

GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND in the Czech Republic

EEA and NORWAY GRANTS 2014-2021

Consortium

| Nadace **OSF**



(2021)

INTRODUCTION

We have designed this Guide as a practical manual for organizations from donor countries (Iceland, Principality of Liechtenstein, the Kingdom of Norway) that want to apply for a grant from the Active Citizens Fund. The programme is funded by the EEA and Norway Grants and is managed in the Czech Republic by a consortium of the **Open Society Fund Prague (OSF Prague), Committee of Good Will – the Olga Havel Foundation (VDV) and Scout Institute.**

The Guide summarizes general information and procedures for all types of the programme grants, yet the **specific and binding conditions for submitting a grant application are always set out in the open call in question.**

The Guide gradually refers you to the forms and documents which you will need when preparing your application and which can be found on the programme website [We want to apply](#).

We wish you a lot of success in preparing your grant applications and are looking forward to your projects.

Active Citizens Fund
Programme team

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DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Applicant – an entity eligible to apply for a grant under a call for proposals by the Fund Operator; applicants eligible to apply for grants are defined in individual calls for proposals and the Guide for Applicants / Fund for bilateral cooperation.

Beneficiary State – the country that concluded an agreement with the donor state(s) on a set of programmes and scope of cooperation according to its national needs and priorities, and which draws funds from EEA and Norway Grants on the basis of this agreement. EEA and Norway Grants provide funding for 146 programmes in 15 beneficiary states. The Czech Republic is one of these beneficiary states.

Bilateral Project – project implemented by a project promoter receiving a grant from what is called the Fund for bilateral relations.

Call for Proposals – a document released by the Fund Operator defining the conditions for the submission of grant applications (hereinafter Call).

Civil Society Organisation (CSO) – an organization with a legal entity that has not been established for business purposes and is independent of local, regional and central government, public entities, political parties and commercial organizations.

Donor State (donor country, donor) – the donor states within the framework of the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanism are Iceland, Principality of Liechtenstein and the Kingdom of Norway.

EEA and Norway Grants – Through the EEA and Norway Grants, Iceland, Principality of Liechtenstein and the Kingdom of Norway contribute to reducing economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area (EEA) and to strengthening cooperation among fifteen European countries. The beneficiaries of the financial support are countries of Central, Eastern and Southern Europe. The great emphasis on sharing and exchanging experiences between donors and grant beneficiaries is an important aspect that differs from the EU funds.

Evaluator – evaluates and scores individual grant applications in the programme

Financial Mechanism Office (FMO) – is the office that assists the EEA Financial Mechanism Committee and Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the management of the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014–2021. Administratively, this is part of the European Free Trade Association responsible for the everyday implementation of the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014–2021 as the representative of the EEA Financial Mechanism Committee/ Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and also performs the function of a focal point.

Fund for Bilateral Relations – a fund established within the Active Citizens Fund to strengthen bilateral relations between the donor states Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein and the Czech Republic.

Fund Operator (FO) – a public or private, commercial or non-commercial entity, as well as a non-governmental non-profit organization whose responsibility is to prepare and implement the programme. A consortium of the Open Society Fund Prague (hereafter the OSF Prague), Committee of Good Will - Olga Havel Foundation (hereafter the VDV) and the Scout Institute (hereafter the SI) were selected in an open tender as the Fund Operator for the Active Citizens Fund in the Czech Republic.

Grant Application – a document prepared by the applicant in the prescribed form, requesting the Fund Operator for a grant for project implementation.

Grantys – the Fund Operator's information system for the receipt of grant applications and project promoters' interim and final reports (only available for Czech applicants).

Guide for Applicants / Project Promoters / Fund for bilateral cooperation (hereinafter the Guide) – a manual for a) grant applicants stating all instructions and requirements for preparation of an application for a grant under the programme Active Citizens Fund and b) project promoters (available only in Czech) stating all instructions and requirements for the implementation of projects funded by grants under the programme Active Citizens Fund (grants under outcomes) and c) project promoters stating all instructions and requirements for the implementation of projects funded by grants under Fund for bilateral relations.

Memorandum of Understanding on the Implementation of the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014–2021 – an agreement concluded between Iceland, Principality of Liechtenstein and the Kingdom of Norway and the Czech Republic defining the basic conditions for the implementation of the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanism in the Czech Republic and specifying mutually agreed programme areas, their focus and amount of support.

Monitoring indicators - are quantified, objective and measurable indicators of outputs and outcomes used to monitor the achievement of the project goals and objectives and as thus essential both for the monitoring and evaluation of the project. Applicants always choose from predefined indicators (for more details, see the Results Framework), which they must quantify in the grant application (in the Results Framework).

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) – organisations with the nature of legal entities, but not established for the purposes of conventional business, which are independent of the local, regional and central government, public institutions, political parties and commercial organisations. Religious institutions and political parties are not considered non-governmental organisations.

Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA) – the institution that manages the Norwegian Financial Mechanism in 2014-2021

Programme Area – programme Active Citizens Fund consists of five programme areas: 1) Democracy, active citizenship, good governance and transparency; 2) 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; 3) Social justice and inclusion of vulnerable groups; 4) Gender equality and gender-based violence and 5) Environment and climate change.

Programme Executive Board – a programme executive body with a decisive role, which shall serve as the programme supervisory structure to legitimize crucial decisions and outcomes of the programme Active Citizens Fund.

Programme Implementation Agreement (PIA) – an agreement concluded between the Fund Operator and the Financial Mechanism Office defining the responsibilities and duties of the FO within implementation of the Active Citizens Fund.

Programme Operator – the Financial Mechanism Office is the Brussels-based secretariat for the EEA and Norway Grants who acts as Programme Operator.

Programme Outcomes

Zaměření projektů – there are five programme outcomes defined within the Active Citizens Fund, in which the projects will be supported and which correspond to the planned results of the program (see Results framework, outcomes 1-5).

Project – economically indivisible work fulfilling a precise technical function and meeting the clearly defined objectives specified in the programme under which the given project falls.

Project Co-financing – the funds by which the project promoter or project partner shares in co-financing the project in a designated amount and percentage. Such resources include funds that the project promoter or project partner acquired from other sources or in the form of non-financial benefits (in-kind), up to the designated percentage share.

Project Contract – a detailed contract concluded between the Fund Operator and the project promoter governing the implementation of the concrete project and specifying the conditions of the provided grant, such as the participating parties' rights and obligations.

Project Grant – a financial contribution provided by the Fund Operator for the realisation of a project on the basis of a project contract.

Project Monitoring Report – a document prepared by the project promoter in the prescribed form, which includes information on project implementation and eligible project expenses in the monitored period / whole project period, a request for ongoing/final payment with a summary of anticipated expenditures and confirmation of co-financing.

Project Partner – a public or private, commercial or non-commercial entity or a non-governmental organisation that is a legal entity in the area/active in the area of the Czech Republic, Iceland, Principality of

Liechtenstein, the Kingdom of Norway or any beneficiary states, and that is actively involved in project implementation, effectively contributes to its implementation. The partnership cannot be based on a commercial purpose.

Project Promoter (PP) – an entity that receives a project grant

Results Framework – the basic framework of the Active Citizens Fund, which summarizes the program objectives and outcomes of the programme, with each outcome further having objectives defined in advance as outputs and indicators.

Selection Committee (SC) – the body responsible for evaluating and recommending grant applications for support under the programme Active Citizens Fund.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CSO	Civil Society Organisation
FO	Fund Operator
EEA	European Economic Area
FMO	Financial Mechanism Office
Guide	Guidelines for Applicants/Project Promotes/ Fund for bilateral relations
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NMFA	Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
OSF Prague	Open Society Fund Prague (Nadace OSF)
PDP	Pre-defined project
PIA	Programme Implementation Agreement
PO	Programme Operator
PP	Project Promoter
SC	Selection Committee
SI	Scout Institute (Skautský institut)
VDV	Good Will Committee - Olga Havel Foundation (Výbor dobré vůle - Nadace Olgy Havlové)

1. ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

The objective of the Active Citizens Fund is to strengthen civil society and active citizenship and to empower vulnerable groups.

Civil society is an essential condition of thriving democracy. To fulfil this irreplaceable goal, it is necessary to increase citizens' active participation in public life and decision making, to strengthen transparency in public administration, to improve civic awareness and media literacy. It is crucial to promote respecting human rights and to give more consideration to the needs of vulnerable groups. There is an ongoing challenge of mobilizing and stimulating participation of youth. The **Active Citizens Fund** thus focuses on financial support of citizens' initiatives, boosting efficient collaboration, education and further development of capacities of the civic sector.

The Active Citizens Fund is implemented within the **EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021** and has a total budget of € 15 million. In the Czech Republic, a **consortium** of the **Open Society Fund Prague, Committee of Good Will - Olga Havel Foundation and Czech Scouting Institute** has been selected and appointed as Fund Operator in an open and competitive tender. The total amount designated for grant support is almost € 13 million (more than CZK 300 million).

