Iceland Liechtenstein Norway **Civil Society Fund**

OPEN CALL FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (CSOs)

IN SLOVAKIA

ROLLING CALL No 1. FOR SMALL GRANTS

AVAILABLE FUNDING: EUR 990 000

1st DEADLINE: 31 March 2026 23:59 CET

The **EEA Civil Society Fund** is part of the contribution of **Iceland**, **Liechtenstein** and **Norway** to 15 EU Member States under the EEA and Norway Grants, including **Slovakia**. The aims of the EEA and Norway Grants are to **reduce social and economic disparities** in the European Economic Area (EEA) and to **strengthen bilateral relations** between the Donor States and Beneficiary States.
The EEA Civil Society Fund aims to support **a vibrant and resilient civil society protecting and promoting democracy, the rule of law, and human rights**.
The EEA Civil Society Fund in Slovakia has a total allocation of EUR 9,7 million. A consortium of **Ekopolis Foundation, Open Society Foundation Bratislava,** and **Carpathian Foundation** operates the EEA Civil Society Fund in Slovakia on behalf of the Donor States.
This call targets Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) working in civic participation in democratic processes, integrity of information and media literacy, protection of human rights, providing assistance and advocating for the displaced people and has a total allocation of **EUR 990 000.**

SUMMARY OF THE CALL	
Title of the call	Call No.1 for Small Grants
Purpose of the call	See section 2.1 of this Call
Outcome(s)	1. Democratic values and rule of law strengthened 2. Human rights strengthened
Output(s)	1.1 CSO participation in democratic processes increased 1.2 Civic engagement increased - special focus: Addressing challenges arising from Russia's war on Ukraine 1.3 Information integrity and media literacy increased 2.1 Human rights, including anti-discrimination, and social justice supported
Relevant project activities	Recommended activities under each Output (See section 2 of this Call)
Eligible project applicants	See section 3.1 of this Call
Project duration	Between 1 and 12 months
Project grant amount	Maximum of EUR 25 000
Co-financing	No co-financing required
Partnerships	Applications may be submitted in partnership. Partnerships with entities from the Donor States (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) are encouraged.
Call available in the following language(s)	Slovak, English
Questions deadline	No later than 5 working days before cut-off dates for inclusion in the evaluation
Application deadline	31 March 2026 23:59 CET - first cut-off date (Submissions are accepted on a rolling basis – see section 5.2)

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1. BACKGROUND FOR THE EEA CIVIL SOCIETY FUND IN SLOVAKIA

Support to civil society is a key priority for the EEA and Norway Grants, funded by **Iceland, Liechtenstein** and **Norway**. The overall objectives of EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2021-2028 is to contribute to the reduction of **social and economic disparities** in the European Economic Area (EEA) and to strengthen **bilateral relations** between the Donor States and the 15 EU Member States including Slovakia.

The EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2021-2028 are based on the **common values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities**. All organisations and activities funded by the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2021-2028 shall be consistent with respect for these values and principles and abstain from supporting operations that may fail to do so. Their implementation shall comply with the fundamental rights and obligations enshrined in relevant instruments and standards.

10% of the overall funding of the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028 has been set aside for support to civil society through the EEA Civil Society Fund. The allocation for the EEA Civil Society Fund in Slovakia is **EUR 9.7 million.**

Through an open tender process for Slovakia, the secretariat of the Donor States – the Financial Mechanism Office (FMO) – has selected **a consortium of three Fund Operators** (FOs): **Ekopolis Foundation, Open Society Foundation Bratislava (OSF) and Carpathian Foundation (CF)**. Each FO is responsible for specific Outputs defined in relevant Outcomes. Ekopolis Foundation acts as the lead partner of the consortium. It is the contracting party to the Donors, responsible for the overall programme management.

The objective of the EEA Civil Society Fund is to contribute to **a vibrant and resilient civil society protecting and promoting democracy, the rule of law, and human rights**.

The EEA Civil Society Fund in Slovakia will include **seven calls**, contributing to the following outcomes[1]:

- Outcome 1: Democratic values and rule of law strengthened
- Outcome 2: Human rights strengthened
- Outcome 3: Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) that promote democracy, the rule of law, and human rights, strengthened
- Bilateral Outcome: Strengthened bilateral cooperation in the civil society sector
- Regional Outcome: Strengthened regional cooperation in the civil society sector

Within the key areas, the EEA Civil Society Fund aims to support the promotion of democratic values, civil society participation in decision-making processes, civic engagement, information integrity and media literacy, the protection of human rights, the fight against discrimination and for social justice. The programme places particular emphasis on gender equality, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, the promotion of LGBTIQ+ rights, as well as climate action, environmental protection and a just green transition. Another important focus is on developing organizational capacities and creating an enabling environment for the effective functioning of the civil sector.

[1] Outcomes are the higher-level changes that occur through the achievement of various outputs. Their effects on the target group should continue in the future. Projects are expected to make a measurable contribution to the applicable outcome. See more information in Annex 2.

Part of the Programme's support is specifically dedicated to addressing **urgent societal challenges**, such as **addressing challenges arising from Russia's war on Ukraine, countering gender-based violence** and **empowering groups that are marginalised**, particularly **Roma**.

The bilateral outcome of strengthened bilateral cooperation is about cooperation between civil society in Slovakia and in the three Donor States Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

The EEA Civil Society Fund provides support for CSOs throughout Slovakia**.** Applications from CSOs based in under-served geographic areas and led by target groups that are marginalised are encouraged.

