



The Active Citizens Fund 2014-2021

Youth Bilateral Cooperation Initiative

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

Study visit

Terram Pacis - Human Rights Education Programme

23-24 July 2024, Oslo.

Fund operated by:



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1. General information on ACF Malta 2014-2021

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 objectives of the EEA and Norwegian Grants are to contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area and to strengthen bilateral relations between the donor states and the beneficiary states.

The Active Citizens Fund recognises the fundamental role that the civic sector plays in ensuring democratic governance, human rights and social cohesion across Europe. ACF Malta also reflects the firm recognition of the sector's role as a fundamental building block of democratic governance, human rights and social cohesion across Europe. ACF Malta, thus, financially supports citizens' initiatives to boost collaboration, education and further development of the capacities of the civic sector.

The overall objective of the ACF Malta Programme is to strengthen civil society and active citizenship and to empower vulnerable groups.

The programme provides flexible and accessible funding with the aim of fostering an enabling environment for the civil society sector, strengthening its capacity, strengthening support for human rights and social inclusion and increasing citizen participation in civic activities. Initiatives are funded through open calls for proposals.

The ACF Malta is established through the Memorandum of Understanding between the Donor States and SOS Malta. The Fund Operator for the ACF Malta is Solidarity Overseas Service Malta (SOS Malta).

These guidelines regulate the terms and procedures to applying for funding from the ACF Malta NGO programme.

Throughout these guidelines the term Fund Operator (FO) and ACF Malta team are interchangeable.

2. ACF Malta call for Bilateral Cooperation Initiatives

2.1 Objectives and areas of support

The overall objective of the ACF Malta Programme is to strengthen active citizenship and civil society and empower vulnerable groups.

The four areas supported by the ACF Malta Programme under this objective are:

- Democracy, active citizenship, good governance and transparency.
- Human rights and equal treatment through combating any discrimination.
- Social justice and inclusion of vulnerable groups.
- Environment and climate change.

This is a call for expression of interest to participate in a bilateral cooperation initiative between youth-based Maltese NGOs and youth-based NGOs in the Donor States (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) that support the following outcomes of the ACF Malta Programme:

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| Outcome 1 | Increased support for human rights and social inclusion |
| Outcome 2 | Increased citizen participation in civic activities |
| Outcome 3 | Enhanced capacity and sustainability of civil society |

The aim of the initiative is to provide an opportunity for youth-based organisations in Malta to observe and experience good practices in active citizenship in one or more of the Donor States.

2.2 Description of the initiative

The initiative will take the form of a 2-day study visit organised by Terram Pacis, Oslo for representatives of one or more Maltese youth-based organisations.

The visit will be held on the 23-24 July 2024. A detailed itinerary will be issued nearer the date.

2.2.1 Description of the host of the visit

Established in 2010, Terram Pacis (terrapacis.org) is a human rights, non-profit organisation that, through education and training, aims to empower youth to acquire the skills and behaviours needed to apply, uphold, and protect human rights.

Terram Pacis believes in the transformative power of non-formal education. The mission of the organisation is to provide youth and youth organisations with learning opportunities and digital, free, open educational resources.

The organisation takes a rights-based approach in its youth work that is reflected in its youth education programme which covers the planning, design and delivery of effective youth intervention from a human rights-based, participatory, and gender-sensitive approach. The programme highlights the important role youths play in achieving sustainable results when designing a youth intervention that is rights-based, meaning that the youth, their human rights, their unmet needs, and their unfilled gaps are at the centre of the lifecycle of the intervention.

2.2.2. Aim of the study visit

To introduce Maltese youths who are active in youth-based organisations to the human rights education programme run by Terram Pacis with a view to future longer-term collaborations through concrete projects.

2.3 Eligible applicants

This call for expression of interest is open for youth-based NGOs that are registered with the Office of the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations in Malta and Agenzija Zghazagh.