EEA and NORWAY GRANTS

The EEA Grants and Norway Grants represent the contribution of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway to reducing economic and social disparities and to strengthening bilateral relations with 15 EU countries in Central and Southern Europe and the Baltics. For the period 2014-2021, €2.8 billion has been set aside under the Grants.

For more information about the EEA Grants and the related programs in the Czech Republic, you can visit www.eeagrants.org or www.eeagrants.cz.

1.1 PROGRAMME CONSORTIUM

The Open Society Fund Prague (Nadace OSF)

We have been distributing grants for more than 25 years. We have always supported organizations with original and innovative approaches and invested in their development. Via our financial support, we have made it easier for the People in Need NGO to launch pilot projects focused on social work in socially excluded communities and to initiate the "One World" international human rights film festival. We have made it possible for organizations such as Transparency International, Ecological Legal Service, currently Frank Bold and Fórum 50% to be established. We have brought new concepts to Czechia – approaches that were unknown due to the totalitarian communist regime, but worked in other countries and helped promote values of open society and democracy. This applies, for example, to the concept of palliative care (successfully developed by the Cesta domů NGO) and open data (in this area, we initiated establishing the Rekonstrukce státu NGO). We continue to promote a state built on openness and transparency which backs up responsible citizens and makes sure that justice and rights apply to all citizens. We contribute to mutual respect understanding, justice and equal opportunities in society. We deal with problems such as growing discrimination in the Czech Republic which is related to various areas such as the access to education, jobs, housing and healthcare. We also focus on the crisis of trust among people and the crisis of trust in values of liberal democracy.

Everything we do has been achieved together with our partners and organizations committed to improving people's lives and cultivating civil society. The Active Citizens Fund is an amazing challenge for us and an opportunity to support these organizations in their efforts.

The Committee of Goodwill – Olga Havel Foundation (Výbor dobré vůle – Nadace Olgy Havlové – VDV)

The Committee of Goodwill was founded by Olga Havlová, the first wife of the president Václav Havel, at the beginning of 1990 following the tradition of the Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Persecuted and the Charter 77. Our mission is to help people who, because of their poor health or social status, find it difficult to integrate into society or cannot care for themselves without other people's assistance. We support NGOs focusing on healthcare, social, humanitarian and educational activities that enhance dignity and integration of people with disabilities or diseases, uncared-for children and elderly people. With these goals, we defend human rights and social justice.

Thanks to the Active Citizens Fund, we will be able to increase support for the Committee of Goodwill – Olga Havel Foundation so that it can maximize its impact and make society-wide changes helping numbers of disadvantaged citizens to integrate into society.

Scout Institute (Skautský Institut – SI)

The Scout Institute operates under Junák – Czech Scout organization which has had hundreds of thousands of members. Our mission is to record the history of this inspiring movement, to develop it and promote it. Besides that, we create space for encounters and personal growth of people of all generations, whether they are scouts or not. This forum filled with scout atmosphere and values attract young organizers and visitors of various events to active citizenship in the public sphere.

Joining the Active Citizens Fund is an excellent opportunity to support more young people, their ideas and projects. Among others, it will make it possible for us to launch an Incubator where we can foster young teams' ideas and help carry them out.

1.2 PROGRAMME AIMS

The aim of the Active Citizens Fund programme is to strengthen civil society, active citizenship and empower vulnerable groups.

The key part of the programme is the **distribution of funds in the form of different types of grants** to support greater involvement and participation of citizens and vulnerable groups, support of efficient cooperation, education and promotion of human rights. All of this with the intention of building up the civil sector capacity and sustainability. Within the programme, the Consortium also implements two projects of its own, which contribute significantly towards the programme objectives and enhance its overall impact. The aim of the Consortium projects is to increase the share of young people aged 18-30 in civic participation and to build up the capacities, skills and abilities of non-profit organizations in advocacy work.

The programme also wants to **support and develop mutual bilateral relations** between the Czech Republic and Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein, specifically, to improve partnerships and mutual exchange of experience between organizations from these countries in the preparation and implementation of projects.¹ At the same time, exchange of information takes place as part of **regional cooperation** among organizations from other European countries where the Active Citizens Fund programme is implemented as well.

The programme will also provide **support activities for non-profit organizations**, such as training workshops, study visits or presentations by experts from donor countries and networking meetings, aiming to connect individual actors, establish new partnerships and share the outputs of supported projects.

PROGRAMME STRATEGY

- To increase capacity and cooperation within the civil society sector;
- To increase the number of partnerships between the civil society sector and public/private sector entities and the ability of the civil society sector to approach inactive or marginalized groups;
- To strengthen civil society advocacy and watchdog role and to increase the participation of citizens in civic activities such as public policy-making and its enforcement;
- To address the public in the underserved regions and outside of the civic society activism centers;
- To address the vulnerable groups and minorities including Roma to strengthen their rights with the aim to increase their ability to advocate for their rights (e.g. disadvantaged families with children, the LGBTI community, single parents and the elderly at risk of poverty, people with disabilities, migrants or other groups facing discrimination in education, housing, health care, at the labor market, etc.);
- To increase youth participation in civic life.

The grant support of the programme is intended for:

- **projects to support civil society**
(strategic, mid-sized, action and matching grants; pre-defined projects)
- **development of mutual bilateral relations of organizations from the Czech Republic and donor countries**
(bilateral grants)

¹ For basic information on the preparation of an application for a grant from the Fund for Bilateral Relations and for the implementation of bilateral projects see the [Fund for Bilateral Relations](#).

PROGRAMME SPECIFICS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

For the Active Citizens Fund programme in the Czech Republic specifics are set out (see the [Programme Implementation Agreement](#)) which were given special consideration in the preparation and overall setup of the programme. Throughout the programme, steps are adopted and taken to accommodate these specifics. Grant applications and subsequently supported projects that respect these priorities are welcome as well.

Strengthening the capacity and sustainability of civil society:

- At least 19% of the amount allocated to grants supporting civil society is dedicated to the development and sustainability of the civil society sector and individual organisations. This is guaranteed through Outcome 5: Civil society strengthened on one hand (see the Results Framework on programme website), from which projects focused exclusively on organizational capacity building will be supported under mid-sized and action grants, and, on the other, through the mandatory budget component under mid-sized and strategic grants, where promoters are required to invest a part of the grant (in the amount of 5-15% depending on the type of grant) in the capacity building of their organisations.
- Within projects to support civil society, there are pre-defined outputs inviting organizations to work together with public institutions, raise awareness of their work and strengthen links with existing and potential constituents, including informal groups.
- Both Consortium projects (see Chapter 1.4 of the Guide) offer methodological and strategic support, consultation and training activities to non-profit organizations focused at improving their skills and knowledge.
- For non-profit organizations educational activities and consultations beyond the usual scope of support provided to applicants and promoters are held during both the preparation and implementation stage of the project.

Greater involvement of under-served regions:

- The programme communication addresses non-profit organizations across the Czech Republic to motivate even less experienced organizations from under-served regions to apply for a grant.
- It is a priority of the programme to support innovative methods and activities for greater involvement of under-served regions and for addressing neglected target groups.
- The programme offers extended support and consultations to less experienced applicants and promoters. If desired, certain open calls may be announced only for selected regions.

Empowerment and inclusion of vulnerable groups, including the Roma minority:

- At least 20% of the amount allocated to grants supporting civil society is earmarked for projects focused on vulnerable groups empowerment (through Output 3).
- Roma organizations are motivated to prepare grant applications, especially in the areas of advocacy work, participation in decision-making processes and cooperation with public institutions in the development of measures to meet their needs.
- The OSF Prague project (see Chapter 1.4 of the Guide) offers members of vulnerable groups counselling on promoting system changes and mentoring to build up their advocacy work competencies and abilities to defend their rights and needs of their communities.

Activation and involvement of young people in civic activities:

- We welcome projects (focused in particular on civic participation, civic education and media literacy) which will include cooperation with youth organizations in their activities or consultations, mentoring and coaching of young people in order to integrate them into civil society activities.
- The Scout Institute project (see Chapter 1.4 of the Guide) offers support to young people with the aim of their greater involvement in public affairs, support of future civil society leaders and of new project activities of the youth in this area.

The following rules apply in the programme as well:

- The Environment and climate change programme area wants to support projects dedicated to civic participation, advocacy and watchdog activities or strengthening of civil society.
- Financial support in Outcome 3: Vulnerable groups empowered is not primarily intended for the provision of social services, the aim of the programme is awareness raising and empowerment of vulnerable groups.

PROGRAMME PRINCIPLES

The Active Citizens Fund programme is based upon values respecting human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law and human rights, including the rights of minorities. It applies the principles of good governance, is participatory and inclusive, responsible, transparent, responds to needs, is effective and

efficient, and adheres to the standards of zero tolerance for corruption. At the same time, it is in line with sustainable development, long-term economic growth, social cohesion and environmental protection.

