Iceland
Liechtenstein
Norway

Civil Society Fund

2025 - 2032

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS AND PROJECT PROMOTERS FOR THE EEA CIVIL SOCIETY FUND SLOVAKIA

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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[1] 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 that receive funding, 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.

Ten percent 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, the secretariat of the Donor States – the Financial Mechanism Office (FMO) – has selected a consortium of three organisations to be the Fund Operator (FO): Ekopolis Foundation, Open Society Foundation Bratislava (OSF) and Carpathian Foundation (CF). Each consortium member is responsible for specific outputs defined under 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[2]:

- 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 these outcomes, 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 (SRHR), 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] The years refer to the period for the relevant Agreement on the European Economic Area which brings together the EU Member States and the three EEA EFTA States – Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. The years do not refer to the implementation period for projects.

[2] 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, in particular 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.

Programme website: https://eeagrants.org/sk/civil-society-fund-slovakia

2. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION FOR THE EEA CIVIL SOCIETY FUND

For the EEA Civil Society Fund in Slovakia, the following guidance documents have been issued:

The Guidelines for Applicants and Project Promoters of the EEA Civil Society Fund in Slovakia (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.: **EEA Civil Society Fund Slovakia Indicator Library**. This document is available only in Slovak language as *Príloha 1. Knižnica indikátorov EEA Civil Society Fund Slovakia.*

Annex 2: **Result based management for the EEA Civil Society Fund Slovakia.**

The Cost Eligibility Guidance for the EEA Civil Society Fund Slovakia 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).**

In addition to the documents mentioned above, each call launched under the Programme has its own specific documents and annexes.

All supporting documents and their annexes are available on the Programme's website at https://eeagrants.org/sk/civil-society-fund-slovakia.

3. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

- **Applicant** – a legal entity eligible to submit a project application seeking a grant under the Programme.
- **Civil Society Organisations -** (CSOs)
- **Complaints Committee** – a body established to ensure an effective mechanism for handling complaints related to potential breaches of sound implementation principles at all levels of the Programme. The Complaints Committee has three members, representatives of the Fund Operator who are not involved in the Programme's implementation.
- **Cost** – a decrease in the economic benefits of an accounting entity during the accounting period that can be reliably measured.
- **EEA Civil Society Fund in Slovakia (hereinafter referred to as "the Programme")** – aims to support a vibrant and resilient civil society protecting and promoting democracy, the rule of law and human rights.
- **Eligible expenditure** – expenditure actually incurred within the eligibility period defined in the Project Contract and in line with the applicable rules on eligibility.
- **Evaluation –** a systematic, objective and independent assessment of the design, implementation and/or results achieved in programmes and projects with the aim of determining the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and/or sustainability of the financial contribution.

- **Expenditure** – a decrease in cash or cash equivalents on the part of the Project Promoter or Project Partner for the purpose of project implementation.
- **Expert assessor –** an expert responsible for the professional assessment of project applications, based on the approved assessment criteria, through scoring and written comments.
- **Final project report** – a report prepared by the Project Promoter in the prescribed format, providing a comprehensive summary of project implementation and results achieved.
- **Financial Mechanism Office (FMO)** – the office managing the EEA Financial Mechanism 2021–2028. Administratively, the FMO is part of the **European Free Trade Association (EFTA)**. The FMO is responsible for the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2021–2028 and serves as its contact point.
- **Fund Operator** – a consortium of civil society organisations, independent from local, regional and national authorities, selected through an open tender procedure and directly contracted by the Financial Mechanism Office, responsible for the development and implementation of the Programme. In Slovakia, the Fund Operator consists of a consortium of three foundations: **Ekopolis Foundation (Ekopolis)**, **Open Society Foundation Bratislava (OSF)**, and the **Carpathian Foundation (CF)**. The contractual partner of the **Financial Mechanism Office** is **Ekopolis Foundation**, which is responsible for the overall management of the Programme.
- **GBV** - Gender inequalities, gender-based violence
- **Grant** – financial resources provided under the Programme to an applicant based on an approved project application and following the signature of the respective **Project Contract**.
- **Indicators** – are 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 Programme Indicator Library constitutes Annex 1 to these Guidelines. Each indicator comes with a description, unit of measurement, time frame, data source, baseline, and target value.
- **Informal group –** is an informal, ad hoc and self-help organisation (including grassroot organisation) that is not registered as a legal entity.
- **Interim project report** – a report prepared by the Project Promoter in the prescribed format, containing information on both financial and physical progress in the implementation of the project.
- **Irregularity in the project –** any infringement of the legal framework of the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2021-2028, the project contract, or any applicable EU or Slovak national law that affects or jeopardizes the implementation of the Programme, including but not limited to any action or omission aimed at unlawfully obtaining and/or using the grant, such as fraud, embezzlement, deception, breach of contractual obligations, or failure to exercise due care.
- **Monitoring** – a regular activity involving the systematic collection, classification, consolidation, and storage of relevant information required for evaluation and control of processes at the project and programme levels.
- **On-site verification** – verification of the project implementation at the Project Promoter's premises or the site of activities, confirming the delivery of goods, works, or services declared in the financial documents and project reports by the **Fund Operator**.
- **Partnership** – a non-commercial association of legal entities and/or informal group(s) established with the purpose of jointly achieving the defined results of a project.
- **Programme Steering Committee** – the governing body of the Fund Operator, responsible for approving the Programme's strategic direction, decisions on projects above 25 000 EUR, appointment of expert assessors, selection committee members, and the complaints committee, as well as decisions on appeals and complaints. The Programme Steering Committee consists of six members: three statutory representatives of the Fund Operator and three members of its boards of trustees. Representatives of the FMO and the National Focal Point act as observers.
- **Project** – a project implemented under the Programme and supported financially based on a **Project Contract** concluded between the **Fund Operator** and the **Project Promoter**.

- **Project Application** – a document prepared by the Applicant in the prescribed format, requesting approval of the proposed project.
- **Project Contract** – a detailed contract between the Fund Operator and the Project Promoter governing the implementation of a project, defining the terms and conditions of the grant as well as the rights and obligations of the parties.
- **Project involving a Donor State partner** – a project implemented under the EEA Civil Society Fund Programme in cooperation with a partner from **Iceland, Liechtenstein or Norway**, based on a **Partnership Agreement** concluded between the Project Promoter and the Donor State partner. The Donor State partner is also called a donor project partner. A donor project partner is a project partner whose primary location is in one of the Donor States.
- **Project Partner** – an eligible entity actively involved in the implementation of a project and contributing effectively to its delivery.
- **Project Promoter** – an entity responsible for the implementation of a project under a signed **Project** Contract.
- **Reporting period** – the period for which the Project Promoter submits an interim report on project implementation. The reporting period is defined as a six-month calendar period: January – June, and July – December.
- **Selection Committee** – a body responsible for making recommendations to the Programme Steering Committee regarding the approval or rejection of grant applications. The Programme establishes three Selection Committees, each operating under one of the Fund Operator organisations: SC1 – Ekopolis, SC2 – OSF, and SC3 – CF. Each committee consists of three members: two external experts and one representative of the Fund Operator. Representatives of the FMO and the National Focal Point act as observers.
- **Supplier** – an entity with which the Project Promoter has entered into a contract for the supply of goods, execution of construction works, or provision of services.
- **Without delay** – no later than **five (5) working days** from the date of the event determining the start of the relevant period.

In case of ambiguity regarding terms not explicitly defined in this Guidelines for Applicants and Project Promoters, their meaning shall be interpreted in accordance with the relevant legislation of the Slovak Republic and the documents applicable to the implementation of the EEA Civil Society Fund under the EEA Financial Mechanism 2021-2028.

4. MANAGEMENT OF THE PROGRAMME

The Ekopolis Foundation (Ekopolis) is responsible for the overall management of the EEA Civil Society Fund in Slovakia. It acts as the contractual partner of the Donors and ensures the overall coordination and administration of the Programme.

The Carpathian Foundation (CF) and the Open Society Foundation Bratislava (OSF) are partners of Ekopolis Foundation in the implementation and management of the Programme.

The main role of the three foundations in implementing the Programme is to provide grants through open calls to eligible entities under the respective Programme Outcomes and the outputs and special focus defined within them, according to the following structure:

Outcomes and Outputs	Consortium Member Responsible for the Output
Outcome 1: Democratic values and rule of law strengthened	

Output 1.1: CSO participation in democratic processes increased	Ekopolis Foundation
Output 1.2: Civic engagement increased	Ekopolis Foundation
Special focus under Output 1.2 Addressing challenges arising from Russia's war on Ukraine	Carpathian Foundation
Output 1.3: Information integrity and media literacy increased	Open Society Foundation Bratislava
Outcome 2: Human rights strengthened	
Output 2.1: Human rights, including anti-discrimination, and social justice supported	Open Society Foundation Bratislava
Special focus under Output 2.1: Inclusion and empowerment of Roma	Carpathian Foundation
Output 2.2: Gender equality, including sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and LGBTQI+ rights supported	Open Society Foundation Bratislava
Output 2.3: Climate action, environmental protection, and a just green transition supported	Ekopolis Foundation
Outcome 3: CSOs that promote democracy, the rule of law, and human rights, strengthened	
Output 3.1: Organisational development supported	Ekopolis Foundation
Special focus under Output 3.1: Strategic support for CSOs working within the Programme outcomes	Open Society Foundation Bratislava
Output 3.2 An enabling environment for civil society supported	Ekopolis Foundation
Bilateral outcome: Strengthened bilateral cooperation in the civil society sector	Ekopolis Foundation

5. TYPES OF GRANTS UNDER THE PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

The Programme supports projects of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) through open calls for proposals announced under the respective Programme Outcomes. The durations and grant amounts will be specified in each call and can deviate from the amounts listed in these Guidelines.

