



The Active Citizens Fund 2014-2021

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

Fund operated by:



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1. GENERAL INFORMATION ON ACF MALTA 2014-2021

The Active Citizens Fund - ACF in Malta is established under the specific Programme Area for Civil Society part of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021, financial contribution from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway to 15 EU countries in Central and Southern Europe and the Baltics. ACF Malta aims to contribute to the achievement of the overall objective of the EEA and Norway Grants, to reduce economic and social disparities, and to strengthen bilateral relations between Malta and the donor states. 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.

The programme shall support the objective "Civil society and active citizenship strengthened, and vulnerable groups empowered" through one open call covering two thematic outcomes.

The programme provides flexible and accessible funding with the aim to foster an enabling environment for the civil society sector, strengthen its capacity and strengthen the support for human rights and social inclusion and increase the citizen participation in civic activities.

The ACF Malta is established through the Memorandum of Understanding between the Donor States and Malta. The Fund Operator for the ACF Malta is Solidarity Overseas Service Malta (SOS Malta). During the programme period 2014-2021 **One Open Call** will be issued.

These guidelines regulate the terms and procedures to apply for funding from ACF Malta.

2. ACF MALTA CALL FOR PROJECT PROPOSALS

2.1. OBJECTIVES AND AREAS OF SUPPORT

The overall objective for the ACF Malta is to have '**Civil Society and active citizenship strengthened, and vulnerable groups empowered**', covering four areas of support¹:

1. Democracy, active citizenship, good governance and transparency;
2. Human rights and equal treatment through combating any discrimination;
3. Social justice and inclusion of vulnerable groups;
4. Environment and climate change.²

Through the above-mentioned core areas, the ACF Malta will be organised into 2 outcomes:

OUTCOME 1 "INCREASED SUPPORT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL INCLUSION"

Thematic areas which may be tackled through project proposals submitted under this Outcome:

¹ Provision of welfare and basic services shall only be supported as part of wider actions addressing awareness-raising, advocacy, empowerment and reform initiatives;

² Protection of the environment and climate change shall only be supported as part of measures to promote civic participation, advocacy, social innovation and active citizenship.

- ☛ Advocacy and awareness raising campaigns on human rights (including gender equality) and social inclusion;
- ☛ Intergenerational dialogue;
- ☛ Civic and human rights education, with a particular emphasis on informal education;
- ☛ Countering hate speech and negative stereotypes;
- ☛ Knowledge and awareness of intercultural competence and cross-cultural sensitivity;

OUTCOME 2 “INCREASED CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN CIVIC ACTIVITIES”

Thematic areas which may be tackled through project proposals submitted under this Outcome:

- ☛ Active citizenship and open society - with a particular focus on human rights, democracy, the rule of law and environmental protection;
- ☛ Facilitation of citizens participation in decision making processes at local and national level -> access to information, access to justice in environmental matters in accordance with the Aarhus Convention;
- ☛ Media literacy, critical thinking and healthy debate education;

The programme shall address the country-specific concerns:

- Strengthen the capacity and sustainability of the civil society sector
- Improve outreach to underserved target groups and ensuring that the programme supports hard-to-reach target groups
- Asylum-seekers and migrants are one of the target groups of the programme

2.2. EXPECTED PROGRAMME RESULTS

The ACF Malta has a complete set of outcomes and associated indicators which it is expected to achieve through its various projects and activities. All projects funded by the ACF Malta are expected to contribute to the achievement of the programme results and indicators. The ACF Malta seeks to address outcomes 1 and 2 with this specific call for proposals.

All projects submitted must address:

- A. One specific programme outcome choosing between Outcome 1 and Outcome 2 denoted below**
- B. One or several outputs and indicators as indicated in the table below relevant to chosen Outcome (point A above refers)**

Number		Expected programme results	Indicator	Unit of measurement	Source of verification	Comments
Programme level		Civil society and active citizenship strengthened, and vulnerable groups empowered	Number of people engaged in civil society organisation activities ³ (disaggregated by age, gender, migrant status)	Number	Project Promoters' records, Attendance sheets, Petition signatures	All projects will report against these indicators
	Outcome 1	Increased support for human rights and social inclusion	Number of national policies and law influenced	Number	Formal responses, acknowledgment of input to consultations, Informal feedback, Survey responses	All projects that fall under Outcome 1 and include an advocacy component will report against these indicators
			Share of target group showing concern for human rights (disaggregated by gender)	Percentage	Survey results	All projects that fall under Outcome 1 will report against these indicators
Outcome 1	Output 1.1	Human rights and social inclusion advocacy supported	Number of human rights (incl. gender equality) and social inclusion advocacy initiatives supported	Number	Project promoters' records; Fund Operator's records	Each project will report only against output indicators relevant to the given project and which are selected by the applicant at proposal stage.
	Output 1.2	Intergenerational dialogue supported	Number of initiatives on intergenerational dialogue supported	Number	Project promoters' records; Fund Operator's records	

³ Disaggregation "Migrant status" to be tracked in FO's system.

