

ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS - BILATERAL COOPERATION INITIATIVES

The Active Citizens Fund is implemented in Portugal within the framework of the “Memorandum of Understanding on the Implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021” between Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway (the Donor States) and Portugal, in force as of 22 May 2017.

The Financial Mechanism Office, the programme operator of the Active Citizens Fund in Portugal, has selected the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation as Fund Operator in Portugal, in consortium with the Bissaya Barreto Foundation. The Active Citizens Fund is operated in Portugal under the terms and conditions of the ‘Programme Implementation Agreement’ (PIA), signed on 9 July 2018.

The submission of applications for Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives to the Programme supported by the Active Citizens Fund in Portugal as set forth in Article 4 of the Programme Rules, takes place exclusively via open calls, whose notices specify its terms.

The present call for applications lays down the detailed specifications to apply for Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives.

Applications shall be submitted exclusively via SIPPICA (the Programme’s information system) using the application form available on the Programme’s website: activecitizensfund.pt and shall follow the specifications detailed on this notice.

Without prejudice to the specifications contained in this notice, the provisions of the Programme Rules shall nonetheless apply to applications for Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives when relevant and should therefore be consulted by applicants. The Programme Rules, the Promoter’s Manual and other useful information can be found on the Programme’s website.

1. Objectives

1.1 The Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives provided for in Article 4 of the Programme Rules, are intended to support activities aiming at enhancing relations between Portuguese NGOs and entities in the Donor States (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) and contribute to the objective of the Active Citizens Fund.

Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives are intended to finance short-term international exchanges of experiences, including internships and participation in conferences, seminars and short duration training courses, and to foster contacts amongst NGOs and other potential partners.

1.2 Priorities for Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives include strengthening the capacity and effectiveness of NGOs in the Portuguese civil society, namely capacity building in specific areas like advocacy and public policy watchdog, fundraising and diversification of funding sources and volunteer’s

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management, and also promoting gender equality and combating gender-based violence and to contribute to the objective of the Active Citizens Fund.

1.3 Each supported initiative shall contribute at least to one outcome and deliver at least one output, from the indicators set for this Programme and quantified according to its nature and objectives.

1.4. The output indicators established for this Outcome are:

- a. Number of projects involving cooperation with a donor project partner;
- b. Number of bilateral cooperation initiatives funded by the ACF bilateral fund.

1.5 The Active Citizens Fund in Portugal, the *Norwegian Helsinki Committee* (<http://www.ngonorway.org>, <http://www.nhc.no/en/>) and the *Icelandic Human Rights Centre* (<http://www.humanrights.is/en>) shall facilitate contacts and co-operation initiatives between Portuguese NGOs and Donor States entities.

2. Territorial Scope

The activities foreseen in the Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives may take place in Portugal (Article 8 of the Programme Rules) and in the Donor States (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway).

3. Eligible Activities

3.1 The proposed Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives may comprise, in general terms, all activities aiming to deepen the contacts of Portuguese NGOs with entities from Donor States.

3.2 Eligible activities may include:

- common development of project applications;
- visits aiming at deepening partnerships through specific common activities;
- preparation of common projects to be supported under the Programme outcomes (preparatory work and meetings);
- individual short-term internships in donor countries' entities;
- exchanges of experience and knowledge;
- visits by NGO experts / experts from donor countries entities to Portuguese NGOs for training/coaching purposes;
- attendance to conferences or workshops with a concrete impact on bilateral partnerships and relations;
- other activities such as internships in Portugal for donor country entities, or visits by Portuguese experts to the donor countries, could also be supported.

Activities involving international organisations relevant to achieving the objectives referred to in 1.1 may also be considered provided that there also is a donor entity involved.

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4. Eligible Applicants

4.1 Promoters of Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives must comply with the general conditions of access to the Programme set out in the Programme Rules, particularly concerning administrative and eligibility criteria established in Article 4, 9 and 12 of the Programme Rules.