1.2.1 PROGRAMME AREAS

The focus of organisation shall match at least one of the programme areas:

Active citizenship

(Democracy, active citizenship, good and transparent public administration)

Trust in public institutions is constantly low in the Czech Republic. The roots of this situation can be found in **the high level of bribery, low efficiency of public administration** and a lack of long-term visions. Politicians often and on the long-term basis discourage citizens' activity by claiming they can take care of everyone. All these things have a significant impact on citizens' engagement and interest in public affairs. Active citizenship is a key element of democracy. From local activities supporting community relations, citizens' participation in municipal politics and development to active defence of public interest, monitoring of authorities and transparency.

Human rights

(Human rights and equal treatment – fighting against discrimination based on ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion or opinion)

Across the political spectrum, we can hear voices claiming that the Czech Republic has no problems with violation of human rights. However, we can see an increase of hatred and hostility towards people who are somehow different. We face discrimination and attacks motivated by racial prejudice. Such symptoms of **violation of the right to freedom** are becoming more frequent in the political and public discourse and they are widely shared by large groups of population. In democratic society, every person has the right to freedom of religion, sexual orientation and must not be a target of hatred for their skin colour, ethnicity, age, health condition or opinions. Democratic society is society of various ideas that must be respected in their diversity.

Vulnerable groups

(Social justice and inclusion of vulnerable groups)

Vulnerability or disadvantages can be seen on several levels in the Czech Republic. There are differences between urban and rural areas as well as among individual regions. These differences apply to opportunities **in the labour market, quality of education and access to resources**. The idea of social justice highlights principles of support and solidarity regardless of ethnicity, orientation or religion. Active inclusion means allowing all people to be members of society truly and fully. In practice, this means equal access for everyone to the labour market, good-quality education and services allowing active engagement.

Gender equality

(Gender equality and gender-based violence)

Low representation of women in management and politics is a long-term problem in the Czech Republic. Women have generally lower wages, even if working in the same roles as men. The gender pay gap is currently about 22%. This also results in lower pensions for women. The root of this problem is not a lack of women's education, competencies or professionalism; it is caused by **prejudice in society**. Women also constitute a major share of victims of sexual and domestic violence. Women form a half of the Czech Republic's population, and in younger age groups, they have higher education than men, and yet their voice is still not heard properly. It is vital to boost representation and engagement of women in public space, labour market and politics. Especially areas where decisions about women and their rights are made need to have a higher representation of women.

Climate change

(Our environment and climate change)

We are facing climate change connected with the lack of water, landscape devastation, deforestation and extinction of numerous species. There are extreme weather incidents such as long droughts followed by torrential rains or hailstorms. It is time to act – on all levels. Whether locally in our neighbourhood, or globally by abiding by the Paris Agreement on climate protection. Various formal and informal citizens' activities can prevent backstage deals and private interests which might have a negative impact on the environment on the local and national level. We need a society-wide discussion on climate change and steps taken by all of

us leading to improvement of the environment.

1.2.2 PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

Each project must contribute to the fulfillment of at least one of the defined programme outcomes in accordance with the call:

Increased citizens' participation

We are a part of what is happening around us. We want to **influence the public** life and participate in it – and it is **our right to do so**. We constitute civil society. We are a part of decision-making on how good our lives will be and what kind of conditions we will have. If we disagree with something, it is up to us to transform it. Let us participate actively in the public life. Let us improve relationships in our neighbourhoods. Let us organize community activities and improve public space. Let us participate in decision making and public policies. Let us be active and **defend public interests together**. Let us share our experience, explain and discuss why citizens' participation matters and which results it brings. Let us get connected, share and collaborate.

Projects involving the public in public policy decision-making and citizen participation in public events will be supported. Cooperation of public institutions with non-governmental non-profit organizations and educating of politicians in the field of citizen involvement in decision-making processes will also be supported.

Supported projects will meet the programme outcome 1. Increased citizens' participation.

Strengthened Civil Society Advocacy and Watchdog Role

Civil society is facing a crisis of political parties as well as attacks on democratic values. We often witness a minimal interest in citizens' needs in the political sphere as well as in governance. It is necessary to defend public interest and show dissatisfaction with non-transparent and untrustworthy governance to the executive branch of the government. It is vital to **support watchdog activities** and give feedback to the executive power and their governance.

To be able to pursue the watchdog role, it is essential to strengthen **monitoring of politicians and public institutions** decision-making processes on every level of the governance. Civil society organizations need to proceed together to defend public interest, share good practice and to support effective exercise of human rights. All to be able to contribute to systemic change in Czech society.

Projects promoting good and transparent governance, the fight against corruption, monitoring the executive, defending the public interest through advocacy and lobbying, incorporating democratic principles into decision-making or implementing international human rights and climate protection standards will be supported.

Supported projects will meet the programme outcome 2. Strengthened civil society advocacy and watchdog role.

Vulnerable Groups Empowered

Members of vulnerable groups are often on the edge of mainstream society. Those people are more likely to become a target of hate speech and are often excluded from discussions about their own needs. Vulnerable groups include minority ethnicities, refugees, migrants, LGBTQ people, socially and culturally excluded groups, people with lower education or income, poor families or people with disabilities.

To be able to improve their situation, it is crucial to **empower them to communicate needs of their communities and advocate for their rights**. Vulnerable groups need to be engaged in the process of their own empowerment and their ability to exercise their rights needs to be strengthened. Focus should be put into increasing awareness of their needs, **including them into mainstream society**, sharing good practices and including vulnerable communities when designing long term solutions.

The program in this outcome aims to address the problems of vulnerable groups, especially the Roma minority in the Czech Republic, but also the issue of vulnerable families with children, victims of hate violence and prejudice, or migrants / asylum seekers. Projects with implementing the tools and processes for the participation of vulnerable groups in public decision-making processes will be supported. Emphasis will be placed on supporting activities in regions with a higher degree of social exclusion at the municipal and regional level.

Supported projects will meet the programme outcome 3. Vulnerable groups empowered.

Increased support for civic education and media literacy

The media world has been undergoing a technological boom; it is full of news that can influence public opinion. Lots of information are spread from a wide array of sources and they're spread regardless of their relevance or truthfulness. Through numerous social networks and websites, information is spread regardless of their relevance or truth. Whether we know it or not, that information influences our opinions. Since disinformation campaigns are getting more inventive and more money is spent on spreading fake news, the

ability to analyse media messages, evaluate whether they are based on facts and understand their intention is becoming one of the most important ability to develop. Civic and media education support **critical thinking** that allows us to make well-informed and responsible choices and have an active participation in public affairs. Critically thinking citizens are crucial for active civil society and promoting democratic principles. They are also less likely to disseminate fake news. It is necessary to increase media literacy in both formal and nonformal education, to include **media literacy** into school curriculums and to develop a critical thinking attitude among people.

Projects that will increase support for civic education and media literacy, strengthen tools for verifying information and detecting fake news at the level of formal and non-formal education will be supported.

Supported projects will meet the programme outcome 4. Increased support for civic education and media literacy.

Increased Capacity and Sustainability of the Civil Society Sector And Individual CSOs

Insufficient and unsystematic funding of the civic sector prevents Czech non-governmental organizations from reaching a higher impact of their activities. In such conditions, it is becoming increasingly more difficult to focus on the organization's growth and sustainability. In this sector, we experience lack of systematic and effective cooperation with our supporters which would help us communicate the importance of our activities and develop a positive attitude towards our role among general public. To face this issue, we must emphasize our professionalism and necessity of our work for maintaining healthy civil society. Our role is not only to proceed the activities that fulfil original purpose of our organisation but also to confidently **defend civil sector as one of the stable pillars of democracy**.

Projects that will lead to increasing the capacity, sustainability and professionalism of non-profit organizations will be supported.

Supported projects will meet the programme outcome 5. Increased capacity and sustainability of the civil society sector and individual civil society organizations (CSOs).

There are defined outputs and indicators under each outcome in the Results framework (see chapter 2.3 of the Manual or [program website](#)).

Within the programme **five calls for proposals** will be announced, involving open calls aimed at supporting projects in the given **programme outcomes**.

Each call will make it clear of which outcome can be submitted (see below).

Applicant activities must also fall into one of the programme areas.

1.2.3 TARGET GROUPS

The target groups of the programme are primarily:

- vulnerable groups (minorities, including the Roma minority, LGBTI, people with disabilities, victims of violence, people at risk of poverty, seniors, prisoners, children from vulnerable families, etc.)
- young people
- civic activists (individual citizens, local communities, etc.)
- civil servants and employees of state authorities, decision-makers
- company employees
- migrants, refugees and asylum seekers
- journalists
- NGO staff, boards and volunteers
- employees of schools and educational institutions
- general public

1.3 FUND FOR BILATERAL RELATIONS

The overall objective of the EEA and Norway Grants is to contribute **to reducing economic and social disparities** in the European Economic Area and to **strengthening bilateral cooperation** between donor and beneficiary states through financial contributions in specified priority sectors.

