



The Active Citizens Fund 2014-2021

BILATERAL COOPERATION INITIATIVES

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS
(CALL 3)

CALL TEXT

Fund operated by:



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SOS Malta, acting as the Fund Operator (FO) for the Active Citizens Fund for Malta, announces an open rolling call for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) for the outcome **“Enhanced collaboration between beneficiary and donor state entities involved in the Programme.”**

The Active Citizens Fund (ACF) is established under the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 and has a total budget of € 200 million that is granted by the Donor States of the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism - Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway - to 15 EU countries in Central and Southern Europe and the Baltics.

The overall objective of the ACF Malta Programme is to strengthen civil society and active citizenship and to empower vulnerable groups. It is based on the common values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law and the respect for human rights, including rights of persons belonging to minorities.

This call for applications lays down the detailed specifications to apply for Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives that have the aim of enhancing relations between Maltese NGOs and entities in the donor states (Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway). **It has an allocated budget of €70,000.**

Applications shall be submitted exclusively via SOS Malta using the application form available on the ACF NGO Programme’s (<https://activecitizensfund.mt>) or the Citizens Lab website (<https://citizenslab.org.mt>) and shall follow the specifications detailed in this notice.

1. Objectives

The call for Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives is intended to support activities that enhance relations between Maltese NGOs and entities in the Donor States (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) and contribute to the overall objective of the Active Citizens Fund.

Bilateral cooperation initiatives are intended to finance short-term international exchanges of experience, including internships and participation in conferences, seminars and short training courses and to foster communication among NGOs and other entities in Malta and the donor states.

Priorities for Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives include strengthening the capacity and effectiveness of NGOs in Maltese civil society. Particular emphasis will be given to areas of concern that will actively contribute to the overall objective of the Active Citizens Fund in Malta, such as civic engagement (especially among youth); promotion and protection of human rights; watchdog and advocacy roles of the civil society sector (focusing especially on how to influence policy-makers and cooperate with local authorities);

empowerment of vulnerable groups (with a focus on migrants); gender equality (especially women empowerment) and activities combatting gender based violence.

Each supported initiative must be aligned with the outcomes of the ACF Malta Programme as described in the Guidelines for Bilateral Cooperation.

The Fund Operator of the Active Citizens Fund in Malta, the Norwegian Helsinki Committee (<http://www.ngonorway.org>, <http://www.nhc.no/en/>) and the Icelandic Human Rights Centre (<http://www.humanrights.is/en>) shall facilitate contact and co-operation initiatives between Maltese NGOs and entities from the Donor States.

A partnership database (<https://ngonorway.org/partners/>) has also been established by the Norwegian Helsinki Committee to facilitate the search for potential partners. Potential applicants are advised to register and add a brief description about their organisation and search for potential partners among interested Norwegian institutions, NGOs, municipalities, companies and other bodies.

2. Eligible applicants

Applicants for Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives must comply with the general conditions of the Programme, as set forth in the Guidelines for Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives, particularly concerning the administrative and eligibility criteria established in the guidelines.

Apart from the criteria mentioned above, applications must also meet the following specific conditions:

- a) Applicants must be NGOs registered in Malta or legal entities established in the donor states, as defined in the Guidelines for Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives.
- b) Only sole applicants may apply from Malta (this call is not open to partnerships between NGOs registered in Malta).
- c) **At least one entity from the Donor States, relevant to achieving the cooperation objectives, must be involved in the initiative.**

3. Indicative list of activities

The proposed Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives may comprise, in general terms, all activities that enhance collaboration between Maltese NGOs and entities from the Donor States.

Eligible activities may include, but are not limited to:

- visits that have the aim of deepening partnerships through specific common activities;
- internships;
- networking, exchange, sharing and transfer of knowledge, technology, experience and best practice;
- visits by NGO experts / experts from Donor States entities to Maltese NGOs and vice versa for training / coaching purposes; and
- attendance or organisation of conferences or workshops with a concrete impact on bilateral partnerships and relations.

4. Location of initiatives

The activities foreseen in the Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives may take place in Malta and/or in the Donor States (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway). In well justified cases bilateral cooperation initiatives may take place in other locations.

5. Size of grants

The total amount for funding under this call is **€ 70,000**.

Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives can be supported up to a maximum rate of 100% of the eligible costs, with a minimum grant of **€5,000** and a maximum grant of **€15,000 per application**.

6. Eligible expenses

The eligible period for expenses under the Bilateral Initiatives component will be defined in the bilateral contract. Only expenses incurred from the entry into force of the bilateral contract to its end date will be eligible.