4.2 Apart from these, applications must also observe the following specific conditions:

a) Promoters are Portuguese NGOs, as defined in Article 7 of the Programme Rules and that comply with the conditions of eligibility of the Programme established in Articles 9 and 10 of the Programme Rules, or entities from Donor States.

b) Each promoter may receive support to a maximum of two Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives under this call and for the duration of the Programme (Paragraph 5 of Article 4 of the Programme Rules). Proposals under this call shall not be considered for the purpose of the limitation of applications to other types of projects to be supported by the Programme.

c) At least an entity from Donor States and a Portuguese NGO relevant to achieving the cooperation objectives must be involved in any initiative (Article 4 of the Programme Rules).

5. Eligible expenditure

5.1 Expenditures of NGOs legally established in Portugal and entities from the Donor States and international organisations of bodies or agencies thereof, that meet the requirements stated in Article 9 of the Programme Rules, shall be eligible under the present call for applications, for the purposes of calculating the grant.

5.2 The following categories of expenditure are eligible:

- a) Registration fees and travel costs for participation in conferences, seminars, courses, meetings and workshops, as well as the acquisition of support materials needed for this purpose;
- b) Travel costs concerning study missions abroad;
- c) Travel and salary costs, for visiting experts;
- d) Costs related to feasibility studies and preparation of financial and economic analysis of feasibility studies;
- e) Costs of organising conferences, seminars, courses, meetings and workshops;
- f) Publicity and communication activities;
- g) Costs of purchasing data (statistical or otherwise) essential for the preparation of projects;

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- h) External consultancy fees;
- i) Costs arising directly from requirements imposed by the grant contract.

5.3 The expenditures indicated in paragraph b) may include transportation costs and a per diem to cover lodging and subsistence costs for participating staff of the promoter and eligible partners, provided they are in line with the usual practice of each entity and do not exceed the rules set for the Public Administrations of their respective countries.

5.4 After the decision of approving the grant, only the expenditures incurred and paid between the start and the completion dates defined in the contract shall be eligible.

6. Maximum grant support

6.1 Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives can be supported at a maximum rate of 90% of the eligible costs, with a maximum grant of 6 000 € per application.

6.2 The amount of eligible costs referred to in the previous paragraph may be exceeded but will not be considered for funding.

7. Submission of applications

7.1 The announcement of the call to Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives will be made on the Programme's website.

7.2 This call shall be open from 11 July 2018 and shall remain open until the 30 June 2023 or until the exhaustion of the available funds, whichever occurs first. Applications may thus be submitted at any time and shall be evaluated in a sequential manner and decided on a monthly basis.

7.3 Applications must be submitted, as a rule, with a minimum of 60 days prior to the date of the planned initiatives. Exceptionally and in well justified situations this period may be reduced to 30 days.

7.4 The applications shall be submitted, electronically, via SIPPCA using an application form available on the Programme's website: activecitizensfund.pt.

7.5 The application form must be complete with the detailed information on the Initiative for its proper evaluation and describe the relation between the promoter and the partners, as well as the objectives of the partnership. (Paragraphs 1 and 6 of Article 11 and Article 12 of the Programme Rules).

7.6 The on-line application form includes as mandatory annexes:

- a) for Portuguese NGOs: promoter's articles of association or statutes, official registry of the NGO and other documents, if relevant;
- b) for non-Portuguese entities: evidence of the entities legal existence;

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c) in addition the promoter entity has to submit a liability waiver (signed by those responsible, under the law, for the entity).

7.7 Promoters must demonstrate proficiency in the English language of the proposed participants in the Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives submitted. Donor States' entities shall submit the mandatory documents in English.

7.8 Only complete applications that comply with the deadline to send the above-mentioned document by registered mail, shall be considered for evaluation and selection purposes.

7.9 Applicants are responsible for the truthfulness and authenticity of all submitted documents and are expressly informed that they may be required to present the original documents to the PMU at any stage of the application process.

8. Methodology of evaluation, scoring and selection of applications

8.1 The PMU shall review the submitted applications for compliance with administrative and eligibility criteria for the purposes set in paragraphs 1.b), c), d) and g) of Article 22 of the Programme Rules.