2.3.1 Eligibility criteria for applicants

Applicants must be enrolled and compliant with the Commissioner of Voluntary Organisations and in compliance with the Maltese Voluntary Organisations Act.¹

Applicants shall have to provide proof that they are legally registered in Malta by providing a copy of their VO Certificate.

¹ For details: <http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=8958&l=1>

Applicants must be registered with Agenzija Zghazagh.

They must also meet the following criteria:

- They are a non-governmental organisation (NGO), i.e., a non-profit, voluntary organisation established as a legal entity, having a non-commercial purpose, independent of local, regional and central government, public entities, political parties and commercial organisations. Religious institutions and political parties are not considered to be NGOs.

- They meet the following principles:
 - Have members who do not have any direct commercial interest in the outcome of the work of the organisation or of its commercial activities and should not pursue the commercial or professional interests of their members. This requirement therefore excludes trade- and professional associations, where the aims and purposes of the association is to further the specific interests of its members only.

 - Are non-profit, being organisations that have not been created nor operate to generate personal profit. Although they may have paid staff and may engage in revenue generating activities, they do not distribute profits to their members nor to their board. Where revenue generating activities are undertaken, these should not represent the purpose of the NGO, but should be a means to support its mission and values.

 - Are voluntary in nature, formed voluntarily by groups or individuals and usually involving an element of voluntary participation in the organisation.

 - Act in the public arena and for the public good on concerns and issues related to the well-being of people, groups or society as a whole.

 - Have some degree of formal or institutional existence, unlike informal or ad hoc groups, involving formal statutes or other governing document(s) defining their mission, objectives and scope.

 - Have transparent structures and elected chair/board and are accountable to their members and donors.

 - Are independent of local, regional and national government and other public authorities.

 - Are not politically affiliated and are independent of commercial

organisations.

— Abide by the principles of democratic values and human rights.

The representative/s of the applicant must be aged from 18-29 years at the time of submission of the application.

2.4 Communication and visibility

The successful applicants must acknowledge the support received from the ACF Malta to the relevant audiences at national, and/or local levels on their website, social media and other public channels.

All communication materials must be issued in line with the *EEA and Norway Grants Communication and Design Manual* which is downloadable through the ACF Malta website (www.activecitizensfund.mt/).

3. Financial parameters

All expenses related to the study visit for each participant will be paid through the ACF Bilateral Initiatives Fund.

These include:

- Flights to and from Oslo.
- Basic insurance for the duration of the study visit.
- Accommodation for the duration of the study visit.
- Any fees due to the hosts of the study visit.
- Meals not covered by the hosts of the study visit.
- Transport in Oslo during the study visit.

All expenses, excluding flights and insurance, will be covered through a subsistence allowance, also known as a per diem (daily allowance), that will be provided based on the number of nights abroad in line with the rates stipulated by the European Commission.²

² https://finance.gov.mt/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/PerDiemRates_November_17.pdf

4. Application process

4.1 Submission period

The deadline for this call for expression of interest shall be **28 June 2024**.

4.2 Application form

Applications must be submitted using the Bilateral Cooperation Initiative for Youth-Based Organisations application form that is downloadable from the ACF Malta website (<https://activecitizensfund.mt>).

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

Each applicant can nominate up to two representatives to participate in the visit but the fund operator retains the right to limit participation to one representative per successful applicant due to budget restrictions.

4.3 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

By sending a scanned copy of the signed and initialled application by email

To: acfmalta@sosmalta.org

Subject line: Submission of Bilateral Cooperation Initiative for Youth-Based Organisations 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 any Annexes) and all supporting documentation should be initialled on each page also in blue ink.

The following supporting documentation is to be annexed to the application and represents the administrative criteria that need to be met:

Copy of Voluntary Organisation Certificate ³	
Latest certificate of compliance with VO Office	
Copy of VAT Certificate if applicable	
Agenzija Zghazagh registration number	
Copy of ID cards of youth representative/s who will be representing organisation	

5. Evaluation and selection procedure

All applications will be reviewed for compliance with all three types of selection criteria, namely the:

- administrative criteria
- eligibility criteria; and
- evaluation criteria.