The Fund for Bilateral Relations (hereinafter referred to as the Bilateral Fund) was established within the Active Citizens Fund to strengthen bilateral relations between the Donor States (Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein) and the Czech Republic. The Bilateral Fund serves as a flexible source of financial support for a wide range of initiatives of mutual interest both for Czech entities and for entities from the Donor States.

The total budget available for activities under the Bilateral Fund is € 150,000. One part in the amount of € 65,000 will be set for bilateral projects (see below). The remaining part will cover further bilateral initiatives as study trips, Donor States' experts or networking events supporting programme areas. These events will be organised directly by consortium of the programme and all information will be available on the programme website.

The prerequisite for successful grant application is therefore the cooperation between civil society organisations in the Czech Republic and entities in the Donor States. All details about the Fund for Bilateral Relations, the distribution of the allocation and the support of bilateral projects can be found in the call of the Fund for Bilateral Relations or on the website of the programme.

The Norwegian Helsinki Committee (<http://www.ngonorway.or>, <http://www.nhc.no/en>) and **the Icelandic Human Rights Centre** (<http://www.humanrights.is/en>) shall facilitate contacts and co-operation initiatives between Czech CSOs and Donor States entities.

Applications may be submitted **continuously** from the date of the announcement of the Call until **August 31, 2023** (or until its annual/total allocation is used).

1.4 PRE-DEFINED PROJECTS

As part of the Active Citizens Fund, we carry out two of our own projects which aim to support the programme's goals and reinforce its impact. The projects were part of a selection procedure for an intermediary for the Active Citizens Fund and were approved by the Office of Financial Mechanisms.

Project Meeting and Coming up with New Ideas: Boosting Participation of Youth in Citizens' Activities

(Implementer: The Scout Institute)

We see young people have very little interest in public affairs. And we want to change it. With the Scout Institute project, we address the youth and try to boost their participation in decision making and activities in public space. FORUM. We are setting up a network of SCOUT INSTITUTE FORA – not only for scout teams – across the Czech Republic to organize regular events for the public. We educate, explain and discuss why and how young people can be active.

INCUBATOR. A lab of projects and ideas. Young people submit their ideas and they can develop them with the help of professional consulting and explore how to turn them into reality.

Project Capacity Building and Increasing Organizations' Skills and Abilities for Civic Society in Advocacy

(Implementer: The Open Society Foundation)

Democracy cannot do without active civic society and citizens' participation in decision making. Yet if civic society is expected to fulfil its role appropriately, it requires know-how to defend public interest via advocacy and lobbying.

This includes understanding how public administration and municipalities work, how planning is done and how to communicate with these institutions. There is know-how of defending public interest in the Czech Republic, but many NGOs and active individuals do not have access to it or they do not know how to apply it. In other words, individual participants in civic society have various levels of professional knowledge and skills. The project aims to reinforce civic society, improve citizens' participation in decision making and thus improved defending of public interest.

1.5 TYPES OF GRANTS

There are five types of grants within the Active Citizens Fund programme. They differ in purpose, funds amount and length of project implementation.

Type of grant	Grant purpose	Project length (in months)	Grant amount (in EUR)	Max. Grant amount (in %)	Expected publication date (grant call)
strategic grants	support of systemic changes	36/42/48	€ 100,000 – 250,000	95%	September 2019 (grant call n.1)
mid-sized grants	support of current issues within the programme outcomes	12/18/24/30	€ 8,000 – 85,000	95%	October 2019 (grant call n.2) 3rd quarter 2021 (grant call n.5)
matching grants	support the organizations in implementing campaigns aimed at donors and audience	6–12	€ 1,000 – 4,000	50%	1st quarter 2021 (grant call n. 3)
action grants	solving current needs and challenges at the local level, supporting the citizen's engagement at the local level	1–12	€ 1,000 – 3,000	100%	until 1st quarter 2021 (ongoing grant call n. 4)
bilateral grants	strengthening bilateral cooperation between CSOs from donor states and The Czech republic	1–12	€ 1,000 – 4,000	100%	August 2019 (ongoing grant call for bilateral projects)

The following table lists the planned **types of grants according to the programme outcome.**

Type of grant ----- Programme outcome	Strategic grants	Mid-sized grants	Action grants	Matching grants	Bilateral grants
Increased citizen participation in civic activities (outcome 1)		x	x	x	x
Strengthened civil society advocacy and watchdog role (outcome 2)	x	x	x		x
Vulnerable groups empowered (outcome 3)	x	x	x		x
Increased support for civic education and media literacy (outcome 4)	x	x			x
Increased capacity and sustainability of the civil society sector and individual civil society organizations (CSOs) (outcome 5)		x	x		x

1.6 THE AMOUNT OF THE FINANCIAL FUNDS AND THEIR DISTRIBUTION

The implementation of projects to support civil society (strategic, mid-sized, action and matching grants; pre-defined projects) in the program amounts to € 13,247,900. These funds are distributed according to the programme outcomes.²

Programme outcomes	Finanční alokace Total allocation (in EUR)
Increased citizen participation in civic activities	€ 1,936,500
Strengthened civil society advocacy and watchdog role	€ 3,763,000
Vulnerable groups empowered	€ 2,619,000
Increased support for civic education and media literacy	€ 2,535,000
Increased capacity and sustainability of civil society sector and individual civil society organisations	€ 1,912,500
Total	€ 12,766,000

Pre-defined projects	Total allocation (in EUR)
Increased citizen participation in civic activities / Meeting and Coming up with New Ideas: Boosting Participation of Youth in Citizens' Activities (Scout Institute)	€ 346,000
Increased capacity and sustainability of civil society sector and individual civil society organisations / Capacity Building and Increasing Organizations' Skills and Abilities for Civic Society in Advocacy	€ 135,900
Total	€ 481,900

The total allocation of € 65,000 is available for the bilateral cooperation between civil society organisations in the Czech Republic and entities in the donor countries (bilateral grants).

Year	Total allocation (in EUR)
2019	€ 15,000
2020	€ 15,000
2021	€ 15,000
2022	€ 15,000
2023	€ 5,000

² The current amount of financial support for individual outcomes, or the allocation for individual years, is defined on the programme website. The amount may change within the programme, e.g. due to the transfer of unspent allocations from already closed grant calls or years. Aktuální výše finančních prostředků na jednotlivá zaměření, případně alokace na jednotlivé roky, je uvedena na webu programu.

1.7 LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND BINDING PROGRAMME DOCUMENTS

- Protocol 38c to the EEA Agreement on the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 [Agreement between the Kingdom of Norway and the European Union on the Norwegian Financial Mechanism for the period 2014-2021 signed on 22 September 2016];
- Memorandum of Understanding on the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 [Memorandum of Understanding on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 between the donor states and the Czech Republic as the beneficiary state signed on 4 September 2017];
- Programme Implementation Agreement [Agreement between the Financial Mechanism Office as the Programme Operator and the Open Society Fund Prague as the Fund Operator signed on 12 June, 2019].
- Manual for Fund Operators of the Active Citizens Fund;
- Civil Society Results Manual;
- Civil Society Bilateral Manual;
- Guides and forms of the programme issued by the Fund Operator during the programme: its implementation must comply with procedures defined in this Manual, the legal framework and binding documents of the Programme.

2. RULES FOR DRAWING FUNDS UNDER THE ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND PROGRAMME

2.1 ELIGIBLE APPLICANT

- It is a non-governmental organisation registered in the Czech Republic defined by the Czech law as:
 - **civic association** (i.e. legal name in Czech: spolek, ústav, obecně prospěšná společnost);
 - **foundation and endowment fund** (i.e. legal name in Czech: nadace a nadační fond) or
 - **organization department of church and religious society** (i.e. legal name in Czech: účelové zařízení registrované církve a náboženské společnosti) on the condition, that the proposed and funded project activities do not promote a religious doctrine, mission or proselytism related to the beliefs of a particular faith,
 - possibly **interest association of legal persons** (i.e. legal name in Czech: zájmová sdružení právnických osob) if all members of the association are non-governmental non-profit organizations and individually fulfil the eligibility criteria;
- (In the case of projects funded from the Fund for bilateral relations) It is a Donors' State (Norway, Liechtenstein, Iceland) entity in case of its non-commercial character;
- Project applicants must satisfy the condition of at least:
 - a two-year history (in case of strategic and mid-sized grants) or
 - one-year history (in case of action, matching and bilateral grants) at the time the grant application is submitted.

The eligibility of the applicant may be further specified in the grant call with regard to the grant type and purpose.

Religious institutions (except the charities), political parties, social partners or profit-distributing cooperatives (not even trade- and professional associations, where the aims and purposes of the association is to further the specific interests of its members only) are not considered NGOs. Neither a sole proprietorship (in Czech "OSVČ") nor a natural person is an eligible project applicant.