The PMU shall evaluate and score the proposals for Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives, which shall then be submitted by the Programme Director to the Selection Committee and subsequently sent for final decision of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Board of Trustees.

8.2 The evaluation and scoring of the proposed initiatives shall be based upon the following criteria and weights:

| Criteria | Weight |
|---|------------|
| 1. Merit of the Initiative | 30 |
| 2. Expected impact on the promoter's capabilities and / or relevance to future projects | 20 |
| 3. Partnership sustainability | 20 |
| 4. Value for money | 30 |
| Total | 100 |

The scores shall be assigned on a scale between 0 and 100.

For the purposes of final selection, only the applications that obtain an overall score equal to or greater than 60 points shall be considered.

8.3 The decisions on the applications are communicated individually to the respective promoters, as set in paragraph 1 of Article 27 of the Programme Rules.

8.4 The Partnership Agreement formalised between the promoter and each of the partner entities eligible for funding is mandatory and sent to PMU before the signature of the grant contract. The template of this agreement is available in the Programme's website. The provisions set in paragraphs 3 to 5 of Article 30 of the Programme Rules are applicable.

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8.5 A grant contract shall be signed by the promoter and the original version sent to the PMU by registered mail with acknowledgment of receipt, within 10 days. This document needs to be signed by those responsible, under the law, for the entity.

9. Reporting and payments

9.1 The promoter shall submit via SIPPCA, together with the documents of expenditure actually incurred for reimbursement, a brief report on the actions taken and achieved results, as well as documentary evidence of these actions (event invitations, attendee lists, meeting agendas, support materials for training, videos, other deliveries, etc.). The promoter shall submit this report up to 60 days after the Initiative completion, under penalty of losing the right to the grant.

9.2 Payments related with the initiatives shall comply with the provisions set forth in Article 42 of the Programme Rules.

9.3 The grant payment is made in one single transfer, as reimbursement of expenses actually incurred, up to 10 working days upon submission and acceptance of the report mentioned in 9.1 and of invoices and receipts or documents of equivalent probatory value.

9.4 In order to ensure the understanding of the documents related to the expenses of Donor States' entities, eligible costs incurred and paid by these entities shall be justified by expenditure documents certified in English by a statutory auditor or by who, in the country of origin, has equivalent powers to do so. In alternative, certified English translations of the expenditure documents may also be accepted.

The costs with this certification are eligible under the project grant.

10. Communication requirements

The promoter shall describe the measures enabling communication and online dissemination of the Initiative, mainly activities, deliverables, promoter contacts, images and other relevant contents.

All the communication materials and results of the Initiative must include the logos of Active Citizens Fund and of the Consortium (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and Bissaya Barreto Foundation).

11. Control Process

11.1 Without prejudice to any other control mechanisms that may be adopted, the Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives are subject to financial, physical and technical verification actions.

11.2 The financial verification of the project is based on the documents of expenditure submitted by the promoter and aims to confirm:

- a. The legality of the supporting documents of expenditure submitted for reimbursement;
- b. Compliance of the actions carried out with the objectives set for the Initiative in the grant contract and with eligibility rules and dates;

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- c. Full compliance with payment procedures, including proof of financial flows and receipt validity;
- d. A proper accounting of project expenses in accordance with applicable accounting standards.

11.3 The control process complies with paragraphs 3, 4 and 7 of Article 47 of the Programme Rules.

11.4 After the conclusion of the Initiative, all the documents shall be archived and available for auditing until 31st December 2028.

12. Irregularities

If any irregularities are detected during verification actions or audits, Article 49 of the Programme Rules shall be applied.

13. Appropriation

The overall budget allocated to this call amounts to 90 000 euros.

14. Additional information on call notice and amendments

14.1 This call for applications and other relevant information, including the Programme Rules, the application forms and the Promoter's Manual, are available on the Programme's website: activecitizensfund.pt.

14.2 Any adjustments to the terms and conditions set forth in this notice shall also be publicised in the above mentioned website, with a minimum of three working days prior to the date of its entry into force.

Lisbon, 20 October 2021