An overview of all open calls as well as other activities supported by the programme can be found on the website https://eeagrants.org/sk/civil-society-fund-slovakia

2. FOCUS OF THIS CALL

2.1 Purpose of this call

Slovak society today is experiencing a weakening of the rule of law, growing polarization, and a decline in trust in democratic institutions and independent media. The EEA Civil Society Fund therefore seeks to **create space for strengthening the role of civil society organizations**, which play a crucial role in protecting the public interest, holding power to account, and promoting democratic values. It supports their advocacy and watchdog activities, engagement in public policy-making, and expert analysis of legislation, with an emphasis on strategic communication, data-driven work, and increasing the transparency of public administration.

The call also responds to **emerging social challenges, particularly the consequences of Russian aggression against Ukraine and the integration of refugees into Slovak society**. Supported projects will contribute to equal opportunities, social inclusion, and the building of solidarity between migrants and host communities, while also addressing disinformation and strengthening social cohesion.

At the same time, the programme focuses on supporting **independent journalism, fact-checking, and media literacy**—helping to foster a resilient society capable of critically engaging with information and safeguarding democratic public discourse.

Finally, the call recognizes **the persistent inequalities and discrimination faced by Roma communities, women, LGBTIQ+ people, and persons with disabilities**. Support is directed toward organizations working to eliminate these barriers through advocacy, legal assistance, and community-based initiatives. The overall aim of the programme is to contribute to a more just, inclusive, and democratic society founded on equality, transparency, and respect for the rule of law.

2.2 Expected results

The EEA Civil Society Fund in Slovakia uses a **results-based management approach**[2]. This means it is designed and managed with a focus on achieving specific results. The Programme has a results framework that guides what can be supported. To be eligible for support, all projects must contribute to the expected results outlined in this framework.

Each project contributes to one single programme outcome. Within that outcome, a project may support one or more outputs. In addition to the outcome, a project may also contribute to the bilateral outcome—if it is implemented in partnership with a donor project partner.

[2] See Annex 2 of the Guidelines for Applicants and Project Promoters

All projects selected under this call shall contribute to **one of the two following outcomes** and their related output(s):

- Outcome 1: Democratic values and the rule of law strengthened
  - Output 1.1: CSO participation in democratic processes increased
    [Responsible partner: Ekopolis Foundation]
  - Output 1.2: Civic engagement increased. Please note that, this output includes a Special focus on "Addressing challenges arising from Russia's war on Ukraine"
    [Responsible partner: Carpathian Foundation]
  - Output 1.3: Information integrity and media literacy increased
    [Responsible partner: Open Society Foundation Bratislava]
- Outcome 2: Human rights strengthened
  - Output 2.1: Human rights, including anti-discrimination, and social inclusion supported
    [Responsible partner: Open Society Foundation Bratislava]

Each project is expected to align with these main expected results, and report on them narratively.

To track progress, projects should also contribute to programme-level indicators from the selected outcome and output(s).[3] Indicators are a means to quantifiably measure progress. Alongside narrative reports and other sources of information, indicators are used to help *indicate* the extent to which an outcome or output has been achieved. The indicators are used to monitor progress and measure results at the programme level for this call.[4]

Each project is strongly encouraged to use at least one of the programme-level indicators from the selected outcome and output(s).[5]

[3] By achieving results under the selected outcome and related output(s), projects will contribute indirectly to the programme's high-level objective to contribute to a vibrant and resilient civil society protecting and promoting democracy, the rule of law, and human rights. However, project applicants are not required to measure results at this higher objective level, neither with narrative reporting nor with indicator reporting.

[4] For more information on indicators, please see the Annex 1 of the Guidelines for Applicants and Project Promoters.

[5] Project applicants can design and use their own additional outcome-level and output-level indicators to help track their specific results. These project-level indicators are not part of the programme's overall results framework. For more information, see Annex 2 of the Guidelines for Applicants and Project Promoters.

2.2 OUTCOME 1: Democratic Values and the Rule of Law Strengthened

Slovak society is currently facing challenges such as the erosion of the principles of the rule of law, weakened public trust in institutions, and attacks on independent media and civil society, all undermining the healthy functioning of democracy.

Under Outcome 1: Democratic Values and the Rule of Law Strengthened, the EEA Civil Society Fund provides space for civil society organisations (CSOs) to enhance their role in democratic processes by supporting their capacity to monitor public affairs, advocate for change, and participate meaningfully in public debate. The fund also strengthens CSOs' ability to withstand disinformation and smear campaigns and to contribute to building an open, fair, and participatory environment. Through this support, CSOs can respond more flexibly to current societal challenges and defend public interest in developing legislation and public policies.

Common challenges across outputs within Outcome 1 include institutional and administrative barriers limiting policy influence, public distrust in institutions stemming from historical governance inefficiencies, and regional disparities in civic participation, particularly in rural areas and among various population groups. The rapid evolution of digital communication offers opportunities for direct engagement but also challenges such as increased polarisation and the superficial nature of public debates.

Output 1.1 CSO participation in democratic processes increased

Responsible Partner: Ekopolis Foundation

Financial allocation: EUR 250 000

Needs addressed: Civil society organisations (CSOs) are an essential pillar in protecting democracy; however, their ability to effectively participate in public affairs has been weakened. This output supports projects focused on advocacy, watchdog activities, participation in policy-making, and expert contributions to legislative processes, with particular emphasis on strategic communication and the preparation of data-based positions, comments, and proposals that provide a sound basis for dialogue with public institutions.