Three types of grants are available:

1. **Small Grants** – with a maximum grant amount of **up to EUR 25 000** and an implementation period of **up to 12 months**.
   Small grants are available on a **rolling basis** (see Section 7 – Call No. 1 and Call No. 7).
2. **Project Grants** – with a grant amount ranging from **EUR 50 000 to 70 000**.
   If the applicant submits a project **in partnership with an organisation from one of the Donor States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, or Norway)**, the **maximum grant amount may be increased to EUR 80 000**, provided that the additional funds are used **exclusively for activities directly related to the participation of the Donor State partner**.
   The implementation period is **between 12 and 24 months**.
   Project grants will be made available through **two open calls for proposals** (see Section 7 – Call No. 2 and Call No. 6).
3. **Organisational Grants** – designed to support the **strategic and long-term objectives** of the recipient organisation.
   These grants provide financial support based on the organisation's **strategy and institutional development goals**.

The grant amount ranges from **EUR 100 000 to 120 000**, with an implementation period of 30 to **36 months**.
Organisational grants will be available under **one open call for proposals** (see Section 7 – Call No. 5).

Two **pre-defined projects (PDPs)** will be announced to address specific **Programme priorities**:

a) **Pre-defined project (PDP) 1 – Legal and Crisis Support for Civil Society Organisations** *(Budget allocation: EUR 140 000)*

The project shall aim to strengthen the resilience of CSOs by providing targeted legal assistance and crisis management support. The project shall offer expert advice and capacity-building resources, enabling CSOs to manage risks and maintain operational continuity. The support shall include direct protection of individual activists, specifically in remote or hostile environments. The project may also include advocacy activities for the sector, to respond to attacks on the sector or individual organisations and defend against the shrinking space for CSOs.

b) **Pre-defined project (PDP) 3 – Support for Civil Society Cohesion** *(Budget allocation: EUR 80 000)*

The project shall aim to strengthen collaboration among CSOs in Slovakia by organising national sector-wide gatherings, organising working groups focused on sub-agendas related to an enabling environment for civil society, conducting a study to help identify narratives that can clarify the important role of CSOs in society, and organising multi-stakeholder dialogue to co-create and coordinate campaigns based on the study.

The **pre-defined projects** will be implemented through **open calls** (see Section 7 – Call No. 3 and 4).

Overview of grant types under the Programme outcomes:

Outcomes and Outputs	Grant Type	
Outcome 1: Democratic values and rule of law strengthened		
Output 1.1: CSO participation in democratic processes increased	small grants	project grants
Output 1.2: Civic engagement increased	project grants	
Special focus under Output 1.2: **Addressing challenges arising from Russia's war on Ukraine**	small grants	project grants
Output 1.3: Information integrity and media literacy increased	small grants	project grants
Outcome 2: Human rights strengthened		
Output 2.1: Human rights, including anti-discrimination, and social justice supported	small grants	project grants
Special focus under Output 2.1: Inclusion and empowerment of Roma	project grants	
Output 2.2: Gender equality, including SRHR, and LGBTQI+ rights supported	project grants	
Output 2.3: Climate action, environmental protection, and a just green transition supported	project grants	
Outcome 3: CSOs that promote democracy, the rule of law, and human rights, strengthened		
Output 3.1: Organisational development supported	organisational grants	

Special focus under Output 3.1: Strategic support for CSOs working within the Programme outcomes	organisational grants
Output 3.2 An enabling environment for civil society supported	project grants
Output 3.2 An enabling environment for civil society supported	pre-defined project 1
Output 3.2 An enabling environment for civil society supported	pre-defined project 3
Bilateral outcome: Strengthened bilateral cooperation in the civil society sector	small grants

6. FOCUS OF THE PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

The programme uses a results-based management approach. This means it is designed and managed with a focus on achieving 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 with the outcomes and outputs in the results framework.[3]

6.1 Outcome 1: Democratic Values and 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 — all of which undermine the healthy functioning of democracy.

Under Outcome 1: Democratic Values and Rule of Law Strengthened, the Programme provides space for civil society organisations (CSOs) to enhance their role in democratic processes. It supports their capacity to actively monitor public affairs, advocate for change, and meaningfully participate in public debate. The Programme also strengthens CSOs' ability to withstand disinformation and smear campaigns and to contribute to building an open, fair, and participatory environment.

Through the Programme's support, CSOs are enabled to respond more flexibly to current societal challenges and to defend public interest in the process of developing legislation and public policies.

All projects implemented under Outcome 1 shall contribute to achieving the following outcome 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.

A detailed explanation of the indicators and the method of their verification is provided in Annex 1, entitled *"EEA Civil Society Fund Slovakia Indicator Library".*

[3] See Annex 2 Result based management for the EEA Civil Society Fund in Slovakia.

6.1.1 Output 1.1: CSO Participation in Democratic Processes Increased

Civil society organisations (CSOs) are an essential pillar in protecting democracy; however, their ability to influence public affairs has been weakened.

This output will support projects aimed at advocacy, watchdog activities, participation in policy-making, and expert contributions to legislative processes. Particular emphasis is placed on strategic communication and the preparation of data-based positions, comments, and proposals, which can serve as a sound basis for dialogue with public institutions.

The aim is to strengthen the influence of civil society organisations on policy formulation and decision-making processes, thereby increasing the legitimacy of citizens' voices and the transparency of public decision-making.

The support provided under this Output contributes to the protection of democratic values and the rule of law.

Target groups:

- 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:

Projects implemented under **Output 1.1** shall contribute to achieving the following **Programme Indicators**. Each project is strongly encouraged to use at least one of these indicators:

Indicator code	Indicator
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

A detailed explanation of the indicators and the method of their verification is provided in **Annex 1**, entitled *"EEA Civil Society Fund Slovakia Indicator Library".*

6.2.2 Output 1.2: Civic Engagement Increased

Citizen participation in public life in Slovakia remains low, which weakens democratic culture. The calls under this output therefore support **community organising**, **volunteering**, **educational programmes**, and **initiatives that strengthen civic awareness and active participation** of citizens in public affairs. Particular attention is given to **young people**, **groups that are marginalised**, **rural areas**, with **cultural and community centres**, especially in smaller towns, playing an important role. The aim is to create **conditions for dialogue between citizens and public authorities**, to **expand access to participatory processes**, and to **support the establishment of sustainable platforms for civic cooperation**. Everyday engagement of people in public life contributes to **building democracy from the bottom up** and increases **societal resilience**.

Target groups:

- Young people
- Groups that are marginalised
- Cultural and community organisations
- Communities in rural areas and smaller towns
- The general public

Relevant activities include but are not limited to:

- Participation in the development of public policies and decision-making processes
- Civic education, training, and awareness-raising activities
- Community work and citizen organising to promote volunteering, civic activism, and participation
- Cultural activities that promote social change
- Research, advocacy, and other initiatives promoting good governance, transparency, and anti-corruption measures
- Joint community initiatives addressing local issues, improving the environment, and promoting social justice
- Establishment and development of infrastructure for public dialogue – both material (e.g., community spaces for NGO activities) and non-material (networks, web tools, platforms) supporting civic participation
- Capacity-building activities for civil society organisations

Indicators:

Projects implemented under **Output 1.2** shall contribute to achieving the following **Programme Indicators.** Each project is strongly encouraged to use at least one of these indicators:

Indicator code	Indicator
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)

A detailed explanation of the indicators and the method of their verification is provided in **Annex 1**, entitled *"EEA Civil Society Fund Slovakia Indicator Library".*

6.1.3 Special focus under 1.2: Addressing Challenges Arising from Russia's War on Ukraine

The Russian aggression against Ukraine has brought significant challenges, including integration of people displaced from Ukraine in Slovakia, and increased polarisation within Slovak society.

Civil society organisations (CSOs) play a key role in providing assistance and advocating for the interests of people displaced from Ukraine. This call will support **civil society initiatives** aimed at **the integration of refugees** and **strengthening solidarity within host communities** in Slovakia.

Supported projects will promote **equal opportunities, better access to education, employment, and social inclusion** through **advocacy activities** targeting institutions responsible for refugee services, engaging both **displaced persons and host communities**.

Campaigns countering disinformation about the war and refugees, and promoting **mutual understanding**, will contribute to **social cohesion**. The support will also enhance **cooperation among civil society organisations,** particularly those **founded and led by displaced persons themselves.**

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:

Projects implemented under **Special focus: Addressing challenges arising from Russia's war on Ukraine** shall contribute to achieving the following **Programme Indicators.** Each project is strongly encouraged to use at least one of these indicators:

Indicator code	Indicator
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

A detailed explanation of the indicators and the method of their verification is provided in **Annex 1**, entitled *"EEA Civil Society Fund Slovakia Indicator Library".*

6.1.3 Output 1.3: Information Integrity and Media Literacy Increased

Widespread disinformation networks, propaganda, and polarising narratives are undermining trust in democratic institutions, independent media, and shared facts. In increasingly divided societies, even the boundary between truth and falsehood becomes contested, with groups embracing conflicting versions of reality and credibility. Information integrity seeks to strengthen the quality, transparency, and resilience of the entire information environment. It considers not only the content itself but also the conditions in which information is created, distributed, and consumed, placing fundamental freedoms—such as access to information and freedom of thought, opinion, and expression—at the centre while recognising the responsibility of public and private actors to uphold the foundations of informed democratic participation.

This output responds to these challenges by supporting investigative journalism, fact-checking efforts, cooperation between media and civil society organisations, and the development of digital tools to detect manipulation. A key component is sustained public engagement aimed at improving media literacy among young people, seniors, and rural communities. The overall goal is to foster a more resilient society capable of critically assessing information sources and safeguarding the space for credible, democratic public discourse.

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:

Projects implemented under **Output 1.3** shall contribute to achieving the following **Programme Indicators.** Each project is strongly encouraged to use at least one of these indicators:

Indicator code	Indicator
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

A detailed explanation of the indicators and the method of their verification is provided in **Annex 1**, entitled *"EEA Civil Society Fund Slovakia Indicator Library".*

6.2 Outcome 2: Human Rights Strengthened

Structural inequalities, discrimination, and insufficient enforcement of legal standards continue to persist in Slovakia. Groups that are vulnerable – including **Roma people, women, LGBTQI+ persons, and persons with disabilities** – face persistent barriers in accessing **education, employment, healthcare, and public services.** This outcome supports organisations that systematically work to **remove these barriers** through **advocacy**, **watchdog activities**, **legal assistance**, and **community initiatives**. Particular attention is given to **gender equality**, the promotion of sexual and reproductive health and rights, the **prevention of gender-based violence**, the **protection of LGBTIQ+ rights**, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) as well as **environmental justice** and **public engagement in climate and environmental policies**.