	Output 1.3	Awareness raising of human rights (incl. gender equality) and social inclusion conducted	Number of awareness raising campaigns carried out	Number	Project Promoters' records, Audio/video/print material produced as part of the campaign		
			Number of people reached by awareness raising campaigns	Number	Project promoters' records		
	Output 1.4	Civic and human rights education provided	Informal human rights/civic education curriculum developed	Binary	Copy of the curriculum		
			Number of students educated in civic and human rights ⁴ (disaggregated by age, gender, Migrant status)	Number	Attendance sheets or online enrolment records		
	Output 1.5	Counter speech to curb hate speech and negative stereotypes supported	Number of CSO initiatives countering hate speech supported ⁵ (disaggregated by CSO migrant focus)	Number	Project promoters' records; Fund Operator's records		
	Output 1.6	Knowledge and awareness of intercultural competence and cross-cultural sensitivity reinforced	Number of people educated on intercultural competence and cross-cultural sensitivity ⁶ (disaggregated by gender, migrant status)	Number	Attendance sheets or online enrolment records		
	Outcome 2	Increased citizen participation in civic activities	Number of incidents of human rights violations	Number	Project promoters' records; Formal		All projects that fall under Outcome 2 will report

⁴ Disaggregation "Migrant status" to be tracked in FO's system.

⁵ Disaggregation "CSO migrant focus" to be tracked in FO's system.

⁶ Disaggregation "Migrant status" to be tracked in FO's system.

			identified and reported		acknowledgement of human rights violation reports	against these indicators
			Number of national policies and law influenced	Number	Formal responses, acknowledgement of input to consultations, Informal feedback, Survey responses	All projects that fall under Outcome 1 and include an advocacy component will report against these indicators
			Number of public institutions directly involving citizens in the decision-making process	Number	Project promoters' records	Only projects falling under Output 2.3 will report under this indicator
Outcome 2	Output 2.1	Civic participation supported	Number of civil society education initiatives on civic participation supported	Number	Project promoters' records; Fund Operator's records	Each project will report against indicators relevant to the project and selected by the applicant at proposal stage.
			Number of supported civil society education initiatives on critical thinking and healthy debate	Number	Project promoters' records; Fund Operator's records	
	Output 2.2	General public and CSOs educated in media literacy	Number of CSO staff trained in media literacy (disaggregated by gender)	Number	Project Promoters' records, Attendance sheets or online enrolment records	

			Number of people educated in media literacy ⁷ (disaggregated by gender, migrant status)	Number	Attendance sheets or online enrolment records	
	Output 2.3	Advocacy for increased citizen involvement in public decision-making supported	Number of advocacy initiatives on increased citizen involvement in public decision-making supported	Number	Project promoters' records; Fund Operator's records	

2.3. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

The call for applications is open for applicants that are **enrolled, and compliant** Voluntary Organisations established and enrolled under the **Voluntary Organisations Act** meeting the following criteria and principles.

A: Meeting the below definition of an NGO:

A “non-governmental organisation” (NGO)⁸ is eligible for support within the Programme if it meets the following definition: *it is 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 NGOs.*

B: Meeting the following principles:

- Are non-profit, being organisations that have not been created nor operate to generate personal profit. Although they may have paid staff and may engage in revenue generating activities, they do not distribute profits to their members nor to their board. Where revenue-generating activities are undertaken, these should not represent the purpose of the NGO, but should be a means to support its mission and values;
- Have members who do not have any direct commercial interest in the outcome of the work of the organisation or of its commercial activities and should not pursue the commercial or professional interests of their members. This requirement therefore excludes trade- and professional associations, where the aims and purposes of the association is to further the specific interests of its members only
- Are voluntary in nature, formed voluntarily by groups or individuals and usually involving an element of voluntary participation in the organisation;
- Act in the public arena and for the public good on concerns and issues related to the well-being of people, groups or society as a whole;

⁷ Disaggregation "Migrant status" to be tracked in FO's system.

⁸ Under Maltese Law referred to as Voluntary Organisations

- Have some degree of formal or institutional existence, unlike informal or ad hoc groups, involving formal statutes or other governing document(s) defining their mission, objectives and scope;
- Have transparent structures and elected chair/board, and are accountable to their members and donors;
- Are independent of local, regional and national government and other public authorities;
- Are independent of political parties and commercial organisations;
- Abide by the principles of democratic values and human rights;

Prospective applicants shall note that:

- Political parties, religious institutions, social partners or profit-distributing cooperatives are not considered NGOs.
- Foundations and the national Red Cross societies are considered eligible NGOs if they fulfil the above principles;
- Faith-based organisations are eligible if they meet the principles identified.

All applicants must be **enrolled and compliant with the Commissioner of Voluntary Organisations and in compliance with the Maltese Voluntary Organisations Act⁹** including having at least one legally employed member of staff in place prior to submitting the application.

Applicants have to provide proof that they are legally registered in the country they reside and that they have registered for the ACF Malta Capacity Building online course which must be fully completed by the end of the project in case proposal results successful for funding.

Applicants have to provide proof of having a physical office from where to operate, through submission of a self-declaration which should disclose type of rent/ownership of the space.

2.4. PROJECT PARTNERSHIPS

The ACF Malta supports and encourages the formation of partnerships to enhance the value and impact of project applications. Partners shall share a common economic or social goal with the applicant, which is to be realised through the implementation of the project. They should have as their aim, the will to contribute to the outcome/s of the project, whose participation in the project is needed for reaching aims of the project and which is actively involved in the preparation, implementation and evaluation phases of the project.

Primary locations of partners should be:

- Malta or any other beneficiary states of ACF Grants¹⁰;
- Donor States Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein.

Partners¹¹ in projects may be:

⁹ For details: <http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=8958&l=1>

¹⁰Beneficiary states of EEA Grants: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia,

¹¹ Meaning not the Lead Partner but the Co-Partner/s.