The aim is to strengthen the influence of CSOs on policy formulation and decision-making processes, increasing the legitimacy of citizens' voices and the transparency of public decision-making, thereby contributing to the protection of democratic values and the rule of law.

Expected results: This output also aims to enhance public access to government information and decision-making while fostering stronger dialogue between CSOs and policymakers, addressing key issues such as the need to protect and expand existing tools for civic participation, tackle corruption, and reduce bureaucratic hurdles that hinder CSO engagement.

Target groups of the project:

- Advocacy and watchdog CSOs
- Community organisations active in governance, transparency, and participation
- Policy-makers and public institutions at all levels
- Academic and research institutions (as partners)

Relevant activities include but are not limited to:

- Advocacy activities promoting specific policy or thematic issues

- Participation in the development and implementation of public policies and decision-making processes
- Watchdog and monitoring activities focused on policy formulation and implementation
- Civic education and training
- Awareness-raising initiatives
- Research, advocacy, and other activities promoting good governance, transparency, and anti-corruption measures
- Establishment and strengthening of CSO networks and coalitions
- Monitoring and reporting on risks to democratic processes
- Capacity-building activities for CSOs

Indicators: Each project is strongly encouraged to use at least one of these indicators:

Indicator code	Indicator
CIV-001	Number of national laws or policies developed or revised with civil society participation
CIV-002	Number of local laws or policies developed or revised with civil society participation
ALL-013	Estimated number of people who engaged and took an action in support of the advocacy / awareness-raising campaigns
CIV-003	Number of times CSO inputs in a policy initiative focused on rule of law or democracy topics are acknowledged by public authorities
CIV-015	Number of public advocacy outputs delivered by supported CSOs
CIV-004	Number of CSOs participating in consultations with a public institution
CIV-005	Number of consultation processes with a public institution facilitated by CSOs
ALL-012	Number of advocacy/awareness-raising campaigns carried out

For a detailed explanation of the indicators and how to demonstrate them, see Annex 1 of the Guidelines for Applicants and Project Promoters under the EEA Civil Society Fund Slovakia entitled „ Indicators Library of EEA Civil Society Fund in Slovakia. “

Special focus under Output 1.2: Civic engagement increased: Addressing challenges arising from Russia’s war on Ukraine

Responsible Partner: Carpathian Foundation

Financial allocation: EUR 240 000

Needs addressed: A key challenge in this area is the difficulty Ukrainian migrants and refugees face in integrating into society, as their needs are often overlooked and their participation in public affairs remains insufficient. Support in these areas is primarily provided by civil society organizations; however, their capacities are limited, and the lack of systemic measures at the state level presents further obstacles.

The integration of Ukrainian refugees into Slovak society faces numerous challenges across sectors, including the recognition of Ukrainian qualifications hindering employment, the education system’s struggle to develop systemic tools for integrating Ukrainian children, and insufficient support for young people at universities. Individuals with special needs and disabilities face barriers to diagnostic and educational inclusion services, while the mental health sector lacks professionals to address war-related

trauma. Housing accessibility remains a significant obstacle, exacerbated by negative societal attitudes and the broader rental housing crisis, with harmful political narratives contributing to societal polarisation and affecting refugees' well-being and access to services.

There is a deficit of quality refugee-led initiatives and weak coordination among CSOs, with many organisations reducing or ceasing support due to societal negativity and diminished financial resources, and local CSOs often lack the capacity and expertise needed for refugee integration. Government policies and responses have been slow and inadequate, including at the level of local authority action plans, and a critical gap in data collection limits effective policymaking. Both refugees and service providers struggle with unclear information about entitlements and rights linked to settlement status.

Expected Results: The expected results include advocacy initiatives targeting institutions responsible for refugee services, alongside the creation of comprehensive refugee integration plans through participatory, evidence-based planning. They also encompass campaigns countering disinformation about Ukrainian refugees and the war, as well as enhanced solidarity and understanding within host communities. In addition, the results foresee the growth and strengthened expertise of refugee-led initiatives and CSOs, together with increased CSO engagement in advocacy platforms and working groups.

Target groups:

- Migrants and refugees from Ukraine living in Slovakia
- Initiatives led by migrants and refugees from Ukraine
- Civil society organisations supporting migrants and refugees from Ukraine
- Community actors
- Host communities in Slovakia

Relevant activities include but are not limited to:

- Capacity building for CSOs working on Ukrainian migrants' and refugees' rights, including refugee-led or migrant-led CSOs.
- CSO participation in working groups relating to challenges arising from the invasion of Ukraine.
- CSO participation in advocacy platforms relating to challenges arising from the invasion of Ukraine.
- Advocacy initiatives targeting institutions responsible for refugee services.
- Evidence-based and participatory initiatives to create comprehensive refugee integration plans.
- Campaigns for information integrity and/or countering disinformation.
- Support for local or community-based media outlets to increase information integrity.