In this way, the Programme links **legal protection** with **practical measures** that improve people's living conditions and promote an **inclusive society**.

All projects implemented under **Outcome 2** shall contribute to achieving the following **Programme 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
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.

A detailed explanation of the indicators and the method of their verification is provided in **Annex 1**, entitled *"EEA Civil Society Fund Slovakia Indicator Library".*

6.2.1 Output 2.1: Human Rights, Including Anti-Discrimination, and Social Justice Supported

Discrimination and unequal access to education, employment, healthcare, and public services continue to persist in Slovakia, weakening public trust in the rule of law.

The output aims to support organisations that work to **eliminate these barriers** through **advocacy**, **watchdog activities**, **legal assistance**, and **community initiatives**. These organisations also play an important role in **public education** and in **promoting evidence-based policies**.

The call thus contributes to building a **more just and inclusive society**.

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:

Projects implemented under **Output 2.1** shall contribute to achieving the following **Programme Indicators.** Each project is strongly encouraged to use at least one of these indicators:

Indicator code	Indicator
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 (disaggregated by age)

A detailed explanation of the indicators and the method of their verification is provided in **Annex 1**, entitled *"EEA Civil Society Fund Slovakia Indicator Library".*

6.2.2 Special Focus under 2.1: Inclusion and Empowerment of Roma

Roma communities in Slovakia continue to face long-term **discrimination, poverty, and social exclusion**, manifested in limited access to **education, healthcare, housing, and employment**.
This output supports projects aimed at **removing these barriers**, supporting **community organising**, **advocacy**, and **strengthening the voice of Roma in decision-making processes**, with a particular focus on Roma-led organisations and **Roma women and girls**.
An important component is the support of the **ecosystem of organisations** that systematically work to improve the living conditions of Roma in communities that are marginalised, and the creation of **partnerships with public institutions, the private sector, and representatives of the majority population**.
The overall objective is to **promote equal opportunities**, **reduce anti-Roma racism**, and **contribute to lasting social cohesion** through the **active participation of Roma in public and community life**.

Target groups:

- Roma-led organisations
- Pro-Roma civil society organisations
- Informal groups working on inclusion and empowerment of Roma
- Roma communities in segregated areas or areas that are marginalised
- Roma **women and girls**
- Non-Roma residents in affected communities

Relevant activities include but are not limited to:

- Supporting Roma participation in public consultations, advocacy initiatives, policy-making processes, working groups, and multi-stakeholder platforms, with particular focus on Roma women.
- Strengthening the advocacy capacity, sustainability, and outreach of Roma-led CSOs, Roma NGOs, and informal Roma community groups, including through targeted capacity-building activities.
- Building the capacities of CSOs working with and for Roma inclusion and empowerment to improve coordination, effectiveness, and long-term impact.
- Developing, implementing, and monitoring Roma inclusion policies using participatory, evidence-based approaches, including through participatory workshops and community-driven processes.

- Empowering Roma communities to advocate for equal access to services and to design their own community advocacy strategies.
- Conducting advocacy initiatives targeting public institutions responsible for services, as well as the general public, to advance Roma inclusion and counter prejudice.
- Combating antigypsyism through legal measures, strategic litigation, anti-discrimination initiatives, and campaigns promoting positive narratives about Roma contributions to society.
- Implementing initiatives promoting inclusion, empowerment, and positive public perceptions of Roma, including activities addressing stereotypes and supporting intercultural understanding.

Indicators:

Projects implemented under **Output 2.1: Inclusion and Empowerment of Roma** shall contribute to achieving the following **Programme Indicators.** Each project is strongly encouraged to use at least one of these indicators:

Indicator code	Indicator
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 (disaggregated by age)
CIV-024	Number of supported CSOs working on Roma inclusion and empowerment
CIV-025	Number of supported CSOs working on Roma women and girls' inclusion and empowerment

A detailed explanation of the indicators and the method of their verification is provided in **Annex 1**, entitled *"EEA Civil Society Fund Slovakia Indicator Library".*

6.2.3 Output 2.2: Gender Equality, including SRHR, and LGBTIQ+ Rights Supported

Gender inequalities, gender-based violence (GBV), and attempts to restrict access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), remain serious challenges in Slovakia. This topic is highly polarising, which increases the demands placed on the systematic work of civil society organisations (CSOs). The output supports projects that **strengthen the capacities of organisations** in the areas of strengthening gender equality, ensuring sexual and reproductive health and rights, **prevention of gender-based violence**, and **protecting the rights of LGBTIQ+ people.** An important element is **advocacy**, **public education** and the **elimination of stereotypes** that sustain and deepen these inequalities. Support for **gender equality** and **protection of fundamental rights** contributes to building a **more open, safe, and just society**.

Target groups:

- Women and girls
- LGBTIQ+ people
- LGBTIQ+ rights organisations and/or CSOs working on LGBTIQ+ rights
- Women's/girls' rights organisations supported and/or CSOs working on gender equality and/or women's/girl's rights
- Rural and communities otherwise disadvantaged with limited access to services
- Men and boys, as part of efforts to prevent gender-based violence and transform social norms
- Special attention is given to **Roma women** within the priority area of gender-based violence

Relevant activities include but are not limited to:

- Conducting research, analyses, and evidence-gathering activities to inform advocacy, policy development, and efforts promoting good governance, transparency, and anti-corruption.
- Implementing advocacy initiatives targeting public institutions and the general public to advance policy changes, address discrimination, and improve services related to gender-based violence, SRHR, and LGBTIQ+ rights.
- Participating in policy-making and decision-making processes, including CSO engagement in working groups, platforms, and multi-stakeholder dialogues on gender equality, gender based violence (GBV), SRHR, and LGBTIQ+ issues.
- Carrying out civic education, training, and capacity-building activities for CSOs, especially those working on anti-discrimination, countering gender-based violence, SRHR, and LGBTIQ+ inclusion.
- Conducting information and awareness-raising activities and campaigns addressing prejudice, stigmatisation, and discrimination, and promoting gender equality.
- Engaging in watchdog, monitoring, and oversight activities related to the development, implementation, and evaluation of public policies.
- Providing legal aid, psychological support, and other forms of assistance to human rights defenders and individuals facing discrimination or rights violations.
- Delivering mentoring, empowerment, outreach, and representation activities for socially excluded groups, including women, LGBTIQ+ persons, and other marginalised communities.
- Strengthening networking and collaboration among CSOs, including partnerships with local providers of health and social services to improve access to and quality of SRHR-related services.
- Organising community forums, roundtables, participatory workshops, and other inclusive events that foster dialogue on gender equality and gather feedback to inform improved policies and services.
- Pursuing strategic litigation to address systemic discrimination, promote equality, and strengthen rights protections.

Indicators:

Projects implemented under **Output 2.2** shall contribute to achieving the following **Programme Indicators.** Each project is strongly encouraged to use at least one of these indicators:

Indicator code	Indicator
CIV-015	Number of public advocacy outputs delivered by supported CSOs
ALL-012	Number of advocacy/awareness-raising campaigns carried out
CIV-018	Number of strategic litigation cases focused on GBV filed in court by supported CSOs
CIV-023	Number of supported CSOs working on gender equality (or women's/girls' rights)
CIV-026	Number of supported CSOs working on LGBTIQ+ rights

A detailed explanation of the indicators and the method of their verification is provided in **Annex 1**, entitled *"EEA Civil Society Fund Slovakia Indicator Library".*

6.2.4 Output 2.3: Climate Action, Environmental Protection, and a Just Green Transition Supported

Slovakia, as part of the international community, urgently needs **systemic solutions for sustainable development**. This call supports **civil society initiatives** focused on **climate action**, **biodiversity protection**, **reducing environmental risks**, and advancing a **just green transition**.

An essential component is the **participation of the public in decision-making** and **increasing awareness of sustainable solutions**. This approach links **environmental protection** with **social justice** and contributes to strengthening society's **resilience to ecological and economic crises**.

Target groups:

- Green and environmental civil society organisations
- Local civic initiatives and movements
- Individual activists
- Policy-makers and public institutions; private-sector and industrial actors
- Secondary target groups include local communities affected by industrial activity and climate change.

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 and training activities
- Information and awareness-raising initiatives
- Fieldwork and community organising to foster civic activism, volunteering, and citizen engagement
- Watchdog and monitoring activities related to public-policy development and implementation
- Research, advocacy, and other activities promoting good governance, transparency, and anti-corruption
- Outreach and representation of target groups that are marginalised
- Capacity-building activities for civil society organisations
- Partnerships between CSOs and actors from the public and private sectors

Indicators:

Projects implemented under **Output 2.3** shall contribute to achieving the following **Programme Indicators.** Each project is strongly encouraged to use at least one of these indicators:

Indicator code	Indicator
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 focused on climate action and environmental protection carried out
CIV-018	Number of strategic litigation cases focused on climate action and environmental protection filed in court by supported CSOs

A detailed explanation of the indicators and the method of their verification is provided in **Annex 1**, entitled *"EEA Civil Society Fund Slovakia Indicator Library"*.

6.3 Outcome 3: CSOs that Promote Democracy, Rule of Law, and Human Rights Strengthened

Civil society organisations (CSOs) in Slovakia face **long-term underfunding**, **limited access to resources**, and in recent years, **increasing public and political questioning of their legitimacy and role** in society. These factors weaken their ability to **systematically promote democracy, the rule of law, and human rights**, including **gender equality** and **LGBTIQ+ rights**. This outcome therefore supports the **development of internal capacities**, **organisational resilience**, and **strategic long-term orientation** of CSOs, as well as the creation of an **enabling environment** in which they can operate freely and effectively. The grants will enable organisations to **develop stable teams**, **sustainable operational models**, enhance their strategies, and ensure **partnerships with other actors**. Strengthened organisations will thus become a **more powerful voice of civil society** and **reliable partners in the democratic process**.