A. Recipient of funds such as :

- enrolled and compliant voluntary organisations,
- public or private, commercial or non-commercial entities,

Some examples of Project Partners which are eligible to have a share of the budget proposed may include:

- think-tanks and academic institutions where they will contribute expertise to a project, particularly where a project is innovative in nature and where research into the outcomes/results of a project would be valuable for wider learning, dissemination and replication.
- Statutory bodies and agencies, (local governments, national government agencies etc), in building cross-sectoral partnerships

Project partners have to provide proof that they are legally registered in the country they reside and that they have registered for the ACF Malta Capacity Building online course which must be fully completed by the end of the project in case proposal results successful for funding.

B. Non-Recipient of funds such as:

- Informal, ad-hoc and self-help organisations (including grassroots organisations) that are not registered legal entities in the beneficiary state.

They nonetheless must meet the following requirements:

- not for personal profit,
- act for public good,
- are voluntary and non-discriminatory in nature,
- independent of local, regional and national government and other public authorities,
- independent of political parties, religious institutions and commercial organisations;

The informal groups shall be represented by one single person, who signs the project partnership agreement on behalf of the group. A commitment declaration signed by at least two representatives of the informal group (one being the representative eventually signing the project partnership agreement) shall be presented to the lead applicant and the latter should submit such declaration with the proposal under section “Project Partnership Framework / Organigram”. The partnership agreement shall limit the role of the informal group/s solely to participation in project outputs with no monetary compensation for input of human resources thus non-recipient of funds.¹² Costs related to an informal group’s participation in a project as partner can be covered by the project grant (invoices should be issued to the project promoter, paid by the project promoter and recorded in the project promoter accounting system). **Such costs must not represent input of human resources and /or services given by one or more representative of the informal group in question.**

¹² Expenditure related to the involvement of the informal group shall be managed and borne by the project promoter.

A lead applicant cannot apply as a partner in any another ACF Malta project.

2.5. DURATION AND LOCATION OF PROJECTS

The duration of the projects submitted under the ACF Malta call shall be **not less than 12 months and not more than 36 months of operation**. The duration shall be counted from the date of signing of the project contract with the Fund Operator. The project contract shall set the final date of eligibility of costs which shall be no later than 31st December 2023. Costs incurred after that date are not eligible.

2.6. COMMUNICATION

The project promoters must communicate the achievements of their project and must acknowledge the support received from the ACF Malta to the relevant audiences at national, and/or local levels thus the following steps should be followed:

- Develop a communication plan as part of the project application with the aim of creating awareness of the existence, the objectives, any bilateral cooperation with entities in Iceland, Liechtenstein and/or Norway, the implementation, results and the impact of support from Donors to the project, mentioning target group activity, such as an event or a press conference, on progress achievements and results.
- Make information about the project available on the dedicated ACF Malta website and publish any updates and achievements of the project throughout the implementation phase.
- Create a landing page on an already existing organisation website.

The communication plan includes the following elements:

1. The main **channels of communication** that will be used to reach the target audience(s). These communication channels should include a webpage(s) on applicant/partners website(s). Every project will be assigned with a project webpage on the dedicated ACF Malta website which will be continuously updated by the applicant/partners throughout the implementation phase.
2. What are the **key messages** your project seeks to communicate? This can be updated during project implementation.
3. How will the applicant/partners **assess the effectiveness** of the communication activities?

Here the applicant is expected to describe how will they assess the effectiveness of the communications plan in terms of reaching the objectives and target groups. For example, how will they know if the communications activities have contributed to increasing the awareness of the ACF and the contribution of the donors? What other criteria will they use to assess the effectiveness of their communications activities?

3. FINANCIAL PARAMETERS

The total available funds for the call to be distributed in terms of grants are EUR 369,000. The provisional budgetary breakdown is as follows:

- ☛ **Outcome 1** – “INCREASED SUPPORT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL INCLUSION” **€184,500**
- ☛ **Outcome 2** – “INCREASED CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN CIVIC ACTIVITIES” **€184,500**

Project Proposals that will be implemented through partnerships will be given priority during the evaluation and selection process. Partnerships are strongly recommended following the guidelines under section 2.4 above.

Total project cost (i.e. 100%) will be composed of 90% ACF Malta Grant and 10 % own contribution. The own contribution element can be covered by the contribution of voluntary work (up to a maximum of 50% of the 10% own contribution) (details are explained further under Section no. 3.2.6).

SIZE OF GRANTS¹³ SPECIFIED PER OUTCOME:

OUTCOME 1	Minimum Grant per Proposal	€ 12,300.00
OUTCOME 2	Maximum Grant per Proposal	€ 30,750.00

3.1. DOUBLE FUNDING

The Project being proposed for funding shall not be funded from other sources, both on national and international level, other than the ACF Malta. Double-funding of activities are not permissible. Nevertheless, financial backing offered to the applicant by another entity, disassociated with the project as well as not specifically directly towards the implementation of the project, is permissible.

If the applicant is found liable for seeking or receiving double-funding for project/activities proposed, agreement between applicant and Fund Operator will be automatically terminated and any grants forwarded by the latter to the applicant will have to be redeemed in full by the beneficiary.

3.2. ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE

Eligible expenditure refers to the expenditure incurred by the project promoter and the project partners (in case of partnerships) when implementing the actions of the projects and that can be charged to the project in line with the Project Budget presented with the application, which must be drafted based on the below principles and conditions.