Indicators: Each project is strongly encouraged to use at least one of these indicators:

Indicator code	Indicator
CIV-001	Number of national laws or policies developed or revised with civil society participation
CIV-002	Number of local laws or policies developed or revised with civil society participation
ALL-013	Estimated number of people who engaged and took an action in support of the advocacy / awareness-raising campaigns

CIV-003	Number of times CSO inputs in a policy initiative focused on rule of law or democracy topics are acknowledged by public authorities.
CIV-006	Number of people who participated in consultations with a public institution facilitated by CSOs (disaggregated by age)
CIV-010	Number of people engaged in CSO activities as volunteers (disaggregated by age)
CIV-027	Number of supported CSOs working on Ukrainian migrants' and refugees' rights

For a detailed explanation of the indicators and how to demonstrate them, see Annex 1 of the Guidelines for Applicants and Project Promoters under the EEA Civil Society Fund Slovakia entitled „ Indicators Library of EEA Civil Society Fund in Slovakia. “

Output 1.3 Information integrity and media literacy increased

Responsible Partner: Open Society Foundation Bratislava

Financial allocation: EUR 250 000

Needs addressed: Slovakia faces a fragmented information ecosystem, a rise in disinformation, and the growing influence of political propaganda, which deepens societal divisions. Misinformation, emotional narratives, conspiracy theories, and anti-Western rhetoric are frequently leveraged by populist politicians, while allied media outlets amplify misleading narratives, often targeting journalists and civil society actors.

Expected results: This element of the Civil Society Fund aims to decrease the impact of disinformation and propaganda, equipping citizens with the skills needed to critically evaluate credible information from misinformation and to foster a more resilient media environment. Expected results include:

- strengthened ability of media to combat misinformation and ensuring the dissemination of accessible and reliable information,
- improvement of the target groups in media literacy,
- developed tools and platforms to counter fake news and propaganda,
- developed collaborative networks among CSOs and media institutions.

Target groups:

- Journalists and independent media outlets
- Civil society organisations engaged in combating disinformation and promoting digital or media literacy
- Schools and universities
- Technology companies (as partners)
- Local and regional civic initiatives

The target audiences of project activities include students, the general public, and vulnerable groups, such as seniors and residents of rural areas.

Relevant activities include but are not limited to:

- Supporting investigative journalism, independent media, and local or community-based outlets to strengthen information integrity.
- Developing and deploying tools, methodologies, and digital solutions to enhance information integrity, media pluralism, and media literacy, including mechanisms for detecting and countering disinformation.
- Implementing fact-checking initiatives, verification tools, and rapid-response mechanisms to address misleading or manipulative content.
- Carrying out public awareness-raising campaigns on information integrity, disinformation risks, and responsible information consumption.
- Promoting media and digital literacy initiatives that empower individuals of all ages to critically assess and engage with information in online and offline environments.
- Advancing information and media literacy in education by integrating relevant skills into school curricula, teacher training, leisure-time education and lifelong learning programmes, including in remote or underserved areas.
- Strengthening cooperation, networking, and knowledge-sharing between civil society organisations, media institutions, educational institutions, and other stakeholders.
- Conducting capacity-building activities for civil society organisations to enhance their ability to address disinformation, promote media literacy, and support credible public discourse.
- Empowering persons in vulnerable situations—such as women, Roma communities, LGBTQI+ persons, persons with disabilities, migrants, and other marginalised groups—by ensuring inclusive, accessible, and protective information environments.
- Establishing information-integrity networks and platforms to exchange findings, best practices, and lessons learned, contributing to collective resilience.

Indicators: Each project is strongly encouraged to use at least one of these indicators:

Indicator code	Indicators
CIV-001	Number of national laws or policies developed or revised with civil society participation
CIV-002	Number of local laws or policies developed or revised with civil society participation
ALL-013	Estimated number of people who engaged and took an action in support of the advocacy / awareness-raising campaigns
CIV-003	Number of times CSO inputs in a policy initiative focused on rule of law or democracy topics are acknowledged by public authorities.
ALL-009	Number of training courses delivered by supported CSOs on information integrity
CIV-007	Number of people who participated in CSO-led training courses on information integrity
LOC-011	Number of local or community-based media outlets supported
ALL-012	Number of advocacy/awareness-raising campaigns focused on information integrity and media literacy carried out (non-Ukraine related)
ALL-012	Number of advocacy/awareness-raising campaigns focused on Ukraine-related information integrity and media literacy carried out

For a detailed explanation of the indicators and how to demonstrate them, see Annex 1 of the Guidelines for Applicants and Project Promoters under the EEA Civil Society Fund Slovakia entitled „ Indicators Library of EEA Civil Society Fund in Slovakia. “

2.3 OUTCOME 2: Human Rights Strengthened

Common challenges across all outputs within Outcome 2 include deep-rooted structural inequalities and a persistent gap between legal frameworks and practical enforcement, with vulnerable groups facing limited access to essential services due to lack of information, inconsistent outreach, and uneven policy application, while fragmented data collection and coordination hinder effective, evidence-based interventions. Environmental degradation and fragmented climate policies intensify health risks and social inequalities, underscoring the urgent need for coordinated, socially just green transitions.

Output 2.1. Human rights strengthened: Human rights, including anti-discrimination, and social justice supported

Responsible Partner: Open Society Foundation Bratislava

Financial allocation: EUR 250 000

Needs addressed: The state of human rights in Slovakia is characterised by persistent structural inequalities, suboptimal enforcement of anti-discrimination legislation, and constrained access to essential public services for vulnerable groups, which impede the realisation of equality and social justice. Local CSOs and national surveys point to significant discrimination in education, employment, health, and housing, with inconsistent application of anti-discrimination measures at all levels creating notable gaps between the legal framework and practice.