Indicators:

All projects implemented under Outcome 3 shall contribute to achieving the following outcome 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-035	Number of supported CSOs with improved overall organisational strength

A detailed explanation of the indicators and the method of their verification is provided in **Annex 1**, entitled *"EEA Civil Society Fund Slovakia Indicator Library".*

6.3.1 Output 3.1: Organisational Development Supported

Many civil society organisations (CSOs) operate with **limited resources and overburdened teams**, which undermines their **long-term sustainability**. This output is therefore about CSOs' organisational development.

This call supports the **development of internal capacities** – from **building professional skills and effective management** to **stabilising human resources**. The aim is to enable organisations to operate **professionally, efficiently, and sustainably** in the public interest.

Target groups:

- CSOs with an established track record and results in relation to Programme outcomes and outputs
- CSO leadership and management teams
- CSO member and partner bases

Relevant activities include but are not limited to:

- Capacity-building activities for CSOs
- Networking of civil society organisations
- Partnerships between CSOs and public or private sector entities
- Mentoring to support organisational development

- Research and analyses to inform advocacy and policy-making
- Advocacy activities promoting specific issues or policies
- Participation in policy-making and decision-making processes
- Civic education and training
- Information and awareness-raising activities
- Cultural activities supporting social change
- Watchdog activities and monitoring of policy development and implementation
- Research, advocacy, and other initiatives promoting good governance, transparency, and anti-corruption
- Activities working with and representing marginalised target groups
- European and cross-border cooperation
- Fundraising initiatives
- Strengthening communication capacities and professional skills of organisations

Indicators:

Projects implemented under **Output 3.1** shall contribute to achieving the following **Programme Indicators.** Each project is strongly encouraged to use at least one of these indicators**:**

Indicator code	Indicator
CIV-047	Number of women's/girls' rights organisations supported
CIV-048	Number of LGBTIQ+ rights organisations supported
CIV-039	Number of supported CSOs that have completed a training course
CIV-040	Number of CSO staff who have completed a training course (disaggregated by age)

A detailed explanation of the indicators and the method of their verification is provided in **Annex 1**, entitled *"EEA Civil Society Fund Slovakia Indicator Library".*

6.3.2 Special Focus under 3.1.: Strategic Support for CSOs Working within the Programme Outcomes

Short-term projects are often insufficient for civil society organisations (CSOs) to achieve **sustainable, long-term results**. This output therefore provides **strategic support** to organisations working within the **priority themes of the Programme**. Stable funding will allow organisations to **focus on long-term priorities**, **strengthen their professional and analytical capacities**, and **develop partnerships** that lead to **systemic change**.

Target groups:

Civil society organisations working in the fields of **democracy, rule of law, human rights, and environmental protection**, with proven track record, and with the potential to develop **long-term expertise** and **strategic partnerships**.

Relevant activities include but are not limited to:

- Research and analyses to support advocacy and policy development
- Advocacy activities promoting specific issues or policies
- Participation in policy-making and decision-making processes
- Capacity-building activities for CSOs
- Networking of civil society organisations

- Partnerships between CSOs and public or private sector actors
- Intercultural dialogue initiatives
- Mentoring to support organisational development
- European and cross-border cooperation
- Public policy dialogues and consultations with stakeholders to improve the legal and institutional environment for CSOs
- Activities strengthening CSO platforms and umbrella organisations
- Improving the effectiveness of existing donor and funding platforms, and creating new user-friendly tools to facilitate CSOs' access to financial resources

Indicators:

Projects implemented under this Special focus under **Output 3.1.** shall contribute to achieving the following **Programme Indicators.** Each project is strongly encouraged to use at least one of these indicators:

Indicator code	Indicator
CIV-047	Number of women's/girls' rights organisations supported
CIV-048	Number of LGBTIQ+ rights organisations supported
CIV-039	Number of supported CSOs that have completed a training course
CIV-040	Number of CSO staff who have completed a training course (disaggregated by age)

A detailed explanation of the indicators and the method of their verification is provided in **Annex 1**, entitled *"EEA Civil Society Fund Slovakia Indicator Library".*

6.3.3 Output 3.2: An Enabling Environment for Civil Society Supported

In recent years, civil society in Slovakia has faced **attacks and attempts to restrict civic space**, which have weakened its ability to operate freely and effectively. This call therefore supports initiatives that **strengthen the enabling environment for civil society organisations (CSOs)** — from **legal protection and advocacy** to **building public trust through communication and partnerships**. Supported organisations will contribute to **protecting and expanding civic space** and creating the conditions for **citizens to engage freely and meaningfully in public life**.

Target groups:

- Advocacy organisations, human rights defenders, and organisations working to develop civil society infrastructure (including networks, platforms, and umbrella associations)
- Secondary target groups:
    - Public officials and institutions at all levels
    - Academic institutions and media as key partners

Relevant activities include but are not limited to:

- Research and analyses supporting advocacy and policy development
- Advocacy activities promoting specific causes or policy changes
- Participation of CSOs in policy-making and decision-making processes
- Capacity-building activities for CSOs
- Building networks and cooperation within the civil society sector

- Partnerships between CSOs and public or private sector actors
- Support for intercultural dialogue
- Mentoring and organisational development support
- European and cross-border cooperation
- Policy dialogues and consultations with stakeholders to improve legal frameworks for CSOs
- Strengthening CSO platforms and associations
- Optimising existing donor platforms and developing new, user-friendly tools to improve CSO access to funding

Indicators:

Projects implemented under **Output 3.2** shall contribute to achieving the following **Programme Indicators.** Each project is strongly encouraged to use at least one of these indicators:

Indicator code	Indicator
CIV-004	Number of CSOs participating in consultations with a public institution
CIV-028	Number of membership-based organisations supported
CIV-029	Number of member organisations in membership-based organisations supported

A detailed explanation of the indicators and the method of their verification is provided in **Annex 1**, entitled *"EEA Civil Society Fund Slovakia Indicator Library".*

6.4 Bilateral Outcome: Strengthened bilateral cooperation in the civil society sector

Support for **bilateral cooperation with exchange of experience, know-how, and best practices** between civil society in Slovakia and the **Donor States** (Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway) is an **integral part of the Programme.** The aim is to **strengthen cooperation and mutual understanding** between organisations, to **develop professional capacities**, and to support **exchange initiatives** that enhance the **quality and sustainability of projects.** The focus is on quality, and not on quantity for the bilateral cooperation.

To support the bilateral outcome, the Programme has a Fund for Bilateral Relations where a total allocation of EUR 80,000 will be made available on a rolling basis to support bilateral initiatives (such as short-term internships, exchanges of know-how, and expert events on topics relevant to the objectives of the Programme). Administrative and eligibility rules as for Small Grants apply to activities financed by the Fund for Bilateral Relations (see Section 6.5 – Call No.7). Additional bilateral activities may also be supported **during project implementation**.

Target groups:

- Civil society organisations (CSOs) in Slovakia and partner organisations from the Donor States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway)
- Experts and activists in the non-governmental sector
- Public and educational institutions engaged in bilateral exchange
- Community initiatives that directly benefit from **knowledge transfer** and **international cooperation**

Indicators:

All projects implemented in partnership with a donor project partner must contribute to the following Programme Indicators under the Bilateral Outcome of the EEA Civil Society Fund in Slovakia. This is for any project implemented in partnership with a donor project partner regardless of which output and outcome the project is under (i.e., a project under Outcome 1 or 2 or 3 but with a donor project partner would also contribute to indicators under the Bilateral Outcome).

Each such project is required to use indicators BIL-006 to BIL-013, which will be measured directly by the Financial Mechanism Office (FMO) through a bilateral survey. This means that each such project must reply to the bilateral survey sent by the FMO.

In addition, projects may also choose, at their discretion, to use indicators BIL-001 and/or BIL-002.

The following indicators are for all projects in the Programme that are implemented in partnership with a donor project partner:

Indicator code	Indicator
BIL-001	Number of exchange programmes or study visits organised between bilateral partners
BIL-002	Number of participants in exchange programmes / study visits (disaggregation by Beneficiary State / Donor State)
BIL-006	Level of involvement of the project partner in the project
BIL-007	Level of trust between partners
BIL-008	Level of relevance of the partnership
BIL-009	Level of effectiveness of the partnership
BIL-010	Level of efficiency of the partnership
BIL-011	Level of added value of the partnership
BIL-012	Level of sustainability of the partnership
BIL-013	Level of overall satisfaction with the partnership

A detailed explanation of the indicators and the method of their verification is provided in **Annex 1**, entitled *"EEA Civil Society Fund Slovakia Indicator Library".*

6.5 Additional Eligibility Conditions for Project Activities

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.

7. PLANNED CALLS BY GRANT TYPE, FINANCIAL ALLOCATIONS AND RELATED DEADLINES

The following overview of planned calls by grant type, financial allocations and related deadlines is indicative; specific conditions, durations and grant amounts will be defined in each call, and in case of any differences, the official call text shall take precedence.

7.1 Call No. 1: Small Grants

This call is planned as an **open rolling call** with **continuous evaluation of project proposals** on a **bi-monthly basis**, until the total allocation is exhausted.