3.2.1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES ON THE ELIGIBILITY OF COSTS IN PROJECTS

¹³ Grant is referring to the 90% of the project budget

1. The principles set forth in this Article shall apply in full to all eligible expenditures unless otherwise stated in this Agreement.
2. Eligible expenditures of projects are those actually incurred by the project promoter or the project partner, which meet the following criteria:
 - a) they are incurred between the first and final dates of eligibility of a project as specified in the project contract;
 - b) they are connected with the subject of the project and they are indicated in the detailed budget of the project;
 - c) they are proportionate and necessary for the implementation of the project;
 - d) they are used for the sole purpose of achieving the objective of the project and its expected outcome(s), in a manner consistent with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness;
 - e) they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular through being recorded in the accounting records of the project promoter and determined according to the applicable accounting standards and generally accepted accounting principles; and
 - f) they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation.
3. 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 and depreciation of equipment are considered to have been incurred when they are recorded on the accounts of the project promoter and/or project partner.
4. 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.

3.2.2. DIRECT EXPENDITURES

1. The eligible direct expenditures for a project are those expenditures which are identified by the project promoter and/or the project partner, in accordance with their accounting principles and usual internal rules, as specific expenditures directly linked to the implementation of the project and which can therefore be booked to it directly. The following direct expenditures are eligible provided that they satisfy the principles set out under section 3.2.1:
 - a. the cost of personnel assigned to the project, comprising actual remuneration including social security charges and other statutory costs as applicable, provided that this corresponds to the project promoter's and project partner's usual policy on remuneration; Internal Staff costs are to be calculated on the basis of the following formula:

Eligible staff costs = hourly rate X number of hours worked on the project

- Hourly Rate = Annual Salary / Total number of hours worked in a year

- Annual Basic Salary = annual basic gross salary pre-taxes + employer's share of national insurance + maternity benefit + statutory bonuses
 - Total number of hours worked in a year = [(52 weeks per year X number of working hours in a week¹⁴) – (hours of vacation leave¹⁵ + hours of public holidays not covered from vacation leave)]
- b. travel and subsistence allowances for personnel and volunteers taking part in the project, provided that they are in line with the project promoter's and project partner's usual practices on travel costs:
- i. Travel Costs: Only the amount equivalent to economy tickets may be claimed, hence travelling which occurred in business class is requested to be backed by a quotation for an economy ticket for reimbursement purposes
 - ii. Subsistence Allowance known also as Daily Allowance: This consists of a fixed subsistence allowance based on number of nights abroad. The amount of daily allowance must be in line with the relevant national legislation and internal rules of the entity when applicable; in the absence of such internal policy, the amount be in line with the rates stipulated by the European Commission applicable for the period in question¹⁶.
 - iii. Budget Categorization: Travel and Subsistence Allowance for personnel and volunteers should be budgeted for and reported under "*Travel and subsistence allowances for personnel and volunteers*". Travel and Subsistence Allowance for participants of trainings/events should be budgeted for and reported under "*Costs of consumables and Supplies*". Travel and Subsistence Allowance of external experts and service providers should be budgeted for and reported under "*Costs entailed by other contracts awarded by a project promoter for the purposes of carrying out the project*".
- c. cost of new or second-hand equipment provided that it is depreciated in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles applicable to the project promoter and generally accepted for items of the same kind. Only the portion of the depreciation corresponding to the duration of the project and the rate of actual use for the purposes of the project may be taken into account by the Fund Operator. In case the Fund Operator determines that the equipment is an integral and necessary component for achieving the outcomes of the project, the entire purchase price of that equipment may be eligible;
- d. costs of consumables and supplies, provided that they are identifiable and assigned to the project;

¹⁴ Being pro-rata to employment of staff in question based on employment status and not hours contributed to the project; i.e. if an individual is employed on a 20-hour basis per week thus number of working hours per week shall read 20 in above equation

¹⁵ Being pro-rata to employment of staff in question based on employment status and not hours contributed to the project; i.e. if an individual is employed on a 20-hour basis per week thus vacation leave shall read 50% of total vacation leave application for full-time basis

¹⁶https://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/public-procurement/rules-implementation/thresholds_en

- e. costs entailed by other contracts awarded by a project promoter for the purposes of carrying out the project, provided that the awarding complies with the applicable rules on public procurement; and
 - f. costs arising directly from requirements imposed by the project contract for each project.
2. Costs related to reconstruction, renovation, or refurbishment of a real estate shall not exceed 50% of the total eligible direct cost of the project.
 3. Where the entire purchase price of equipment is eligible in accordance with point (c) of paragraph 1, the Fund Operator shall ensure that the project promoter:
 - I. keeps the equipment in its ownership for a period of at least five years following the completion of the project and continues to use the equipment for the benefit of the overall objectives of the project for the same period;
 - II. keeps the equipment properly insured against losses such as fire, theft or other normally insurable incidents both during project implementation and for at least five years following the completion of the project; and
 - III. sets aside appropriate resources for the maintenance of the equipment for at least five years following the completion of the project.
 4. The specific means for the implementation of this obligation shall be specified in the project contract. The Fund Operator may release any project promoter from the above obligations with respect to any specifically identified equipment where the Fund Operator is satisfied that, having regard to all relevant circumstances, continued use of that equipment for the overall objectives of the project would serve no useful economic purpose.
 5. The provisions listed above shall apply entirely to all eligible expenditures incurred by all the parties concerned and involved in the implementation of the Project.

3.2.3. INDIRECT EXPENDITURES

1. 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.
2. Project promoters and project partners may apply a **flat rate of up to 15% of direct eligible personnel costs to cover the indirect expenditures.**
3. In case of project promoters or project partners that are international organisations, or bodies or agencies thereof, indirect costs may be identified in accordance with the relevant rules established by such organisations; in such cases, the ruling policy/ies shall be referred to and briefly explained in the budget.