The focus of the organisation shall match programme areas (Active citizenship, Human rights, Social justice, Gender equality, Environment).

Applicants must be directly responsible for the implementation of the project for which they are seeking a grant, and must not act merely as an intermediary of project activities.

2.2 ELIGIBLE PROJECT PARTNER

- Any public or private entity, commercial or non-commercial established as legal person:
 - in the Czech Republic,
 - donor states (Norway, Liechtenstein, Iceland),
 - beneficiary states or a country outside the European Economic Area that has a common border with the beneficiary state,
- any international organisation or body or agency thereof:
 - An international organization (or body or agency) is an organization with international membership, international outreach or scope. It is an intergovernmental organization established by an international agreement as a permanent association of at least three countries which has its own bodies and is constantly striving to achieve the goal it was established for; such an organization is also an international legal personality derived from the founding states.
 - In the Active Citizens Fund program, the eligible partners are international organizations with the outreach or scope / registered in the territory of the Czech Republic, donor countries or in the territory of recipient countries supported by the EEA and Norway Funds 2014–2021.
- as well as informal organisations, which met eligibility requirements actively involved in, and effectively contributing to, the implementation of a project is considered an eligible project partner.
- (In the case of projects funded from the Fund for bilateral relations) It is only entities from Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein are eligible partners.

Project partners share a common economic or social goal with the project promoter, which is to be realised through the implementation of the project. Informal organisations/groups are those grass root organisations or informal groups that are not registered legal entities in the Czech Republic and shall be represented by one single person, who signs the project partnership agreement on behalf of the group. An informal group cannot be the applicant for the project grant and cannot be direct recipient of the project grant (expenditure related to the involvement of the informal group shall be borne by the project promoter).

A partnership is a contractual relationship between two or more entities (public or private), which is based on shared responsibility for project implementation. The nature of legal relationships between the project promoter and partners does not rest upon service provision; the cooperation is not of a supplier-customer character (sub-contracting), the partnership must not be of a commercial (profit making) character.

In the case of obtaining a grant, the project promoter must conclude a partnership agreement with each project partner, which must be submitted to the OSF Prague/VDV before the grant agreement is signed, as it forms an annex to this grant agreement. A sample statement can be downloaded from the [programme's website](#).

There are two types of partnerships within a project:

- partner with a financial contribution – this type of partner receives part of the grant for the implementation of material project activities through the beneficiary;
- partner without a financial contribution – this type of partner participates in the implementation of the material activities of the project, e.g. through consultations, professional guarantees, etc., but is not granted a financial contribution for participation in project implementation.

Applicant as well as partner must respect the principles of human dignity, liberty, human rights, rights of minorities, equality, democratic values and the rule of law.

There is the [database](#) of potential Norwegian partners and other organizations from the countries where the Active Citizens Fund is running on the programme website.

2.3 EXPECTED OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS OF THE PROGRAMME

A significant document outlining the basic programme setout is the **Results Framework**. It defines outcomes and gives their quantifiable, objective and measurable indicators, i.e.:

- **the main programme objective** (every project supported under the programme must be directed towards it, the project must meet the **programme indicator** *Number of people engaged in civil society activities*)
- **programme outcomes 1-5** (supported project must comply with one programme outcome selected by the applicant depending on the project focus) and programme outcomes indicators (which can be used to assess the achievement of the project objective). In the case of strategic and mid-sized grants (with a mandatory % of the capacity building grant), projects supported in outcomes 1 - 4 must comply with the programme Outcome 5: Civil society strengthened for capacity building simultaneously.
- **programme outputs** (specific consequences or effect of project activities / target state achieved by or material product generated by project activities) and indicators of programme outputs (by which the achievement of an output can be verified).

Every outcome has its predefined objectives (hereinafter only outputs and indicators). Projects must comply with the relevant programme outcome while contributing towards the selected output and/or its given indicators. The selected indicators must be quantified in the grant application. The Results Framework also provides recommended resources for indicator verification and their mandatory categories which the beneficiary must record.

RESULTS FRAMEWORK (expected outputs and project indicators)

zde vložit tabulku na šířku strany - naformátováno ke vložení do grafiky [zde](#).

2.4 EXPENDITURE ELIGIBILITY

2.4.1. ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE

In project implementation, the project promoter is obliged to comply with the principles of expenditure eligibility in accordance with the Programme Agreement, which contains a detailed definition of eligible and ineligible expenses (see Chapter 4 of the [Programme Agreement](#)).

Expenditures incurred by the project promoter or project partner during the implementation of the project are considered eligible project expenditures under the following conditions:

- they are incurred between the first and final dates of eligibility of a project as specified in the project contract;
- they are connected with the subject of the project contract and they are indicated in the detailed budget of the project;
- they are proportionate and necessary for the implementation of the project;
- 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;
- 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;
- overheads are considered to have been incurred when they are recorded on the accounts of the project promoter and/or project partner;
- the project promoter's internal accounting and auditing procedures must permit direct reconciliation of the expenditures and revenue declared in respect of the project with the corresponding accounting statements and supporting documents;
- the expenditure must be made, recorded in bank accounts or evidenced by the promoter's proof of expenditure, be identifiable and controllable and must be supported by accounting documents as defined by Section 11 of the Accounting Act No. 563/1991 Coll., as amended, and/or originals of other documents of equivalent probative value.
An exception to the condition of provability by accounting documents is indirect / overhead expenditure, i.e. all eligible expenditure which the promoter cannot directly identify and justify in their accounting system as expenditure incurred in direct connection with the eligible direct expenditure of the project.
- the expenditure must be made in accordance with the Czech legislation, in particular Act No. 137/2006 Coll., on Public Procurement

The project budget is divided into the following chapters:

- 1) personnel costs
- 2) volunteer work
- 3) employee travel expenses
- 4) consumables and equipment
- 5) services
- 6) subcontracting

In addition to individual items and the total sum of these chapters, the budget also indicates the total amount of the grant required as well as (according to the relevance for individual grant types) the amount of co-financing, of investment in the organization capacity building and of indirect project costs. At the level of individual budget lines, the applicant does not indicate whether the cost is covered by the required grant or by co-financing source.

Eligibility of expenditure applies to all project expenditure, i.e. both the costs covered by the grant and costs covered by co-financing sources.

DIRECT PROJECT EXPENDITURE

Direct financial expenditure is such expenditure which is recorded in an appropriate accounting system and compliant with the internal accounting principles of the project promoter and their project partners and, at the same time, directly connected with project implementation.

Personnel costs for project implementation

Personal expenses of staff assigned to the project (on the basis of an employment contract or supplement), which are approved in the grant application, bonuses (provided that they are a reward for completing an extraordinary task in the project, overtime pay is not eligible project expenditure). Expenditure must be in line with the employee remuneration policy and correspond to the nominal wages and statutory deductions paid by the employer (social and health insurance).

Furthermore, an employee may not work more than 1.2 full-time in the project promoter's organization and in the project partner's organization at the same time, including all of the employee's jobs (activities) or volunteering on the project in the project promoter's or partner's organization.

Personnel costs related to the project implementation are monitored cumulatively throughout the duration of the project, the required amount may not exceed the amount allocated in the given item. Wage expenses, sick pay, paid leave and public holidays expenses and compulsory accident insurance for employees are considered to be eligible expenditure.

Travel expenses

Travel expenses include business trips of members of the project implementation team related to the project implementation. Eligible fare costs are public transport costs (public transport ticket, seat reservation ticket, deck chair or bed ticket, flight ticket, ticket cancellation insurance, local public transport ticket) or expenditure related to the use of a private vehicle. Taxi may be used only in exceptional and well substantiated cases, when other means of transport are not available.

Consumables

Consumables may be considered eligible expenditure if used directly for project implementation.

Equipment Costs

This is the purchase of material equipment, where the purchase price is equal to or lower than CZK 40,000 and the service life is longer than one year. Eligible expenditure is the purchase price at which the equipment was acquired and the costs related to the acquisition, such as assembly, transport and connection. If equipment is purchased, the project promoter must ensure:

- the equipment must be in their possession for at least the duration of the project and use it to benefit the project objectives of the given period,
- the equipment must be insured against fire and theft or other normally insurable events for the duration of the project (for projects with a duration of up to and including 12 months, insurance is only recommended)
- after the end of the project, the equipment must be further used for the benefit of the promoter's main activity

Services

The purchase of services includes expenses related to the provision of supplier services which are directly connected with the implementation of the project (e.g. supervision, training, seminars, conferences...).

Furthermore, members of the project team who are not employees of the organization, but are involved in the direct implementation of project activities (e.g. self-employed persons, specific-task contract, contract of mandate) are to be listed here. A member of the project team is a natural person who participates in the implementation of the project as a whole, on a long-term basis and in close cooperation with the organization.

When meeting these criteria, members of the project team are part of services, not of subcontracting.