Allocations for the individual outputs are as follows:

Outputs	Allocation
Output 1.1: CSO participation in democratic processes increased	250 000 €
Special focus under Output 1.2: **Addressing challenges arising from Russia's war on Ukraine**	240 000 €
Output 1.3: Information integrity and media literacy increased	250 000 €
Output 2.1: Human rights, including anti-discrimination, and social justice supported	250 000 €

Minimum / maximum grant amount	0 – 25 000 €
Minimum / maximum project implementation period	1 – 12 months
Possibility of involving project partners (recommended maximum 1 partner)	Yes
Announcement of the call	January 2026

7.2 Calls No. 2 and No. 6: Project Grants

Calls	Call No. 2	Call No. 6
Planned timelines:		
Announcement of the call	March 2026	June2027
Deadline for submission of applications	May 2026	August 2027
Publication of call results	September 2026	December 2027
Financial allocations:		
Outcome 1: Democratic values and rule of law strengthened		
Output 1.1: CSO participation in democratic processes increased	350 000 €	350 000 €
Output 1.2: Civic engagement increased	350 000 €	350 000 €
Special focus under Output 1.2 **Addressing challenges arising from Russia's war on Ukraine**	350 000 €	350 000 €
Output 1.3: Information integrity and media literacy increased	350 000 €	0 €
Outcome 2: Human rights strengthened		
Output 2.1: Human rights, including anti-discrimination, and social justice supported	350 000 €	350 000 €

Special focus under Output 2.1.: Inclusion and Empowerment of Roma Communities	600 000 €	600 000 €
Output 2.2: Gender equality, including SRHR, and LGBTIQ+ rights supported	350 000 €	350 000 €
Output 2.3: Climate action, environmental protection, and a just green transition supported	350 000 €	350 000 €
Outcome 3: CSOs that promote democracy, the rule of law, and human rights, strengthened		
Output 3.2 An enabling environment for civil society supported	330 000 €	300 000 €
Minimum / maximum grant amount	50 000 € – 70 000 € For projects with a partner from Donor States[4], the maximum grant amount is €80,000	
Minimum / maximum project implementation period	18 – 24 months	
Possibility of involving project partners (recommended maximum of 2 partners)	Yes	

7.3 Calls No. 3 and No. 4: Predefined Projects

These are planned as **two calls** under **Output 3.2 – An enabling environment for civil society supported,** within **Outcome 3 –** CSOs that promote democracy, the rule of law, and human rights, strengthened.

Calls	**Call No. 3**	**Call No. 4**
Planned timelines		
Announcement of the call	March 2026	March 2026
Deadline for submission of applications	May 2026	May 2026
Publication of call results	September 2026	September 2026
Financial allocations	140 000 €	80 000 €
Minimum and maximum project implementation period	30 - 36 months	
Possibility of involving project partners (recommended maximum of 2 partners)	Yes	Yes

7.4 Call No. 5: Organisational Grants

This call is planned as **a call** under **Outcome 3 – CSOs that promote democracy, the rule of law, and human rights strengthened**, as follows:

Allocations for the individual outputs are as follows:

Outputs	**Allocation**
Output 3.1.: Organisational development supported	EUR 600 000

[4] Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway.

Special focus under Output 3.1: Strategic support for CSOs working within the Programme outcomes	EUR 1 320 000
Announcement of the call	May 2026
Deadline for submission of applications	July 2026
Publication of call results	October 2026
Grant amount	EUR 100 000 – EUR 120 000
Project implementation period	30 – 36 months
Possibility of project partnership	No

7.5 Call No. 7: Bilateral cooperation

This call is planned as an **open rolling call** under the Bilateral Outcome with funding from the **Fund for Bilateral Relations** with **continuous assessment of initiative proposals** on a **bi-monthly basis** until the total allocation is exhausted, as follows:

Announcement of the call	May 2026
Grant amount	0 EUR – 25 000 EUR
Total allocation	80 000 EUR
Project implementation period	Up to 12 months

8. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

8.1 Eligibility of Grant Applications, Applicants and Project Partners

8.1.1 Administrative Eligibility Criteria for Grant Applications

An eligible grant application must meet the following **administrative criteria**:

- it is submitted in **electronic format** through the **online grant system**;
- it is submitted **before the deadline** for submission of grant applications;
- it includes **all annexes required** under the respective call;
- the **requested grant amount** is in line with the limits specified in the respective call;
- the **project duration** is in line with the duration set out in the respective call.

8.1.2 Eligible Applicants

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.

An applicant eligible to implement a project must be a **non-governmental organisation (NGO)**.
A non-governmental organisation is defined as a **non-profit entity, independent of local, regional and central government, public authorities, political parties and commercial organisations**.

An eligible applicant must be an organisation registered in the Slovak Republic under one of the following legal forms:

a) Civic association pursuant to Act No. 83/1990 Coll. on Association of Citizens;
b) Foundation pursuant to Act No. 34/2002 Coll. on Foundations;

c) Non-profit organisation providing public benefit services pursuant to Act No. 213/1997 Coll.;
d) Non-investment fund pursuant to Act No. 147/1997 Coll. on Non-Investment Funds;
e) Non-profit organisation registered under Act No. 116/1985 Coll. on the Conditions of Activities of Organisations with an International Element;
f) Association of legal entities pursuant to Act No. 40/1964 Coll. (Civil Code);
g) Slovak Red Cross pursuant to Act No. 460/2007 Coll. on the Slovak Red Cross.

The following entities are not eligible applicants:
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[5] related to the beliefs of a particular faith.

Additional eligibility criteria for organisational grants:

h) The applicant must have had **legal personality for at least 60 months** prior to the deadline for submission of applications.
(This requirement will be verified by the Fund Operator through the relevant public registry.)
i) The applicant must have had an **average annual turnover of at least EUR 200,000** over the last three financial years for which accounting documents are available.
(The applicant shall provide official financial statements for each of these years as part of the application package.)
j) The applicant must be implementing, or over the **last five years** have **implemented projects with a cumulative budget exceeding EUR 200,000** as a lead partner or project partner, within at least one of the following topics:

- promoting civic participation in democratic processes;
- promoting information and media literacy;
- protecting human rights, including combating discrimination and promoting social justice;
- promoting gender equality, including SRHR (sexual and reproductive health and rights) and LGBTIQ+ rights;
- promoting climate action, environmental protection and a just green transition;
- promoting inclusion and empowerment of Roma communities.
(For each project, the applicant must specify in the application: project title, donor, contract number, total project budget, amount received by the applicant, project duration, main activities and key results.)

k) The applicant must have a **valid multi-annual organisational work plan and/or strategy** effective at the time of application.
(The work plan/strategy is a mandatory annex to the grant application form.)
l) The applicant must be **compliant with its payment obligations with regards to taxes, social security contributions and health insurance payments**.
(The applicant must submit valid certificates proving no outstanding liabilities towards the Tax Office, the Social Insurance Agency and health insurance companies. These certificates must not be older than 3 months and are mandatory attachments to the application.)

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

8.1.3 Eligible Project Partners

All eligible partners 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.

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.

Eligible project partners include:

a) **Public or private entities**, whether non-profit or for-profit, including non-governmental organisations, established as legal persons in **donor states**, **beneficiary states**, or **Ukraine**.
b) **Entities established according to the Commercial Code in Slovakia** 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.
c) **International organisations or body or agency thereof.**
d) **Informal groups** may participate as project partners under the following conditions:

- their members have **permanent or temporary residence in the Slovak Republic**;
- they are **not established or operated for personal profit**;
- membership is **voluntary and non-discriminatory**;
- their purpose is **consistent with the objectives of the Programme**;
- they are **independent** of local, regional and central authorities, other public bodies, political parties, religious institutions, and commercial entities; and
- they are **represented by one individual** with permanent residence in the Slovak Republic who signs the **Partnership Agreement** on behalf of the group.

Informal groups **cannot be direct recipients of grant funding**.
The **Project Promoter** (grant recipient) remains the formal beneficiary and is responsible for financing the activities implemented by such a partner.
Both the **Project Contract** and the **Partnership Agreement** must include provisions reflecting this arrangement.

Number of partners recommended:

- For **Small Grants** – up to **one (1)** project partner.
- For **Project Grants** – up to **two (2)** project partners.
- For **Organisational Grants** – partnerships **are not permitted**.

Additional conditions for partner participation:

- The cooperation **must not take the form of a supplier–client (contractual) relationship.**

If a project is planned in cooperation with a partner, the **Declaration of Partnership** must be submitted as a **mandatory annex** to the grant application.

8.2 Eligibility of Expenditures

The **eligibility of project expenditures** is described in detail in the document *Cost eligibility Guidance EEA Civil Society Fund, Version 1.1* published at https://eeagrants.org/sk/civil-society-fund-slovakia.

This section provides **only the key information** useful for applicants when planning their grant applications.

Eligibility period for project expenditures by grant type:

- **Small Grants:** until **30 April 2031**
- **Project Grants:** until **30 April 2031**
- **Organisational Grants:** until **30 April 2031**
- **Pre-defined Projects (PDPs):** until **30 April 2031**

8.2.2 Eligible Expenditures

I. Categories of Eligible Expenditures

Direct expenditures – costs directly related and essential to the implementation of project activities. Eligible categories of direct expenditures include:

- personnel costs,
- travel costs and allowances,
- consumables and supplies,
- equipment costs,
- services,
- other direct costs.

Indirect expenditures – costs that cannot be directly attributed to specific project activities but are necessary for the general operation of the organisation and project implementation.
These may include, for example:

- overhead and operational costs (energy, water, telephone, internet),
- administrative and accounting staff costs,
- office rent,
- IT support and maintenance.

Indirect costs are calculated using a **flat rate** — see section below.

II. Forms of Eligible Expenditures

1. Actual incurred costs:
These are reimbursements of eligible expenditures **actually incurred** by the Project Promoter and/or Project Partner in connection with project implementation.
Each cost must be supported by appropriate documentation (e.g., invoiced, paid, and the goods delivered or services performed).

2. Simplified Cost Options (SCOs):
SCOs are **pre-determined amounts or percentages** representing the best possible approximation of actual eligible costs in practice.
They offer an **alternative method of reimbursement** instead of documenting real costs and payments.
When using SCOs, it is **not required** to provide accounting documents or other supporting evidence for each expenditure item.

The Programme defines the following types of **Simplified Cost Options (SCOs):**

- **Unit costs (hourly rates):** pre-defined hourly rates for calculating personnel costs, based on available historical documentation;
- **Flat rate:** a pre-determined percentage applied to calculate one or more categories of costs in the project (e.g., other project costs or indirect costs);
- **Lump sum:** a pre-agreed fixed amount linked to the achievement of a specific project output or result.

8.2.2 Ineligible Expenditures

Ineligible expenditures are, in general, those **that do not fall within the categories of eligible costs** and **do not meet the eligibility criteria** defined in Section 2.4 of the *Cost eligibility Guidance of the EEA Civil Society Fund Slovakia*.