3.2.4. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

Applicants are required to allocate a minimum of 5% of the grant (i.e. 5% of the 90% ACF Funding) , for financial management capacity. This budget category shall cover the costs of project financial management with the aim of supporting the project promoter with the

necessary bookkeeping of project costs and financial reporting thereof. The person/s engaged for this task can be either employed with the organization or subcontracted. Procurement regulations (Section 3.2.7 below refers) must be adhered to.

3.2.5. EXCLUDED EXPENDITURES

1. The following costs shall not be considered eligible:
 - a) interest on debt, debt service charges and late payment charges;
 - b) charges for financial transactions and other purely financial costs, except costs related to accounts and financial services imposed by the project contract;
 - c) costs related to purchase of land or real estate;
 - d) provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
 - e) exchange losses;
 - f) recoverable VAT;
 - g) costs that are covered by other sources;
 - h) fines, penalties and costs of litigation, except where litigation is an integral and necessary component for achieving the outcomes of the project; and
 - i) excessive or reckless expenditure.

3.2.6. OWN CONTRIBUTION

Own contribution includes: (1) In-kind contribution in the form of volunteer work and (2) financial contribution from other sources of funding provided by the project promoter and the partners (financial reserves, donations which are not linked to specific project activities, etc.).

Own contribution is defined as a percentage of total project implementation costs. It is not permitted to refer to a specific activity or budget expenditure category.

- a contribution of the project promoter;
- a contribution by the project partner/s, in case the partner is an NGO;

The own contribution element is equal to 10% of the project's total eligible costs (direct + indirect costs i.e. the 100% project budget). Co-financing can be in-cash or in-kind contribution. Co-financing to the project should be recognizable. Activities and costs undertaken as part of other projects or budgets of the promoter **are not acceptable as co-financing for projects funded by ACF Malta.**

Voluntary work/in-kind contribution may partially contribute towards the coverage of the 10% co-financing. Voluntary work may constitute up to 50% of required co-financing. For the calculation of the in-kind contribution, the price for each hour of voluntary work shall be in accordance to the country's national minimum wage for year when work is being carried out and shall be calculated according to officially available statistics. The national minimum wage

for year 2019 for ages 18 and over reads €175.84¹⁷ basic per week for a full-time job excluding government bonuses and the employer's share of social security contributions and maternity benefit. It can be converted to €4.39 basic per hour calculated on a 40-hour week salary. Overheads and existing premises/facilities are not considered as in-kind contributions.

3.2.7. PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS:

1. Notwithstanding provisions of national law that exempt NGOs from public procurement, any procurement procedures related to amounts above the European Union thresholds for procurement shall be undertaken in accordance with the applicable laws on procurement without regard for such an exemption.¹⁸
2. However, in cases of purchases related to an amount of EUR 5,000 or higher but below the relevant European Union thresholds, the project promoter shall invite at least three suppliers/service provider to submit offers.

4. DEVELOPMENT OF BILATERAL RELATIONS - DONOR PARTNERSHIP

Bilateral Relations between Beneficiary States and Donor States are mandatory within the ACF Programme. The scope of the Bilateral Outcome is to strengthen relations between civil society organisations and other entities in Malta and in the Donor States and contribute to the objectives of the programme.

ACF Malta is encouraging project applicants to include a bilateral partnership with 'a donor project partner' as part of their project application. Such a partnership could include networking, exchange, sharing and transfer of knowledge, technology, experience and best practice and should be reflected in the development and establishment of cooperation at project level within the project application. The bilateral activity will contribute to the achievement of Outcome 4 - Bilateral Outcome from the ACF Results Framework outlined in detail in the table below.

A 'donor project partner' is a legal person actively involved in, and effectively contributing to, the implementation of a project, and whose primary location is in one of the donor states. Both public and private entities, commercial and non-commercial, as well as non-governmental organisations may participate as donor project partners in a project. The degree of involvement and the content of the partner's contribution will vary but only projects implemented in close co-operation between beneficiary and donor state partners will be considered donor partnership projects.

The project level cooperation shall be mutually beneficial to the involved partners, and the partnership is expected to have a positive impact on the project. They should be joint initiatives where input from both partners is necessary to achieve the project objectives. Donor project partners should be involved as early in the planning stages of the project cycle as possible. The donor project partner should be consulted on and given the opportunity to contribute to the relevant aspects of the project application.

¹⁷ <https://dier.gov.mt/en/Employment-Conditions/Wages/Pages/National-Minimum-Wage.aspx>

¹⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/public-procurement/rules-implementation/thresholds_en

The bilateral partnership component must be clearly described and integrated in the project application and the foreseen costs clearly outlined in the budget as part of the overall 100% proposed budget.

Projects that have a bilateral partnership component will be positively assessed during the evaluation process.

The FO will assist the applicants by facilitating the identification of the donor state partner, making use of Donor State information tools and channels available to facilitate bilateral cooperation. In the case of Norway, the Norwegian Helsinki Committee shall act as facilitator in building bilateral contacts, including through the website www.ngonorway.org.

Outcome 4 Bilateral outcome		Enhanced collaboration between beneficiary and donor state entities involved in the programme	Level of satisfaction with the partnership (disaggregated by State type)	Scale 1-7	Survey results	All projects that have a bilateral component will report against these indicators that will be measured directly by the FMO
			Level of trust between cooperating entities in Beneficiary States and Donor States (disaggregated by State type ¹⁹)	Scale 1-7	Survey results	
			Share of cooperating organisations that apply the knowledge acquired from bilateral partnership (disaggregated by State type)	Percentage	Survey results	
			Share of participants in bilateral initiatives funded by the ACF bilateral fund reporting improved knowledge/methods/approaches	Percentage	Survey results	
			Share of participants in bilateral initiatives funded by the ACF bilateral fund reporting improved knowledge/methods/approaches	Percentage	Survey results	
Bilateral Outcome	Bilateral output 1	Partnerships between beneficiary and donor state entities supported	Number of projects involving cooperation with a donor project partner (disaggregated by Donor State)	Number	Copies of contracts concluded with Project Promoters, Partnership agreements between Project Promoters and project partners	

¹⁹ Beneficiary State/Donor State.