Expected results: This initiative focuses on empowering CSOs dedicated to human rights, as well as national, ethnic, and other minorities, persons with disabilities, low-income communities, and other vulnerable groups across Slovakia. The goal is to promote a more inclusive society based on respect for rights. This includes:

- empowerment of vulnerable groups to have knowledge and skills
- enhanced legal enforcement and oversight through structured partnerships between CSOs and various authorities, ensuring more effective responses to discrimination cases,
- strengthened capacity of CSOs to systematically address incidents of discrimination,
- improved advocacy efforts through legal support for CSOs and regular engagement with policymakers,
- advancement of evidence-based policymaking through collaboration with academic/research institutions and governmental and public agencies, and
- increased public awareness of rights through CSOs-led educational programs and information campaigns.

Target groups:

- Roma people
- Women
- LGBTQI+ persons
- Persons with disabilities
- Ethnic and other minority groups
- Low-income and otherwise groups that are vulnerable across Slovakia
- Human rights organisations

Relevant activities include but are not limited to:

- Research and analyses supporting advocacy and policy development
- Advocacy activities promoting specific issues or policy changes
- Participation in policy-making and decision-making processes
- Civic education, training, and awareness-raising activities
- Strategic litigation
- Monitoring and oversight of policy development and implementation (watchdog activities)
- Research, advocacy, and other initiatives promoting good governance, transparency, and anti-corruption measures
- Legal assistance, psychological support, and other forms of help for human rights defenders
- Conducting outreach to target groups and ensuring their representation, with a focus on people who experience social or economic disadvantages
- Capacity-building activities for civil society organisations
- Provision of information, training, direct consultations, and support to vulnerable groups in the field of human rights

Indicators: Each project is strongly encouraged to use at least one of these indicators:

Indicator code	Indicators
CIV-001	Number of national laws or policies developed or revised with civil society participation
ALL-013	Estimated number of people who engaged and took an action in support of the advocacy / awareness-raising campaigns
CIV-003	Number of times CSO inputs in a policy initiative focused on human rights are acknowledged by public authorities.
CIV-015	Number of public advocacy outputs delivered by supported CSOs
ALL-012	Number of advocacy/awareness-raising campaigns carried out
ALL-009	Number of training courses delivered by supported CSOs
CIV-007	Number of people who participated in CSO-led training courses on information integrity (disaggregated by age)

For a detailed explanation of the indicators and how to demonstrate them, see Annex 1 of the Guidelines for Applicants and Project Promoters under the EEA Civil Society Fund Slovakia entitled „ Indicators Library of EEA Civil Society Fund in Slovakia. “

3. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS AND PARTNERS

3.1 Eligible applicants

The applicant is the entity responsible for the overall initiation, preparation and implementation of the project (the project promoter). Eligible applicants are CSOs that are established in Slovakia and fall within the following definition:

> *A non-profit voluntary organisation with a non-commercial purpose, independent of local, regional and central government, public entities, political parties and commercial organisations. Religious institutions and political parties, social partners or profit-distributing cooperatives are not eligible applicants.*

Eligible candidates must meet the following general conditions:

- Are non-profit, being organisations that have not been created nor operate to generate personal profit. Although it may have paid staff and may engage in revenue-generating activities, it does not distribute profits to its members nor to its board. Where revenue-generating activities are undertaken, these do not represent the purpose of the non-profit organisation, but are 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 activities, and the organisation does not pursue the commercial or professional interests of its members. This definition therefore excludes trade- and professional chambers and 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 where the organisation is membership based, membership is not compulsory for any group or individual.
- Any applicant must agree to the principles and procedures of the Programme's *Policy for the Protection of Vulnerable Persons and Children under the EEA Civil Society Fund Slovakia* and commit to complying with them by signing the Declaration of Honour when submitting the application.

More specifically, eligible applicants must be registered in Slovakia under one of the following legislative acts:

a) Civic Association according to the Act No. 83/1990 Coll. on the Association of Citizens;
b) Foundation according to the Act No. 34/2002 Coll. on Foundations;
c) Non-profit Organisation Providing Public Beneficial Services according to the Act No. 83/1990 Coll.
d) Non-investment Fund according to the Act No. 34/2002 Coll. on Non-investment Funds;
e) Non-profit Organisation according to the Act No. 116/85 Coll. on terms for activities of organisations with international aspect;
f) Association of Legal Entities under the Act no. 40/1964 Coll. - Civil Code;
g) Slovak Red Cross under the Act no. 460/2007 Coll. on the Slovak Red Cross.

Religious institutions and political parties, social partners, profit-distributing cooperatives or informal groups are not eligible applicants. Faith-based organisations are eligible if they meet the principles identified above and if the funded activities do not directly or indirectly promote a religious doctrine, mission or proselytism[6] related to the beliefs of a particular faith.

All eligible applicants must abide by the common values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, and comply with the fundamental rights and obligations enshrined in relevant instruments and standards.

3.2 Eligible project partners

An applicant may submit a grant application individually or jointly with a partner organisation sharing the applicant's economic and social objectives to be achieved through the project. The purpose of establishing a partnership is to ensure close cooperation among different types of organisations that bring diverse experience and expertise to address the issues targeted by the project. A project partner is actively involved in the implementation of the project and effectively contributes to its results.