Applicants are **specifically reminded** that the following categories of expenditures are **ineligible**:

- Cost related to purchase of land or real-estate property
- VAT (Value Added Tax), where deductible or refundable in accordance with the applicable legislation of the Slovak Republic;
- Expenditures for the purchase of land or real estate.

9. E-GRANT SYSTEM

The Programme uses the E-grant system for all administrative and project-related operations connected with its grant activities.

Work in the E-grant system is divided into three levels:

- Completion and submission of the grant application
- Evaluation of grant applications – administrative and expert assessment of project applications
- Project module, which includes:
    - Basic project documents
    - Submission and approval of project reports
    - Monitoring and processing of project output data, as well as communication between the Beneficiary and the Fund Operator

9.1 Level I: Instructions for Completing and Submitting the Grant Application

After logging into the online grant system and selecting the relevant call, outcome and output the applicant completes the application form. The application form is fully integrated into the E-grant system, where applicants can find detailed instructions directly within the system.

Instructions are provided only for the **budget section** of the application, with the aim of clarifying its correct preparation, as follows:

9.1.1 Instructions for Preparing the Budget

Applicants shall begin by completing the *Calculator for selecting the appropriate budget type, available in the budget section of the application.*

To select the most suitable budget type for your project, we recommend first completing the "Budget Type Selection Calculator". After entering the planned project expenditures (column marked yellow), the calculator will automatically suggest the most appropriate budget type. The choice of budget type primarily depends on the structure of planned costs, i.e., the ratio between personnel costs and other direct project costs.

Types of Budget forms:

Type A – suitable mainly when personnel costs represent the majority of the total project budget.

Cost categories:

- Personnel costs – must be documented (determined as unit costs or based on real personnel costs).
- Other costs – calculated as a flat rate of 100% of declared personnel costs for small grants, and 40% for project grants. No supporting documentation is required for these costs.

Type B – recommended when the majority of direct costs are non-personnel costs such as services, materials, or travel.

Cost categories:

- Direct project costs – must be documented by supporting documentation.
- Indirect costs – calculated as a flat rate of 7% of declared direct costs (no supporting documentation is required).

Type C – also for projects where other direct costs dominate (non-personnel) but uses a different method for calculating indirect costs. This option is not available for small grants.

Cost categories:

- Direct project costs – must be documented by supporting documentation.
- Indirect costs – calculated as a flat rate of 15% of declared direct personnel costs (no supporting documentation is required).

Choose Option A if your project is staff-intensive. Choose Option B or C if most of your budget will cover other direct costs; the difference between B and C lies in how indirect costs are calculated.

When choosing a budget type also consider: I /the scope and nature of planned activities, ii/ the need to cover personnel and other direct costs, iii/ as well as the complexity of documenting expenditures during project implementation.

Selecting the right budget type and properly planning costs from the start will greatly simplify project implementation, administration, and final reporting.

The second step in completing the budget form is to click "Project" which indicates whether the project will be implemented **with or without a partner/partners.** After this selection, a table will be displayed In the **"Planned expenses / budget"** column, enter the estimated project expenditures. Based on entered data, the system will then present three budget type options (A, B, C) reflecting the available simplified cost methods. The system automatically verifies the **minimum and maximum grant amounts** applicable to each grant type. If the limit is exceeded, an **error message** will appear.

For more details, please refer to the **Cost Eligibility Guidance, Section 3.3.**

The third step in completing the budget form – click the **"Type of budget"** to select the budget type the Applicant will use when submitting the grant application.

Below we provide instructions for completing the budget as well as the requested documentation for project financial reporting for budget type A, B and C.

Instructions for completing the budget:

Budget Type A:

Under Budget Type A, the budget includes two categories of expenditures:

Expenditure Category	Instructions for Completion	Requested documentation for financial reporting
1. Personnel Costs	Based on an hourly rate: In this case, calculate the hourly rate for the given position according to the most recent document on remuneration (pay slip/contract on annual remuneration from the period preceding the submission of the grant application). The hourly rate is calculated using the "Hourly Rate Calculation Table" and by attaching the required supporting documentation. The calculated hourly rate remains fixed throughout the entire duration of the project.	Simplified – by submitting only monthly timesheets

	Based on actual salary/remuneration payments: In this case, the "Hourly Rate Calculation Table" is not required. Enter the planned salaries/remunerations in the budget according to the instructions in the E-grant system. The amount of the monthly remuneration may vary according to the actual calculation and payment.	Monthly – pay slips and proof of salary payments
	Add new rows to include additional staff members; the total amount of personnel costs is displayed on the right side of the screen.	
2. Other Costs	Determined as a flat rate of 100% of personnel costs for small grants	Not reported
	Determined as a flat rate of 40% of personnel costs for project grants	Not reported

Budget Types B and C:

For Budget Types B and C, the budget consists of **six expenditure categories.** The table below presents the **budget structure**, along with **instructions for completion** and the requested documentation for financial reporting for each type of expenditure category.

Expenditure Category	Instructions for Completion	Requested documentation for financial reporting
Direct Costs		
Personnel Costs	Complete according to the instructions provided for Budget Type A	Same as for Type A
Travel Expenses	Provide justification/consistency with project activities and describe the calculation method	In full compliance with the Accounting Act and the Travel Allowances Act
Consumables Equipment Costs Services / Subcontracting	Provide justification/consistency with project activities and describe the calculation method. Indicate whether the expenditure is related to renovation or refurbishment These expenses may represent a maximum of 50% of total direct costs.	In full compliance with the Accounting Act and procurement rules
Other Direct Costs	Provide justification/consistency with project activities and describe the calculation method	In full compliance with the Accounting Act
Indirect Costs (flat rate)	Budget Type B: 7% of eligible direct costs Budget Type C: 15% of eligible personnel costs	Not reported

The final table of the budget is the **Summary**, with separate columns for the applicant and the partner, including a **dedicated control total** for expenditures related to **renovation or refurbishment**.

Instructions for preparing the budget for funding activity via Lump Sum:

Applicants may propose financing of selected project activities using a **lump sum**. This option is available for **small grants, project grants, and predefined projects**.

The applicant shall use budget form **Type B or C**, which allows proposing the financing of selected project activities via a lump sum If a specific activity is to be funded via lump sum, this must be clearly indicated in the description of the respective budget item, including the proposed amount allocated to that activity in the **comments field**. In the **comments field** for the calculated budget amount, the applicant shall provide a brief narrative explaining the calculation method and its justification.

For each budget category (personnel costs, travel costs, equipment, consumables, services/subcontracts, other direct costs), the budget form shall include:

- A clear **description of the expense**,
- The **unit** of measurement,
- The **unit cost**, and
- The **number of units**.

Note on Budget Adequacy:

When assessing a grant application, the **Fund Operator** verifies the adequacy, justification, and realism of the requested amount. Budgeted amounts must align with the project's objectives, activities and planned outputs and must correspond to standard market prices and the scope of activities described in the project proposal.

Budget items that are unreasonable or insufficiently justified may be adjusted or reduced during the project assessment process.

9.1.2 Mandatory Annexes to the Grant Application

Annex No. 1 – Relevant for small and project grants:

> **Annex No. 1a:** Partnership Declaration (if the project is implemented in partnership)
> **Annex No. 1b:** Partnership Declaration in English (if the project is implemented in partnership with a foreign institution)

Annexes No. 2-6 – Relevant for organisational grants (in accordance with point 7.2, items h/, i/, j/, k/, and l/ of these Guidelines):

> **Annex No. 2:** Financial statements for the years 2022, 2023, and 2024
>
> **Annex No. 3:** General budget of the organisation for the project implementation period
> **Annex No. 4:** Overview of completed projects
> **Annex No. 5:** Multiannual organisational work plan/ organisational strategy
> **Annex No. 6:** Certificates according to point 7.1.2

Forms for Annexes 1a and 1b are available in the online grant system of the Programme.

Annexes must be submitted in one of the following formats: **.xls, .pdf, or .jpg.**

9.2 Level II. Assessment of Grant Applications – Administrative and Expert Assessment

The assessment of the Grant Application proceeds in the following steps:

- Assessment of the administrative compliance of the grant application and assessment of the eligibility of the grant application and of the applicant;
- Assessment of the grant application according to the evaluation criteria for expert assessment.

9.2.1 Criteria for Administrative Compliance, Eligibility of the Grant Application, and Eligibility of the Applicant

To advance to the next stage of the evaluation, the application must meet all of the following criteria:

Criteria for administrative compliance of the grant application:

The grant application is:

- submitted electronically through the programme's online grant system;
- submitted by the deadline of the relevant call;
- includes all annexes required under the call.

Criteria for eligibility of the grant application:

- the requested grant amount complies with the conditions of the relevant call;
- the project duration is in accordance with the time limits set in the relevant call.

Criteria for eligibility of the applicant:

- the applicant is an organisation registered in the Slovak Republic in one of the categories defined in the relevant call;

Criteria for eligibility of the project partner:

- the project partner is an entity meeting the conditions set out in the relevant call.

9.2.2 Criteria for Expert Assessment

The criteria for the expert assessment of the application will be specified in the relevant call. An overview of the calls is provided in Section 6 of these Guidelines.

9.3 Level III: Project Monitoring and Reporting

The E-grant system will enable both the Project Promoter and Fund Operator to:

- transfer data from the grant application into reporting forms;
- process interim project reports, including their review and approval;

- process the final project report, including its review and approval, as well as the analysis of achieved results and indicators throughout the entire project implementation period;
- communicate directly within the E-grant system between the Project Promoter and Fund Operator;
- use electronic document signatures;
- generate statistical outputs in xls format.

A detailed description of project reporting is provided in Section 11.2 of this Guideline.