Eligible Bilateral Activities

The ACF Malta shall aim to strengthen the sector, and its contribution to key challenges. In this respect, the following activities are suggested for support under **all the ACF Malta outcomes**:

1. Fostering active citizenship and participatory democracy, including grassroots/local level
1. Advocacy, watchdog and monitoring activities
2. Awareness-raising activities
3. Multicultural dialogue activities
4. Participation in policy and decision-making processes
5. Harnessing citizens participation in decision-making processes
6. Mutual learning and dissemination
7. Education and training activities, in particular development or curriculum and informal learning activities
8. Cultural initiatives to promote key thematic areas as mentioned above
9. Provision of welfare and basic services.

5. APPLICATION PROCESS

1. An applicant can only submit an application under one outcome. A project proposal can however focus on more than one output under the same outcome.
2. A lead applicant cannot apply as a partner in any another ACF Malta project.
3. An application must be filled by using the form provided by the Fund Operator and submitted:
 - a. Either online via the ACF Malta website <https://activecitizensfund.mt/submit-project/>, as a pdf file signed²⁰ (in blue) and initialised on each page by a legal representative and stamped; together with the supporting documentation listed in the table below. Applicant will receive a confirmation via email upon submission.
 - b. Or By hand delivery to the address of SOS Malta: 10, Triq il-Ward, Santa Venera, SVR 1640, Malta, of the original application (bound signed²¹ (in blue) initialised on each page by a legal representative and stamped) and the supporting documentation listed in the table below; moreover, a soft copy of the application and supporting documentation on a CD-Rom or USB stick;
4. The application has to be submitted in English.
5. The deadline for the submission of the application, either online or as a hard copy, is the 25th January 2020 **by noon (12:00pm)**.
6. The following supporting documentation is to be annexed to the application and represent administrative criteria in the selection process:

²⁰ Signatory should be the same as stated in Section 16

²¹ Signatory should be the same as stated in Section 16

Audited accounts/Financial Statements of financial year 2018 [obligatory also for Project Partners in case of Partnership)	
Latest Certificate of compliance with VO Office [obligatory for Project Applicant and Project Partners in case of voluntary organisations]	
Copy of Voluntary Organization Certificate [obligatory also by Partners in case of voluntary organizations]	
Annex I Detailed Budget Breakdown	
Annex II Communication Plan	
Annex III Project Work Plan	
Organigram of the applicant organisation	
Project Organisational Framework / Organigram [if applicable]	
Project Partnership Framework / Organigram [if applicable] ** including Commitment Declaration in case of informal groups (Section 2.4 above refers)	
Proof that the online ACF Capacity Building Course is being undertaken	
Copy of VAT Certificate if applicable	
Job Plus employment history up to October 2019, making sure no personal data of employees or employer is disclosed ²²	

6. EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURE

All submitted applications are reviewed for compliance with all three types of selection criteria: (1)administrative, (2)eligibility and (3)evaluation criteria. Administrative and eligibility compliance check will be made by administrative staff of SOS Malta, whilst the evaluation criteria will be assessed by an Evaluation Committee.

6.1 ADMINISTRATIVE CRITERIA

- The project application has been submitted by the deadline 25th January 2020 by noon (12:00pm)
- The project application has been submitted in accordance with the permissible method(s) of delivery

(electronic/and or hard copies, signatures, etc.)

²² Personal data of employees and/or employer need to be masked for data protection purposes.

- All requested supporting documents have been submitted²³

6.2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Eligibility of applicant - refer to section 2.3
 - Proof of employed staff up to October 2019;
 - Self - declaration which should disclose the type of renting/ownership/donation of the office space that the Applicant is using;
 - Audited accounts/Financial Statements of the last 2 financial years
 - Applicant is registered and following the ACF Malta Capacity Building online course. More information about the course can be found on activecitizensfund.mt/capacity-building-courses/
- Eligibility of partner/s - refer to section 2.4
 - Project partner/s are registered and following the ACF Malta Capacity Building online course. More information about the course can be found on activecitizensfund.mt/capacity-building-courses/
- Eligibility of application
 - The requested grant amount is within the permissible limits provided in the call
 - The proposed implementation period is within the permissible limits provided in the call
 - No more applications have been submitted by the same applicant
 - A minimum of 5% of the grant (i.e. 5% of the 90% ACF Funding) is allocated to financial management capacity
 - The allocation of indirect costs, is equal or less than 15% of direct eligible personnel costs

6.3 APPEAL PROCEDURE

If an applicant, activities or costs planned for the project do not fall under the administrative and eligibility criteria, the application will be subject to rejection. Rejected applicants will be informed after a week from submission of application, and they have the right to appeal that decision within 72 hours 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 should be reasoned not later than a week after the submission. The rejected applicant will be informed about the appeal's resolution via email.

²³ See section 5

6.4. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Projects which are in compliance with administrative and eligibility criteria are subject to evaluation assessment, which is undertaken by two impartial experts appointed by SOS Malta.