Unless explicitly stipulated, the following entities are eligible to be project partners:

[6] Proselytism is the practice of attempting to convert people to another religion or belief system; any effort to persuade someone to change their beliefs

- Any public or private entity, commercial or non-commercial, as well as CSOs, established as a legal person either in the Donor States[7], Beneficiary States[8] or Ukraine;
- An international organisation or body or agency thereof;
- A commercial entity may participate as an eligible partner; however, it cannot receive financial support from the Programme.
    - Entities registered as "social enterprises" (as defined by Act No. 112/2018 Coll. on the Social Economy and Social Enterprises) are eligible to participate as project partners with financial support from the Programme.
- Informal, ad hoc and self-help organisations (including grassroots organisations) that are not registered legal entities (hereinafter referred to as "informal groups"). Informal groups are considered eligible project partners provided that:
    - their members are legal residents or based in either the Donor States, Beneficiary States or a country outside the European Economic Area that has a common border with Slovakia;
    - they are not established or operating with the purpose of personal profit;
    - membership in the group is voluntary and non-discriminatory;
    - their purpose aligns with the objective of the EEA Civil Society Fund;
    - they are independent of local, regional and national government and other public authorities, as well as of political parties, religious institutions and commercial organisations; and
    - they are represented by one single person, with legal residency in Slovakia, who signs the partnership agreement on behalf of the group. An informal group cannot not be a direct recipient of the project grant.

A project partnership shall not be mistaken for sub-contracting. Project partners always share a common economic or social goal through the implementation of the project, and are actively involved in, and effectively contributing to, the implementation of the project. In contrast, sub-contracting is aimed at one or several specific deliverables, e.g. services or equipment to realise a specific activity within the project. Sub-contracting shall always be carried out based on an appropriate service or purchase contract.[9].

4. PROJECT CONDITIONS

Detailed rules for projects are described in the **Guidelines for Applicants and Project Promoters.**

Project duration	Between 1 and 12 months
Project grant amount	Maximum of EUR 25 000
Indicative start of project implementation	May 2026
Final date of eligibility of expenditure (depending on the start of project implementation)	no later than 30 April 2031

4.1 Co-financing

The grant rate of the project is 100%, no co-financing is required.

[7] Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.
[8] Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia.
[9] Please see further details on sub-contracting in the Guidelines for Applicants

4.2 Eligible expenditure

Eligible expenditure is governed by the **Cost Eligibility Guidance**, with specific rules on grant forms, eligible cost categories, and any applicable Simplified Cost Options defined in the project contract and call documentation. Applicants must submit a project budget via the e-grant system, noting that budget approval does not automatically confirm expenditure eligibility.

Further details are provided in the Guidelines for Applicants and Cost Eligibility Guidance.

4.3 Payment of the grant

The grant will be paid in euro (€), in instalments defined in the project contract:

Payment Type	Limits	Conditions
Advance payment	40% - 50% of the total project budget	Paid after signing the Project Contract (approx. during the first month of implementation); intended to cover the first 6 months of activities.
Interim payment	up to 45% of the total project budget	Paid after approval of the semi-annual interim report (within 10 working days after approval). For 12-month projects, typically around 8th month of implementation.
Final payment (retention)	15% - 20% of the total project budget	Paid after approval of the final report (within 10 working days after approval).

For more information on payments, please refer to the *Cost Eligibility Guideline in the EEA Civil Society Fund Programme.*

4.4 Other conditions

- The Programme and all activities **do not support the provision of social or similar services** unless when the provision of a social service **directly enhance advocacy, community participation, and/or civic engagement**.
- Organizations applying for support under the EEA Civil Society Fund in Slovakia are required to commit to complying with the principles and requirements set out in the **Policy on the Protection of Vulnerable Persons and Children**. Applicants shall confirm their commitment by familiarizing themselves with the Policy when submitting their Application. Recipients of support will be contractually bound to comply with the Policy. Please note that this document is only available in Slovak.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE, ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION CRITERIA

5.1 Administrative and eligibility criteria

Administrative compliance is checked against the following criteria:

- Compliance with the submission deadline given on the front page and in chapter 7 of this call text. Applications cannot be submitted after the deadline.
- Applications are submitted electronically via e-grant system in Slovak language as per chapter 7 of this call text.
- Applications include all relevant supporting documents and attachments as per chapter 6 and Annex 1 of this call text.
- The duration of the project is in accordance with the information specified in the relevant call for applications – see section 5.2 below on the project implementation period.

- The amount requested is in accordance with the information specified in the relevant call for applications – see section 4 on project financing and expenditure eligibility.

Grant applications that fail to meet all of these criteria may be rejected and will, in that case, not be assessed further.

The Fund Operator may request additional information/documents from the applicant to determine compliance with administrative and eligibility criteria. The applicant will be given **5** working days to provide the missing documentation.

5.1.1 Appeals

The Fund Operator notifies the applicants about approval / rejection decisions by e-mail within 5 working days from the decision of a respective Board of Trustees.

Applicants whose applications are rejected due to non-compliance with administrative or eligibility criteria will be informed of the reasons for rejection and have a period of 10 working days to appeal the decision, counted from the day after the notification.

Appeals must be submitted through the e-grant system and must clearly justify the grounds for reconsideration, based on procedural or factual errors. Appeals are reviewed by the Steering Committee, in consultation with the Programme Manager of the respective call, within 15 working days of receipt. The Steering Committee may uphold or reverse the original decision. The outcome of the appeal is final and is communicated to the applicant via the e-grant system.

The Project Managers shall also ensure a list of supported and rejected projects in a respective call is published at the Programme website within 10 working days after the Board of Trustees issues its decision.

5.2 Selection process and criteria

All applications will be assessed according to the following steps and criteria.

Applications that meet the administrative and eligibility criteria outlined in chapters 5.1 and 5.2 of this call will be assessed by at least two impartial experts appointed by the Fund Operator. At least one expert will be independent of the Fund Operator.