10. TIMELINE FOR THE ASSESSMENT AND APPROVAL OF GRANT APPLICATIONS

Indicative timeline for the submission, assessment, and approval of grant applications from the date of the call announcement:

Event	Small Grants	Project Grants / Pre-Defined Projects	Organisational Grants
Call for Proposals	Open call with continuous evaluation of applications on a bi-monthly basis until the allocation is exhausted	Published at least 3 months before the call deadline	Published at least 3 months before the call deadline
Information webinars	Within the first month after the call announcement on the website https://eeagrants.org/sk/civil-society-fund-slovakia		
Provision of information to applicants	Ongoing	Up to 5 calendar days before the call deadline	Up to 5 calendar days before the call deadline
Call deadline	Ongoing call – cut off dates specified in the call	On the date specified in the call	On the date specified in the call
Publication of the list of received applications on the Programme website https://eeagrants.org/sk/civil-society-fund-slovakia	Within 5 working days after the call deadline	Within 5 working days after the call deadline	Within 5 working days after the call deadline
Administrative and eligibility check and submission of missing documents or correction of deficiencies	Within 5 working days after each bi-monthly deadline	Within 10 working days after the call deadline	Within 15 working days after the call deadline
Expert assessment and approval of applications	Within 20 working days from the date of submission for assessment	Within 45 working days from the date of submission for assessment	Within 55 working days from the date of submission for assessment
Notification of applicants about the assessment results (publication on the Programme website	Within 20–25 working days after each bi-monthly deadline	Within 55–60 working days after the call deadline	Within 70–75 working days after the call deadline

https://eeagrants.org/sk/civil-society-fund-slovakia			
Signing of the Project Contract or communication of a reasoned rejection	Within 20–25 working days after each bi-monthly deadline	Within 65 working days after the call deadline	Within 80 working days after the call deadline

11. GENERAL CONDITIONS FOR SUPPORTED PROJECTS

11.1 Project Contract

The **Project Contract** is the legal document concluded between the **Fund Operator** and the **Project Promoter**, defining the rights and obligations of both parties in relation to the implementation of a project supported under the Programme.

The Project Contract includes, in particular:

- the commitment of the Project Promoter to act in accordance with the values and principles of the Programme;
- a summary of the main outputs and outcomes of the project including indicator(s) and target value(s):
- obligations related to financial and technical reporting;
- responsibilities for data collection and storage:
- the maximum grant amount;
- the grant type, overview, and method of calculating eligible expenditures;
- the start and end dates of the eligibility period for expenditures;
- requirements for cost reporting (submission of supporting documents and/or evidence of fulfilment of conditions in the case of simplified cost options);
- provisions for project change management and approval;
- provisions ensuring timely access for monitoring, audits, and evaluations;
- obligations concerning information and publicity;
- the right of the Fund Operator to suspend payments or request reimbursement of funds from the Project Promoter;
- provisions for dispute resolution and jurisdiction;
- provisions on disclaimer of liability in accordance with Article 17.2 of the Programme Implementation Agreement (PIA);
- a detailed project budget;
- provisions on procurement;
- provisions on termination of the contract;
- references to partnership agreements or letters of intent, where applicable;
- provisions on record-keeping;
- provisions on irregularities and related reporting procedures;

The Contract also establishes the obligation of the Project Promoter to inform all project partners about any parts of the Contract that concern them, and to notify them in advance of any project changes that may affect their participation.

Additional provisions for organisational grants:

The Project Contract for organisational grants shall also include:

- obligations concerning the submission of interim and final reports on the implementation of the multi-annual institutional plan or strategy;
- details on the amount and frequency of payments;
- the right of the Fund Operator and the FMO to audit the Project Promoter's full accounts;
- the right of the Fund Operator to cancel or reduce the grant in cases of clearly unsatisfactory project performance.

Any amendments to the Contract shall follow the conditions set therein and must take the form of a written **Addendum** (which may be initiated either by the Project Promoter or the Fund Operator).

Annexes to the Project Contract:

- Project Results Framework
- Project Budget

The Project Contract is signed electronically through the **E-grant system**, with the exception in cases where the Project Promoter is unable to sign the contract electronically.

11.2 Partnership Agreement

If a project is implemented in cooperation with one or more project partners, the **Project Promoter** is obliged to conclude a **written Partnership Agreement** with each project partner **before signing the Project Contract**. A draft of the Partnership Agreement must be submitted to the **Fund Operator** for approval.

The Partnership Agreement must include at least the following provisions:

- **Roles and responsibilities of the parties** – clearly defined duties and responsibilities of the Project Promoter and the Partner in project implementation, monitoring and reporting;
- **Financial arrangements** – a detailed project budget for the Partner, including the rates and values applied under simplified cost options, where relevant;
- **Obligations concerning financial and technical reporting**;
- **Communication obligations** related to project promotion and visibility;
- **Obligation of the Project Promoter** to inform the Partner of all provisions of the Project Contract relevant to the Partner and of any subsequent changes that may affect it;
- **Project audit** – provisions ensuring access for the Fund Operator and auditors to the Partner's documents for monitoring and verification purposes;
- **Dispute resolution** – provisions defining the procedure for resolving disputes and the competent jurisdiction.

If the Partner is an entity from a **Donor State**, an international organisation, or its agency, the Partnership Agreement shall be drawn up **in English**.

If the Partner is an entity based in the **Slovak Republic**, the Agreement shall be drafted **in Slovak**.

The Project Promoter must use the **Partnership Agreement template** provided by the Fund Operator. The Agreement ensures **transparent and effective cooperation**, establishes clear rules for financing, reporting, auditing, and dispute resolution, and forms a **mandatory part of project implementation**.

11.3 Project Communication

The **Project Promoter's core communication obligations** are as follows:

a. To provide information to relevant target groups and stakeholders about the existence, objectives, and results of the project, as well as about the support received from the Programme and any bilateral cooperation with entities from the Donor States;
b. To ensure that all project participants are informed about the financial support from the Programme and the Donor States by displaying the **Programme logo** (available for download at https://eeagrants.org/sk/civil-society-fund-slovakia and the following acknowledgement on all project outputs (printed and electronic materials, and media outputs):

   "The project '[project title]' is supported by the EEA Civil Society Fund in Slovakia, financed by the EEA Financial Mechanism 2021-2028. The Fund Operator is the Ekopolis Foundation in partnership with the Open Society Foundation – Bratislava and the Carpathian Foundation."

c. To ensure that information about the project is available on the Project Promoter's **website** in **Slovak and English**, including:

   - basic information about the project, its progress, achievements, and results,
   - cooperation with entities from Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway,
   - relevant photos, contact details, and a clear reference to the Programme and the EEA and Norway Grants.

   The Project Promoter must keep this information **regularly updated**.

d. To share information about the project on **social media platforms**, where relevant.

Specific obligations for project partners:

b) The Partner must provide information to relevant target groups and stakeholders about its participation in and results of the project;
c) Information about the project must be made available on the Partner's website and/or social media channels.

11.4 Format of Electronic Documentation

Unless specified otherwise, the **Project Promoter** must use the prescribed file formats for project reporting:
DOC and XLS for structured documents, and **PDF, JPG, or TIF** for other supporting materials (attachments, scans, etc.).

All files must preserve **internal links and structures** (formulas, macros, headers, footers, etc.) to ensure full traceability and accuracy of documentation.

12. PROJECT FINANCING AND REPORTING

12.1 Project Financing – General Provisions

Project financing is provided under the **EEA Civil Society Fund** at a **rate of 100% of the total eligible project costs**.

The grant is disbursed to the **Project Promoter** in the form of:

- an **advance payment**,
- one or more **interim payments**, and
- a **final payment**,
  based on the approval of submitted project monitoring reports.

The level of advance payment to projects shall be set out in the project contract. The level of advance and final instalments by grant types shall be linked to the project budget and duration as follows:

Grant Type	Project Duration	Advance Payment	Final Payment (retention)
Small Grants ≤ EUR 25 000	0–12 months	40 % - 50%	15% - 20 %
Project Grants EUR 50 000 – EUR 80 000	12–24 months	20% - 30%	15% - 20%
Organisational Grants EUR 100 000 – EUR 120 000	30–36 months	20% - 30%	20% - 25%

- The **advance payment** shall be transferred within **10 working days** from the project start date as specified in the signed Project Contract.
- The **interim payment** shall be transferred within **10 working days** from the date of approval of the interim project report (both narrative and financial parts).
- The **final payment** shall be transferred within **10 working days** from the date of approval of the final project report (both narrative and financial parts).

Approval of interim and final project reports shall be completed within **two months** from the submission of all required information.

In **exceptional cases**, where projects are assessed as **high-risk** based on a risk analysis conducted and documented by the Fund Operator, the Fund Operator may take a justified decision to **modify the payment scheme** — by reducing or cancelling advance financing, or by requiring the **Project Promoter** to provide a **financial guarantee in advance**, in order to mitigate financial risks associated with pre-financing.

12.2 Rules for Project Reporting and Payments by Grant Type

Project reports are fully integrated into the **E-Grant online system**, which collects sufficient information on project progress, achievement of objectives and results, statistical data, and financial settlement.

Each project report follows a **predefined format** and consists of two sections:

- Narrative part
- Financial part

Reports must be completed and submitted via the **E-Grant system** in the required format.

12.2.1 Reporting and Payments for Small Grants

1. Interim Project Report
To be submitted semi-annually (for the periods: January–June, July–December) within 15 working days after the end of each calendar semester.

It shall include:

a. Narrative part:
Provides comprehensive, structured, and verifiable information enabling assessment of actual project progress and results in relation to planned outcomes and outputs, covering:

- Summary of activities implemented during the reporting period.
- Progress towards project expected results, clearly distinguishing outputs and outcomes, each supported by quantitative and/or qualitative evidence.
- Monitoring of indicators, including baseline, current, and target values; sources of verification; and interpretation of data in terms of performance and efficiency.
- Analysis of deviations from the implementation plan, indicator targets, schedule, or budget — outlining causes, implications, and corrective actions taken.
- Communication and outreach activities, detailing their contribution to achieving project goals, including behavioural change, stakeholder engagement, visibility actions, dissemination of results, and overall effectiveness of communication strategies.
- Lessons learned and recommendations to support adaptive management and the scaling of successful approaches during the remaining implementation period.

b. Financial part:
List of project expenditures incurred (without submission of supporting documentation at this stage).

2. Final Project Report
To be submitted within 15 working days after project completion and covering the entire implementation period.