5.1. Administrative criteria

- The application has been submitted within the submission period.
- The application has been submitted in accordance with the permissible method(s) of delivery (with the right signatures etc.)
- All requested supporting documents have been submitted.

³ In the case of a newly established NGO, a copy of the receipt of enrolment would suffice. As soon as the certificate is received, a copy must be submitted.

5.2. Eligibility criteria

- Eligibility of applicant

The application is automatically excluded from further evaluation if one or more of the eligibility criteria are not met. However, prior to an application being rejected, the applicant will be given the opportunity to clarify and resubmit the application with correct information within 3 working days from notification. If the applicant fails to provide the missing information within this period, the application will not proceed to the next step of the evaluation.

Rejected applicants will be informed at the latest 15 working days following the submission of the application and have the right to appeal this decision within 3 working days of being notified about the rejection (see appeal procedure below).

5.3. Evaluation criteria

Applications that are in compliance with administrative and eligibility criteria are subject to an evaluation assessment based on the evaluation criteria below:

Criteria		Weight
1.	Alignment of applicant NGO's activities with ACF Malta Programme outcomes	60
2.	Fit of NGO's representatives' profiles with the aims and topic of the study visit	40
Total		100

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

6. Appeal procedure

If an applicant, activities or costs planned for the initiative do not fall under the administrative and eligibility criteria, the application will be subject to rejection. Rejected applicants will be

informed at the latest 15 working days following the submission of the application and have the right to appeal this decision within 3 working days of being notified about the rejection. The appeal should be submitted via email using as subject text: 'Appeal' and sent to acfmalta@sosmalta.org. Appeals are reviewed by a board member of SOS Malta and the Chief Executive Officer and the decision will be communicated to the applicant by email not later than one working week following the submission of the appeal.

7. Conflict of interest

A conflict of interest situation is deemed to occur when a person involved in the selection process (e.g. independent experts, members of Selection Committees, members of the Board, staff involved in reviewing compliance with administrative and eligibility criteria, or decision-makers for the Fund Operator) has direct or indirect interests that are, or appear to be, incompatible with the impartial and/or objective exercise of the functions related to the selection process. Such interests may be related to economic interests, political or national affinities, family or emotional ties, other shared interests with the applicant or its partner, or any other interests liable to influence the impartial and objective performance of the person involved in the selection of initiatives.

SOS Malta shall take every reasonable measure to prevent a conflict of interest situation from occurring in the selection process. If such a situation arises, SOS Malta must take all the necessary measures to prevent such a situation affecting the integrity of the selection process.

8. Notification and award of the grant

Applicants will be notified of the results of their application by email within 15 working days following the submission of the application.

SOS Malta will sign a contract with successful applicants.

9. Reporting

Successful applicants shall submit a brief report on the outcomes of the study visit within 3 week days of their return.

10. Complaints procedure

Any complaints specifically relating to selection process or the ACF Malta programme in general should be submitted via acfmalta@sosmalta.org using the text subject: Complaint. The complaint will first be assessed by the SOS Malta staff and, if still unresolved, will be passed on to the Complaints Committee set up by SOS Malta. The Complaints Committee will include one member of the board of SOS Malta, the Chief Executive Officer of SOS Malta and a person that is external to the organisation. If requested, a meeting may be held with the FO and the unsuccessful grantee to discuss their proposal and the reason it was not selected in more detail.

The Complaints Committee will not address issues related to the administrative and eligibility criteria of the applications that were rejected. Such issues will only be dealt with through the appeal procedure.

11. Further information

The main reference documentation for this Call for Proposals is this *Guidelines for Applicants* (the present document) and the *Application Form* which can be downloaded from <https://activecitizensfund.mt/>.

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

E-mail: acfmalta@sosmalta.org

Subject: Questions - Bilateral Cooperation Initiative for Youth-Based Organisations Application

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

Malta, May 2024