5.2.1 The Scoring Chart

The experts will independently score the project application according to the selection criteria in the grid below. The selection criteria are divided into headings and subheadings. Each subheading is given a score. The application can be given an overall score of maximum 100 points. **Further guidance on requirements for each criterion is provided Annex 3 to this Call**.

Group of Criteria / Criterion	Maximum Score
1. Relevance, Purposefulness, and Added Value of the Project	**35**
1.1. Significance of the project in relation to the focus of the call; contribution of the project to the programme's expected results, including its outcomes and outputs	20
1.2. Usefulness of the project in relation to the needs of the direct target groups and the target groups benefiting from project activities and results (indirect target groups)	10
1.3. Expected sustainability of the project results	5
2. Project Implementation Approach	**25**

2.1. Appropriateness and feasibility of planned activities in relation to the defined results	20
2.2. Quality of communication of project results to the public	5
3. Value for Money – Budget and Cost Efficiency	**20**
3.1. Adequacy - value for money	10
3.2. Alignment of the budget with proposed activities	10
4. Profile, Capacity, and Experience of the Applicant (and Partner)	**20**
4.1. Alignment of the applicant's (and partner's) activities with the shared values and principles of the EEA Civil Society Fund Slovakia	10
4.2. Organisational and professional competence and the relevance of the applicant's (and partner's) previous activities in relation to the project.	5
4.3. Applicant's seat located outside of the Bratislava self-governing region (NUTS 3 / SK010)	5
Total score	**100**

To be eligible for funding, a project must achieve **a minimum score of 85 points**. However, achieving this score does **not** automatically guarantee that the project will receive funding. Projects that receive a score of 0 on any of the subheadings may be rejected.

5.2.2 Indicative timeline for the selection process[10]

January 2026	Announcement of call
Cut-off dates for inclusion in the evaluation: 31.03.2026 23:59 (CET) 31.05.2026 23:59 (CET) 31.07.2026 23:59 (CET) 30.09.2026 23:59 (CET) Etc.	Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, and the cut-off date for inclusion in the evaluation is every two calendar months, until the allocated funds are exhausted.
Days 1–5 following the submission deadline (up to 5 working days)	Application is checked against administrative and eligibility criteria
Days 6–15 following the submission deadline (up to 10 working days)	Independent experts assess application External experts: Assessment by 2/3 evaluators
Days 16–20 following the submission deadline (up to 5 working days)	Fund Operator will prepare and submit the ranking list for approval to Programme Director / statutory OSF/CF and Board of Trustees
Days 20-25 following the submission deadline (up to 5 working days)	Fund Operator will publish evaluation results, notify applicants of approval/rejection decision, and send draft contracts to successful applicants
The decision on the awarding of grants is made by the following: o For output 1.1 – the Programme Director (statutory representative of the Ekopolis Foundation) or an authorised delegate	

[10] Should a large number of applications be received, the schedule will be adjusted to stay as close to the set deadlines as possible, without compromising the quality of the evaluation process.

○ For output 1.2 – a statutory representative of the Carpathian Foundation or an authorised delegate ○ For outputs 1.3 and 2.1 – a statutory representative of the Open Society Foundation or an authorised delegate The decision is finally approved by the Board of Trustees of the relevant consortium partner.	
Days 26 – 35 following the submission deadline (up to 10 working days)	Announcement of applications awarded funding on the programme's website
May 2026 (provided that the project application was submitted by 30 March 2026)	Provisional start of projects, generally no earlier than two calendar months from the application submission deadline.

6. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS (mandatory attachments to application)

If the project will be implemented in partnership, a partnership declaration (letter of intent) between the Project Promoter and each of its partners shall be submitted as a supporting document to the application.

By signing the **partnership declaration**, the applicant and project partner jointly declare that they have been **sufficiently informed** of the conditions and obligations that will arise in connection with the implementation of the project if financial support is granted to the project.

These conditions include, inter alia:

- provisions on the roles and responsibilities of the parties;
  - provisions on the financial arrangements between the parties including, but not limited to, financial reporting obligations, means for proof of expenditure, payment flows and the expenditure for which project partners can be reimbursed from the project budget;
  - currency exchange rules for such expenditure and reimbursement;
  - provisions on the forms of grants for all costs in the project and their calculation method;
  - requirements for the submission of proof of expenditure and/or proof of conditions fulfilled where unit costs or lump sums are used;
  - provisions on audits of the project;
  - a detailed budget, which foresees flexible rules for shifts between budget headings; and
  - provisions on dispute resolution.

If one of the parties to the agreement is an entity from the Donor States or an international organisation or body or agency thereof, the partnership agreement shall be in English and shall be based on the provided template.

In addition, the Project Promoter shall include in their application the following:

- Statutes of foreign partners – if this is not freely available online (if applicable)
- Hourly rate calculation attachment (if applicable)

These documents are referenced in the online application and must be uploaded as attachments within the e-grant system. Separate submissions will not be accepted.

7. HOW TO APPLY

7.1 How to apply

Applications must be submitted electronically to e-grant system. The date and time of receipt recorded by the e-grant system will determine whether the deadline has been met.

Only applications submitted through the e-grant system will be accepted. Submissions by email or post will not be accepted.

It is recommended that applicants familiarize themselves with the e-grant system in advance. Technical support is available at **podpora@egrant.sk**.