Acquisition of intangible assets is also included in the services, where the acquisition price is equal to or lower than CZK 60,000. The purchase price at which the property was acquired and costs related to the acquisition, e.g. installation are considered eligible expenditure.

All purchases of goods and services must **always** be made in accordance with the recommendations / obligations given in the Guide for Project Promoters (section 4.2.2 *Obligations regarding the purchase of goods and services*).

Subcontracting

Purchase of a service where through the organization the implementation of a project activity is partially or fully transferred to a supplier. This applies, in particular, to a situation where the project activity is partially or fully solved in the form of a "turnkey contract". This does not apply to members of the project team who are in an external role.

VAT

VAT is only considered eligible expenditure if the payer cannot claim the right to deduct input tax.

Eligibility of expenditure must be demonstrated by the project promoter / project partners and all accounting cases must be supported by accounting and other required documents.

Project Finances

Project must not generate profit. Project promoter / partner may incur other income during the implementation of the project (interest on the bank account and foreign exchange gains), which will not be monitored within the project settlement.

When submitting interim and final monitoring reports, the promoter must provide a copy of accounting documents (including relevant annexes) for itemized project expenditures according to the operator's instructions (usually expenditures over CZK 25,000 and documents on wage costs and volunteering). If the supported project is selected for the sample for the interim / final project audit, the promoter must provide all project documentation (i.e. also documents of the project partner (s)). The costs of this audit, based on a sample of projects supported under the programme, are covered by the fund operator.

INDIRECT PROJECT EXPENDITURE

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 staff costs (which consist of costs for personnel and volunteers work in the project) to cover these costs. The project promoter does not have to provide accounting documents. Indirect expenses are reimbursed on the basis of their remuneration in the financial part of the project monitoring report and their total when submitting the application for final payment must not exceed % defined in the project contract.

Active Citizens Fund funding does not involve a transfer of State resources in the sense of Article 107 (1) Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). The decision to grant Active Citizens Fund funding to the Fund Operator ("FO") and by the FO to the promoters in the Beneficiary States, cannot be attributed to one of the EFTA States or the Beneficiary States individually. However, the project promoters shall comply with the rules on state aid and public procurement in accordance with the project contract.

2.4.2. INELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE

Expenses are considered ineligible, if they:

- were not stated and approved in the grant application
- were not spent in line with the project purpose
- did not arise in the time period given for the implementation of the project
- were not reimbursed at the time of eligibility of project expenditure and are not supported by relevant accounting documents, unless otherwise stated
- were not recorded in the bank accounts of the project promoter / partner or are not supported by proof of expenditure
- are in other respects inconsistent with the programme rules or the rules set forth in this Guide

Specifically, the following expenditure is considered ineligible:

- interest on debt
- debt service charges
- late payment charges, fines, penalties
- exchange losses (eligible only under indirect costs)
- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities
- bad debts
- investment purchase prices of assets
- depreciation of investment assets
- administrative fees (extract from the land register, extract from the commercial register, and the like)
- other expenses of a purely financial nature, e.g. banking services fees, account opening fee
- account management fee (unless it is a project account - in which case it is eligible only as indirect expenditure)

- bank transfer fee (unless they are associated with transfers for payments related to project expenditure)
- recoverable VAT
- costs of litigation, except where litigation is an integral and necessary component for achieving the outcomes of the project
- taxes (road tax, property tax, gift tax, inheritance tax, etc.);
- other social expenses for employees which employers are not obliged to pay according to special legal regulations (supplementary pension and life insurance contributions, life anniversary gifts, recreation allowances etc.)
- costs that are covered by other sources
- overtime

3. GRANT APPLICATION CONTENT AND SUBMISSION


The project should be formulated briefly, clearly and concisely. Consider carefully what information and how structured you will include in the application. Try to see the application from the other side as well - through the eyes of an evaluator assessing your application. Ask yourself if the application contains all the important information, if the information is arranged logically and is not unnecessarily lengthy. And if you provide answers to the following questions:

1. What is your goal and how will you achieve it?
2. Who is your project intended for?
3. What will be the outputs of the project?
4. How will you achieve the outputs (what will the project activities be)?
5. What are your capacities?
6. Where will you implement the project?
7. With whom will you implement the project?
8. How much money will be needed?
9. When will the project take place?
10. How will you ensure sustainability of the project?
11. What to watch out for?

3.1 APPLICATION CONTENT IN MORE DETAIL

TARGET GROUPS

The description of the project target group should provide accurate and simple information about who the project is intended for, who it focuses on and what it will bring. According to the Level of Involvement of Target Groups in Decision-Making / Activity table below, you select the degree of involvement of the target group in decision-making / activity on a scale of 1 - 5.

Level of involvement of target groups in decision-making / Activity				
scale number	scale title	characteristics/description	activity examples	
1	distributing information without the recipient's consent	one-way communication from the organizer without request / initiative of the recipient	leaflets, posters, brochures, publications, letter	
2	distributing information with the recipient's consent / feedback	one-way communication from the organizer upon request / initiative of the recipient / one-way communication from the public	subscription to a newsletter, filling in questionnaires, surveys, interviews	
3	participation in a prepared activity / consultations / participation in the organization of the activity	double-sided communication which does not have to take place at the same time, the organizer decides what and to what extent will be discussed / decides on the content and purpose of the event	events for the public, demonstrations, public debates, commenting processes, happenings with interactive elements, Internet discussions, organizational assistance during an event	
4	partnership / joint preparation of an activity	joint search for and proposal of solutions, equal role in discussion, all actors active in decision-making, joint preparation of solutions / organization of events, shared responsibility for solutions / for the outcome of the event	holding planning meetings, working groups, advisory bodies / membership in the organizational team and participation in the organization of events	
5	decision-making-transfer of power / organization of one's own activity	transfer of decision-making / organization of an event and of responsibility for the event to the target group	referendum, civil jury, delegation of responsibility / planning and implementation of one's own activities	

PROJECT TIMELINE

The timeline must provide a clear picture of when and in what continuity individual project activities will be implemented. The first month marks the start of project implementation. Select the total implementation period according to the type of project (strategic, mid-sized, action or matching grant) and according to the information provided in the text of the grant call. For strategic and mid-sized grants, where you have defined project milestones, you will describe how the activities will follow each other and what milestone they will lead to.

COMMUNICATION PLAN

For details on project publicity see the programme website / the PIA. When completing the application, keep in mind that:

- every project promoter receiving a grant of over € 150,000 must create an independent project website in both Czech and English
- every project promoter receiving a grant of up to € 150,000 must provide a project website in Czech as a part of an existing project promoter's website; in cases where the promoter doesn't have a website, a separate project profile can be set up on social media platforms which must remain available even after the end of the project implementation period.
- every project promoter receiving a grant of over € 50,000 must hold at least two events within the project aimed at providing information about the progress and results of the project (a seminar, press conference or other event for journalists, an event to launch and / or end the project, etc.)
- every project promoter receiving a grant of up to € 50,000 must hold at least one event within the project aimed at informing about the progress and results of the project

RESULTS FRAMEWORK PLAN

It is **important** for the **indicators** to be quantified realistically, responsibly, thoughtfully and in relation to all parts of the project (project objectives, activities and target groups, budget, etc.) and to think about a specific (and easily available to you) method of documentation. The way indicators are set up plays a crucial role in the decision-making of evaluators and members of the evaluation committee on the award of a grant. Keep in mind that:

- project outputs always relate to the project implementation period
- multiple project outputs can lead to one outcome / focus

Do not include your own defined project outputs and their indicators in the Results Framework Plan.

The Results Framework Plan is part of the grant application and in case of project approval, the plan is an annex to the project contract between the project promoter and the OSF Prague / VDV. Achieving of the expected outputs and their indicators is monitored within the submitted interim and final monitoring reports of the project.

PROJECT BUDGET

The project budget is an important and compulsory part of the application. If not submitted/filled in on prescribed form, the application will be excluded from further evaluation during the formal control.

Keep the following principles in mind when drawing up your project budget:

- **economy** - minimum expenditure while maintaining the required quality
- **efficiency** - the highest possible benefit while spending the lowest possible amount of resources
- **eligibility** – the expenditures meet the conditions of the programme (see chapter Expenditure eligibility 2.4 of the Manual).

If the project is implemented with a partner / partners, **the same rules** apply to their project expenditures as well.

Project grant rate and co-financing

Project grant is provided:

- **up to 95%** of the total eligible expenditures for **strategic and mid-sized projects**, the co-financing shall form at least 5% of the total eligible expenditures of the project;
- **up to 50%** of the total eligible expenditures for **matching projects**; the project promoter has to match the grants (from crowdfunding) in other 50% to receive the grant;
- **up to 100%** of the total eligible expenditures for **action and bilateral projects**; no co-financing is needed.

The grant shall form 60 % of the total project costs the minimum, except the matching grants.