Evaluation Criteria ²⁴	Maximum Score
1. Relevance and coherence between the project and the Programme objective, outcomes and outputs	45
1.1 Coherence between the proposal and the outcomes and the thematic areas of the programme. <i>Under this sub-criterion, the points will be allocated according to the number of outputs and thematic areas reflected in the project application.</i>	15
1.2 The proposal includes verifiable and measurable indicators for the outcome of the action in line with programme indicators. <i>Under this sub-criterion, the points will be allocated according to the number of indicators corresponding to the relevant outputs of the project.</i>	10
1.3 The target groups are clearly identified, including end beneficiaries and intermediaries, if the case. Asylum-seekers and migrants and youth are included as target groups. Evaluation breakdown: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The target groups are clearly identified and defined. 2. Asylum-seekers and migrants are included as target group. 3. Youth is included as target group. 	10

²⁴The selection criteria are divided into sections and subsections. Each subsection will be given a score between 1 and 5 or 10 relevant to the subsection, in accordance with the following guidelines: 1 = very poor and 5 or 10 = very good.

<p>1.4 The project is relevant to the needs of target groups . The needs have been clearly defined and the proposal addresses them appropriately. Evaluation breakdown:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The project relevance to target groups. 2. The needs of the target groups are defined. 3. The needs of the target groups are addressed. 	10
<p>2. Implementation of the project, feasibility of the suggested activities and measures</p>	10
<p>2.1 The activities proposed are feasible, practical, and consistent with the objectives and expected results. The log frame is clear and feasible. Evaluation breakdown:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Activities are specific. 2. Activities are measurable. 3. Activities are achievable. 4. Activities are realistic. 5. Log-frame is clear and feasible. 	5
<p>2.2 The communication plan is comprehensive and includes direct reference to the target groups and the means of communication selected to reach them. Evaluation breakdown:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The communication plan includes a clear target audience. 2. The communication means are identified. 3. Media/channels to be used are appropriate for the target audience. 4. Appropriate timeframe for communication. 5. Enough resources allocated for the communication activities. 	5
<p>3. Partnership</p>	10

<p>3.1. The project is implemented by the lead applicant in collaboration with one or more project partners²⁵, and the partners' level of involvement and participation in the action is satisfactory and clearly outlined in the application. Evaluation breakdown:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The project is implemented as a partnership. 2. Project Partnership Framework is relevant. 3. The choice of partners is justified. 4. Partners have relevant roles assigned in the project. 5. Monitoring of the performance of staff from partner organisations planned by the applicant. 	5
<p>3.2 The project includes a bilateral partnership with a donor project partner. Evaluation breakdown:</p> <p>Bilateral component included in the application and appropriate costs allocated in the budget.</p>	5
4. Experience of applicant and capacity to implement the project	10
<p>4.1. The applicant and partners (where applicable) have enough experience of project management. Evaluation breakdown:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The applicant has implemented previous projects under different funding schemes. 2. The partner/s have implemented previous projects under different funding schemes. 	5
<p>4.2. The applicant and partners (where applicable) have sufficient technical expertise (notably knowledge of the issues to be addressed). Evaluation breakdown:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The applicant has worked on the topic addressed in the project proposal. 2. The partners carried out relevant work on the topic addressed in the project proposal. 	5

²⁵ see eligibility of partner provided in section 2.4. Project Partnerships

5. Sustainability of the intervention	5
<p>5.1. The project describes how the results shall be maintained after end of project time-frame. Evaluation breakdown:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Outline of how the project impact will continue after the end of the project. 2. The target group is involved in the implementation of the project. 	5
6. Economic efficiency (reasonable and justifiable budget, coherence with the proposed activities)	20
<p>6.1. The proposed costs are proportional, realistic and necessary for the proposed actions and expected results. Evaluation breakdown:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposed costs are connected with the subject of the project and they are indicated in the detailed budget of the project. 2. The proposed costs are proportionate and necessary for the implementation of the project. 3. The proposed costs are realistic. 	10
<p>6.2. The applicant and partners (where applicable) have or are proposing sufficient management capacity (including staff, equipment and ability to handle the budget for the action). Evaluation breakdown:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The staff costs allocated are sufficient for the project activities to be implemented. 2. 5% of the grant (i.e. 5% of the 90% ACF Funding) overall total of the direct and indirect budget of the project is allocated to financial management capacity. 3. The allocation of costs is proportionate between partners (only those eligible for funding) according to their role in the project. 4. Allocation of indirect costs, being either equal or less than 15% of direct eligible personnel costs, is calculated correctly. 	10
Total	100

The minimum total score required for an application to be recommendable for funding will be 55 points.

SOS Malta, as Fund Operator, shall appoint external experts to be part of the **Evaluation Committee**, that are impartial of the Fund Operator itself, its partners, of the applicants, and their partners, to score projects according to the evaluation criteria. With at least one of them

being independent from the Fund Operator. The experts shall justify in writing the scores for each criterion they evaluate. For the purposes of ranking the projects, the average of the scores awarded by the experts shall be used.

If the difference between the scores given by the two experts is more than 30% of the higher score, a third expert shall be commissioned by the Fund Operator to score the project independently. In such cases the average score of the two closest scores shall be used for the ranking of the projects.

Following the scoring given by Evaluation Committee, the Selection Committee shall review the ranked list of projects. It may modify the ranking of the projects in justified cases.

The Selection Committee will consist of at least three persons possessing the relevant sector expertise and experience on/with working with civil society. Such experts shall have no direct or indirect interests that are or appear to be incompatible with the impartial exercise of their function. At least one of them shall be external to SOS Malta.