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis from the announcement of the call, whereby the deadline for inclusion in the evaluation is every two calendar months, until the allocated funds are exhausted. The first deadline for applications to be included in the evaluation is **March 31, 2026, at 23:59 CET** (further deadlines for ongoing calls can be found in section 5.2 of this call).

7.2 Support to applicants and frequently asked questions (FAQ)

The **Fund Operator** ensures equal opportunities for all applicants by continuously publishing vital information and updates on the program website. We encourage you to regularly consult the **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)** section. Should you not find the answer to your inquiry there, the following support options are available:

- **Information Webinars and Sessions:** The Fund Operator along with consortium partners will host online sessions to outline funding priorities, provide guidance on completing application forms, and explain the full project lifecycle. Dates for these sessions will be announced on the programme website in due course.
- **Telephone Consultations:** The consortium partners are available to answer questions via telephone every Wednesday between 9:00 AM and 3:00 PM (contact information is listed in the dedicated section).
- **Written Inquiries:** Inquiries may be submitted via email or through the FAQ portal on our website. Responses from all meetings and consultations are regularly integrated into a comprehensive FAQ subpage on the EEA CSF Slovakia program page.

Important Notice Regarding Deadlines:

As this is a rolling call for proposals, inquiries may be submitted at any time. However, if you require a response prior to a specific submission deadline, your inquiry must be received at least **5 working days** in advance. Inquiries received after this timeframe will be addressed during the preparation phase for the subsequent evaluation round.

Complaints

Any complaints related to this call may be submitted via email to **staznosti@eea-csf.sk** or through the "staznosti" (complaints) link available at www.eea-csf.sk. Applicants should follow the procedure outlined below:

1. Submission and Processing (Fund Operator)

Stage	Action

Submission	Complaints are submitted directly to the **Complaints Committee** via the website link or email.
Registration	The responsible Programme Manager records the complaint in the programme database without delay.
Review	The Complaints Committee reviews the submission and adopts a resolution within **10 working days**.
Notification	The Programme Director informs the Programme Manager of the resolution, who then informs the complainant in writing within **5 working days**.

Total Response Time: The complainant will receive a written response within **20 working days**.

2. Complaints to the FMO

Complaints may also be submitted in English to the **Financial Mechanism Office (FMO)**.

- **Process:** The FMO is not subject to the process described in the table above.
- **Confidentiality:** Complaints sent to the FMO are shared with the Fund Operator **only if the complainant wishes** for the FMO to do so.

8. CONTACT

Web CSF – Slovakia: EEA CSF Slovakia / www.eea-csf.sk

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Telephone consultations are available every Wednesday from 9:00 to 15:00 at the phone numbers provided.

ANNEX 1: CHECKLIST FOR APPLICANTS

CHECKLIST FOR APPLICANTS	Yes/No
Administrative criteria	
Submission deadline: Compliance with the deadline given on the front page and in Chapter 7 of the call text.	
Submission method and language: Applications must be submitted electronically via the [e-grant link] in the [language(s) accepted] as per Chapter 7 of the call text.	

Required documents: Applications must include all relevant supporting documents and attachments as per Chapter 6 and Annex 1 of the call text.	
Project duration: The duration of the project must be in accordance with the information specified in the relevant call for applications (see section 4 on the project implementation period).	
Requested amount: The amount requested must be in accordance with the information specified in the relevant call for applications (see section 4).	
Eligibility criteria	
Organisation eligibility: See section 3 on eligible applicants and partners.	
Financial and time limits: The requested grant amount and proposed implementation period must be within the permissible limits provided in the call.	
SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS	
• Partnership declaration(s) /Letter of Intent (if applicable) • Statutes of foreign partners if not freely available online (if applicable) • Hourly rate calculation attachment (if applicable)	

ANNEX 2: RELEVANT GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

1. **The Guidelines for Applicants and Project Promoters** of the EEA Civil Society Fund Programme (hereinafter referred to as the "Guidelines") provide comprehensive information about the programme, its objective and expected results, outcomes, and outputs, as well as the rules and procedures related to the submission, assessment, implementation, and financing of projects. They serve as a practical guide for Applicants as well as for Project Promoters.
   Annex 1. Indicators Library of EEA Civil Society Fund in Slovakia. This document is available only in Slovak language as *Príloha 1. Knižnica indikátorov EEA Civil Society Fund in Slovakia*
   Annex 2: Result based management for the EEA Civil Society Fund in Slovakia

2. The **Cost Eligibility Guidance** for the EEA Civil Society Fund — defines the principles, rules, and criteria determining the eligibility of costs, including categories of eligible expenditures and simplified cost reporting methods.
   Annex 1: Unit cost calculation for personnel costs under Simplified Costs Options (SCOs)

3. **Safeguarding and Protection Policies for Children and Vulnerable Groups** of the EEA Civil Society Fund in Slovakia.

All of the mentioned materials are accessible on the Programme website.

ANNEX 3: SELECTION CRITERIA (detail)

The expert assessment of grant applications under the EEA Civil Society Fund Slovakia ensures a professional, objective, independent, and transparent assessment of applications against predefined

assessment criteria, resulting in a ranked list that serves as the basis for decision-making by the Selection Committee.

Only applications that meet administrative and eligibility requirements are evaluated, with each eligible application assessed independently by at least two expert evaluators using both quantitative and qualitative criteria; a third evaluator is involved in cases of significant scoring discrepancies.

The assessment outcomes, including scores and recommendations on project content and budget, inform funding decisions, while applications scoring below 85 points do not advance further; detailed rules and procedures are provided in the Annex 3.