

Call for Applications for an Online Tool Developer for the Active Citizens Lab

Introduction

This project is set up as a manner of trying to get people as close together as possible even during a pandemic of the scale that we have been experiencing. Hence this is why the Active Citizens Lab exists. This project aims at helping individuals understand the role of citizens in society, by highlighting human rights, democratic participation, journalistic interaction as well as the importance of a healthy society.



TENDER OPEN
APRIL 20TH 2021

ACTIVE CITIZENS LAB

Call for Web Developer
SOS Malta | ACF PROJECT

More info on: ACL@sosmalta.org

Details of the call for the call

This call aims to reach individuals or companies that would like to help and build a webspace that will serve as a platform for holding a new civic space. This space will aim to attract and help individuals from all parts of society to interact together, work together and bring forward a new level of social cohesiveness. The call would require a tech company that is able to build a new form of social media from the ground up according to the specifications that are presented. To apply you will be expected to present a list of qualifications/ capacity of the company as well as examples from other work you have carried out.

Project brief

The objectives of the ACL will be to empower and equip citizens and civil society, with necessary skills and tools to push for good governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights and democratic principles.

Active Citizens Lab project will have an online as well as offline component. The Active Citizens Lab will:

1. Offer educational/informational materials and training courses to develop citizen journalism and human rights awareness amongst other skills;
2. A civic action forum: a citizen alert web based feature that will serve to strengthen the capacity of civic voices. Empowering the general public to advocate for policy priorities, good governance, respect for human rights and democratic principles;
3. Professional support and practical assistance offered through an Advisory Board of Experts which will be delivered offline, through face-to-face meetings and online through informative materials and a chat/email based service.
Topics covered will be research-based advocacy, gathering of public opinion data, media literacy, monitoring of respect of human rights and democratic principles, equality, development of legislation, etc.

The ACL will be designed following a research exercise to identify the needs of the sector with regards to Human Rights, Democracy and Active Citizenship issues in Malta. The research shall be the first output of the ACL imperative for the successful planning and implementation of subsequent actions proposed under the ACL.

The main questions asked during this research phase will be related to the content and specific services that will be available in the online laboratory. The participation of the target group of this ACL is crucial in the design of appropriate online tools and services. The research methodology will also include participatory methods, which will offer the advantage of direct interaction with stakeholders who can share issues of concern from their daily life experience in a more informal setting. Having as one of the main goals, to facilitate participation, the ACL will then be designed in the most appropriate way; identified together with the stakeholders according to their needs and realities.

In December 2017, a stakeholder consultation, to identify specific needs and challenges in Malta was held. This stakeholder meeting was attended by 14 participants; representatives of organisations and associations, the Ministry of European Affairs and Equality, platforms and networks, journalists and activists.

The specific challenges identified during the consultation were:



1. lack of civic participation in policy, governance and advocacy as well as
2. a lack of support for vulnerable groups and
3. vulnerable groups' voices not being heard.

All of this was discussed in the context of good governance, human rights and the rule of law. Lack of good governance started being discussed in Malta most recently in the Malta Human Rights Report 2016, due to the weakening and deterioration of the democratic system and the rule of law, which is undermining public trust in the authorities.

Recent reports such as 'The Rule of Law in Malta' and 'Governance in the EU Member States – Evidence from Three Global Indicators', make reference to a major decline in Malta's international rankings related to governance, rule of law, democracy and freedom of expression.

This was further accentuated after Daphne Caruana Galizia - an investigative journalist in Malta - was murdered in October 2017 and the response of the authorities was neither satisfactory nor transparent in the eyes of many of the citizens. This incident made evident the recent decline in freedom of speech and journalism. The work of Daphne Caruana Galizia was mainly related to alleged acts of corruption by senior members of the Government and opposition, which reduced the accountability of the authorities and their ability to enforce the rule of law.

Due to the small and limited capacity of CSOs in Malta it is difficult for individual organisations to fully take on the role of a watchdog and promote transparency and accountability. What is more, censorship of civil society has also been witnessed, for example through the removal of billboards put up by the activist group, Occupy Justice.¹

Stakeholders also stressed that fake news and disinformation is on the rise, which makes it challenging for civil society to disseminate genuine and impartial information, and may cause additional harm to already vulnerable groups. Hate speech and discrimination based on race, religion, LGBTIQ identification, political opinion and belonging are worrying phenomena that threaten the respect of human rights, especially among these groups.

Taking all these factors into consideration, SOS Malta felt it was imperative to create an ACL that would serve as a watchdog as well as empower both civic society and the general public to become more engaged active participants.

¹ Times of Malta, <https://goo.gl/sgaxbS>



Requirements on submission of expression of interest:

Proof of capacity to handle projects.
Examples of previous work carried out.
Motivation for joining this project.

Closing Date for Submission: 11th May

For any further questions or clarifications please contact Mr. AH on the above details.

ACL@sosmalta.org
SOS Malta
10, Triq il-Ward
Santa Venera, SVR 1640
Malta