The Selection Committee shall operate in an open, transparent and accountable manner, and its composition will ensure that due attention is paid to possible areas of conflict of interest. The selection procedure must provide equal treatment of all applicants. The Financial Mechanism Committee or its representatives as well and the National Focal Point shall be invited to participate in the meetings of the Selection Committee as observers. The board of SOS Malta takes the final decision on the projects to be supported based on the Selection Committee's recommendation, not later than 8 weeks after the deadline for applications. Modifications to the recommendations of the Selection Committee shall be justified. SOS Malta shall keep a record of the selection process and decisions taken.

7. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

A conflict of interest situation is deemed to be present 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 projects.

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 GRANT AWARDING

All applicants are notified about the results in writing via email within 10 working days after final decisions are made.

SOS Malta has set up a Complaints Committee through which any complaints related to the selection process or the ACF Malta in general, can be filed and assessed accordingly. The

complaints should be sent via email to acfmalta@sosmalta.org using the text subject: **Complaint** which will firstly be assessed by the SOS Malta staff and if not resolved will be passed on to the Complaints Committee. The Complaints Committee will include one member of the board of SOS Malta, the Chief Executive Officer of SOS Malta and one member external to the FO. If requested, a meeting may be held with the fund operator and the unsuccessful grantee to discuss in more detail the proposal and the reason why it was not selected.

The Complaints Committee will not address issues related to the administrative and eligibility criteria of the applications that were declared rejected, such issues will only be dealt with through the Appeal procedure as specified under section 6.3.

SOS Malta will conclude a project contract with all selected Project Promoters and the list of selected projects will be published on the ACF Malta website.

Payments to the Project Promoters will be made as follows:

A. For 12-month projects:

- 40% of the 90% as an advance transfer
- 40% interim payment upon submission of interim report after 6 months from implementation
- 20% of the 90% held as retention money
- Final payment will be the remaining 20% of the 90% of the actual total costs incurred and claimed transferred following:
 - ◆ the positive assessment and verification of the final report submitted to the Fund Operator, by the independent external auditors
 - ◆ completion of the online capacity building course by lead applicant and partner/s.

B. For 24-month projects:

- 40% of the 90% as an advance transfer
- 40% interim payment upon submission of interim report #1 after 12 months from implementation
- 20% (i.e. having 20% of the 90% held as retention money).
- Final payment will be the remaining 20% of the 90% of the actual total costs incurred and claimed total estimated costs transferred following:
 - ◆ the positive assessment and verification of the final report submitted to the Fund Operator, by the independent external auditors
 - ◆ completion of the online capacity building course by lead applicant and partner/s.

C. For 36-month projects:

- 40% of the 90% as an advance transfer
- 20% interim payment upon submission of interim report #1 after 12 months from implementation

- 20% interim payment upon submission of interim report #2 after 24 months from implementation
- 20% (i.e. having 20% of the 90% held as retention money).
- Final payment will be the remaining 20% of the 90% of the actual total costs incurred and claimed total estimated costs transferred following:
 - ◆ the positive assessment and verification of the final report submitted to the Fund Operator, by the independent external auditors
 - ◆ completion of the online capacity building course by lead applicant and partner/s.

9. DATA PROTECTION

All the documentation provided by applicants throughout the application process and during the implementation of projects, will be collected and stored both electronically and physically by the Fund Operator for the purpose of reporting to the Financial Mechanism Office (FMO) and for a 3-year period following FMO's approval of the final programme report.

10. CONTACTS

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

Any question may be sent by email on acfmalta@sosmalta.org, which will be addressed within 48 working hours from receipt of email. Additional information on the ACF Malta Programme can be found here: <https://activecitizensfund.mt/> .

ANNEX I - GLOSSARY

Overall Project Objective	The effects of the project on society or the environment (positive or negative, direct or indirect, intended or unintended) in the long term.
ACF Programme Outcome:	As stated in section 4 of the Guidelines for Applicants the ACF Programme has a predetermined set of outcomes and indicators it wishes to achieve through its project level support. Please refer to section 4 of the guidelines for more details.
Objective	Effects of an intervention on society or the environment (positive or negative, direct or indirect, intended or unintended).

Expected Outcome:	What are the specific changes or results you wish to bring about through the project implementation. An outcome describes the vision of change of the project. Outcomes are usually short and medium term effects.
Outcome indicator:	How will you know the proposed change has taken place/ how will you measure it? Indicators provide the quantifiable information you need to illustrate that the outcome has been achieved and change has happened. Indicators should always be SMART: (specific, measurable, achievable/appropriate, relevant, time bound)
Outputs:	Outputs are the products, capital goods and services delivered by a project to the intermediaries. Outputs are easy to attribute directly to the resources used and the activities performed. They are usually within the greatest control of the implementing organisation.
Programme Results:	Results are the outputs, outcomes and objective of an intervention or a programme.
Baseline:	What is the situation in the areas of intervention now, that is, before the project has started. It is the reference point for measuring change. More specifically, it is the value of a particular indicator at the beginning of an intervention against which variations that occur are measured Baseline figures should be linked to each indicator.
Target:	What is the quantifiable number you wish to reach for each indicator by the end of the project. A particular value for a performance indicator to be accomplished by a specific date in the future. It is what the intervention would like to achieve within a certain period of time in relation to one of its expected results (outputs, outcome and/or impact).
Source of verification:	This refers to the ways in which you will be able to measure and prove the indicators have been reached, eg evaluation, research, photographic evidence, testimonies etc. <i>Sources of verification will include:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>participant lists for the training</i> ● <i>evaluation of the training among participants</i> ● <i>meeting agendas</i> ● <i>minutes of meetings with government officials</i>