The implementation of co-financing is monitored both in the interim monitoring reports of the project and in the final settlement, in particular, whether the share of the grant in the total eligible expenditure of the project promoter as identified in the final settlement did not exceed the amount specified in the project contract. The promoter submits a solemn declaration during the final settlement of the project, stating from which sources and in what amount the project was co-financed.

In-kind contributions

The co-financing shall be provided in the form of cash or in-kind contribution. The in-kind contribution in the form of voluntary work may constitute up to 50% of the co-financing (strategic and mid-sized projects).

Non-financial contribution in the form of volunteer work is possible only from the applicant or project partner, not other entities. Other forms of non-financial contribution are not permitted.

The project cannot be co-financed by:

- other programmes of the EEA and Norway Grants;
- European funds or European Union budget;
- Swiss-Czech cooperation programme
- volunteer work exceeding the scope and conditions mentioned above
- or other in-kind contributions.

Investment in NGO capacity building and development

An important goal of the programme is to strengthen the capacity and sustainability of the non-profit sector. Therefore, investment in the promoter's own capacity building and development is a mandatory part of every strategic or mid-sized grant application. These funds can be used by both the project promoter and the project partner, provided that it is a non-profit organization. (This obligation does not apply to projects supported under mid-sized or action grants directly from Outcome 5.) Under action and matching grants, investment in development cannot be applied as part of the grant.

Costs for the project promoter's own capacity building and development make up 5-15% of the required grant amount for strategic grants and 5-10% of the required grant amount for mid-sized grants and must be part of each project budget. With this investment, the project also contributes to at least one indicator of Outcome 5: Civil society strengthened and fulfils at least one of its outputs and indicators (see the Results Framework).

3.2 APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Calls for proposals are always published in Czech and English on the programme's [website](#), as well as on the websites of all consortium members (www.osf.cz, www.vdv.cz and www.skautskyinstitut.cz). Each call shall be open for submission of grant applications for at least two months from the date of its publication.

An open call for a given type of grant always defines specific conditions binding for the applicant to submit a grant application and states the date and specific time of the call closure.

The following rules apply to projects supporting civil society (strategic, mid-sized, action and matching grants):

An applicant may submit only one grant application in a given call for proposals. In case an applicant submits more than one application in the Grantys system in one call for proposals, only the first delivered application will be accepted for evaluation (the date and time of submission of the application in the Grantys database is decisive). Other applications will be automatically excluded from further

evaluation. There is an exception of action grants, which are announced in the form of a continuous call for proposals with several deadlines - in the call for action grants, every applicant may submit a maximum of 3 applications, but always a maximum of one application by one deadline.

Number of partnerships in supported projects is not limited as long as the total financial support from the programme does not exceed the maximum possible support per each organisation.

In all the calls for proposals of the Active Citizens Fund programme **an applicant may** submit a maximum of **3 applications**, with the total sum allocated to one applicant (as a project promoter or project partner) may not exceed **€ 125,000** in the total of all supported projects. The limit of submitted applications applies to the action grant applicants as well. This limit does not involve applications and projects supported under the Fund for Bilateral Relations.

An exception is an organization supported as a promoter of a strategic grant, which can obtain up to € 250,000 thanks to a strategic project grant.

The Active Citizens Fund provides each organization (be it applicant or project partner) with the financial support up to the maximum of € 125,000 in total for all calls for proposals (excluding the projects supported under the Fund for Bilateral Relations).

If an applicant for a mid-sized grant is supported by a strategic grant with an amount higher than €125,000, the application for a mid-sized grant will be excluded from further evaluation. However, if the applicant is only a partner in the mid-sized grant application, the application will be submitted for further evaluation and can be supported on condition that the maximum financial limit per organization is fulfilled.

The application and annexes (if relevant) are processed in the Czech language, except for the project title and a brief annotation of the project objectives, or a partnership declaration in the case of partner (s) from donor or beneficiary countries, which are written in English. Project expenditures will be given in the detailed project budget in both CZK and euros.

Grant application annexes may differ from one type of grant to another. Applicants are bound by the information in the grant call for the given type of grant, which specifies whether the application includes mandatory annexes and, if so, which ones.

Only those applications submitted in the prescribed format with all annexes and in an electronic version will be evaluated:

- in case of the Czech organisation applicant via Grantys database at <https://granty.nadaceosf.cz> (OSF Prague) or <https://www.vdv.grantys.cz> (VDV), depending on which foundation administers the given call or its part (for more details on working with the Grantys system, see the Czech version of the Guide for Applicants)
- in case of the Donor States applicant (in the case of application for the grant funded from the Fund for bilateral relations) in word format by e-mail (see more in the call for proposals on bilateral projects).

All grant applications must comply with the objectives and rules of the Active Citizens Fund and the EEA and Norway Grants.

3.3 CONSULTATIONS ON GRANT APPLICATIONS

All detailed information on the grant application is provided **in general terms** in this Manual and **in a binding manner** in the text of the given grant call itself. If in doubt, the applicant and project partners can contact the OSF Prague or VDV (see contacts to the implementation team on the [programme website](#)) on working days via email or by phone. Consultations on the preparation and processing of applications are provided from the first day of the announcement of the call until the date specified in the call before the call deadline. Technical consultations are provided until the deadline, but it is necessary to report any technical problems before the actual call closure.

Furthermore, information seminars for potential applicants will be held after the publication of calls. Specific dates of seminars and other details, including registration, are always given in the grant call or on the programme website.

The OSF Prague and VDV contact persons provide information on the conditions of the call and the Grantys database, yet they **may not process the application or assist with the completion of applications** - this ensures an equal attitude to all applicants.

4. SELECTION PROCESS AND EVALUATION OF PROJECTS

The selection process of the project applications reflects principles of the programme: it is transparent and does not tolerate any elements of corruption. The selection procedures (formal control and expert evaluation) are carried out without any risk of conflict of interest between the applicant and the evaluator. All evaluators and members of selection committees are bound by Ethical Guidelines for Project Evaluators and Selection Committee Members and the Declaration of no conflict of interest declaring the objectivity of the selection process and exclusion of any conflict of interest.

4.1 FORMAL CONTROL

The formal control (review of administrative and eligibility criteria) follows the next working day after the call for proposals deadline and is finalised within 10 working days. All criteria are reviewed in all submitted applications, **a detailed list of these criteria is available in the checklist at the end of the given call for proposals.**

(The selection process and criteria for bilateral grant applications are described in the call on bilateral projects.)

4.1.1 ADMINISTRATIVE CRITERIA

The program sets criteria that must always be met, they are so-called elimination. This means that failure to meet even one of them already leads to the automatic exclusion of the application from further evaluation, without the right to supplement. These are usually the following 3 criteria:

- **Application is submitted electronically in Czech.**
- **Application was submitted before the given closure of the call for proposals via Grantys system / email** (in case of donor countries applicants)
- **Project budget is completely filled**

In case the application fails to comply with a **maximum of** given administrative criteria (except those elimination criteria), the applicant will be invited to make corrections (i.e. by supplementing missing documents or removing formal mistakes in the application). The applicant has 3 working days (3x24 hours) since the receipt of this invitation for these corrections. The application will be automatically excluded from further evaluation if the applicant does not submit the correction on time. The application **will be rejected automatically** from further evaluation if it **fails to comply with defined elimination criteria, or more than given number of** administrative criteria.

4.1.2 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The application is automatically excluded from further evaluation if one or more eligibility criteria were not met. Such as:

- Applicant is eligible
- The amount of required grant respects the limits set in the call for proposals
- Project duration respects the duration set in the call for proposals
- The applicant submitted a maximum of 3 applications in all calls of the Active Citizens Fund programme.

The applicants **will be informed about the results** of formal control (if the application will be further evaluated or about the application exclusion from further evaluation for formal reasons) within 20 working days of the date of the call closure. If an application was rejected due to non-compliance with administrative criteria or eligibility criteria, **the applicant may appeal in the written form** and request a reassessment of the decision within 5 working days of the information on the results of the review. The programme Executive Board decides and the applicant is informed about the results by email within 5 working days of the date of appeal.

4.2 EXPERT EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS

4.2.1 EXPERT EVALUATORS

Each project application complying with the administrative and eligibility criteria is scored by **two impartial and independent evaluators** who assess the quality of the applications from an expert point of view. Applications are assigned to the evaluators by lot. The evaluation process is based on evaluation criteria with

score. The final score is an arithmetic average of points given by both evaluators. The maximum is usually 100 points, or higher in case of extra points reflecting priorities of the call.

The project that does not reach the given threshold in one or more criteria will not be recommended for further evaluation, i.e. it will not be discussed by the selection committee. At the same time, the application will not be recommended for further evaluation if the arithmetic average score of both evaluators doesn't reach the given point limit.

The evaluation criteria and their point score may differ for individual types of grants, the criteria stated in the given grant call are always relevant.

