual relationship) represent legal basis for all personal data processing by CNVOS, Institute PIP and DRPD as noted in this information.

With whole application, including personal data submitted with it, also third persons can get acquainted, and that is Financial Mechanism Office (Financial Mechanism Office, Rue Joseph II 12-16, 1000 Brussels, Belgium), donor states and their authorized persons.

In accordance with GDPR and respective national legislation, individuals whose personal data is included in application to public call have the right to be acquainted with all of their personal data, to correction, in the case of conditions as laid down by applicable regulations also the right to deletion, restriction of processing and to their portability. Individuals concerned can address their requests or questions regarding their personal data processing to CNVOS.

**Please note: At submission of project proposal application to public call of ACF Slovenia, legal representative of applicant organisation is obliged to sign a statement that they are aware of and in agreement with processing of personal data included in project proposal and relevant parts thereof.**

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND SUPPORT TO PROJECT APPLICANTS

Support to project applicants is available on telephone and email. All inquiries concerning the call for proposals should be directed to [podpora@acfslovenia.si](mailto:podpora@acfslovenia.si). All questions and answers will be replied within one week and will be published on the programme's website. For quick information you can contact Veronika Vodlan or Emilija Kastelic (+386 1 542 14 22) or Tina Cigler (+386 7 39 39 311) or Brigita Horvat (+ 386 2 234 21 27).

A video of information workshop (from the previous quick response call for proposals) and a video tutorial on the calls' purpose and focus are available at the programme's web site.

Timetable of events:

Event	Main purpose	Date	Venue
Last minute Q&A session	To answer last questions and support development of project ideas	20 March	ZOOM



**PUBLIC CALL STEP BY STEP TIMELINE**

Date	Step
30 January 2023	Publication of Call for quick response
30 January 2023 – until closure of the call	Phone and e-mail counselling
20 March 2023	Last minute Q&A session
3 April - until closure of the call	Possibility to submit applications
Two weeks after submission (30 days for applications submitted between April 3 and 17)	Notification about the result of the selection process