It shall include:

a. Narrative part:

structured in the same way as the interim report but covering the full duration of the project, and focused on achieved results.

b. Financial part:

a list of all project expenditures, accompanied by **complete supporting documentation** for the entire project period.

For partners from Donor States receiving support **below EUR 5 000**, submission of financial documents is **not required**.

All project reports must be submitted in the **E-Grant system** using the predefined format.

3. Payments for Small Grants

Payment Type	Amount / Timing	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 35% 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 month 8 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).

12.2.2 Reporting and Payments for Project Grants

1. Interim Project Report

To be submitted **semi-annually** (for the periods: January – June, July – December) within **15 working days** after the end of each calendar semester and shall include:

a. Narrative part:

Structured in the same way as for Small Grants (see section 11.2.1).

b. Financial part:

A list of project expenditures incurred. Supporting documentation for expenditures is required **once per year**.

For partners from Donor States receiving support **below EUR 5 000**, submission of supporting documents is **not required**.

2. Final Project Report

To be submitted **within 15 working days** after project completion and shall include:

a. Narrative part:

Structured in the same way as the interim report, but covering the **entire implementation period**, and focused on achieved results.

b. Financial part:

A list of all expenditures incurred with **supporting documentation** for the full duration of the project. Supporting documentation already submitted with interim reports does **not need to be resubmitted**. For partners from Donor States receiving support **below EUR 5 000**, submission of supporting documents is **not required**.

3. Payments for Project Grants

Payment Type	Amount / Timing	Conditions

Advance payment	20% - 30 % of the total project budget	Paid after signing the Project Contract (approximately during the first month of implementation); intended to cover the first 6 months of implementation.
Interim payments	up to 55 % of the total project budget *(the combined amount of advance and interim payments may not exceed 85 % of the total project budget)*	Paid after approval of interim project reports (within 10 working days after approval). Given that project grants have an implementation period of up to 24 months, interim payments are typically disbursed around months 8, 14 and 20 of implementation.
Final payment (retention)	15 % - 20% of the total project budget	Paid after approval of the final project report (within 10 working days after approval).

12.2.3 Reporting and Payments for Organisational Grants

1. Interim Project Report

To be submitted **annually** (for each calendar year, January-December) within **20 working days** after the end of the reporting year, and shall include:

a. Narrative part:

- Overview of the organisation's goals and priorities during the reporting period;
- Summary of organisational work plan or strategy supported by the grant during the reporting period, identifying significant deviations or changes;
- Description of the main activities carried out within the reporting period, linking activities to the outputs and outcomes with information on the fulfilment of any planned indicators;
- Overview of the most important communication deliverables for the reporting period;
- Identification of problems and risks;
- Work plan or strategy for the next reporting period

b. Financial part:

The financial report provides an overview of the organisation's expenditures for the relevant year together with a summary of the use of grant funds.

2. Annual Meeting with the Project Promoter

To assess project implementation progress, the Fund Operator shall organise an annual meeting with the Project Promoter by 31 March of the following year.

3. Final Project Report

To be submitted **within 30 working days** after project completion and shall include:

a. Narrative part:

- Overview of the organisation's goals and priorities during the grant period;
- Summary of the implementation of the organisational work plan or strategy supported by the grant;
- Description of the main activities carried out within the grant period, linking of activities to the outputs and outcomes with information on the fulfilment of any planned indicators;
- Overview of the most important communication deliverables for the grant period;

- Explanation and justification of any changes in organisational work plan or strategy, if applicable;
- Further quantitative and qualitative data related to the organisational grant period requested by the Fund Operator.

b. Financial part:

- Overview of grant utilisation;
- Summary of how the grant fit into the overall organisational budget;
- Identification and justification of major deviations between the planned and actual organisational budget during the grant implementation.

c. Final external financial audit

At the end of the implementation period, the Project Promoter shall provide a report by an external auditor to provide assurance that the grant has been used in accordance with the purpose and provisions of the project contract.

If the Project Promoter commissions annual statutory audit reports for other purposes, the report of the latest year of implementation may be submitted, provided that it covers and specifically mentions the contribution from the Programme.

4. Payments for Organisational Grants

Payment Type	Amount / Timing	Conditions
Advance payment	20% - 30 % of the total project budget	Paid after signing the Project Contract (approximately during the first month of implementation); intended to cover the first 12 months of activities.
Interim payments	up to 50 % of the total project budget *(the combined amount of advance and interim payments may not exceed 80 % of the total project budget)*	Paid within 10 working days after approval of annual interim reports and annual progress meetings. Given that organisational grants have an implementation period of up to 36 months, interim payments are typically disbursed around months 14 and 26.
Final payment (retention)	20 % -25% of the total project budget	Paid after approval of the final project report (within 10 working days after approval).

12.2.4 Reporting and Payments for Pre-Defined Projects

Pre-defined Projects **PDP1** and **PDP3** follow the **same reporting and payment procedures** as those set for **Project Grants** (see section 11.2.2).

Both projects, PDP1 and PDP3, are subject to an **independent external financial audit**, commissioned and submitted by the Project Promoter. Audit expenditures are considered eligible project expenditures.

13. PROJECT MONITORING

Project monitoring covers the **administrative, financial, technical, and substantive aspects** of projects, in accordance with applicable Slovak legislation, the Programme Rules, and the **principle of proportionality**.

Project monitoring is carried out by the **Fund Operator's internal staff**.
Selected projects and expenditures may also be subject to **independent external financial or compliance audits** commissioned by the **Financial Mechanism Office (FMO)**.

Monitoring of projects is conducted in the following forms:
a) Administrative control of projects;
b) On-site or online verifications and meetings with representatives of the Project Promoter and Partner(s).

13.1 Administrative Control of Projects

Administrative verification involves reviewing project reports submitted by the Project Promoter, including assessing their compliance with project objectives, achieved results, relevant supporting documentation, and the eligibility of expenditures ("desk review").

Administrative controls are performed by staff of the Fund Operator.

Administrative control includes:

1. **Formal verification** – checking the accuracy, completeness, and correctness of data.
2. **Substantive verification**, which includes:
    - Verification of the reality, eligibility, accuracy, and timing of expenditures;
    - Verification of data used to calculate eligible amounts, including correctness of data on goods, services, and works listed on invoices and other accounting documents;
    - Verification of the legality and eligibility of expenditures, in particular:
      i. compliance with the provisions of the **Project Contract**, and
      ii. compliance with **Slovak legislation** (especially labour law and accounting regulations).
3. **Review of project reports**, including:
    - **Narrative part**: assessment of project progress, achieved results, indicator fulfilment, deviations from planned implementation, and communication/publicity activities;
    - **Financial part**: assessment of the eligibility of declared expenditures based on submitted copies of relevant supporting documents, such as:
      • payroll records, timesheets,
      • contracts, invoices, purchase orders, and delivery/acceptance protocols,
      • travel documents, training participation certificates,
      • procurement documentation (calls, offers, evaluation reports),
      • bank statements confirming payments,
      • accounting records (general ledger, payroll accounts, asset register, etc.).

The required scope of documentation is specified in the **Cost Eligibility Guidance, Section 4**.

For expenditures reported under **Simplified Cost Options (SCOs)**, only the correctness of the calculation and the use of approved and verified expenditure bases are checked.

Eligible expenditures must be included in the list of expenditures for the reporting period in which they were incurred, **no later than** the next reporting period.

13.2 On-the Spot and Online Verifications

On-the spot and online verifications with representatives of the Project Promoter and Project Partner(s) are an integral part of project monitoring.

Authorised persons entitled to carry out on-site verifications include:

- Representatives of the **Fund Operator**,
- Representatives of the **Financial Mechanism Office (FMO)** or persons authorised by it,
- Representatives of the **EFTA Board of Auditors** and/or the **Office of the Auditor General of Norway**.

Authorised persons are entitled to:

- Request written or oral statements from the Project Promoter's staff;
- Access documentation, make copies or extracts;
- In cases of serious irregularities (e.g., risk of document destruction), retain original documents while providing copies to the Project Promoter;
- Request information from third parties related to the activities of the Project Promoter;
- In justified cases, engage external experts.

Obligations of authorised persons:

- Notify the Project Promoter's legal representative or project management at least **five working days** in advance of the verification;
- Examine all relevant circumstances objectively and impartially;
- Maintain confidentiality and comply with data protection rules;
- Immediately inform the Programme Director if there is any suspicion of a criminal offence;
- Provide the Project Promoter with a written **record of the verification**;
- Confirm receipt of any documents and return originals;
- Declare any potential conflict of interest.

Each project shall be subject to **at least one on-site or online verification** during its implementation period, **prior to approval of the final report**.

For high-risk projects, **ad-hoc visits** may be carried out as needed.

14. CONTACT INFORMATION

EEA Civil Society Fund Website: https://eeagrants.org/sk/civil-society-fund-slovakia

Ekopolis Foundation
Komenského 21
974 01 Banská Bystrica
Tel.: +421 48 4701 092
www.ekopolis.sk

Programme Director: Peter Medveď – medved@eea-csf.sk

Financial Management: Lívia Haringová – haringova@eea-csf.sk

Program Manager: Veronika Záhradníková – zahradnikova@eea-csf.sk

Financial Controller: Jarmila Bibová – bibova@eea-csf.sk

Open Society Foundation – Bratislava
Baštová 5, 811 03 Bratislava
Tel.: +421 948 681 150
www.osf.sk

Program Manager: Viktória Németh Križanová – krizanova@eea-csf.sk
Financial Controller: Martin Mlýnek – mlynek@eea-csf.sk

Carpathian Foundation
Letná 27, 040 01 Košice
E-mail: info@karpatskanadacia.sk
Tel.: +421 948 506 118
www.karpatskanadacia.sk

Program Manager: Nora Čéplöová – ceploova@eea-csf.sk
Financial Controller: Zuzana Némethová – nemethova@eea-csf.sk

15. OVERVIEW OF ANNEXES

Annex 1: **EEA Civil Society Fund Slovakia Indicator Library**

Annex 2: **Result based management for the EEA Civil Society Fund in Slovakia**