The following indicative list of expenses showcases the general type of expenses that are eligible for funding, under the call for Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives (the list is non-exhaustive):

- a) Registration fees for conferences.
- b) Travel costs for the applicant for participation in conferences, seminars, courses, meetings and workshops.
- c) Travel costs and fees relating to expert exchanges (inviting experts or sending experts)
- d) Publicity and communication activities directly related to the bilateral initiative.

- e) Costs related to study trips and job-shadowing (incl. for example transportation, accommodation and basic living expenses, special needs in equipment).
- f) Staff costs.

Note: The expenditures indicated above may include transportation costs and per diem to cover accommodation and subsistence costs for participating staff (and/or volunteers) of the Project Promoter¹ provided they are in line with the usual practices and policies of each entity, and do not exceed the limits set in the Guidelines for Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives.

For more information regarding the eligibility of expenses of the bilateral initiatives, please consult the Guidelines for Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives.

7. Submission of applications

7.1 Deadlines

This call shall remain open from **3 March 2023 until the 31 June 2024**, or until the available funds are exhausted, whichever occurs first. **Applications may be submitted at any time and shall be evaluated in a sequential manner and decided on a rolling basis.**

Applications must be submitted, as a rule, at least 45 days ahead of the date of the planned activities. In well justified situations this period may be reduced upon confirmation with the FO. The FO will evaluate and provide an official response of approval/rejection of an application at the latest 15 days following the submission of the application. All applications will be evaluated following the process and evaluation criteria detailed in the Guidelines for Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives.

Please refer to the Guidelines for more information and clarifications on eligibility and evaluation criteria.

7.2 Application process

7.2.1 Application form

Applications must be submitted using the Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives application form (including its Annex) that is downloadable from from the ACF Malta website (<https://activecitizensfund.mt>) or the Citizens Lab website (<https://citizenslab.org.mt>).

¹ Project Promoter is the name given to the successful applicant.

Only complete applications meeting the eligibility criteria and providing all the required supporting documentation shall be considered for evaluation purposes.

7.2.1 Pre-submission assistance

Prior to submitting a full application, applicants may wish to contact the ACF Malta team for assistance with:

- i. identifying a relevant bilateral donor country partner; and/or
- ii. aligning the proposed initiative aims with the objective of the ACF Malta Programme.

In such cases applicants are to submit a concept note (through the channels mentioned below) for consideration by the FO. The FO will submit feedback on the concept to the applicant within 5 working days of receipt.

7.3 Submission procedure

Applications with the supporting documentation can be submitted as follows:

By hand / post to the SOS Malta offices, 10 Triq il-Ward, Sta Venera.

OR

Send a scanned copy of the application by email

To: acfmalta@sosmalta.org

Subject line: Submission of Bilateral Initiative application

The first page of the application should be signed in blue ink by a legal representative of the organisation. The rest of the application (including the Annexes) and all supporting documentation should be initialled on each page also in blue ink.

8. Methodology of evaluation, scoring and selection of applications

The FO shall review the submitted applications for compliance with administrative and eligibility criteria.

The FO shall evaluate and score the proposals for Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives according to the following criteria.

Criteria		Weight
1.	Partnership fit and effectiveness	40
2.	Relevance to the aims of the programme	30
3.	Value for money / proportionality of proposed costs	30
Total		100

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

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

The decision on the application shall be communicated individually to the respective applicants.

A grant contract shall be signed between successful applicants and the FO.

9. Reporting and payments

The Project Promoter shall submit a brief report on the actions undertaken and results achieved as well as documentary evidence on such actions (event invitations, attendee lists, meeting agendas, support materials for training, videos etc.).

The Project Promoter and their partner from the Donor States will have to prove expenditure and attach relevant documents (e.g., salary slips, timesheets, travel orders, invoices, confirmation of payment) in accordance with the reporting requirements of the ACF Programme as set forth in the Guidelines for Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives.

The Project Promoter shall submit this report up to 30 days following the completion of the initiative.

The grant payment shall be made in two transfers as follows:

- 60% as a pre-payment based on the budget as submitted and approved by the FO; and
- 40% upon completion and approval of the final report and supporting documentation.

10. Communication requirements

The Project Promoter shall describe the measures enabling communication and online dissemination of the activities and deliverables of the initiatives.

All communication materials must be issued in line with *the EEA and Norway Grants Communication and Design Manual* which is downloadable from the ACF Malta website.

11. Contact information

Questions related to the present call, must be sent by email to the address below:

E-mail: acfmalta@sosmalta.org

Subject: Questions - Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives Rolling Call

This call for applications and other relevant information, including the **Application Form** and **Guidelines for Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives** are available on the ACF Malta website: www.activecitizensfund.mt and the Citizens Lab website (<https://citizenslab.org.mt>). Information on successful projects will also be posted on these websites.

Any adjustments to the terms and conditions set forth in this notice shall also be publicised on the websites listed above.

Malta, March 2023