If the difference between the scores of the two expert evaluators is more than 30% from the higher score, the project is evaluated by the third expert evaluator. In such cases the arithmetic average score of the two closest scores is used for the final ranking of project applications. The third evaluation does not take place if the arithmetic average score of the first two evaluators is 60/40 or less points.

The result of the expert evaluation is a list of all applications with their point and verbal evaluation, which is ranked by the arithmetic average of the point evaluation.

4.2.2 SELECTION COMMITTEE

The selection committee is an external body of independent experts and representatives of the FO who represent equally outcomes and programme areas of each call for proposal. The selection committee has at least three members, while at least one member must be independent of the program consortium. At the beginning of the meeting, each committee elects a chairman who, in the event of a tie, has two votes when voting for the projects.

The selection committee evaluates the list of project applications ranked by the arithmetic average. It is within the competence of the selection committee to assess whether the priorities of this call have been taken into account in the overall evaluation of the project. The selection committee may propose so-called modification measures (for modification/elimination of activities, modification or reductions of the budget, modifications of the results framework, etc.) as a condition for project support, but it cannot be fundamental modifications of the project goal and purpose.

The result of the selection committee meeting is a ranked list of projects:

- recommended for support,
- projects recommended for support with conditions,
- projects on the reserve list and
- rejected projects

4.3 RESULTS APPROVAL

The programme executive board confirms selection of the projects for funding and can propose changes to the list, if justified. The Executive Board may modify the ranking list of the selection committee in justified cases. In such a case, it is obliged to send its justification to the applicant and to the Financial Mechanism Office.

The OSF Prague/ VDV board of trustees approves finally the list of projects recommended for funding by the programme executive board.

4.4 INFORMATION ON THE RESULTS OF THE EVALUATION

A list of supported projects is published on the programme website as well as on websites of each consortium member. All applicants will be notified about the results of the evaluation process within 10 working days from the final decision. On the top of that it will take place within 10 weeks of the date of the

The applicant cannot appeal against the final decision on support/rejection of a project made by the programme executive board or the board of trustees of the OSF Prague/VDV.

5. PROJECT CONTRACT

If a successful applicant confirms that they accept the conditions for the award of the grant within 5 working days of notification of the evaluation results, the preparation of the signature of the project contract is commenced. Within the given deadlines (usually within 10 working days) from the notification, the applicant is obliged to:

1. a) (in the case of projects recommended for support with changes) incorporate the modifications of the project to which the support is conditional
2. b) (if relevant) secure the signature of a partnership agreement between the project promoter and each project partner (in the case of a partner from Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein or the beneficiary countries, this must be concluded in English)
3. c) provide, if necessary, additional data for the information system of the EEA and Norway Funds (the so-called GrACE)

The applicant is obliged to incorporate all changes and send the required documents to the contact person in the OSF Prague / VDV for approval / inspection by the date specified in the notification, as they are a necessary part of the preparation of the project contract. If this does not happen in time, the applicant organization loses the right to project support and this will be offered to the project next in line.

The draft of the project contract is in accordance with Act No. 89/2012 Coll., The Civil Code. The project contract involves obligations of the project promoter arising from the conditions of the EEA and Norway Grants and of the Active Citizens Fund. The project contract also stipulates the amount of the grant, the amount of the project promoter mandatory co-financing, the period of cost eligibility, the approved project budget, etc. .

The annexes to the project contract usually involve:

1. - grant application (project proposal)
2. - detailed budget
3. - results framework plan
4. - partnership agreement (s) (if relevant)

On the [programme website](#), project promoters can find sample partnership agreements in Czech and English which respect the obligations set out in the Programme Agreement. The project promoter may, at their discretion, further specify and extend the partnership agreement to reflect all the specifics of the partnership.

The project contract will be signed only **after all its annexes** have been **approved**. If the OSF Prague / VDV do not receive a signed project contract from the applicant within 10 working days from the date of approval of the agreement with all completed annexes, the applicant is believed to have refused to sign the agreement and thus withdrawn from the signature.

6. BASIC INFORMATION ON PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 SYSTEM OF PAYMENTS

Grants are awarded and paid **in euros**. Exchange rate differences are borne by the project promoter.

Strategic and mid-sized grants

Grants for supported projects will be paid in instalments (defined in the project contract):

- **First payment** by advance instalment of **up to 40%** of the approved grant support to the promoter's bank account within 10 days from signing the project contract, or from the start of the project
- **Further interim payments**, the number of which depends on the length of the project and on the submission and approval of interim monitoring report(s), but together make up to 50% of the grant support;
- **Final payment** of the remaining 10% of the grant support (or up to the maximum of % of the grant support depending on the approved eligible project costs) will be paid after the final monitoring report has been approved. If the total approved eligible costs of the project are lower (than planned in the application) and as a result the maximum percentage of the grant amount has been exceeded (and therefore a higher amount is paid out than that which the promoter is entitled to under the specified maximum percentage of the grant), the promoter shall, in compliance with the project contract be obliged to return the overpayment to the account of the OSF Prague / VDV, within 10 working days from the delivery of the notification on the approval of the final monitoring report (including the calculation of the overpayment amount).

Action grants

In the case of action grants an advance one-off payment of 100% of the approved grant amount is made to the promoter's bank account after signing the project contract (i.e. the project is pre-financed on the basis of the approved budget).

Matching grants

The final grant amount depends on the outcome of the crowdfunding campaign – the amount collected will be doubled by the grant.

6.1.1 REPORTING EXPENDITURE

Together with their own expenditures, the promoter reports in the interim and final reports the eligible expenditure of the project partner as well. All expenditure must be supported by relevant accounting documents. The period for which eligible expenditure is reported is always specified in the project contract. All conditions regarding the eligibility of costs and the obligation to record them must be met not only by the project promoter, but also by all their financial partners involved in the approved project.

Including a budget item in the approved project budget does not necessarily mean that the related expenditure is eligible! Every expenditure must comply with the programme rules.

6.2 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION MONITORING

Projects must be implemented in accordance with the project contract and the rules of the Active Citizens Fund programme, which are mainly based on the Programme Agreement (downloadable from the [programme website](#)). During project implementation, the OSF Prague / VDV monitor how the project meets the defined monitoring indicators stipulated in the contract and its progress towards achieving the outputs and the chosen focus, how the budget is implemented and how the timeline is maintained. Continuous monitoring of implemented projects includes:

- interim / final reports on project implementation
- site visits to the project
- checks by telephone, email or other means of communication
- audits of sample projects

6.2.1 PROJECT REPORTS

The number of project implementation reports which the project promoter is obliged to submit depends on the period of the project implementation, in the following manner:

Type of Grant	Lenght of the project (in months)	Monitoring report	Number of reports
Strategic	36/42/48	every 12 months	3–4
Mid-sized	12/18	every 6 měsíců months	2–3
	24/30	every 12 months	2–3
Action	1-12	final report only	1
Matching	1-12	final report only	1
Bilateral	1-12	final report only	1

In the interim and final reports, the project promoter describes the content and financial part of the implemented project in the given monitoring period, or of the whole project in the case of the final report. The promoter fills in the individual report forms electronically, the final version of which is uploaded, together with the attachments, to the Grantys database. All reports are submitted in the Czech language.

6.2.2 MONITORING VISITS

During the implementation of each project, one on-site inspection, the so-called monitoring visit, will normally take place at the promoter of strategic and mid-sized grants during the first half of the project implementation period. If necessary, the OSF Prague / VDV may carry out a second on-site visit. The project promoter, or their project partner, who will be visited on the spot, is informed about the date and content of the planned visit by email at least 2 weeks in advance. On-site monitoring visits will also offer project promoters space for individual consultations on the project.

6.2.3 PROJECT AUDITS

Within the programme, an interim / final audit will be performed on 15% of the supported projects, and/or 10% of the funds provided. The audits will be carried out by an independent certified auditor, a sample of projects will be selected on the basis of project monitoring performed done by the OSF Prague / VDV. The project promoter is obliged to provide the necessary cooperation for this audit as given by the project contract. The costs of conducting the audits in these cases are covered by the OSF Prague / VDV.

7. CONTACT INFORMATION

All contacts for the implementation team are available on the programme website (www.activecitizensfund.cz)

- Project/application aimed at programme outcomes: **Citizen participation, Advocacy and watchdog activities, Civic education and media literacy and Increased capacity and sustainability of civil society organisations** proceeded by the OSF Prague.
- Project/application aimed at programme outcome Vulnerable groups empowerment proceeded by the VDV.

Contact e-mail: konzultace@activecitizensfund.cz

Contact e-mail in case of technical difficulties with application preparation and submission via Grantys database: podpora.grantys@osf.cz.

Contact details for submitting a complaint about the administration of the program placed on the program's website listed on the website.

The Open Society Fund Prague

www.osf.cz

The Committee of Goodwill – Olga Havel Foundation

www.vdv.cz

Scout Institute

www.skautskyinstitut.cz

Follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/acf.czech/>
www.activecitizensfund.cz

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